

NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

Ottawa, Canada

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N.O.W. becomes Gender Mosaic

After much discussion, some arguing, a great deal of procrastination and a fair amount of thought, we have finally selected a new name. We are now officially Gender Mosaic.

Nothing demonstrates better the indefinability of transvestism than attempting to find a suitable name for your crossdressing organization that accurately reflects each individual's concept of who he is. It can't be done! Instead, we have settled upon a variation of a good Canadian concept, the mosaic. Where Canada is a country of many cultures working together, so too are we an organization of individuals working toward the advancement of the crossdressing culture. Although I can't speak for everyone, for me personally the name reflects also the idea that there are many ways to express your gender over and above the

commonly accepted ways. I don't believe, and I never have, that gender is a black and white concept. I do believe that all people, not just crossdressers, are at one time or another oppressed by the gender roles that are assigned to them. Gender, in short, is a mosaic.

The name itself is not so difficult to explain, but the process behind our selecting it is another matter. For those of you wondering why it took us almost a year to decide this issue, I present a brief synopsis of the events.

The first step seemed easy enough. Everyone was to think of alternatives, we'd whittle them down to an acceptable number and then we'd vote. What could be simpler! Well, it soon became evident that the group was splitting into widely divergent camps behind several of the front running choices. I was starting to feel uneasy. I realized I could not function in the group if we were to pick a name that was no more acceptable than the last one, and it occurred to me that other members probably felt the same way about my particular favourite. Obviously we had to sit down and thrash out a name together. Okay, it would be difficult, but it could be done.

All of the above, summarized in one paragraph, took several months.

Before we could proceed on thrashing anything out, however, we had to decide who we were and where we were going. The name we'd choose had to fit what we'd be in a few years time. So we had to talk about the group itself, and in so doing we discovered we had grown

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Printed by Gender Mosaic, a non-sexual social/support group for crossdressers. Subscriptions 7 dollars per year. Interested persons are invited to write us at the above address.

An accredited chapter of the Society for the Second Self.



"It's no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society."

Krishnamurti

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beyond being just a social and support group. We wanted to do more, while still maintaining the social/support base. All that led us to the meeting of August 12th, wherein we not only plotted a direction for the future, but finally got down to some major brainstorming. All the divergent opinions managed to come together, and against all odds we managed to find a name we could all live with. It was no small accomplishment.

So our renewal has finally begun. We have a core of committed people with a lot of great ideas. We have a substantial number of members who, because of restrained circumstances in their own lives, cannot contribute as much as they'd like, but who are, in any case, the base of the organization (whether they realize it or not). What we need is more crossdressers to throw off the fear and to take the big step to join us. To initiate some of our great ideas requires more money than we currently take in and a larger base membership than we currently have. (I'll bet that's a unique problem for a crossdressing organization.) For all that though, there's an air of optimism about 1991 and I'm sure we can live up to it.

Ted

Thank You

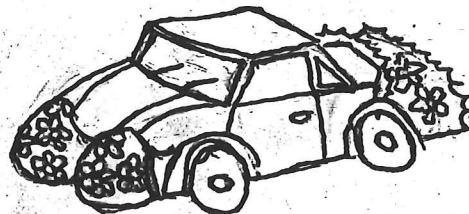
I wanted to take this opportunity to tip my hat to two people for their generous contributions on our behalf.

Thank you Judy for all the work you put into this group. I know it didn't work out the way you expected, but I know I speak for everyone when I say that we're grateful. I hope we work together again someday.

Thank you Joanne for the fabulous day in the country (only day in September it didn't rain, wasn't it?). The barbecue was great, the shortage of hamburger buns notwithstanding. Lucky I was navigating though, or they would never have found the place.

Ted

THE OTHER SIDE



MATCHING CAR BRA
AND PANTIES

BY RACHEL

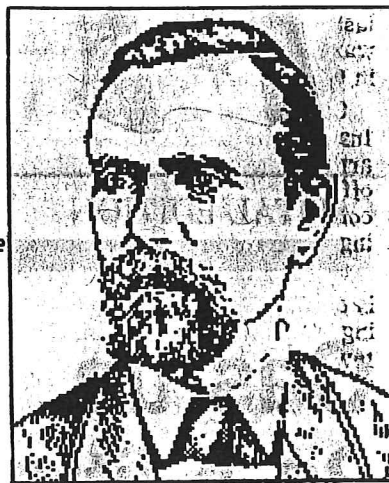
OUR FIRST CROSSDRESSING M.P.

Canada's first female Member of Parliament was a transvestite who posed as a man, according to a new book written by a Queen's University historian. John White, a tory backbencher from 1871 to 1887, was in fact Eliza McCormack White, a cross-dresser who eventually married another woman and raised eight children, says Don Akenson in the book, At Face Value.

"It's certainly an unusual story and one I expect to be controversial," says Akenson. "But I'm hoping to challenge the way people think about men and women."

Akenson twigged to the story after reading White's obituary notice, published shortly after her death in 1894. The newspaper clipping said White's funeral was remarkable for the large number of women who attended. It also detailed White's sympathy for women and quoted a line she was fond of repeating, "Give me the ladies on my side and I don't care much for the men."

Akenson says White emigrated to Canada from Northern Ireland in 1846 and, upon landing, assumed the identity of her brother who had died a year earlier. In 1854 White married Esther Johnson and through a series of fake pregnancies, the pair raised six daughters and two sons. Akenson claims the pair were able to adopt orphaned infants, a common practise at the time. Having settled down north of Belleville, Ontario, White became owner of a cheese factory and foundry, joined the Orange Lodge and moved into local politics. In 1871 she won the strong Tory riding of East Hastings near Belleville by virtue of being the only candidate.



John or Eliza?

Pakistani TV a Serious Election Contender

Pakistan's third sex is coming out of the closet and entering politics. A transvestite is running for the provincial assembly in the North West Frontier Province and the support he is generating reflects the public's total disillusionment with most politicians.

Aslam Khusra is a name that normally sends a ripple of sniggers through any audience. Khusra means "transvestite" and the tens of thousands of Pakistani transvestites and eunuchs, oppressed for centuries by a macho and conservative Islamic code, are banded together in a clan system in which they adopt Khusra as a surname. Traditionally they dress up as women and appear at weddings and parties to dance and sing. But Aslam has more

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serious things on his mind.

"You have tried out men to rule this country and even a woman. They have all failed. Now give us a chance," he said. Aslam Khusra has become an overnight hero for the nation's transvestites. Delegations are coming from Lahore and Karachi to help him in his campaign. He has received letters from human rights and minority groups, who see his courageous "coming out" as a chance for all minorities to assert their rights.

Surprisingly, all this is happening in a province where strict tribal custom keeps women veiled, the men armed and the mullahs powerful. Compared with the Jadoons, the feudal landlords who dominate the politics of Abbottabad and could spend an estimated \$400,000 for their election campaign, Khusra lives in one room of a ramshackle building with his widowed sister and her two children. His one room campaign office and battered pick-up van are paid for by donations from Abbottabad's businessmen, shopkeepers, doctors and lawyers. Political activists from Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party and its main rival, the Muslim League, have abandoned their leaders and crowd into his office, wanting to canvas for him.

In door-to-door canvassing, Khusra woos the women first. As a transvestite, he has the advantage of being allowed to talk to veiled women. His political line is uncompromising: "Corruption, bribery, horse-trading and no concern for the public by the

politicians is destroying Pakistan. Elect me and it will be a slap in their faces."

Now nearly 50, Khusra is a plump and jolly man who once dressed as a woman and performed. His long hair has been cut, but he still retains effeminate mannerisms. The Jadoons are worried, not least because their women taunt them every day for running against a "khusra". Aslam says he has been offered vast sums of money to withdraw from the race, but he has refused. "Politicians are all prostitutes. Now, through me, the people will take their revenge on them."

By Ahsan Rashid, The Independent. Both items quoted from the Ottawa Citizen.

Crossdressing Groups in Canada

The Cornbury Society
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Phi Sigma - Tri-Ess
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6808 Ogden Road S.E.
Calgary, AB
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Illusions Social Club
PO Box 872, Stn. T
Calgary, AB
T2H 2H3

Monarch Social Club
Box 682
Owen, Sound, Ont.
N4K 5R4

Gender Mosaic
PO Box 7421
Ottawa (Vanier), Ont.
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Mulling over the Magazines

When I was younger and deeply imbedded in the closet, I used to scan the various "sexual variations" type magazines for true stories about transvestism. Although I never thought of myself as being particularly naive, I must admit I liked to think that most of what I was reading was true. Sure, I had my doubts - it seemed to me there were an unusually large number of sympathetic aunts who enjoyed seeing their nephews in pretty dresses - but on the whole I liked to think there was a possibility there were a great number of understanding women out there whom I hadn't met yet.

Having recently read through a number of such magazines again, I was suddenly struck by the idea that I had been unbelievably naive. Everything that had at one time seemed so new, now seemed so full of cliches, I felt embarrassed that I ever believed any of it. "A sensitive man writes about his life-long love of lingerie and the very special woman who made all his crossdressing dreams come true." "Read about a wife's loving response to her husband's hidden desires." "With patience and perseverance a husband who enjoys crossdressing is able to convince his doubting wife that clothes do make the man." Of course, all of them end in this great, orgasmic climax in which the participants come close to seeing God. I think this is the point in the show where Joan Rivers sticks her finger down her throat.

I must admit, there are times I despair for this culture of ours (and I use the term culture loosely). I've

had a good look at our library recently, and while I was astonished at the amount we've collected, I would that the quality was as good as the quantity. I find that so much of it is self-focussed. Our lifestyle is so repressed, we obviously spend a good deal of time in our heads. When I read too much of this stuff, it just makes me sad.

Aside from the "pure" crossdressing material, there is some other unbelievable crap in our library. The magazines that have such a low opinion of their own integrity that they feel they have to show us the models' private parts to convince us that they're really men are the ones that really kill me. Of course, integrity has nothing to do with it. It's voyeurism pure and simple. And while I doubt that cross-dressers are the major buyers of these publications, it's clear that a lot of this stuff ends up in libraries like ours. I don't wish to belittle other people's sexual proclivities, but crossdressing is not really about sex at all, and we already have enough problems with society's ignorance about our behaviour without having ourselves sexually stereotyped also. I just know there is some student of psychiatry out there writing a thesis on crossdressing literature which will arrive at some highly dubious conclusions about transvestism.

The longer we stay closeted, the longer we victimize ourselves; and the longer we victimize ourselves, the longer we stay closeted. This is a Catch-22 I could well do without.

THE BACK PAGE

And now, the good news

**PANTYHOSE
FOR MEN**

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Photography by Peter