

# NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

Ottawa, Canada

Supplementary Summer Issue 89

No. 4

## Memoirs of a Social Misfit, Part Two

The last time I wrote I left it off where I revealed myself (so to speak) to my peers. After that I was pretty much dressed all the time, that is if I was visiting my friends or they were visiting me.

They got used to it. A short time later, a

lady friend who was in the habit of reading the personal column in the paper called me and said there was an ad from a TV wanting to meet other TV's. I couldn't believe it!

My heart was jumpin', my nerve ends were twitchin', my eyes lost their focus - in short, I was beside myself.

Once I calmed down, I thought, "Wait a minute, what is this guy going to be like? Is he some deranged person? A gay? Joe Normal? Or is he like me?" Then I asked, "How should I behave?" God, the debate was endless, so I just decided to find out.

A few days later, I went to his place. There it was, his building. Climbing the stairs now...carrying my stuff...maybe I should leave...No!... finally the door. I knocked and was confronted with a very spacy looking guy: no make up, an old 1920's flapper dress on - nothing else - and he's playing a bunch of old 78 records on a tinny little record player.

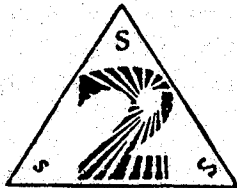
I definitely wondered what I had gotten myself into, but too late, I'd come this far. His name was Robert, and he said that others were coming as well. Holy Mackerel! I thought. So I got changed into my outfit, a white satin blouse with a gold satin skirt, and appropriate accessories and make up, and we chatted.

(Continued over)

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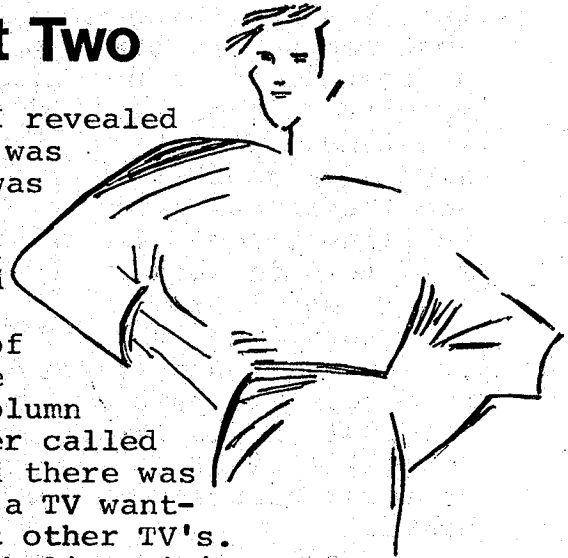
Printed by New Ottawa Women, a non-sexual support group for cross-dressers. Interested persons are invited to write us at the above address.

An accredited chapter of the Society for the Second Self under the name Nu Omicron Phi.



"Still our whole consideration if we were to survive must be to keep our true selves hidden; to walk to talk and live indistinguishably from other people. We had a gift, a sense which should have been a blessing, but was little better than a curse. The stupidest norm was happier; he could feel that he belonged. We did not and because we did not, we had no positive - we were condemned to negatives, to not revealing ourselves, to not speaking when we would, to not using what we knew, to not being found out - to a life of perpetual deception, concealment and lying."

John Wyndham  
The Chrysalids



## A Social Misfit (continued)

After awhile the others came in one by one, and pretty soon there were five or six of us around the dining table. I'll tell you the thing that struck me most was seeing other guys dressed up instead of just my mirror image all the time. It was kind of a shock to see the masculine/feminine image. I felt this is what people see in me! But, just like my friends, I found it easy to get used to. The person I liked best was Paul, a fun loving Brit who would fit right in with our crowd. He moved back to England last I heard.

Needless to say, after awhile I went to another gathering. This was in 1980, and was held at a TS's place. I don't recall how this came about, but I went to Diane's (the TS) and sat in the car, going through the usual brain wringing over whether to go in. I was dressed all in satin again (what else?) but was in a state of paralysis until I saw a person - another TV - crossing the street and entering the same place I was going to. That did it! In I went.

Inside there was a much larger crowd than there had been at Robert's. I sat down next to a nervous little guy, and struck up a conversation. He says his name is Lary and he's from Nova Scotia. Later on I went into the kitchen, and there was Lary talking to this other person, so I grabbed a beer and joined in. Lo and behold, it's the same person I saw crossing the street who unknowingly proved to be the catalyst to my going in. His name was Ted, and we all got along like three peas in a pod. As you may

*"IT WAS KIND OF A SHOCK  
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have guessed, Ted and Lary are the same Ted and Lary we all know and love. There were others there that we got along well with, particularly Nila, an honest to God real woman whom we had a lot of good times with.

So here we all are some years later with a really fine group of ladies which I feel is going to be a real success in furthering our lives, as

long as everyone participates in some way.

Personally, I find this newsletter a lot of fun to contribute to and I hope I can come up with some other stuff to write about in future issues. I hope we can organize some get-togethers like barbecues, trips to the Gatineaus and parties (my birthday in August - ha! ha!) At any rate, we could wind up doing a lot.

Jim

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### Editor's Note

Since I am mentioned in the above, readers may be interested to read a portion of my journal entry for the event, dated May 4, 1980. "...So off I motored to 225 Maclaren St. Though it was just past eight, the sky was still very light and there were several people on the street...Gradually the party began to liven up. I ended up in the kitchen talking to Jim who, I found, had a lot of experiences similar to mine. He seemed pleased to have found someone who was a "transvestite" who could also, perhaps, become a friend and for my part I thought it was possible too. Laura (Lary) also seemed to have a lot in common with us."

Well I guess! Nine years later and still going strong.

Ted

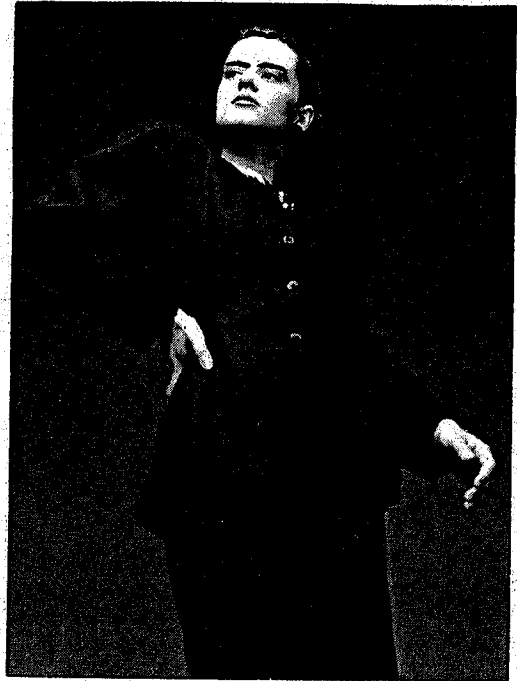
## Limited by the Fantasy

I'm sure I'm not the only one who agrees with Sharon's views, expressed in the last issue of Notes from the Underground, that the only way crossdressers will achieve any level of acceptance in society is by venturing out into public more often. There is, however, a fundamental contradiction in this opinion and the way crossdressers behave while in public that to me anyway, forever dooms us to the fringes. Put simply, when a crossdresser goes out in public, he has done his very best not to be noticed. He's thrilled when people don't pay attention to him because he assumes they think he's a woman.

Being a crossdresser, I can appreciate the fantasy. I have it too, but being as tall as I am, I have been either blessed or cursed with the necessity of finding another way, and that way, to me at least, is the realization that we crossdressers place far too much emphasis on passing.

This is completely understandable, of course, not only because we enjoy it, but also because it gives us a level of security. Many of us look quite different in pants, no make up and with our hair shaved (or missing), so when we meet our co-workers in a restaurant there's a possibility that they may not recognize us in our skirts and wigs. This is one of the drawbacks of having one foot in the conventional world and one high heeled foot on the wild side. The conventional wins out because it's the safe side, and we've built our lives on these foundations.

Personally, I dislike having to split my life in two like this. I have read so many times the



advice that this is the way it must be for transvestites, that we must compartmentalize our lives into male and female. I call this old thinking, more suitable for the 50's than the 90's. I have no wish to change my sex, but if it were solely left to me, I'd probably be wearing skirts 80% of the time, and I know for certain that I wouldn't spend hours every day trying to look like a woman. That's just too much work, although I do enjoy it sometimes. I would, however, enjoy wearing the clothes I like to wear.

I'm not saying my perceptions are the correct ones; everyone has a greater or lesser desire to be "like a woman". One of the wonderful things about transvestism is its indefinability. There are no stereotypes, though goodness knows society does its best to create them. I am saying, however, that we limit ourselves by our fantasy, that crossdressing will never move beyond its present repressed state until people  
(continued over)

perceive it as a simple choice. Many people understand it when you say that you're more comfortable in feminine clothes. What they don't understand is why you must look like a woman as well.

When I was young, I decided I liked skirts and other feminine clothes better than I liked the clothes I was supposed to wear. Once I tried one item, I wanted to try everything else and I found I enjoyed the feminine look as much as the feel. I just don't believe that when I want to wear my skirts, I absolutely have to look like a woman to do it. Of course, that doesn't mean I look like society's comic stereotype of a man-in-a-dress. It simply means that it is possible to develop your own feminine style.

The conventional thinking among TV's has frequently been that we'll be better accepted if we're dressed to look as much as possible as women, but this isn't necessarily true at all. I've had women come up to me and tell me that they like it that I'm not trying to impersonate them. I assume that they believe, like some do, (wrongly of course) that we're mocking women in some way. The point is the conventional wisdom doesn't hold water.

It does, I will grant you, take more courage to be walking around in your skirts with maybe only a touch of make up on (or none at all for that matter), but as far as I'm concerned that's the freedom I want. It's the freedom to say, "Yes, I'm male but I enjoy wearing feminine things. Is there a problem?"

Of course, I'm nowhere near where I want to be yet, and it's true that I may fail. "But a man's reach should exceed his

grasp, Or what's a heaven for?" I'm not interested in cultivating a second self, just one fully rounded self which can express its feminine or masculine sides whenever it pleases. That way, if I do succeed I'll know I'll be free all the time and not just half the time.

Ted

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### Every Morning

She gets up in the morning  
And wipes away her face  
Holds back the tears  
And starts the morning race.

Washes off her mascara  
Until there's not a trace  
Of the woman who lives inside her  
And sees a man she cannot place.

She looks in the mirror  
And takes one last look  
As she slips off her lingerie  
And hangs it on a hook.

She washes off her perfume  
Feeling such despair  
At least tonight she will resume  
In the clothes she likes to wear.

But today for another day  
She'll leave herself at home  
Off to work as someone else  
She doesn't even know.

Puts on his suit and tie  
Feels so awkward she could cry  
Reaches out to grab her purse  
Stops herself and then feels worse

Living to please everyone else  
She's got to start thinking of herself  
How much longer can she go on  
Til someone's daughter used  
to be their son?

Sharon

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# Reflections on the Forbidden Garment

When I was young and innocent, but already old enough to know that wearing girls' clothes was a big no-no, I enjoyed the adventure of trying on my sister's shoes. I liked her ballet type slippers because they were soft and looked pretty and liked her mary-janes so much more than my own shoes. It came to pass, as it so often does with people like us, that I wondered, given that girls' shoes were so nice, what other girls' clothes I might fancy.

One evening I noticed my sister's short, cheerleader-type skirt with the sewn in panties hanging on my bedroom door. We were a little cramped in the house at the time and my brother and I shared a room on the ground floor. I don't know how the skirt found its way to my doorknob, but it was one of those windows of opportunity that TV's are ever on the lookout for. I found myself pulling on the skirt and had worn it for no more than 5 seconds before the terror of what I was doing hit me. I never really had time to realize whether I liked it or not. I was aware only that I was a most depraved little boy and that I would never, ever wear a skirt again. I was about five years old at the time.

Some years later when I had resumed trying on my sister's shoes, I once again began experimenting. This time I wore lingerie, progressed to nylons and even a bra, but I resisted wearing a skirt or dress. I had drawn the line. If I wore a skirt, well, that would be serious stuff. It may mean I was a pervert. Prancing, however furtive-

ly, in lingerie, nylons and ballet slippers was just idle amusement which I could, of course, cease at any time.

It was illogical, but it seemed for many years a matter of survival that I accept such a blatant falsehood.

I was seventeen before I cracked. I put on a polka dot dress of my sister's. It was too small for me and yet - surprise, surprise - it felt marvellous. I knew it

would, of course, because I had finally overcome my self-delusion. That day I also was convinced that I was going to like feminine clothes for the rest of my life, which was positive if only because it saved me from the too frequent TV neurosis of throwing one's clothes out from time to time and declaring oneself "cured".

Still, it seems in retrospect that a 5 year old shouldn't have to carry around a burden of guilt like that and that society's concept of masculinity is itself somehow fundamentally flawed when the feminine, even in a 5 year old, is perceived to be such a threat.

We are all, in our own ways, survivors though and the most we seem to carry around for all the personal battles we've fought is a profound regret that we didn't know then what we know now. I have a black and white photograph of me and my sister standing in front of the drapes at my aunt's house. I'm wearing a horrid little suit and my sister is wearing a wonderful white dress. I never wore that wonderful white dress,

And that's the story of how skirts became my Forbidden Garments.

Alison T.

## TRANS SCRIPTS

Personal Musings on  
Crossdressing

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## Organization Update

This supplementary issue of Notes from the Underground (N.F.T.U.) has been made possible by the continued participation of the members in our newsletter. As a result of this participation, we have decided to expand our publishing program and publish an annual journal. This project is still in its very early stages, but I hope to provide more details in the next newsletter. We have also set a small subscription fee of 5 dollars per year for the newsletter. Members and our exchange partners will, of course, continue to receive N.F.T.U. for free.

You may be wondering what we're doing with the buckets of money we're accumulating. Well, nothing. We have, as of July 31, 1989, 106 dollars and though I haven't got an account for it as of this writing, by the time the newsletter is in your hands, I should have.

Other business of note:

- Owing to some confusion over which Wednesday is the one in the middle of the month, we've pegged our mid-month meeting on the third Wednesday.
  - We've found someone who makes attractive pins for a reasonable price and are calling upon members with a creative bent to design one for us.
  - And finally, our evening at a restaurant is scheduled for the first Saturday in September.
- If you're interested, let us know.

RACHEL'S FOLLIES

BY JIM

