

State University of New York College at Buffalo - Buffalo State College
Digital Commons at Buffalo State

Buffalo Belles Newsletters

The Madeline Davis Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual,
Transgender Archives of Western New York

5-1999

May 1999

Buffalo Belles

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/buffalobelles>

Recommended Citation

Buffalo Belles, "May 1999" (1999). *Buffalo Belles Newsletters*. 107.
<http://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/buffalobelles/107>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the The Madeline Davis Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Archives of Western New York at Digital Commons at Buffalo State. It has been accepted for inclusion in Buffalo Belles Newsletters by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons at Buffalo State. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@buffalostate.edu.



INFO-LINE:
446-2661

Mail Correspondence

to:

Buffalo Belles

P.O. Box 1701

Amherst, NY 14226

BUFFALO BELLES

MAY, 1999

Dear Sisters and **brother**,

Finally after writing Dear Sisters for the last six years to start the newsletter, I have a reason to change our greeting! Wish to give Jay a big welcome and just hope that you will forgive me if I slip and only use the female pronoun out of habit on occasion. It is wonderful to have you with us and hope that we can be of support to you also.

Wish to apologize for this rather abbreviated newsletter this month. But with the short turn around in meeting dates and Camille being involved in her moving, things just aren't coming together as they should this month.

The other holdup, was waiting to hear from Shelia Kirk and whether she was going to come and address our group this month or not. At this writing, April 16th, we have not heard back, one way or the other. There was the possibility that she would prefer our only other choice for the month, the 22nd. Something may still happen, and a special notice might be sent out.

However, as it now stands, our next meeting will be as scheduled on Saturday the first of May. Upstairs meeting room once more. Not that there is anything wrong with that.

We had a good turnout for the April meeting. As I understand it, it was a good meeting. Police weren't called in to break up any cat fights. Perhaps it was the calming effect of having Jay's manly presence that kept the girls acting a little more lady like for a change. In attendance were:

Janice G., Patti J., Becky A., Camille H., Donna S., Brenda D., Vaughn
Colleen R., Joy S., Jay, Susan R., Kendra, Kristen M., Jennifer S.,
And guest Terry.

Hi ladies,

Talk about a preemptive strike! I hope you read "Pantyhose for the Long Run" in the March newsletter. Yvonne wrote a great article loaded with helpful tips. Well, I had to throw away the rough draft I had done on that subject, but I do take some comfort in knowing I'm not the only one who reads Consumer Reports!

Her tip on using skin cream is noted but you may want to expand on that advice.....try shaving your legs! It really does feel good when covered in nylon. Also, a little trick of the trade (a pun was intended) is to get a pair of cotton gloves and a can of Crisco Shortening. At night before you go to bed, apply some Crisco to your hands. Your don't have to rum it in completely but it should cover. Put the gloves on to avoid getting your sheets slippery and have a good nights sleep. If you have rough, callused heels this procedure will also work on your feet. Rub the Crisco over the rough area and put on some cotton socks! Socks seem to work better gloves on your feet. You will have to do this often as it[s not a one time cure and you could even follow this procedure while watching a little TV in the evening., Of course, the TV would have to understand what you are doing. In any event, I have tested this process and it truly does make a difference.

Since I'm about to hit my word limit for this edition I have one last thought to pass on. To see what sort of man you really are next winter... do some snow blowing while wearing a short skirt!

Take care,

Your sister,
Nancy

When her suburban school district hired a transgender music teacher for her daughters' middle school, Crosby was outraged. She did not want her girls to consider a man in pantyhose a role model. She did not want them sharing a restroom with a man who believes he's a woman. Above all, she did not want the state of Minnesota protecting a teacher whose lifestyle she considers morally wrong. "We don't think school is the place to shove this in our kids' faces," Crosby said. "We'll fight it," she vowed. "I mean it. We will."

In a showdown that promises to spark much debate, Crosby and several like-minded parents have teamed up with conservative advocacy groups to try to excise the transgender clause from Minnesota's 1993 Human Rights Act

TRANSGENDER PROTECTION LAW SPARKS DEBATE

From Buffalo News, April 9, 1999.

MINNEAPOLIS--It's illegal in Minnesota to fire a worker because of his race. Sandy Crosby has no problem with that. Nor can someone be axed because he is gay. Crosby is OK with that too.

But Minnesota is also the only state in the nation to protect transgender residents against discrimination. Employers cannot fire people for presenting an "identity not traditionally associated with [their] biological maleness or femaleness

And Crosby has a big, big problem with that.

They've already won one victory. The transgender music teacher, Alyssa Williams, resigned in late February, complaining that her foes had "worked tirelessly to get rid of me." Williams, who has since refused all interviews, added in a statement: "They do not want to accept that I exist

Many parents did support Williams, championing her as a real-life example of the need to respect diversity. After she disclosed she was biologically male, although she had legally changed her identity to female, only 25 of the more than 400 students she taught withdrew from her classes. Another transgender educator, a Minneapolis librarian, also won the backing of many parents after "coming out" as a woman last spring.

"This is Minnesota," gay-rights activist Bart J. Cannon said. "We have a tradition of respect.

The campaign to revise the Human Rights Act will put that tradition to the test.

Gov. Jesse Ventura already has promised to support the law as is. "He is unabashedly in support of human rights for everyone," spokesman John Wodele said.

Still, transgender activists fear they're vulnerable. As Riki Anne Wilchins, director of a national advocacy group called Gender PAC, put it: "In polite company, you no longer make jokes about gays and lesbians. But gender difference is still a socially acceptable reason to hate."

The transgender community includes everyone who feels as though their true identity does not match their biological sex. It embraces cross-dressers and those who blend male and female traits for an androgynous image, as well as people who live full-

time as the opposite sex. Some, but not all, have surgery or take hormones to aid the transition.

A handful of cities--including San Francisco, Santa Cruz, Seattle and Iowa City--have enacted laws protecting transgender people from discrimination. Only Minnesota, however, offers statewide protection.

The Human Rights Act holds that no one be denied employment, housing or public accommodation (such as service in a restaurant or tickets to a ballgame) because of gender identity. Religious associations and private youth groups are exempt.

"Since the law has been in effect," said Walter Bockting, who directs the program in human sexuality at the University of Minnesota, "it has really given transgender people more confidence to come out of the closet and express their true identities."

It certainly gave a boost to librarian David Nielsen. Nielsen had worked in Minneapolis public schools for 28 years before the Human Rights Act--as well as his own growing self-confidence--helped him find the courage to announce he was living a lie. Although biologically a man, he had long felt his true identity was female. For years, he had been transforming himself into Debra Davis after work. Now, he wanted to be Debra on the job as well. The school staff, well briefed on the law, supported him. So Debra Davis debuted at Southwest High School last May, with television cameras whirring. Davis, 52, may well be the only publicly "out" transgender

educator in the country who works directly with secondary school students, activists say. She is also Exhibit A for those pushing to revise the Human Rights Act.

"By sending a message that it's just another acceptable lifestyle, you get kids thinking, 'Maybe that's where I want to go.'" said Tom Prichard, president of the Minnesota Family Council. "For many people, that's morally objectionable."

ASK ANN

Baffled by a sudden urge

Dear Ann Landers: My husband has been clinically depressed for most of his adult life. A while back, "Herman" began seeing a female therapist who focused on my husband's early years to see if something in his childhood might be the cause of his depression. His therapist discovered that during adolescence, Herman had been a cross-dresser. He apparently had worn women's clothing in his early teens but repressed it as an adult. Now Herman wants my permission to express this part of his personality around the house.



ANN
LANDERS

This disgusts me, Ann. The thought of my husband in makeup, wig and high heels makes my skin crawl. His therapist told me I need to be more tolerant.

Herman is artistic and sensitive, a gourmet cook and an avid sportsman. More importantly, he is a terrific father to our two sons. I used to think he was the most masculine man alive. Now I don't see how I can ever look at him the same way or stop wondering if he is gay. I don't want to break up our marriage, but if anyone found out about the makeup, wigs and high heels, I would be devastated.

— N. Carolina

Dear N. Carolina: You need to have a better understanding of your husband's cross-dressing. Herman is a transvestite. Some transvestites are gay, but many are not. They get their thrills from dressing up in women's clothing, but that's as far as it goes. Please go to the public library and read up on the subject. The more you know, the less you will fear it.

Davis scoffs at such reasoning. "It's not like it's catching," she said. "I don't recruit."

She does allow, however, that she's on a crusade of her own. "I want to change the world. I want to make it a safe, loving place, accepting of diversity, for my grandchildren."

Written by Stephanie Simon,
Times Staff Writer
Copyright 1999 Los Angeles
Times. All Rights Reserved.

ANNOUNCING

The First Annual **TRANS America Transgender Conference** A TRANS-MILLENNIUM EVENT

May 13-15, 1999
Charlotte, North Carolina

Brought to you by transgendered activists, caregivers, entertainers and those experienced in transgender conventions, the 1999 **TRANS America, A TRANS-MILLENNIUM EVENT**, in "The Queen City," Charlotte, NC, in the supportive Sheraton Airport Plaza Hotel.

Scheduled **presenters** currently include: American Gender Institute; Max Anderson; Dan Bibes, Ph.D.; Anne Bolin, Ph.D.; Mary Boenke; Holly Boswell; Jim Bridges; Sandra Cole, Ph.D.; Debra Coles, MD; Dallas Denny, M.S.W.; Divinity; Randi Ettner, Ph.D.; J. William Futrell, MD; Linda & Vanessa Kaye; Sheila Kirk, MD; Ernest Monder, MD; Terri O'Connell; JoAnn Roberts, Ph.D.; Sharon Stewart; Erin Swensen, Ph.D., M.Div.; Transgender Surgical & Medical Center; Dr. Delia Van Maris; Marilyn Volker, Ph.D. and many more...

Activities will include: shopping trips; dinner at an audience-participation mystery theatre and on the Catawba Queen River Boat on beautiful Lake Norman; a pre-convention trip to America's largest home, the 250-room Biltmore Estate; a talent show with special guests; a banquet; and, many evenings of Queen City nightlife...

Additionally, TransAm will feature numerous **"Gender Vendors."** The **Registration Fee** for all three days is reasonable, starting as low as \$185 which includes five meals. The sooner you register, the lower the cost. Special rates available for couples.

For more information, registration form, etc., please call (704) 531-9988 (Monday-Friday, 9:00am-6:00pm Eastern Time), or visit our web site at <http://www.q-notes.com/transamerica.htm>.

Closeted Crossdresser Dilemmas

GENDER ARTICLES

This educational column authored by Gianna E. Israel is regularly featured on the 3rd Monday of each month in Tg-Forum, the Internet's most up-to-date, weekly Transgender Magazine <<http://www.tgforum.com/>>. Several weeks later each article is forwarded to Usenet and AOL <Keyword TCF>. Each column has been written to inspire contemplation and dialogue. Columns may be reprinted in any medium insofar as each article, its introduction, and the author's contact information remains unaltered.

CLOSETED CROSSDRESSER DILEMMAS (#29)

Copyright 1998
by Gianna E. Israel

Have you noticed how many people have come out of the closet these days? Has someone attempted to make you feel bad because you only have an online existence? As a gender specializing therapist, I regularly hear complaints from closeted crossdressers who have been told they are flawed because they haven't come out. Comments such as these can cut very deeply, sometimes so bad that they can push a person even deeper into the closet. This article is designed to help people who are closeted and know they simply cannot come out.

What is it that keeps a person in the closet? Are a person's reasons for not coming out simply some nebulous excuse to prevent others from having a good time? Or, are the reasons for remaining closeted so valid that they make those who come out looked foolish? In all likelihood a person's reasons for coming out can be just as valid as those reasons a person may have for staying in the closet. Closeted or not, it is important to recognize that each individual has placed particular importance on getting their needs fulfilled, and typically one's choice is not better than another.

The most commonly written about reasons for staying closeted include social, family, and financial factors. A person who is closeted frequently sees that coming out would substantially interrupt life as they know it. What therapists, authors and the transgender community less frequently explore is the fact that in many situations there exists deep emotional needs for an individual to remain closeted. The one need people dislike talking about most is that of the crossdresser's need to maintain a strong sense of masculine identity when not crossdressed. It is possible that in some subconscious manner coming out may interrupt the preceding dynamic.

People need to be very careful with their judgments when discussing and exploring gender boundaries and roles. Just as there is nothing wrong with having a healthy en femme persona for a crossdressing male, there is also nothing wrong with having a healthy sense of masculinity. The preceding theme is true primarily for transgenderists and crossdressers, although even transsexuals need to maintain some sense of masculinity in order to be a whole person. All humans need to find a successful balance between their feminine and masculine identity and needs. This is particular so for transgender persons, because we are always mindful of how our gender appears to others. However, it is also true that non-transgender individuals explore

similar themes. This may explain why gender studies are so popular at universities and gender role play games are enjoyed by a wide variety of people.

In the pursuit of coming to terms with having a need to crossdress it is very important to feel good about yourself. Having people discount your needs doesn't feel very good. I suggest if someone criticizes your choices, take some time to think about what the person has said. Decide if their criticism offers any useful suggestions on how to improve your situation. The very best advice typically comes from a person talking about their own experiences. If you hear about positive coping strategies that other people used successfully, try to consider how such strategies might work for you. However, always remember that free advice is just that, free to take or leave at your discretion.

As I mentioned earlier, crossdressers frequently are interested in hearing about how others deal with the fear of being exposed or discovered as a crossdresser. During counseling we make a point of discussing how the person might feel if they should be found out. Most feel as if being so would utterly destroy their entire world. Fortunately, most crossdressers simply pick up the pieces and continue on with their lives after being discovered. I like to encourage crossdressers to overcome the fear of being found out, even if they do not come out of the closet. This helps reduce stigmatization of what they are doing in private. After all, private is nobody's business except your own, particularly if no one is getting hurt.

Another issue common to closeted crossdressers is purging. As a result of guilt, after crossdressing some individuals throw away their wardrobes and stuff their feelings deep inside. I encourage people to stop using such unhealthy coping mechanisms. Instead, find storage places to keep your clothing until you are ready to use them again, and learn to feel positive about having a transgender identity. People have been crossdressing for a long, long time. You have nothing to feel guilty about. After safeguarding your responsibilities, try to keep in mind that the most important issue for all transgender persons, is having some reasonable quality of life.

When you crossdress does doing so increase your quality of life? Would living with less guilt and fear of being found out help your overall state of mind? Is it possible to feel satisfied with crossdressing privately? If you can answer "yes" to the preceding questions, then in all likelihood it may be possible to come out when you feel ready. Until then, be kind to yourself and enjoy crossdressing for what you get out of it. Do not allow others to dictate how you should feel about yourself or your needs.

GIANNA E. ISRAEL provides nationwide telephone consultation, individual & relationship counseling, evaluations and referrals. She is principal author of the Transgender Care (Temple University / in press 1997). She also writes Transgender Tapestry's "Ask Gianna" column; is an AEGIS board member and HBIQDA member. She can be contacted at (415) 558-8058, at P.O. Box 424447 San Francisco, CA 94142, or via e-mail at Gianna@counselsuite.com.