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Buffalo Belles

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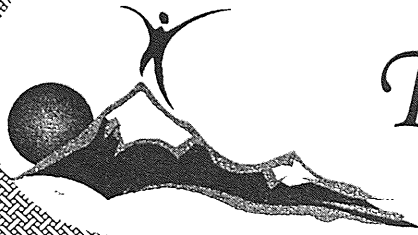
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Summer "Lite" Edition

AUGUST 2000



THE JOURNEY

NEWSLETTER OF THE BUFFALO BELLES

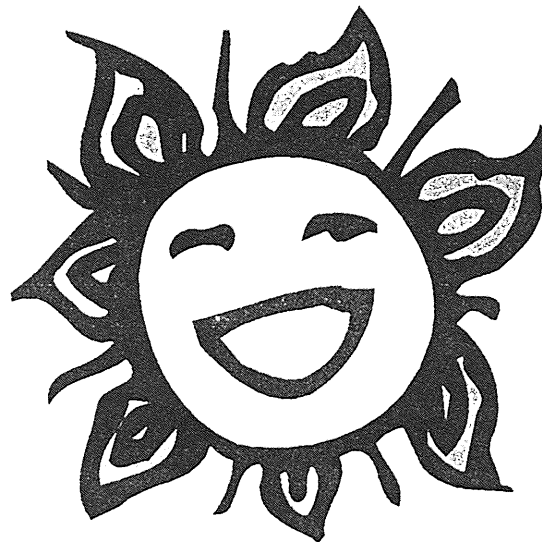
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THIS IS OUR SPECIAL SUMMER 'LITE' EDITION. THE STAFF IS OFF ENJOYING THE WEATHER, A FEW BOOKS AND SOME FREE TIME. THROUGHOUT THE NEWSLETTER YOU'LL SEE A FEW SUGGESTIONS FOR WHEN YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF IN THE MOOD FOR A GOOD BOOK. SO GRAB ONE AND ENJOY. AND DON'T FORGET TO TAKE THE SUNTAN LOTION.

BELLES ANNUAL SUMMER PICNIC



SATURDAY, AUGUST 12

BRING A DISH OR
SOMETHING TO SHARE WITH
YOUR FELLOW SISTERS

CALL THE HOTLINE (879-0973) AND LET
CRYSTAL KNOW WHAT YOU MAY BE BRINGING
(to avoid 15+ potato salads)

**NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, BRING YOURSELF AND
CELEBRATE THE SUMMER WITH FRIENDS**



CAMILLE'S CORNER

Yesterday I got a glimpse of how the rest of the world thinks about the TG community. More specifically, how the criminal justice system in Niagara County, New York feels about us.

On July 31, I found myself in Niagara Falls City Court seated next to a anxious 21 year-old M to F transsexual while she waited her turn to go on trial for perjury. Her crime? She was raped and the police chose not to believe her and instead filed charges against her for filing a false report of rape. She was caught up in the bewildering maze of a system that minimizes and ignores you if you're poor and part of the African-American minority. Add to this the label of transgendered and you have the makings of what amounts to a failure of justice.

"Dee" (I choose not to use her real name) never thought that as a victim of a brutal assault in her own home that she would be the one to face a judge and jury for a crime where she was the victim. Finding little help from her family and fickle friends, she turned to Gay and Lesbian Youth Services of Niagara County (GLYS) for some assistance. GLYS is only now beginning to implement programming for Trans youth, and their director contacted the Buffalo Belles for input regarding the unfolding events. I called Dee and was told a distressing story of frustration, lies and deceptions by the rapist, the police and a friend of Dee who betrayed her.

I met with her a week later and found Dee to be a pleasant, vibrant, attractive T-girl who came out to the world when she was 16. Her time in high school was painful. A proud beauty, she suffered the torments of daily insults and occasional injuries and still got through it somehow. Now she attends community college and has hopes and dreams of having a successful career and eventually marrying the man of her dreams.

But she didn't meet her dream man on that fateful night last September, when she got together with a handsome guy to watch some videos in her apartment. The evening ended with Dee violated, terrified and unable to contact the police to report the crime. Like most women who are raped, the majority (estimated

up to 90%) do not report the assault for many reasons. Fear, shame, concern the rapist may return and do further harm.

Months later, Dee saw him on the street and discretely learned his real name. But instead of contacting the police, she confronted him. He threatened to harm her and weeks later did just that. Dee had her wounds treated at the hospital and then contacted the police. When they confronted him, he denied it and they chose to believe him. This was the first instance of the police ignoring Dee. A second confrontation a few weeks later resulted in another trip to the hospital. Again the police acted as if it was too much trouble. It was as if members of the TG community deserve what they get.

If Dee's life wasn't bad enough now, a friend turned on her after a disagreement and told the police that Dee was lying and never was raped. That was enough for them. They decided to charge her with perjury for filing a false report of the rape. Dee was arrested and taken to jail where she had to endure being put in the male holding cell. Being a pre-op transsexual was the reason given. She was terrified of a gang rape being allowed to happen by the police. She got through the night OK and was bailed out the next day. Eventually she was offered a deal to plea to a lesser offense. She refused and demanded a trial. "I'm innocent! I'm the one who was raped! Why is this happening to me?" The American Civil Liberties Union was contacted but this wasn't the 'right' case for them. Appeals to legislators went unheeded. So Dee turned to the Gay, Lesbian & Trans community for help of any kind. That led to GLYS and then to the Belles. Giving her little more than moral support and a premiers to stick with her through all this, gave her the courage to face an uncaring and cruel system.

The outcome of the trial? The case was dismissed because the rapist, who the court called the 'victim', had left for Arizona and couldn't be reached. Dee was told to go home and be content it went that way. She was relieved for it to be over. But I was troubled by the whole endeavor. This was justice? Was Dee a victim of a system that doles out justice to those who could afford it? Was she treated this way because she was Trans?

Last night I lay awake wondering if somewhere a Trans individual is being victimized again by the system that is supposed to protect us. I did not sleep well. I hope tonight I can. Take care.



The Journey is the monthly publication of the Buffalo Belles. All articles and information contained in this publication may be reprinted in full by any non-profit gender community organization without permission, provided credit is given to this newsletter and the author. The material contained herein does not necessarily express the views or opinions of the Buffalo Belles, its officers or editorial staff. Contributions of articles are welcomed. The Buffalo Belles reserve the right to edit submissions for publication for suitability, spelling, grammar and/or length. Submissions or comments should be addressed to:

Buffalo Belles, PO Box
1701, Amherst, NY 14226-
1701

Editor :

Camille H.

To contact the Buffalo Belles:

By Phone:
(716) 879-0973

By Mail:
Buffalo Belles
P.O. Box 1701
Amherst, NY 14226

By E-Mail:
buffalo_belles@juno.com

Buffalo Belles Website:
www.geocities.com/
buffalobelles/



Tina's Travels

By Tina Marie

On Sunday, I had to go to the Buffalo Airport and pick up a friend that was flying in from Texas. (For those of you that don't know, Patti and I are planning on attending the Southern Comfort Conference in Atlanta in September. We are planning on flying down dressed. I have never flown before and my first time is going to be as Tina!) I had been thinking of going to pick up my friend as Tina so I wouldn't be quite so nervous for our trip and to see how I would fair. Now, remember that this is Sunday (Father's Day), 1:00 PM. BIG Airport. As I got close to the Airport, I noticed that there were what seemed a million cars in the parking lot and now I started to get a bit nervous. She was coming in at 1:30. I got there at about 12:45 so I would have enough time to find her gate. I pulled into the parking ramp and checked my watch. I had 45 minutes which was plenty of time. I got out of my car, looked at the airport doors and got back into my car. I would wait a little longer.

At 1:05, I took a big breath and went for it. I walked through the doors and looked around a bit. To my relief, it wasn't that crowded. I went straight to the escalator and took another deep breath as I rode up. I got to the top and made a quick left towards the metal detector inspection area. I had been doing fine to this point and no one even looked twice. Everyone was too busy doing what they had to do. I had thought about this obstacle and was rather worried about it. I really didn't want buzzers going off and everyone looking at me to see who set it off. For those of you that don't know, I always wear a corset that has metal in it. I knew I couldn't get through with it on, so I used the old "Saran Wrap" back up. I had also talked with a few people to see if jewelry was a problem and was told that it wasn't. As I approached the machine, I kept saying, "Please no trouble", to myself. As I walked through, the buzzer went off! The lady inspector asked me if I had anything in my pockets and I said no. She said to try again, which I did and

again they went off. So much for getting through without drawing attention to myself! I was thinking "Here comes the strip search"! She then said maybe it was the buttons on my coat, so I took it off and tried again. This time I got through fine. I grabbed my coat and purse and headed for free space.

I then checked the arrival board to see what gate I should go to. I should have known that it was going to be gate 16, which is at the very far end of the airport. So off I went, down the length of the airport concourse. There still wasn't too many people around. There were groups at the various unloading areas, but other than that, it was rather sparse. I passed about a dozen people on my way through the concourse and only one girl, about 20 years old, gave me the "Stare." It must have been because I was looking sooo good! (smile) She came and went and it was no big deal. I got to the end and found a seat without too many people around. As I waited I looked around to see who was looking at me. About half a dozen people were around. One was a teenage girl who was facing me and she was looking at me! She checked me out for a few seconds and then went about her day-dreaming. She later walked past me a few times and never looked again.

I will have to say that it was a very new experience to be in a public place in the middle of the day, with people of all ages: little kids, teenagers & adults. 99% of them didn't take a second look, but I was glad when I saw my friend and we could get her luggage and head for the door. Once outside, I took another deep breath and gave my friend a big hug. I hope this will make the trip in September a bit easier. There will be no turning back for that!



Powerful Editorial from Vermont's Concord Monitor

By SHARON UNDERWOOD
Sunday, April 30, 2000

As the mother of a gay son, I've seen first hand how cruel and misguided people can be.

Many letters have been sent to the Valley News concerning the homosexual menace in Vermont. I am the mother of a gay son and I've taken enough from you good people.

I'm tired of your foolish rhetoric about the "homosexual agenda" and your allegations that accepting homosexuality is the same thing as advocating sex with children. You are cruel and ignorant. You have been robbing me of the joys of motherhood ever since my children were tiny.

My firstborn son started suffering at the hands of the moral little thugs from your moral, upright families from the time he was in the first grade. He was physically and verbally abused from first grade straight through high school because he was perceived to be gay.

He never professed to be gay or had any association with anything gay, but he had the misfortune not to walk or have gestures like the other boys. He was called "fag" incessantly, starting when he was 6.

In high school, while your children were doing what kids that age should be doing, mine labored over a suicide note, drafting and redrafting it to be sure his family knew how much he loved them. My sobbing 17-year-old tore the heart out of me as he choked out that he just couldn't bear to continue living any longer, that he didn't want to be gay and that he couldn't face a life without dignity.

You have the audacity to talk about protecting families and children from the homosexual menace, while you yourselves tear apart families and drive children to despair. I don't know why my son is gay, but I do know that God didn't put him, and millions like him, on this Earth to give you someone to abuse. God gave you brains so that you could think, and it's about time you started doing that. At the core of all your misguided beliefs is the belief that this could never happen to you, that there is some kind of subculture out there that people have chosen to join. The fact is that if it can happen to my family, it can happen to yours, and you won't get to choose. Whether it is genetic or whether something occurs during a critical time of fetal development, I don't know. I can only tell you with an absolute certainty that it is inborn.

If you want to tout your own morality, you'd best come up with something more substantive than your heterosexuality. You did nothing to earn it; it was given to you. If you dis-

agree, I would be interested in hearing your story, because my own heterosexuality was a blessing I received with no effort whatsoever on my part. It is so woven into the very soul of me that nothing could ever change it. For those of you who reduce sexual orientation to a simple choice, a character issue, a bad habit or something that can be changed by a 10-step program, I'm puzzled. Are you saying that your own sexual orientation is nothing more than something you have chosen, that you could change it at will? If that's not the case, then why would you suggest that someone else can?

A popular theme in your letters is that Vermont has been infiltrated by outsiders. Both sides of my family have lived in Vermont for generations. I am heart and soul a Vermonter, so I'll thank you to stop saying that you are speaking for "true Vermonters."

You invoke the memory of the brave people who have fought on the battlefield for this great country, saying that they didn't give their lives so that the "homosexual agenda" could tear down the principles they died defending. My 83-year-old father fought in some of the most horrific battles of World War II, was wounded and awarded the Purple Heart.

He shakes his head in sadness at the life his grandson has had to live. He says he fought alongside homosexuals in those battles, that they did their part and bothered no one. One of his best friends in the service was gay, and he never knew it until the end, and when he did find out, it mattered not at all. That wasn't the measure of the man.

You religious folk just can't bear the thought that as my son emerges from the hell that was his childhood he might like to find a lifelong companion and have a measure of happiness. It offends your sensibilities that he should request the right to visit that companion in the hospital, to make medical decisions for him or to benefit from tax laws governing inheritance.

How dare he? you say. These outrageous requests would threaten the very existence of your family, would undermine the sanctity of marriage.

You use religion to abdicate your responsibility to be thinking human beings. There are vast numbers of religious people who find your attitudes repugnant. God is not for the privileged majority, and God knows my son has committed no sin.

The deep-thinking author of a letter to the April 12 Valley News who lectures about homosexual sin and tells us about "those of us who have been blessed with the benefits of a religious upbringing" asks: "What ever happened to the idea of striving . . . to be better human beings than we are?" Indeed, sir, what ever happened to that?

Sharon Underwood lives in White River Junction, Vt.

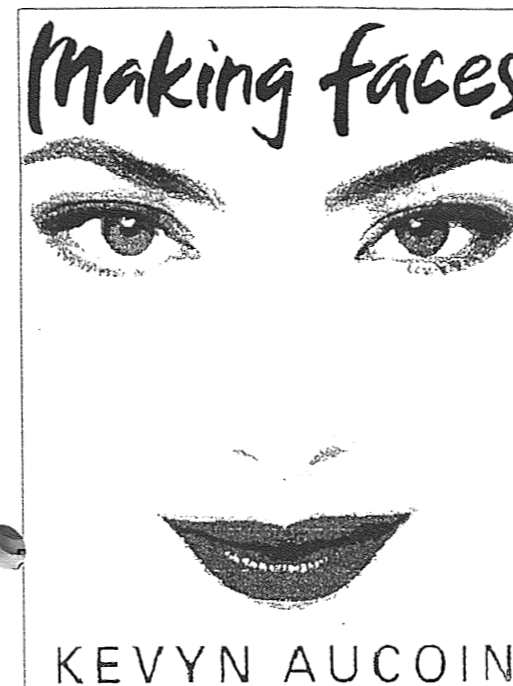


FASHION, STYLE ... AND YOU



A Book of Interest

Review by Kelly H.



Making Faces is a very good book about makeup by the famous makeup artist Kevyn Aucoin. In this book, the author covers pretty much everything that you might want to know regarding makeup.

The first section of the book covers skincare, preparation and facial structure. It then discusses foundation, powder, shading and highlighting (a good section for us!), eyes, lips and blush. It has a nice discussion on how to cover your brows using wax and sealer, if you are so inclined.

The second section provides "how to" instructions to create a number of "looks". It is a very helpful section and the text and pictures provide enough detail to follow along.

The third section shows before and after pictures of a number of women. The text with each of the before and after describes the steps that were done to create the "finished" look.

The book concludes with more "how to" instructions for a variety of great looks. This section also includes two makeovers of a male into a female. The transformation is incredible! I wish I could learn to do as well!

I highly recommend this book. It contains lots of instruction and great pictures. It is available at larger book stores such as Borders or Media Play. Any bookstore can order it for you. It can also be purchased on-line. The book comes in both hard cover and soft cover. The hard cover retails for \$29.95, the soft cover for \$20.00.



From "Instant Style"

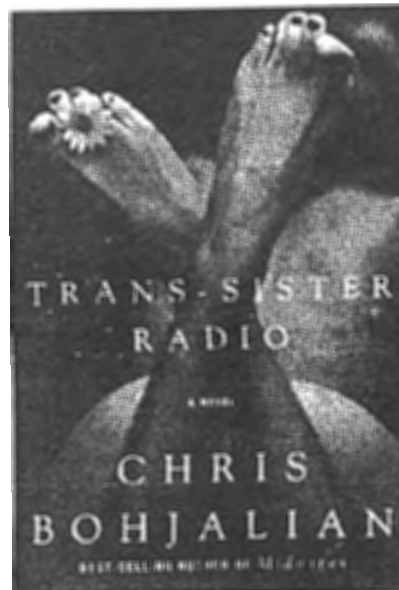
By Emily Cho and Neila Fisher

- ◆ Whenever you wear dark, sheer hose, bring an extra pair in case you get a run - nothing looks worse.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ If you're wearing a lot of necklace, choose simple earrings to finish your look.

SUMMER READING SUGGESTIONS



"TRANS-SISTER RADIO"

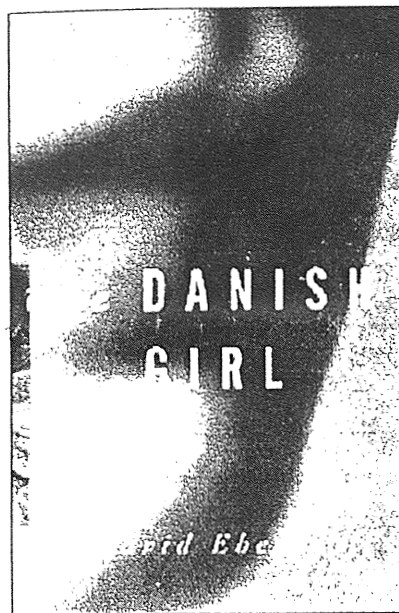


The bestselling author of *Midwives* and *The Law of Similars* continues his tradition of incorporating social issues into his moving narratives. Transsexuality goes mainstream in this *Scarlet Letter* for a softer, gentler but more complicated age. Allison Banks--42 years old, heterosexual, long divorced, mother of a college student and a grade school teacher in a picturesque Vermont village--meets single, attractive, attentive, 35-year-old Dana Stevens when she takes his film class at a nearby college. Early on in the relationship, Dana confesses that he has always believed he was female, though he desires women, too--and he is soon to undergo a long-planned sex change operation.

Despite this revelation, and despite her reservations, Allison invites Dana to move in with her, and they have great sex right up until the night before the operation in Colorado, where Allison has loyally accompanied Dana for post-op and moral support. On their return to Vermont, he--now physically and emphatically "she"--continues to share Allison's bed and her house, though nothing can be the same as it was. Allison's ex-husband, Vermont Public Radio president Will, now her good friend, and their daughter, Carly, cope well with the situation, but the close-knit community is less understanding. Questions of what constitutes community tolerance are explored here, but the novel's central focus is on the definition of sex and gender in the characters' personal lives. Allison, Dana, Carly and Will express their views in alternating first person chapters, and transcripts from a fictional NPR All Things Considered series on Dana and her operation provide additional narrative background.

Gender is central to who we are, Bohjalian concludes, but not perhaps to who we love. Sex, on the other hand, expresses who we are. Bohjalian's sometimes simplistic characterizations diminish the emotional impact of the novel, and his abundant research on gender dysfunction often gives the book a curiously flat, documentary quality. Nevertheless, Bohjalian humanizes the transsexual community and explains the complexities of sex and gender in an accessible, evenhanded fashion, making a valuable contribution to a dialogue of social and political import. *-From Publisher's Weekly* (Available in hardcover only)

"THE DANISH GIRL"



Though the title character of David Ebershoff's debut novel is a transsexual, the book is less concerned with transgender issues than the mysterious and ineffable nature of love. Loosely based on the life of Danish painter Einar Wegener who, in 1931, became the first man to undergo a sex-change operation, *The Danish Girl* borrows the bare bones of his story as a jumping-off point for an exploration of how Wegener's decisions affected the people around him. Chief among these is his Californian wife, Greta, also a painter, who unwittingly sets her husband's feet on the path to transformation. While trying to finish a portrait of an opera singer who has cancelled a sitting, she asks Einar to stand in for her subject, putting on her dress, stockings, and shoes. The moment silk touches his skin, he is shaken:

Einar could concentrate only on the silk dressing his skin, as if it were a bandage. Yes, that was how it felt the first time: the silk was so fine and airy that it felt like a gauze--a balm-soaked gauze lying delicately on healing skin. Even the embarrassment of standing before his wife began to no longer matter, for she was busy painting with a foreign intensity in her face. Einar was beginning to enter a shadowy world of dreams where Anna's dress could belong to anyone, even to him.

Greta soon recognizes her husband's affinity for feminine attire, and encourages him not only to dress like a woman, but to take on a woman's persona, as well. "Why don't we call you Lili?" she suggests. What starts out as a harmless game soon evolves into something deeper, and potentially threatening to their marriage. Yet Greta's love proves to be enduring if not immutable. As Einar inexorably transforms, he steps beyond "that small dark space between two people where a marriage exists" and Greta lets him go.

Ebershoff does a remarkable job of historical prestidigitation, creating the sights and sounds and smells of 1930s Denmark and making it seem easy. Even more remarkable is his treatment of Greta: he gets inside her head and heart, and renders her in such loving detail that her reactions make perfect sense. Einar is more of a cipher, and ultimately less interesting than his wife. But in the end, this is Greta's book and David Ebershoff has done her proud. *The Danish Girl* marks a promising fictional debut. *-Sheila Bright, Amazon.com* (Available in hardcover only)



NANCY'S PERSPECTIVE

What a great meeting last month! A big turnout is always fun, and when you throw in a spouse, guests from Nashville & Rochester, along with two debutantes, it doesn't get any better than that!

Welcome to Rebecca & Stephanie. We hope you will continue to be a part of our special group.

Colleen started the meeting with a very heartfelt talk of her personal walk down the road of life, and where it has taken her. She made it look easy which says a lot about who she is, since I know relating one's own deepest thoughts is hard.

I got a kick out of sitting at the head of the table, and acting, for a time, as the "Head Hostess." We missed our officers, but managed to get it done. We need help in this period of change, so please look into a way you can help the Belles in a more active role. If you plan on coming to the picnic on the 12th, call the hotline phone and leave a message. We need to know who is coming, and what you will be bringing so we can coordinate a little. Tina will be checking with Crystal and if everybody is going to bring potato salad, they will get back to you. Come on down for this annual event, relax, dress down a bit and enjoy!

It was good to see somebody took my advice and brought a birthday cake! We got to sing Happy Birthday to Crystal who just turned 29 (or so she says). The cake was provided by Tammy of the Newbury St. Hair, Wig & Center for Wellness out on Niagara Falls Blvd. Thanks a bunch. The things those crazy gals will do to get a free ad in this publication!

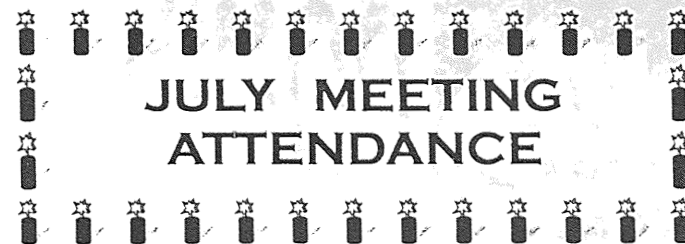
Keeping it short this month. Take care!

Your sister,
Nancy

Men should be saying "I want to become a woman." The world would be a far better place if more men wanted to become women, than women wanted to become men.

Albert Halsey (b. 1923), British author, educator. Independent (London, 14 Oct. 1992)

JULY MEETING ATTENDANCE



Brenda C.	Stephanie-debutante
Colleen R.	Tina L.
Crystal F.	Victoria C.
Jo S.	Guests:
Joan L.	Jamie
Kelly H.	Joanna & Maddie
Kim K.	Karen from Nashville
Nancy W.	Sandy
Patti J.	Terry Lynn
Rebecca-debutante	



A Recent Ann Landers column

BOSTON GLOBE, June 7, 2000

Dear Ann Landers:

My daughter attends a preschool for children between the ages of 3 and 5. One of the little boys in her class has beautiful, curly hair and wears it long. He also wears ruffled and frilly dresses and stockings with designs on them. He plays with dolls and other "girl" toys. This is very confusing to the other children. They can't figure out whether this child is a boy or a girl.

One of the other parents says it's probably easier for the boy's parents to let him wear his sister's clothes than argue with him every day.

This child's parents are very accepting of his behavior, and don't seem to think there is anything wrong with it. In my opinion, they need to have their heads examined.

Ann, do you think this is OK, or will it hurt the boy in the long run? Shouldn't those parents be dressing him in gender-appropriate clothing? I'd appreciate your thoughts on this.

NO NAME, NO CITY

Wearing girls' clothing and playing with dolls will not make the boy gay. We now know that homosexuality is a matter of genetics. In other words, they are born that way. Most experts believe children should be permitted to have a say in what they wear. When the boy is older, he may be uncomfortable wearing "frilly" clothing and rebel. Meanwhile, MYOB.



COMING EVENTS



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

AUGUST 5	ROCHESTER CD NETWORK - 6:30pm
AUGUST 12	BUFFALO BELLES ANNUAL SUMMER PICNIC - 6:00pm
SEPTEMBER 2	ROCHESTER CD NETWORK - 6:30pm
SEPTEMBER 9	BUFFALO BELLES MEETING - 6:00pm
SEPTEMBER 16	ABACUCK PRICKERT DINNER PARTY 7:00 to 11:00pm Albany, NY (for info see page 9)
SEPT. 26-OCT. 1	SOUTHERN COMFORT Atlanta, Georgia (info: 404-630-6470; www.sccatl.org)
OCTOBER 5 - 8	4th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON CROSSDRESSING, SEX & GENDER, Philadelphia, PA (info: 610-975-9119)
OCTOBER 7	ROCHESTER CD NETWORK - 6:30pm
OCTOBER 14	BUFFALO BELLES MEETING - 6:00pm
OCTOBER 18 - 25	FANTASIA FAIR Provincetown, Massachusetts
NOVEMBER 4	ROCHESTER CD NETWORK - 6:30pm
NOVEMBER 11	BUFFALO BELLES MEETING - 6:00pm
NOVEMBER 9 - 12	WESTERN BELLES ROUNDUP 2000 Milford (The Poconos), Pennsylvania (info: 810-286-6214; www.bobbiswan.com/dude)
NOVEMBER 16 -19	LAKE ERIE GALA 2000 Erie, Pennsylvania (info: www.geocities.com/wellesley/1614)
DECEMBER 2	ROCHESTER CD NETWORK - 6:30pm
DECEMBER 16	BUFFALO BELLES ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY 6:00pm

"The strength of women comes from the fact that psychology cannot explain us. Men can be analyzed, women . . . merely adored."

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), Anglo-Irish playwright, author. Mrs. Cheveley, in *The Ideal Husband*, act 1.