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Buffalo Belles

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May, 1998



Hello Sisters,

Well, my head is still spinning from the trip to the IFGE Convention in Toronto a few weeks ago. It was a whirlwind of activity from the time both Patty and I ar-

ived (be sure to read her column on the convention in this issue). But before I proceed with that, let me go over the last meeting of the Buffalo Belles that was held on Saturday, April 4th. We had a decent turnout, 14, including a first time attendee, Amber Lynn. Welcome, Amber. It was good to see you there. During the meeting we discussed the IFGE Convention, the Imperial Court of Buffalo's Coronation activities that will be taking place April 22 to the 26 (a report to follow in the next issue), and the need for more structured activities at our meetings. Becky (formerly Angela) suggested that we schedule an appearance for our group members, of a laser light hair removal technician that she is currently seeing. For those who may not be keeping up with cutting edge technology, lasers are the latest weapon in the field of hair removal. From what I have read and

understand, it appears to work better at removing hair permanently on females than males. It may be helpful to some but for others it could be an expensive temporary fix. Either way, I hope to have this specialist scheduled for a discussion at our meeting in June. Plan on attending if you are curious or want more information on the subject.

We ended the business part of the meeting by announcing that the next meeting of the Buffalo Belles will be Friday, May 8, due to a scheduling conflict at our host's meeting site. Please note, ladies, that it will be held at our upstairs meeting room as well.

Most of the night's attendees made it down to our usual stepping out spot, the Stage Door. Later a few of us ventured around the corner to the former Roxy's, now known as "Fuel". The current owners (same ones who owned Roxy's) have given it a 'harder' edge by featuring a metal inspired decor. I found the chain spider's web over the bar interesting, but the chain link fence entrance to the dance floor seems more like the decor of the upstairs leather bar "Detour". Will it fly? I didn't see many women there that night. In fact, there were more men in the bar than women (excluding us). Well, let's see what develops. It's still great for

dancing and has reasonably priced drinks. (I guess I'll have to enlarge my wardrobe by a leather outfit or two.)

Thoughts on the Toronto IFGE convention "Crossing Borders '98"

As I see it, the purpose of conventions like this, is to expose oneself to new ideas, to share past experiences with fellow sisters, to create some new experiences and to bring back something that will make one a better person.

The two and a half days there went by fast. The hectic, full schedule of seminars and workshops covered various areas that would interest most members of the transgendered community. I still found that many were not as challenging as I had hoped for. But the chance to see and share the same space with so many sisters I had never met before was an exhilarating experience. The friendliness was overwhelming.

The evening galas were festive and fun. How could you not enjoy a entertainment group with the name "Washed Up Blondes"? And although we did our best experiencing Toronto nightlife, Patty and I decided we have to return for further adventures.

The thing I enjoyed the most though, was getting out in the daytime and mingling with the people of Toronto. Strolling down Dundas or Young Street and walking and shopping in the Eaton Center (the gorgeous downtown mall), gave me a chance to empower myself. My fears, both real and imagined, disappeared over the space of a few hours. This new 'freedom' felt so right, that we stopped at a local mall for a two hour 'exploration' trip. Being there seemed as natural as breathing.

Now I'm not saying that all sisters must try something like this. But I do think you should try it at least once (assuming you haven't already). You only have your fear to lose. And fear is one of the most limiting and destructive feelings we tend to hold on to. I still carry more than I want to, but I know that I lost a large quantity of it on this trip. Today I feel like a newer and better Camille. I hope that you can see the difference. I know I do.

Till next month, take care.

Hugs, Camille

ATTENDANCE at April meeting:

Amber Lynn
Becky
Brenda (guest)
Camille
Colleen
Crystal & Tanya
Dana
Donna
Holly
Janice
Kathy L.
Patti
Sharon F.
Susan
Vaughn

MEETING DATES :

MAY 8, FRIDAY, will be held in our secondary meeting room, upstairs, off the firescape!

June 6, regular meeting

July 11, regular meeting

August 1, regular picnic meeting

September 5, regular meeting

October 10, regular meeting

November 7, regular meeting

December 5, regular Christmas meeting

OTHER EVENTS:

April 29-May 2 California

Dreaning-San Francisco

May 28-31-Spring Fling

Provincetown, Ma

June 6, PRIDE MARCH

BUFFALO

June 10-14-BE ALL

Pittsburgh-brochure enclosed

July 15-19-Spice Convention

Atlanta

September 24-27 Paradise in the Poconos

October 2-5 Southern Comfort, Atlanta

October 19-26-Fantasia Fair, Provincetown Ma

November 5-8 Fall Harvest Minneapolis

November 12-16 Holiday

EnFemme- CANCELED

November 19-22-

RIVERSIDE GALA WEEK-END, can Patti win best

dressed three years in a row? With the same dress!

Anyone interested in attending any of these events, we have brochures for all of them.

CROSSING BORDERS '98

By Patti Jones

Toronto was the location, for this years IFGE's 12th annual convention, hosted by Expression on March 24-27. This was the first IFGE convention held in a foreign country. Camille, myself and a host of others, from all over North America and as far away as Barbados, enjoyed Toronto's excepting hospitality. It was truly an international event. The event was held at the Toronto Colony Hotel centrally located near Tononto's shopping, and theater districts. IFGE & the Expressions group did great job coordinating a variety of seminars, a day trip to Niagara Falls & Niagara-on-the Lake, and evening theater outings to the Phantom & Rent. The convention started on Tuesday and ran thru Sunday, with the Gala banquet on Saturday evening. Camille and myself both had work commitments, so we opted for the "party plan" which included Friday- seminars and buffet dinner, Saturday-seminars and Gala, & Sunday-Farewell Brunch.

The weekend started, for myself, with a nail appointment Thursday evening after work, at Attilio's. Janice G. was kind enough to let me change and stay over, so I left work a hour early & rushed to change for my 5:00pm appointment. I wore a spring business dress, as if coming from work. I got there at about 5:08pm, just a little late. (not bad for me.) My nail technician's 6:00 appointment mistakenly came at 4:50 for a 5:00 apt. She had already started on her first before I arrived, so I

had to wait a little until she was at a point one of the other girls could take over for her. I waited in their lounge area along with two other women waiting for their hair appointments. The other women waiting didn't give me a second look. I had my first set of sculptured acrylic nails put on with a natural look polish. They looked and felt so feminine. After the salon I did some last minute shopping, then went back to Janice's and gave Camille a call to see how she was doing, (she had been fighting a cold earlier in the week) and to check the time she wanted me there the following morning (8:00am!) That meant I had to get up at 4:30am to be able to shower, breakfast, makeup, change, repack and drive over to Camille's. We were using my mini van, and it's a good thing we did, because we had a ton of luggage. I picked up Greg (Camille in drag) and we were heading for Toronto, with Greg driving, by about 8:45am. I thought it would be better for the "man" to drive, because HE had been to Toronto before and HE would be able to talk to customs at the border.

We had a beautiful day, sunny and 60+, for the short drive and we arrived at the Colony Hotel at about 10:45am. We had the bellhops unload the car, and they informed us that we could use the hotel-parking ramp below the hotel and we did. We checked into the hotel, and had the bellhop bring up our luggage. We then checked into the convention. I got settled into the room as Camille made her transformation. We had time to attend one seminar before the fundraiser buffet. The seminar was held by Richard Doctor Ph.D., a open group discussion on, "AreThere Common Stages of Crossdressing". There were some interesting points discussed, but

the two hour discussion was cut to an hour because the Dr. had prior commitments. So we checked out another seminar on plastic surgery to feminize the male face. The surgeon doctor, Douglas K. Osterhout, did a wonderful presentation with before and after slides of his patients. After his presentation he offered a mini evaluation for who ever wanted them. Camille and myself signed up to be evaluated. The doctor was able to quickly measure your face, evaluate what he felt was needed and then his assistant would work up an estimated price. Camille required less work than myself but its safe to say that we both won't be going under the knife anytime soon.

Time was growing short before we needed to change for dinner, but I thought we should check out the venders first. The vender room displayed many different offerings, from wigs, breast forms, books and a manicurist. While checking out some literature, I thought I recognized a familiar voice. It was a friend from my Rochester CD. days, Pam. We briefly said hello and soon Camille and I were on our way back to our room to freshen up before dinner.

The dinner was buffet style, with a delicious assortment to choose from. All the proceeds from the dinner went to benefiting AIDS charities of Toronto. After dinner & a short check donation presentation, we were entertained by the nationally known music & comedy of "The Washed-up Blondes" three girl singers performing '60-'70's Supremes style songs. They were great! During one of their breaks we took a short walk to cool off (as the room was very warm) and checked out the beautiful city architecture especially around City Hall.

It was a beautiful & warm night. We didn't even need a coat.

After the show and a few drinks we went back to the room to change to go out on-the-town and enjoy the Toronto nightlife. What started out as a quick change of outfits, took over an hour between Camille losing glued on nails & myself changing my outfit every time she broke another nail. We finally were in a cab at about 11:45, which meant we only had only two hours until last call.

Camille had checked out the conventions program guide for a bar that might be fun. The Mango sounded like it would be a good place to start. The beautiful weather had everyone out enjoying the nightlife. The sidewalks were a bustle with people walking and enjoying all the sites and sounds of people at the bars, up and down the street. The traffic on Church St. was moving at a crawl, so the cabby suggested it would be faster if we walked, so we did. We didn't know exactly where we were going. We didn't care, just walking and people watching, was fun. We were, of course, a part of what everyone else was watching. The Mango ended up to be about three long blocks away, and there wasn't anything much going on at all. It was more of a restaurant/café, than nightclub. Camille asked the waitress, if she knew of any good dance clubs. She gave us few places & off we went back down the street. We stopped at one bar thinking that they might have a dance floor. No such luck, but we stayed for a couple of drinks anyway.

As we moved on, we ran into two ladies from the convention that I recognized as members of the Erie Sisters. They mentioned that the bar across the street had a good drag show

that we might enjoy. "Crew" was the bar's name. We had another drink and watched a few performers. They were good but no dance floor. We ended up, for last call, at a bar called "The Barn" appropriately named because it was an all leather, gay bar and packed full, like corralled cattle. We never did find any place to dance but our feet sure got tired anyway from all walking. It was about 3:00am by the time our heads hit the pillow.

8:00am Saturday, time to get up. It came much to quickly. While we got ready we had our breakfast, danish, OJ. & coffee. The convention didn't have any thing of interest to us in the morning secessions, so we decided that we would do a little daytime shopping. It was another beautiful day, sunny and about 70+ but a little windy. With the wind, we felt it would be better to shop inside. The Eaton Center was only a short walk away, so we decided to go there. Camille & myself had a great time shopping and checking out all the stores. We canvassed most of the three-story mall. Camille bought some Clinique makeup facial cleanser and I found a pair of shoes that I just had to have. It was about 1:00pm by the time we decided to stop for lunch. We found an open air market-style deli buffet. We left the mall after lunch and made our way back toward the hotel, with one stop at the House of Shoes. By this time, I had developed a blister on my right heel. All the walking Friday night had made it sensitive and the mall walking did it in. At the shoe store I was content not to move around a lot. Camille on the other hand was like a bee in a flower garden-buzzing from shoe to shoe, back and forth, trying them on, then putting them back. I just found a spot to sit and rest

my blistered foot. The busy little shoe shopper ended up buying two or three pairs. (We "girls" can never have too many shoes.)

As we were heading back to the hotel it started to sprinkle and by the time we inside the doors, it started to pour. We made it back just in time. It was a great little shopping experience.

We went back to our room to relax until we had to get ready for the Gala. We got out the snacks and beer while we checked out our purchases. We slowly got ready for the Gala. Camille's gown was beautiful, a deep purple satin, with short sleeves and a gathered waist, with beaded accents, very becoming for her dark features. I wore a long black fitted column dress, with a mid thigh slit, heart shaped bodice & bolero jacket that matched.

Camille and myself finally got to the ballroom (but not before a few cocktails at the bar), just in time to grab a seat at a table with some girls that drove up from Nashville, Tennessee. The dinner was a delicious three course meal, with awards and entertainment to follow. This convention is IFGE's main & largest yearly function, therefore there was a lot of acknowledgments of various people and groups within the organization. The main presentation, was the Viginia Prince Award of Merit, presented by 81 year old Viginia Prince, herself. The award was given to a dynamic F-M transsexual for his efforts in developing the needed support network of the F-M transgendered part of our community. After some light entertainment they cleared the dance floor and had a deejay, complete with light array. We stayed for a few more drinks along with a couple of dances, but the crowd seemed to thin out fast.

We originally thought we would go out afterwards but because of the time we decided to stay put. The hotel's bar-lounge was having a drag show, we thought that it might be a fun mix, with the normal hotel patrons and the conventioneer in attendance. The show was a comic /drag show, which was funny but at our (the transgendered) expense. I guess we have to be able to laugh at ourselves. After the show they also had a deejay playing some good dance music. I tried to dance a few songs in my gown, but I decided to go and change into my short party dress. I went back to the room and changed and by the time I got back to the bar, Camille was ready to go and do the same. The good dancing (fast) lasted about an hour, before they slowed it down. We had a great time dancing & afterwards enjoyed some of the other girl's company in the lounge until closing. We had a lot of the "straight" hotel patrons a little confused. What a good time!

Sunday, Camille decided she would ride back as Camille and change back at Jan's. We got up and got ready for the farewell brunch. There had been an announcement at the banquet, that the farewell brunch would be extended from 1:00pm until 2:00pm. We got to the brunch at 1:15pm, and No Food! Oh well, you snooze, you loose. We were more sorry we missed saying good-by to everyone than not having breakfast. So we just went down to hotel's restaurant, and paid for breakfast. After breakfast we finished packing, and had the bellhops load the car for us & we were on the road back to Buffalo.

We had another beautiful day to drive home, with no problems at customs. We even stopped at the duty free store but

we didn't buy anything. As we passed the Factory Outlet Mall on the I 190, I looked at Camille and said, "Should we?" We just couldn't pass up the opportunity to be able to shop as our femme selves. We canvassed all the major stores and enjoyed the shopping, but didn't find what we were looking for. By this time we were all shopped out so we headed to Jan's.

We no sooner walked in the door when Colleen called and said, "her and Jan were just finishing dinner" & invited us to join them if we hurried. We just got back in the car and went over but, by the time we got there they were all done. However, Colleen saved some lasagna for us. As we ate, we filled them in on all our Toronto escapades. Afterwards, Camille had to change to go home. I drove Greg home then went back to Jan's to crash myself. By this time all the late nights had caught up with me. I had a bad sore throat-(Camille's cold!). I had taken Monday off and it's a good thing I did because I didn't feel very good. I canceled plans for lunch with Jean and just rested, while I tried to remove my acrylic nails. Girls, a word of caution. I wouldn't recommend acrylic nails to anyone, unless you have a long time to enjoy them and time to remove them. (about 3 hrs.) They don't come off easily, even soaking in pure acetone.

I did pay for all the fun I had. I caught Camille's cold but, I'm glad I didn't pass up the event. It was a blast! And a great way to end the shaving season.

Thank you, Camille & Janice!!!

Items from the news media:

Transvestite Dancer Norman Can only Whirl as Norma

Reuters 17-APR-98

LONDON (Reuters) - A Briton who used to attend line dancing classes twice a week -- once as a man and once as a woman -- was banned from twirling in his male version by an offended instructor.

Norman Horton, a 58-year-old former paratrooper and military policeman, enjoyed his Tuesday dancing class so much that he decided his transvestite alter ego Norma should also give it a go on Wednesdays.

When word of Horton's double life reached Frank Howell, his Tuesday instructor at the Darlington Arts Center in northeast England, told him not to return. The Wednesday tutor, however, allowed Norma to continue a more promising dancing career with frilly blouses, short skirts and high heels.

"I've won two awards while dancing as Norma," Horton told Reuters. "I don't know why I perform much better as a woman, maybe the boots I wear as Norman are too heavy."

(From the New York Post, June 5, 1996. It's dated but interesting)

Catfight Erupts As Eateries Featuring Cross-Dressing Waiters Hits Home

by John O'Mahony

Think the drag fad is over? Think again. It's simply moved out of the movie theater and into the restaurant - and into the world of big business and legal hassles.

In New York City (and soon across the nation) investors looking for a niche in the mega-competitive dining-out market appear to have found a vein of gold in falsies, shaved legs and a clingy, China-blue dress.

Already, three restaurants in Manhattan have decked their waiters out as women, and it appears to be paying off, well, handsomely. So much so, that what was once viewed as an ephemeral trend in the chic eatery business now looks as if it's here to stay. (You could say, thanks for everything, Julie Newmar.)

The first to enter the drag race was the cheap and bohemian Stingy Lulu's, situated near the corner of St. Mark's Place and Avenue A in the East Village. Then came the bordello-inspired Lucky Cheng's, also in the East Village on First Avenue. And newcomer Good Luck Cheng's, housed in the old Zig Zag Lounge space in Chelsea on West 23rd Street, recently opened its tony, mahogany doors.

Now, the Post has learned, as the dust settles on what has been likened to a cutthroat, corporate raider-style appropriation of the "Cheng" moniker, Hayne Jason, the owner of Lucky Cheng's (which specializes in Asian drag and Oriental cuisine), is poised to franchise the concept a la Planet Hollywood.

"Everyone is interested in drag queens nowadays," says Jason, who has flexed her muscles by recently opening successful sister locations in South Beach, Fla. and New Orleans. Speaking of his relatively conservative customer base, he says "The people we thought would be offended are filling every chair in the place."

But while the name "Lucky Cheng" turned out to be the ultimate fortune cookie for Jason, it's left nothing but a bad taste in the mouth of the man who claims to have given his name to the venture, a 48-year-old Chinese immigrant known simply as Cheng. "I started Lucky Cheng's restaurant, and she stole it," Cheng says of Jason via an interpreter. "It was my blood and soul."

According to Cheng, for nearly a decade the restaurateur had worked for Jason in a number of failed dining ventures. Eventually, though, he raised enough money to open his own Chinese restaurant, and consequently took a lease on a property from Jason.

He called it Lucky Cheng's, which gradually evolved from being a conventional Chinese restaurant into a bona fide drag-themed eatery. Cheng says he came up with the idea of hiring an all-drag staff on a whim. Customers fell for the gimmick, and business took off. "Within six months we were raking in the money," Cheng says.

However, once the going got good, Cheng alleges, Jason wanted him out. And because he hadn't filed the appropriate partnership contract, and alleges Cheng, because Jason had "better lawyers," he lost the litigation that grew from the dispute.

For her part, Jason admits the name of the restaurant came from her association with Cheng, but blames incompetence on his part as a business partner as the reason for Cheng's dismissal. "We had to file a lawsuit against him," Jason says, adding "I'd have been more than happy to continue the partnership if he had behaved in a proper manner."

Cheng has since gone on to open Good Luck Cheng's, which he claims one-ups Lucky Cheng's by being "more low-key and upscale." Jason alternately is busy making subtle changes to make his flagship restaurant easier to sell and relocate as a franchise. Among the recent additions are drag-queen cabaret acts, drag talent shows, and the so-called "Dragbox," in which waitresses sing for tables. (The Big Easy-themed Orleans restaurant has also begun weeknight drag reviews.)

Stingy Lulu's owner Karacona Cinar, however, sees drag as less of a "theme" than a way of life, and shuns the notion of franchising his restaurant. "We're not even encouraging tourists to come here," he says. "We were serving drag queen customers first, and since we're always busy, there's no reason to change our clientele." From the drag staff, Lulu's has developed into an important gay meeting grounds, he adds.

"When you franchise the idea, you lose that feeling of the neighborhood and the local lifestyle," he argues. "I wish them luck with it, but I think that the commercialization will kill the philosophy." Judging, though, by the open proliferation of cross-dressing services listed in local personals and service-oriented magazines all over town, the continued mainstreaming of drag culture is inevitable.

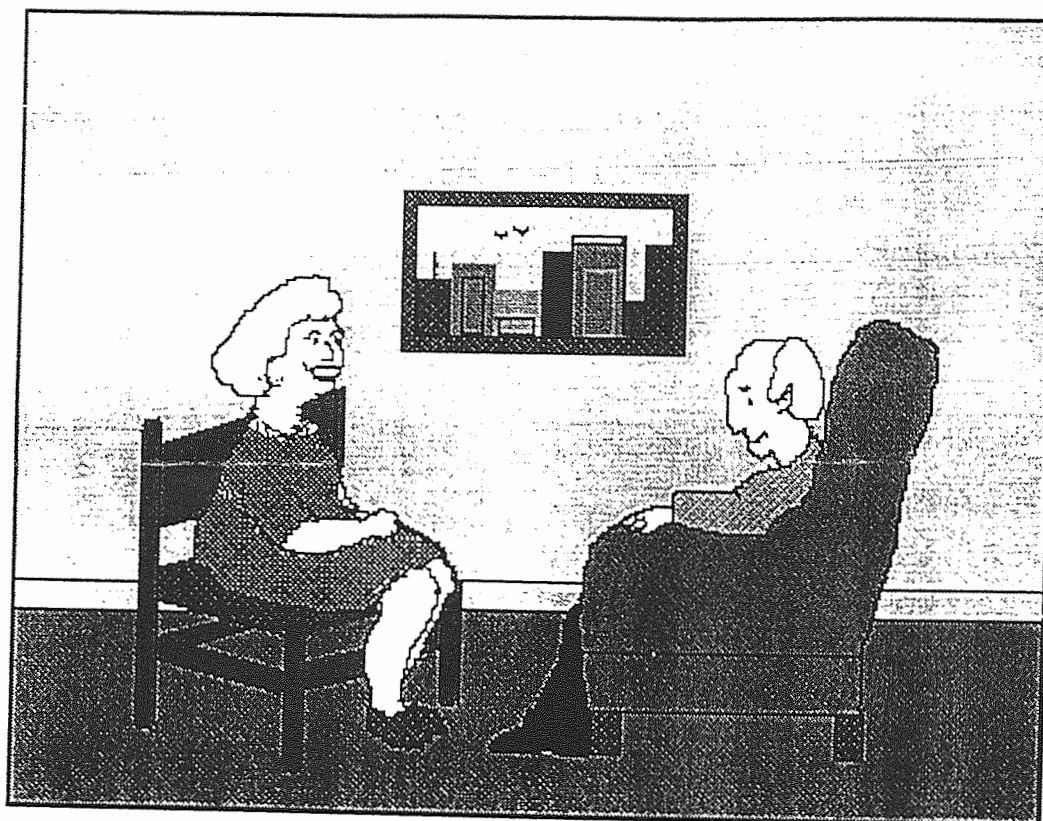
According to performance artist Lady Bunny - who is to New York drag queens what the Statue of Liberty is to immigrants - the appetite for drag has been whetted by the recording and film industries. Now it's unstoppable. "It percolated through the straight community, and as it became more and more popular, it opened up opportunities for us drag queens," she says. "We're trying to make the best of the opportunity, and we're succeeding."

Need evidence? Look no further than James Moreland, a 1996 presidential candidate... and crossdresser. Or to Lady Chablis, the Southern drag queen made famous by John Berendt's best-selling book "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil," whose own memoirs, "Hiding My Candy," arrives later this summer in book stores. Trend forecasters see Chablis poised as the next RuPaul, the latter whose contract as spokesmodel for M.A.C. cosmetics was recently extended.

"It just all goes to show," says Lady Bunny, "you can't keep a good girl down."

PASSING THOUGHTS

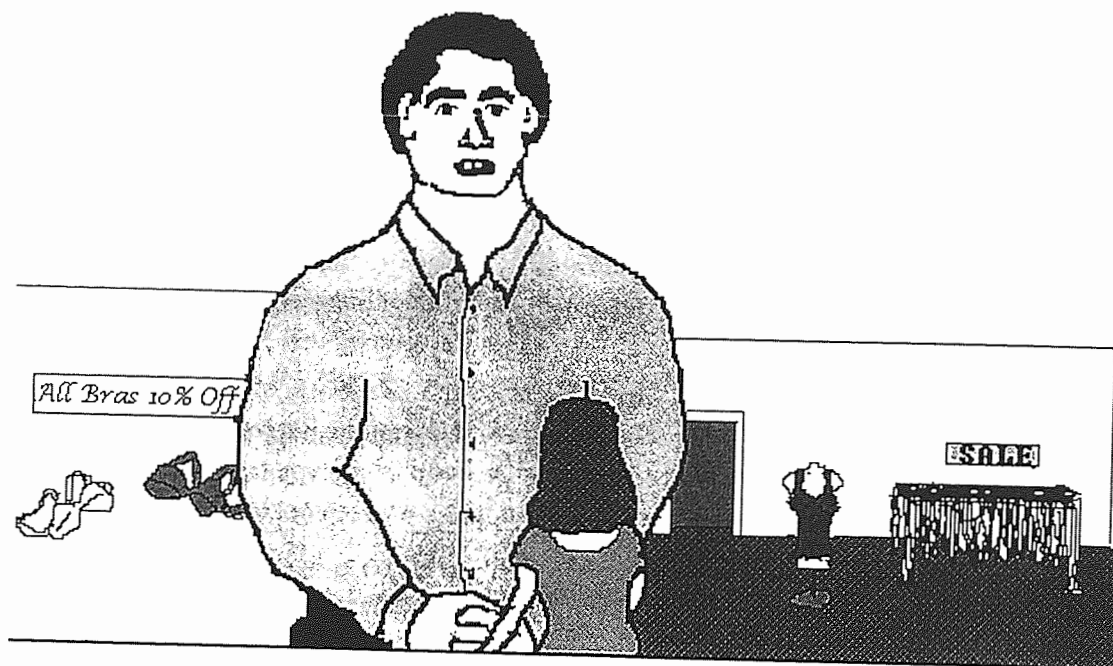
by Linda D



"Would your 'woman within' like to clean the bathroom?"

PASSING THOUGHTS

By Linda D



"She's about MY size."