

The Crystal Chronicle

March / April 2004

<http://www.tgender.net/cc>

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The Crystal Chronicle is the official newsletter of the Crystal Club. The Chronicle is published and mailed a week prior to the regularly scheduled meeting.

Complementary copies of the Chronicle may be obtained by contacting a club officer or any club member. News items for the Chronicle should be mailed to the Club before the end of each month. The e-mail address is: ccnl@tgender.net

Notes from the Girls:

Hello Girls,

I want to express some problems with the club with you. Some years ago several people started a group called "The Crystal Club" but now it seems that some of the founding members as well as the younger ones do not have time for the club for one reason or another. If you feel anything for the club and can help to get it going again, Please Help!! The news letter on the web has not been updated for almost a year. No-one has the time to help or teach someone to update the web. I have been told it would long to up do this but for some reason the people who could help are not doing so. Please stop and think where you would be without the Crystal Club. Also think of the others who may need or are looking for a place to be themselves. Others may need the club even if you don't

Signed: You're Sister who needs the club and the friendship of others

A note from Barbie,

I just wanted to say thank you to Kim and Kelly for the spaghetti dinner they fixed for the March meeting. It was good!! Both tasty and second it gives me a brake from the task of cooking or fixing something. If anyone else would to take on the task for a meeting just let us know at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting and show us what you know how to fix. If there is something you do not like or cannot eat {onions, nuts, etc} let me know

A note from Tina,

Hi girls, I haven't written an article in ages, it is time I do so now! We need you all to start coming back to the meetings. Whatever the reasons you stopped, I don't know. But we want you to come back and make us strong and united again. We have had new members and some old members come back, but we need YOU!!! Make it a point to stop by and say HII!! We also need you input on who you want to speak at our meetings. Any ideas? We all need your support. If you need to get directions again, call me at 614-806-7288. I am Tina and I am going to be around to help you feel at ease and our other officers will do the same. See you!!

Love, Tina Darling

Editors notes:

Thanks to Diana Mills for the PDF converter program. I needed it to change the newsletter into the PDF format used on our webpage.

Thanks to Mary Ann for the crash course on the webpage. The newsletters are up-to-date on our webpage. I still have a lot to learn and I am working on changing some of the graphics to give the pages a new look. I will be checking to make sure that the links and pinklist are updated. If you have any suggestions that would make our webpage better e-mail me ccnl@tgender.net.

The March meeting was one of our best. Just as girls like to do we talked about ourselves and our goals. These types of meetings are important so we can find out what members need and what they would like the club to be doing. We also had a wonderful dinner, thanks to Kelly and Kim. It just doesn't get any better than this, Good friends, Good food and Good conversation.

Ladies night: If some of you wish to go out let me know. There have been about 4 to 5 people going to Slammers on Saturday night. Please do not assume that we will be there every weekend so e-mail or contact me. I will check with the girls and see if someone will be there. **Our Wednesday and Thursday night out is on a contact ahead.** If you contact me I will post the notice and try to find someone to be there and I will get back with you.

Letters:

Let us hear from you. What would you like to see the club do? Do you have a special recipe or makeup tip? Are you a poet and don't know it? Do you have a story about going out somewhere, or coming out to someone about your trans-gendering. No names will be noted unless you wish them to be.

E-mail me at ccnl@tgender.net

Last year the church that I go to had a service about a defining moment in your life and they ask me to speak. Here is what I said:

Defining Moment **By David / Linda Cox**

After thinking of the most defining moment in my life, I thought of several times. First, maybe it was the time that I came out to my mom, only to find out that she knew. Second, maybe the time I came out to my younger sister, she said: maybe we could go shopping sometime for some new clothes. Or maybe the time that I came out to my children and my ex-wives; that I was not going to hide being transgender. Of all these people in my life, the most important person that I had to face and come out to was ME. I had to realize that I had a conflict inside me had to be dealt with first.

I have been cross-dressing since I was about four years old. Throughout my childhood my mom caught me a couple times. She thought that I would grow out of the need to dress in girl's clothes and playing with girlish toys. My first 25 years I thought that something was wrong with me. Why did I feel the need to be a female? In order to solve the problem I tried to castrate myself, and then I tried suicide. I missed both times. I decided to learn about myself and went back to school. I found researchers of the early 1980's still thought cross-dressing was a mental problem. Then researchers found out that some people are born with brains that are not the same sex as their bodies and the hormone levels are different in some people. Now I could justify that I was not mental and that I was not perverted. Now I had to come face to face with my true self. Who am I? And how do I see myself when I look in the mirror? Do I repress my feelings and put on an act to be accepted by society? I have chosen to accept myself as I am. I perceive myself as female. My monetary situation prevents me from having the surgery. I am a believer in changing the things that I can and accepting the things I cannot. I can be happy in knowing that I have my family and friends to support me. I have found that the people of the UU community to be accepting of me and in them I have found many friends. Today is another defining moment in my life.

The Girl in the Mirror

When I look in the mirror, here is what I see
The girl that I always wanted to be
Long golden hair just past her shoulders I see
With curls at the ends all bouncy and free
Her makeup is just perfect, her cheeks all aglow
Her eyes how they sparkle, and her lips a pale shade of rose.
An image of perfection this girl that I see
O' how I wish this girl were me

I watched in the mirror as she slipped on a dress of blue,
All lace from top to bottom that was almost see through
It clings to her body leaving nothing to hide
Her hourglass figure with her shapely thighs
With 4" high heels just right for her feet
Her long and lean legs made her silhouette complete

As she puts on her hose my legs have the sensation
Of silky nylons and her fingers caressing
With these feelings that I'm having could this be
Is the girl in the mirror is actually me?

As I watched in the mirror as she is brushing her hair
I feel the same brush strokes going through my own hair
As she finishes her makeup, her lipstick her blush
The feelings overwhelm me as I feel her light touch
I touch my face and I am suddenly aware
That her face, is my face, and I'm sitting here
As I watched her transform from me to her
And I now realize that she is me, and I am her
I know this maybe confusing for some to read
But this is the girl in the mirror is really me

I call her Linda; she's what I'd like to be
She's the best of all that's inside of me
She's wise, she's smart; she's witty and kind,
She's the left side, or is it the right side, of what's left of my mind?
And now I let her pick out my clothes from time to time
Sometimes hers, sometimes mine

Linda Cox

Tips for Going out:

Since some of the club members have a desire to go out. I thought I would talk about some things.

First: if you are afraid that you will be ousted as a man in a dress, you may never go out in public. This is a fear that can be overcome by going out to a safe place first, before you walk down Broad and High streets. There are several safe places to go in Columbus; However I will talk of one for now. Slammers is about as safe as it gets the girls there are very accepting of cross-dressers, and people who tend to express themselves different from the norm. Some people say but I do not have any fun and it's to light at Slammers. To that I say, in this world "you have to make your own fun" and "you will never grow into a woman sitting in a dark corner of a bar". You are saying that you think that you look like a man in a dress. Ok, I have seen real woman that look like a man in a dress. You just need to find the courage that they have and just go out. The first step is always the hardest.

Before you go out for the first time or anytime you need to think about a few things.

Where am I going to go and are they accepting of cross-dressing?

How are the people at this place dressed? Example: Do not wear a prom dress to a blue jeans bar.

There is safety in numbers, Is there someone that might go out with me?

Learning to pass can take several years so be patient. It took the girls all their life to become a woman. The way I am learning to become a woman is "stop, look and listen". When you see a group of Women look at the clothes they are wearing, look at the way they walk, talk, sit and do other things. When you learn and emulate them you will start to pass as a woman.

Even if you aren't able to pass, the following hints should help you to blend in more easily and be better accepted. You will certainly draw less attention to yourself and many folks won't even notice you.

Hair: if you are not lucky enough to have enough hair of your own to wear in a feminine style (and you need to be entirely honest about this), make sure you get a realistic looking wig. It needn't be expensive but you need to go to a wig supplier in person and try several styles until you get one which works. Wigs which come straight out of the factory may need some styling to look their best and this is best left to an expert. Wear a wig which is appropriate to your age and similar to your natural coloring. At the end of the day, you're looking for a wig which doesn't look like a wig.

{**Kim's Wig Fashions, 6044 Sawmill Road, TG friendly**}

Make-up: the secret of makeup is practice, practice and practice! Most girls wear very little make-up during the day. You want to try to wear as little make-up as possible, enhancing and modifying your own features rather than obscuring them with a thick mask. If you look like you are wearing a lot of make-up you've already failed. An excellent make-up book is "Making Faces" by Kevyn Aucoin.

Foundation: try to get a foundation which closely matches your skin tone {lower cheek or neck color} and remember your neck and ears as they will be seen (of course if the match is perfect you don't need to worry about these). It can be very difficult to hide the beard shadow but a number of very good foundations are available. I cannot help here because of my blonde hair and my hair removal system. You really need to go to a specialist supplier and try several types and colors until you get one that works.

Eyebrows: Pay attention to eyebrows {unibrows are not feminine, nor masculine} if you can't pluck them into a reasonable shape yourself. Find a beauty salon that patron to men as well as woman.

If you are going to attack your eyebrows with tweezers, Please beware of over plucking or thin eyebrows are the biggest giveaway you may become a Trans-person when you aren't dressed! You may prefer to have your eyebrows shaped professionally if you are not sure.

Breasts: a very common mistake is for Trans-folk is to have their bra straps too short and their breasts way too high. Remember that gravity tends to pull real breasts downwards. If you hold your arm out horizontally, the top of the bra cup should be about 3 to 4 fingers below the armpit. Victoria Secrets has low cost breast enhancers for less than \$50.00. If you want enhancers that cost next to nothing and have the weight of real breasts take an old pair of tights, cut the leg off (must have no holes!) and put in approximately half a cup of dry rice (you can experiment with quantities and type until you get something that works). Twist the end around (not too tightly), tie it in a knot, turn the free end inside-out so that you enclose the rice in a second layer and tie it again. Trim the knot. You now have a cheap breast form. Also be careful not to make your breasts too large - lots of TVs model themselves on a fantasy

woman with DD breasts or worse Dolly Parton. If you want to look realistic, tone it down!

Footwear: Comfort, Comfort, etc... Wear what you can walk and dance in. Most women do not wear patent leather stiletto shoes with 4" or 5" heels for a night on the town. There are a few shoe stores that have women's shoes in larger and wider sizes. Avoid buying your large footwear from fetish suppliers, stick with styles which are sensible and comfortable. You'll find it easier to walk in them too!

Clothes: Spend some time just watching girls your own age and height. Just sit down at a café in a shopping centre or a busy street and don't be afraid to make notes. See what they are wearing, what looks good and what doesn't. Use real girls as role models when deciding what to wear, not your fantasy woman, Drag Queens or other Trans-girls! Most girls don't wear party clothes during the day, you shouldn't either. During the day avoid miniskirts (especially PVC), fishnets, seamed stockings and anything satin or sparkly.

Movement: women and men move in different ways. While you're sitting watching girls go by see what they are wearing, see how they are moving. Pay attention to how they hold their arms and hands - when they are standing still and walking. Watch their hands and gestures they make when girls are talking. Also they look at each other when they talk as if they are the only people in the room.

Confidence: The more you learn from watching women, the easier you will be able to blend in. Then you will look confident and relaxed. Before you know it you will be walking, talking and looking woman.

In general, if you want people to think you are a real girl, you have to study real girls. You also have to throw away your inhibitions and be prepared to go to a wig or a make-up store and ask for help. I never thought I'd come close to being passable but I get hit on by straight guys sometimes. The sad thing is I'm not into guys!

Caution: Do not put yourself into a situation that real girls would not be in. A woman usually will not go for a walk to the post office or store alone late at night. The ones that do are likely to attract unwanted attention from a male. Remember not every one is going to accept the "fem" in the male.

Gender-bending surgery saves dog

While scanning through news I found a cute story about a 7 month old Belgian Malinois (looks like a German Sheppard). The dog's former owners had left him outside without proper shelter since he was about 10 weeks old. Neighbors were concerned about Charlie's living conditions eventually persuaded his owners to hand him over to them to the Double J Pet Ranch in Greeley. Double J - a boarding kennel and no-kill shelter. Charlie's injuries included lost part of his tail and an ear to continued exposure to subzero temperatures, and he was slightly malnourished; however the more serious injury was to his penis, which had suffered frostbite and infection.

Veterinarians at Colorado State University that examined Charlie and decided a penile amputation was the only way to save his life. Over the weekend, veterinarians performed the two-hour surgery. "It doesn't look like it now, but he's a pretty lucky dog," said the doctor who admits to pangs of sympathy before the rare surgery. "We gave him a bunch of morphine," "It just seemed like the right thing to do."

Once Charlie recovers completely, he will be put up for adoption to a good home "Through all of this, Charlie has just remained a sweetheart." The doctor said he has done a similar procedure on cats and even performed open-heart surgery on a dog. But Charlie's situation was unique. "This had to be done for him to have any quality of life." For now, Charlie wears an Elizabethan collar that stops him from licking his wound. He's also on medication to prevent infection and to help with the pain. The doctor said.

"You'd expect a dog that has gone through what he has would be just a little bit grumpy. But he's not. He's just been great." He err She bounces around her kennel, licks the hands of strangers, and is adapting to her situation. Charlie didn't have much to say about his transformation, the result of what was basically a sex-change operation. Some of the residents who never met him donated the money to fund the \$1,800 operation. The kennel now wants to raise more money to help pay for follow-up visits for Charlie and to help other dogs rescued from abusive home

There are no plans yet to change his name to Charlene or Charlotte.

Gene hunt: April 17, 2004

The search is on to find a biological basis for transsexualism.

As a young child, Craig Andrews felt certain about his future. "I always thought I'd grow up to be a man," he recalls. At school, however, his mates were quick to remind him that he was a girl, and point out his differences.

He grew up in far north Queensland, where there was nowhere, and no one, he could turn to in his confusion and despair. "It was extremely difficult," he says. "They don't keep that kind of information in our school library." At 25 he moved to Sydney and discovered there were medical treatments available. Now at 35 he says with hormone therapy and surgery, options he did not undertake lightly, have finally brought his body and mind into harmony. "It's had a profound effect on me." It is not only his personal experience that has led Andrews to believe that transsexualism is a biological condition in which the brain "the most powerful of all the sex organs" develops differently to the reproductive organs, making the desire to live as the opposite sex overwhelming.

Andrews set up a support and advocacy group three years ago for female-to-male transsexual men, called FTMA. He has talked to many people with a similar story, and they all say: 'From my very first memories I thought I was going to be a boy'.

Dr Walter Bockting, a scientific editor of the International Journal of Transgenderism. "We believe it is an interaction between nature and nurture." however, "The reality is, there is no consensus. We do not know exactly how transsexualism develops. "I have found no evidence at all it has anything to do with child-rearing. They are perfectly normal children with perfectly normal parents. But they say they are in the wrong body and I believe them."

Melbourne psychiatrist Dr Herbert Bower has few doubts about a strong biological origin that he instigated in the world's first search for genes linked to transsexualism several years ago. Bower, who is almost 90 and works with Australia's only gender Dysphoria clinic at Monash Medical Centre, estimates he has treated more than 1000 people with transsexualism and gender identity issues. He says he has searched literature and his own patients for decades for psychological causes, such as family dynamics. We believe it is an interaction between nature and nurture.

Transsexual people that attend the Melbourne clinic have begun to donate blood for a gene hunt being carried out by Associate Professor Vincent Harley of Prince Henry's Institute of Medical Research in Melbourne and Professor Eric Vilain of the University of California.

Bower claims a genetic test of gender identity would have great benefits. Children with disorders such as "Alex", the subject of a controversial Family Court decision this week, could confidently monitored and raised as the opposite sex from a young age and given treatments to prevent puberty, which is extremely traumatic for transsexuals. Alex is a 13-year-old girl who is depressed and suicidal, and who has gone to distressing lengths to live as a boy, including wearing nappies to avoid the girls' toilets. Permission was given this week for Alex to take a form of the contraceptive pill that will suppress menstruation. When Alex is 16, doctors may also prescribe male hormones, but any surgery could not be considered until Alex was 18. This decision was supported by Alex's doctors, teachers, aunt and two independent psychiatrists but has been criticized by Catholic ethicists.

Understanding of sexual development changed dramatically with the discovery in the early 1990s of the gene for maleness, known as SRY, which sits on the Y chromosome. If the SRY gene is absent, a girl develops. If it is present, it sets off a cascade of genetic events that lead to the development of testes that then flood the fetus with male hormones. Mutations in SRY or some of the other genes can lead to males who look like females. Until very recently, it had also been thought that differences in the way men and women think and how their brains are structured was controlled solely by hormones. But last year, California scientist, published a study that suggested sexuality was hard-wired into the brain very early in the womb. They tested 15,000 genes in the brains of mice embryos and found 54 genes that had different levels of activity in male and female brains long before SRY was switched on and testosterone was produced. It is these 54 genes that they want to study in transsexual people from the Melbourne clinic. Work has already begun on a couple of them; however there is little evidence that transsexualism is psychological, but also admits "the evidence that there is a genetic component is not very compelling yet". "But we have more every day," he adds. It includes the fact that transsexualism can run in some families. A Dutch study that found a small part of the post-mortem brain in male-to-female transsexual people was the same size as in women, rather than men. At this point the gene hunt can be justified as

scientific curiosity alone. "We would like to understand how the brain functions and a very important function is to provide gender identity." Professors Harley and Vilain are experts in intersex conditions, where children are born with ambiguous genitalia and they say genetic tests for sexuality could improve the difficult decisions about which sex to raise these children.

Any genetic test for transsexuals could become "a double-edged sword", says Kate Clarke, a spokesperson for a male-to-female transsexual advocacy group, "It could be politically and legally advantageous for some"; however there is a risk it could be used to prevent people from getting the treatment they need. At the University of Minnesota, research on 1100 patients shows about 10 per cent regret their decision. The debate continues around the world about the age at which treatment should begin, because not all adolescents with gender identity disorders go on to become transsexuals. About two thirds of the adolescents and adults with gender identity disorders eventually decide to take hormones and about a quarter have surgery. Doctors in Europe and Britain have been giving hormones to teenagers with gender identity disorders for some years. In Alex's case and her age, the best practice has been the following, says Dr. Bockting, use a medication with puberty-blocking properties, but reversible, other medications such as the contraceptive pill, before any male hormones are prescribed. Essentially this is buying time to see how the person's identity develops.

Columbus events:

Sunday, May 2nd Info line 614-447-5050



Important HIV/AIDS Facts

AIDS is a devastating disease that continues to affect the lives of men, women and children throughout our community. AIDS is now the leading cause of death for men ages 25-44 in Columbus and is fast becoming one of the leading causes of death for women in the same age group. The growth of AIDS cases still disproportionately affects the African-American community, and while the number of pediatric AIDS cases is fairly stable, there is disturbing growth in the number of teenagers being diagnosed as HIV+. The number of new AIDS cases continues to grow locally, and there is still **NO CURE.**



Pride Holiday (Columbus, OH)

Dates: Friday, June 25, 2004 through Saturday, June 26, 2004

Upcoming Meetings: **April 24 2004** Bravo * **May 8 2004** Business meeting {location to be announced} * **May 22 2004** TBA * **June 12 2004** TBA

The Crystal Chronicle Information Page

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Postal Mail: The Crystal Club att: newsletter editor PO Box 287 Reynoldsburg OH 43068-0287

Our Purpose: The Crystal Club is a non-profit social and support group for transvestites, cross dressers, transsexuals, and other transgendered individuals. Spouses and significant others are welcome and encouraged to participate. Both male-to-female and female-to-male individuals are welcome. Also, members from related organizations, helpful professionals and approved guests are welcome when cleared through a Crystal Club officer.

What to Expect at a Meeting

Except for being transgendered, participants in the club are just like other people. We dress pretty much like average people, and meet only to socialize and participate in club functions. We range in age from our 20's to our 60's, and come from a wide range of professions. Most of us are cross dressers, although several of us are transsexuals. Most of us are married and have kids, and often our spouses attend the meetings, too. Nothing of a sexual nature is permitted at any of the meetings. You will not be criticized for how well you dress or pass. The club isn't a beauty contest. We range from hardly convincing to completely passing. Some of us dress up, some dress down. Come however you are comfortable. Our regular meetings will have a private changing room, so you may bring a change of clothing with you. We do insist, however, that you dress either completely male or completely female. Gender-blending attire is normally not an option. We also insist that everyone behaves as ladies and gentlemen (which is more polite than simply "women and men"). Overtly sexual or obnoxious behavior is unwelcome; we don't need to exasperate the feelings of people who are already nervous! You will not be required to reveal your legal name, or any other personal information. You can be as open or anonymous as you wish. We ALL have been newcomers and have had similar feelings. We can (and will) sympathize completely!

Membership Dues

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| One year membership, includes newsletter \$42 | Newsletter subscription only \$18 |
| Meeting Fees: First Timer Free | Member (of any T group) \$10 |
| Member and Partner \$15 | Non-Member \$20 |

Your membership renewal date is shown after your name on the mailing label. Membership fees paid on months other than January are prorated to January.

Contact Information: **Postal Mail:** The Crystal Club PO Box 287 Reynoldsburg OH 43068-0287

Screening Officers: (614) 806-7288 (with voice mail) **Electronic Mail:** cc@tgender.net

World Wide Web Page: <http://www.tgender.net/cc> **Newsletter editor e-mail:** ccnl@tgender.net

Contact Policy: All calls are kept strictly confidential. We do not use caller ID and will return your call only at your request. If you are still concerned about caller ID, you can block this function by pressing *67 (or dialing 1167 for rotary/pulse) before the phone number. All written inquiries are kept confidential. The newsletter is mailed in a plain, white envelope, bearing only the return PO Box and no markings pertaining to the Crystal Club. The meeting location is never published, and is only disclosed after a prospective attendee has been interviewed by the screening officer.

Meeting Dates and Times: Regular meetings are held the fourth Saturday of the month, except for November and December. The doors open at about 6:30p.m. (For those wishing to change). The meeting begins at 8:00 p.m. Refreshments are normally provided, and activities usually centers on a presenter or selected topic. Several members may go to an accepting dance club or restaurant after the meeting (of course, this is optional).

Business meeting: is held on the second Friday of the month the doors open at 7:30 p.m. After the club's business is addressed, this Meeting is more of a relaxed and personal discussion time than the regular meeting - a great time to get support for "real world" issues! During the month of December, and at various other times, we will hold special activities (such as a holiday party). These will be announced in the newsletter.