

Gender Mosaic's Notes From the Underground

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Ottawa, Canada

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GUEST EDITORIALS**A R.E.A.L. WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE**

The more I hear from other transsexuals, the more I find myself defending an unlikely camp. It is hard to understand people who find the Webster spelling of "woman" beneath them. And although I enjoyed reading Gloria Steinam's latest work, I just cannot relate to what some feminists stand for.

I am a housewife. And for the hundredth time, I find my life very fulfilling, thank you very much. I take great pride in the work I do. I do it well and I do it by choice. There is nothing wrong with living life in this traditional feminine manner.

However, this opinion seems unfashionable. Talking about enjoying the work I do can bring odd stares of incomprehension. I wonder if I explained the situation, would anybody listen?

The benefits seem obvious to me. A large house I would never be able to afford on my own. A "boss" that is actually concerned with how I happen to feel. An opportunity to advance my culinary expertise with an appreciative audience. A stable home where I am respected for who I am.

It's also a grand way of setting up your independence. With flexible hours and a stable homelife the doors are open for education and other interests. Even a job if I want. Oh, and the loving's great, to boot.

So please excuse me while I refuse to believe I am being oppressed. This seems more enjoyable than sitting in front of a computer all day surrounded by people who are doing the same thing all being pushed by a boss that doesn't give a flying hoot about how you feel, so long as the work gets done. Just who is being oppressed?

Being a housewife is, in a sense, as much a career as any other. To dismiss it is to dismiss generations of women who have worked so hard to make this an art. Perhaps other trannies should take into consideration that being a housewife may be a path to a better lifestyle. It takes care of many relevant concerns at once. Concerns of loneliness and poverty related to transsexualism can be put on the back-burner (pardon my kitchen analogy), while the primary concern of establishing your identity as a woman is addressed.

Diana R. Coltridge

THE TIME

I'm starting to believe that entering the transition period is something that you end up just doing. In spite of all the hours you've spent trying to figure it all out, it's something you end up doing if the majority of your thoughts believe that it is right. It's as if your time just comes, and off you go.

You can never know when that time will be and I've learned from experience that you can't try to pressure yourself to decide in advance. Since my early years I always felt that 29 or 30 would be my time, but I didn't start hormones and electrolysis just because I hit that age. It was so many other things in my life that caused these things to happen.

There's a difference between wanting to do something and needing to do something. You can want to be a woman, but you'll never take any steps towards this until you really need to. We all want to have a new car, but as long as the one we have is in decent shape and working, we don't need a new car and so we don't go out and buy one. Once the need to do something becomes equal to the want, then you're mind automatically makes its decision for you.

You just have to learn to live with your gender dysphoria until your need causes you to act. Believe me, it can take years. It took me six years of extreme stress to decide to live full-time. But maybe you can find some comfort if in your heart you have a feeling of when your time will be. If you do, then you can relax a little and ease up on pressuring yourself to decide.

Sharon McGonegal

Notes From the Underground

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June 18, 1993

To the Editor,

Please accept my congratulations on a paper that exceeded all my expectations in terms of graphic, print and content quality. I found the articles well written and interesting. As with most things not all was perfect.

I found the last two pages were not keeping with the rest of the paper. I must admit this is a personal opinion. Upon discussion with other members, I found that others were in agreement with me that the content did not properly reflect the group's image. The point I am trying to make is the newsletter was something I was proud to be a part of, until I read the last two pages. There was nothing really wrong with them (last two pages) except that I felt they would be better included in some other document. When I presented the news letter to my wife to read, I found myself apologizing for the "tension release material" which both she and I felt was in poor taste for such a high class publication. This sort of comedy reflects poorly on all of the group, as we are all judged by the one thing that stands out in people's minds. I personally would prefer that in future issues the comedy was of a little higher quality, or failing that, just skip it.

Again, thanks for a magnificent effort, and success, just that little bit of criticism, and hopefully a future improvement we all can be proud of without reservations.

Linda

July 28, 1993

To the Editor,

I would like to congratulate you on "OUR" newspaper you produced last month. It was of excellent quality, both graphically and editorially. I was proud to be associated with it and hope that this is the level of material that will appear in each issue. It was both entertaining and educational reading material that could proudly be shared with both CD's and non-CD's alike, which is an important issue to me.

Thank you again for your effort and hard work that it must have taken to get that paper out.

Linda

FOUR DAYS EN FEMME

by

Carol

Recently Joanne and I went touring around Ontario, particularly Toronto, for four days. Whilst I have made quick visits in the local shopping malls, this was a first for me. We visited the Dixie mall, Eaton Center and went to various functions. On our first night in Toronto we went to a Karaoke night. The singers, who were competing for a \$75 prize were really good. In the middle of the show, the host decided to get the audience to participate more. He announced that he had noticed that some people were not participating at all, and therefore had to make their contribution. The first person he picked out of the audience, was, of course, Joanne! He then picked out two more people, put them all on stage, and had them sing individually. Joanne went first. I will not comment on the lack of ability there. The host then eliminated one of the three, as judged by audience applause. Joanne remained on stage. It turned out that the man on stage with her was from Ottawa. For her efforts Joanne won a free beer. I guess that is what is known as a Boobie prize! The rest of the trip went well and we both thoroughly enjoyed it.

This letter is in response to a letter written to Gender Mosaic by Sharon McGonegal, which was published recently in our News Letter. (Ed note: Summer, 93)

Gender Mosaic
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K1L 8E4

To F.A.C.T.T.

Dear Sharon,

Gender Mosaic is a support group for Transsexuals, Transvestites, Crossdressers, Transgenderists. We do have members from each gender community, and we are now reviewing our Terms of Reference, which will be available soon. As to your concerns, the name Gender Mosaic was chosen by the members from a wide variety of names presented. We are concerned that members of the "community" may consider that we are primarily a heterosexual social group, however heterosexuals do represent the majority of our group.

We cannot understand your sorrow if the majority of our members are heterosexuals. From your response it appears you have problems accepting our membership and the services we offer to the members, i.e. the library, a safe environment for parties, workshop meetings and bringing in people from the outside for special events. Although we attempt to maintain control of who joins, we do not discriminate. There are no quotas to fill. We are available to those in need even though some are non-paid members; the door is always open to all.

If society was accepting of all lifestyles, we would not have to form support groups, but, some support groups are like society, they [themselves] are unaccepting of people different to their beliefs, colour or lifestyle.

I hope that this will clarify the misunderstanding that you have perceived about our group.

Sincerely,

Joanne Law
President
Gender Mosaic



Ms. Masters is proof that the right person, working independantly, can do more to advance the dignity of people, than cumbersome organizations with stifling regulations and ineffectual but impressive sounding committees. Materials produced by TransEqual are available in the club library.

TRANSEQUAL'S MISSION

By Laura Masters

TransEqual's mission is quite simple; we advocate change in the way transsexuals and transgenderists are treated in Canada's many complaint handling systems.

TransEqual members are all transgenderists and transsexuals. We do not for one minute think that our peers need special rights, or special consideration. We advocate acceptance and inclusion. We recognize that the transgendered person's end goal is integration into society, as the men or women they really are and not as transsexuals or transgenderists.

Our main goal is to establish uniform enforcement of the rights of transgenderists and transsexuals all across Canada. We feel that appropriate enforcement of our peers' rights is the key to a dignified life. In many cases people have reduced access to broad aspects of Canadian society (health care, employment, housing etc.) solely because they live the other sex role. Just as often they have received poor support from human rights agencies for exactly the same reason. We feel this secondary victimization must end.

We also encourage people to understand and respect the dignity of transsexuals and transgenderists. To this end we are advocating change in many areas such as counselling, health care, and incarceration management. Our goal, in this regard, is to ensure that dignified and respectful way. Our services include the distribution of original information about transsexualism and transgenderism. We can help our peers prepare & file their complaints with agencies across Canada.

Dear Diva,

What exactly do bible thumpers, drug pushers, and codependancy gurus have in common?

Looking for a Life

They have many things in common. They have similar customers -- people who are down and out -- people who have lost faith in themselves and don't want the duty of taking control of their lives. They sell a similar product -- one which allows the customer to detach themselves from reality and fake the sense of being content. They all work in keeping their customers isolated from external influences. They all discourage the customer from developing their own sense of will and judgement. They all convince their customers to rely on some "higher power", which invariably turns out to their product. They all say money isn't important. They all want your money. They all fear their customers developing an individual sense of ego and pride. They all consider self-sufficient customers to be dysfunctional and in denial. They all are big on positive thinking. Their slogan is "Happy...Happy...Joy...Joy".

Dear Diva,

I understand that you are an expert in bizarre sexual practices. Tell me what is the most cruel thing a sadist can do to a masochist?

Just Curious (honestly)

Why...absolutely nothing.

Dear Diva,

I understand that you are an expert in inane geographical trivia. Just wondering what do Nagasaki and Baghdad have in common?

Box Filler

Why...absolutely nothing.....yet.

ASK DIVA

THE POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

The Ontario Police Complaints Commission - the civilian body handling complaints against police officers --has agreed to extend their services to include transsexuals, transgenderists, and transvestites.

Ignorance and rudeness from police officers has long been a problem for all transsexuals, transgenderists, and transvestites. It is now possible to challenge this problem and over time we can, hopefully eliminate it. We are entitled to be treated with professionalism and courtesy, just like anyone else.

Crossdressing, cross-living, drag, female impersonation and even an "other-sex" alias are all legally acceptable in Ontario. The limit is that you must not be doing this to commit a crime or avoid persecution. You should not have to explain yourself or your lifestyle to anyone, and especially not to police officers.

TS's, TG's, and TV's can now complain about almost anything they deem inappropriate behaviour from a Police Officer. Each complaint will be judged upon its individual merits, and will be handled as part of the routine business of the Commission. Complainable behaviour runs the gamut from accosting a person without just cause, to unnecessary roughness, to offensive gestures and rude comments, and even to the repeated use of inappropriate gender references.

Your complaints can be directed to:

Police Complaints Commissioner
595 Bay Street, 9th floor
Toronto Ontario
M5G 2C2

Attn: Complaints Officers

phone 1-800-267-5648 or
1-416-325-4700

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

The Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons, a professional body overseeing Ontario's medical practitioners, has renewed their 1991 commitment to provide an equitable and adequate complaint process for transsexuals, transgenderists, and this year they have included transvestites.

This agency handles complaints of professional misconduct about individual medical doctors, surgeons, psychiatrists etc. they cannot accept complaints about clinics or hospital services, as these are not within their jurisdiction. In cases where complaints fall outside the College's purview they can provide referrals to more appropriate agencies.

This is a very broad and individualized service. Complaints from TS's, TG's and TV's will be handled as part of the college's routine business, and each will be taken upon its own merits. Your complaints can run the gamut from continual discourtesy, to sexual misconduct, to medical or diagnostic errors, and even to the persistent use of inappropriate gender references.

Ruth Milikin is a complaint investigator who is well versed in transgender identity issues and has an open attitude about transvestitism. She has graciously offered to serve as a contact person and help you with your questions and complaints.

Complaints and enquiries can be directed to:

College of Physicians & Surgeons
80 College Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 2E2

Attn: Ruth Milikin, Complaint Investigator

Phone 1-800-268-7096
or 1-416-961-1711

More information can be obtained by calling TransEqual's contact line at 1-416-688-0276.
Note: This information was originally released on 12 March 1993

A Symbiotic Friendship

by

Karen Patrick

The words sear through softened layers of protective shell burning hollow my spirit. A simple sentence lay waste an evening of joy. In a fleeting moment a gender confidant openly perceives me as man. "I see you as a supportive male"... her words silence my self esteem wrenching open a lifetime wound. An hour later I lay on a bed bursting tears from deep within.

It is not said in malice but the voice maintains its echo. My emotions are fragile and crumble in despair. Years of projected image designed for societal survival remain etched on the surface. It has not yet faded enough. Perhaps a year ago I could have disregarded my feelings...I no longer can.

Joining a gender support group has placed me on a winding path of discovery and destruction, friendship and pain. It is a delicate link to renewed hope of fulfilment. It is a place which has allowed me to uncompress a feminine essence and expose a vulnerable core. It has left me emotionally defenceless and in need of reassurance.

That night I cried into the phone for an hour. The sympathetic person on the other end helped patch up my life. She has done it for me before and will again ... she is my best friend.

I first met Sharon at the group's annual BBQ. We had few opportunities to talk amid the rumble of the day but we exchanged phone numbers and I hoped to talk to her soon. That night I met my first encounter with the reality of open femininity. Feeling unrestricted and emotional, I vented years of loneliness by falling into a momentary interlude with the wrong member. By morning I was hurt and alone again. I called Sharon's number and for the first time in my life found true support and compassion. We talked for two hours, then again the following night for four more. Our phone calls have

never stopped and we meet almost daily. She is my link to self- understanding.

Through this friendship I am learning better how to touch my inner core. I have come to lean on her, her on me ... we support each other in trouble and triumph.

Through this support group I am meeting a microcosm of the real world through the eyes of a woman. It is filled with a spectrum of pain and joy. There is only one constant within, a friendship as deep as I have ever experienced with one who feels what I feel and sees beneath the exterior layers.

So many fears have been overcome one tiny step at a time with her help. The origins of transition commence with release of the mind. I have someone now with whom can share this experience in kaleidoscopic detail. I have someone who shares with me her innermost thoughts. She is both a guide and a dependent. It is a symbiotic relationship in a rarefied culture.

I feel fortunate. I feel released. I am slowly becoming Karen and know I can not accomplish this journey alone. This group has opened a new pathway of hope, a new honesty. It contains a precious friend who is helping me bond with others and overcome adversity. I can no longer imagine how it was a year ago when I was truly alone.



Unloved?**by****Sharon McGonegal**

Perhaps the most painful topic I can ever discuss is the entrapment I feel in being unloved due to my transsexuality. It is something I usually try not to think about because if I do, I will cry. By being unloved, I don't mean to say that no one likes me, but rather that I cannot be loved intimately in both an emotional and sexual way because my gender identity makes me unacceptable as a partner to most people.

I have recently made friends with people outside of the gender community. Their main concern and interest is to have boyfriends and girlfriends and unlike me, they are free to pursue this interest. They often talk about previous relationships or marriages, they date co-workers and acquaintances, and read and sometimes reply to companion ads. (Ironically, the paper they read does not allow transsexuals to advertise.) I listen with an inner sadness when they discuss their relationships. Usually they all feel the biggest area in their lives that they want to work on deals with relationships.

I on the other hand feel a complete void in my life as far as relationships go. I really feel left out. It seems that I can't even begin to work on my skills at having relationships because I can't find anyone. I have felt love for another person, but I have never been loved myself. I feel I could offer so much in a relationship, yet I have no idea how I would actually be. Would I be prone to jealousy? Would I be demanding or possessive? I don't know. I like to believe that I wouldn't, but how can I know? I have no experience to back up any belief I may have.

Is it wrong to assume that no one can love me? I know it's unhealthy to have this belief, but it is supported by my experiences. And please don't give me the old adage that "To be loved by someone you must first learn to love yourself". I already feel that I have

enough self love to be loved by someone. I have no reason to believe that I am unlovable on the basis of any personality trait I may have.

I am at the point that I cannot meet a female without telling her about the way I am, and if I were to take off my clothes in front of her it would be a little noticeable. No woman has ever wished to date me because I feel like a woman myself and therefore they feel that I could not meet the needs they have as a woman. Whether I could meet their needs or not, I cannot say. No woman has ever been willing to give me the chance to try. I can understand how a woman could turn me down. If I were a genetic woman, I probably would not be interested in falling in love with a female male. I, like my last attempted girlfriend, would also be too afraid of the eventual pain of ending the relationship once my partner had SRS. Women want and have the full right to want a male who is male. Unfortunately this truth leaves me alone and unloved.

Of course there is the option of falling in love with a lesbian, assuming two conditions have been met: 1) That I have had SRS and that my vagina is functionally and aesthetically correct, and 2) That she does not feel that my having been born male negates my claim that I am a woman. Some lesbians can accept transsexuals as friends quite easily. But if you've got a penis your chances of a relationship are non existent. Some lesbians may dislike men and dislike even more, a man who dares to pass himself off as a female and thus infiltrate the privacies of their female society. I may be a few years or a lifetime away from SRS, so I must remain unloved by lesbians at least until after SRS and possibly beyond.

Well there's always men. Unfortunately all the men I've met are either secretly gay or just curiosity seekers. Gay men are not interested in me. I'm too female to be loved by them. The secretly gay men are those who can't accept their homosexual desires and find it easier if they are with someone who looks like a woman but has a penis between their legs. Usually they are

fixated on giving or receiving oral sex. The curiosity seeker may masturbate at the mere sight of me within minutes of arriving and then dash out the door. The secretly gay male and the curiosity seeker are both usually drawn to my male parts and upon satisfying their urges, they return quite happily to their wives or girlfriends.

To be with one of these men is only to be used sexually much like an inflatable doll or a Penthouse magazine. There is no love or intimate emotions involved. They may promise you the world. Dancing, dinner, going out, all of the romantic things that you want. But it never happens. They just want sex even if it means forcing it on you. At times I feel flattered that there are so many men who would want to have sex with me. (Believe me, there are a lot of them) But I'm not interested in just having sex. I WANT TO BE LOVED. I used to give into men, but I don't anymore. My self-esteem is too high (finally!) for that.

There is the possibility of a relationship with a straight man. But the same conditions apply as mentioned previously with lesbians. I must have SRS first and hope that either, I can get away without disclosing that I was once physically male (a slim possibility), or that I am so much like a woman that he can accept me in spite of the fact that I've had SRS.

Another option is to have a relationship with another transsexual or a transvestite. My psychiatrist says that this is my only option, so far. (Thanks a lot Dr. T.!) But now a real paradox comes into play because I apply the same things to others as most people apply to me. If I'm going to love a woman, I'd prefer her to an actual genetic female. If I'm going to love a man, I'd prefer an actual genetic male. In spite of my predicament, I don't want to be with a man who used to be a woman or a man who wears skirts. Maybe I could be with a male to female transsexual but she would have to really look like a woman. Maybe I could accept a man in skirts but I wouldn't want to see it too often. Prejudiced? Maybe.

Perhaps I should be more flexible in this area? I'm not sure.

I have tried being with TV's and TS's, but sexually it never works out. Neither of us wants to be the man and I have no desire whatsoever to penetrate a male. I also have a hard time treating a TV seriously like a woman. Transvestites typically follow the same behaviour as the secretly gay male or the curiosity seeker, except they are driven to want sex from me also due to the fact that they are wearing female clothes. They expect me to be turned on by their clothes as well, but I get no sense of excitement from seeing a man dressed as a woman. In fact, sexually it really turns me off. My experiences with TV's have only ever been purely sexual, without emotions, and included the usual empty promises.

There's always the option of just having friends, and I've heard this said by some people. By doing this, they say, then they don't need a relationship. Personally I don't buy into this idea. Having friends helps, but it's not the same as having someone to come home to, to share your life with, and to give and receive emotional love.

So throughout my entire life, I have only been loved by my parents and "loved" in the way one friend loves another friend. Due to the way I am, even my parents are having a hard time loving me. They may say they do, but being called a freak or a weirdo by my mother doesn't lend itself well to the idea. I feel so empty in that I have never been able to get someone to love me as a partner. I wish I could have at least have experienced it as a male. Then at least I would now have the memory of what it was like and I would know what it feels like to be loved by someone.

Sometimes I think that I'd even be willing to be loved by someone in a bad relationship for a time, even if only to know love for one moment. Most people would say that this is a foolish idea, but then most people have had relationships. They take it for granted that they have experienced love and they have no concept of being someone

like me who has no idea what it is even like to experience the emotion. Some people who have had bad relationships tell me that I'm better off being alone. If they really believe this then why are they still pursuing relationships themselves?

So having said all of this, what's next? I keep trying to hope that one day I will experience love but I've heard of so few happy endings for transsexuals. Are we all destined to be unloved? Are all the men I meet always going to try and force sex on me with no emotions or hope of a relationship? I'll admit that there are a few who have found partner's prior to SRS, but often after SRS things change. I wouldn't want to find someone now only to find out later that he only liked me because I was a "chick with a dick". I also know of several TV's and TS's who have not had a relationship in years. It consoles me to know that there are others in the same position as myself, but what can we do to find love? I welcome any suggestions.

At least I know that I'm not becoming a woman as a way of finding love. It would be so much incredibly easier to find love if I were not transsexual. But the fear of ending up alone, or putting up with sexually over aggressive men, sometimes makes me wonder if it's all worth it. Sometimes I'd like to be a dominatrix with a nice big whip so I could lure in and punish some of these men for treating both myself and other women so badly.

Could there actually be someone on the planet who could truly, honestly, love me now as I am? And could I please find out what continent this person is on? I must confess that I probably won't meet anyone while I'm sitting around in my apartment (and I'm doing too much of that). It's just that my experiences in the past don't leave me feeling too optimistic. I'd gladly disclaim ever having written this article if just one person would step forward and say "I love you".

"TRANNNIES FROM HELL UNITE"

A Review by Belinda Doree

"GenderTrash From Hell" is a hand-grenade disguised as a magazine. These people are pissed off at being treated like shit. They're not afraid to let their passions run rampant and the pages smolder with emotion. Be warned, those who are easily offended should stay clear; there is little concern here for soothing the sensibilities of the prim and proper. The most refreshing, invigorating periodical to hit the scene in recent memory; hopefully it will give a number of very complacent behinds a much needed kick in the pantaloons. GTFH is available at Mags and Fags and the Ottawa Women's Book Store. Info on mail delivery can be obtained by phoning 1-416-929-2350.

TS's & anonymity
 TS's & racism
 TS's & politics
 TS's & queer communities
 spaces & places of our own
 TS's & employment
 TS's & parents
 TS's & housing
 TS's & youth
 TS's & TS run SRS clinics
 TS's & isolation
 electrolysis
 TS's & medicine
 TS's & sexuality
 TS's & her/history
 TS's & social supports
 gender positive behaviour
 TS's as a separate gender
 reaching our community
 TS's & our lovers
 TS's & HIV/AIDS
 TS's & our families
 TS's & TS run community centres
 linking with other groups
 TS's & prostitution
 TS's & the police

GENDER TRASH FROM HELL

SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS

by Susan C.

Over a year ago, I wrote an article on "Dating a Crossdresser". Well the update here is that we are best friends now. The split, however, had nothing to do with the crossdressing; there were many other factors that impacted on the relationship. The good part of the story is that we are still very good friends and still see each other. Secondly, I have had the opportunity to meet many new and exciting people in the Gender Mosaic Group and other crossdresser groups. I feel I have made some very good friends and that makes me happy.

I find many of the crossdressers I have met are very exciting and fun to hang out with. I have been to some of the socials and the last Christmas dinner. I have always had a good time. The atmosphere created by the group has always been very relaxed and easy going. Most times during conversations, I feel like I'm talking to my girlfriends, laughing and joking about buying clothes, wearing heels or putting on makeup. However, there are a few guys out there that don't know how to relax and enjoy themselves at the socials. Some seem a little uptight and nervous. I say just relax and have a ball. It helps to make everyone else relax and have fun too.

During conversations, though, sometimes I have to watch what I'm saying because I'm not talking to another woman. When I'm with my girlfriends, quite often we end up talking about sex, however, when I'm with crossdressers this subject matter takes on a different perspective. Its not that I can't talk about sex, I do, but relating to the experiences are different simply because of the biology.

On the topic of biology, there are two issues that bother me about crossdressers. The first one is the fact that you guys have all the fun of dressing up and going out whenever you feel like it and enjoy these special days or evenings on an ad hoc basis. Crossdressers, therefore, have the

opportunity to enjoy being a woman periodically and don't have to live as one on a daily basis with all the discrimination and second class citizenship that goes along with it. Secondly, crossdressers can enjoy most aspects of femininity without the negative biological aspect such as the menstrual cycle. For many women (me especially), as you probably are aware, this can be very painful and emotionally disturbing. Don't ask me why these two points bother me. They just do.

Perhaps part of this has to do with the fact that at times, I don't enjoy being a woman. I seem to have to work twice as hard in the workplace to get half as far, making less money. I experience frustration when my ideas or concerns are ignored or dismissed (in the workplace or dinner table conversations), bear the brunt of sexist jokes, experience sexual assault and live in fear of more brutal assaults. There probably is more but that is enough to get my message across. Living as a woman is not necessarily always fun. Actually living as either sex has its drawbacks. I don't want to seem too negative on being a woman, however, I do want to point out both the good and the bad.

Since I am biologically female I have to make the best of it. I have experienced much of the negative side of being female and I've dealt with it the best I know how. After experiencing sexual assault and living about 18 years as an angry young woman, I went for counselling. I've talked to many women who have had similar experiences and that helps a great deal. I attend meetings in a self-help group and am learning much more about myself and what I want out of life. I never had a "normal" (whatever normal means) relationship with a man until I dated a crossdresser. Sandy is a wonderful person and was the longest relationship I've ever had with a man. I am also happy to say that today, I feel wonderful.

All together I have three good friends that are crossdressers. Sandy, of course, Belinda and Joanne. Sandy was my boyfriend/girlfriend for about two and a half years. When I wasn't out on a date with my

boyfriend, I was out with my girlfriend. How many women can say that? Very few! I first met Belinda at a halloween party. I thought she was beautiful. I was completely drawn to her personality and display of confidence. I had a hard time keeping my eyes off her. I have never been attracted to another woman, however, something about her certainly drew my attention. Belinda's other half isn't so bad either. I think I've developed a very special kind of friendship with her. Last but not least, is Joanne. Now there is a lady to be reckoned with. She too displays confidence and a fun loving spirit. This woman always has a warm smile and a kind word. Recently I met her other half after work and we spent the evening just talking. It was wonderful, we talked about everything under the sun, moon and stars. Actually my initial motive to meet was to borrow a skirt or some outfit for a dinner party. However, I wasn't successful in finding just the right one. Not that she didn't have beautiful clothes, its just that I have bigger hips. Maybe I can't raid Joanne's closet but if she really wanted to, she could probably raid mine. Gee what am I saying, I'll be giving her ideas!

I hope to get the opportunity to meet some of the new members at more socials. I'd like to have an open invitation to go whenever I can since I'm not a "significant other" anymore. If anyone wishes to talk or go for coffee sometime, I can be contacted through Joanne or Belinda. I like to meet new people and expand my friendships. Hope you enjoyed this article, I may even do a follow-up at some point in the future. The next title might be something like "More About My Best Friends". You never know!



This was pulled from Irma Kurtz's "Agony Column" which is a regular feature in Cosmopolitan (August 93).

Q. Not long ago, my husband and I attended a benefit party where, as a gimmick, all the men dressed in drag, entered a beauty contest, and had to serve drinks to the ladies. My sister, who is a beautician, helped my husband get dressed and put on makeup and jewellery. Later she told me he had a rock-solid erection the whole time. When we arrived home after the party, he made passionate love to me-the best in our ten years of marriage-while he was still dressed as a woman. Now he doesn't want to wear his own clothes around the house. The minute he gets home, he changes into something of mine. When we go out at night, he wears one of my suits with all the accessories, heels, even carries my purse under his arm. I hate to admit it, but it's kind of fun. The problem is, a couple of weeks ago, he asked me to tie him to a chair in the basement, so I did, with old rope and adhesive tape. As I stood back to look at him, I had an orgasm! I had never felt such a rush of power over anyone. Since then, I've brought patent-leather pants, which I wear when I train my slave, whom I've renamed Barbara. I enjoy every powerful moment of this, but I'm getting concerned it's going too far, since bondage has become an almost-daily routine. What's happening to us? Are we headed for serious trouble? How far should we let this go? How can we stop it and get back to normal like before we are discovered and shamed?

A. You and your husband are obviously made for each other. He likes to wear the skirt in the family and you like to wear the patent-leather trousers. Believe it or not the fantasy world you're living in is not all that uncommon. I don't know at what kind of "benefit party" you learned the joys of cross-dressing, but I suspect the greatest benefit was given to transvestites in the crowd; most of these men were probably into bondage as well.

What are you worried about? You are not harming anyone. Your sex life is

rollicking. You're not breaking any law. There is no reason you should be "found out". if you are really afraid of discovery by unsympathetic people, there are plenty of clubs of transvestites and sex slaves where you can meet other like-minded people.

But the fact that you're the dominatrix (the one who ties the ropes and pulls the strings) doesn't mean you're in charge. Barbara calling the shots, and if things get too hot and heavy, Barbara will stop you. If you wind up getting into sado-masochism-and that seems to be the direction in which you're headed-Barbara will let you know when he/she has had enough.

The only thing that astonishes me is that you were married ten years before discovering how perfectly matched your sexual fantasies are. Aren't you sorry you didn't let it all out sooner?



This following article was taken from Tapestry Issue # 64. It is an obituary about a type of person I think we need more of. Unfortunately the author's name could not be located.

HARRIET LANE

I first met Harriet Lane at a party late in the spring of 1989. It was a wig shop in a small town in Connecticut whose owner enjoyed hosting informal get-togethers for a small, very discreet group of TV's and a few of their wives. She sold a few wigs, we had a place to go, and everyone was happy.

Into this somewhat sedate scene swaggered approximately 6'4" and 275 lbs of former pro-football player and his entourage of TV's, pre-ops, and a stray genetic female or two.

This unlikely figure introduced himself to me as Harriet Lane and invited me to a party at his house the following weekend. I was just starting my coming out process, still looking for the answers to a lot of questions. One thing I couldn't help noticing was that Harriet's crew seemed to have a lot more fun than our prim little group. It occurred to me that a little fun might go well with all the fear and anxiety that went with being a novice crossdresser.

I took Harry up on his offer, and wound up staying for four days, remaining en femme the whole time. That is how I grew up to be one of Harriet Lane's miracles. I don't think I ever attended another gathering at the wig shop. I did manage to find my way back to Harriet's several times a month for the next few years.

Since then I have belonged to several different support groups in the New England area. I have been lucky enough to attend a number of workshops, weekends and conventions around the northeast. I've been to my share of drag bars and parties. I have yet to experience anything anywhere that resembled the unique energy and atmosphere that was so much a part of Harriet Lane's TV Set.

Aunt Harriet did not have meetings, she had parties. She had parties on the second and fourth Saturday night of every month, since forever. The physical location changed several times over the years, but somewhere in Connecticut, Harriet was having a party. It was a sure thing.

Harriet was not running an educational program. Never the less, it was a great place to learn. It was a great place to get to know people from all over the gender spectrum. At Harriet Lane's you could learn from people's ideas, their experiences, and even their mistakes. I learned a lot about what I am and what I am not there. Harry had one of the most open groups that I have ever seen, where close friendships were formed across the boundaries of different lifestyles. If intolerance and judgemental attitudes are the problem, then Harry had something a lot like an answer. Harry had little tolerance for the phony. He may have alienated some, but he endeared himself to a great many more.

Harry was a tough guy, a hard case. Wasn't nobody gonna put one over on Big Harry, that's for sure! Unless you needed someone to talk to, a place to dress, \$40 to make your rent, or pay the doctor this week. When did Harry ever not have a roommate, or a houseguest, or a houseguest with a houseguest? A real tough guy.

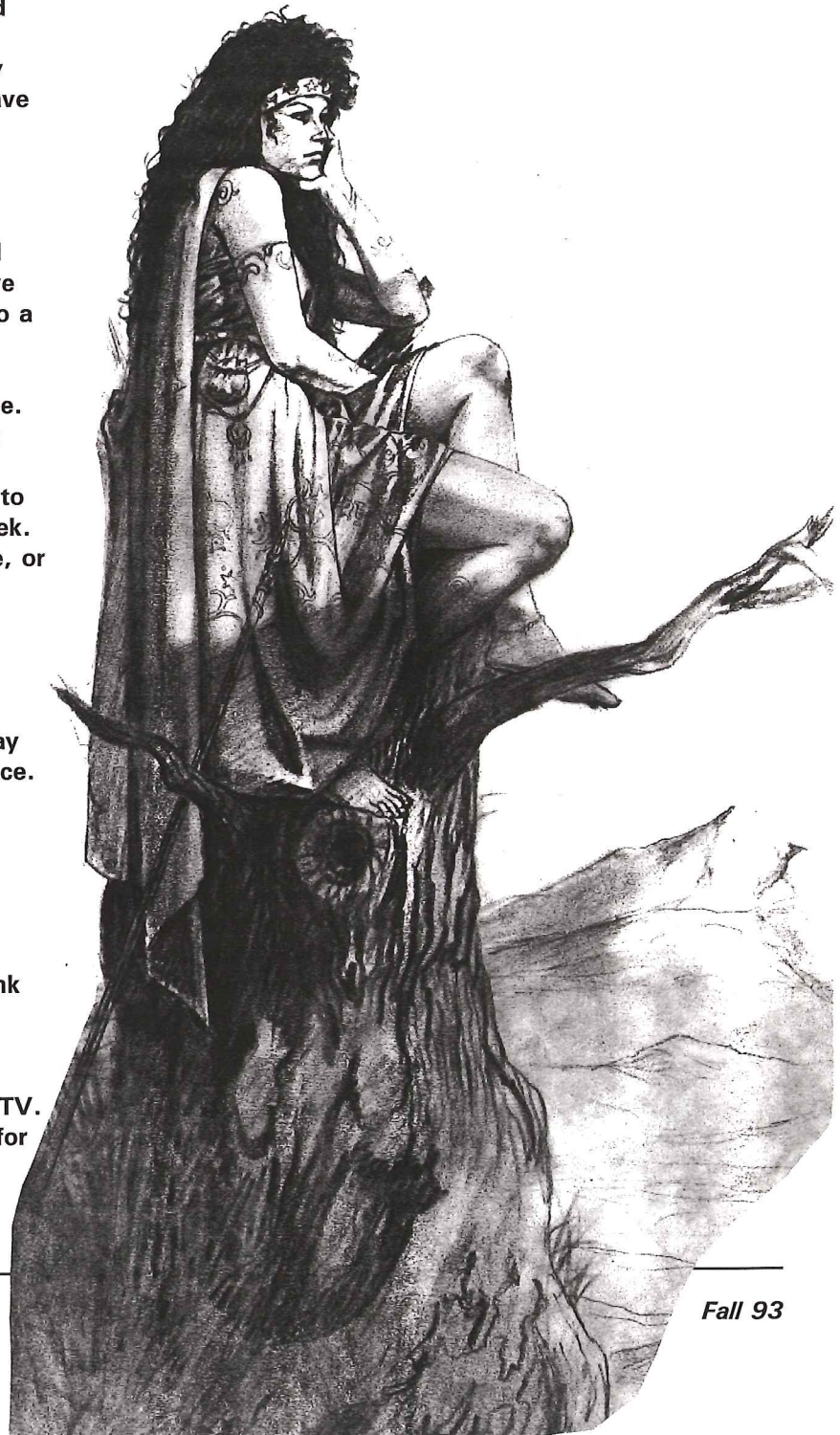
We've come a long way from the days when you had to go to the special apartment at the right time on a certain day and use the secret knock to gain admittance. We all owe an enormous debts to those pioneers who are responsible for the enormous progress we've made. Harry stands as one of those original pioneers. maybe he was a little more original than most, but he was one of the folks who invented the secret knock. and I don't think he ever failed to answer.

I hope Harry will forgive my selfishness when I say I'm glad he was a TV. Otherwise he would not have been there for me, and for all my fiends, and God only knows how many came before us. I

remember saying goodbye to Harry, no it was Harriet that day, after that first four day visit back in 1989. I had changed back to my male self and loaded up my car. Just before I left, (s)he said, "Take care of yourself, kid, you're special!"

I'm glad you felt that way, Big guy, you were very special, too!

Harriet Lane passed away on Monday morning, the first day of March. She will be missed.



Happy in a Hug

by Karen Patrick

A warm light glows in growing intensity within the core. It is surrounded by darkness stretching into a seamless distance. There is no meaning to the void only the essence of radiant desire. A simple caress could cause it to illuminate the expanse, bringing all into focus.

The need for companionship extends beyond mere acceptance. It is the making of a human essence whole. The touch of a friend is prized beyond conventional value. The thought of love and being loved drifts within the twilight of an emotional void. I can not extinguish the flame. It resists logic and rationale. This yearning for male compassion blossoms within, yet it is incongruous with my physical being. I wish for normalcy...a man and a woman bonded by love. But I am not yet woman, still not man.

A happy night with friends mutates into emptiness. A caring man is nearby, but he is unreachable. Too unsure to approach, afraid of being approached...it happens again and again. These feelings torment the innerself and the spirit dwells on ideal fantasy.

It is not for gratification but for emotional assurance. A momentary transference of compassionate energy to strengthen fragility, a dispersal of increasing anxieties, a sharing of human warmth. A longing to simply be held. It feels beyond the realm of true potential but the emotions glow with growing luminescence.



This is an excerpt from Diana's upcoming book, a marriage manual entitled, "How to Make Love to a Transsexual".

LOVING DOWN UNDER

by

Diana R. Coltridge

The first mistake most men make when going to bed with a transsexual is to go for the penis. One really cannot blame the guy; after all, the she-males in the magazines seem to adore being sucked by men. In reality, this is a temperamental thing. Although it is not cast in stone, most transsexuals do not like being reminded of this obviously masculine part of the body. If this is your center of interest, the best course of action would be to first make sure she is relaxed physically and then ask permission for what you would like to do.

As for technique, try to make her feel as feminine as possible when you are at it. If you want to make her feel good, try to treat it as you would a vagina during cunnilingus. Play with the scrotum gently with the tongue. A lovely place to play with is the crease between the scrotum and the leg. Be careful not to bite on the balls themselves. Let her make believe that you are eating her out...not sucking her cock. If she is not rock hard, please do not worry about it. She could be having fireworks inside but the hormones can make her limp no matter what you do. Gently playing with her breasts can make this a total body experience.

After three or four minutes of this, then it is time to throw a condom on her and then gently take care of this common male fantasy. If she suddenly goes limp again, go back to the initial technique to reassure her that you're not in a hurry. The estrogen in her body will make it very difficult for her to come in the male sense, so instead of expecting it, consider it a rarity.

Even if it is the main attraction for you, her cock isn't her favourite part of her body. I doubt you would like to turn her right

off, so keep this in mind. As much as she is part of your fantasy, you are part of her fantasy. And infallibly, this fantasy is based on a man making love to her as he would a woman.



A Weekend at the Cottage

by Diana R. Coltridge
(and some outside interference)

The last week-end of August, Gender Mosaic organized a get away for TV's and their wives at a cottage by Constance Bay. Although I have no fondness for the outdoor life, the week-end was simply beautiful.

Karen, Frank, and I arrived a little after noon on Saturday. Karen, Jo-Anne, Rhonda, Leigh, and his wife Judy were already there. By dinner time, there were a dozen people milling about.

We started building a campfire on the sandy beach after the sunset. It was simply wonderful. All of us in our various groups sitting around talking over beer. People coming back from walks along the beach. There was a warm sense of togetherness as people just sucked in all the atmosphere brought on by the good food, drink and talk.

Who could not but be engrossed by Karen and Belinda's demonstration of advanced burial techniques. There were lumps of pride in many throats as our President gallantly led members in arcane male bonding rituals while putting out the fire. There was the intense intellectual stimulation of Rhonda's recital on Francophone culture to ad-libbed but enthusiastic musical accompaniment. One must of course overlook the singular occurrence of Belinda dancing around the fire chanting feminist slogans... or is there truth in the phrase "en vin...verita"? There were difficulties with a sexually adventurous Hoover running amok in the night, but I understand that ended well.

It's impossible to describe all the events and those "intangibles" which made the weekend such a memorable one. To wit, to the despair of cynics, the weather was glorious, the food was wonderful, the service was great, and a good time was *definitely* had by all. **BIG-TIME KUDOS (congratulations) TO JOANNE FOR MAKING THIS HAPPEN!**

Mass democracy, mass morality, and the mass media thrive independently of the individual, who joins them at a cost of at least partial perversion of his instincts and insights. He pays for his social ease with what used to be called his soul, his discriminations, his uniqueness, his psychic energy, his self.

Al Alvarez
1929- British writer and poet

Conformity, humility, acceptance -- with these coins we are to pay our fares to paradise.

Robert Lindner

One should respect public opinion insofar as is necessary to avoid starvation and keep out of prison, but anything that goes beyond this is voluntary submission to an unnecessary tyranny.

Bertrand Arthur

It seemed the world was divided into good and bad people. The good slept better...while the bad seemed to enjoy the waking hours much more

Hubert Allen

This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

George Bernard Shaw
Pep-talk to dispirited troublemakers

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

In a time long, long ago...

In a place not so far, far away...

A few girls got together for a burger, and a beer.

*Little did they know that this chance
encounter...*

would eventually become.....

***THE PREMIERE CULINARY
SOCIAL EVENT OF THE YEAR!!!!***



**GENDER MOSAIC'S
4TH ANNUAL
BBQ & CORN ROAST
SEPTEMBER 25, 1993**

***if you're still in the closet after this...CHECK
AGAIN!.....YOU may not be breathing!!!!!!***

