

# LA FEMME SILHOUETTE

Volume 17, Issue 10

October 2005

## LETTERS

### HITCHHIKING

I enjoyed Diane's discussion on the CD as Tourist - ANALOGY [September] and thinking through where I might fit. I have a slightly different take on the *commuter* versus the *tourist* though. I view myself as a *commuter* when I attend AO meeting at the church. Why? Because the only reason I go that location is to mix with, and generally only with, similar minded people. (Analogous to many work locations I've commuted to.) Traveling to the many Be-All style CD gatherings would fall into this category too, if one mostly only mingles with the other CD attendees. The distinction with Andrea's description? No survival issues required.

Just my take on it.

Elaine Suede  
Alpha Omega Member

### GORGEOUS

Sheila's wonderful write-up on the new transformation salon in North East Ohio generated a lot of interest - GOIN' UPTOWN [August]. Here are the salon's contact details:

25 S. Main St.  
Munroe Falls, OH 44262  
Phone: (330) 475-0591  
Fax: (330) 686-1394

***Let's hear from you!***

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
1	Letters, Evolution – Part 6
2	Where Love Lives
3	A CD Eye for Art
4	A Gorgeous Adventure
5	Uniform Uniform, From the Archive
6	AO Meeting Minutes
7	The Last Laugh

## EVOLUTION OF GLORIA - PART VI

I don't remember the performer's name, but as the show continued it was revealed that the guest was a female impersonator that did a stage act and had also been in a movie or two as a woman. With hair back in place to cover "his" bald head, they talked about his act. He had been so convincing as a woman that until the wig was pulled off, everyone had been fooled. There was a very definite irony I began to feel inside myself.

Here was someone who made a living pretending he was a woman, and telling me about his everyday life as a married man with a family. Being a woman for him was supposedly just an act, and nothing more. There I was looking at him and knowing that what I was feeling inside of me was not an act, but something very real. Someone seeing me and him at that moment could have easily said I was just like him, but I knew we weren't alike at all, other than wearing women's clothes.

He was even joking about getting dressed up, and how his act was based on fooling people. My "dressing up", I knew, was not any joke or an attempt to fool anyone, and I felt that in my heart, my mind, and my soul at that moment. But yet, as I say, to anyone else, I knew I could be seen as a joke and pretense, because that would be all they could see, or care to understand. I could never explain what I felt inside me. Seeing that show made me, even more than before, truly wonder about who and what I was, as well as whom and what George was.

I went upstairs and slowly undressed and put everything away. It wasn't until I was standing in front of the dresser mirror, dressed again as George, and wiping off my lipstick that I realized I had been crying the whole time. Maybe I was a joke, a very cruel joke. I let George return. I could have come back again over the next couple of weeks, but I didn't let it happen. Life went on.

Later that year George fell in love for the first time. His love was a girl named Elenore. Though George was only fourteen, and she was sixteen, George knew she loved him, and he loved her so much in return. George

*Continued on page 3*

# Where Love Lives

By *Miqqi Gilbert*

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Being part of a long term couple is never an easy undertaking. It requires commitment, hard work, and honesty. Being part of a transgendered couple almost inevitably adds extra stress to a relationship. Even under the best of circumstances living with another person is never that easy, and if that other person is transgendered, then it's even harder. For one thing, being transgendered or being with a transgendered person means that you are forced to confront your feelings and attitudes about gender and gender roles. Why is it so important in so many cultures that the differences between men and women remain so incredibly rigid? Why is it that gender outlaws are treated so harshly? How do we each support and reinforce the gender rules in our daily lives, in our attitudes and expectations?

Every cross dresser periodically goes through a spell of wondering, why? Since there is no answer to this question, or at least no neat generally accepted answer, we cross dressers try not to spend too much time wrestling with that issue. And, I imagine, our partners must go through a similar process. First, there's the question, why does he cross dress? But, secondly, there's another question that must arise: Why did I choose a cross dresser? What was there about this man that attracted me, and was his being a cross dresser part of that attraction? Is there some karmic issue or underlying feeling that brought us together? And maybe even, going that one step further: What is there in it for me in being married or partnered to a cross dresser?

The path to self acceptance for the TG person, and certainly for the heterosexual cross dresser (my own group,) is not an easy one. The lack of

any compelling explanation for a behavior that is so broadly condemned, the awareness that one is violating primal and deeply held norms, the fear, guilt and uncertainty accompanying an activity that at one moment seems utterly harmless and the next totally inappropriate, is sufficient to create stress in any individual. There may be, at the end of the path, contentment, peace and even pride, but getting there is no mean feat. That is why the role of the TG partner is so terribly crucial.

Regardless of the flavor of TGism, partners play a powerful role. They easily become, rightly or wrongly, our windows to the world. They often personify the Other, the outside world who looks at us and sees not the self-image we conjure of the lovely lady or good looking guy, but of the misfit, the weirdo, the silly man or woman trying to be what is not. We make them the Other, we give them this power and role, force it on them, whether asked for or not, and we feel it's strength when we search their faces for disapproval or audit their tone of voice for irony or rejection. At the same time we too often forget that they are having the analogous experience. What are they doing here? What brought them to this place? Isn't someone who loves a gender transgressor also violating the rules? When s/he gives you support, s/he becomes part of the struggle. When s/he is out with you and feels comfortable and has fun and stands proud, then s/he is part of the vanguard, part of the transgender revolution.

For us being part of the revolution, being outlaws, is not a choice. We were born this way, became this way, or somehow evolved into who we are.

For our partners their recruitment into the gender outlaw family frequently comes as a surprise. Sometimes it is a result of a sudden revelation and at other times through a more subtle evolution, but more often than not it is something happening to them, not about them. And yet many stay, and many learn to accept, participate, share and even enjoy. They are the ones who know what it means to love a person, a being, who may sometimes be one thing, sometimes another, who may have begun life as one thing and be continuing it as another. They are the ones who see through the roles, games and charades to the soul beneath, and that is truly revolutionary.

The partners of TG people have to give more, and I love them for it. Every single time I see a wife who supports her cross dressing husband, or a partner who is with a TS, or a couple sharing the TG experience by trying to find their own way across rocky terrain without a map, my spirit soars and there is a gladness in my heart because I am seeing love. When we see the soul of our partner, and not just the clothing or even the body, then we are seeing truth and that is the place love lives.

When you are transgendered and loved, that love is very special because it comes to you the hard way. Like a salmon swimming upstream, that love fought its way there against the rules and conventions of society. So if you are transgendered, do not ever forget that your partner is a special person, someone in whom love lives truly. And when you love a transgendered person you are showing an insight into your partner that pierces superficiality and goes to the heart of where love lives. You also show an insight into yourself, an acceptance that offers a potential for peace and permanence arrived at through sharing, giving, and receiving. When that happens you truly know where love lives.

was becoming a man, and I had to face the fact that my time was gone and done. George had won the war. Oh, I fought back at times, though I felt shame in doing so. Elenore was so pretty in her dresses and stockings and heels, and George was so proud she was his girl.

George loved to hold her and kiss her when they could find a moment alone, which was not often. It was wicked of me, and I knew it, but when I could sneak a thought or two, I wondered how I would feel if I were in her clothes. George was always quick to bury me again. As it happened, George's love lasted about six months. For reasons that George didn't understand at the time, suddenly Elenore broke off the relationship. It was the minister of the church they both attended who told George that Elenore didn't want to see him any more, and that her love had not been real.

George fell apart at the news, and I'm not even sure how he kept going. George just wanted to die. But exist he did. Seeing Elenore hurt so much because he still loved her. But it was over. A couple months later George's parents stopped going to church for reasons he wasn't told. Not seeing Elenore helped George to some extent, but her memory was still there in his mind at times. Again it was wicked of me, but if Elenore's love for George had only been a game she had played, then I felt no love loss in wishing I had gotten into her clothes in a sense as revenge for her game.

I began to surface more often, even if I couldn't wear anything. It hurt me knowing that Elenore had hurt George. George and I had our battles, but someone purposely hurting him, hurt me, too. Three months after not going to church, George, in a round-about way, discovered the truth. Apparently, Elenore had (before knowing George) been considered somewhat of a "wild girl". The minister had know this, and tried to use this to his advantage. The minister played around with the women in his congregation, and had finally been caught doing so. That was why Ma and Dad stopped going to church. George learned that the minister had approached Elenore and told her he would tell George about her past if she didn't have an affair with him. Elenore had broken up with George because she was the one who finally exposed the minister for his true character, and she was afraid George would be ashamed of her and her past. Elenore had loved him, but the pieces could not be put back together.

I felt shame for my thoughts against Elenore. George hated me now, and I couldn't blame him. I wasn't too proud either of my thoughts. George buried me for almost two years. During that time George worked hard to be the boy and man he was supposed to be, and even

got into sports in high school. There were still the problems of being the shortest boy in his class, and his not being the tall, dark, and handsome guy that the girls liked.

And George, though in sports, was not the most athletic; and some older boys made fun of him. As George turned fifteen, he quickly gained body hair and a beard. By sixteen George had to shave at least twice a week. It did seem that I was slowly but surely being eliminated as a part of George, and I fought for even tiny moments of life. Ma's shoes were now too small for me. I could still wear a bra, but my panty girdle was now gone, and so was my slip. All the little pieces that had led to my coming alive were now fading memories. Even putting on stockings was not the same because now George had hairy legs, and I could do nothing about it.

As Ma had fewer things for me, I took almost any chance to try on other women's, or other girl's clothes, or shoes, or jewelry, or lipstick. But those times were very limited. I felt like I was dying and could do nothing about it. My life was, at best, only stolen moments of wearing one or two things so briefly that I could not really enjoy them. George turned seventeen.

*To be continued*

Gloria Sue Fenton © 2005



*"An artist expresses himself with his soul..."*

Marcel Duchamp (1887 - 1968)

### An Artist That Inspired a Movement...

RECENTLY, Marcel Duchamp's Fountain - a humble porcelain urinal marked with a false signature (1917) - has been named the world's most influential piece of Modern art, knocking Picasso from his traditional position of supremacy.



The Duchamp came out top in a survey of 500 artists, curators, critics and dealers commissioned by the sponsor of the Turner prize. Different categories of

*Continued – page 4*

respondents chose markedly different works, with artists in particular plumping overwhelmingly for Fountain.

It feels like there is a new generation out there saying, “Cut the crap - Duchamp opened up modern art”, said an art expert, “and not just the formal qualities, but also the edginess of using a urinal and thus challenging bourgeois art.”

*OK, great, but why do we care you ask? Well, it turns out that Duchamp had a well developed and well documented feminine side.*

Duchamp named his feminine persona Rose Sélavy. A name that resonated with his predilection for puns (Rose Sé-la-vy = Eros, C'est La Vie, meaning “love, that’s life”).

Rose Sélavy is one of the most complex and pervasive pieces in the enigmatic puzzle of the artist's oeuvre. She first emerged in portraits made by the photographer Man Ray in New York in the early 1920s, when Duchamp and Man Ray were collaborating on a number of conceptual photographic works. Rose Sélavy lived on as the person to whom Duchamp attributed specific works of art, readymades, puns, and writings throughout his career. It is thought that by creating for himself this female persona, whose attributes are beauty and eroticism, he deliberately and characteristically complicated the understanding of his ideas and motives.



**Rose Sélavy, Photographer: Man Ray**

[On the Town]

## **A GORGEOUS ADVENTURE**

AT OUR last meeting we talked about Sheila’s newsletter article about Gorgeous, a new boutique that she had been to. And, as it turned out, Penny had also visited Gorgeous that very day. After a little more talk, Diane B, Elaine S., Margaret, Penny and I had set a tentative date to go to Gorgeous two weeks later.

As the day arrived, Diane B and Elaine S had things come up so they could not go. Also, I did not hear from Penny, so I figured that her work had tied her up. On the Saturday, a call from Margaret, and some strong encouragement from Kathy got me heading on my way to meet Margaret, and go to Gorgeous.

We found the place fairly easily, but the door was locked. As we were wondering about that, we happened to spot someone working in another section of the building. A moment later we entered Gorgeous. Farrah, one of the proprietors of Gorgeous, had been the one working in the other part of the building. As we were told, business was doing well, and the store was moving next door to a larger space.

We talked for a few minutes about how Sheila and Penny had recommended the boutique and how a reasonably priced place to buy things in comfort and safety was very welcomed. After that, though, it was down to serious stuff.

This old blonde needed new hair. I picked out my first wig to try on, put it on, and began fussing with it. As Margaret saw me playing with my hair, I heard her laugh. I guess I probably looked funny, but after a moment I saw my image in the mirror, and I was smiling from ear to ear. My hair was suddenly a little straighter than usual, and a couple shades lighter in color. But there was no doubt about it. I had a new hairdo. After trying on some other hair pieces, I even found another hairdo that Farrah, Margaret, and I liked.

Then it was Margaret’s turn for new hair. I had to smile as I saw Margaret fussing with her hair, as I had. By the time we were done shopping an hour-and-a-half later, I had two new hairdo’s, a new ring, and a brand new pair of long, dangly, silver, pierced earrings, all for under \$100.00.

Farrah was wonderful and when I asked if she would like to do a program about Gorgeous for one of our meetings, she said she would be happy to. Margaret and I had a great visit, and a great shopping experience. I most definitely will be going back to Gorgeous.

Gloria

[In the News]

## UNIFORM UNIFORM

*From ThisWeek Community Newspapers - New Albany Edition. (A bit tabloid-esqué... but... hey... why didn't I think of it back in high school: Ed)*

### Local Teen Challenges Gender Restriction on High School Cheerleading Squad

GUYS play football. Girls are cheerleaders. Right? Wrong! Not at Riverside High this year. Thanks to Title IX, girls have been allowed to play football for five years now (although only three girls have actually joined the team during this time). However, even with Title IX, the gender barrier on the cheerleading squad had remained -- until this year when Mark Layton showed up for tryouts.



*[left: Mark Layton (center, standing) with some of the other - female - members of the Riverside squad]*

No one was really sure what to do about Mark, but they let him try out, and then cut him at the first opportunity.

"They had no intention of giving

me a real chance to make the squad" he said. "I was cut just because they didn't want any guys to be cheerleaders. Mrs. Holloway, the cheerleader coach was against me from the start, and so was Mrs. Greene, the principal."

Faced with a decision he felt was unfair, Mark did the All-American thing: he got a lawyer. "As soon as they found out about the lawyer, everything changed" he reports. "They said I could join the squad, but I would have to follow all the same rules as the girls, including rules about the uniform. I was given a copy of the rules, and was told there would be no differences between my uniform and the standard girl's uniforms. I would have to wear the skirts, the dresses, the shoes, and even the panties and sports bra! I think they were expecting me to give it up by then, but I was determined. And if it meant wear panties, then so be it -- I'd wear panties."

"My mom has been a big help, and so has my girlfriend. She's a cheerleader too. At first she lent me some of her panties and one of her bras, but they were too small, so

she went shopping with me to get my own. Now that was quite a shopping trip!" Mark laughed. "You should have seen the faces when people realized that we were shopping for panties and a bra for me!"

And how does the girlfriend of a male cheerleader in a dress feel about the whole thing? "She's really cool with it" Mark explained. "In fact, she said it's kind of sexy. And some of the other girls must think the same thing, because a couple of them have hit on me while I've been dressed."

The obvious question -- how does HE feel about wearing the bra and panties? "It doesn't bother me at all." he says. "The panties especially are quite comfortable. My girlfriend says I should wear them all the time, not just underneath my cheerleader uniforms, and I think I may start doing what she says!"

[From the Archive]

### La Femme Silhouette - March 2001

*"Make the most of the time you have" - looking back at good advice and more from our current chair, Gloria Sue Fenton.*

#### TIME

I know some people who have gotten totally paranoid about turning 30, 40 or 50, or so on. But when the fateful day came, it passed as any other day. Their lives continued on until they feared the next milestone. Go figure.

Martin will be 50 in February, so I guess, being as close to him as I am, that in calendar years, I am also becoming 50. How old I feel in my own heart and mind depends on the moment and may vary greatly from moment to moment, and is a lady's prerogative to disclose only if she chooses to.

But being pragmatic for a few moments I will share a couple of thoughts and feelings someone like myself might experience, if they were turning 50.

Fifty years sounds like a long time, and for some things maybe it is. When I was a child a year seemed like an eternity and dragged on forever. Now that same year seems to pass far too quickly with few times to savor its moments. I think they call that a perspective of age. You know a year is still as long as it was back in the olden days, and so do I. The difference now is that with home, family, job, bills, health, and a few other responsibilities and other facts of life today, that there really is less time to savor, or if we do have some time we are so tired from the stress of our own lives that we don't take full measure of it.

*Continued - page 6*

*From the Archive – continued from page 5*

Time isn't moving faster, but life is. We, as human beings, are caught up in trying to live our lives at the speed of technology that seems to drive us. I don't know about you, but Martin and I don't make a trillion calculations per second or move at the speed of electricity.

Fifty years really isn't that long, and because of that, all of a sudden you gain a new respect for the 25 years or so (on average) that you may have left.

For 38 of that first 50 years, I could not handle or accept this part of me, I call Gloria. So it has only been 12 years that I have had to discover a part of me that I needed to be complete as a human being. Time, and how Martin and I spend it, has become more and more precious, by the moment.

Nowadays, we have instant food, instant communications, and a compulsion for instant gratification of our needs. I wonder how many people really spend four hours or more cooking a meal, or sitting down with pen and paper and writing a letter in longhand, or want to take the time to develop relationships like friendship or love for something with any lasting meaning.

If you believe the media, if a boy doesn't try to kiss a girl or do more on a first date, then he must be gay or there is something wrong with him. And if a man and a woman don't have sex on a first encounter -- well, we all know that both of their lives are shattered from that moment on, or so we are supposed to believe. What happened to two people getting to know each other first?

I'm not sure how many men or women really want lasting relationships anymore. Or perhaps more to the point, want to spend the time, the work and the commitment that is needed for two people to share their lives. In a lot of ways today there isn't the closeness of family bonds as there used to be, in my opinion. Kathy and I have family spread out to Indiana, Tennessee, South Carolina, Georgia, Texas and Florida. And for even what family is within a hundred miles, it seems like our lives are all so busy that there is no time to get together. A phone call or email is nice, but will never take the place of seeing a smile and getting a hug or talking face to face.

The family bonds, the closeness of ties that used to be, and the simpler and slower pace of life are things I miss. They say time waits for no man, and very few women, and I suppose it's as true as any other old saying. Time doesn't wait, and it is up to us how to use and fill the time we have in our everyday lives, and in our times as

our second selves.

Take time to decide what is really important to you in your life, and not just passing fancies. And then make the most of the time you have.

All my love, Gloria

## **MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2005 ALPHA OMEGA SOCIETY MEETING**

After a summer break, our first fall meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. by Chairperson, Gloria Fenton. There were nine members in attendance.

Discussion was held on the need to provide assistance to Abby for contact and interview follow up. Diane Frank will speak with Abby about how we can best assist her.

Kathleen asked that the membership consider a donation to the Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund. Discussion was held. Kathleen made a motion that we donate \$100.00 to the Red Cross for the Hurricane Relief fund. The motion was seconded by Elaine Suede. The motion carried unanimously. Diane Brennan will write a check to Red Cross on behalf of Alpha Omega Society.

There was also discussion held on possible charities to help during the traditional holiday season. Specific groups will be determined at a later date.

An outing to "Gorgeous" which Sheila had written about for the newsletter was discussed. Penny had also been there the morning of the meeting. Several members set a tentative date to visit. Having them as a possible program was discussed. Other ideas such as "Hat Night" which was brought up by Abigail at the August cookout and the topic of hair accessories were also briefly discussed. A visit by Wigs & Things was another idea for a possible future meeting.

The meal for next month will be on the e-list for planning. Kathleen motioned we adjourn. The motion was seconded by Diane Brennan. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted - Kathleen Fenton

[Last Laugh]  
**Gavin & Unintended Consequences**



*"It's not that your Mother and I object to you  
being in a marching band Gavin...."*

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■ **THE ALPHA OMEGA SOCIETY** ■

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Secretary (Correspondence) ♣ Kathleen Fenton  
Director of Membership ♣ Abby White

Director of Finance ♣ Diane Brennan  
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The Alpha Omega Society is a non-profit social support group for heterosexual crossdressers and their wives or partners. Our membership is open to all who share this focus. Also, members from related organizations, helping professionals, and approved guests are welcome when cleared through Alpha Omega's officers may attend meetings.

Meetings are the second Saturday evening of each month unless a special event is scheduled that takes the place of the regularly scheduled meeting. The location of the meeting or event is only released to members or others with the approval of an officer. Members and visitors must be 18 years of age or older. We will exchange newsletters with any other similar group. Send all correspondence to The Alpha Omega Society, P.O. Box 2053, Sheffield Lake, OH 44054, or email us at [officers@aosoc.org](mailto:officers@aosoc.org)