

News & Views

Renaissance

BIG STAFF CHANGES by Debbie Ann Byrd

It has happened again and I guess it is now up to me to carry on the tradition of the Renaissance News & Views into another year. I guess with all her talent it was gonna happen sooner or later and I am only glad that she has bin allowed to move up in the show bizness world and I am able to take over like this. Oh, right I forgot to say that what has happened is that Angela Gardner got that call from a big shot in Hollywood and she had to go to the coast to take a meeting.

Actually, it seems that the ad she started running in the last issue of the newsletter was read by a producer in Hollywood who happens to be a cross-dresser and he, well, that is she, I mean the producer, was working on a cartoon show that is supposed to start in the fall and he needed a announcer to be the voice of one of the major characters. He read the ad and called Angela and she sent him a tape to audition for the part and then he called her and said she had to start right away in Hollywood so she had to leave right away. She wrote some stuff before she left so I am putting that some wear in this edition.

The other problem, which is once again a grate piece of luck for her and I hope it really goes well, but I would not care to live in New York City and since she had to leave I am not sure where I will put the articles since she used to put this paper together on her computer is Joanne Robert's BIG NEWS! She has sold her business, Creative Design Service to Doubleday Books. Not only that but like I said before she had to move to New York City to take over a new job as the Executive Vice President in charge of Transgender Publications at Doubleday Books who is the company that bought her out and as grate as that is I guess it seems like it would be very dirty there and dangerous too. But she will probably be wearing CHannel suits and setting behind a large desk in a big office where some secretary like Melanie Griffin in Working Girl will bring her coffee and tell her who is waiting on line one for her to take there call.

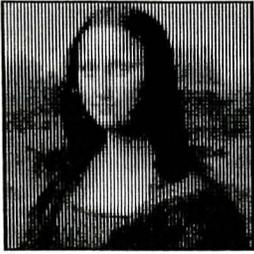
So anyhow I had some experience on my high school newspaper and Jo Ann was nice enough to let me have one of her computers which she won't need any more (but I can't figure out how to make it do anything but show me little symbols and stuff and that mouse thing just makes these things like windows appear all over the screen) so I figure that in a few months I will have it all ship shape and running. In this issue I have a couple of things that Anglea wrote before she left for LA and I also found some great poetry in a newsletter that I had in my house. I guess I spilled coffee on it because the part where the name was was all coffee stained and I cannot figure out what group put it out but they are grate poems and are very sensitive and express the feelings that only truly special people like us can have. I have also filled up some space with some cartoons that I thought would be real funny if I changed what the captions said. Just wait till you see what Garfield says to Odie....it is a scream for us T-people.

Anyhow, I will need your help to make this into a great ~~pub~~ ~~pub~~ magazine and if you have any cartoonns that you think would be good with another caption then just send them in and I will put my comedy thinking cap on. Don't muss my hair! Wow, I sure got through page one fast and I didn't even get to write yet what Anglea and Joann told me to say so I think I can get it in on page two where they used to put all that stuff about differnt chapters and such. If you turn the page you'll see that they said I should tell you...

April

Fool!

**Question of the Month:
Does "anal retentive" have a hyphen?**



News & views

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RENAISSANCE

Bugs Bunny: Queer As A Three Dollar Bill

by Hank Sartin

Paula Jordan Sinclair sent this item on that favorite crossdressing bunny. We reprint it from the June 24, 1993 issue of the Windy City Times with their permission and that of the author.

Bugs Bunny, Cross-Dresser? asked *The New York Times* on Oct. 19, 1992, in what it would no doubt term a "puff piece," as if that didn't say it all.

The *Village Voice* fired a return volley a month later in their "Jockbeat" section, in which they noted that, in Nike's "Hare Jordan" calendar, Bugs camps it up shamelessly, planting a big, sloppy kiss on the cheek of a smiling Michael Jordan. "Cross-slippage?" they retorted, "Cross-avalanche, more like."

And who could forget Garth's coming-out moment in *Wayne's World*, when he asks Wayne if he was ever attracted to Bugs when Bugs dressed up as a woman?

Just when the heck did Bugs become the gender transgressor for our times?

In fact, Bugs Bunny has been at play in the field of gender from the moment of his conception. In *A Wild Hare* (1940) Bugs' first screen meeting with Elmer Fudd, Bugs quickly established a playful sexual innuendo in his dealings with Elmer. When Elmer points his gun at Bugs' rabbit hole, Bugs' gloved hand reaches out and strokes the gun. And strokes it. And strokes it. It's just a little too much. This leads to an extended tug of war, with that big gun of Elmer's going in and out of Bugs' hole. In and out, in and out. Later, when Bugs comes up from behind and covers Elmer's eyes to play "Guess who?" Elmer comes back with "Heddy Wemarr? Owivia de Haviwin?" Bugs responds to these charming misapprehensions by planting a *big kiss* on Elmer's lips.

Skeptics may quibble. A gun going into a rabbit hole... so what? I might have agreed with them, had it not been for the experience of sitting in an audience of a hundred queers watching this cartoon. Last year at the University of Chicago, a group of gay and lesbian students and faculty ran a film series on the history of representations of gays and lesbians on film. As the resident cartoon scholar (it beats working for a living), I was asked to

schedule a cartoon to precede each film. I looked at some Bugs Bunny clips, and these familiar cartoons of my childhood suddenly took on a new character. The cartoons seemed obviously gay, with Bugs refusing time and again to settle into traditional gender roles. I thought I might be over-reading, looking for a queer sensibility to validate my love of Bugs. But, when it came time to screen the movies, the audience roared with laughter, cheered Bugs on and found the whole thing just as suggestive as I had.

In the wake of the 1934 Production Code, movies could not represent "sexual perversion"—at least not overtly. Though Hollywood found ways to get around the code, there were still certain borders that live-action movies could not transgress. In cartoons, however, the rules were less stringently enforced, the animators could push the limits. Bugs Bunny enjoyed the freedom to violate the norms of society, and one of the ways he violated those norms was to refuse to conform to "normal" gender roles. Bugs Bunny had fun not being conventionally masculine. He kissed his opponents, he pranced, he danced ballet, and he dragged.

In fact, Bugs Bunny did drag so often, you have to wonder where he shopped. We can all remember the image of Bugs putting on cherry-red lipstick to the strains of "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby," but you might be surprised at just how often Bugs put on the dog.

In *What's Cookin', Doc?* (1944), Bugs dresses up as Carmen Miranda and treats his audience to a drag show that would put RuPaul to shame. In *Mississippi Hare* (1949), Bugs makes a delightful Southern belle who almost marries her supposed opponent. *Hillbilly Hare* (1950) sees Bugs in hillbilly drag, complete with gingham dress and pigtailed. *Rabbit Fire* (1951) has Bugs all dolled up as a huntress who leaves Elmer ready to kill anything for a kiss, and *Rabbit Seasoning* (1952) has Bugs in a Lana Turner sweater and killer pumps. In *What's Opera, Doc?* (1957), Bugs and Elmer, faithful to their opera-going audience, redo Wagner, with Bugs making a smashing Brunhilde in golden tresses and busty Norse armor. The couple even dance a lovely

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Chapter & Affiliate Information

Chapters

Delaware

Renaissance Delaware Chapter meets second Saturday of each month. Write for info to: PO Box 5656, Wilmington, DE 19808 or call 302-995-1396.

New Jersey

South Jersey/Shore Area: Write Renaissance SJ, Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ 08330. Meets the first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee City. Doors open at 7 p.m. Call 609-435-5401 for details.

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia area: Write Renaissance GPC, Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020-0530. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia. Doors open 8 p.m. all year 'round. Call 610-630-1437 for information.

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122 Harrisburg, PA 17105. Meets on the first Saturday of the month. Call 717-780-1LSV (1578) for location and times.

Affiliates

Georgia

The American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), PO Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724 or call 404-939-0244. Information resources.

Louisiana

The Gulf Area Gender Alliance, PO Box 870213, New Orleans, LA 70187-1300. Local support group.

New Jersey

Monmouth/Ocean Trans-Gender, (MOTG), write PO Box 8243, Red Bank, NJ 07701. Local support group.

New York

Metropolitan Gender Network (MGN), write 561 Hudson St., Box 45, New York, NY 10014, or call 201-794-1665, Ext. 332. Local support group.

Start Your Own

Would you like to start a group in your area? If so, we can help with our chapter/affiliate program. Write to the Director of Outreach, Chapter Development, Renaissance National, PO Box 60552, King of Prussia, PA 19406 or call 610-630-1437 and request our Community Outreach Bulletin No. 1.

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Articles, opinion pieces, and letters to the editor are always welcome. Ideas for articles and opinion pieces should be sent to our editorial office care of Renaissance, PO Box 530, Bensalem, Pa. 19020-0530. Complimentary and irate letters to the editor may be sent to the same address.

Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education and support to the transgender community and the general public.

Resources

Background Papers:

- Background Papers are \$1.25 each:
1. Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing
 2. Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing
 3. PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others
 4. The Matter of Children
 5. Annotated Bibliography
 6. Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View
 7. AIDS/ HIV Safety and Ethics.
 8. Understanding Transsexualism

Significant Other Support

To network with other partners of transgendered people contact Evelyn Kirkland, PO Box 1242, Newtown, Pa., 18940.

Pen Pal Program:

If you would like to correspond with other people around the country contact Pen Pals, care of Maryann Kirkland, PO Box 1242, Newtown, Pa., 18940. Maryann will put you on the Pen Pal List and give you a copy of that list so you may correspond with as many new friends as you like.

TransParent Forum:

If you are transgendered and have children, that makes you a TransParent. If you'd like to network with other TransParents contact Elsa Larson, PO Box 2122, Harrisburg, Pa., 17105, attention: TransParent.

Events Calendar

April

- 2 Ren LSV- Dinner at Bube's
- 2 Renaissance SJ meeting
- 9 Rites of Passage leather dance
- 10 MGN Meeting
- 16 Ren GPC - Lingerie Party
- 21 Moonlight In Manhattan, NYC
- 23 MOTG Meeting
- 30 EuroFantasia, Denmark

May

- 7 Ren LSV - Vendor Night
- 7 Renaissance SJ meeting
- 14 Renaissance Del. meeting
- 21 Ren GPC - Rap Groups
- 19 Paradise In The Poconos, CDS
- 23 AIDS Benefit- Academy of Music
- 31 Tiffany Club Spring Outing

News Beat...

in the latest Philadelphia run of *La Cage Aux Folles*. Reams said he lifted a lot of his female impersonator moves from famous FI Charles Pierce. With over an hour of makeup for each performance and four different characters to portray in each show, it was grueling work. Some actors might balk at the role but Reams said playing Albin was no problem, "...my legs look great in three inch heels." — Speaking of looking great in heels, here's that national dish I promised. It seems that the film we have been talking about for awhile, *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar*, will be coming out later this year. The three drag queens on the road include a white queen, a Hispanic queen and, a black queen played by action movie star, Wesley Snipes. In an interview with the Gay News, Snipes said the director asked everyone to audition in drag. Sounds reasonable to me. He also said, "It wasn't the first time." — Before the interested reporter could ask when Wesley had done drag before he quickly changed the subject and started talking about his current film, *Sugar Hill*. Later in the interview Snipes talked about how hard it is to just be a regular guy and go out in public. He can't even get away from the limelight by using disguises. "It seems like I always dress the way I do in the movies." The interviewer said that soon (after people see, *To Wong Foo...*) even drag won't be a sufficient

disguise. Snipes laughed and said, "Girl, you will see me. I'm gonna be out there. (The interviewer was a guy named Steve.) — In another odd coincidence surrounding this film, Renaissance was contacted by a research firm from Hollywood. Their job is to make sure the movie doesn't mention any actual people who might decide to sue. It seems the drag queens are the winners of a contest at the Boy Bar in New York City. Part of their prize is a chance to compete in a contest in L.A., that's why they are driving across the country. On their way through Pennsylvania, they stop to look at the interesting road signs right near Philadelphia. The ones for towns like Bird In Hand, Blue Ball and Intercourse. They run afoul of the sheriff of Snyderville and the research company has to find out if the real sheriff's name is Sheriff Dullard. If it is there could be a lawsuit. Anybody been arrested in Snyderville lately?"

WON'T GET FOOLED AGAIN

Adin Quinn was a guest on the February seventh *David Letterman Show*. He told Dave a story about being in a bar and making eye contact with a hot looking woman. He approached her and they adjourned to a restroom where they began to kiss furiously. As they were kissing he ran his hand behind her neck and commented to himself, "Neck's a bit big." More kissing occurred. Adin's hand roamed to the front of his sex bunnies neck and he thought, "Adam's Apple big." This revelation was quickly followed by, "Shoulders big." It was

then Adin thought he should go back out into the bar. When he got back to the bar the other patrons had a large laugh at his expense. He didn't say if she was a good kisser. A girl likes to know those things. Please call Adin. I miss you.

KEEP THOSE KNEES TOGETHER

They're back. Men in skirts. Just regular guys not crossdressers. Every few seasons fashion designers try sending a few male models down the runways in some kind of skirts or dresses. This year there were grunge look guys walking down the runway next to sexy women models and both of them were wearing cute little baby doll dresses. The guys wore long underwear under their dresses and the women showed more skin. The guys had beards too. — The skirt thing may be catching on a little more than it has in previous years. In an article I clipped from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and Elsa Larson clipped from the *York Daily Record* we find that home of hip, Miami's South Beach section is infested with men in skirts. Usually a plaid schoolgirl type skirt worn with a leather jacket and work boots. Most of the guys wearing skirts are in their twenties and they tend to fall into two groups; gay men and grunge rockers. The rockers are inspired by Axl Rose of Guns & Roses and other alternative rockers like Lemon Heads, Nirvana and the Red Hot Chili Peppers. It's simple to explain these guys wearing skirts. It's just a fashion thing like youth in the

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sixties wanting a Beatle haircut or Nehru jacket. More guys are doing skirts because more of their rock heroes are wearing them in videos and in concert. They're not wearing them with matching stockings and pumps though. Gay guys are wearing skirts cause they have good taste. Gay men have always worn clothing that shows off their bodies and is easy to dance in. All it takes to satisfy those criteria is a skirt. Take a tip from most of the guys in the article and buy your schoolgirl skirt at the Catholic school supply store. They only run around twenty four bucks there as opposed to the \$88 price tag trendy boutiques put on their men's skirts.

AND THE WINNER IS...

Every Academy Award ceremony contains a segment where they give out the Irving Thalberg Award. Who knows what this award is for? Well, Elsa Larson clipped us the Intelligence Report from the February thirteenth *Parade Magazine* that tells us the Thalberg Award may be for the Best Transgendered Performance. Thalberg was the head of MGM in 1936. He was married to Norma Shearer and one of their private fun things was to have an elegant candlelight dinner in their Santa Monica mansion while they, like the coaches in the football story wore each others clothes. Irving would wear a gorgeous Adrian creation, complete with makeup and Norma would butch it up in one of his suits. It seems they were lucky enough to wear the same size. Irving could even wear her shoes. Lucky devil. Keep your eyes open for

his biography, *Thalberg* by Roland Flamini, for more details on Irving's stylish life.

EVENT! EVENTS!

All dressed up? Need a few places to go? Here they come. On the first Friday of every month there's another opportunity to mix and mingle with hot, young lesbians at the Fur Salon. Nicole, the young woman who runs the Fur Salon parties has offered us reduced rates in the past if you mention Renaissance at the door. Call her for information at 215-413-3400. Your five dollars or reduced rate if Nicole goes for it, gets you an open bar from nine to ten. The March party was held at The Casbah on Bank Street but I heard Nicole talk about moving the party to another venue or to Sunday nights. Check with her for coming months. — *Dressing For Pleasure* is a fetish fashion oriented party thrown by Constance Enterprises, Ltd. from Upper Montclair, NJ. For information on upcoming parties call them at 201-746-4200. — Okay, here's one you can go to in a conservative little suit. (Word of the month, LITTLE!) It's the Spring Dinner Social at The Victorian Ballroom at Bube's Brewery. LSV is doing it again. It's ten dollars for non-LSV members and I hope you got this in time to make your reservation. It happens at eight PM on April second. Call 717-780-1-LSV. — April 9 is for you finished, black, cowhide fans as the Ms. Philadelphia Leather 1994 Contest and "Rites of Passage" leather dance squeaks into center city Philly. Ms. Northeast Leather 1992

Tova Sewall MCs the afternoon contest at the Bike Stop. Last year's winner and other leather celebs will be on hand. That night the leather dance happens at the Two Four/Rear Entry complex. Tickets are available for the dance at Giovanni's Room for \$10. The contest is free. For more information call David at 215-563-4560. Proceeds from the dance will benefit AIDS support organizations. — In the central Pennsylvania area from April 22 to 24 comes another opportunity to do some good in the fight against AIDS. The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt will be on display in York. People are needed to volunteer their time to help set up the Quilt, provide information, collect donations and pack it back up. If you would like to donate your time and prove that crossdressers are more than just party girls, call Barbara Kovacs at the York City Health Bureau. Her number is 717-849-2297. — On May 23 a major fund raiser for AIDS will happen at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia. I'd say this is a black, off-the-shoulder dress event with long, black gloves and rhinestone earrings. Just a few of the celebrities slated to appear are Tommy Tune, Barbara Cook, Dick Cavett, Phyllis Hyman, Celeste Holme, Michael York, Tony Randall, Jack Klugman and opera stars Benita Valente and Thomas Fulton. All of the performers are appearing for free and half of the proceeds will go to AmFAR. The other half will be divided between the AIDS Consortium and the Minor-

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Roger's Notebook

Dear Readers,

We realize this is the April Fool issue, but the news that we bring you in this space is not a cruel joke. Sadly, it is fact.

Dr. Roger Peo is terminally ill with cancer. There is little hope for his recovery at this time. Miracles have been known to happen and we can only hope and pray for one for Roger.

Dr. Peo will write one more "Roger's Notebook" and we will present it to you when it is received.

Dr. Peo plans to spend what time he has left completing several unfinished projects for the transgender community. One of them, we hope, will be a compilation of all of his columns written over the years. He has spoken of doing this many times and now he may just get it done.

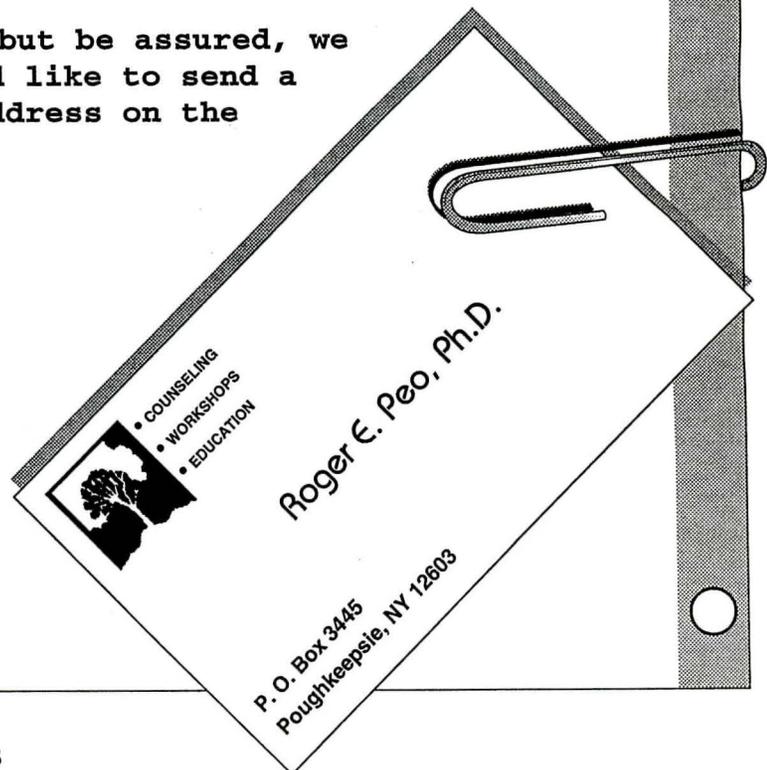
Dr. Peo has been a major contributor to the community, and not just by writing "Roger's Notebook" but also by educating the professional community about transgendered people. Dr. Peo is not a man who seeks high visibility, but is content with knowing that his work bears fruit.

Dr. Peo was never one to shy away from a controversial subject and we're certain that he will not shy away from his illness, but face it squarely and with dignity.

We will miss "Roger's Notebook," but be assured, we will miss Roger even more. If you'd like to send a card or a letter, please use the address on the business card at the right.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Staff



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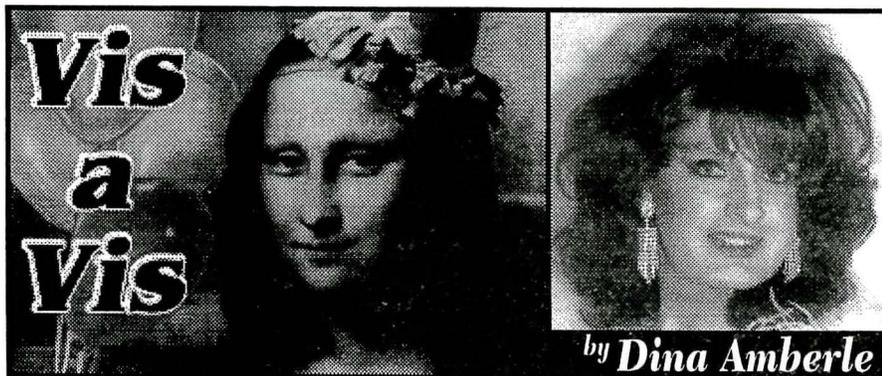


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The Olympics are over and all went well—except for that brief episode when Brenda Davidson tried to hit me in the knee in the hope of winning back this column.

And after four months of my writing Vis-a-Vis, the judges' scores are in: 5.8, 5.9, 5.8, 5.8, 5.9, 5.1

5.1! That friggin' Bulgarian judge...

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE

Kymerleigh Richards in *Cross-Talk* writes a counterpoint to the barrage of criticism brought down on the organizers of the 'Holiday En Femme' regarding media coverage of that event. As previously mentioned in this column, members of the Boulton & Park Society and the Powder Puffs Of California made quite a fuss about how the media was allowed to run wild over the 'Holiday' event. Aside from their professed indignation, each group had a slightly hidden agenda: each was promoting its own convention and as a marketing tool was promising that no media would be allowed on the premises as a placation to camera-shy conventioners.

Kymerleigh points out in her article the reported hysteria about convention-goers afraid to come out of their rooms lest they be caught on the eleven o'clock news was greatly exaggerated. And, the "conspiracy" about the convention's whereabouts being leaked to the press was pure hogwash. After reading the Boulton & Park and Powder Puffs newsletters, and noticing their negative slants on anything not of their own making, I tend to believe Ms. Richards' contrary views almost without question.

But the real meat of Kymerleigh's article is this: media coverage is impor-

tant to our community, particularly when it takes place at a respectable affair such as the Holiday En Femme. I made this point two months ago when this controversy first broke. Mainstream media coverage of our community has been pretty positive and is a catalyst for many closeted people to find legitimate support organizations. Kymerleigh points out the reporters were perfectly willing to abide by the camera restrictions placed on them.

Imagine the consequences of taking the isolationist approach advocated by the alarmists. Does it look good for our community to tell the media they are not welcome at our events? Sounds pretty secretive doesn't it? You can imagine what some people could infer from such a closed-door policy. We have nothing to hide from the general public during these conventions. As long as the media is willing to respect some understandable concerns for privacy, media coverage can do nothing but good for our community.

DIVIDED WE STAND, UNITED WE FALL?

Sofronia Anne Strong wrote about the current flap over whether Tri-Ess should abandon its traditional hetero-only policy in favor of open enrollment. She titled it *Of Grouse, Dogs and Transvestites* and it appeared in the *Femme Forum*, put out by the Tau Chi Chapter in Houston, TX.

Sofronia's viewpoint is that Tri-Ess appeals to a very specific part of our community and through that specialization draws its strength. The 'gender community' is a little too broad a term and Sofronia admits she doesn't have a handle on what people mean when they

use it. To throw open an organization such as Tri-Ess to everyone who fancies him/herself a member of the 'gender community' would be to lay the groundwork for its eventual dissolution into civil war as sub-groups battle for supremacy within the umbrella group.

She uses as an example a century-old organization devoted to lovers of hunting dogs. After a while, people who loved non-hunting dogs began to complain they were being discriminated against. There was a conflict between those who were a part of the 'hunting dog community' and those who were a part of the broader 'dog community'. Eventually, the non-hunting dog lovers branched off and formed their own club which is now the American Kennel Club. (She also used an example about grouse hunters vs. duck hunters to make the same point, hence the catchy title.) Sofronia's point is that those two groups may seem to have the same agenda—love of dogs—but they really don't share enough common ground to make a single cohesive group.

Therefore, by serving the particular needs of a very large segment of the gender community—the hetero CD—Tri-Ess is a stronger organization than if it threw itself open to every segment with their own agendas to pursue. This is a valid point of view and if each segment of the gender community could agree on certain common topics and stop bitching back and forth, there's no reason why several branches couldn't be as effective as a single organization for all members of the ill-defined 'gender community'.

DRAGGING IT 'OUT'

The Tiffany Club of New England's *Rosebuds* carried an article by a Dianne E. about being 'outed' by her former friends. Although I've heard other 'outing' stories, Dianne's was particularly chilling.

Apparently, someone in her circle of friends found out about her crossdressing and told other mutual acquaintances about Dianne's secret life. She found herself being called by her femme name or simply 'fag'. Someone graffitied her house and car with 'faggot' and 'queer'. It wasn't simply having her

crossdressing secret made public—it was a malicious attack and invasion of her privacy and property. Perpetrated by someone she thought of as a friend.

You read the story and shake your head at her misfortune. But if you visualize it happening to you, your property, and your 'normal' life, it's a scary thing indeed. The scariest thing is that you could be up against people with whom there is no reasoning, no understanding—only blind hate and malice.

As Dianne says, "You find out who your real friends are in a crisis like that." She adds that someone may 'out' you in a twisted desire to help 'cure' you of your 'abnormality.' She recommends confronting the situation and discussing it, if not with the perpetrator, then with those people you wish to keep as friends to educate them about your lifestyle. We'd like to think that people who like us as individuals will still like us even if they know our secret. The rest of them...well, write them off.

As members of a misunderstood minority we are vulnerable not just when we are walking down a street in high heels but as long as we have a secret we wish to keep, at all times of day and night. Be careful out there, girls.

I TOLD YOU SO

I ragged on the Powder Puffs Of California in last month's column because their newsletter is so full of negative opinions. Well, in the small print of the Puffs' meeting notes, I saw that there was a request by some member(s) to have more features and stories and less opinion pieces in their *Girl Talk*

newsletter. And in fairness I must say that this recent issue was much less venomous so they are on their way to losing the moniker I gave them: The Puckered Pusses of Orange County.

Somebody out in Phoenix AZ is reading the *Renaissance News & Views*. In the February issue of *Gender Quest*, I saw Jessica Brandon's article *The Fishbowl Syndrome* and my piece *Dare to Be Different* reprinted there.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

It is a wonderful life if you're Cassie Owens, a member of the Emerald City group in Seattle WA. And just to prove it to everyone, Cassie wrote a recap in *The Emerald City News* of her Halloween weekend at the Fall Harvest convention in Kansas City last October for us less fortunate girls. Rather than paraphrase Cassie, I'll let her own words do the talking.

At a mixed straight and gay nightclub Cassie let us in on a little secret. "Not to sound conceited, but I am attractive as a woman. What I really liked was having people look me up and down, then ask if I was a man. I wouldn't tell them and they left confused." Cassie, maybe they left for another reason that I am too polite to spell out in this family newspaper.

At a straight bar later, "I had Monique from Jim Bridges do my makeup and I looked hot. Because I am short and I was with two tall crossdressers, I was assumed to be real. I even walked into a crowded ladies' room and didn't get a second glance." Cassie, that's because those real girls were just honored

to be sharing the same planet with you.

Cassie was going to enter the Fall Harvest beauty pageant "...with the plan of winning, and bringing glory to all the members of Emerald City." Unfortunately, Cassie's full platter of nighttime social activities made it impossible for her to get up early enough to participate in all the pageant activities. "So I figured it would be rude to show up, possibly win, then go off to some bar. I thought it would be best for one of the active participants to win."

That Cassie. What a bighearted gal! She let one of the lesser lights cop the pageant tiara that was meant for her.

Cassie ends the article with these final bon mots: "...I learned a lot about myself and realized that I am not a bad dancer..." I can't vouch for your dance floor prowess but I can tell you we have learned an awful lot about you, Cassie. Finally, Cassie writes, "Even though I might have come across as a snob, the people in the KC groups were really nice." Snob? I can hardly imagine anyone even considering it, Cass, ol' girl.

Cassie is a pretty girl to be sure—but she's no Elle Macpherson. Although I am having a bit of fun needling her, I can't believe anyone is as ego-crazed as her own essay makes out. She's probably a very nice person when she's not talking about herself. (Assuming there are times when she doesn't talk about herself.) I guess the lesson is: let all of us keep a firm grip on our egos. Yeah, we all know we're beautiful, charming, sexy, and good dancers. But nobody else really wants to hear about it.

continued on page 23

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Hot • BUZZ

JOAnn Roberts

I never did give anybody hell. I just told the truth and they thought it was hell.

Harry Truman



It had to happen sooner or later. There's been recalls of cars, recalls of toys, and recalls of appliances, but a recall for lingerie? Yes, babies, my fave lingerie supplier, Victoria's Secret, has issued a recall of 4000 robes because they may not meet federal flammability standards. Thank goodness it's just robes. I'd hate to think my bra might go up in smoke at any moment.



While I'm re-calling things, I recall that there is a call for papers for the first International Congress on Cross Dressing, Sex and Gender being organized by the Center for Sex Research at Cal State Northridge. The conference will be held Feb. 23-26, 1995 in the San Fernando valley, earthquakes notwithstanding. Abstracts are due Oct. 1, 1994. For more information about the conference, please write to the Center in Northridge, CA 91330 or fax 818-885-5561.



All of a sudden he seems to be everywhere. Who? Frank Lloyd Wright. His popularity seems to be on the increase. The prestigious *Smithsonian* magazine did an article on Wright and there is a really nice datebook full of Wright's designs. New York's Museum of Modern Art has a display of Wright's work including 350 drawings, 30 scale models, 120 photos and 6 full-scale constructions. Most people are unaware that Wright also designed clothing, especially for women, to harmonize or blend in with his architectural styles.



Is your favorite wig starting to look like a bird has made a nest in it? If so, perhaps it's too far gone for this trick, but if your fave faux-cheveux looks just a little raggedy, try using a laminator on it. Laminators are the latest hair-care rage. They consist of large chain silicone polymers that slick down the cuticle on real

hair. Turns out it works on synthetic hair as well and can restore a wig to new life. Be careful though, the stuff is flammable. Follow the directions on the bottle exactly.



The Hot color for Spring is Navy. It's been showing up everywhere and usually paired with white. Navy is such a versatile color and it comes in many shades from near black to near royal blue and works in any situation.



The Hot fashion style for Spring is the Mini-suit. Whazzat?, you say. Try a shapely jacket paired with a mini-skirt. Personally, I think they won't catch-on with the business set, but I like the short skirt look. Being short to start with, and not proportioned like a genetic female, we men who dress as women need to do all we can to simulate the natural leginess of females. Of course, a skirt can be too short, Personal taste and modesty should dictate the proper length.



Gunslinging women are Hot Buzz in Hollywood these days. After the phenomenal success of films like *Thelma & Louise*, LaLa Land is cranking out a cadre of celloid portraying women as "action heroes." For example, Lena Olin is a one-woman killing machine, albeit a very sexy one, in *Romeo Is Bleeding*. Soon to be released *Bad Girls* stars Drew Barrymore, Madeline Stowe, Mary Stuart Masterson, and Andie McDowell as a group of young women bent of revenge against a group of bank robbers. Kathleen Turner (I loved her as V. I. Warshawski) goes on a killing spree in the black comedy *Serial Mom*. Do these movies set a new precedent for want is acceptable behavior in women. Some think, Yes; some think, No. One critic feels that putting women in action films will cause women to lose the sense of who they are. On the other side of the argument, screenwriter Callie Khouri (*Thelma & Louise*) says, "Movies are meant to take you places you can't go

physically, but can go emotionally. You are not supposed to give up your identity because you see something on screen". Does any know if Lorena Bobbit saw *Romeo Is Bleeding*?



Here's the Buzz on shoes for Spring... With the new skirt shapes, straight above-the-knee skirts look great with pumps or sling backs with one- to two-inch heels. (This queen will not give up her 3-inch heels however), with the more fluid shorty skirts look very nice with a t-strap or a Louis heel, long fluid skirts and slip dresses look nicest with very feminine shoes, like a low-heeled strappy sandal...Black leather pumps for evening are OUT while black suede, peu de soie, and satin are IN...Black suede may be too dressy for daytime but suede itself is seasonless, so a buff or neutral tone is fine for day wear..For casual wear sneakers (a la Keds, not Nike) are good, as are thong sandals, or a low-heeled mule for slacks.



Hosiery is as important as your shoes and the Buzz about hose is that pale tints are fresh for Spring. Look for colors like Nude, Bone, and Beige. There are differences between styles and they can be confusing, so here's the scoop: demi-sheers are the most opaque and ultra sheers are the sheerest. Daytime sheers fall in between. Demi- and daytime go with classic clothing and ultra- goes for fancy evening dress. Stay away from the short skirt with the thigh-high hose peeking from just under the hem. It looked dumb on the runway and odds are it will look dumb on you too.



Speaking of hosiery, the Hot Buzz in the leg-covering business is hose for the ethnic woman. A new line debuted this Winter called Essence designed especially for women of color. All styles are offered in eight shades and five sizes (petite to queen). Prices range from \$3.75 to \$5.25 a pair and are available at J.C. Penney, Sears and other stores.

Hot • Buzz

Queen of Prussia

.....
First there was the crossdressed Ken doll. Now comes the TS Barbie? A group calling itself the Barbie Liberation Organization switched voice boxes on some talking Barbie dolls with voice boxes from G.I. Joe "action figures" (God forbid boys should play with dolls.) Anyway, the tough talking Barbie now says things like: "Eat Lead, Cobra!" Must be the testosterone.

.....
On the makeup front, the HOT look for Spring is the un-madeup look. Quelle damage! Unless you look like a woman without makeup already, this look is not for you. Diane Franklin notwithstanding, most of us need a lot of makeup help. Just don't pack it on with a trowel.

.....
From time to time I've commented on IFGE's publication *TV-TS Tapestry* from a designer's point of view. Well, now I have a new magazine to pick on, *Mademoiselle*. Last year the magazine underwent a graphic transformation that looked (to me) like a group of three-year-olds had gotten to the computer. Well, the mag has a new editor-in-chief and the design has once again changed, and though it's better than last year, it's still pretty ugly.

.....
Ugly or not, magazines have their followings and *SPY* magazine out of the Big Apple had a large following. But, apparently, not large enough since the magazine ceased publication last month. *SPY* was known for its irreverent covers like Hillary Clinton in D&S leathers and a pregnant Bruce Willis.

.....
Maybe you've heard this one and thought it was a joke: Preparation H reduces puffiness and shrinks wrinkles. Well, babies, it's true and it's been a staple in the beauty kit of many a beauty queen (and drag queens too). The ingredients in Prep-H that shrink hemorrhoids really do work on those under-eye bags. Many of the same ingredients are

found in tony firming creams like *Chanel Firming Eye Cream* and *Ultima II Brighten Up Tighten Up*.

.....
If you've wondered, like I do, who actually wears those flimsy little skirts and see-through blouses that appear on the runways of the fashion capitals, the answer is: nobody. Designers admit to a cover-up. Skirt hems fall at least six inches and transparent blouse get opaque underpinning before being shipped to the stores.

.....
Bad management or bad manners? Barney's Inc., the huge fashion retailer in NYC has been getting the gas for being a slow-payer. They sent out "mea culpa" notices saying the slow payments reflect poor communications, not financial difficulty. Maybe some of our own slow-pays could take the hint.

.....
This oughta be good for a laugh. Hef and the Playboy mansion haven't been Hot Buzz for a long time, but that may change. Hef met New York party queen Susanne Bartsch recently and he's asked her to throw a few parties at the old place. Now Bartsch is known for bringing drag into the NYC party scene. Can you just see RuPaul and the latest Playmate together. This could give Playboy a shot in the arm. Maybe we'll see more layouts on the likes of Tula in the future.

.....
By the time you read this the first Tulafest will be over. Held in Atlanta as a fund-raiser, Tula was the guest of honor. The money raised will benefit a gay/lesbian/bisexual community center, and AEGIS. Way to go Dallas.

.....
Shameless Plug (hey, it's my column) — Two new offerings are available from CDS (C'est moi). The first is *Identity Management in Transsexualism* by Dallas Denny, M.A. The book advises transsexual people (MtF & FtM) how to manage their paper trail during and after transition and even includes a trans-

gender identity card. \$15.00 plus \$1.50 shipping and handling. The second offering is a new CDS video *Accessorizing Your Wardrobe* by Laurie Lamoureux. Laurie shows how to stretch your wardrobe dollars by adding inexpensive accessories to change a look or update a style, \$40 plus \$4 postage and handling. Let me make a plug for Laurie here. She reps for a company that makes jewelry and accessories in regular and large sizes. Rings go up to size 11 and this is the only company I've ever seen that offers bracelet and necklace extenders. It's almost as if they designed the line for us. If you're interested in really nice jewelry in a size that will fit you, call Laurie at 800-726-3324, extension 2035.

.....
Well, it's that time of the year and I'm off to the IFGE convention in Portland. There's lotsa stuff going on in the background (more so than usual) and there could be some significant developments come out of the soup this year. Perhaps when I return, I'll have an important announcement or two.

.....
This should give us some hope. Vivienne Westwood, the outre fashion designer, was married for the second time last May He's 25, she's 50. New hubby, Andreas Kronthaler, is a crossdresser and loves to hang out in slingback sandals, pearls and a skirt. Maybe Vib will start a new trend among older well-to-do women. Could be we'll see TV marriage brokers.

.....
Quotes without comments — Gianni Versace: "Egos? Who doesn't have an ego? Only stupid people." —Donna Karan: "I do love the ability I have to create something from nothing." —My Granpa: "If you were born a jackass, you'll probably live like a jackass, and very likely you'll die a jackass."

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Bugs... cont'd.

ballet number in which we get to check out Elmer's surprisingly shapely legs.

Of course, there is a long tradition of comedians crossdressing for comic effect. Everyone from Milton Berle to Cary Grant has donned a dress for a laugh. However, much of the humor in comic drag derives from the obvious insufficiency of the comic's femininity: Milton Berle gets a laugh because he is so emphatically *not* a woman.

In Bugs Bunny's case, crossdressing has a different effect. While Berle fails to convince and mugs to show us he knows, Bugs gives the drag his all. As a result, he carries it off with style. His success is all the more pronounced because Elmer, the "straight" man of the comic duo, doesn't get it. Whereas in the mainstream, most comic drag shows the awkwardness of crossing the gender divide, Bugs' drag emphasizes the utter permeability of that border.

Bugs makes apparent gender's

constructed nature and his success as a femme fatale suggests the degree to which the arbitrary signifiers of gender are usable by anyone. If Bugs belongs in a drag tradition, it is the tradition that leads from Burt Savoy to RuPaul, a tradition in which drag defamiliarizes and destabilizes gender categories.

Because Bugs is a cartoon character, he has a special advantage in this game. Bugs is not firmly inscribed in a male/female system. (Try to imagine Bugs with genitalia of either gender, and you'll see my point.) So when Bugs takes on the outward signs of femininity, his comic drag is not based on making the masculine reality take on feminine markers.

Instead, Bugs is funny because he can take on any role successfully and make everyone else accept him as whoever he claims to be. If Bugs says he is a sexy Lana Turner type, then he is, and Elmer reacts accordingly. If he claims to be the King of England, so be it. Bugs' drag succeeds because, fundamentally, Bugs is always in *some*

sort of drag, whether it is Carmen Miranda's slinky dress and fruit salad hat or a baseball player's uniform and cleats. He plays all these roles with equal pleasure.

But the Bugs Bunny story is not all about drag. Bugs Bunny was part of a comic couple who kissed more often on screen than Hepburn and Tracy. Bugs kissing Elmer became such a trademark that even Mel Blanc felt compelled to comment on it in his autobiography, *That's Not All Folks! My Life in the Golden Age of Cartoons*: "Strangely, for two so embroiled in perpetual conflict, the rabbit and the hunter do an awful lot of smooching. That and Bugs' proclivity for crossdressing — in *Rabbit Fire* (1951), *Rabbit Seasoning* (1952), *What's Opera, Doc?* (1957), to cite several examples—have raised some concern among viewers. On numerous occasions fans have asked me, 'Are Bugs and Elmer... well, you know... are they?'



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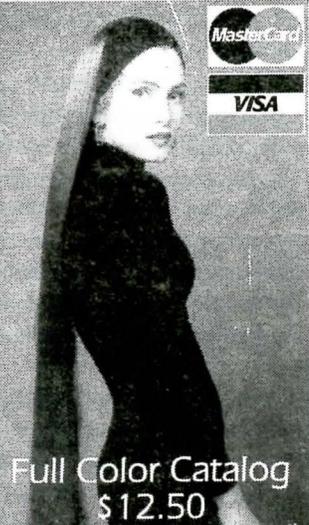
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“No, they’re not sweethearts. During a production meeting for *Elmer’s Pet Rabbit* (1941), someone suggested we have Bugs startle his new owner by planting a smacker on Elmer’s lips. The gag worked; the gag stayed. That’s all there is to it.”

Talk about denial! Poor Mel could barely bring himself to write “sweethearts.” And in his tale about *Elmer’s Pet Rabbit*, he forgets that the kissing gag began a year earlier in *A Wild Hare*.

The embattled relationship of this scrawny couple deserves a second look. What we have here are a pair of bachelors who hang out together over a period of 25 years. One has a big gun. The other has a nice tail.

Hmmmm... When Elmer, fed up with all this chasing and no catching, tears up his contract in *The Big Snooze* (1946), Bugs goes all out to get his man back. Bugs dresses Elmer in a green gown and Joan Crawford wig, and let’s him loose on Hollywood and Vine. When zoot-suited wolves pursue Elmer, he stops to ask the audience “Have you giwls ever had an expewience like this?” As Detroit News columnist Deb Price put it recently, the cartoon “invited moviegoers of 1946 into a sexual fantasy of men chasing men, of men feeling desirable to men, of men being allowed to dress up and act out.”

For Bugs and Elmer, desire led to efforts at long-term commitment. The pair ended up at the altar on several occasions. *Rabbit of Seville* (1950) ends with Bugs and Elmer marrying,

Elmer looking stunning in his bridal gown. Three years later, apparently having had a spat with Elmer, Bugs is headed down the aisle with Yosemite Sam in *Hare Trimmed* (1953). When Sam backs out at the last minute, Bugs turns to the camera and moans, “Always a bridesmaid.” But Bugs finally gets that church wedding in *Bugs Bonnets* (1956). Bugs finally marries Elmer, who once again has donned the bridal veil. As Bugs puts it, “You know, I think it always helps a picture to have a romantic ending.”

With the media embracing drag and the queering of America underway, we need to look back at the history that got us here, and that history includes America’s favorite queer rabbit. Many of us grew up with Bugs, loving that rabbit. For many of us, he had a way of dealing with the world that seemed just right. He takes pleasure in everything he does, including dressing up and stepping out.

But beneath the happy exterior, Bugs is tough. You don’t mess with Bugs. Elmer and Yosemite Sam learn that lesson over and over again. Part of the project of gay and lesbian scholarship is to bring to light a queer sensibility that is already built into the products and performances of “straight” culture. In the spirit of this project, I offer you Bugs Bunny, Queer Icon.

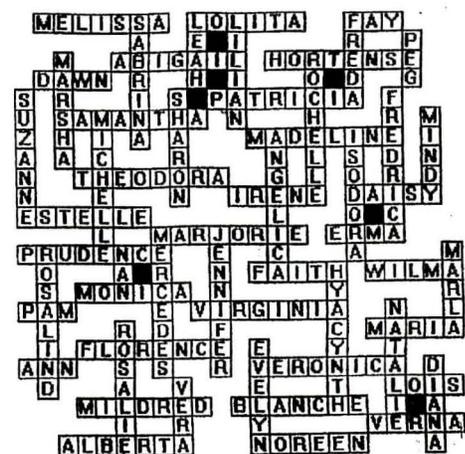
In the last year or so, the gay subtext of Bugs Bunny has become a topic of interest to the media. Because of my association with the University of Chicago film series, I’ve become a

sort of spokesman for a queer Bugs; it seems my 15 minutes of fame are inextricably linked to Bugs, and I wouldn’t have it any other way. Now if I could just get Elmer out of the picture...

Hank Sartin is pursuing his doctorate in film studies at the University of Chicago.



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Letters to the Editor

To The Editor:

Not long ago, Dina Amberle was brought up to write the *Vis-A-Vis* column in *Renaissance News and Views*. Although she is relatively new to the job, the rookie showed she is a real major leaguer. In her February column, in one of her first at-bats, she hit a towering home run.

Very properly, she chided the Boulton and Park newsletter *Gender Euphoria* for doublespeak in criticizing the media presence at the recent *Holiday En Femme*. Every such event represents an opportunity to showcase the issues of crossdressing before the American public. Why should we not take advantage of every opportunity to build positive community relations through media? If careful, there is no reason why media coverage should interfere with confidentiality.

At the recent *Holiday*, the media outreach brought many crossdressers out of secrecy. Most evenings found my wife and I counseling earnestly with crossdressers and wives in need of support. Support! Isn't that what *Renaissance*, *Tri-Ess*, and the rest of us are all about? Strange, isn't it, that the most strident criticism of the *Holiday* came from people who were not there!

Rounding first base, Dina went on to stride into the issue of "appropriate dress." None of us loves dress codes, and they should not be necessary. When we are out crossdressed in public, we are ambassadors for crossdressers everywhere. If we are ever to change the sleazy stereotype society pushes at us, we must behave in our actions and appearance as the ladies we are. Fantasies are frequently healthful, but they are for private enjoyment, not public view. Extending this idea, Dina cites E. Fenton's article in *The Rainbow* in which she challenges crossdressers to develop qualities such as compassion, a sense of esthetics and emotional sensitivity. In a very real sense, the dresses we wear are badges of femininity. We must honor them in all we do and all we are.

It was onto third base where Dina took up Deborah Benton's article on sexuality and crossdressing. Correctly, she read that sexuality is an issue present in crossdressers — an entirely

appropriate issue not to be stifled. Such writers as Jeanette Johnson and Janice Soleau have worked with this issue in the *Femme Mirror* [the *Tri-Ess* quarterly journal—Ed.]. For a long time I, too, struggled with the issue of Jane's sexuality. Finally, I reached the insight that I am one person, and the person who is me is attracted exclusively to women. Who cares about labels? While that solution worked for me, I realize it may not be for everyone. Probably all of us have grappled with the sexuality issue. To share our feelings and thoughts about it is entirely appropriate.

Heading for home, Dina spoke eloquently of her distaste for the cat-fighting in genderland. Nothing would honor her words better than simply repeating them: "and sometimes sarcastic nay-saying speaks louder about the nay-sayer than about the target of the attack." When every one in genderland reaches that insight, we will have come a long way to realizing the true community we seek.

Bravo, Dinal Well hit! Grand Slam!
Jane Ellen Fairfax

To The Editor:

A couple of nights ago, at a Steering Committee meeting for MGN, we were talking about a couple of things we had seen in recent issues of *Renaissance News & Views*, and I thought it would be good to share some thoughts with you.

On political correctness—Well, yes, we do get kind of militant sometimes about people or large multi-national conglomerates who can't think of anyone else to humiliate. Sometimes all it takes is somebody like Conan O'Brian making a passing comment about transsexuals, or *Vibe* magazine doing a five page article implying that all transpeople are hoodlums and drug addicts. Other times, it's an idiotic advertisement by people who should know better. It's not necessarily the specific incidents that matter: what matters is that it becomes known that people in our community are paying attention to what others are saying about us, and calling for fair and accurate representations of our lives and lifestyles. Silence implies consent, and we do not consent to unfair or inaccurate portrayals of our communities.

On facial hair. You know, New York

City is just a collection of small towns, each with it's own personality and quirks. And generally for some reason, bearded ladies get more scrutiny than those without facial hair. It doesn't really matter too much whether it's here in our beloved "Baghdad on the Hudson," or another small town in America's heartland. Last year, the Greater New York Gender Alliance established the policy for *Moonlight* in Manhattan for several reasons. One is simply personal safety: it is asking for trouble to go out and about in New York in a mini-skirt and a moustache. Another is to shield our community, and the participants at *Moonlight*, from adverse publicity: not to seem prudish, but it is one thing for a person with facial hair to cross-dress in the privacy of the home, another to do so in a midtown Manhattan hotel filled with tourists, business travelers and so on. We articulated the same policy last year, and although no one complained, perhaps this year we'll get some alternative viewpoints. And of course, we encourage feedback on this matter: last year our participants all received a "critique sheet" to fill out and return to us at GNYGA, so that we could make changes and improvements this year.

Sincerely,
Ms. Lynn E. Walker
Secretary, MGN



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ity AIDS Coalition. Ticket prices range from \$15 to \$200. Sponsor packages are available at \$500 to \$1000. Seats can be purchased through UpStages box office at 215-567-0670 or by sending a check made out to the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, 121 N. Broad St., Phila. PA 19101-1906. — Looking for something more cloistered? Something more out of the public eye? How about the 12th Annual Be All in Pittsburgh, PA June 8 through 12. Informative seminars, a river boat cruise, swimming pool party, Monte Carlo Night (OK, this event is pretty public too) bridal march and more. Dr. Richard Docter, Marriette Pathy Allen and Alison Laing will be featured speakers, and JoAnn Roberts will be there as a vendor. Renee Edgerton will do a special presentation on being tall and passing. Wonder if there's a height requirement to get in? Pick up a registration form at the GPC meeting or write them at, Be All Weekend, PO Box 23442, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. — If you're planning on marching your little footsies off at Stonewall 25 you may want to get your feet in shape at the Stonewall 25 Ball on Friday, June 24th at the New York Hilton. They're calling it the drag event of the decade and I'm going to do my best to be there. Girlfriend, we are talking high drag. Tickets are \$60 general admission and \$100 V.I.P. For further information call Empress Nicole at 619-692-1967 or Empress

Coco at 212-475-0838 or write them at PO Box 33915, San Diego, CA 92163. If you're planning on going and staying over night better make your hotel reservation now. There'll be millions of people, well, hundreds of thousands of people in New York for the march. — Here is an event for the partners of crossdressers. SPICE '94 will be held July 6-10 at the Ramada O'Hare Hotel in Chicago. This is an event for spouses. Please tell your's about it and if you attend you have to leave your dresses at home. For more information write SPICE Director Linda Peacock, PO Box 24031, Little Rock, AR 72221. — Attention attorneys and activists! It's Transgen '94, the 3rd Annual Transgender Law & Policy Conference. It happens August 17-21 in Houston, Texas. For more information write to Phyllis Randolph Frye, Attorney, Executive Director ICTLEP, 5707 Firenza St., Houston, Texas 77035-5515. If you attend bring a women's business suit and brief case. — A visit to a museum is always uplifting and here's one that may be more uplifting than most. Caroline Reid sent in a page from the *New Yorker* with a piece about the Maidenform Museum in New York City. I put it here in the events section since it's sort of an on-going event. It's located on East 37th in Manhattan and covers everything you'd want to see in the brassiere spectrum. I dreamed I toured the museum in my Maidenform bra! Call New York directory assistance for the museum number. — Don't forget the Luau on August 27 in Harrisburg. Call LSV for ticket info.

How's that for events? I'm worn out and I haven't been to one yet.

CREDIT REPORT FROM KILT COUNTRY

Michelle Lynn, an avid radio listener has heard about an offer that you're going to love. You've heard of special interest group credit cards? Unions, fraternal organizations, even residents of some states can get credit cards with their group's name on the front. The Royal Bank of Scotland is offering a credit card for transvestites. No, it doesn't say TV on the front. What they give you is an account with two cards. One card has your male name and photo and the other card, with the same account number, has your femme name and photo. The card is so popular that the bank has received seventy thousand applications so far. With this kind of acceptance from a mainstream business can even greater acceptance be far behind? I wonder if the Royal Bank of Pennsylvania would be interested in starting a program like this? Maybe I should stop asking questions and someone should call a few bank service departments and make the suggestion. Michelle heard this news on a broadcast by Paul Harvey and on ABC Radio News. Jessica Brandon sent a clipping from the *Philadelphia Daily News* that confirms the story so we have to credit these ladies accounts on this one.

DESIGNERS DEALING IN DRAG

There's probably no way most of us

continued on page 19

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Where I Stand

Daisy Fried

It entered my consciousness by way of a woman on the corner. Orange shirt, orange sling-back sandals, neon and coordinated and cool.

The epiphanic knowledge hit me with the force of a comic-strip BLAM. Barely restraining myself, I asked my pal, "Do you think she wears orange sandals when she wears a purple or a green shirt. Or! Do you think she has shoes to match?"

"Of course," said my pal, blinking at my ignorance, "she has shoes to match. You pick up a few pairs at a time. You should get some, they'd be cute."

I sighed the sigh of someone who suddenly knows the full extent of her fate.

You see, my feet are size 13, women's. That's three sizes bigger than your average shoestore stocks, never mind your chic boutique. That means, alas, I shall never wear beautiful yellow suede clogs. Nor architectural platform heels, nor sweet little sandals with straps that twine about the ankles. Pairs and pairs of sling-back shoes for matching with my T-shirts? A fruitless daydream.

For years I squeezed my feet into size 10s. Thus I deceived myself. Flashes of reality came only at the ice-skating rink when I got dark grimy skates from the rental guy and all my girlfriends got ice queen white. Eventually I could no longer avoid the truth. The evidence was there before me; indeed, attached to me. My feet—once comely, if oversized—had grown to

hideously gnarled and calloused.

I've come to terms with it, embraced it, this truth about myself. Others have more trouble. Recently, I was sitting on my stoop, barefoot to the evening breeze, and a passerby screamed.

Once she had calmed down, she spoke. "Oh, oh. You're going to have Real Problems." "Huh?" I said, intelligently. "I'm a podiatry student," she explained. "And I couldn't help but notice your feet. Your toes. They're all twisted under. You're going to need surgery some time down the road."

I took this in stride, no pun intended. I mean, I get compliments: Working as an artist's model, I'm told, "Gee, Lucien Freud would love your feet." Good old Lucien, he who is enamored of juts and veins and creaks and cracks and boney twists. Thanks much.

But what, you're wondering, now that I've foresworn self-deceit (and -mutilation), do I do for shoes? Oh, I've got shoes. After all, Philly's store for female big feet is conveniently located in Center City. And stocked mostly with garish, badly made, over-expensive footwear. "Isn't that a transvestite store?" someone asked me. I snorted. No self-respecting transvestite would wear those shoes.

Yes, I've got a perfectly pretty pair of pumps from the place, size 13N, and I tell you that's the very best I could do. Do I sound bitter? I write this the day after a formal dinner that required the donning of said pumps. Blisters constellate my toes. Oh, ouch.

My salvation—barring formal dinners—has been men's shoes. I've become clumpy-chic of late. But even that's a struggle. Size 13 women's is a size 11 men's, which just happens to be the shoe size of approximately 92 percent of Philadelphia men. And their brothers. It's a tough life. I had to go to three stores to find standard black men's Reeboks in my size.

And one person's chic is another's fashion disaster. I walk alone up South Street after midnight one weekend night in a cute little dress and my big black men's 11s with shiny big buckles. "Hello!" says a car window. "Smile!" But I don't speak to car windows after midnight, which doesn't make the car window very happy.

"Bitch! Bigolduglyass feet!" Sigh. Pick on something that can help itself.

They say heroes and heroines are mostly accidental. That causes are fought out of necessity, not conviction. My issue may not be the pressing one of today. But I won't be a martyr, a victim. Big-foot women of the world unite. Lobby for beautiful shoes for big feet. Denounce ignorant bigotry. Act up. Fight back. Then maybe, just maybe, someday, I too shall have sling-backs to match T-shirts in every color of the rainbow. And maybe someday there'll be world peace.

Daisy Fried is a freelance writer who lives in Philadelphia. Reprinted by permission of the author and the Philadelphia Inquirer. ©1993 by Daisy Fried.

Cross Illusions Network Gala

The Cross Illusions Network is a collective of wig and cosmetics salons serving the crossdressing community in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. The combined buying power of the collective allows them to give their customers the lowest prices on quality hairpieces, wigs and specially formulated cosmetics.

Cross Illusions Network will host a gala show on Saturday, April 9, 1994, at

their main salon, Professional Hair Goods, 302 West 238 St., Riverdale, New York. The show will run from 8:00 PM to Midnight.

They will feature designer wigs at special prices, professional wig styling and consultations. Robin Russell, the network's professional makeup artist will be available from 6:30 PM by appointment for personal makeovers.

Joining the network is Suzie Antipo-

des who features a selection of breastforms, specialty bras and more.

Refreshments and Hors D'oeuvres will be served. Dressing areas are available by appointment.

Attendance is limited by space, so a reservation is required. Admission is \$9, payable at the door.

For more information of the network and its services, call Professional Hair Goods at 718•884•6024.



News Beat...

are going to be able to take advantage of this but it is another example of how we are gaining greater acceptance in mainstream business. It seems, according to a report in the March issue of W magazine, at least one couture house in Paris is widening it's customer base by catering to the transgender community. Rich members of the transgender community. The unidentified designer is quoted as saying, "One of them comes by private jet and buys ten dresses at once." When you consider that a designer dress at a couture house in Paris costs thousands of dollars you begin to see why most of us will never take advantage of this kind of acceptance. Who could this wealthy client be? Donald Trump? Merv Griffin? Maybe it's one of the Hollywood studio heads. After all they have to live up to the example set by Irving Thalberg. Whoever it is, it's the same as if they were shopping

at K Mart. Their money is wanted by the business just as much as the next customer's. The designer's dressing room is much nicer than the ones at K Mart. (Some of them are so drafty!) Gotta go. My jet is all warmed up and ready.

Y Oh Y GOODBYE

Linda C. from LSV sent a story from the York Dispatch that could be good news or bad news. It depends on your point of view. (Then again, what doesn't?) A population geneticist named William R. Rice has determined the chromosome that creates a male, the Y chromosome is gradually disappearing. That's right girls, within a few million years, if this wacky old species lasts that long, all human beings will have two X chromosomes. Now don't get all excited. It seems that there will still be two sexes. Some of the genes on the X would take over the role of determining sex. We are pretty adaptable you know. It's interesting to wonder though, if the Y goes bye bye

continued on page 23

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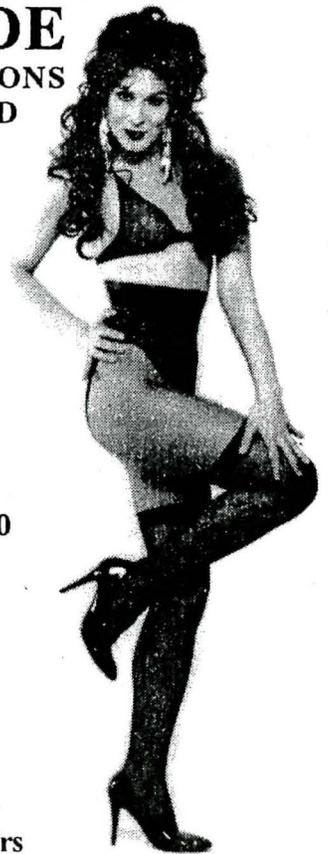
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SHOPPING WITH JACKIE

The months are flying by and that's good since I am sick of the winter. Cabin fever has made me bonkers. How can a shopper shop when the weather won't let her? Ugggh!! Spring, however, is just around the corner and I can't wait. Speaking of spring, I'm getting all the new catalogs and it seems the styles are not much different than last year. That's good for the pocket-book and supports my premise that buying quality and basic standards is cost effective, and I enjoy saving a buck. I like expanding my wardrobe rather than replacing things that have gone out of style. I hope that you will start to think this way too.

Well girls, I'm disappointed that many of you have not shared your purchasing sources with me so they can be shared with our readers. If you have a special bargain spot to share, drop me a note at LSV Renaissance PO Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105.

Are you an "old fashioned" person? You might be interested in the items offered by the Vermont Country Store, PO Box 3000, Manchester Ctr., VT 05255-3000. Phone 800-362-2400 or fax them at 802-362-0285. Items available include a cotton lace underdress which can be worn under a skirt, jumper or suit. Since it is a blouse and slip in one it saves layers. It has a cotton lace eyelet collar and a scalloped hemline. Sizes to eighteen at \$45.00. They also have pinafore jumpers, skirts, vests, hats, dresses and a nice selection of undergarments. Not cheap, but nice. A catalog worth having.

My favorite catalog source, Chadwick's of Boston, has a great selection of spring fashions in their latest book. If you don't have this one, you should. Call 508-583-6600 for their catalog. For example, they have silk tanks, two for \$20.00 in fifteen colors and many dresses, skirts and blouses in the nine-

teen to thirty nine dollar range. (They also go higher of course.)

In the for-what-it's-worth category, I find that I have to be dressed to write this column. Don't ask me why because I don't know but I do know that the words flow when I'm in a dress. It may be all mental, if you have a clue let me know.

Watch the papers and ads for spring sales. Many of the stores are clearing winter things at good prices. You want to also be sure of your prices. Do your homework before you go out shopping. Know what prices are in most of the stores. How do you know it's a bargain if you don't know what it's worth to start with? My father, a lifetime retailer, used to say, "you can't take it off, if you haven't put it on." Makes sense to me. Until next time, HAPPY SHOPPING!



The Gender Journey

A small-group exploration of the various stages in the life of a crossdresser, with implications for personal identity and human relationships.

Held at the Wayne Counseling Center (where Renaissance Gr. Phila. meets) with Dr. Lee Etscovitz, Renaissance National Librarian, former Professor of Human Behavior at Drexel University, and currently Director of Human Dimensions, an organization specializing in gender education. \$25 per person per two-hour session. Meeting times flexibly arranged. Write: Human Dimensions, PO Box 471, Willow Grove, PA 19090 or call 215-657-1560.

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BOOK NOOK

From the Renaissance Library
by Lee Etscovitz, Librarian

Women's Reality by Anne Wilson Schaef, Harper Paperbacks, 1985

This book is must reading for anyone who wishes to understand what it feels like to be a woman in contemporary American society. That "feeling" grows out of four major myths which underlie what Schaef describes as the "White Male System" in our culture. These four myths are:

1. The White Male System is the only thing that exists.
2. The White Male System is innately superior.
3. The White Male System knows and understands everything.
4. According to the White Male System, it

is possible to be totally logical, rational and objective.

According to Schaef, a practicing psychotherapist in Boulder, Colorado, women spend , much of their lives reacting to these myths, usually by fitting in. But an emerging Female System seeks to enhance the self-belief and self-esteem of women without destroying male-female interaction.

This book helps the reader to see more clearly the ways in which men and women interact with each other in terms of several dimensions of their lives, such as talk, time, relationships, power, thought, communication, responsibility, process versus product, morality, healing and immortality.

The reader begins to understand, even to feel, what women experience in their day to day lives. This insight should be invaluable to anyone who seeks to understand the other gender, regardless of whether one is male or female.

COMIC BOOK NOOK

by Jessica Brandon

Justice League Task Force #7 & #8, written by Peter David, penciled by Sal Velluto, inked by Jeff Albrecht and published by DC Comics presents the ultimate case of

gender bending. In this two part story, the Justice League has to enter a subterranean world in Africa run by green skinned, Amazon like women called "Daals" to rescue a pilot and a deadly virus in his possession. However, the leader of the Daals insists on letting only women enter their world. The League puts together a team of super-heroines, featuring Wonder Woman but when the Leagues's CEO insists on a male, J'onn J'onzz, The Martian Manhunter to lead the team, J'onn must use his shape shifter abilities to transform himself into a female.

After entering the subterranean city and the obligatory fight with the inhabitants, J'onn (now jokingly called Joan) and the team are brought before the leader of the Daals who is instantly smitten with "Joan" and they must mate. There were several comedic touches in the story, such as "Joan" being offered Midol by one on the team and later on, "Joan" after marrying the leader of the Dalls discovers that the leader is a she-male. Of course the team recovers the pilot and the deadly virus.

Justice League #7 & #8 are available in the Renaissance Library.

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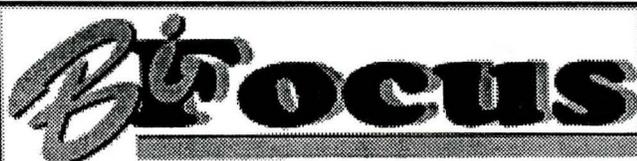
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Love, Nancy

News Beat...

what "male" characteristics may become extinct? Maybe we will become a kinder gentler sex.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Elsa Larson sent in a Far Side cartoon. A male snake is perched on the bed. He is wearing a stocking over the length of his sinuous body. A female snake, distinguished only by a pair of pointy framed women's style glasses and that hairdo Gary Larson uses on his female characters, is standing in the doorway. The caption is, "Oh my God, Bernie! You're wearing my nylon!" Elsa also sent another page from P.J. O'Rourke's calendar. It says on the August 21, 1993 page, "Some heterosexual men occasionally don pantyhose and a bra in the privacy of the bedroom, but, in general, straight men have kept a

lower profile about their urge to crossdress. Mostly they've limited themselves to puttering around the house in bathrobes and using lots of Chap Stick when they go skiing." Danielle Lynn sent a page from the March issue of *New Woman*. She circled one item on the page for our attention but I found two that were interesting. Danielle's item was about the Japanese. The government was persuaded by feminists to change the official word-character for woman. The old character translated into English as "person carrying a broom." At least person is in there. The new character means "female gender." Wonder what the Japanese character is for cross-dresser? The other item on the page that spoke to me was the mention that the Vatican is thinking about letting girls be altar girls. Now, if they let girls take over the jobs of altar boys this could have far reaching ramifications. As this is a prestigious, non sleazy publication I won't go into some of

those ramifications. I will only ask the question, how will young boys get the chance to walk around in public wearing skirts with the approval of the Catholic church? Yeah, they could wear their sister's school kilt in Miami but it's just not the same.

CLOSING QUOTES

I've made a tradition, albeit a new tradition of closing with a quote. This month I'm mutating that new tradition and leaving you with two. Danielle Lynn sent some of her favorites and here's one from Vito Russo: "We have cooperated for a very long time in the maintenance of our own invisibility. And now the party is over." Vito was speaking about being gay but it applies to us as well. Quote two was spoken by my favorite drag queen, Tammy Faye Baker. "You don't have to be dowdy to be a Christian." As Bugs' good pal Porky would say, "Tha, tha, tha, tha, that's all folks!"

Vis-a-Vis

CHOOSE YOUR LEADERS WISELY

Our own JoAnn Roberts wrote an essay on how we choose our leaders of the various groups to which we belong. It appeared in the March issue of *Renaissance News & Views* and also in *Cross-Talk*.

JoAnn reminded us that our leaders must be responsible, conscientious, and ethical. And that the members choosing their leaders should be cognizant of the qualities that make a good leader above and beyond popularity contests.

Which brings to mind one particular leader of a well-known group who has stooped to the basest instincts of many crossdressers by promoting a lingerie party to be held during the regular monthly gathering of this otherwise serious-minded organization. What's that?... Her name is, uh, Dina something... Oh, that's me! Never mind...



DELAWARE CHAPTER UNDER WAY

In the last issue we told you about the Renaissance Chapter forming in Delaware. The Board of Directors of Renaissance National met on March 13 and the board approved their chapter status. Welcome aboard ladies. Chapter leader Danielle Lynn sent us the following story of the first meeting of the new chapter.

On the evening of January 15, the conspirators met quietly at the Ship Inn after a GPC meeting. Over coffee and drinks they plotted to establish a Renaissance chapter in Delaware. Several times I had heard some girls wonder why there was not a chapter there.

After many hours on the phone compiling ideas, and after much running to and fro, it looked like it was going to happen. Happen it did on February 12. The girls made it happen! A Unitarian Church agreed to let us meet there. Unfortunately, we found out later we had a communication problem in the church office. The person responsible for booking the hall couldn't get in due to the heavy snow fall, so the pastor booked us in on her own. She told us there would be a high school band there that evening along

with their mommies and daddies. We thought their group would be small and we could all peacefully co-exist.

As we arrived at the church there were 30 kids outside and alternative music was blaring from inside. Time to engage panic mode. A little crisis management was in order. I contacted the pastor and we decided the best thing to do was split the church in half by locking the connecting doors. This worked fine to provide a separate meeting site for our group but we knew that some people would pull up, see the kids and leave. Emily Sheldon (disguised as her male-self) stood outside in hopes of catching anyone that might show up. She came in at 9 however, to catch the start of the meeting and we did lose a couple of girls who arrived late. Two more arrived after 10 and braved the gantlet of kids to join us.

The meeting itself was a good one. We agreed on our agenda, did some munchies and gabbing, then adjourned

continued on back page

Tired of getting read every time you go out? Join the...

O.W.W.S.M.M.

Do you enjoy playing the role of girl, woman, lady or even Bimbo? Do you want to mingle in the crowd without anyone suspecting your true sex? Would you enjoy trips to the ladies restroom, or better, the ladies locker room?

These and many other questions can be answered "Yes" and you too can become an elite member of the O.W.W.S.M.M. if you act *now*.

Just what do these letters stand for you ask? Why, the *Organization for Women Who Are Sometimes Mistaken For Men*, of course.

Let's examine some of the advantages of belonging to this prestigious group over existing choices.

So, you want to go shopping while at the Texas "T" Party. Until now, your choices were to brave it alone or go with Cynthia Phillips. Just because she's the real thing, doesn't mean this will be a pleasant adventure. I bet she doesn't take you to even one shoe store that sells pumps in a size 13 with a 6-inch heel. I can see it now, she'll try to talk you out of that short, short mini-skirt you want so badly, or that low cut top to show off the boobs you've worked so hard to create.

It would be nice to hope that people would look at the group of you and, seeing Cynthia first, say "The girl in front is cute, but her friends are sure big and ugly." At least you'd pass.

But, that's not the case. Instead, they're saying, "I wonder if that girl knows there is a pack of transvestites following her?"

Yes folks, you're gonna stand out like a sore thumb. People will giggle and laugh, names will be called, and you may even be denied use of the women's bathroom and changing room. Are you going out to shop or to entertain strangers?

Well now, thanks to Linda, the group known as the *Organization for Women Who are Sometimes Mistaken for Men*, has been founded. The idea is

so simple, it's amazing that no one has come up with it till now. Instead of trying to get all crossdressers to look and pass as everyday women, you reverse the logic and try to get the group to stand out in the crowd. There's no better way than to have everyone wear a large badge with **O.W.W.S.M.M.** across it. In smaller print one can spell out the meaning of the letters and your name. Anyone who spots you will read the badge and say, "If I looked like that, I'd join too."

Now, some examples of what may happen to a member of **O.W.W.S.M.M.** who plans a full day of shopping:

You are in need of a makeover, so you approach the cosmetic counter in your local department store. The sales lady sees your 5 o'clock shadow, but she also sees the name of your group. Her fears are calmed as she realizes that you are not some perverted old man, but a real woman, just like her, who has had to put up with some problem facial hair. You are treated with dignity and respect and you walk away feeling great with your new face.

You stop in the wig department. You want to try on the platinum blonde showgirl wig you saw in the window. As you expose your bald head, a shriek is heard from across the room, "Eeek, a man!" But your sales lady knows the other patron has made a terrible mistake because she saw your **O.W.W.S.M.M.** badge as you entered. The other person has been asked to leave and you are given a 50% discount on your purchase.

You want to be fitted with a new bra. In the lingerie department, a cute blonde takes you back for a private fitting. She has seen your badge and she subconsciously assumes you have some abnormal hormone imbalance. Now, when she sees you with your top off, she won't be asking embarrassing questions like, "I see you have no boobs," or "Gee, you have quite a few hairs on your chest." You are given consideration and courtesy as you

make your selections.

You choose a mini dress of your liking and you approach the petite sales lady to inquire where the dressing rooms are. Even though you're almost seven feet tall, 325 pounds and have a voice like a bassoon, the helpful clerk sees your badge and directs you accordingly. In case you still see some doubt in her eyes, you may throw in something like, "Could you also direct me to the Stayfree Maxi Pads." This should ease her mind.

Yes, folks, if you come shopping with us, you can look or dress any way you wish and no one will suspect a thing. Sure, there may be some whispers, but they'll be saying things like, "If I hadn't seen the badge myself, I, too, would have mistaken those ladies for men."

In fact, the badge works so well that if you buy something for your wife, you'll have a hard time convincing the sales person that you're not a lesbian!

Reprinted with permission of the author from the CrossPort newsletter.

Delaware, cont'd

to the Sante Fe Bar and Grill for post meeting festivities. As we left the church there were still plenty of kids out front but not a single comment was heard. Detente.

We arrived at the Santa Fe to find they had been looking forward to our visit all week. The waitresses said we looked like such a fun group they would like to join us. We extended an invitation with a hearty chorus of assent and before we knew it the entire staff was seated at our table. The bartender said he admired us for our conviction to follow through on our feelings. They all asked questions, which gave us a chance to do education and outreach while having fun at the same time.

After several hours, we closed the Santa Fe. The staff said they're looking forward to our next visit.