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Buffalo Belles

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The Buffalo Belles Newsletter



March 2002 Issue

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Meeting time for regular monthly meetings is 7:00pm

Dues for year 2002 are \$25 for full membership and \$15 for supporting. You can send it to the P.O. Box or pay at a meeting. Make your check out to "The Buffalo Belles"



"I completely forgot!"

*Please be advised that this is the last issue of the newsletter that will be sent to members that have not paid their dues.

-Don't miss out, renew today!

Info Line

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*To submit an article for print in this newsletter, send it to the editor at michelefox32@aol.com by the 15th of each month

7 members were in attendance for March's meeting.

They were;

Trissa F, Michelle F, Brenda H, Patti J,
Jo S, Kendra K, and Colleen R

Karen Boyd of Newbury Street Hair, Wig and Center for Wellness located on 2884 Niagara Falls Blvd. has offered to host our April meeting at her boutique so we can see and shop from her selection of 75 drastically reduced wigs. The store would remain open after hours and we'd be the only cliental there. She wants commitment from 6 people in order to keep the store open after hours for us.

Members are free to visit the boutique during normal business hours dressed "in-fem". However, Karen would like a phone call in advance, prior to your arrival. There is a notice on page 10 also.

*No definite plans have been made to have our meeting there, and this decision is up to members. Unless you hear otherwise, our meeting will be at the usual place.

We are considering removing the "Coming Events" and "Newsletter Archive" section from our website. But before we do, can members contribute scanned copies of old newsletters? And also notices about coming events? Coming events notices will appear in the newsletter as well.

Name Change by Michelle Fox

I am concerned that something may be missed out on by our group and also many of the unknown TG people in the general public. Something that has the chance of creating a long-term "good" effect. Since some people see a need for a name change and others do not, the issue logically needs to be talked about. So I shall humbly attempt to convey the proponent argument so far.

The reason I have been proposing a name change in the first place is because a longtime Belles member came to me and asked me to write such an article, because she believed it was right. I agreed to pursue it because I myself (and a few other longtime members) agreed with her. Last year this issue was brought up and the idea seemed to fail. However, no ballot vote was taken. I believe members incorrectly thought that after we changed our name, "political activism" was going to follow. This was perceived to be a potential risk of member's privacy and anonymity. We have no overt political activist wing or any such agenda. For the average member, a name change will be merely clerical.

This was a discussion about an idea that we believed would help our group and help those CD's & TS's who are left out because they hadn't correctly "heard" that there even was a social support network to turn to. The focus of the debate may be this > Do perspective Belles members actually read our ads and then make a decision? Or do they not inquire because they don't see us a beneficial? Or do they not inquire because they don't know we exist?

There is another TS group in Buffalo called A.Q.A. (African Queens Association). They were formally called "House of Elegance" and successfully existed for 2 years under that name. Recently however, they changed their name because they believed that the nature of their support structure was not clearly known to the average TS's on the street, whom they are geared toward helping. They too have a newsletter and are involved in the community. However, word of mouth travels more easily than an advertisement. Their title is like a "buzzword" or something that is easily re-communicable and carries a definition with it. So they changed their name to give a more clear and immediate definition of who they are and what they do. *Their title is specific and exclusionary, however they don't make the same claims we do, as far as being all TG'd inclusive.

Changing our name leads to changing what people think of us. It's changing the message we send about who and what we are. An advertisement just doesn't do the trick. It's the word of mouth that reaches the most number of people, while spending the least on advertising. Which is what we need to do, advertise with an almost nil budget. This is important and not trivial. We are an organization with knowledge about the TG world the straight and gay communities don't have. There is a growing CD/TS population that exists without knowledge of us. If they don't know we exist they can't inquire, or join.

Crossdressing in public some years back (in some places) was merit for a violent physical attack. Crossdressing at work, well you wouldn't have a job the next day I think.

Today some of that prejudice still exists and I believe exerts profound psychological duress on the given individuals. Without a support system in place they stand alone to face the drama that brings almost 1 in 3 TS's to suicide. This is a bonafide concern for us, if we really are a "support" group. The need for all CD's/TS's to have a support group is serious.

A support group should have a name that's clear and definitive. Not vague, generic or otherwise incongruent with the group's support structure or function. Here is an example. I don't know what the Moose Lodge is. With a name like that I'm not about to inquire either. What would motivate me to join them? Do they care that I am unaware of who and what they are? Do they care if I ever join? In this case the burden is placed on me. I have to dig and find out for myself. What is taken as common knowledge by one person may be totally unknown to another. The term "Moose Lodge" doesn't communicate their values and mission to me clearly. Their name is a generic label I do not understand. My lack of investigative efforts pays no dividends for that particular group. Maybe "Moose Lodge" is a "play on words", but I'm not very good at figuring out colloquialisms. You see, I don't participate in all segments of society. Their group may be a great resource for me. But because I may have a narrow social exposure, limited education and lack of desire to query every group out there, I may be missing out on a beneficial opportunity. Too bad for me. Translate this analogy to our situation. You get TG'd people who hear only our name or partially hear about what we're about and decide not to inquire, because they figure we're not what they are looking for. The burden should not be placed on them to do research on us. A support group should take it upon themselves to at the very least, title themselves in a way that speaks of the type of people whom they serve. We could help them to more readily understand us by changing our name. They'd get a quick idea of what we're really about. There also are TG'd folks who do not have high levels of education and lack organizational skills. They are less inclined to ask questions and dig for information. Some are well-adjusted members of society, and others are on the brink. There is a need for expediency in getting these people connected with support channels. The hardest part is getting them to take step#1-making an inquiry. We are reaching out to the people who do reach for us, and also those who might, if they knew they could. This is not a trivial matter and should not be pushed aside with "the notices are good enough" because we are a public resource for the community and we owe it to them to make it easier for TG'd people get to us. To say "status quo" will suffice for the future is closing the door to people that don't even know the door exists. To say "The invitation is *already* there and is *quite* clear enough" would be said out of simple ignorance to the fact that there are "Non-Belles" CD's and TS's who have never seen our ads and may otherwise consider us an enigma. These are not imaginary people I refer to, but real live CD's and TS's I have personally met and talked with.

Another issue is the longevity we've had with our current name. Some could argue that a change of name would disrupt the familiarity the public currently has with us and

create some genuine confusion as to the question of our existence. This may consequently reduce the number of applicants we get, bringing stagnation to membership enrollment and effectively reduce our group by means of attrition. *To be perfectly honest, our membership count is falling. We are doing something wrong here. Changing our name would hardly alienate us from support networks or serve to distance us from TG'd individuals but would instead make clearer, to more people, the nature of our diverse TG support. The group "House of Elegance" changed their name to "African Queens Association". The old title was admittedly vague and drew fewer responses. The new title quickly communicates to everyone that they serve African American TS's. Can you see the difference? The difference will be felt in the community when, in time, more and more black TS's enlist with them and start benefiting from the unique support structure only they can provide.

What is to be accomplished with a name change? Number one, we'll correct a misnomer. Our name simply does not match our advertised messages and we also have transsexuals as members> "Belles" connotes "crossdressers".

From Spouses of Crossdressers

My Best Friend

By: a Spouse

From the beginning of our relationship, I knew there was something different, something only a trustworthy person would find out about. When I'd go to his place, I'd find a bra (not my size), or a tube of lipstick (not my shade). Another woman I thought! But I never caught him in a lie, so when he told me about his crossdressing, it wasn't much of a shock. I wasn't sure how to handle this Revelation. The Other Woman was my Best Friend I have ever had! My best friend for almost 26 years, and I have been married to him/her for 22 of them. I have never met her. I've only seen pictures of her. I am not certain I want to meet her! I may not approve. You see, she is a little trashy! I try to give the support my best friend needs as he gives the support I need to me.

My Best Friend asks me why I did not marry someone normal or human? What is normal or human? My best friend gave me a home and a family to show just how much I am loved. The greatest thing about best friends is that you can be who and what you are! No matter what! You are accepted.

A Few Thoughts From a Significant Other

By A Loving Spouse

My life was moving along just fine. I was keeping pace with those around me. I felt my marriage was above average, actually feeling a bit superior at times, when I allowed myself to compare my man and I to others. He was macho, strong, capable and funny. I'd never seen him cry or crumble. He was the strength in our home, our protector. He was the epitome of

Hopefully in years to come we'll see more TG'd people reach us as more of the general public finds out about us through that "word of mouth" message that spreads easily. Hopefully those troubled CD's and TS's whom we haven't met yet, will join us and possibly can get their lives back together. There are people out there who need a support group, even if they don't know it. Saying it's up to "them" to find "us" isn't fair, ethical or moral. Not when we were supposed to be a "support" group.

Strong words I know. But I can only emphatically plead with you to vote in a name change and allow a more viable, meaningful and effective title to circulate through the community giving the CD's/TS's who are facing this alone, every chance, every opportunity to get connected with those of us who can and want to offer them realistic immediate and long term support. I have heard some awfully sad stories from some of you. You know what it's like. Please help us to help them. Enclosed in this issue is your ballot, please vote by sending it to the P.O. Box or send me your vote by e-mail.

Michelle

what I was taught and conditioned to believe (the era of the 1950's) that a husband should be. I was content.

Then, out of nowhere, things began to change. He became moody and silent, even hateful and cruel at times. The true communication we once had was gone. I was scared, filled with dread, and clueless as to what was in store for me. I pleaded, I prodded, I begged for him to open up to me. I blamed myself, my self-esteem was gone. Not knowing what his secret was, I assured him that we could handle anything, together. Finally, after many months, he told me. Through tears I'd never seen him shed, he poured his heart out to me. He told me that from the age of nine he'd been dressing in women's clothes. I was in shock, and filled with fear.

My mind was spinning out of control. I'm an educated professional woman, but was completely ignorant on the subject of crossdressing. When I learned the word "Transvestite", I was repulsed and resentful that that title described my husband. I, I wanted to be the most attractive and feminine one in his life. I wanted to fill his feminine needs. I wanted to be the ONLY one to use womanly things, sexy lingerie, make-up and stockings. I wanted to be the one with breasts, something female and special about ME. I didn't want to think about his desire to wear false ones himself!!

My emotions were in turmoil. I felt resentment. After all, I wanted to feel safe and protected. I had the RIGHT to be the weaker one, didn't I?? Now, all of a sudden, I must be the strong one, the protector, the Secret Keeper. I was lonely, scared, insecure, and I felt cheated. Didn't I have enough to deal with? My work, my lousy childhood, the kids, economics, the running of a household? I was angry. What other secrets

was he holding from me? Why me? And how DARE he EVER criticize anything I might do when he's putting me through this!! I began out of desperation to educate myself. I learned that the odds were very high that he was not gay, or a transsexual. I learned that this was his stress reliever. That as he got older, the sexual pleasure derived from dressing was mainly replaced by a desire to feel calm, comfortable. I became somewhat rational, realizing that there really isn't anything "wrong" with dressing. After all, I wear jeans, flannel shirts and suits. I had compassion, I wanted to be supportive, I wanted to understand. I felt honored and loved, that after all of these years, his entire life, I was the one, the only one he'd ever trusted his lifelong secret with. I felt tremendous love for him. I remember the shock of seeing him dressed for the first time. I didn't want him to feel like a freak, a weirdo, yet my mind was reeling. I questioned my own sexuality, enjoying my man in bed as a "woman", does that mean I'm a lesbian? I'd buy him female things, encourage him to wear them, and then resent him for it. He began pushing me, making semi-permanent changes, such as shaving his legs and his chest. I felt his doing that completely took away my "man". I loved his chest hair, and I loved the feel of his hairy legs on my smooth ones. He filled me again with fear when he did these things. I resented his selfishness of not respecting my feelings, my requests. I was always the one giving in, he the one pushing me harder and harder to not only accept the crossdressing, but to "enjoy" it and "like" it, to be "turned on" by it. Although I did want to be supportive because I love him, I'd find myself running hot and cold, sometimes yes, sometimes no. I'd give him mixed signals and then he'd punish me with distance and moodiness. I needed to talk with other women dealing with this, but I didn't know who or how. My main priority then and now was to protect The Secret, to protect our lives as we know it, to protect our security.

And somehow, through this abyss, emerged feelings of understanding. I once again began to feel we were still that "above average" twosome. That we were closer than the "normal" couple, for we shared this tremendous secret. We had trust. Precious trust.

He is the one who found the STLGF, a turning point in his life. But, ironically, it is becoming a tremendous aid and support to me, for I still have issues I battle and I still find myself floundering at times. I need to be there, with people I share a commonality with, a bond. It is so necessary to me, so needed. Some crossdressers adjust and accept their desire at an early age, some never. For some it is easy, for others it takes years, perhaps a lifetime. I've only had a few years to learn and understand. Be patient, be kind, be forgiving, and give us time. This is not easy, this is a very difficult situation your needs have put us in. We have to try to understand you, please put your own feelings and needs aside and try to understand us. We need your compassion, forgiveness, and patience, just as you need ours.

Finding Husband in her Clothes Changes Everything for Wife

Dear Open Mind: I came home about 11 p.m. a few weeks ago to find my husband of 10 years trying to fit his body into

some of my clothes, including my lingerie. I was totally repulsed! He didn't even try to hide it. He just said he thought it would be fun to wear some of my things. If I wasn't so upset, this would've almost be funny. I'm about as "turned off" as I can get and can't even imagine having sex again with my own husband. Now what?

Fear and revulsion of the unknown is a common reaction. Similar to our height, color of eyes and hair color, the need to wear the clothes of the other sex appears to be determined either genetically or prenatally. Current psychological practice is to educate the patient to remove the guilt and anxiety they feel about being different. Crossdressing is a social taboo, not mental illness.

One instance does not necessarily make your husband a crossdresser. He merely could be curious, or thought it might be fun. Hundreds of men dress as females for Halloween every year.

This is a crossroads in your marriage, though. Your feelings about finding your husband in your clothes, your feelings of revulsion and being sexually "turned off" can damage your marriage. This is the same person you married 10 years ago. His potential crossdressing is not a perversion, but your actions are telling him that you feel differently.

Finding your husband in your clothes had to be a shock. You are not alone. I have worked with many women in your very situation. Your next step is to have a frank conversation with your husband. Ask him about his crossdressing (e.g., how long he has done this, what it does for him). Then listen as calmly and openly as possible to what he has to say. He himself may not know the reason for his behavior. Sometimes women's clothing is associated with sexual pleasure. For some men, crossdressing is a form of stress relief and/or related to their gender identity.

Society says you are either male or female, but actually gender exists on a continuum. Most crossdressers are heterosexual men who are generally happy being male. However, they may have a feminine component to their identity that demands expression. Research suggests this is largely biological. Many men (and women, too) secretly struggle with their gender identity.

It is a tribute to your relationship that your husband didn't try to hide his behavior. Even if this is a fundamental part of his personality, you have the right to set limits around what is acceptable in your presence. Professional counseling may help to sort out your feelings. Peer support is also available through the St. Louis Gender Foundation.

SHORTS TAKE

What puts pizzazz in a relationship? Maryann Troiani, Psy.D., and Michael Mercer, Ph.D., authors of *Change Your Underwear, Change Your Life*, reveal that huge numbers of women cherish wearing their man's clothing. 92% surveyed borrowed their significant other's sweaters, while 39% filched his underpants, which "makes her man feel special," says Mercer. We're waiting for the survey that shows how women feel when they come home to find lover boy wearing a familiar Wonder bra, garter belt, and fishnet stockings.

Questions & Answers

Q.) I have a pair of silicone heart shaped breast forms and the corner of one of them has come apart, leaking gel. Has anyone had this problem and if so, could you please tell me if you were able to repair it?

Ans. #1) If the hole isn't too big, super glue will fix it. It works best for small punctures. Clear packing tape will work too but doesn't last too long

Ans.#2) To repair small leaks use elastic adhesive tape (it's a tape that will stretch) for best results. I wore mine so much, that I had to totally recover them several times. I used the stretchy plastic bags that the newspaper comes in and ironed them sealed. I wrapped them and put them in the box they came in to hold them, cut off the excess, and pressed down on the back of them with the iron to seal the new plastic using a piece of waxed paper between the plastic and the iron.

Q.) How can I get that pierced-ear look -- without pierced ears?

Ans.#1) There are two ways. The first, for those of you who may not frequent shopping mall jewelry stores aimed at teens, is magnetic earrings. They only cost about \$5 -- and they do work, you can buy them at Claire's.

Ans.#2) The second method involves a little work, but it also works fine. Take any pair of regular earrings and cut off the thin, metal part that is supposed to go through the ear. Take a metal file and use it to smooth out the back of the earring, because there will be a small piece of metal protruding.

Once that's done, all you need to attach it to your ear - giving you the pierced ear look - is a tiny bit of super glue. Yes, super glue! Use a tiny amount and it attaches just fine. When you want to remove it, just roll the earring off gently.

Court TV By Matt Bean

Michael Kantaras, a transsexual who lives as a male, is currently fighting for custody of his two children.

Is sex in the mind or the body? That was the question in a Florida court Tuesday as the custody battle between a transsexual man and his wife of 10 years got under way. Central to the case of Michael Kantaras — who was born in 1959 as Margo Kantaras but took hormones and had his breasts, uterus, and ovaries removed to become a man — is the notion that sexual identity is a mental, not a physical construct. "Sex is between your ears, not between your legs," testified Walter Bockting, an expert on transsexualism, on Michael Kantaras'

You can use a tweezers to hold the earring and place it, because there's less chance of getting glue on your fingers. You can usually just remove the tiny amount of glue residue on your ear with your finger (it scrapes off, because it's dry), but you can also use nail polish remover with acetone with no adverse effect on your ear lobes. Buy super glue with a brush attachment in the bottle; it just makes it a lot easier to apply.

Q.) I get a shadow that's visible in some lights. What can I do?

Ans.) Use some "beard cover" which should easily be found at theatrical supply shops; "Ben Nye" is a well-known brand cream. Use this under the foundation and apply a thin coat of orange/red lipstick on your face and rub it in. The orange in the lipstick helps block out the blue shading of the beard.

Q.) Do companies make clip on bangs? I have enough hair on top and back but I think I would look better if I had bangs. Anyone know the name for what I am looking for?

Ans.) You can probably find a satisfactory piece at www.wiggoddess.com. Their phone number is 1-866-767-9049 and they have a large selection that is not extravagantly priced.

Q.) Can I get the "look" of a face-lift?

Ans.) Some of us have the need for brighter eyes and higher cheekbones. A neat trick for an instant face lift is tape! Pull the forehead up with *transpore clear medical tape*. It's a clear tape with an elastic quality to it. By putting it from the back of the head and pulling forward and masking it to just above where the hair line of the wig is, we can attain a very good look. It seems to open the eyes more. With just a little white stick blended with the foundations you can have the look of higher cheekbones.

behalf. Bockting, a clinical psychologist who says he has helped 150 "gender dysphoric" individuals switch genders, was the only witness to testify in the opening day of this precedent-setting custody battle.

Kantaras' wife, Linda Kantaras, claims that because her husband was born as a woman, their 1989 marriage is void under a 1998 Florida law banning same-sex marriages.

Linda Kantaras, 33, brought to the marriage a 1-month-old son, Matthew, whom Michael Kantaras adopted that year. Then, in 1992, Linda gave birth to a daughter, Irina, using sperm from Michael's brother, Thomas. It was Michael Kantaras, however, who in 1998 filed

in Pasco County, Fla., for divorce and custody of the couple's two children, now ages 9 and 12, after allegedly becoming involved with another woman. The bench trial, the first of its kind in Florida, will provide Circuit Court Judge Gerard O'Brien the opportunity to set precedent on a number of issues, beginning with an age-old question revisited: What makes a man a man? Bockting testified that the right genetic code isn't the only factor. The expert said how the process of gender reassignment can also turn women into men. Gender reassignment, he explained, consists of three steps, taking male hormones, living for a period of time in the masculine "gender role" and receiving surgery to alter the body to remove some or all of the external female sexual characteristics. Some transsexuals must undergo such a transformation, Bockting said, to relieve the psychological afflictions caused by feeling assigned to the wrong gender. "One of my patients actually tried to cut off his breasts, because that wasn't how he saw himself," he said. "That is the level of despair that some female-to-male-transsexuals experience." In 1987, Michael Kantaras underwent reassignment surgery at a Galveston, Texas, clinic — a procedure that removed his breasts and sculpted a male chest, and that removed his uterus and ovaries. However, Kantaras never had a penis constructed, which Linda Kantaras claimed in court documents to be grounds for considering him to be female. Bockting told the court that a complete surgical transformation however, is expensive and unnecessary for the reassignment to be complete. According to the expert, less than 10 percent of female-to-male transsexuals undergo phalloplasty, a surgical procedure that uses skin grafts and fat transplants to construct a penis in the place of the clitoris. O'Brien, who interjected often to question the expert, asked, "Do you believe that having a small penis or having no penis at all makes an individual less of a man?" "No," Bockting said. Karen Doering, the lawyer for Michael Kantaras, closed her examination of Bockting with a nod toward the effect this case could have on her client's psychological well-being. "And what would be the psychological, social, physical response of a person who has ... completed the sex reassignment process ... to then be declared by the court to be the gender they were assigned at birth rather than the one that they received through reassignment?" she asked. "Well, I think that would be devastating. It's really an invalidation of their whole being," Bockting answered. During the bulk of her examination, Doering led the expert through questions emphasizing the mental part of one's sexual identity. O'Brien, however, asked a number of questions about the physical side of identity, at one point going into a lengthy rhetorical excursion on the chromosomal underpinnings of gender. During her cross-examination, Linda Kantaras' attorney, Claudia Jean Wheeler, alluded to the Kantaras' son, asking whether a child would have problems if "he finds out that his father used to be a woman and the socks that he used to put in his pants are there because his dad used to put socks in his pants?"

"The way in which this news is presented is at least as important if not more important than the nature of the news," Bockting replied. Following Wheeler's cross, O'Brien posed one final question, asking the expert whether male bonding would be hampered if the father lacked a penis. "That male bonding where a male and a boy are involved is very important," O'Brien said. "Can a male undergo reciprocal

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bonding with a male whom he understands was born a woman and still maintains some physical characteristics of a woman?" "He might not have as big of a penis, but he is a man," Bockting replied.

USA: Equality Florida Legal Advocacy Project Represents Transgender Father in Custody Battle Televised on Court TV

SAN FRANCISCO -- February 15, 2002

Anyone tuning into Michael Kantaras' custody battle in Clearwater, Florida looking for "talk show" style sensationalism got an advanced education on transgender issues instead. Due to the unprecedented Court TV coverage of Mr. Kantaras' fight for his children, more people were exposed to accurate information about transsexualism and sex-reassignment than in any case that has ever been litigated on behalf of a transsexual person anywhere in the country. "We have heard from transgender people from around the country who see this case not only a validation of their ability to marry and be good parents, but also as an unprecedented validation of our lives as transgender men and women," said Kantaras co-counsel Shannon Minter. "In addition to Michael himself," adds Minter, "the primary credit for the educational impact of this case must go to Tampa attorney Karen Doering, the founder and director of the Equality Florida Legal Advocacy Project, a non-profit legal organization based in Tampa, Florida. Karen's dedication to this case is what has transformed this private battle into an amazing opportunity to educate the country about transgender issues."

Fired transsexual Wal-Mart cashier wins \$2M

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. (AP) — A judge ordered Wal-Mart to pay more than \$2 million to a former cashier who said he was harassed and fired after a boss learned he was undergoing a male-to-female sex change.

Ricky Bourdouvaes, 27, sued the retailing giant in May. The default judgment was issued Monday after the company failed to respond to the lawsuit. Bourdouvaes, who dresses as a woman, claimed no one at the Piscataway Wal-Mart had a problem with his work while they thought he was a woman; he said they even asked him to train other employees. But when a store manager reviewed his job application and noticed the box "male" was checked, he questioned Bourdouvaes, who confided he was undergoing a sex change. It was then that harassment and discrimination started, he claimed. Bourdouvaes said he was told he was fired in January because of discrepancies with his cash register count. A Wal-Mart spokesman said Bourdouvaes was fired for misconduct, but would not elaborate. Superior Court Judge Douglas Hague awarded Bourdouvaes \$2 million in punitive damages, and \$100,000 in compensatory damages and legal fees. Tom Williams, a spokesman for Wal-Mart in Bentonville, Ark., said the company will ask the judge to vacate the award. He said the store was aware that a document was served in May but did not realize what it was. "We were totally unaware of the lawsuit, and we want to have the opportunity to defend ourselves," he said. "We'd like to have our day in court."

INFORMAL GENDER IDENTITY SELF DISCOVERY PROVOCATEUR

Essay style thought experiments designed to facilitate self analysis

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Following is a free form provocation tool, designed to elicit thought about gender identity. Use this tool to provoke self-examination. Answer each question with as much heartfelt honesty and awareness as possible. Explore the concepts and expand on them.

1. Do I express femininity MORE for freedom of being, or for the pleasure I feel?
2. Clothes, or Self? If everyone dressed exactly the same, male or female, how would this need in me express itself...or would it?
3. Which gender expression permits me more freedom to be and do what I REALLY want, male or female?
4. If I do nothing, I will lose the ability to be accepted as a female forever, and within about five years. How do I feel? What does this make me want to do?
5. My penis is GONE FOREVER. How do I feel about that?
6. If I had to pick only one sex to be FOREVER, would it be male, or female?
7. That choice is already being made for me. How do I feel about that?
8. List the *single most important thing* that comes to heart about being 'en femme' (dressing or otherwise expressing female gender).
9. If I spent the rest of my life just dressing as a woman, but living as a man, is that enough?
10. It is ten years from now. WHAT am I?
11. I wake up one morning and I am a woman. It is PERMANENT. It will never, ever change. How do I feel about that?
12. Is there *ANYTHING* I cannot do as a woman that I could do as a man? How important is that?
13. If I will feel about my gender the way I do right now, for the rest of my life, can I live with that? For exactly how long?
14. Suddenly the entire world is devoid of gender. All people are hermaphrodites, utterly androgynous in personality and form. The culture reflects this, as does all human interaction. I am still me. Living in this world, would I still want to be a woman? Why?

15. One of the following things is stopping me from being my preferred gender. Which is it?

- A. I am unsure.
- B. I fear what others will do.
- C. What if I regret it?
- D. It is too much to face.

16. I am offered two choices. I am assured that I will not regret either choice, once it is completed. Both are painless and foolproof. One choice is to have the wiring of my brain altered so that it corresponds with my male body, eliminating forever any yearning to be female. The other choice is to have my body altered to fit my brain, so that I am fully female. Which is my preferred choice? Does one choice seem wrong? Why?

New Yorkers Say Final Goodbyes to Transgender Activist Who Helped Spark Modern Gay Rights Movement

(Feb. 27, 2002) On Tuesday evening, New Yorkers paid their final respects to Sylvia Rivera, the troubled and controversial transgender activist who helped to ignite the modern day gay rights movement in 1969 during the famed clash between police officers and gay patrons at the historic Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village. Rivera, 50, had died of complications from liver cancer at St. Vincent's Hospital on Tuesday, February 19th. Services for the gay rights pioneer at the Metropolitan Community Church Tuesday evening were followed by a ceremony where Rivera's ashes were sprinkled in front of the Stonewall Inn. Rivera's remains were then carried in a horse drawn carriage to the Christopher Street piers, where a wreath was cast into the Hudson River in her memory.

Orphaned at three, a child prostitute at age ten, Rivera also battled homelessness, alcoholism, drug abuse, and fellow gay rights activists over the calculated exclusion of transvestite and transgender rights from the mainstream gay rights political agenda in order to improve the prospects of passage of gay rights legislation in the City Council and in the State Legislature. After more than a decade of intense lobbying, the City Council and then Mayor Ed Koch enacted a local law that extended many civil rights protections to gay New Yorkers in the mid-1980's — but the rights of transgender New Yorkers were excluded. In the final year of life, Rivera lobbied for passage of city legislation to extend civil rights protection to transgender New Yorkers. Just last month, Rivera and other transgender activists picketed in front of the Greenwich Village offices of the Empire State Pride Agenda to protest the exclusion of transgender protections in a statewide gay rights bill (SONDA) being promoted by the Pride Agenda. Five years ago, she founded a not-for-profit shelter in Park Slope, Brooklyn for transgender homeless individuals.

This is taken from the "Standards of Care", sixth version February 2001. I had wondered if the suggestions here would help. These are alternatives to going "full-time" or living in the opposite gender role continually (24 hrs. / 7 days a week). This document can be read in full at

<http://www.hbigda.org/soc.html>

VI. Psychotherapy With Adults

Options for Gender Adaptation.

The activities and processes that are listed below have, in various combinations, helped people to find more personal ease. These adaptations may evolve spontaneously and during psychotherapy. Finding a new adequate gender adaptation does not mean that the person may not in the future elect to pursue the real life experience, hormones, and genital reconstruction. These activities and processes are focused on matters other than real life experience, hormones, and surgery.

Activities-

Biological Males

1. Cross-dressing: unobtrusively with undergarments; unisexually; or in a feminine fashion
2. Changing the body through: hair removal through electrolysis or body waxing; minor plastic cosmetic surgical procedures
3. Increasing grooming, wardrobe, and vocal expression skills

Biological Females

1. Cross-dressing: unobtrusively with undergarments, unisexually, or in a masculine fashion

"Defining" Things by Michelle Fox

*Here is a "definition" that I saw on the net, and it *really* irked me.

Transsexualism: An ideology that holds that transsexuality is a permissible and desirable portion of a wide range of different types and equally valid expressions of human sexuality; a belief system that advocates special rights for transsexuals, to the extent that they demand that sex re-assignment surgery shall be publicly funded so as to permit transsexuals to submerge themselves totally and physically in their psychological fixation.

TRANSGENDER RESTROOMS URGED FOR SCHOOLS

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

by Joyce Howard Price

The United States Students Association is urging the

2. Changing the body through breast binding, weight lifting, applying theatrical facial hair
3. padding underpants or wearing a penile prosthesis

Both genders

1. Learning about transgender phenomena from: support groups and gender networks; communication with peers via the Internet; studying these Standards of Care; relevant lay and professional literatures about legal rights pertaining to work, relationships, and public cross-dressing
2. Involvement in recreational activities of the desired gender
3. Episodic cross-gender living

Processes

1. Acceptance of personal homosexual or bisexual fantasies and behaviors (orientation) as distinct from gender role aspirations
2. Acceptance of the need to maintain a job, provide for the emotional needs of children, honor a spousal commitment, or not to distress a family member as currently having a higher priority than the personal wish for constant cross-gender expression
3. Integration of male and female gender awareness into daily living
4. Identification of the triggers for increased cross-gender yearnings and effectively attend to them; for instance, develop better self-protective, self-assertive, and vocational skills to advance at work and resolve interpersonal struggles to strengthen key relationships
5. Seeking spiritual comfort

*Here is part of a quote from the same place that equally bothered me.

"... of great importance in the politics of sex as a euphemism for sexual orientation, intended to obscure and to obfuscate the biological and cultural classification of humans into two sexes - male and female - so as to promote the view that the bipolarity of sexual concepts that grew out of biological reality are social constructs and not a consequence of human evolution."

nation's colleges and universities to provide single-stall "gender neutral" restrooms for transgender students to protect them from harassment and physical attacks." We're the nation's oldest student association, and we believe access to education should be open to all, regardless of gender, ethnicity or sexual identity," Ms. Ringor said. She said transgender people "have a problem with bathrooms" that are for men or women

only. "They face a risk of being assaulted if another person in here doesn't think they belong. If a person is not safe [in a restroom on a college campus], that person won't necessarily be able to go to college," Ms. Ringor said. Because of those concerns, USSA's National Congress passed a resolution last summer committing the organization to support "gender neutral" restrooms. Ms. Ringor stressed that such facilities should not be equated with unisex restrooms used by both males and females. Peter LaBarbera, senior policy analyst for the Culture and Family Institute, an affiliate of Concerned Women for America, responded with dismay to USSA's recommendations. "Maybe you are chronicling the decline of society by the number of restrooms it takes to accommodate all the different sex identities and sexual orientations," he said. "In a statement heralding the arrival of the transgender liberation movement, the national chapter of the United States Students Association recommended that university bathrooms become gender neutral in order to accommodate the needs of the transgender community at UCLA," the students, Erwin Ong and Masen Davis, wrote. A UCLA spokesman said he saw the column in the student newspaper but was unable to say whether any single-stall

Elephant in The Living Room by Myria

Among many TS's there tends to be a somewhat odd (at least to me) assumption that if no one walks up and says "So what's with the 'mones?" - in other words, if there isn't an obvious reaction - no one noticed. To be sure, an awful lot of people are not what one would call overly observant, but a lot of people are and of those that are many of them aren't going to say anything to you but that doesn't mean they don't say anything to anyone else. There's an awful lot one can "get away with" without anyone making a deal of it, but there are distinct limits to that and you're not going to necessarily be apt to know when you've crossed that line. It's something anyone starting HRT in "male mode" must keep in mind. You can't simply depend on people not to notice, there are too many variables for that to be anything like a wise strategy - it's more along the lines of hopeful fantasy.

There's a shorthand phrase most people have heard at one time or another - "Elephant in the living room" syndrome. What it means, basically, is that there's something everyone knows about but no one openly discusses because, well, to discuss it you have to acknowledge it and no one wants to bring it up. I suspect many TS's find themselves as the elephant in the living room, even if they don't realize it, when they're making their first steps. No one says anything about the changes they're going through so they assume no one has noticed. Up to a point that's perhaps true, but past a certain point it quickly starts to strain credulity well past the breaking point. Still, no one has said anything so they must not have noticed, right? Well maybe no. Trying to predict what people will or won't notice is a difficult proposition at best and as often as not your guesses will be wrong. Most certainly one cannot take the lack of overt comment as proof that no one

restrooms are planned for transgender students. Tim Kelly, a spokesman for the University of Wisconsin at Madison, which Ms. Ringor described as "progressive," said that institution offers both "unisex bathrooms" and single-stall restrooms. Mr. LaBarbera, who tracks homosexual activism, says transgenderers are emerging as a vocal minority. "Right now, they are the young Turks of the whole gay movement," he said.

Meanwhile, a state lawmaker in West Virginia is distancing himself from the transgender-rights movement as he pushes a bill aimed at senior citizens that would put unisex restrooms at many of the rest stops along that state's interstate highways. Senator Mike Ross, a Democrat, said his bill has the backing of the AARP and other senior citizen groups. It's designed to prevent a recurrence of a situation that occurred at a West Virginia rest stop in July, when a woman entered the women's restroom and her husband, an Alzheimer's patient, went into the men's room. "That was the last time she saw her husband," Mr. Ross said in a telephone interview.

noticed, to do so would be foolish in the extreme. Nor can you presume that you have an accurate idea of how others view you, that's only rarely the case. The only reasonable course that I can see is to assume that people will notice and plan accordingly. If they don't, fine, but if they do and you don't have any idea what to do then you're screwed, blued, and tattooed.

They may not have said anything because it would be an uncomfortable subject at absolute best and people don't like to discuss uncomfortable subjects if they can at all avoid it. They probably aren't sitting there thinking "Oh, she's a TS!" because very likely transsexualism doesn't exist as any kind of discrete concept - they're thinking TV, gay, some combination thereof, or they just plain don't know what's up, they just know that something is.

Twelve or so years ago I was staying with a TS friend and her girlfriend one weekend. On a lark I agreed to let them dye my hair as I'd never done it before and wanted to see what it would look like. My hair was at the time quite long, always has been, and was the one thing everyone always noticed about me - to the point where strangers would stop me in restaurants and such to comment on how pretty it was - as it's perhaps my only decent feature. My friend and her girlfriend dyed it from my normal brown looking indoors/red looking outdoors to a *flame red* and I thought it looked fantastic. I went home that Monday having taken particular care in styling and such thinking that everyone would notice. No one did - not friends, not co-workers, nada. Several people noticed that *something* had changed, but none seemed to be able to figure out exactly what when asked. Around the same time I started plucking my brows. I did so in a rather slow and

methodical way, trying not to draw attention to it, but the fact of the matter was that I didn't think anyone would much notice anyway and I was just being anal about it.

Wrong, everyone noticed instantly and several people asked me about it even though the degree of change had been relatively small. Whatever exactly they may have noticed and whatever they may or may not have derived from that, you can bet that it's not something they particularly want to engage in a conversation about if they can avoid it. People can be amazingly good at ignoring that elephant in the living room.

Myria

The new home of The New Sex Change Indigo Pages:
<http://myria.home.mindspring.com/Indigo/>



Pictured from left to right are Brenda H. and Michelle F. out on the town!

Karen Boyd of Newbury Street Hair, Wig and Center for Wellness located on 2884 Niagara Falls Blvd. is offering 75 full wigs specially low priced to members of The Belles. These wigs are not damaged however they did get wet from ceiling leakage and now cannot legally be sold to their chemotherapy patients. The staff at the Newbury has washed and re-styled every wig and offers them exclusively to The Buffalo Belles first. They will be presented to the public starting May 1st. Layaway plans are available and they accept all major credit cards. These wigs normally sell from \$180-\$400 and are available to us for \$50 and under. A great buy for sure.

Please contact Karen at 694-4528

New Book Concerning Addressing Transgender and Intersexed Concerns

I am just about to have my new book published after working on it for several years. A significant portion of the book is dedicated to speaking to inequities that the transgender and intersexed community experience within the rest of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexed community. I am looking for examples of where there were hate-crimes against either intersexed or transgender people where the gay press or gay/lesbian groups or leaders ignored the crimes. I won't use anybody's name, but if you want to send it anonymously, that is fine. Thank you for your anticipated assistance.

Christina Rosetti
 Call: Toll Free 1-800-435-3595
 Email: Christina1836@hotmail.com

Spiritual Concerns Studies

Contact:

Jean2ts@aol.com 716-283-4707

*We can meet in my home, or talk on the phone

A Walk in the Word

Different Lifestyles!

It is a puzzle, isn't it? This question is a first cousin to some of my reflections on the question: "What if I am not certain what I believe?" Certainty that can lead to arrogance. Arrogance invariably leads to condemnation. Maybe Christianity's "religion of love" needs less certainty and more trust. At the beginning of this century, I think we need to bring back a book popular last mid-century: J.B. Phillips' *Your God is Too Small*. The title tells the story. Many Christians seem to have (or need?) a very small God. And with that small God they seem bent on whipping the very world that God so loves.

The only answer I have for this question is that we must struggle more faithfully, we must labor with more love to hold up a balance to what many see and experience as an oppressively rigid Christianity. This balance of grace over guilt may be one of the Church's best and most enduring gifts to the patchwork fabric of the Christian faith.

As one of the saints of old has said, "Truth is never truth if it is on the side of oppression." To that I would add, Christianity is not of Christ if it is abusive to those "whose lifestyles and views may differ from their own."

John 14:6 – "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."



Lets get your face on these pages! Send in some snapshots of you having fun!