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Madeline Davis Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual,  
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1-1995

### January 1995

Buffalo Belles

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#### Recommended Citation

Buffalo Belles, "January 1995" (1995). *Buffalo Belles Newsletters*. 66.  
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BUFFALO BELLES\*\*NU PHI CHI

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President: Denise Miller V.P.,Treas.: Janice Gnau Newsletter: Kathy Lorraine

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Dear Sisters,

Our Cristmas meeting was held on another one of our balmy fall nights. I am beginning to wonder if I am ever going to wear my new winter boots. Note, I didn't say I WANTED to wear them, rather it was whether... But we still have months to go. After all, it is only New Year's now, guess it just seems like it should be a month later, with the Bill's season finished, but on to a complete New Year for the Belle's!

We held forth in our "regular" meeting room once more. The group that we have bean in "conflict" with used the room before us. They numbered about a dozen I'm told. They left promptly at 6:00. If you feel comfortable, you can come earlier to change etc., but respect their wishes also. Otherwise, we'll be useing six as our starting time till further notice.

Turning out to enjoy the evening were Jean H., Janice G., Patty J., Holly I., Dana D., Joan C., Kathy L., Frances L., Collean D., Michelle, and Jackie with Yvette and Dee Dee. Also one member was there briefly to drop off a gift for the kids but was in DRAB and I haven't any idea whom she was.

We all had another lovely evening. An interesting video brought by Jean was viewed. We had planned on watching the new Speaking as a Woman video but didn't have time. Maybe this month!

The gift exchange was quite a success. I'm sure we will be seeing some new bauble's adorning the girls at the next meeting! Many nice toys were brought for the needy. There certainly was no shortage of generous hearts that evening.

With the treats brought and the pizza, thoughts of a "WonderGirdle" were certaily added to many of the girls list for Santa...

As usual time passed to quickly and it was time to go off into the good night. It was eleven when the last departed.

*Kathy*

Denise, Janice and myself held get together a few days after the meeting. Kind of an executive session I guess. I wrangled in invitation by provideing the meal and drinks. We had several concerns that needed addressing. In the issue is a report from Janice regarding the dues increase for associate members. We have decided to add a hotline number. This will enable newcomers to find us easier. Also we will have last minute updates on <sup>the</sup> meeting room, special events, etc. Hopefully the number will be secured by the next newsletter.

Also discussed was increasing our security. We will no longer be 'open' to the other local groups. Their members seeking to come to meeting must come as a guest of a member or go through the interview process before attending. We instituted some changes in our welcome/application forms. Hopefully the process has been streamlined somewhat. Denise will continue to hold the records. Janice does the checking/accounting and interviewing. I continue as the wrench in the printshop. And tallest. Oh,well....

We did discuss some other ideas. It was good to spend an evening looking over our past couple of years. All in all,we are doing well. But there is some worry that we are stagnant in growth. It will be interesting to see how many reup for another year. We believe the meetings have gotten into a bit of a rut recently. How about an idea for a meeting??

I also would like to once more request articles for the newsletter. Really! How about it? Please...

C A L A N D A R

- Jan. 7- BUFFALO BELLES Reg. meeting 6:00 PM Video "Talking as a Woman" & Cosmetics- two Mary Kay ladies to do makeovers, demos etc.
- 25-28- Tiffany Club- First Event 1995 - Mass. location
- Feb. 4- BUFFALO BELLES Reg. meeting-Wig show and sale. Dress up Night? Denise returns!
- March ? Buffalo Belles-make up demo by Avon.
- April 20-23-Moonlight in Manhattan-NYC

I hope all had a very nice Christmas! and a Happy New Year! See you in '95!

AN UNUSAL CHRISTMAS GIFT  
BY JANICE GNAU

Sometimes a Christmas gift comes in an unusual package, it doesn't even have to be gift wrap. This year I was invited to a Xmas eve party by my close friend Tracie (known to her family as Jan). I was nervous about going, mainly due to meeting my friends family, in-laws, and other friends. She told me not to worry (a number of times), everything will be fine and that I will have a good time. Then she would add we might have a problem with this one person, or maybe this other one. Either way she said she felt comfortable about inviting me this year because in the past year she has started going over to her brothers place in skirts and dresses and her niece and nephew call her Aunt Jan - my friend Tracie is a transsexual.

Most of her family and friends were very friendly and courtess, neither of us had any direct problems. Keep in mind I was introduced to everyone as Tracie friend and did nothing to alter my voice. The Christmas gift I was referring to comes in two packages.

The first package was being accepted by most everyone there as myself.

The second package comes in two parts, the first part was when one of Tracie sister-in-law was talking to me about Tracie (her brother-in-law). She was unfortunately but understandbly using her male name and male gender and was meaning the best. She was telling me that he had certain problems that the rest of us didn't have to deal with. I was shocked, she was talking to me like I was another genetic female, like I didn't have many of the same problems to deal with as my friend, it was like my male DNA did not exist.

The second part of the second package can be sum up by this message I had on my answering machine. "Hello - this is Tracie brother Mark, just hoping you had a good time on Xmas eve and just to let you know that my brother-in-law and Bob that were here didn't realize that you were a guy



dress as a woman and they were checking you out. I just hope you get a little laugh about that, take care and I hope you had a good time, talk to you later."

I thought this well meaning statement was one of the best Christmas gifts I have ever received, outside of the fact I do not view myself as a guy in a dress and I did not get a little laugh about it. The reason I wasn't laughing was the warm cozy feeling I had all over. The feeling of accomplishment, of being myself, being accepted and passing in conditions which I did not expect to do so. This fantastic feeling that I really cannot express in words was a priceless gift (although unusual) that I did not have to unwrap but it was a gift that made it my best Christmas Eve ever.

This feeling could be interpreted in the following quote, "Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see .... Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders that are unseen and unseeable in the world." This unseen feeling of mine was and is one of most real wonderful things in the world. May all of you always believe in the magic of Christmas, not only at Christmas but thruout the year.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### BUDGET REPORT

This is a reminder to all sisters and members of the Buffalo Belles that your yearly membership of \$25.00 for full members or \$15.00 for associate members is now due and payable. It can be paid either at the next meeting or by mail (with checks or money orders made out to either the Buffalo Belles or Cash) to either Denise or myself.

The cost of the membership is based upon the following tentative budget for the 1995 calendar year. This is exclusive of any special events or extras that might be held (like the Spaghetti dinner or another Buffalo night out. The budget also does not include the costs of the refreshments or pizza which are supplied but is covered from the \$5.00 meeting fee.

Monthly mailing costs	\$40.00
room rental	20.00
phone (soon to be establish)	15.00
mail box	9.00
Total monthly costs	<u>\$84.00</u>
	X 12
Total projected yearly costs	<u>\$1008.00</u>
	=====

Based upon the total yearly costs of approximately \$1000 and a yearly membership rate of \$25 we need 40 full members. At the current time we do not have these 40 members and the remaining costs will have to be covered by the \$5 meeting fee over and above the costs of the refreshments at the meetings.

This leads to a disturbing trend that has been occurring at the meetings. We have been operating mostly on a honor system with putting \$5 into a collection plate. The problem is that not everyone is contributing. For example at the December meeting we had 13 sisters attending but only 11 contributing the \$5. Since the meeting fee is in plain view for several hours I have a hard time believing it is an innocent oversight. Due to this for the near future either myself or another designated person will be forced to personally collect the \$5 at some point during the meeting.

Checks for your membership renewal can be mailed to:

Janice Gnu, PO Box 1701, Amherst NY 14226

Any comments or feedback would be appreciated.

## Sateen Armor

by Sue

A knight in shining armor, he stands full of pride  
 weapons sharp and polished lay close along his side.  
 Yet deep inside this armor, fear and shame both dwell.  
 Fear worse than any demon who ever lived in hell.  
 Inside a darkened room, far from the world, our hero hides  
 shutters drawn, door locked and bolted, shield him from the world outside.  
 Now no shining armor adorns our hero's chest  
 instead today, as he hides away, our hero wears a dress.  
 Deep inside our hero, a woman begins to cry,  
 Hero, let me sally forth or we'll both surely die.  
 Each time she calls, she's stronger, she's harder to resist.  
 again he'll don the demon's robe, again he'll wear the dress.  
 Now she wants to venture out, now she has a name,  
 now he'll really fight her, he couldn't stand the shame.  
 The dress becomes the armor against his manly pride,  
 armor for the fight with him if she's to ever get outside.  
 A man in woman's clothing rates the ultimate in scorn,  
 these things are true, they're told to you since the day that you were born.  
 You've faced machine-gun's rattle, looked death coldly in the face  
 yet nothing you feared more my friend, than the horror you now face.  
 A coward be, stay safe inside, or sally from this place  
 in naught but sateen armor, to face the ultimate disgrace.  
 Now you're going to do it, you'll take her out at last  
 you've tried so hard, yet in fear you pray, God, please let me pass.  
 So out the door you must go, though it wounds your manly pride.  
 The clothes you wear are for the woman fair kept hidden deep inside.  
 "Let me out!" you've heard her shout, "I need to be myself!"  
 Leave macho pride and manly things inside upon the shelf.  
 You stay no more, go out the door and set your sister free,  
 into the world, a brand new girl, to be all that she can be.  
 Every man or woman, who ever lived or died  
 to me it's clear that down somewhere, there is some of both inside.  
 When my life is over, and I take my final rest  
 I ask of you, this one thing do, grant my last request.  
 I ask no fancy headstone, service or the rest  
 but if it could be, in the box with me, I'd like to have a dress.

Continued from last month

By the time my third class rolls around, my nails have grown to late-Mandarin length; they grate on plates, clack like claws on the keys of my typewriter, make zippers awkward and masturbation precarious. I've also noticed that my recent attention to detail has brought out a certain slave mentality. I am making hospital corners on my bed, sweeping, washing the dishes after every meal, lining up cups and saucers and emptying ashtrays.

When I arrive for class, Ms. Traum is just finishing up with another tv. He is in his mid-20s, shy and balding—not in the least effeminate. After he leaves, Ms. Traum announces, "Jane has got to go!" She explains that after a year of feminization, the boy who just left us had developed his female twin so successfully that she had begun slipping out in his place, showing up unexpectedly at board meetings and business lunches. Now she has to de-train him. Suddenly Dusty begins to alarm me.

I emerge from the bathroom wearing pink bikini pants and a garter belt. Today I am learning to walk. The Powers Glide Walk and the Seductive Walk. Ms. Traum does a slow-burn Jane Russell trappy bump-and-grind stroll, while great movie themes play in the background.

"Just try it yourself, one time now," says with a naughty smile. "Walk—st-walk-twist-hip-hip-hip-shift-shift-shift." I feel as if I am seducing myself as I walk this sweet gauntlet under her titillating gaze. "Basketball!" shouts Ms. Traum, pulling me back from the edge. "You've played basketball. Do that twist the way you'd do a pivot shot. You know, turn on your heel, slowly now." The thought of Keds and the Knicks has saved me from my shady reverie. But it begins again. "Once more, Dusty dear, now hold it on the pivot. Chest out. Head back and slightly down, pouty. Good. Turn slowly and catch a look at yourself in the mirror." I hardly dare look; the words alone are getting me hot.

"Now, dear," she says, "you can imagine the line of the black hose, can't you?" There's no question about it—I do look gorgeous. The wig, the heels, the nylons, the haughty turn of the head. I have passed without realizing it from terror to boredom to vanity to actual enthusiasm for the way I look.

Stella (nee Stanley) and I are talking over drinks. She is showing me "before" photographs. I find it hard to believe the nebbish pre-law student with glasses and mustache in the picture is also the gaunt blonde across the table from me, flirting distractedly with the air. After seven years of being a tv, Stanley sold his motorbike last year to pay for the operation that made him Stella.

**MY LIFE AS A WOMAN** Eddie hoists up his mini. He has rigged a G string with a net that holds his plumbing.

I've been thinking about going out in drag, so I tell Stella about my apprehensions. "My secrecy about dressing up was torture," she says. "My greatest desire was to be seen in women's clothes. The first time I dressed and went out I felt a tremendous relief. I had planned it for three or four years—waiting to get up the nerve. One night I decided that it was time. There was an old lady who always sat on the steps of my building. I was afraid she would recognize me and I waited for her to go home. I thought she would never leave. Finally she went away. I slipped out and went around the corner to buy a newspaper. Two guys passed me on the street and one of them said, 'What a doll, huh?' and I felt better."

Stella told me about Stefan, who holds tv socials at his house. They're no longer as common as they were in the Fifties and early Sixties when it was necessary for tvs to meet in secret. There were secret tv conventions, tv Odd Fellows halls, tv sororities and even weekend retreats with cabins and masked balls.

In a thick middle-European accent, Stefan puts me off at first on the phone. When I ask if I could come by with my girlfriend, his tone changes instantly. "Perhaps tonight?" We settle for the weekend.

"Stefan will be with you shortly," his delicate wife announces as I enter the apartment. "He's dressing." As we wait in the quaint room, decorated in red and white with touches of ethnic crafts, I imagine a Hungarian dwarf with tassel boots, lace shawl, pleated blouse and castanets.

Stefan strides into the room with an absurd march. His long hair is lightly frosted and he wears slacks and a string of pearls. He looks like an attractive woman in her late 30s. There is only the slightest hint of embarrassment. After a little chitchat, he fixes me with a stare. "Why don't you get dressed?" he asks. "What are you so shy about?"

With false modesty, I retire to the bathroom and begin to apply the layers of cosmetics in their cabalistic order so painstakingly learned at Ms. Traum's academy. What other tvs have had such elaborate training? I feel a flush of vanity that debutantes in *couturier* gowns must feel.

When I slip into the room with my Powers Glide Walk, Stefan looks up, almost amused: "Why do you want to put all of that junk on? You look like a hooker. What woman in her right mind wears that much make-up today? Anyway, it's too hot. Don't you feel uncomfortable in all that? Why don't you just wear slacks like a girl your age?"

An hour later, another guest arrives with a suitcase. Under the dark shades he has worn on the subway from Brooklyn, his lashes are coated with gluey mascara and blue shadow. He's over six feet tall and is built like a giant teardrop. "Hi, I'm Eddie," he says heartily, and retires to the bathroom. In a few minutes, Eddie reappears, posing in the doorway in a red micro miniskirt that barely covers his crotch, matching patent-leather pumps, Dynel curls and screaming-pink lipstick and rouge. I have to bite my hand to stifle a laugh, but no one else gives it a thought. Eddie's red delirium is taken for granted, whereas I am put down because I am trying to impersonate a genetic girl.

Talk turns casually to sales of tv clothing. Stefan recalls seeing peasant women dressed in their traditional garb as they went to Mass on Sunday. "As a little boy, I would stand at the garden gate and watch them pass. The women's skirts were made of beautiful velvet, either red or green and very full. They would wear about eight starched crinolines. They wore stockings with gold spangles and soft white blouses that were very sexy. That was when I began to envy them because of the clothes they could wear. What can men do? They match their socks with their hankies."

It's a steaming, hot midsummer night—not tv weather. Eddie uses this as an excuse to change. "I have a few tricks under here," he says, pointing to his miniskirt. "I always believe girls should share their secrets, don't you? Would you like to see how I create the effect of a vagina, so that nothing pops out when I'm squatting with the girls?"

Do you like to go into ladies' rooms? I think it's the greatest thrill."

Eddie hoists up his mini. He has rigged up a G string with a net that holds his external plumbing and tucks it away. With his huge pot belly rolling down to a little fake *mons Veneris*, the effect is like something out of *Satyricon*. "I may have a spare one here," he says as he rummages through a suitcase packed with panties, stockings, corsets and even a *douche bag*; but the spare G string doesn't turn up.

Dr. Leo Wollman, who holds teas on alternate Sundays and has performed a number of sex-change operations, functions these days more as a counselor than as a surgeon. One associates this sort of surgeon with sanitariums in Switzerland, but Dr. Wollman's clinic is situated in the rather seedy Mermaid Avenue area of Coney Island, among juju shops and languid Puerto Rican hookers in pink Afros, lolling against the walls of sleazy hotels.

MY LIFE AS A WOMAN He pours a couple of drinks and puts on a Joni Mitchell album. He coils his arm around me. I scan his face a bit guiltily. "You—you're a guy?"

Wollman's walls are dripping with testimonials, garish photos, news clippings, Polaroids of grateful patients and degrees in sexology. The doctor is only too delighted to take me on a brisk tour of his bizarre picture gallery. The subjects are about equally divided between black, white and Hispanic, and—not surprisingly, considering the neighborhood—most are plainly *not* professional people. In fact, when I mentioned the "harassed-professional" theory of Ms. Traum and the magazines, Wollman scoffed. "You find these people in every walk of life," he says. "You're only going to hear about the more literate, educated types, naturally. But I run across all kinds: barbers, dockworkers—" He produces a photo of a husky teamster, who keeps his breasts bandaged to his chest while driving a semi. Other photos show elegant transsexuals in Givenchy scarves. One he is especially proud of is an ex-New York City cop, now an airline stewardess, with legs erotically splayed, split-beaver fashion, to show the successful outcome of her operation. "Cute, huh?" asks Wollman, with a disturbingly unprofessional wink.

Wollman, who began his practice as a gynecologist, leans toward an endocrinological explanation of tvs and ts's, dismissing the classic Freudian interpretation of sexual role changing as the fantasy of "a neurologist who couldn't bear to look his patients in the eye."

A few days later, I visit Dr. Lee Steiner, a psychiatrist who treats the problems of tvs and would-be ts's. Dr. Steiner is a forthright old girl, and when I ask her if she went along with the theory that the operation released "the girl within," she lets me know in no uncertain terms.

"No, sir. We don't take much stock in those calcified notions. Ts's come in here, suicidal and depressed, thinking the operation is going to solve all their problems. You see, it's just another form of suicide. They want to destroy this life and become another person. They come here saying they feel like a woman, but let me ask you what in the hell does it feel like to feel like a woman? Most of the people in this field are men, and they don't know. They're so caught up in the technical side of these operations that they forget what a sex-changed person is going to do with his life or where he's going to fit in.

"A heterosexual doesn't want him—you can't tell me a heterosexual man with an ounce of experience can't tell the difference between the perineal muscles of a vagina and a hole, for God's sake—or between real breasts and silicone. A homosexual doesn't want him sexually, either. He wants a man. And women won't have anything to do with him; they feel that ts's are just parodying them."

One thing both Steiner and Wollman agree on, however, is Freud. Steiner says, "We've inherited this crappy notion from upper-class Vienna—that boys are tough and aggressive and little girls are all sugar and spice. We're living in a world populated with Freudian clichés. This is unquestionably harder on men. Girls don't have to be good in sports; they don't have to get jobs; they don't have to be good at anything. Somebody takes care of them. Nobody really cares what a woman does because it doesn't matter. If you're a girl, you're nothing; all you have to do is stay home and cuddle.

"I think that's what the tv and the ts want: a smaller, simpler life."

Ms. Traum asks me to bring leotards. Instead, I wear a pair of wine-colored panty hose, a red bikini and a blue-and-white Quaalude T-shirt. The effect is Clark-Kent-out-of-the-closet. This is my last class. I am to be initiated into the ultimate mysteries of feminine postures and movements. "The only women who are truly feminine are the ones who've taken lessons," Ms. Traum assures me. "Girls learn how to be girls. It isn't something they're born with. The glow that comes from a truly feminine woman starts in her appearance, her gestures, what she's wearing."

She proceeds to show me the correct deployment of various bodily parts.

Head: "If we want to know how to coordinate our entire bodies in a feminine way, we have to start at the top. If there's something I can't stand, it's a woman who walks around with a bobbing head. Actually a woman is very subtle—never jerky or obvious. If you were sitting in a chair, for instance, there would be, oh, just the *slightest* tilt of the head."

Hands: "We put our hands together in the yoga mudra position, thumb and middle finger together, something like a flower's petals. If we put our wrists together, we make a flower."

After we have reviewed posture, we move on to some more-complicated maneuvers: dinner by candlelight. We sit down at the table with two place settings to rehearse the logistics of intimacy. I ask Ms. Traum if it's going to be a TV dinner. She's heard it before. I learn how to open a napkin, pick up the wineglass with two fingers and drink like a doe, smoke a cigarette, wipe my mouth, pick my teeth with discretion and go to the ladies' room. Then we flirt. "Flirting is fun, fun, fun!" Ms. Traum explodes.

"You can't do it with dry lipstick. Your lipstick should be very, very moist with a coat of lip gloss over it to get the utmost flexibility from your lips."

Then we exercise our orifices, saying "oooooh" and concentrating on making the hole as small as possible. "Make sure," she says with an almost obscene wink, "that a coffee cup or glass never goes in your mouth farther than a half inch. This way you create the puckering effect you want." Ms. Traum says she could go on teaching me facial tricks for three hours—and she nearly does.

The course is over. I have opened the doors of many musty closets and let loose a host of my own latent demons. I have endured the discipline of the tongue, run the gauntlet of the Powers Glide Walk, scrutinized my awful face under layers of Maybelline, Estee Lauder and Clinique; I have eaten a dinner in full drag, in the company of phallic females. I have closely observed the mysteries of monstrous machines of sexuality, tvs careening deliriously toward mumlike lacy locomotives. I have offered my innocence on altars of paint

and powder, sacrificed my dignity to the thousand shocks flesh is heir to, rendered up my *machismo* and dreamed awful dreams of nights in pink panty hose. I have undergone all these humiliations, terrors and titillations, but not like some, to progress on the path toward the light, or to gain admittance to a tribe, or even the Elks Club. I did it for a fucking article. Then I received this note from my editor:

Dear David,

There are two things you still haven't dealt with in this piece.

1. The idea of men coming on to you.
2. Passing.

Soon writers will be asked to undergo mutation to fulfill the appetite of journalism. Hasn't my editor already suggested I take a few hormone shots?

I devise an ingenious plan. I will make the run on Halloween. That way I'm covered: If discovered, I can simply say "It's just a costume, man. If you can't tell the difference that's your problem, not mine." I don't have to worry about my street, because just down the block is the infamous Eighty-Two Club, New York's premier drag show for more than 20 years. The real problem is making it to the street. Even on Halloween, my outfit will be hard to explain to Carlos, all-seeing Selnia or Tony the Giant who works in the mindeli downstairs. No mention the people I don't know who live in my building. I'm already conspicuous enough as the resident honkie. The *señora* in the tent dress, the balloon girl who never sleeps: Until the middle of November, the street is their home.

Conclusion next month