October/ November 1997

Buffalo Belles

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Dear Sisters,

A big hello to all of you. It’s been sooooo long since our last newsletter that I don’t know where to begin. Well, for instance, the greatest excuse to come along in awhile caused the cancellation of the September newsletter: “Computer problems”. Specifically e-mail difficulties. For further trivia, ask me at the next meeting and I’ll bore you with the details.

The October meeting has left me feeling a little troubled. The attendance was quite poor (11) for a meeting in the fall. We tried to come up with some reasons: previous commitments (so many of you?); the weather (it was decent for most of the evening); couldn’t find a thing to where (not a good enough excuse!). One reason that was suggested is that the meetings are lacking direction and are becoming dull or non-productive. Do you find that the case or only partly true? A group is only as good as the sum of its parts and if something is missing we only have ourselves to blame. We need input girls. Ideas, inspirations, direction. We need you to tell us what you want! We could use a several of you to volunteer for a few of the many duties that keep a group like ours alive and well. For a long time its been falling on the shoulders of the officers and one or two others to do everything and it becomes time consuming and burdensome after awhile. Burn-out often follows if there is no others to assist with some of the ongoing duties. Please, if you can’t run for office or volunteer occasionally, then tell us what we can do to make the meetings more meaningful to you and hopefully to increase the attendance. Our group survives because enough of us care. Don’t take it for granted.

Please take note that Halloween is on Friday this year. I was hoping that there would be a costume party at the Stage Door or some other downtown spot on Saturday, the day of our monthly meeting, but they will be holding their Halloween Party on October 31. It sounds like it will be a good time, along with prizes and food as well. Many of us who ventured down to the ‘Door’ after the last meeting thought it would be fun and are planning to attend. I know that I’ll be there dressed as .... Well, why don’t you come on down and find out. Hope to see you there and at the November meeting the next night.

Hugs, Camille

ATTENDANCE

SEPTEMBER     OCTOBER
DENISE M.     JEAN H.
JEAN H.       JANICE G.
JANICE G.     PATTI J.
PATTI J.      KATHY L.
HOLLY I.      COLLEEN R.
COLLEEN R.    ANGELLA A.
KATHRYN Y.    CAMILLE H.
MICHELLE G.   SUSAN B.
JOY S.        ALICIA
CAMILLE H.    CRYSTAL
SUSAN B.      KENDRA
SHARON F.     KARL & Tiffany*
CATY B.       DEBUTANTES
CLEO J.       VAUGHN *
KARL & Tiffany*  DIANE-Erie Sister
Dear Sisters,

As I sit here writing this, I find it hard to believe the summer is coming to an end. I was getting used to enjoying and delightfully cool weather is so easy and simple. Sandals or a pair of shorts and T-shirt. Whatever it was you loved to wear this summer, that is all about to change.

With fall weather, the amount of clothing a woman needs goes up as the temperatures go down. Trying to put together a reasonable outfit can be difficult (and expensive if one tends to follow the latest fashions). If you look at any of the dozens of women's magazines that feature fashion designs, its easy to see why Genetic Girls have complained for years about not having reasonable looking and or priced clothes available to the average woman. Then you throw in the fact that we transgendered sisters have a more difficult time trying to find something that fits our bodies properly and you can have a real dilemma. What's a girl to do?

Keeping an eye open and see what works for other women you see around on the street, at the shopping centers, window display's, even at the Buffalo Belles meetings. Check out some of the women's magazines we get. And don't be afraid to ask, for some helpful hints. That's another reason what we're there for; companionship and friendly advice. Use those resources.

I don't want to dwell on the clothing issue too long. Sometimes that seems to be the only thing some crossdressers are concerned about. We fret about how we look and often forget that the active force behind much of our activities is a drive or feeling that is drawing us towards the feminine side of our personality. The clothing is a tool to get closer to the feminine but it should not be the only thing we do with this 'gift'. We can tap into that creative and fun part of ourselves if we strive to become more than "men in dresses". How can that be done you ask?

Just look around at the women that you know or have known. Most women, when they are with their friends or other women, are interested, concerned, friendly and sympathetic towards each other. They care about each other. Not that men don't. Men tend to lean toward a more regenerative "I'm right" or "I know more than you". It's more of a 'power thing'. With a woman its more of a 'getting along' thing. A lot of it is learned behavior that our culture throws at us. But something has given us that special 'gift'. An awareness that we can be more than what we appear to be. We can use it to become "prettier" or we can add to that and become "caring and concerned". At the next meeting, just make a little extra effort to speak to the newer girls and get to know them. Be kinder to the people that you see every day. Be gentle. You will have a lot less stress in your life. You will look marvelous and feel marvelous.

I'll get off my soap box now and let you know about our September meeting. Attendance was lower than expected with 16 girls making their way to the meeting place. But we did another new member attend her first meeting this month. Welcome Karl! I hope that we'll be able to call you by your feminine name as soon as you reveal it to the rest of the girls. It makes it difficult to call someone as lovely as you by your 'guy' name.

Does anybody know what happened to the lighted makeup mirror? I can't seem to locate it. I need all the help I can get to put on this face every meeting. The business end of the meeting was letting everyone know that the officer elections will be postponed until we get the nomination ballots posted in this issue of the Buffalo Belles newsletter. Please fill out the ballot if you intend to run for an office or if you know someone who would make a good 'sister in charge'. Once we have names we will post them in following newsletter and will have elections the next month. Mail in votes are encouraged if you can't make it to that meeting.

After the meeting ended, a bevy of beauties descended upon The Stage Door for more entertainment, conversation and a few drinks.

Well my fingers are shot and I'm in the mood for a hot bath. So until the next issue, take care.

Love, Camille.
Lasers, a pricey new weapon against unsightly hair. It's not a one-time deal, either

By NICOLE PERADOTTO

As long as a doctor signs the consultation form, laser hair removal can cover large body areas. "The response has been staggering," says dermatologist Kevin Kulick, who receives between 10 and 15 calls daily about the procedure, which he began offering last month.

"I would have never anticipated this. We've seen women crying during their consultations because they are so distraught about their hair." In one of Kulick's examinin2 rooms, registered nurse Katherine Crispo rubs a carbon liquid — which absorbs the laser into the follicles — over Francis Jessela's forearms. When the laser hits the black goo it makes a popping sound. Unlike electrolysis, which can zap only one hair at a time, laser hair removal can cover large body areas.

Twenty-five minutes later, Ms. Jessela's treatment is done. It didn't hurt, she says. But it does take a bite out of the wallet. Ms. Jessela's session cost her $150 and $300. Larger areas, such as the legs, can cost $4,000 for five treatments.

Nor is it a one-time shot. Because follicles must be hit while they are actively growing hair, many in dormant stages must be treated during later sessions — between three and five, typically. In a study of one laser treatment, 12 volunteers demonstrated slower hair growth after one laser treatment. Six months later, the hair had grown back almost completely.

In Western New York, at least four dermatologists have introduced hair-removing lasers into their practice in the past few months. The response has been staggering, says dermatologist B. Dale Wilson, who has been offering laser hair removal for two years. "Bicyclists and body builders have to shave and wax all the time. And many men suffer from razor bumps on their beards and backs.

But the primary customer will always be female. By one estimate 15 percent of women between ages 18 and 45 have unwanted body hair. "Most of our patients are women who have unwanted hair on their face," says dermatologist Stanley Hoffman. "After that it's women who want the bikini area treated."

Hoffman's excitement about the technique is tempered by concern about who will get his hands on it. He says, "As long as a doctor signs the purchase order, at this time anyone can get office space, plug it in and turn it on. You need a license for painting nails or waxing or sugaring, but you don't need one to operate a laser that can blind someone at 36 feet."

Ms. Kean was Hoffman's first patient. She expects to go back for a third treatment soon.
THE GREATEST ILLUSION
Donna Delbert - The TG Magician Who Fooled The World

She appeared on the British theatrical circuit soon after World War II ended. "America's Outstanding lady magician and the Only Lady Fire-Eater in the World" was her billing, and the agents signed her at once. Audiences flocked to watch this sultry American woman breathe fire, conjure the cards, and stuff cut candles with a flick of a whip. Rumored to be the widow of a British soldier killed on D-Day, Donna Delbert was one of the stars of the English music hall until 1949 when the sultry Donna was revealed to be the AWOL private Delbert Hill and arrested for desertion from the United States Air Force.

Serving in the USAF Special Services as an entertainer, Hill was a considerable success performing his magic act for the troops stationed in England, arriving there in 1942. In 1944, Hill finished his act despite being in the midst of an air raid, continuing to entertain as a fellow soldier burst from the wings and jabbed a helmet down on his head! This heroic performance earned him the honor of performing for the Queen Mother on the Fourth of July.

However, as the war ended in Europe, the USAF bureaucracy took him out of special services and reassigned him duties as, of all things, an on base latrine orderly! Hill immediately collected a paycheck, quit drunk, and vanished from the base. Soon after this, Donna Delbert and her amazing feats appeared, long dark hair framing a sultry smile in promotional photos. In an age when the ideal female form ran slightly to the plump, Donna's build was perfect, and no one suspected Donna of being a male, not even one of her female assistants who worked for Donna for over a year.

Like all performers, Donna had her periods of unemployment, but the unflappable Delbert simply took a job as a tobacco packer in a factory, working side by side with unsuspecting female coworkers. Her uncharacteristic dating led to rumors of lechery, which worked fine when Donna moved in with another theatre girl, Betty. Betty learned about Donna's secret, which didn't seem to faze the English Lady at all. They became lovers and lived together for some time. Unfortunately, Donna became attracted to another woman named Edna, and this was the downfall for Donna Delbert in England.

One spring night in 1949, Donna was eating a late dinner at her boarding house in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, when a police inspector came in and informed Donna that he believe he was a fugitive. Betty had informed upon Delbert to the authorities. A search of Donna's purse revealed Delbert's I.D. pass, and several hours later Donna was found to be the AWOL soldier at the police station. At which point, the USAF sentenced Delbert to two years hard labor as a British prison. Proving to be as cool under fire as questioning by tabloid reporters as he was under fire from German bombers, Delbert answered with these words the question of what he would miss most in prison: "My corset. I can do without my high-heeled shoes, but when you wear a corset for almost four years, you get kind of used to it. That's why I'm looking fat today."

Delbert survived his prison time with seeming ease, performing his act in the prison theatre. Upon his release, he returned to the United States, where he once again hit the performing circuit, this time the innumerable Lions, Elks, Moose lodges, retirement communities, even a show at a New Jersey mental home! Sometimes he billed himself as Colonel Don Q, an Old Western-esque showman. Other times he performed as Donna Delbert, the Celebrated English Magician and Fire-Eater. Philadelphia became his base of operations, where he made many friends both in and out of show business.

On January 10, 1991, Donna Delbert Hill died at the age of 77 in an apartment surrounded by the memorabilia of a remarkable life - photographs, magnetic paraphernalia, show posters, and the closer full of Donna's costumes. Aside from Donna's greatest illusion - fooling both close friends and the general public for years, perhaps the most amazing thing about Donna Delbert Hill was her incredible friendship so many people had for her. Many English theatre companions carpentered Delbert in prison, praising Donna for fooling them and encouraging Donna to visit them again. The two volunteer hospital workers who cared for Delbert in the last years of his life recalled him being independent, cheerful, and always friendly. Finally, another magician recalled that you never really knew if you were going to meet Delbert as a man or a woman, but summed up Donna in the best way possible, and that was "clausy."
Actually, this man is quite passable as a woman, but only dresses 3 or 4 times a month, and is a complete male made the rest of the time. For the get-togethers in question, there was not going to be anyone crossdressed anyway, to give my wife a chance to see that here is another happy couple of two normal, nice people, where the man happens to crossdress at times. I know my wife would like her husband's lawyer and my wife loves talking to lady lawyers. Her best friend is one. It would also give my wife someone to talk to with questions and concerns about that. She talks to no one about it, and that bothers me greatly.

Again it's the whole bigotry thing that has me blown away. Many people in our county have finally figured out that all black people aren't lazy or criminals if they're a black couple, I'm sure she wouldn't have a problem. But you say crossdresser to many people, and they have fears of a pervert, or a sex criminal.

The new CD club I've joined (The Gemini Club) has an interesting statement. The club is for trans-gendered persons or spouses of either gender, gay or straight, as long as they are people of good character. Using the club as a hunting ground for you and any sexual partner is prohibited. Many clubs are for heterosexuals only. No T's, no gay. I love the "good character" clause. They are focusing on the right thing.

In summary, this has been a blessing to many people who in the past felt like there was something wrong with them, but found out through Inner Discovery that they are gifted and equipped to experience the spiritual destiny that was intended for them. It is still under construction, but you might want to check out the website...
SAME STRUGGLE, SAME FIGHT

I am a 47 year old transsexual. I hold down two jobs, one full-time and one part-time, in order to pay for upcoming surgery. Whether on the job or out in public, as a transsexual I face the same bigotry that gay people deal with. People, especially men, can be unfeeling in a lot of cases. It seems that they have something to prove to each other by the way they respond when they see transsexuals. They have little regard for the feelings or the rights of others. They feel they can compromise another person's identity in any situation.

I was working in a convenience store in West Seneca when two men approached the counter and remarked, "I can tell them anywhere." He asked me if I was a faggot.

Prospective employers are the same. They will give you a dozen reasons why they will not hire you. My favorite is, "The position is already filled." Two weeks later you might drive by and the help wanted sign is still out.

Recently, my partner and I went to McKinley Cinema. She went to the concession stand to purchase popcorn while I waited. The clerk started to laugh loudly and uncontrollably and also made gender comments. Both my partner and I were quite embarrassed since the clerk's behavior brought a lot of attention our way. After the show, I discussed this matter with the theater manager and mentioned legal action against them should this sort of behavior occur again.

No one should tolerate behavior, comments and actions that shows a lack of respect... not only for transsexuals but for all of us. We must all fight this bigotry together and we must fight it everywhere it is found. We must unite and tell people that transsexuals are not the ones to be feared, but our harassers are. Their hateful view of the world is similar to the Klan's.

I especially ask other transsexuals not to tolerate this. The problem can no longer be ignored. We transsexuals demand the rights and respect that others enjoy. I am tired of those cross-eyed looks and smirks and giggles. Most of all, I am tired of people viewing me as "something other." I am not a pedophile. I am not a sexual deviant. I am a human being, a person with feeling, with needs and dreams. I am entitled to that. I will no longer step aside nor tolerate those comments.

I do try to be understanding and caring but I know that harassers rely on victims being too civil and too reluctant to create controversy. Don't let them get away with it.

I would like to start a group for transsexuals to help each other and support each other in the face of bigotry and discrimination. Transsexuals interested in this may contact me directly by phone at (716) 668-1128 or mail through this newspaper at 266 Elmwood Avenue, Suite 167, Buffalo, New York (14222).

Cindy Marie Shipley
West Seneca, New York

Sexual harassment suit filed by transsexual will proceed

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Sexual harassment is sexual harassment — even when the true gender of the intended target isn't clear, a federal judge has ruled.

U.S. District Judge Whitman Knapp ruled Thursday that a transsexual can go forward with a $14 million lawsuit against New York University, saying the claim is protected by federal law.

The plaintiff, Jennifer Miles, was in a graduate studies program and undergoing hormone treatment when Professor Cliff Eisen allegedly began the harassment in February 1993.

Eisen fondled Ms. Miles' breasts and buttocks, forcibly tried to kiss Ms. Miles and repeatedly requested a sexual relationship, Ms. Miles' lawsuit claims.

NYU sought to have the law-suit dismissed.

"There is no conceivable reason why such conduct should be rewarded with legal pardon just because, unbeknownst to Professor Eisen and everyone else at the university, plaintiff was not a biological female," Knapp wrote.

Ms. Miles filed a complaint against the professor with the school's Sexual Harassment Committee in March 1993. The school gave Eisen a written reprimand but let him continue to teach.

The school later assured the professor that the reprimand would have no effect on its decision to award him tenure, the judge said. Knapp called the assurance "bizarre" considering that four female students had previously accused the professor of inappropriate sexual advances.

The professor was not awarded tenure and his contract was not renewed.