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February 1996

Buffalo Belles

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BUFFALO BELLES



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FEBRUARY, 1996



Dear Sisters,

We got the New Year off to a great start with our January meeting! This was despite the drubbing our big brother fraternity received at the hands of those most ungracious hosts in Pittsburgh earlier in the day!! The miserable weather we've had this winter didn't take any pity upon us either. 'cause baby, it was cold outside!! Set a new record that night, minus ten if I recall, and was sure it was around zero at best at meeting time. There were only a few ladies there with skirts or dresses on that night!! I recall only Melissa, Kathryn and Cindy being so dedicated or crazy depending upon your interpretation!

Despite all the hindrances, we still had a great turnout! Fifteen intrepid souls found their way. It was especially nice to see Cleo again, as it had been a year or more since she could attend a meeting. Also Sharon is once again home, and it is good to have her back.

ATTENDEES

JEAN H.	CLEO J.
JANICE G.	NANCY M.
PATTI J.	MICHELLE S.
DANALYN D.	MICHELLE G.
RENE K.	CINDY H.
KATHY L.	MELISSA C.
KATHRYN Y.	SHARON Z.
TAMMY Z.	CHRISTINE

We held a productive business meeting after having our usual pizza and snacks. Some of the upcoming events were discussed. The first was the second meeting on January 20 th. at the Stage Door. It will already have happened by the time you read this. hopefully you were able to attend. Another reminder for all, Feb 9 Thu 11 weekend in Toronto to see Virginia Prince and Jo Ann Roberts staged by Wildside see brochure elsewhere. It looks like a chance to meet two of the 'legends' of our interest. Please call the hotline if you are interested in attending. Final plans will be

made at our next meeting.

While we're speaking of 'north of the border up Canada way, eh, don't forget to get your reservations in for Xpressions Spring Fling II at the end of March. Anything with the word spring in it sounds real good to me right about now!! I guess if your one who has a roof that has (springed) a leak might take a different view! And I sure wish someone would spring for a golf outing down south right now. But at least the spring clothes are starting to appear in the stores.

The other item that occupied most of our time at the business meeting was about the upcoming election. Much discussion took place regarding why, how, who etc. We are basically doing



something we never did before. Just like those busy in Philadelphians two hundred and twenty years ago, we too wear wigs (mostly). There seemed to be a great reluctance by all for anyone to assume the title of president. I guess everyone is afraid of not being able to follow in the footsteps of Denise. So the idea presented last summer, was agreed upon. We will elect three to be our officers. They will have the over all charge of running our group. These ladies will have the primary purposes of maintaining security for all members. Communications both written and hotline, mailing list,

treasury, interviewing etc. The three we elect will serve equally, dividing responsibilities among themselves as they see fit. They may (will) designate others to specific duties, jobs etc.

So the first thing we're going to need is a slate of candidates. And this is up to you. Like in how about YOU? Isn't it time to take on a larger role? Self nominations, are not considered abuse in this case! If you can't, do you know someone else you'd like to abuse, I mean nominate? Please respond in one of three ways. Mail the ballot enclosed back in, attend the February meeting, or call the hotline and register your choice or choices. Next month we will have a blank ballot for full members to vote upon. The top three vote achievers will be our new Tri-S- The three sisters or whatever they wish to call themselves. Nominations will close at the end of February 3rd meeting. If anyone wishes to do some form of campaigning of whatever sort, they are welcome to submit for inclusion in the next issue of this newsletter.

Janice has expressed her extreme reluctance to be included in this process, as a nominee. She will continue to do all the things she always has done however. I stand willing to be corrected on my interpretations of what she said, as before. Both publicly at a meeting and via this newsletter. We do have Denise's resignation on file. For myself, I'm hoping that we have a good slate that will enable me to step back also. I hope so! The out come of your group leaders is up to you, make sure you nominate and vote! Please!

Just a reminder girls, please save your Tops and Quality market tapes to donate at our meeting place. There is a collection

basket near the entrance to the meeting room. Our hosts have been very good to us and it would be nice to help them out in their mission.



I have had some enjoyable correspondence with a girl who hails from WNY. Her name is JoAnn. She would like to become a pen pal with any of you who would like a new sister. She can be reached at:

Ms JoAnn Drusilla
P.O. Box 86660
Baton Rouge, LA
70879

Did you catch the novelty song of the holidays? The one titled "Walkin' Round in Woman's Underwear"?? Complete dialog and lyrics set to Winter Wonderland. Sung by a lovely male glee club type sound. The album is "I am Santa Claus" by Bob Rivers & Twisted Radil (Atlantic 82548-2). It's a real kick!!

Our next meeting, February 3rd, will feature Christine Wheeler. She will be doing makeup lessons and a demonstration. Christine is a representative of Mary Kay cosmetics.

An idea is being put before you is whether enough of us would be interested in forming a softball team to play in the gay bar league in Buffalo? Realistically we need about 15 to commit to playing. Games are on Sundays and the season runs two months. Now if we can pickup a few wives, girlfriends, friends etc. we might pull it off. Janice and Melissa played on the Stage Door team last year. As she says. "We had gays, lesbians, transgendered, straights and friends on our teams". We can get Colleen to find us our uniforms at some fantastic price, I'm sure. Maybe we'll have to have a showing of "A League of Their Own" at coming meeting to inspire you! Anyone out there interested? Contact Janice 'Yogi' G., our manager.

CALENDER OF EVENTS

- Feb. 3 rd - Buffalo Belles regular meeting. Makeover with Mary Kay products.
- Feb. 10-11 - Wildside presents Virginia Prince & JoAnn Roberts. (Toronto)
- March 2 - Buffalo Belles regular meeting.



Trapped in a Body of a Man?

by Christine Gorman (re-print from Science)

Transsexuals often claim they were born the wrong gender. Microscopic studies of a key region of the brain suggest they may be right.

Most young children like to play dress-up around the house in their dad's wing tips or smearing their mom's lipstick all over their face. But for a few youngsters, usually boys this childhood rite is more than a game. They are obsessed with their mother's clothes and wear them at every opportunity. It is as if a part of their mind were trying to

erase the maleness of their body and allow an inherent femaleness to emerge. As they grow older their discomfort with their gender often increases, until finally they turn to doctors for help. Some take feminizing hormones to grow breasts. Some even have their sex organs surgically altered so they can live completely -including anatomically-as women.

But are such people, who are known as transsexuals, truly women trapped in men's bodies? For years, scientists searched for but never found any measurable differences between most men and the ones who become transsexuals, whether in the level of hormones, the shape of genitalia or the number of chromosomes. Nor did scientist find any fundamental similarities between transsexuals and women.

Last week, (November 1995) however, investigators from the Netherlands Institute for Brain Research in Amsterdam reported preliminary evidence that transsexuals may be inherently different, after all. Their study of six male-to-female transsexuals showed that a tiny structure deep within a part of the brain that controls sexual function appeared to be more like the type found in women than that is found in men. If confirmed, the study seems likely to challenge long - held beliefs about what it takes to make someone a man or a woman.

The Dutch research is part of a growing body of evidence suggesting that nature is just as important as nurture in determining how we think and behave as sexual beings. Neurobiologists have cataloged apparent differences in the way men's and women's brains process

information and interpret facial expressions. Geneticists have begun sifting through tantalizing clues that sexual orientation as opposed to sexual identity may at least be partly inherited. Yet the subject matter is so charged from an emotional , political and even religious perspective that evaluating all the various claims dispassionately can be very difficult.

In many respects, studying transsexuals would seem to be the most difficult undertaking of all. Not to be confused with transvestites or crossdressers, true transsexuals are rare. By some estimates, no more than 1 person in 350,000 believes he or she was born the wrong gender. Moreover, the portion of the brain that seems to be different in transsexuals is smaller than a pinhead. Even advanced imaging techniques, like the per scan or mir, cannot detect such tiny variations. To do their research, the Dutch team, led by Dr. Dick Swaab, had to dissect the brains of transsexuals in autopsies and examine them under a microscope. Little wonder, then that it took Swaab's team 11 years to find transsexual candidates, persuade them to donate their brains and then wait for them to die to make the comparisons.

Despite these constraints, Swaab and his colleagues were able to detect some intriguing patterns. They compared the brains of two dozen "ordinary" men and women. For the most part, the brains appear to be the same until the researchers examined a section of the hypothalamus called the BSTc. Although no one knows for sure what this tiny patch of neurons

does in humans, earlier studies have indicated that, in rats at least, it plays a key role in regulating male sexual behavior. Half the men in the control group were heterosexual and half were homosexual. Yet, regardless of their sexual orientation, they all had a BSTc that was 50% larger than that in the women.

When the researchers examined the BSTc of the transsexuals, They found a marked difference. The transsexuals' BSTc was more like the women's than the men's. In fact, the transsexuals BSTc was, on average, slightly smaller than the woman's. The researchers seemed to have found at least one biological motive for the transsexual's desire to change sex, although it may not be the only one. Says Swaab: "Our results indicate that other structures in the brain could be involved."

How could the brain and the body become so mismatched? Several exclamations are possible. One is rooted in the process by which embrues take on sex differences. All human embryos develop in the very earliest stages of gestation along more or less feminine lines. Those destined to become males differentiate from the master template after a complex series of hormonal secretions starts to masculinize the embryo. Miscues in this process could result in crossed signals in the portions of the brain that are responsible for gender identity. That would help explain why there are more male to female transsexuals than female to male.

Not everyone is convinced, however. All the transsexuals in the Dutch study took the feminizing hormone estrogen. The

smaller BSTc may therefore have been the result rather than the cause of their quest to become women. Swaab concedes this possibility but notes that two women in the study's control group were postmenopausal and presumably no longer manufactured much estrogen. Their BSTc was still the same size as the younger women's, which may mean that estrogen has no effect on the structure's size.

There are simpler explanations—stress for example. "Think about it," says Roger Gorski, a neurobiologist at UCLA who has studied rats' sexual behavior for 30 years. "these people undergo a lot of emotional trauma. To cut everything off to become a woman has got to be awfully stressful, and that has got to affect brain structures."

But for most transsexuals, there is no question that something deeper is going on. From the time she was a about of six, Bea Jansen, 46, who lives outside Amsterdam, knew her body did not reflect her true gender. "I felt there was something that didn't fit," she says. "And that something was a penis". Jansen, who plans to donate her brain to Swaab's study when she dies, underwent a sex change operation five years ago. She speaks for many transsexuals when she describes her transformation as a liberation: "I felt as if I could finally take off a mask that I had been wearing for a long time." With Hansen's help, scientists may someday understand how that mask got there in the first place.



DOWNTOWN TORONTO'S UNIQUE DRAG STORE FOR CROSSDRESSERS & DRAG QUEENS

Wildside Presents...



Virginia Prince

On February 10th, 1996, Virginia Prince will attend the Saturday Party of the Canadian Crossdressers Club at Take A Walk On The Wildside, 161 Gerrard St. East. On Sunday February 11th at 5pm, JoAnn Roberts and Virginia Prince will be making a presentation at Tallulah's Cabaret, Buddies In Bad Times Theater, 12 Alexander St., (416) 975-



JoAnn Roberts

8555 Tickets are \$10.00 and available at Wildside and Buddies. Virginia Prince, along with the Canadian Crossdressers Club will be forming a Toronto chapter of Tri-Ew. Call Wildside's 24 hr. hotline for info., or to make reservations.

TAKE A WALK ON THE WILDSIDE - 161 GERRARD ST. EAST, TORONTO, ONT. M5A 2E4 - TEL: (416) 971-6112 24HRS.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT NEWS

More than just men in dresses. — Mekanie Y.

Are we nothing more than just a bunch of men in dresses? We're supposed to be a support community, claiming to be gender-gifted, with a special appreciation of feminine qualities. However, in spite of the lip service paid towards "admiring" women, I often see macho, unladylike behavior which makes me wonder how seriously I can take us.

At one recent support group meeting, someone bellowed to the waiter, "hey, you forgot my dessert!" When the waiter brought it there wasn't even a "thankyou". Would a real woman have behaved in such a way?

Likewise, I often see an unspoken comparisons among some members to see who can be "more Feminine." And the conversations often turn to the

usual macho subjects of cars, sports or the difference between Price Club vs Costco. I see a lot of time and energy being spent on learning how to look like women: dressing like them or having a beardless face, breasts and a vergina. What I don't see are attempts to be like a woman: with grace, empathy and a respect for others.

An old joke, - "How can you tell the genetic woman in a room full of crossdressers? She's the one who's actually listening."

Sometimes I get discouraged by what I see. I believe in our community. We have a special understanding of gender issues which the rest of mono-gender society doesn't have. But we waste it on endless discussions about clothing, electrolysis or hormones. Or petty infighting over who held what event, and when. Or a willingness to spend \$100 on an evening gown for ourselves, but nothing in money or time for the

benefit of our respective groups.

Maybe we really are nothing more than men in dresses. If that's the case, then we don't deserve to be taken seriously by the straight community (and especially NOT by the women we crudely parody.) And we certainly don't get any more recognition or protection against discrimination than, say a bridge club.

I love our community. Since coming out, I've made dozens of friends I never would have otherwise. I've gotten a sense of pride, as well as a genuine appreciation and respect from others. But, I can't shut my eyes to the hypocrisy I see around me. I know we're capable of better.

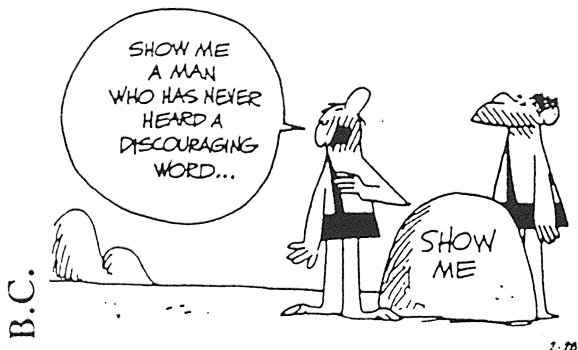
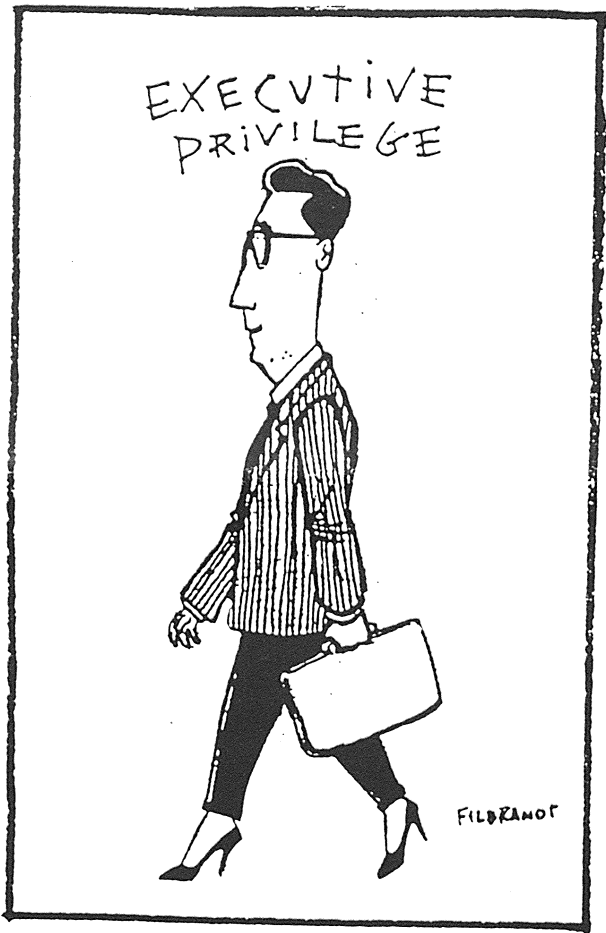
(Melanie is president of Neutral Corner-re-quoted from their Reflection Newsletter via Gender Euphoria/Blulton and Park, Volume IX, No 6-ed)

Nominate three full members of your choice.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



THAT'S ALL WE NEED ON THE ENTERPRISE,
A VULCAN CROSSDRESSER.



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