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April 2000

Buffalo Belles

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Recommended Citation

Buffalo Belles, "April 2000" (2000). *Buffalo Belles Newsletters*. 89.
<https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/buffalobelles/89>

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THE JOURNEY

NEWSLETTER OF THE BUFFALO BELLES

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KATHY'S NOTES



Dear Sisters,

The March meeting was not as well attended as most have been in the recent months. Probably the cause for many was the inclement weather forecast for the evening. It did start snowing as predicted and by the time the meeting was finished, several inches of snow had to be brushed off one's car-to get down to the layer of sleet that awaited your scraper. However, we can't complain to much, as this was the only meeting of the year that weather played a factor in whether one should venture out for the evening, or stay inside by the fireplace.

We did have a pleasant evening, spending it in the living room area just sitting around talking about this and that. Sometimes these are the most pleasant of our meetings, where the discussions can run free and get a little more personal or intimate than in the normal more largely attended meetings.

We did get to welcome a new girl to our little sorority. Michelle L. and her lovely wife Sue made their first appearance and we hope they will return next and every month. Sue, hopefully next time another one of the wives will be here with us so you will have another to compare notes with. The previous month there were three other wives in attendance, go figure!

We had our usual pizza, chips and drinks and then ventured out into the good

night for either home or the night life downtown. That is if one still had their coat with their car keys still there! Poor Brenda, she was in a panic. The only coat left on the rack wasn't hers and now, how could she get into her car and then into to her home? So started the great find her coat venture of the evening.

Off we went to my house, where I have the phone numbers of the members, so we could call around and try to find who had mistakenly grabbed the wrong black winter overcoat. We were able to eliminate some of the attendees who were still there at the end, and others who wore green or red. But that still left a few possibilities. Fortunately, after a few calls and a wife or two woken up, we were able to hook up with the errant wrap and back to meeting place, where the exchange took place. Thank goodness for cell phones, as it certainly enabled us to get the parties together even sooner.

Picking up her keys and coat, we returned to the meeting place where I witnessed such a selfless act that I think it should be mentioned. Jo had stayed behind and was sitting in her car waiting to see if the errant coat wearer would return so she could intercept the wayward keys. It was now past midnight, and for Jo to sit there for two hours like that was really such a nice act. Jo, you are awarded the sister of the month award for being so caring. It really touched Brenda and myself the way you went out of your way to care so much. Sisters like you are what this group is about. Thank you for being you.

If there are lessons to be learned from this, maybe they are: 1. Keys go in your purse. 2. Don't everyone wear black. 3. Have an extra key hidden away somewhere just in case you somehow loose yours.

Continued on page 4

- THE MAY MEETING OF THE BUFFALO BELLES HAS BEEN CHANGED TO THE FIRST SATURDAY, MAY 6. THE CHANGE IS ONLY FOR THIS MONTH.
- SPRING IS HERE. IS YOUR WARDROBE READY? COME TO "SHIRLEY'S ATTIC" FOR A TG FRIENDLY SHOPPING PARTY ON APRIL 30. SEE PAGE 7 FOR DETAILS.



CAMILLE'S CORNER

Spring is here and with the better weather there is an increase of activities for members of the Belles and the entire Gay, Lesbian, Bi and Transgendered community. You can see it by looking at the full page of coming events in his issue of The Journey. I'll get back to some of them in a moment, but I'd like to comment first on an aspect our membership.

I'm sorry to see that a few of the Belles decided not to renew their annual memberships. Was it something we did? Or something we didn't do? I'm always curious as to why some drop out of the only transgender organization in the area.

Perhaps they got what they needed and now feel strong enough to be on their own. I'm happy for them. Or perhaps they didn't get what they wanted and left. If that's the case, all they needed to do was to inform the officers of what they wanted to see happen. We have always encouraged and been open to any and all ideas a member may suggest. But as I have said in the past, we are not mind-readers. Your suggestions need to be communicated to the Belles in order for an idea to be discussed, nurtured and implemented. Too shy or embarrassed to ask about something? Send a note to the PO box or leave a message on our voice-mail. Your feedback can go a long way in making the Buffalo Belles better and stronger.

One way I felt how to make our organization more effective and far reaching has been to re-design our web site. It's been up and running since March 29 and will allow us to better serve the growing TG community out there. Our application is on the website now and soon there will be links to helpful sites. Past editions of The Journey will be posted. There is even a member profile page for those Belles who wish to have some information listed about themselves, including a photo (optional). Kathy, Victoria and myself are already there. Let us know if you are in-

terested. We will even link to your personal web page if you have one. Most of the credit for this website goes to our webmistress, Victoria Covington. The address is: www.geocities.com/buffalobelles. Check it out.

Now about those upcoming events. On, April 16 there is the Sunday meeting of the Transgender Discussion Group at a new time: 7-9pm. If attendance does not improve, it will probably be dissolved due to lack of interest. Info is on page 3.

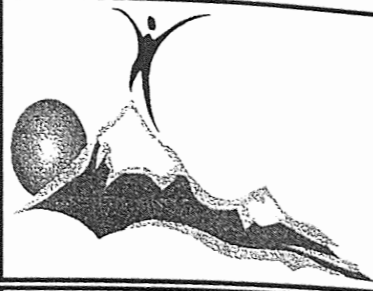
The annual Out, Loud & Proud 2000 Conference is schedule for April 14 - 16 at the University of Buffalo Main Street campus. It is sponsored by the UB Lesbian, Gay & Bi Alliance who have been around for thirty years. Although there are few Trans issues on this years agenda, I plan to attend as it's a great way to introduce ourselves to the University lesbian, gay and bi community and to make some friends through thoughtful dialogue. Hopefully we'll make contacts with some Trans students and alumni. Let me know if you're interested. It's only \$10 for the entire weekend. Event info is on page 4.

Toronto's Xpressions is having their annual spring fling called "Over the Edge" in Niagara Falls, Ontario, April 27 - 30. I understand tickets are going fast, so don't think too long about it if you'd like to attend. Event info is on page 8.

On Sunday, April 30th, a Buffalo Belle's sanctioned event is scheduled at Shirley's Attic, a shop featuring new and nearly new clothing located on Harlem Road in Cheektowaga. I met with Shirley, the owner, last week and she is a sweet and wonderful woman. Shirley's Attic is normally closed on Sunday but she is opening her shop from 2 - 5pm exclusively for the members of the Belles. To make it festive while one browses through the gorgeous clothes, Shirley will be serving wine and cheese for those attending. Changing rooms are available. I'll be there. How about you? Event info is on page 7.

So, how are you going to be spending part of your spring? Got an idea or heard of an event we might all appreciate? Share it with me and the rest of the Belles. Chances are we'll all be a little better for it.

I hope to see you at some of these happenings. Take care.



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www.geocities.com/buffalobelles/

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Camille:

First, I want to say that this newsletter is a wonderful service for the Western New York scene. The article on safety you wrote last month really caught my attention. I had to write to you to add a comment or two.

First, I want to state my opinion from the point of view of a GG (means real girl). I think that it is important to have the girls see things from my point of view once in awhile.

When I am out for the evening, I would NEVER walk around outside, at night, by myself. I know that a woman alone and walking down the street is just plain stupid. I could easily draw attention to myself from the wrong people.

So, what I want to say is..... If you want to walk in my (high heel) shoes, then you must realize that you have to play by the rules that were designed to protect me.

Just this week, a friend of mine, and a member of the Belles, was going out to meet another friend and member. The second lady never showed up. Please, please contact your friend if you cannot keep the date. Things happen and canceling plans will occur. Don't leave a friend hanging though. It's just not lady like.

As far as walking each other to your car, may I suggest that BOTH of you enter the car and then drive the friend to her car or back to the club door? This is safety for both. Do not assume (we know the definition of this word) that since all went well in the club, that no one would bother you while walking to your car alone. Your friends should STILL walk you out and vice versa.

Let's not wait till someone gets hurt before we change our way of thinking. Perhaps the ugly truth is..... Could that person be you?

With love and concern,
Kali Ward

Readers' replies and comments are welcome and encouraged. Letters should be mailed to Editor, The Journey, Buffalo Belles, PO Box 1701, Amherst, NY 14226 or e-mailed to: buffalo_belles@juno.com

NANCY'S PERSPECTIVE

Hi girls,

"To be or not to be." I often wonder if that were written today, what would it look like? Perhaps, "Are you or are you not." Maybe, "Is you or ain't you." Remember, that famous line was penned by a playwright who had actors dress as women to be in the cast of characters in his plays. Any hidden meaning here?

A BIG thank you from this gal to Studio 430, and Newbury St. I had the chance to finally meet Ms. Suzi on her turf. Jo and I went there so I could check things out, and I was impressed! There were 4 girls present, just hanging out in privacy and comfort. I browsed through some great clothes, shoes & wigs while drinking my free cup of coffee. I chatted with all the girls, and wound up buying a riding skirt and new wig. Ms Suzi is a wonderful hostess, and I would recommend that if you are looking for a few hours of relaxation in a safe setting - go there!!

I wasn't able to attend the open house for the Belles at Newbury St. so I set up an appointment for some consultation. I took 3 wigs along, and Karen Marigilio-Boyd (the owner) treated me like a princess! She locked the doors, and I had her undivided attention for almost two hours. She shampooed two of the wigs, and cut, shaped and styled all three. Karen made some comments, suggestions and hints that provided positive reinforcement. One of the wigs I brought along was the one I got at Studio 430, and when I wore it to the March meeting of the CD Network in Rochester, two girls told me how nice it looked. Think about going there for the next open house, or make an appointment You'll be glad you did!

Finally, I want to mention the loss of a real friend to the TG community. Daryl, my Mary Kay consultant, has passed the torch. Some of you met her last year when she came to a meeting, and helped 10 of us with our makeup. She is one of those rare individuals who has been gender friendly for years. Her goal was to always help women look good, and it didn't matter who those woman were. Being nonjudgmental in our society is possible, and Daryl epitomizes that trait. Thank you Daryl, for your hands-on approach, good advice, and caring attitude.

Until next time. . .

Your sister,
Nancy

TRANSGENDER DISCUSSION GROUP MEETING

WHEN: SUNDAY, APRIL 16 7:00pm to 9:00pm (new time)

WHERE: 367 DELAWARE AVENUE (near Tupper Street)

DOWNTOWN BUFFALO

Kathy's Notes

Continued from page 1

The guilty party will not be identified as it was a purely innocent mistake on her part, but I will say she was blonde!

Take care, and may next month go more smoothly for all.
Kathy

E-MAIL UPDATES:

In last month's The Journey we had a listing of members E-mail addresses. We've received a few updates to that list and are added here:

Patti J: PJ362536@aol.com

Paula K.: Pkriedeman@webtv.net

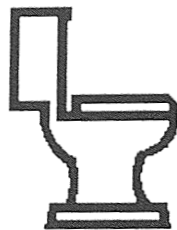
MAY MEETING DATE CHANGED:

Due to a conflict with another group holding a large gathering, our meeting place host has requested that we switch meeting dates this month to the **first Saturday, May 6**. We apologize to our Rochester sisters regarding this change, as this creates a conflict with their meeting date of the first Saturday of the month. Hopefully this won't happen too often.

MARCH MEETING ATTENDANCE:

Denise M.
Kathy L.
Karoline O.
Brenda O.
Jo S.
Kim K.
Tina L.M.
Michelle L. & Sue

WILL MEN IN GERMAN TOWN TAKE TOILET ORDER SITTING DOWN?



BERLIN - Germany's reputation for precision has taken a knock, judging by a ban on urinating while standing that has been imposed on tenants in an east German apartment block, the daily Bild reported Friday.

Landlords, complaining that misdirected urine is causing their radiators to rust, ordered male tenants to answer the call of nature off their feet.

But men in the town of Radeburg are not taking the ban sitting down.

"I'm not going to let anybody tell me how I take care of business. I'm going to carry on standing. Basta!" said local cemetery worker Juergen Galler

(Reuters) March 31, 2000

CHECK OUT THE
BUFFALO BELLES
NEW WEB SITE AT:
[www.geocities.com/
buffalobelles/](http://www.geocities.com/buffalobelles/)

Featuring Wilson Cruz (From Rent & Ally McBeal), Loren Cameron (TS Book Photographer), Leslie Newman (Author), workshops, lectures, Club Marcella Drag Queens, talent show, banquet, and more!

Registration: \$10

-Call the LGBA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Alliance) for more information:

645-3063

-Check event website for further info and to register online:

www.wings.buffalo.edu/sa/lgba/conference/

Out, Loud and Proud 2000

30 Years of Activism in Buffalo and Beyond

April 14 - 16, 2000

University of Buffalo
Main Street Campus

TRANS COMMUNITY NEWS

IT'S IZZARD, ISN'T IT

CROSSDRESSING COMEDIAN READY FOR FAME

By Peter Plagens, Newsweek, March 20, 2000

If you don't know him yet, you will soon. He's the British fellow in heels and eyeliner, followed by a pack of female fans, with all the signs of becoming a comic classic.



In Toronto, on the opening night of his new North American tour, comedian Eddie Izzard stops his routine suddenly. He smiles broadly, straight out at the theaterful of people, and says, "I'm talking crap. Haven't done a gig in ages." Izzard, you see, does comedy the hard way: he doesn't write anything down, and he doesn't rehearse anything, either. During his surreal soliloquies with his on everything from cows ("They have rights... though not many") to a new Canadian national anthem ("Oh Canada, how many A's do we have?/I like banana, only different"), he frequently pauses to gather himself to figure out what to say next. Among Izzardophiles - the hard-core fans who'll follow "Circle," his new show, to Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia and New York - the moments when he says "Um, yes, ba - dum ba - dum... and that's all true" are the especially delicious trademarks of his style.

Izzard - whom Monty Python legend John Cleese calls "the funniest stand-up around" - is a smallish man, with a big, generous face and a voice capable of whiplashing from a high, adolescent croak to a thespian basso in a split second. The content of his gags ("Before Stonehenge, there was Strawhenge and Woodhenge") is like the subject matter of a modern painting - only half the story. The way he says them - very, very fast with a little kid's instant grin of discovery - is the brushstroke, the part his fans love. The downside of Izzard's improvisational courage is the same as an NBA hotshot point guard's: a lot of flashy passes end up in the stands. It

doesn't faze him. Izzard just stage - whispers into his face mike, "They're not going for it, Swindon."

Did we mention that Eddie wears women's clothes - good ones from Jean - Paul Gaultier - and not just as part of his act? He's a bona fide cross - dresser. He's also engagingly self - confident, in an unpretentious way. When NEWSWEEK talked to him on the eve of his tour, the first thing he wanted to do was get the subject of transvestism out of the way. "Being a TV is in the chromosomes, in the genes," Izzard said. "It's similar to being a transsexual - adjoining rooms, so to speak. But TS's are further along." This particular night Izzard was in "bloke mode": leather pants, tight black T shirt and no lipstick. Emphatic eye makeup, however, and very high - heeled boots. "I was initially a frumpy transvestite," Izzard recalled. "I looked like a small elephant in high heels." He added - almost as if his improved fashion sense had something to do with it - "I have a girlfriend, and I do fancy women."

Izzard was born in 1962 in Yemen (his father worked there for British Petroleum) and was sent to boarding school in Britain when his mother fell ill with cancer. She died when Eddie was 6. "I wanted to be an actor," he says, "but I couldn't get any parts in school. Then I discovered Monty Python and thought I can just do this comedy thing." Izzard started as a street performer. One day he saw another guy with "a metal girder attached to a helmet, with spikes coming out, and attached to the spikes were flaming kebabs." Izzard realized, "If I were performing, people would say, 'Let's go across the street and see the guy with the girder'."

So he switched to indoor stand - up, and then added impressions. Exactly two - James Mason and Sean Connery - which serve as voices in his cast of characters, including God, Jesus, Moses, JFK and Dr. Heimlich (who, when choking, asks somebody to perform "the me maneuver" on him). And he "does history," which he gets from "watching telly, the History Channel, endlessly." Izzard riffs: "I'm interested in classical thinking with the Greeks and Romans, then things' going very stupid after that. Someone in the third century A.D. says, 'Uh, I dunno what's going on'."

Oddly - or perhaps not so oddly - Izzard's most dedicated fans are women. All the members of his unofficial American fan club, Executive Izzardites, are female. "He's the kind of guy you want to cuddle with" and "I'll turn the video on to keep me company while I clean house" are typical replies - 99 percent of which came from women - to an Internet newsgroup query asking fans what they fancy about Eddie. The affection doesn't emanate solely from bonbon ladies taking a break from QVC jewelrhythons. "Eddie educates as well as entertains," says Sheri Wilson, a 27 - year - old molecular geneticist. And, unlike all those Drew Carey-esque boyfriends out there, he's got really great taste in shoes.

(Continued on page 6)

TRANS COMMUNITY NEWS

IT'S IZZARD, ISN'T IT

(continued from page 5)

When informed of the ardor, Izzard sighs. "Yeah, but if you start to believe it, you can lose your life and your soul." His solution is to push his artistic envelope. Armed with only high - school French, he took one of his shows to Paris. He's appeared in films - mostly forgettable parts in forgettable movies (the villainous chauffeur in "The Avengers," for instance) - and starred in the legitimate London theater as Lenny Bruce in "Lenny" last spring.

Nevertheless, Izzard still hankers after the comedic big time. Carolyn Strauss, VP for original programming at HBO, where the video of his '98 American tour "Dress to Kill" still plays, says, "He takes you right beyond the garb into the persona. We'd love to work with him again." Tickets to "Circle's" New York run sold out in five days. When an extra show was added, the tickets vanished in 36 hours. But some fans have grown positively possessive of Izzard's nichey strangeness. "As for his going mainstream, I hate it," e-mails Rebecca Townsend, a 28 - year - old insurance exec. Cleese is reassuring: "I don't think Izzard will lose his weirdness. He won't change his act just to be more successful." Right. After all, he outfunned that guy with the girder long ago.

NEEDED:

INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS
TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE BUF-
FALO BELLES BY ATTENDING
LOCAL MONTHLY GAY &
LESBIAN ORGANIZATION

MEETINGS

WHY ?

- TO FOSTER A BETTER
UNDERSTANDING OF WHO
WE ARE
- TO PROMOTE OUR
PRESENCE IN THE
COMMUNITY

SEE CAMILLE, PATTI OR KATHY
OR CALL HELPLINE (879-0973)
AND LEAVE NAME & NUMBER

TRANSWOMAN MURDERED IN
UPSTATE NEW YORK

by Gwendolyn Ann Smith

According to reports from local newspapers, as well as information gained from the local transgender community, a 40-year-old transwoman who went by the name Stephanie Yazum, was murdered on March 23, 2000, in the "Stockade," a section of Schenectady, New York.

Nearby residents were awoke shortly after 4:00am on Thursday morning by a loud dispute in Yazum's Washington Avenue apartment. Police, who arrived on scene shortly thereafter, found Yazum lying on the floor of her kitchen, bleeding from a deep slash to their throat. She was pronounced dead at 5:20am at Ellis Hospital.

Stephanie worked at the MVP Health Plan on Liberty Street, and her employer has offered a \$5,000.00 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of Yazum's murderer.

Police and locals suspect that it is likely that the killer met Yazum in a local bar where she regularly hung out, and that she took this person (or persons) home with her. A friend of Yazum indicated that she an innocent and trusting person, who simply wanted to be loved.

The bars in the area close at 4:00am, and it was not uncommon for Stephanie to get a ride home from friends she met in the bar.

Although Yazum's wallet was found by investigators on a stairway in the apartment building, police do not consider this to be a robbery, but rather have labeled this crime to be about Stephanie's "lifestyle."

Those who lived near Stephanie considered her a nice, quiet individual. She was short at 4' 11" and a mere 95 pounds, due in part to some life-long medical conditions. She was still very attached to her parents, who would pick her up for church every Sunday.

It is unsure how Stephanie placed herself within the community, though she was still working in a masculine role, and was largely known as a man who crossdressed in the evening. One friend of hers has indicated that she was in therapy and was considering going full-time and seeking gender reassignment.

Details on this case are still coming out. Anyone with information should contact the Schenectady, New York Police Department at (518) 382-5245.

FOR A BETTER
YOU...

From "Instant Style"

By Emily Cho and Neila Fisher

- When money is tight, make your wardrobe go the furthest by owning a light neutral set (beige blouse and pant) and a dark neutral set (black sweater and skirt). All the pieces will mix and match - with each other and with everything else you have.
- As your budget grows, spend money on alterations. To get the full value from an outfit it should fit perfectly. Although it's hard to add to an already squeezed budget, the price will pay off.
- Balanced shine in accessories means coordinating your earrings, belt buckle, watch, ring, and bracelet. One should lead the eye to the other and none should stand out significantly.
- The best way to use blush as a contour is to suck in your cheeks and apply a slightly darker shade in the natural hollow.
- Color Trick: Wearing tone on tone - such as gray with gray or blue with blue - gives a long, slim look. It makes you look less heavyset than a contrasting top and bottom like white and black.
- Whenever you wear dark, sheer hose, bring an extra pair in case you get a run - nothing looks worse.
- If you think you are heavy, pay more attention to your hair and makeup, because this is where you want to bring the focus.
- To relax before a big evening, take a bubble bath with bath oil, soft music and scented candles. Try to soak for at least ten minutes.
- Study the merchandise in the best stores even if your budget can't afford them. You will learn to look for similar merchandise characteristics in a store you can afford.

Fashion Tips

ON SUNDAY, APRIL 30

FROM 2:00 TO 5:00 PM

COME TO A SPECIAL AFTERNOON SHOPPING PARTY AT

Shirley's Attic

NEW & NEARLY NEW CLOTHING, SHOES & JEWELRY

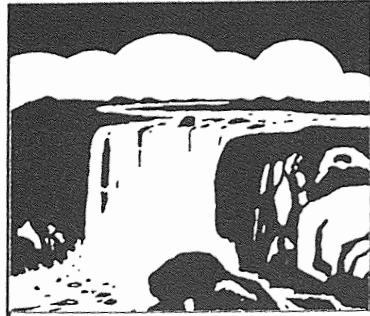
3756 Harlem Road

(between Kensington Ave. & Cleve Hill Drive)

Cheektowaga, NY

(716) 837-1970

SHIRLEY'S ATTIC WILL BE OPEN ONLY FOR MEMBERS OF THE BUFFALO BELLES.
WINE & CHEESE WILL BE SERVED IN A TG FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE.
CHANGING ROOMS WILL BE AVAILABLE.



OVER THE EDGE

A CD Weekend in Niagara Falls, Canada

THURSDAY TO SUNDAY
APRIL 27 - 30

Includes: Workshops, Theatre, Show, Banquet, Winery Visit, Vendors Also: Great Outlet Mall Shopping nearby, plus Niagara Falls, and the Niagara Casino

YANKEE GALS - COME AND GET A BARGAIN!

Many folks from the Great Lakes region and as far away as Boston and Connecticut came last year and had a ball. Remember, your US dollars are worth almost \$1.50 Canadian.

PACKAGES FOR NON-MEMBERS

PACKAGE A - Full event package. \$165 U.S.

Including: Thursday no event costs, Friday breakfast & Dinner Theatre, Saturday breakfast, All workshops, Gala Dinner & Show Sunday breakfast. (Room cost not included)

PACKAGE B - Friday/Saturday/Sunday pkg. \$120 U.S.

Includes: Friday dinner Theatre, Saturday: breakfast, All workshops, Gala Dinner & Show Sunday breakfast. (Room cost not included)

PACKAGE C - Saturday/ Sunday pkg. \$ 70 U.S.

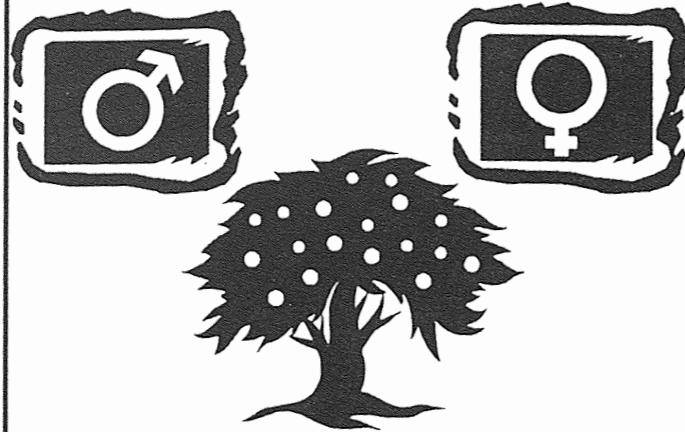
Includes: Saturday: all workshops, Gala Dinner & Show Sunday breakfast. (Room cost not included)

PACKAGE D - Saturday only \$ 65 U.S.

Includes: Saturday: all workshops & Gala Dinner & Show (Room cost not included)

To contact Xpressions:
Voice Mail (416) 410-6949
Website; www.xpressions.org
Email: xpressions@xpressions.org

For room reservations Arcona Motel, 3964 Portage, Telephone: (905) 356-8450 Rates quoted of \$55.00 double for one night. Please advise them that you are part of the Xpressions Gala Weekend. Do not delay calling for a room, as our first hotel is already completely booked.



TREE CHANGES SEX

For most of its adult life--now 150 years and counting--a giant ginkgo tree in Louisville's Cave Hill Cemetery was presumed to be male. Thought to have been grown from seed provided by Kentucky senator Henry Clay, the tree is one of the largest known ginkgos in the world.

But in the past ten years, as it approached its dotage, it's been doing something few other ginkgo's are known to have done: sprout berries, an activity performed only by females. The prolific fruit seems to be growing from one branch--called a sport or witch's broom--about fifty feet up.

Only six other ginkgos are known to have possessed both male and female traits: four at the University of Virginia in a 1982 survey, and two in the whole of Japan in a 1931 survey.

Peter Del Tredici, director of living collections at Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum, says such gender shifts are actually not that unusual. "Maleness to femaleness is a continuum, not an absolute distinction," he notes. "Biology is much more flexible than we give it credit for." He thinks the Louisville tree may be suffering a "breakdown of communal support systems" as a result of old age.

"I think it's a cool tree," adds Lee Squires, the cemetery's superintendent.

Ginkgos are among the oldest known species of trees, and one of the toughest.

A ginkgo at ground zero in Hiroshima in 1945 was shattered by the first atomic bomb but sprouted leaves eighteen months later.

Written and provided by David Williams

Fantasy

by Gianna E. Israel

When you hear the word, fantasy, what comes to mind? Perhaps, a naughty sexual fantasy? A person who is living out of touch with reality? Daydreams about a relaxing vacation? A storybook image? Being forced to go shopping while dressed "en femme." Or perhaps, pursuing an impulse?



According to my faithful Webster's dictionary, a "fantasy" is a product of imagination; specifically, an image, (and) especially, an illusory image. It can also mean a whimsical or capricious mood. Most therapists like fantasy, and get to hear private, secret fantasies on a regular basis. As a gender specialist I particularly enjoy fantasy because at times it can play an important role in my work with crossdressers and other transgender persons.

Generally I receive a lot of questions about fantasy, and having fantasies. The one I hear most often from clients is, is my fantasy mentally healthy? I particularly hear this question after a client has shared their fantasy of becoming involved in some activity considered to be a social taboo, immoral or illegal. This may include S & M activities, fantasizing about acting-out violence, being "dressed" as a little girl and having sex with other children, and so forth.

Generally, fantasizing about almost any subject is OK. However, acting on or making a fantasy happen requires asking if doing so is going to create hurt or trouble for yourself or others. For example, fantasizing about unrestrained S & M activities is fine, however during actual S & M activities with another person, passwords or codewords are used to help keep the activity safe and within each person's limits. What is particularly nice about fantasizing or daydreaming, is that it can be cathartic. Fantasies allow people to experience situations and pleasures they normally may not find accessible or socially acceptable.

Fantasy can be particularly beneficial, if you are stressed out and need a change of pace. For example, if you are a cross-

**LOOKING FOR INDIVIDUALS
TO HELP DISTRIBUTE PAMPHLETS AND TO
STAFF INFORMATION TABLE DURING THE
GAY, LESBIAN, BI & TRANSGENDER
PRIDE EVENT DAY IN JUNE
(IT'S NOT AS BORING AS IT SOUNDS!)
DETAILS NEXT MONTH**

dresser who finds yourself wanting to crossdress at work but unable to do so, there is nothing wrong with closing your eyes momentarily, and fantasizing about what you would rather be doing. Take a deep breath, relax, and enjoy the moment. Fantasies also can be reframed in part as a healthy, therapy dynamic. I have found that individuals who are dissatisfied with their relationships or who have been victimized in the past, occasionally fantasize about less-than-healthy situations, such as being raped, beaten or abused. In these situations I encourage persons to practice changing their fantasies, to situations where they are being loved, respected, and sexually satisfied in a loving manner. With practice it is possible to make healthy fantasies fulfilling, and these mechanisms can play a healthy role in seeking positive relationships and situations.

Recently I was asked if the fantasies crossdressers and transsexuals have routinely differ, and if those differences can be used as a diagnostic tool. In part, where differences are concerned, the answer is yes. Generally, the more strongly identified an individual is with living in role, the less likely it is that they will have fantasies about becoming involved in situations concerning their biological gender. However, because fantasies are fluid and can cross all gender boundaries, they cannot be used as a reliable diagnostic tool. For example, an individual who is only interested in cross-dressing may fantasize occasionally about having genital reassignment surgery. While conversely, a post-operative transsexual may fantasize occasionally about some situation involving their biological gender.

The most common fantasy I hear from crossdressing clients, is one that involves being forcibly crossdressed and made to act as a woman in all respects. This type of fantasy points to the forbidden nature of a man wearing women's clothing. Still, it is a great fantasy and good outlet for those who enjoy it. It should be noted, however, that with that particularly fantasy, exploring it in real life introduces the possibility of new sexual experiences. In that light, remember to use safe sex precautions.

A lot of transgender persons gain information for new fantasies from the writings of others. These fantasies can be particularly rich in detail and imagination. However, the reader does need to exercise caution when adopting information gathered from fictional characters and situations. For instance, many written fantasies relay unrealistic expectations about the effects of hormones. Transgender persons who use hormones are advised to gain credible information from a professional source.

In closing, learn to enjoy fantasy. Its fun, it's free and is good creative exercise.

Gianna E. Israel is a gender-specializing counselor. In private practice she provides nationwide telephone consultation, individual and relationship counseling; evaluations, referrals and. She is also principal author of the *Recommended Guidelines for Transgender Care*, a founding AEGIS board member and an HBIQDA member.

The Journey's recommended films on video:

"Boys Don't Cry" due in April with Best Actress Oscar winner Hilary Swank.
"Flawless" due in late April.
"Better Than Chocolate" already available.
"All About My Mother" Best Foreign Film Oscar winner - spring release.



COMING EVENTS



DUE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF LAST MINUTE
CHANGES, CALL TO VERIFY THE TIME AND
PLACE OF EVENTS

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| APRIL 8 | BUFFALO BELLES MEETING 6:00pm |
| APRIL 8 | PEP MEETING 7:00PM
Compton's After Dark, 1239 Niagara Street, Buffalo |
| APRIL 14 -16 | OUT LOUD AND PROUD 2000 CONFERENCE
University of Buffalo Main Street Campus (see page 4) |
| APRIL 16 | TRANSGENDER DISCUSSION GROUP 7:00 - 9:00pm
367 Delaware Ave (near Tupper St) |
| APRIL 22 | ERIE SISTERS MEETING
Erie, Pennsylvania |
| APRIL 27 - 30 | XPRESSIONS "OVER THE EDGE" SPRING FLING
Niagara Falls, Canada (see notice on page 8) |
| APRIL 30 | SHIRLEY'S ATTIC -BELLES SHOPPING PARTY 2-5:00pm
3756 Harlem Rd, Cheektowaga (see notice on page 7) |
| APRIL 30 | MILLENNIUM MARCH ON WASHINGTON FOR
EQUALITY |
| MAY 6 | BUFFALO BELLES MEETING 6:00pm (note date change) |
| MAY 6 | ROCHESTER CD NETWORK MEETING 6:30pm |
| MAY 20 | IMPERIAL COURT OF BUFFALO CORONATION 2000
Buffalo Convention Center 8:00pm - Midnight |
| MAY 27 | ERIE SISTERS MEETING
Erie, Pennsylvania |
| JUNE 7-11 | BE ALL 2000 - Cincinnati, Ohio |
| JUNE 17 | GAY, LESBIAN, BI & TRANSGENDER PRIDE PARADE
& CELEBRATION - Downtown Buffalo |
| SEPT. 26-OCT. 1 | SOUTHERN COMFORT
Atlanta, Georgia |
| NOVEMBER 16 -19 | LAKE ERIE GALA 2000
Erie, Pennsylvania |