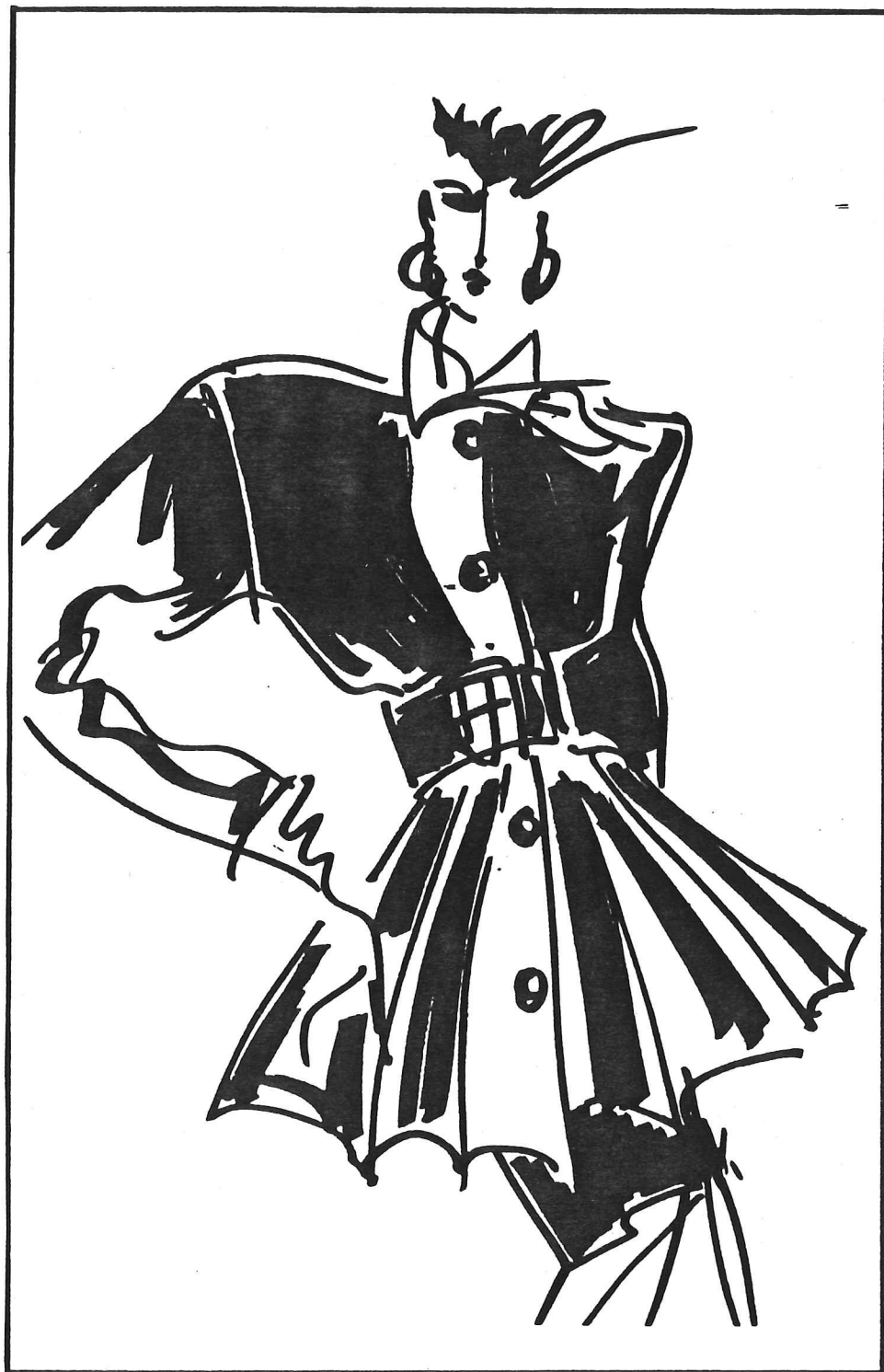


Underground

Ottawa, Canada

Vol. 3 No. 2

March/April 1991



Introducing
the new
Notes
From
The
Underground

Montreal En Femme

For all you girls who could not make it to Montreal, we had a great time. We stayed at the Delta Montreal right downtown. Belinda and Sharon shared a room on a smoking floor, while Natalie and I shared a room on a non-smoking floor. Jennifer, the editor of the Garter Press, had planned a full evening for us. We spent a little more time on dressing and make-up for the night ahead. On the elevator we got a few odd looks and in the lobby of the hotel we turned a few heads. We took a cab to a nice little Italian restaurant, Tony Du Sud, to meet Jenny. The food was delicious and the best thing was we were very welcome en femme. After dinner Jenny took us to Cleopatra's, a haven for TS's, TV's and gays dressed en femme. We blended right in. During the evening, we danced and watched two very good female impersonation shows.

At the end of the night, or should I say the wee hours of next morning, we walked back about ten blocks to our hotel rooms. We needed the fresh air and to walk off some of the intoxicating liquids we'd consumed. When we awoke later that day, Belinda and Sharon went their own way, while Natalie and I went to Olympic Stadium for a few pictures. Then back to Ottawa to wind down. We all had a good time and plan to do it again.

Thanks Jenny for being our hostess in Montreal and thanks Belinda for planning the Ottawa end of the trip.

Joanne Meets Her Daughter

One of the most exciting times in my crossdressing life happened to me January 11, 1991. I met my daughter dressed as Joanne.

Over the last couple of months, I had my daughter over for supper on several occasions and explained to her my new lifestyle. I have been separated for about six months now and living in a nice one bedroom apartment. I guess my wife did not accept it. We are still on friendly terms; we just realized things were not going to change. This was the turning point in my life.

On that special day, I made an appointment with Sande for a facial and make-up session. I explained to Sande the reason for the appointment. I was her first appointment of the day and Sande pampered me for two and a half hours. Afterwards I put on my wig, which I had cleaned and set at Lady Jacqueline's upstairs. When Sande let me look at myself in the mirror, I didn't recognize myself. The image in the mirror was female. Sande did an incredible make over to make this day a memorable

one. I gave her a hug and thanked her for the extra time she spent to make it a perfect illusion.

I left for my rendez vous with my daughter at a shopping centre near to where she lives, as we had planned, so if she was nervous about meeting Joanne she could leave without upsetting anybody. Well, everything turned out better than expected. The only thing that gave me away was the wig, which she had recognized in some of the photographs I'd shown her. I was still very nervous about my daughter's reaction to Joanne, but she followed me to my car as we planned. Out in the parking lot, I gave my daughter a big hug. I felt more love between us than I can remember. It felt good to have my daughter return that hug. She could not get over how feminine I looked. The tension was over after all these years; no more trying to hide my inner feelings. It will be awhile before everything sinks in, but she understands why I have been very unhappy in my marriage, and why Joanne had to go into her closet and turn on the lights.

It was like I had met my daughter for the first time.

Joanne

Crossdressing Groups in Canada

The Toronto CrossDressers Club
429C Dundas Street East
Toronto, Ontario M5A 2A9

Monarch Social Club
Box 682
Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 5R4

Gender Mosaic
PO Box 7421
Ottawa (Vanier), Ontario
K1L 8E4

Illusions Social Club
PO Box 872, Stn. T
Calgary, AB T2H 2H3

Phi Sigma - Tri-Ess
Box 803
6808 Ogden Road S.E.
Calgary, AB T2H 1B4

The Cornbury Society
Box 3745
Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 3Z1

World Watch

Gender Exploration Week

One man, one woman, one small dormitory room and two twin beds. And no hanky panky.

Stanford University students called it "Gender Exploration Week." Officials called it "a fun sociological experiment that has nothing to do with university policy."

Forty-eight residents in Burbank dormitory - 24 men and 24 women - traded in their same sex room-mates for randomly assigned roomies.

"We wanted to demystify the difference between the sexes," said junior Valerie Paz Soldan, 21, who lived with a male sophomore from Feb. 10 through Feb. 15. "A lot of people found it very fun," she said. "Some said, 'I could just stay with this roommate all quarter.'"

The new roomies undressed in bathrooms down the hall or simply turned their heads. In the evenings, they went to gender workshops and heard a professor ask, "How do you know I'm male?" They watched *When Harry Met Sally* and debated whether true platonic friendship was possible.

The roommate swap caused little commotion on a campus that offers a "gender theme house" and a "gender studies" degree. One student co-op even has co-educational showers.

Co-educational housing, on campus since 1966, means putting men and women in the same dorm but not the same room. Except for fraternities and one women-only house, all student halls here are now co-educational.

University officials, who normally do not allow unmarried roommates of opposite sexes, had no problem with Burbank's one week trial, housing director Rodger Whitney said. A smaller group from Burbank did the same thing last year.

Parents were another matter. Many learned about the swap after the fact.

"A couple of parents thought it was amusing," Paz Soldan said. "A couple of parents didn't think much of it. A couple of parents said, 'Don't ever do anything like that again.'"

Nick Anderson
Knight Ridder

Madonna and Crossdressing

Madonna has stayed in the public spotlight partly by constantly creating new trends. Now, her latest contribution to the continent's pop culture could elevate crossdressing into a sweeping fad. Her millions of quick-to-imitate fans are about to learn that Tony Ward, her current lover, who also starred in her scandalous and widely banned video, *Justify My Love*, likes to dress up in women's clothing and is a popular item in gay-oriented magazines.

A growing wave of crossdressing could also benefit from two new star filled movies now being planned. In a remake of one of Hollywood's classic films, the 1959 comedy *Some Like It Hot* Tom Cruise and Michael Keaton will appear in female clothes. The movie will also star Madonna in the role made famous by her idol Marilyn Monroe. As well, in *Operation Pipeline*, muscle-bound hard-bodies Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger will team up as police officers who go undercover to solve a crime while dressed in drag.

Reported in Maclean's Magazine

(I doubt very much that crossdressing will "benefit" from the Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger movie. It sounds to me like the usual sniggering man-in-a-dress routine. Alison)

More Bad News From the Movies

The latest Jodie Foster movie *The Silence of the Lambs* features yet another transvestite serial murderer. It joins the likes of *Psycho*, *Dressed to Kill* and what seems like a thousand other schlock movies with killer crossdressers. Buffoons and murderers, that's the Hollywood view of transvestites. We've got a lot of work to do.

Alison

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A Few Random Thoughts on Gender Mosaic

Sometimes I wonder where I am going. I like the group and all of the members, but I can see some problems on the horizon. We are a very diverse group, ranging from Tri-Ess type people to transsexuals, with who knows what in between. So far we have been able to compromise, but I can see that eventually we will be faced with some very tough decisions.

What I want is not necessarily what the majority wants. How do we deal with that? How can I deal with constantly being outvoted by a coalition of TV's who cannot or do not wish to understand where I am coming from? After our experience with the pamphlet where some members (to my way of thinking) wanted to revamp the spirit if not the entire meaning of the writing, how will we be able to avoid hurt feelings, especially if it comes to something dearly close to someone's heart.

We all have certain beliefs that we will not under any circumstances compromise. Whether it is something most of the other members would find petty, or something that no one else can grasp, we have to create the mechanism now to avoid problems in the future. If our help line gets us any new members, they will probably be more Tri-Ess oriented than transsexuals. Not that I mind, since I was aware of this before we even began, but I do want to protect our place in this group as I feel we have given a lot in relation to numbers.

Not to beat this to death, but a TS (Sharon) wrote the pamphlet and a TS (myself) formatted it. I put in over 25 hours getting it just right and re-editing it over and over again. I enjoyed it, as it gave me a lot of experience with graphics on Word-Perfect 5.1 and enabled me to solve problems that I will face on the job, but the fact is that with only two of the ten regular members being transsexuals and only four of the twenty regular and irregular members being TSs, I believe we have done our share for the group.

That being said, how will we compromise in the future? I am sorry to say that I personally have few suggestions, but I feel that eventually it could become a problem and I would like us to have the mechanism in place now. None of us knows who will be joining us in our group and how they will relate to our tacit and very workable interaction and understanding.

Some TVs really do not like TSs, and vice versa, and it can take only one person to create an irreparable rift. Although I know that Leigh, Joanne, Belinda, Natalie and I will always be friends, are these exceptions or the rule?

Would TVs be so willing to help if certain TSs were to promote certain projects for our group? Would I be willing to see us spend a lot of money and time on a Tri-Ess oriented project that I felt was working against my own self interest? Tri-Ess is not for everyone, but it does help a lot of persons to broaden their horizons; and in that instance, it can be a positive force. Yet, in the name of keeping the majority happy, it will not accept any deviance.

How will new members accept our fairly open door policy and still remain true to the ideals of Tri-Ess? Our whole *raison d'être* is to get people to progress within themselves, not to make anyone feel ill at ease or unwanted and I especially do not want anyone feeling that they cannot belong because of our open door policy.

For this reason, I propose that Gender Mosaic be an umbrella group for three distinct groups. One, FACTT Ottawa, serving the transsexual community; two, a Tri-Ess group serving the heterosexual transvestite community and lastly Gender Mosaic itself, as an open transgendered group. We could then make our Wednesday evening get-togethers a shared meeting of all the groups working together for whatever project was on the table at the time.

We would all have allegiance to our own particular group, but could still get together three or four times a year for special soirees or fundraisers. Membership in any particular group would automatically make you a member of Gender Mosaic, with your opinion worth as much as anyone else's. The great thing about this plan is that each group could still have their own plans and projects while getting together as a community to co-ordinate and work on the big projects.

Maybe I am still too starry eyed and believe in fairy tales, but I think that no matter what our differences, we can and will continue to work together. One of the many possibilities is to have only one voting member per group. This would force us to compromise in order to get any one special project going. This would, perhaps, eliminate such pettiness as viewing our own group better or more deserving than the other two.

If we make each group no better or no worse than the other two, than none can feel that they are being overlooked in favour of "those people". Some feel that there are not enough people to create more groups, but FACTT has been operating for ten years with a very small nucleus. So a Tri-Ess oriented group could serve the need even with five or six members.

Conclusion Page 7

An Adventure in Leaving Home - En Femme

On the 29 Sep 90 the group had its annual BBQ in Cottage Country. The Party was starting at 2:30pm, therefore I had to leave my place around 2:00pm.

I had my exit scenario planned with my wife so nobody would see me getting into the van. The babysitters were my parents-in-law; they do not know about Natalie. The scenario was like this... I had to be ready before they arrived. I would get dressed in our bedroom, sneak down to the main floor bathroom without the kids seeing me and remain there until my in-laws arrived. When they did arrive, I would sneak in the garage by the side door and wait for my wife to leave. When the coast was clear, my wife was to open the garage door using the remote control; back-up in the garage; open the trunk of the van; I would get in; and, she would drive away, closing the garage door with the remote control. No problem! If her parents had asked her why she opened the garage door before leaving, she would tell them it was to pick up chairs for the party; they didn't know what type of party we were going to, only where it was. Sounds simple... Hum!

Everything went as planned, but only to the point when I went into the garage. My daughter almost foiled it. Seeing my in-laws arrive, I went into the garage by the side door. Thinking I should hide behind something when my wife opened the garage door, I used as a shield the 5' empty box that carried the hockey net I bought my son. This box when opened, would hide me from view, one side facing the garage door and the other facing the access door to the garage. Perfect cover. Suddenly...

The side door opened. I bent down behind the box. The light came on. Then a voice... my daughter: "Who is that behind the box". I told her in a low voice to close the light and leave, but she wouldn't listen. She continued repeating the same question. I told her again, angrily, to turn off the light and close the door. She finally closed the door and left. I hurried to turn off the light and returned to my hiding place. In the mean time, I was wondering, what my wife was doing; busy probably with my in-laws. Then, little steps were coming to the door. My daughter was back! She opened the door, turned on the lights and was calling over my mother-in-law. I could hear my daughter tell her she wanted to show her something behind the big box in the garage.

My mother-in-law was coming, I could hear her footsteps. She stopped in the doorway. My daughter was telling her to go look behind the big box, somebody was there. I was just about to jump-up and say: "Surprise", when my wife suddenly realised

what was going on. She came rushing to the door, told my daughter to stop nagging grandma, and closed the door. God, that was close! Luckily for me, grandma doesn't have a good eyesight. The reason my daughter came to the garage was that she wanted to give a guided tour of the house to my in-laws. What a time to decide to do this, especially as this was not the first time my in-laws babysat the kids.

I finally got in the car and we drove away. Even though you plan very well, there is always the unexpected. When we got back that night, I dropped my wife off at home, and drove away. I would then wait till my in-laws were gone to return home. As it turned out, the rest of this true story went as planned. Definitely, dressing at home and trying to leave inconspicuous has its drawbacks, but when you have no other options, you have to plan ahead. Luckily for Natalie, her little secret is still intact, but only till the next time. This is another adventure in the Natalie Saga... For sure!

Natalie B.



Continued from Page 6

The point is not so much having a zillion members, although that would be fantastic, but to have a group that serves the specific needs of all its members. Gender Mosaic cannot serve all the people all the time; we are simply too diverse to be able to do that. But a coalition of groups, even if they are all small, might be the best thing to serve the transgendered persons in our area. Also, each group could then be autonomous and only participate as it wanted.

Niki-Ross Avon

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