

Gender Mosaic's

Notes From the Underground

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You Bet!! Lots!!



Ottawa, Canada

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EDITORIALS

During the American Civil War a good military surgeon was a strong man who could grasp a wounded soldier's shredded leg in a vice like grip. His other arm deftly manipulated a filthy surgical knife splicing open skin and muscle in seconds. Then came a grinding saw and off fell the shattered appendage amidst a torrent of screams.

Other soldiers anxiously awaited their turn for doing their honour bound duty. There was no anesthetic...perhaps a shot of whisky for those who were lucky. Most of them died shortly afterward.

Still earlier in time, boys became men before their tribal masters by submitting to self torture rituals to attain full cultural status. They were proud of their rite of passage. Others simply died.

100 years later one can ask... what has changed? Doctors, tired of being branded mere butchers, advanced their techniques through the invention of drugs to induce a calm sleep in patients. The strong man was replaced by a learned professional.

But in the transgendered community, still, one hears the echo of the tribal drum. It is as if pain is our rite to passage. If agony is avoided, then one can not possibly be "man" enough to be a woman. It is our honour bound duty to endure, "the small price I pay for transition."

It is a medieval mindset. One can understand the transsexual of earlier times enduring agony while an electrologist individually fried the 50,000 hairs on her face. She confronted a choice between withstanding pain or living fulltime as a woman with a bushy beard. There really was no viable alternative.

But today, there is nerve block and topicals to freeze the skin. There are dentists, and electrologists with agreements with dentists who offer a pain-free alternative at a reasonable price. What is difficult to comprehend are those who dismiss the possibility of even trying to promote such an arrangement. Their battle-cry remains, "no pain, no gain." The tribal drum beats louder.

Instead of clinging to ancient ritual, perhaps these transsexuals could turn the page to a new century and accept modern medical science. Perhaps, the transgendered community collectively could promote a marriage of medicine and electrology to eradicate the pain so many still needlessly endure. As if those in this community do not endure enough already.

Or perhaps, those who disagree may choose to advocate SRS without anesthetic. A shot of whisky and a strong man. It would be a passage of ancient familiarity for those

who feel only *they* have balls enough to be a woman.

Karen Patrick

In the last year, becoming increasingly involved with the gay community, I have noticed a misunderstanding about transvestites and crossdressers. It seems that we must be gay. Why else would we wear female clothes to a gay bar? My friends, both lesbian and homosexual, have allowed me into their lives, and a genuine mutual respect has developed. They know that I am from the gender community and so are my friends from Gender Mosaic. I have tried to explain to them why I wear female clothes. I guess over a period of time the mystique will disappear.

They ask questions like, do I love men or women? Why do I dress like a female if I do not want to attract men? Some of the transsexuals that I know can't visualize it. If it is confusing to the gay community, it must be more of a problem than we are aware of in society. We are part of the minority life style. Education is vital to our acceptance and existence in society. My friends know my male and female gender; I am comfortable about who I am and I try to give off a positive image. I am accepted as a friend to them. It does not matter if my clothes are male or female.

I had to contact the gay organization in Ottawa several years ago, to find out if there was a crossdressing group. After numerous calls I was able to find a person who had the phone number. We are in the dark, let's turn on the lights and tell them about ourselves. Ottawa has some good universities and colleges that have gay centres on campus, and I for one will be in touch with these centres. Gender Mosaic is a support group where young and old are welcome. The gay community should know what we represent. Our group is growing all the time. Let us build and educate. **Joanne Law**

Notes From the Underground
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To the Editor,

Firstly it was great to see everyone at the BBQ. You all seem in splendid form. As an outsider looking in, I can't help but to be moved by what I see - Individuals and community growing beyond expectations.

This is what I sought out when I started; things have changed since, and that's another story in itself. Congratulations to all members for the group, the newsletter, the get-togethers and most the opportunity to meet friends and new faces. However in NFTU Vol 5 NO1 in "25 Ways to Cope with Stress" got me into a lot of trouble. I could have sworn I had read "Drop watermelons from high places on your boss head." Anyways, it worked so I shouldn't complain. I have also included some articles for you to print.

Genevieve (Montreal)

A VERY SPECIAL DAY OF SHOPPING

by

Linda

Last Thursday, Nov 4th was a very special day in my life. My wife had agreed for the first time to go out shopping with me dressed as Linda. You must understand that not that long ago, only four or five weeks back, she would still not even talk to me about such an adventure. But times and attitudes change, and for some reason she had a change of heart on this point.

So at 4:30 pm on a Thursday Linda drove into the local Kmart shopping center and picked up Elizabeth (her wife) and they drove down to The Rideau Center. There they went through the stores looking for a winter coat for Elizabeth, having her try them on and passing comments as to their appearance. We went through the Bay and several other stores. At one point we were in Laura's, and Elizabeth wanted to try on a particular coat, so she tried to put her own coat down, but could not find a convenient location so the store clerk motioned to take it.

Elizabeth then said, "Just give it to HIM". All of a sudden there were several clerks who had some reason or another to come over to our area and spend a minute or two looking and listening to the

conversation, then going back to their regular routine. Anyway, we didn't like anything there that we could afford, so we went off to Eaton's to try some more. There, we had to break in the sales clerk again. As my wife and I talked, she had a strange look on her face, but then talked and joked with us. We found a dark brown borg coat that both Elizabeth and I liked on her.

It was now close to 7:00 pm, and we were hungry, so I decided to take her to the Elephant and Castle Restaurant. We sat in the lower part to have a full meal, were served without incident, and my wife admitted that she was surprised with the ease that the evening had proceeded. I guess she thought there would be a lot of people staring, pointing etc. That was not the case, in fact it went just as every other night out goes, very uneventful. That did surprise her though, she must not have believed I could pass that well as a woman even though I had often told her of our outings.

Now that supper was over, we were off to find some winter boots to match the coat, and later to look for a few birthday cards for upcoming family events. By the time 9:00 pm rolled around, we were both tired so we went to Samantha A.'s house so I could change back to John while Elizabeth and Howard chatted in the kitchen. On our way home, Elizabeth conceded that I didn't look too bad as a woman!!!

The following day I approached her on the prospects of going out again, and she offered to do it again in about two weeks, and that it would be ok to go out on average of twice a month. Now that is quite a change, and I must admit I am extremely grateful and willing to do anything to show her my appreciation for this acceptance on her behalf. Also a dozen red roses were delivered to her the following day with a note just saying, THANKS.

I wish the rest of you the same understanding and good fortune the I have found. On previous occasions, it was always others who had outings to share with their wives, and it hurt not to be able to share such an important part of my life with my wife.

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THE FUTURE IS NOW

by

Diana R. Coltridge

"Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Genesis 3:16

Although I cannot attest to the part of the curse dealing with bringing forth children, I can attest to the desire to love the man I'm with, and listen to his command. Whether this desire came before or after the Lord's word is not really important. What is important is that women have been submissive to men since the beginning of recorded history. What may be shocking to feminism is that many women are still afflicted with this original curse. Many women still love the men that rule over them, and even long for them when they are absent.

I've recently read about five hundred pages of classic feminist literature. (Ethics, A Feminist Reader.) Although it was well written, I just could not agree with the point of view taken by the different authors. To agree with them means you must deny both the reality that women love being with strong men and that women already have power in their lives.

In the Darwinian sense, the instinct to fall in love comes from prehistoric times. The woman that had the biggest and most powerful man ate better and her children ate better. Although she might be living with a dangerous bedfellow, it was a better life than that of the woman who starved while living with a wimp.

Over the millennia, the women that were most able to please the powerful and were psychologically able to withstand being submissive were successes. They were the women that could pass their genetic instincts on to well fed children.

The problems that have come about today are due to an inability to adapt to our own civilization. Mating with a big, strong, dangerous man is no longer the best route for success. However, all the old instincts instilled millennia ago still work their way

into the behaviour patterns of modern women. It is almost guaranteed that if a woman leaves an abusive, powerful mate, there will be a list of compliant women willing to take her place. He is type of man that was most able to provide for their prehistoric foremothers, and therefore he is described as being sexy.

Of course, he is no longer the man that spells success, and this is what brings about the disillusionment of feminism. Women are being told by their instincts that this type of man can bring her happiness, when he no longer can. In fact, his own life is in a shambles because he does not belong to this time. The man who is most successful in modern times is intellectually strong, instead of physically. Instead of the hunter, the man of this century is more socially bent. If he has muscles, it is for social reasons, and they are rarely used in a purely practical sense.

To love intelligently as well as passionately is the way to a woman's survival. If all the women of the world took a step back to look at a possible relationship objectively, and then chose only to mate with the men that treated them with respect and dignity, the abusive man would have to either adapt or become extinct.

Somewhere between the feminist ideal and the old ideal is happiness for most women. And naturally, as women are allowed better education and more choices, they will use these towards their own survival.

Man-hating feminism does not improve the lot of its followers. A well adjusted, happily married woman with a respectful husband will simply find it confusing. If her life brings her satisfaction, why should she hate the man she loves? The women that hate men don't have very much that she doesn't have. Traditionally, she has shelter and affection to compensate for her sacrifices. By following the old wives' advice to have build a career to fall back on, she can avoid the bitterness that comes with lost opportunity. Unlike fifty years ago, she can have it all. The technology is here and she is well suited for it.

As for discrimination, intelligence will prevail. Someone will find out that women are more likely to work for less money and realize that it only makes economic sense not to hire men. Taking the present

course to its extreme, the less men are able to find work, the less qualified they will be in the future, and women may find that they are working to pay taxes to support the problem of male unemployment. With the disappearance of North American manufacturing jobs, and the growth of the service industry, this is already happening.

Certainly, there are problems facing the men and women of today. But as much as things change, the more they will stay the same. The fittest will survive the race into the future. As women are well suited to what is success today, men simply might have to adapt, and if an old style male cannot survive and procreate, perhaps the stud of the future will find himself appealing to the whims of powerful women. How many men today survive because they satisfy a woman's need to live out her inherent fantasies of sexual submission and motherhood (either his children or even himself). Uneducated, unemployed males are taking on the roles that women held a century ago. Unprepared, they are doing it badly and turning to drugs and alcohol for emotional support.

And this is what radical feminism doesn't see. Men are not all-powerful and abusive. In these changing times, many are actually becoming helpless, confused, and dysfunctional. Man-hating feminism is simply out of touch with reality. If women don't want children, the technology is there. If they want jobs, the technology is there. Technology has made the lives of women more relevant and enriched. And the great majority of this technology was provided by men. Could men have given women this opportunity out of love?



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LE SEXE DES ÉTOILES

A Review by

Niki Avon

Last week, I went to see a film from Québec called "Le sexe des étoiles". It focuses on a teenaged girl's coming of age while addressing her father's sex change. It is the kind of film that grows on you but having watched it from a feminist point of view, I'm not sure if anyone else would like it for the same reasons I did. I enjoyed seeing the heroine go from a confused child longing for something that never existed, into a person aware of her own life and her own place in it. On that level, I must say I really enjoyed it as it brought back some memories.

On the level of a transgendered person, the transsexual character, I can honestly say, reminded me of a lot of TSs I've met and still know in my life. This is not a positive reaction. She was self-centered, more into forcing old acquaintances to regard her as a woman now, and looking for acceptance from the outside rather than the inside. The actor researched the role quite deeply, seeing he got the moves and self-pity down so well. I think that the difference between men and womyn is that womyn who are victims work very hard to become strong and deal with their emotional needs while men who become victims tend to try and make a life long sympathy plea with it. They refuse to not be victims any longer.

That is not to say that the character does not have any redeeming qualities but rather that she was like most TS's I've met. There almost seems to be an unwritten law that TS's must be self-absorbed and unable to see what others see. It is their greatest strength and their Achilles's heel. I realize that this is the product of their reliance on how their male psychiatrists view womyn, and their need to mirror these beliefs in order to qualify for the SRS. I disagree with it.

It is a prevalent view that the psychiatric profession is a helpful profession. It is not helpful but rather it is forever defending its own agenda and has managed to bamboozle most people and most governments into believing that it is there for the people. How many transgendered persons have really been helped by psychs to attain who they should be, in a way that is significant to the TG?

Either they (the clients) begin to reflect their psych's beliefs or they find another one more attuned with their beliefs, which can mean a long and very costly search. I have yet to find a psych who thinks that feminism is relevant, since most psychs are male and are trying to make people adapt to the white male's society rather than in becoming all they can be.

"Le sexe des étoiles" is ultimately a very personal film in the sense that everyone watching it will get a different impact and/or meaning from it. I identified with the child's point of view and that is what I got out of it. I could not view it from the TG point of view simply because I identified so strongly with the heroine, who is trying so hard to make sense of a situation that she is totally uncomfortable with.

That is not to say that the TS was not believable or even sympathetic in her own way, just that the female characters are more so. Much more. As the film wore on, my sympathies began to move more and more towards the daughter as the TS was so caught up in not being emotional about a situation that is extremely emotional. I found it ironic that this person still could not be emotional after all the (?) psychiatric sessions she must have had to go through, to get to where she is at.


The TS is neither bad or evil but simply almost irrelevant to the reality of those around her. No one hates her or wishes her ill by the end, although her ex-wife lands a few good punches in a drag out bout. They simply would prefer that she leave and go create her own life rather than trying to recapture that which is no longer possible. She is the impetus for our heroine becoming her own person, but in a rather deflective way. The TS is not a positive force on her child but rather a burden at the end. The child wishes her dad well but she must live her own life. I guess that as the film progressed, I went from disliking the heroine to being quite proud of her, and identified more with her than with the TS. I found myself wishing her well. She had worked so hard to accept her old dad in her new role, that she was now allowed to chase her own dreams.

To view it from the TS's point of view, this is not a very sympathetic portrayal but it is a rather honest one from all that I've seen of the milieu. She seemed to not have had anything on her mind but the SRS, without much thought to becoming a full living,

sharing humyn beings. This person reminded me too much of a few persons I have in mind as stereotypes, who are simply ridiculous and not relevant to whether or not they've had the SRS. In one case, because she has had the SRS. It goes to show that cutting something off gives you nothing, unless your heart and soul have something to replace it with.

The one jarring issue here was a scene where the heroine's friend brings her to a drag queen bar and this is passed as being the norm for transgendered persons, rather than for gays. Of course, her friend is a teenaged hustler so this reflected his own reality, but I wish that the makers of the film had made a statement clearing up what is bound to be a gross misconception of our reality. In a perfect world, we would be doing these films and creating our own mythology, rather than letting outsiders tell us what is and what isn't real for us. Everyone is forever telling us what we should think, do, or how we should act and I am beginning to resent the heck out of it. If it isn't the psychs, it is the film makers and it sucks big time. Sometimes it is even those within our own community. As a film reflecting society's fears and perceptions, this was a great film but as a true reflection of us, well, that depends on how you see yourself and those around you.

Anyway, I recommend the film for my own reasons. For anyone else I would suggest going to see it and making up your own mind. I saw it from a very pro-feminist point of view and I supported the actions of the womyn. You might see it very differently and I respect that. It is too good a film not to be seen by a lot of people and be debated and explored. The next time, it would be nice if the film I saw had been made by a transgendered person who was speaking from a very personal point of view and who gloried in that view. I might not always agree but I would probably relate in a more intimate way as a transgenderist.



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TV/TS SUPPORT GROUP

by

Samantha B.

Every Sunday evening we are given the use of a room by a local, well respected establishment for the purpose of TV/TS support group meetings. At the moment no one is making use of this facility.

I originally started an AA group for crossdressers and secured the room about 2 years ago. As it turned out; there were not any other AA group members who were also crossdressers. That makes sense since Ottawa's population is a lot smaller than that of Montreal or Toronto, etc. I therefore decided to drop the idea of an AA group for crossdressers. There are both straight or gay AA groups they can attend.

I then decided that we could hold regular TV/TS support group meetings. At the time I needed to share with others the thinking and feelings of being gender dysphoric, and living daily having to cope with the guilt and anxiety created by this condition.

In the beginning there was a large attendance but as time went by the group thinned out to practically zero.

I've found that running this project has been a learning experience for me. I seem to gather that most crossdressers are not psychologically or emotionally affected by their situation compared to what I thought would have been the case.

I must say however that I was affected very much by my situation. So from my viewpoint, being able to share once a week with others with the same concerns, I found that the interaction to be both enjoyable and therapeutic.

However, I am now living full time as a woman. Because of the fact that I had to go away from the crossdressing community and into the straight world to get my emotional and psychological support, my dependence on the crossgender community also diminished. I am now able to go to AA meetings as a woman and share my thoughts and feelings. I do not discuss gender related problems there at the other AA meetings as a woman, and

share my thoughts and feelings. I do not discuss gender related problems there as the other AA members, to the best of my knowledge, are not aware that I am biologically male. However if they do happen to be aware, they give me the benefit of the doubt by not raising the issue, nor do I feel treated as a male.

Yes, it would have been nice for our Sunday night transgendered support group to flourish rather than die out. Even after I started this group, I discovered that the Gender Identity Clinic of the Clarke Institute in Toronto runs a similar support group with the exception that there are 2 professional gender therapists on board for all meetings as compared to none in ours. However I've at least made some progress. Up until a month ago, it appeared that we would not be able to continue holding meetings at all because they traditionally only allow AA, and similar addiction groups to use their facilities. I brought our case before one of the directors, and received his approval to continue holding support group meetings at that location.

The bottom line is simply this. If the Sunday night gender support group does come to an end, all I can say is that this may be an opportunity we've let slip through our fingers. Just to give you an idea of how I would have liked to see our format:

- * every Sunday evening 7:30 - 9:30
- * peer support & counselling (only if requested)
- * open only to members of recognized TV/TS social and support groups
- * contact Gender Mosaic at 749-5203 or members may simply attend the next meeting.

Maybe other people would prefer another type of agenda. That's OK by me. Let's talk about it. At least it would indicate that there is interest in a support group. The only way to save a situation from failing is to begin by talking about it. Here are some alternative ideas that may be of interest:

- * Discussions on make-up, cosmetic etc
- * Discussions on electrolysis, hormones, problems with going bald,

- * Working on getting some experts from various fields in for open discussion with our members,

Here is a safe place to discreetly change & crossdress once a week and participate in the discussions. This, I am certain could be very therapeutic for some of us, who do not have the opportunity to crossdress that often. Then after the meeting is over they can change back to their male clothing if so desired. Believe me, this is not a place where you would feel threatened or intimidated. Instead it is a completely safe and relaxed environment. However this is one of the reasons why we allow members only. It is not a place for sexual come-ons etc. Simply for those of us who want to share and communicate, while at the same time exercising ourselves in the female role and participating in group discussion.

When I started this group, I really needed a lot of support. I was dealing with a family who I dearly loved, as I still do, but I could not bring myself to leave them. The guilt, the shame, anxiety & depression. All of these issues had to be dealt with. Well now I'm past these issues. I'm now at the point where I participate in support groups with regular straight men and women, and I participate as a woman. I even belong to an all women's support group. Let's face it. My need for this group is not nearly as great as before. However I'm still a transsexual in transition, and could well benefit from the Sunday night group. I'm there to share with others. I'm also willing to step out of the picture completely if that is what is required to motivate others to participate in the group. There is approximately 1 month left before I will be asked if I wish to sign an agreement to sign the room on for another year. It would be nice to get some feedback from members of the other groups, or even those people that would like to join.

I can be reached by contacting me through Joanne of Gender Mosaic at 613-749-5203 or by writing to me, Samantha B, at the club address.



GET UP AND STAND UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS

by

Genevieve L.

No, I'm not about to light up a joint and preach to you of the love of "jah" but I will say this: if you the battle for equal access to society has just begun think again. The discrimination against our community is so well embedded that even those organisations that supposedly pretend to advocate the betterment and as a minimum social tolerance towards our community.

How I have come to this conclusion? Well, get into my shoes for a second. I have been discriminated in my workplace. When my employer found out I was TS, they didn't hesitate to lay me off. It took me 20 months to prove to the Human Rights Commission (HRC) that I had been discriminated against. When their investigation was finished their conclusion was the same as mine. Somehow the tables had turned and I'm not quite sure when and how.

The HRC then negotiated for my return to work for the employer. However since I'm a social worker I work with kids in a youth center. I would have to agree to a study in my hometown community to find out if it was ok with the kids and/or their parents that a TRANSSEXUAL could work with kids.

It is interesting to note that I was an OK guy to work with kids before, but now that I'm a woman I'm not. I'm not at all at ease with the notion that the whole community that now knows me as Genevieve will soon find to my past private life. Also the whole notion of this study is based on stereotypes that society has of us. Frankly I don't want to be known as a third gender and the HRC says that the employer has to do this study on moral grounds. It is the same as if the employer wants to hire a known sexual abuser with a criminal record they told me. I don't know about you but to me I'm a victim of discrimination, not a criminal. It makes me fucking sick to my stomach.

No I'm not superwoman just an ordinary woman just like anybody else but I haven't forgotten history. Our fore fathers came here to make a better life for them and us and this didn't come by freely. They had to fight for Freedom and so do we, to have the BALLS to stand up to oppressors and bigots.

MARCH ON WASHINGTON

by

Genevieve Latella

Well I don't quite know where to start. It has to do with my being there at the Woodstock, or as they said "Queerstock" of the century. The Gay & Lesbian March on Washington - the greatest peace and love I have ever seen. No fights, no drugs no booze - just people being themselves, organized and determined to achieve their goals. 5 blissful days of partying and being high on life - it's the greatest drug! I'm so glad to have had the luck to be there.

But with all due respect, "you missed the boat". This was your opportunity to make a difference and it was royally botched. Everywhere the banners said "gay" & "lesbian" - I didn't see or hear much for TS, TG and TV. Oh yes I did attend a conference at the Holiday Inn. Downright boring it was, a lot of speeches about being present at the March on Sunday. Where the hell did they think I was going to be. I didn't come all the way down from Montreal to be told "Be there on Sunday." On top of that the cost of getting into this conference was \$10 US - might as well have just given them the money and get on with life. I felt I might get some kind of insight - instead just more boring testimonials about how hard life is. Dear God, don't they realize there is the greatest party on the continent outside? "I've got to get out of this place - these people are raining on my parade", I thought. So I exited and went back to the party.

Sunday, 25 April, 1993 - The March on Washington

The news reported 600,000 people. Well they lied. They were so well organized that they counted everyone who was there and by the end of it all, the count was at 2.2 million. The press downplayed it. Do you want to know how many TS's, TV's, TG's got there? One hundred..maybe two.

On Sunday before the march, maps were given by which you could find out where respective groups were situated on the grounds. I managed quite easily to find the TS's section and quite frankly I was so disappointed by what I saw that on the first opportunity I got, I split!

The march was to be fun, but also to be taken seriously. Do you expect to be taken seriously parading in front of the White House in your maid's outfit and heels and corsets? Come back to earth people and wear what people wear to be comfortable at a march. I'm not sure if its the dilemma I have or some prejudice and I have restrained myself from thinking out loud on this subject or the differences between TS's & TV's but showing up at events dressed inappropriately - it really irks me. It's like showing up at beach wearing climbing gear. I felt very sad for those who had the courage to be there for I couldn't help but cry at the source of laughter and ridicule this community provided for the March. IF WE WANT OTHERS TO TAKE US SERIOUSLY PERHAPS WE HAD BETTER TAKE OURSELVES SERIOUSLY.





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QUEST FOR HIRE

by

Sharon M.

I have now been living full time as a woman for 14 months and seeking employment for 22 months. I hope that what I have learned will provide help to those of you who are facing the same situation as me.

When I was contemplating going full time I knew that I did not want to live as a woman and spend all of my time staying at home watching TV or only occasionally going out to a mall. I felt that this would not be living as a woman in a true sense. My fear of applying for a job delayed my going full time more about eight months. Without actively seeking a job, working, or being a full time homemaker, saying that I was full time would be a lie.

In Sept/92 I got a job as a woman and began to live full time. This job was only occasional so in Nov/92 I quit in order to find something better. At the same time I was forced to go on welfare. Welfare required me to apply to two places a day and at the end of each month I had to bring in a list showing where I had applied, who I had spoken to, and what they had said. Although I had worked as a female for almost two months, the thought of applying for jobs as a female terrified me.

Now was the time to be humble. As a male I had worked for nine years as a Systems Analyst. My last job had paid me a salary in the late 40K range and I had been responsible for the operation of the computer systems of about a dozen companies. I had also successfully ran my own consulting business. Ideally I wanted to obtain a similar position, but I knew that as a woman, I didn't have the confidence to apply for a job in a Mac's store. I had the appearance part of things down pretty good, but meeting with someone without arousing any suspicions is much more difficult. And lets be realistic, if the person you talk to can tell that you are not a naturally born woman, they certainly will not hire you.

Due to my fears I had to break the whole process down into smaller steps. I would first try to get a job in a retail store. Hopefully I'd gain confidence from this, and then be able to go to a

secretarial job and finally get a job in the computer industry.

So off I went to the St. Laurent shopping centre to apply for jobs. The first day my goal was to be able to apply at one store and come out alive. I spent awhile looking for stores that weren't busy and that had a friendly looking woman working there. But that day I couldn't do it. I was too scared.

On my second day I did a little better. I went into a Grand and Toy store and first picked up a few pens. This way if I chickened out at least I'd just appear to be a regular customer. I went up to the counter to apply but nothing came out. My voice wouldn't work. So I paid for my pens and left. After walking in and out of several more stores and not being able to apply, I went home feeling very discouraged with myself.

The next day I made a realization. Trick #1 : It was easiest to apply at a large department store such as a Zeller's or KMart because at these places all I had to do was go to the customer service desk and ask for an application. I would only have to say a few words.

So I went into a Woolco store and with all the courage I could muster I asked for an application. To my terror and surprise, the woman at the counter asked me if I could come in for an interview the next morning. I certainly hadn't expected to get an interview at the first place I applied to. The interview actually went well and the experience gave me more confidence.

I continued to concentrate my efforts on department stores. I hit every Zellers, Woolco and Kmart in the city. I was now well on my way to getting my list of sixty places to give to welfare at the end of the month. Remember that I needed to have the names of all the people that I had talked to. Trick #2 : If I was too afraid to ask the person's name, I could read it off their ID badge. With each store I went to I was able to say a little more and I was yet to have a questioning look from anyone.

Now I was ready for my next step which was to go into small boutiques. Initially I shied away from stores that had help wanted signs. I was terrified of actually getting a job. At this point all I wanted to do was gain confidence in applying, and get my list of 60 places for welfare. I'd pick small stores that had

women working in them. (It wasn't until my 3rd month that I had the courage to ask men for jobs.) By this time I also had a resume prepared that emphasized the little retail experience that I had. If you are going to apply at stores you need to have a resume because they usually ask for one. My computer programming resume didn't help at all when applying for retail so I had to alter my work history a little.

I found that things were going well and that I was passing perfectly. Still before I entered each store I worried that some disaster was just around the corner. Fortunately that disaster never happened. I found that I was able to apply at nine stores a day before the stress got to be too much. Trick #3 : Apply at large malls. This way you have a lot of stores to choose from and you don't have to go outside in the freezing cold during winter.

By the end of the first month I had applied at 80 places and had two interviews. I was still very nervous phoning about interviews because I didn't know if my voice would sound okay over the telephone. Trick #4 : Announce your name first when you call someone back about an interview this way if your voice sounds male to the other person, they will just think that you are a woman with a deep voice.

I came close to getting a full time job running a wine store. I was now also applying at stores that had help wanted signs. My confidence had improved, but still every time I'd get ready to go out to apply it was very stressful. Once I got going it would get easier. I continued to apply at nine places about every second or third day.

The best time to apply is at the beginning of fall for Christmas, and about two months in advance of each new season. It used to be true that stores would take on extra staff for Christmas, but this is generally no longer the case. With the recession, the stores have cut back on staff hours, so they usually give the extra hours to the staff or re-hire people who used to work for them. The only exception to this rule is that they will hire students.

Stores also mostly hire for part time work. It isn't very beneficial financially if you're still going to be on welfare since they take two thirds of anything you make. It's still worth doing however, because you gain work experience as a woman.

The most useful thing to know about stores is that they usually don't put up help wanted signs. They have so many people coming in every day applying that they always have hundreds of resumes on file. So there is no need to advertise.

During my second month I became confident in myself enough to start sending out resumes for programming and secretarial jobs while I continued to apply at stores. I now expanded my search to include the classier women's fashion stores. These were a bit more pressurized because there are usually several well dressed women working there and often three or four would be standing around me when I'd apply.

I was now getting an interview about every six weeks. I was learning however that the only way to get hired is to either be a student or to have worked in a store before. Usually I would be competing against 300 people for any job opening and I'm sure that many of them had retail experience. I did come close to getting hired a few times. I actually didn't get one job at a Cotton Ginney Plus store because I was too small and the manager thought that I might intimidate the customers who were all larger sized women.

In Feb/93 I had my first interview as a woman for a computer programming job. I felt that it had gone well and it was really good for my confidence. I continued to send out resumes and go to stores. By this point I no longer had to provide welfare with lists as I had proved to them that I was really trying.

My confidence took a major skyrocketing in April when I started doing contract work part time. This continued in August when I went to board meetings at a large government organization and became involved in a promotional campaign. I met and had lunch with several managers and I was accepted as a woman without question. I used to be terrified at the thought of getting a job, but after this I was no longer afraid. I had never noticeably been read so passing was no longer an issue.

Proof that I had gained confidence came when in two days I went out and applied at 78 stores. This was well beyond my previous limit of 9 per day. But by this point I had applied at over 600 stores and I began to see that I couldn't get hired

without previous retail experience. I stopped applying at stores.

I became involved with a job placement agency in August. They made a lot promises but didn't do very much. Don't expect an agency to get you a job and expect them to do the minimum. But stick with them because anything they do is helpful. The best thing was that they helped me get references from my two most recent employers and they agreed to refer to me as Sharon.

In September I took my resume and altered it to emphasize the aspects of all of my previous jobs that could be considered secretarial. I felt that I probably was not getting interviews for secretarial work because I was "overqualified". By having a new down-played resume I hoped that I would overcome this problem. I had also been spending hours at home teaching myself how to type and could now type 60 words per minute. I was still applying for programming jobs but they are rare.

I began doing volunteer secretarial work at a large institution. This has also been a major confidence booster. I have met several people and made a few friends. They have been very impressed with my work performance and a few of them are trying to help me get a job.

I would like to take a moment to emphasize the value of volunteer work. It is a great way to build confidence and a great way to network. Many of the women involved in volunteer work come from affluent backgrounds and can provide opportunities and help that you wouldn't find anywhere else. I strongly recommend volunteer work as a way of learning to integrate into normal society. I feel that volunteer work is a better way of gaining confidence than taking a night course. In a course you can attend the classes and then go home with very little interaction with others. Volunteer work forces you to interact because you are in close quarters with others who you are working with. If you are afraid of doing volunteer work then you might consider taking a night course first.

Volunteer work also gives you documented proof that you have been working as a woman. The other great thing about volunteer work is that at most places there is a shortage of volunteers so it is quite easy to get in.

I am no longer worried about whether my voice will sound female over the telephone. I no longer pace around before calling someone about a job, I just do it. By mid November I'd had two more secretarial/admin interviews. Both had gone well and I came close on both of them. One of the people told me later that she couldn't see anything that I needed to improve in my interview skills. I also had my best ever interview for a programming job. I actually think that the reason that I didn't get that job was because I was a woman. I also had a successful meeting with a potential client which would have helped me get my own business going again.

I still don't have a job but I believe that this is all due to the recession. I can now apply for jobs, attend interviews, and work as a woman with little concern as to whether I'll pass or not.

Just a few last words of advice to those involved in a job search in a new gender role. First of all there is nothing wrong with admitting to yourself or others that you are afraid or that you lack confidence. In a man's world you aren't allowed to admit these things. After all men have all the answers and are fearless aren't they? As a woman you no longer have to live behind this facade. If you don't admit that you are afraid then you can never take any steps towards overcoming that fear. Also don't be impatient, and break the whole thing into doable steps. The only way to overcome fear and to become confident is by doing those things that you are afraid of. This can take a long time. It took me a year and I thought it would have been longer. And no, I am not entirely fearless, nor do I ever expect to be.

Lastly, there will always be people who will pride themselves in saying that you will never make it. These people will be friends, relatives, and even members of the gender community. It's up to you to determine whose criticism is valid and whose is based on jealousy or a lack of understanding. Fortunately, there will always be others who will have faith in you. These people may even have more confidence in you than you have in yourself. Feed on their words like a starving animal. If it wasn't for Karen P., Belinda and Sande telling me how they believed that I could do this, I probably wouldn't have gotten this far this soon.

Happy hunting!

Note: The following article is an opinion-piece in response to the contents of a speech transcript titled "Legal Positivism" by JoAnne Roberts, found in Tapestry Issue #63. Credit for the tone of the article must also be given to the keynote address by Carol Beecroft, also found in that same issue.

"God is not always on the side of the big battalions, but often puts his weight behind those with the best shots."

Voltaire

THE LAST SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

or

The Mirage of Legal Positivism

by

Belinda Doree

Our society appears to be one at the heights of its powers. Yet, I submit that the very sophistication and complexity of many of our institutions are simply a pretty veil, covering a deteriorating core. It is an illusion; a fantasy image, completely detached from the reality of how things are really going.

Only the most thoroughly conditioned codependant enthusiast can disregard the apprehension that society is turning to shit, and that the basic humanity of people is being sucked out like dirty oil from a machine. Indeed, the whole zeitgeist of many of the elites who run our society seems to be that in order to get a smoothly running society, we should get rid of those pesky, irrational, offensive humans who throw a wrench into the logical wheels of progress.

In the mish-mash world of crossdressers we should be first to recognize this phenomena. The reason many of us came out of the closet was the desperate desire to express our humanity in all its diverse, and to some, perverse variety. Indeed, one can arguably look at our whole para-culture as orange droppings squeezed out of a society being wrung dry of its personality, character, and sense of purpose.

One would think then that one of the most cherished components of our para-culture would be this liberty, no, *need* to be who we really are. Yet a

cursory glance shows that we have learned nothing. Our own "elites" not only don't understand the mechanisms and mindless inhumane logic which are screwing society up, they are embracing them with vigour!

The end result being the rapid building of new institutions and organizational structures which dominate the behaviour of trannies. At the same time they pump out the propaganda that they are fighting for our rights and freedom. Some of the highest awards in North American crossdressing are going to patronizing screwpots who *never* tell crossdressers how to have faith in themselves, in **who they are**. Instead they preach on how to dress, *why* they dress, when they can get an erection, what they can write about; in short, how to compromise your soul to develop the right "image". All of this just to impress the shrinks and Jerry Falwell clones. Stupidity of the highest order. The fact that they declare these "truths" with all the uprighteous arrogance that only narrow minded ideologues can muster, cannot hide the stench of this idiocy. If they actually do something that benefits us, it is more often by coincidence, than by design.

Instead of using our humanity and what it can teach us to build our culture and help better society, our elites have become deciples of logic and slaves to process. They mistake "methods" for solutions.

This can be highlighted in how JoAnn Roberts plans to further the status of crossdressing individuals and to convince society to treat these people with dignity. She wants to bring into law, "A Gender Bill of Rights" using a strategy centering around the pillar of "legal positivism".

NOT EVEN A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

Right off the bat - Do you know what legal positivism means? I would suggest not, and that in itself is a great weakness. You have to be an "expert" to understand it. This in turn means you have to be an expert to understand and treat crossdressers with dignity. To be an expert that understands crossdressers, means you have to be a shrink. Right away that tells you it won't work! Don't you just love logic?

According to JoAnn Roberts, "legal positivism is a Philosophy of law It is a school of Constitutional interpretation that claims individual

rights exist if and only if they are [my emphasis] written into laws."

This philosophy just proves that a healthy society will never be designed by lawyers. This philosophy was designed to make lawyers rich. Legal positivism is Orwellian double-speak for **legislating the obvious**. It is "method" and "process" with no concrete results! Can one imagine a more horrible society? Because what that philosophy also implies of course, is that if you don't have your particular "label" written into law, it is quite *legal* for everyone to treat you like shit. So hurry up! Hire a lawyer and get protection now before it's too late! We throw thugs in jail for doing the same thing to grocery clerks.

We don't even put dogs through such nonsense. The current laws are probably simple and go along the lines of "All dog-owners shall treat their pets in a humane fashion". Pretty simple really - anyone with common sense understands what this means. Of course there are people who are jerks and mistreat their pets. It's the only way they can feel like Napoleon. Ergo you have Robby the Redneck beating the hell out of Bowser the German Shepherd. The lawyers' solution is to bring in a special law protecting the rights of German Shepherds. Well, one can extrapolate from here because now, to make sure *every* dog is protected, one has to agitate for legislation for every breed and combination thereof.

Doesn't that seem kind of stupid? And yet legal positivism is exactly the same mentality, the same logic, except applied to humans.

IF IT AIN'T BROKE - DON'T FIX IT

The Constitution of the United States of America is regarded as one of the greatest documents ever produced. It gives the operating instructions for the most diverse country in the world in less than 30 pages in big, easy to read type. The manual for a VCR runs longer and requires a consultant from NASA.

"We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of happiness."

Everything you need to be a happy "I gotta be me" tranny is already laid down in law. **EVERYBODY** has these rights. There is nothing wrong with the law. The problem is with people who don't understand how to apply these basic ethical guidelines. Rewording the law is not going to change that! In the same way that calling someone who is crippled, "physically challenged" is not going to do anything to solve his "real" problems.

Indeed, it actually takes attention *away* from the central importance of these eternal truths. Because remember what legal positivism says: that if you don't have the lobbying pull, the political muscle to get special legislation, then **your rights don't exist**. You are not worthy of dignified treatment.

This is counterproductive to the extreme, since one of law's essential purposes is to **protect the weak** from the arbitrary wielding of power. Plus it doesn't really help.

Feminists have been getting additional legislation for the past 100 years. But the fact remains that the Pill and mass technology have done more for their liberties than all the different slants you can give to "self-evident truths". Computers have done more for nerds than all the protective legislation ever written. How about Black Americans who were the first, perhaps, to really put their faith in legal positivism? 25 years have passed and it takes real political skills to put a positive spin on their status. The gays imitated the blacks and now find themselves trying to put out brushfires all over the place, as bigots try to get their label off the books, to make it "legal" to discriminate against them. Which means instead of putting energy in building, they now have to spend energy defending. They are defending something which "image-wise" means everything, but in reality means nothing. How ironic that it is the original wording in the Constitution which invariably comes to the rescue. The lawyers are happy though.

LEGAL POSITIVISM VS THE REAL LIFE TEST

Where does legal positivism end? Do you know how many labels you would have to add to make sure everyone's rights existed? What if, in the meantime, you get "caught" and your label isn't on the list? Do you play legal hop-scotch and squeeze yourself into another label?

"You're a transvestite? You're fired!"

"Ugh, sorry, but ugh... ugh... I'm gay!! You bet!!
HaH! You can't touch me! Na Na Na-Na Na!!"

Unfortunately, it doesn't usually work out that way. Only corpses can be described by just one label. Maybe you're "kinky" or "perverted" or maybe you're "fat" or "ugly". Whatever. *Some* "adjective" which is totally irrelevant to the work you're doing. If you're talented, have brass balls, the persistence of a mule, and a gift for gab, you can play this shell game for a long time.

The odds however are stacked against you. See, it is always easier for an unethical person to use a system of rules to fuck you about, than it is for a victimized person to use that same system to stop them. They can "promote" you to a position where your abilities and experience are not sufficient. They can then legally say one thing to let you go, but their eyes will be saying, "Good riddance to you, sicko!" If all else fails, they can do the reverse and let you go for being "over qualified", smirking over the sweet irony of it all. It's happened before, and I guess it will happen again, until the "right to be over qualified" gets put into law.

Your proper point of attack is the unethical person, not the system. The system is simply the medium in which he works, and *hides*. The more complex the system, the easier it is for him to hide. The more complex the system the more reliant people become on "experts" to navigate the system.

Invariably, successful arguments occur when you fight your case on basic ethical principles, on self-evident truths. *So* self-evident that a judge has a very simple choice. It's OK to be a bigot, or it is not. And if the judge is a crook? Well, I refer you to Chapter 8 of the Anarchist's Cookbook. Who better suited to make things go "boom-boom" in the night?

LEGAL POSITIVISM VS HUMAN NATURE

Hegel, the German philosopher wrote that all of history can be viewed as the struggle for status. Within that context, people don't really fight for something abstract like rights; they fight for their interests. Cynical, but true.

Instinct makes us understand that it is in our interest to cooperate with others who may be different, to use varying skills and insights to help

better understand and survive the complexity of "reality". Instinct also makes us perceive anything that is different as a threat which must be avoided, or destroyed. The one instinct which is on the lookout for new ideas, perceptions and skills, is continually being countered by the impulse to be threatened by those very ideas and perceptions.

Legal positivism is linguistic trickery akin to calling ICBMs "Peacemakers". It plays to our threat instinct by highlighting and focusing on our innate differences, instead of our abilities to contribute to society. It defines people not by what they can do, but by what they are. It is a trap. A person, using his will, can affect change in the former. They can do nothing about the latter. And there you have it. A culture .. a society, screaming and yelling over things they can't change.

In the legal positivism arena of rhetoric, media manipulation and "image over substance" which is required for success, there inevitably arrives a compulsion to enforce a bland homogeneous visage where none exists. This, in the hope that they become less vulnerable to propaganda "attack" from competing groups.

That's why the feminist movement kicked out the lesbians in the 70's, even though the dykes provided the lion's share of the anger and energy required. That's why the gays tried to hide the drag queens under the carpet, and shoo them away when they became TS's, even though they're the ones who started the whole gay rights movement. Too radical. Too offensive. Too shocking for the general public was their logic. Ethical behaviour swamped by a consensus of opinion, for the "good of the fight", which justifies trampling and disparaging other people's "rights" to be who they are, and express their beliefs. At least these people's *existence* was acknowledged.

One would hope that the transgendered community, having the benefit of studying this history, will do better. It can, of course, get a lot worse.

LOOSE CONNECTIONS WITH REALITY

In a subsequent issue of Tapestry (Issue #65), there is a description of a classic case of detachment from reality. The article reports on a group of trannies who set up a booth at the

American Psychiatric Convention. James Green writes,

"What really amazed me were the **doctors** who said, 'We don't have this problem in our city,' or 'town' or even 'country.' One Italian national psychiatrist believes *they don't exist*." [my emphasis].

Let's put this into perspective. These are not "average" citizens who are busy with jobs, marriage, kids, mortgage payments, and who may be too busy to catch us on Donahue. We are talking about professionals with "x" years of academic training and supposedly "y" years of experience and self-study all in the singular field of human behaviour. How would you describe a board certified psychiatrist who told you that there were no transvestites in their city or country? ...Detached from reality? Unethical? Professionally ignorant? Professionally incompetent? Is it a stretch to call him a stupid fucking idiot?

Little wonder that this profession is the one that makes the most use of its own services.

Now we swing back to the U.S. transgendered community. Here we have Carol Beecroft stating that **there are no erotically motivated TV's** - even when sexual contact mags outsell Femme Mirror 5 to 1. Is she out of touch? Or are her constant erotophobic ramblings a pathetic attempt to shape every crossdresser after her own image?

We have Joanne Roberts stating that fetishistic transvestites are an "non-existent category" - even though her photo magazines are literally awash with TV's wearing corsets, stilettos, and leather. She then states that there are some poor insecure darlings that don't want to be associated with this non-existent category. As if the reverse couldn't be true? How many French Maids does she see grovelling in front of shrinks like miracle starved peasants in the act of receiving grace? Does she really think it's *that* hard to put a negative spin on TS's?

How ironic that right below her article is a picture of her advertising one of her own products. We see her *absolutely resplendent* in bombshell blonde wig, classic stiletto pumps and a plunging, body hugging dress made from PVC. Coincidence? It reminds me of the priests in the Dark Ages who

kept insisting that the Earth was flat, even after loading up their coffers with gold from sailors who had sailed around the world. Is it any wonder that *their* entire "para-culture" disintegrated from trying to maintain these inherent contradictions. Can we afford the same thing?

Let's put this into perspective. These aren't green, dumb trannies fresh out of the closet. They have wrapped a good part of their lives and self-validation around the wearing of skirts. These are the people who are supposed to be running the show, and they don't even know who's playing! Is it any wonder that drag queens still feel more comfortable identifying with the gay community? Is it any wonder that straight French Maids in the U.S. feel more at ease in gay S&M clubs?

The "complaint" here is just not a disgusting show of disrespect to significant portions of the community; the charge is **impending incompetence!** These people want to lead the charge into the special interest arena, and they haven't done their homework. It is obvious that they haven't given any serious study to other rights groups and political movements since they are already repeating previous mistakes. All I sense is this great haste and fear that we "will get left behind". The gays did it this way, so we should do it this way. In that direction lies folly. Folly, because since they don't even know the make-up of the crossdressing world, there is no way they have made allowances for very significant and relevant differences between us, and other minority groups. Differences in numbers, motivations, resources, access to media, which have a dramatic impact on how we should go about all this.

I have a foreboding that they're about to commit the same historical folly of the peasants going out to fight the Empire on the Empire's own terms. Make the same colossal error that Argentina committed against the British in the Falklands, and Hussein against the U.S. In each case you had a Third World country who thought it could fight like a First World country against a real First World Country. They got their asses kicked. Nothing more embarrassing than starting a fight and then getting your face rubbed in shit. Compare that to Vietnam and Afghanistan where simple peasant armies beat off supposedly unbeatable Western nations. Consider Somalia. Here we find a country that spends \$300 billion U.S. in defence, getting arm-twisted and frog-marched to the negotiating table

by a bunch of nomads, whose funding comes from defrauded Canadian welfare cheques.

There can be no doubt that we are the "peasants". We can't fight for our rights the same way the feminists do. We can't fight on Jesse Helms terms. They have got their own TV channels. Donahue is moving on to other things. We can't fight a war based on rhetoric. It's too easy to make fun of a man in a French Maid's outfit. It's too easy to make fun of a male zapping their body hairs, filling their bodies with hormones, and talking in funny voices. We don't want Oral Roberts telling millions of superstitious numbskulls that we're the "Scourge of God".

We have to fight on our terms, on basic ethical principles. Our tactics should be based on guerilla tactics. Maximum flexibility. Maximum speed. Maximum capability to adjust to local conditions. Maximum decentralization. Maximum interpersonal communication. Maximum emphasis on creating small self-sufficient groups. Minimum overhead. Fuck heavy baggage. Mental or physical. It makes you useless.

I suggest that to do otherwise is political if not social suicide. If all this sounds a bit militaristic, so be it. Personally I'd rather party and fine tune whole body orgasms. But if someone wants to start dragging people into a fight, they better be prepared to show that they want to WIN, not just "look" like they're trying.

SOME RANDOM BABBLING AND TABLE POUNDING

I understand that some will argue that I am being horribly naive and idealistic, that legal positivism is the political reality of the world today and that's that. So buck up, wear sensible shoes, and soldier on.

I submit in return that the politics of today have very little to do with reality. Politics, in the positive sense, is an activity which coordinates diversity of thought and perspectives. Legal positivism has fractured society, turning it into a chaos of competing interests, which turns ideas into ideology, and makes coordinated action against social problems impossible. As situations start to unravel they simply add to the cycle by presenting themselves as solutions, to the problems they themselves have caused. Indeed many raise their

operating funds by intentionally inducing a mood of panic. In our haste to grab our "chair at the table", not only will we be ineffectually adding to this morass, we will be volunteering ourselves up as scapegoats for the ensuing mess.

The fracturing, and ripping apart that legal positivism causes, occurs at every level of the group involved even down to individuals. Even between friends. I type in Genevieve's remarks [March on Washington] about that gutsy French Maid and I'm gritting my teeth and I can barely unclench my fists to type. Like a French Maid is not good enough to share your air.

Well I envy that French Maid. I wish I was there with her. One of the best days in my life, and I've had a lot of good ones, was walking to my first GM meeting in a French Maid's outfit and I was fucked if I was going to blend in and hide. Everyone should have such days. It's very good for your mental health.

I won't deny that such legislation won't help some individuals at specific points in time. But as a culture, or a community or whatever we call ourselves.. it won't make a difference, it may rip us apart. A law clearly specifying that a TS in transition can use the ladies loo, while not glamorous, does more real good than all the proclamation of gender rights you can shoe-horn into the books. Laura Masters using the basic ethical principle of "equal access to society" has and will hopefully continue to do, more real good than all the high visibility manoeuvring down south.

Imagine if we could produce one Laura Masters in each province? I suggest that our legislative problems could be solved relatively quickly. How long would it take to get to the point where we could get thousands of trannies to march on Parliament Hill? What good would it really do?

Some would further argue that attitudes towards gays and blacks and women have changed. I would suggest that the legislation has nothing to do with it. It was the very process of fighting for your dignity, the act of standing up and being counted, just the plain "exposure" that had more influence. If women have gained status it was due to those who got off their butts and joined the workforce. If they didn't get satisfaction there, they started their own businesses. The small middle class for blacks came

about by those individuals who took Martin Luther King's bootstrap advice to "burn the midnight oil". That's the reality of gaining *real* status. Our whole community should be centered around trying to get people to develop their innate strengths, abilities, self-confidence and self-sufficiency to their fullest potential. This is so they can get some means of control over their destiny in a hostile environment.

It appears we often go in the opposite direction, leaving our destinies up "to some higher power", turning our culture in one giant 12 step recovery program. Another case of confusing a temporary "method" of coping with difficult conditions as a permanent solution to one's problems. We are unwittingly creating a culture of professional victims. As if there weren't enough people out there ready to make us real victims.

We should be encouraging the very highest standards because even that may not be enough. To avoid the despair of that reality, we patronize the opposite, and thus ensure our "status". We confuse testimonials with "personal growth". If you look into your pasts I suggest you'll see that those days of personal growth came not when you talked about it; it was when you DID something about it.

Our limited amount of energies could be put to better use elsewhere. Quite frankly, I think that Joanne Roberts developing and producing the people required to build 3 or more organizations like "Renaissance" would do more real good than asking for permission to do what we're already doing. If the now mythical "5% statistic" has any validity then a cursory glance at club memberships would indicate that over 90% of crossdressers are so deep into the closet you have to apply makeup by airmail. You would think there would be a big drive to get people to start clubs of *any* kind in every suburb. An yet, when I look down south there seems to be a concerted effort to make sure there will be no more Tri-Ess's, no more Rennaisances's, no new clubs at all.

Instead of concentrating on small organizations that open doors for crossdressers, the emphasis is focused on big organizations that regulate those that already exist. Energy gets put into the "Congress of Representatives", a bureaucratic organization which, if it ever gets going, will simply duplicate coordinating functions already being handled by IFGE. After four years of existence

they rewriting by-laws. They haven't done anything yet, but they're still rewriting by-laws! A horrible misdirection, if not waste, of time, energy, and talent. All it will do is instill a drive to unproductive conformity. Any initiatives truly innovative, creative and relevant to the situation at hand, will take place farther and farther away from the influence of these organizations. Their sole function will be to get them under wraps, to make sure everything goes through proper channels, to make sure the proper procedures are followed, to make sure the correct image is being displayed. Very heavy baggage.

THE FINE ART OF MUDSLINGING

I am arguing against a method, a process. But a "process" is inanimate and cannot be swayed by argument. All I can try to do is show what happens when people, even good people lose faith in their judgement of what is right, lose sight of basic ethical guidelines, and put their faith in a process. See, it doesn't matter then if JoAnne Roberts is a good person or bad, compassionate or self-centred, brilliant or dumb. This is because the process itself produces answers independently of the person involved. Indeed the person becomes completely detached from the consequences of their actions. Everyone says that Joanne Roberts is a really nice warm-hearted person. What I'm saying is that as long as she stays under the glamour of legal positivism, it won't matter how nice she is.

The fact is that any system is, by itself, AMORAL; it's simply a machine which spits out "answers". That is what makes dependence on it so scary. Thus we have Islamic fundamentalists demonstrating combat tactics by charging machine guns while waving their Korans in the air. To their leaders their death demonstrate belief. To me it demonstrates waste, and a contempt for their subjects. We see the Pope giving governments hell for the state of their children. We then see the Pope in a Mexico City ghetto urging people to denounce family planning, to denounce birth control, and to obey God's directive to "be fruitful". This is the answer that fits his system..but it doesn't help the kids does it? Reality standing right in front of his face, sticks its tongues out. The system goes on to its next problem. Being nice doesn't cut it.

WW1 and WW2 were fought, for the most part, by competing management systems. Reality of

the battle situation had little to do with it. There is of course the story of the general who actually left the staff room and went to look at the battlefield. When he actually saw the mud, he cried, "MY God! (who had nothing to do with it) Did we actually send men out in that?" He then broke out in tears. A "decent" man no doubt, but of little help to the 250,000 men who got to prematurely investigate civilization's most optimistic myth.

And what about those 250,000 men? Now, you can't run the military like a committee meeting. But you would think that after the first 50,000 guys got mowed down at least one non-conformist would have had the audacity to phone back and comment, "Guess what? Your plan is not working". And like lemmings they sprinted to their deaths. Waste.

I don't believe in anarchy; any system is better than that. (although it would suit young males in their prime) But a system that does not have ethical safeguards to double check proposed actions, does not promote empathy with the people those actions will affect. The system elevates itself above common sense soon the group starts ripping itself apart from inner inconsistencies. This ripping apart breeds absolutism and extremism which of course keeps adding gas to the fire. With everyone arguing from fixed positions the group digresses into a combination logjam/finger-pointing exercise. Nothing gets solved. There's no progress, no iterative steps towards solutions. Everybody starts sitting around with their thumbs up their butts, hoping for some version of a crossdressing Moses to come along and straighten the whole thing out.

So, in the end it doesn't matter if JoAnne Roberts is nice. Nice is for your wife, for your lover. Nice, beyond good manners, has nothing to do with what we should do to better our lot. In fact JoAnne Roberts did more good when she knew how to be a jerk, a real pain in the ass. She was at her best when she was waging her one tranny war against Tri-Ess. It was great the way she used to stuff the stupidity of Virginia Prince right back into her face.

She was a person who championed diversity and openmindedness. She symbolized common sense and flexibility. She used to speak in plain simple language and could think fearlessly. When she "made peace" with Tri-Ess I had hoped it was because she had big fish to fry.

Obviously I was wrong.

When you read her article it should become clear that this is not the Joanne Roberts of old. This is someone who talks like a slick lawyer, hiding complete fallacies amongst a jumble of facts. The concept that one of the best minds in the community has traded in her brains for ideological crutches can only be greeted with nausea.

SUMMING UP - THE BIG FINISH

If someone wants to spend their time fighting for these gender rights then that's their business. I would hope, at the minimum, that they argue for these right on basic ethical principles, not on a carefully screened selection of facts. For example, the mythical "we're 5% of the population", where, momentarily, anyone *sniffing* a pair of panties is included, or on some poster child motivation for crossdressing that everyone has to squeeze themselves into. Guess what? Some people won't. And all it takes is a few pictures to show the reality that not all crossdressers are spiritual, asexual, shaman, berdache types. At least not all of the time!

Of course I am also suggesting that instead of being humans fighting for transvestites rights..the right to wear a certain style of clothes, that they consider the option of being transvestites fighting for human rights. Screw the jaded concept of just being another special interest group. Instead why not try to be the *last* special interest group. A special interest group based on ethical treatment for everyone.

Fantasy? Very likely. It has the unique disadvantage of being harder, of being the path covered with thorns. It means you can't relax, as an individual, or as a group. You are always threatening to reach an awareness of reality that may not, no..will not be pleasant, and still go on. It means we can't always be "nice", sometimes we would have to fight dirty, and still try to notice it if we're using a cause for an excuse, because deep down you may really enjoy it.

And let there be no disillusion about what we're up against. The use of integrated logic and systems management, with its organizing criteria of efficiency and market share are so well imbedded into our society, has taken on forms so sophisticated, it is very difficult to separate them from the people

they're connected to. You may have to consider the concept that Jesse Helms is not a complete asshole, that Rush Limbaugh may have a point every now and then. Difficult indeed. It requires a tact and patience that I obviously have not developed.

And yet what better group of people to aim high? You'd have to go back to the Christians in Nero's Rome to find people who made such a big deal about showing their faces in public.

Is it possible to find a more chaotic social mix? We have every extreme and combination of every dichotomy in the same stew: gay/straight, male female, masculine/feminine, dominant/submissive, active/passive, the need to be demanding, the need to be compassionate. Where else can you find people who can navigate this and stay sane. In a way is that not what we all want to do? To be able to go anywhere, and not change who you are and what you believe? Isn't that real power? Isn't that a form of power for person to be able to sit on a family based Tri-Ess support meeting, pack their bags, and catch a piercing clinic with the Gay S&Mers at "Living in Leather" conference, bop back and show up bright-eyed and bushy tailed, ready to do our bit for king and country Monday morning. What many crossdressers can handle as a matter of course would put most people into shock. It is a strength we have. Learn how to use it.

We do have the advantage of history. Remember whose birthday is coming up. Remember how one long haired radical with no formal education, and 12 unemployed fishermen put the world on its ear. Remember how simple their message was. Ethics. They are the only values we have in common. We all want to be treated ethically. Remember how that simple message sliced through the bullshit in society that the Pharisees had set up. Study how that message got perverted, first by blind faith in authority, which excludes the use of one's rational mind; and then by blind logic, which excludes all those attributes (intuition, reason, emotion, experience, common sense) that makes us complete humans.

It just may be that we are the right people at the right time to start something really big. We have the talent. Ethics gives us the tools.

CONSTABLE PRESENTATION

by

Samantha B.

A number of months ago, Linda took on the project of having the Local police departments send their representatives over for a discussion session with the members of Gender Mosaic.

Actually I am rather pleased to note that someone has finally taken the initiative to implement such an undertaking. This topic had been bandied about for the last 3 years but no one had done anything about it until Linda got involved.

On Nov 20/93, Darryl Upshaw of the Nepean Police Department came over to the Ambiance at 7:00 PM to meet with us and after some informal chit chat, he explained to us his position in the department and briefly gave us some of his background. I was impressed with his credentials, believe me. At around 7:30 PM it wasn't too certain as to whether Jerry Doucette of the Ottawa Police Department would be arriving. Therefore we decided to commence the discussion with Darryl.

Most of our discussion centered around a useful list of critical concerns which had previously been prepared by Linda. However the one issue that concerns most crossdressers centered around the use of public washrooms, particularly woman's washrooms. The bottom line on this issue is that there is no set criteria. The position the police take is that if we conduct ourselves in a manner not offensive to women in the bathroom, then we are not committing any crime. However he feels that we should spend as little time as possible in the bathroom.

Around 8:30 PM, Jerry Doucette of the Ottawa Police Department arrived. Most of the waterfront had been covered by that point in time. Basically what I have established from our discussion is that:

- 1) there is no law against crossdressing in public;
- 2) the police really do not have a guideline concerning the use of woman's washrooms. Their advice is for us to use discretion. If we are

crossdressed, we would be wise to use the female rather than the male washroom in order to avoid an all out donnybrook

- 3) If apprehended by an officer in Ontario for any reason whatsoever, be cooperative and don't try to conceal anything. ("Police officers hate surprises") If the officer indicates that he/she wants to see your drivers license, make them aware of your legal name and gender. By conducting ourselves in this manner, we can expect to be treated as equally as anyone else.
- 4) If for any reason a crossdresser is arrested and taken into custody, they can expect to be treated with discretion. In other words we had been assumed that we would not find ourselves thrown in with a bunch of red necked goons. I must say however that the above can only be assumed with the Nepean and Ottawa Police departments. Other police departments may or may not have the same set of standards.
- 5) I will now bring up an interesting point I was not aware of. Let's assume that you are in a dress shop and want to try on a garment. The owner of the store can refuse your request and even go as far as ordering you off of his or her premises without justification if they so desire. Let's face it. it would be a rare occasion if it ever happened but the option is there.

Therefore if anyone, crossdresser or not is asked to vacate the premises (store or shopping centre), keep in mind that he or she has full authority to act upon that decision.

Now here is another point worth mentioning. The police departments in Ottawa now are fully aware of us. They have also been given Gender Mosaic business cards and should a situation ever develop, they may now be aware of where we are coming from. At least this was the impression we

were left with by the time the presentation was finished. However please keep in mind that other police forces of the province have their own set of standards. It should not be assumed that we can necessarily expect the same set of standards from them as we do from the Province of Ontario.

I for one and I'm sure that the rest of the group thank Linda for efforts and success in making this presentation possible. I also would like to thank constables Darryl Upshaw of the Nepean Police Department and Jerry Doucette of the Ottawa Police Department for their gracious time and effort that culminated in making this presentation a success.



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TRANSITIONS THROUGH TIME

by

Karen Patrick

Darkness is my friend. Its black stillness surrounds me in customary isolation. Emotions vividly cascade through dimensions of time like cinematic plays. Memoirs of a life long unresolved.

At times it is overwhelming. Perhaps it is a slingshot rebounding against pragmatic plans which seem to dissolve in a boiling sea of fire. A recurring loss of internal control, payment for past resistance of a truer self. A search for honesty amid failure and fault.

Night is for recounting events and words, intentions and hope. It is a time when feelings spill over the edge, flowing into a pattern of self recognition. I feel myself emerging. But I see a lifetime collapsing into oblivion and pray for a gentle connectivity. It is an intention for a rational exchange of experience, open to overlapping purposes through this process. One wonders if it is at all possible. If new life must ascend only from the ashes of another, or can one really be created in shared harmony.

Confidence fluctuates with regularity and I depend more heavily on friendships for comfort. Night is also for loneliness and self dependency. But the absence of light is in itself an illumination.

I find myself struggling with the interim. That which must be done to wrap up a chapter as a new page is already turned. Answers arrive at a multiplicity of questions and I ask if perhaps I think too much. Emotion has always been the underlying guidance in my life despite desperate attempts at rationalization. I wonder if I am un-unique.

There is a sense of urgency compiled through time. It is not a race, it is a self absorption pathway. One even pulls back from those around, then hopes for a knowing hand to reach through the darkness with understanding. But I have always run in fear from closeness. It represented vulnerability and broken trust. Contact posed potential disaster. For too long I was unequipped for explanation. My

resume speaks of change and failed integration. The condition has invaded personality.

I look back at a life of interfered potential. At a person who projected shining confidence from within an empty shell. One who was unable to sustain the energy and ran to another city, job, career or friend. It is a constancy of attempts to start over, a long trail of inadequacy. Perhaps this now permeates my inner profile beyond renewal.

It is a search for inner peace. But leftover circumstance threatens an uncertain future creating new anxieties and nighttime intensifies feelings. I know I am slowly emerging a woman. I understand the price and pray for enlightenment. But darkness remains my friend. It casts its unthreatening shadow with regularity, linking together the one true constancy of my life from the beginning.

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