

The Crystal Chronicle

August 1989

July Meeting

Hello everyone! The July Meeting was real nice, there were eight CDs and two GGs present. In attendance were Beth and Mary Ann, Debbie and Kelly, Rochelle, Susan, Deneć, Lana, Cheryl Marie and Stephany.

Coming to a meeting for the first time were Deneć and Lana, they both looked real good. I thought I could give them a few tips before I saw them, however it might be the other way around.

Before I go any further I want to apologize to Rebecca who was at our April meeting. In the May Newsletter I said there were twelve CDs and one GG at the April Meeting. I was wrong, there were eleven CDs, one GG, and one TS. It was a blunder on my part, I knew better and I goofed up. The point is that most knowledgeable people about gender dysphoria don't consider transsexuals crossdressers.

We are now a member of I.F.G.E. (International Foundation for Gender Education.) One of the basic purposes of I.F.G.E. is to share ideas and information about the transgender community within the TG community. Since I am the representative to I.F.G.E. from the Crystal Club, I will be passing the information along to you as it becomes available. One thing I should mention, I.F.G.E. seems to be having financial difficulty. Perhaps somebody could come up with an idea to raise funds-contributions for I.F.G.E.

At the July meeting we started the support part of the meeting by asking if there were any TG-CD issues or problems that anybody wanted to discuss. We are going to structure part of the meeting more like a support group. We have a lot to learn about running a support group, but we think this will be a good activity for the group and your input is encouraged here. However, have no fear, there will still be plenty of socializing and most counselors and other people agree that just being at the meeting is good therapy.

Until later,
Susan

Treasurer's Report August 1989

July	Starting Balance	111.42
	New Memberships	60.00
	Meeting Fees	115.00
	Total	286.42
	Printing and postage	-14.39
	Food and Beverages	-41.55
	Meeting Rooms	-63.47
	Total July Expenses	-119.41
	Ending Balance	167.01

Susan

August Meeting

The August meeting will be on August 26. The doors will open at 6. Snacks and beverages will be provided. A changing room will be available if you prefer to come and dress at the meeting site.

At the August 26th Meeting we will discuss whether or not the Crystal Club should affiliate with The Renaissance Education Association, Inc. Several of you are familiar with Renaissance and have been referred to us by them. If you are interested in the concern please consider attending the August 26th meeting to give your input. [Note - this discussion might be postponed until a later meeting - MAH.]

For those of you who would like a stimulating talk about social pressures on CDs and TSs and social problems thereof, Heather Peerson will give a lecture and questions session at the August 26th Meeting for the Crystal Club.

I talked to Heather on the phone three times this summer and found it very hard to put the phone down each time. I find her very interesting and knowledgeable about the TG community and TG issues. If you want some enlightening information and theories on Crossdressing and Transgenderism think about coming to the August 26th meeting.

Heather's background reads as follows: she has crossdressed since early childhood, was married 17 years during which she crossdressed the entire marriage, she started Cross-Port in Cincinnati. Heather has been living as a woman fulltime for the last year and a half and writes for The Transsexual Voice. Since Heather has been the central figure running Cross-Port for several years she is very

familiar with TVs and TSs and the stages they go through.

Now for September, I am glad to announce that Debra Leno, a professional counselor, will be at the Sept 23rd Meeting. She will talk to the group and give us some ideas and guidelines for running a support group. Debra's area of knowledge is relationship issues, gay population, conflict in relationships, sexual dysfunction and TG lifestyles. Debra has considerable experience counseling TG individuals.

The Crystal Club would like to announce that we welcome professional counselors, PhDs or other qualified people to address the group. In some cases, with prior permission we will allow them to come and participate and/or observe the group. Interested individuals should check with officers of the club. And of course these individuals will be made aware and agree to the requirement of extreme confidentiality.

Well, anyhow, I hope to see you at the Aug 26 meeting.

'til later,

Susan

A New Friend

Whew, now that I got the business part over with I want to relate an interesting meeting I had with a new friend that I met in a very coincidental way.

I was in a carry-out buying beverages for the Crystal Club Meeting and I noticed the store clerk (a GG) was the same one who was there the last time, she seemed a little bit aggressive and very outgoing. I got the impression from observing her that she was somewhat liberal and probably not from Columbus, Ohio. I asked for her help on choosing a large bottle of wine, telling her I needed a crowd pleaser type of wine for a support group meeting we were having on Saturday. I didn't expect her to ask any questions about the group but that's the first thing she asked. I, sensing that there would be no problem or risk, told her it was for a support group of transgendered individuals. The first thing she said is "Oh, how neat... Tell me about this."

Luckily for me the carryout had very few customers that night. I stayed for about an hour talking to her about the TG community. As it turns out she is a psychology student at O.S.U. and is fascinated about the TG subject. We made plans to meet at another time so I could fill her in about the TG Community. We did get together a couple of times and she has seen me dressed and seemed impressed.

Even though we are just friends it's great to know somebody that accepts the entirety of me, not just the part a person assumes should be normal. If I had played it safe and never told her I would have robbed myself of the opportunity to have a friend who knows

and accepts me the way I want to be accepted. Naturally CDs reading this should use discretion and act wisely before taking a similar risk (as the risks are real.) On the other hand I've come to the conclusion that the things we believe others think about us as CDs are sometimes more in our mind than theirs. We'll talk more about this later.

Susan

Thanks!

A special thank you to the dear newsletter editors at the Paradise Club, the Cleveland area open crossdresser group, and at Stonewall Union, the Columbus gay rights organization, for listing the Crystal Club meetings on their calendars of events. Stonewall also lists our address, so that interested persons can contact us.

Mary Ann

Lost!

Somehow when I left the July meeting, I didn't come out with my copy of the Alpha Omega Outreach for June. It had an excellent article about the Epilady I wanted to include in the Chronicle. If you wound up with it, would you please get it back to me?

Thanks,

Mary Ann

Book Reviews

In the last newsletter, I reported that two new books are out. I've ordered both books, and recently received them. I wanted to pass along my thoughts.

Speaking As A Woman, by Alison Laing. \$8, postpaid, from CDS, Box 1263, King of Prussia, PA 19406. 40 pages, paperback.

My Husband Wears My Clothes, by Peggy J. Rudd, Ed.D. \$11.40 (including postage) from PM Publishers, Inc., 1811 Crutchfield, Katy, TX 77449. 148 pages, paperback.

When I was ordering these, I wondered why the difference in price. Both books sounded similar in value. When I received them, the difference was obvious. *Speaking As A Woman* would better be described as a booklet, while *My Husband Wears My Clothes* is clearly a book.

I read through *Speaking* quickly in one setting, and it left me hungry for more. It's set in large type and has liberal drawings and tables. It's well written, and has both technical background about how the voice works, as well as listing the steps to take to develop a feminine sounding voice. Beth, who has some technical background in speech production and understanding, tells me the technical information is very accurate.

But somehow, the book left me feeling unsatisfied. It read more like a tutorial, or a technical paper, than a workbook for the serious student. All the information you need is there. It's far more complete than anything else I've read on the subject. But I'd have to be an incredibly dedicated student to really learn feminine voice from this book. I counted 17 pages of tutorial material, 8 pages of technical background, and the remainder is filled with introductions, appendices, tables of contents, and the like.

I think *Speaking* is an excellent beginning. It's clearly by far the most in depth instruction about learning a feminine voice available today. But it would be far more useful if it were expanded. In reading it, I was struck by the similarity between learning to speak as a woman, and learning a foreign language. Berlitz and many others have created libraries of workbooks, cassette tapes, and the like that help people spend the necessary time to learn the language.

Of course, such an in-depth course would cost more than \$8. Mass marketed foreign language courses cost \$40 or more. With a group as small as the gender community, it might be necessary to charge \$100 for a complete program with workbooks and tapes. However, I think anyone who is serious enough about passing to put the time into proper voice development would be willing to spend \$100 for a good set of course materials.

Ideally, the price might include a couple of opportunities to make a cassette tape of your own voice, send it back to the author, and receive feedback from her about what still needs work. If the author had access to sophisticated audio equipment that could alter the pitch of your voice, she could return a tape with altered versions of your own voice, to better illustrate what you have and what you need to do. Another possible service would be telephone instruction.

Speaking plugs a pair of six hour voice workshops at the Fantasia Fair, costing \$100 (basic) and \$135 (advanced). These are probably a good next step after *Speaking*, but may be out of reach for crossdressers who are unable to attend Fantasia Fair.

By contrast, *Husband* takes some time to read. I'm a pretty slow reader, and I've been reading this book to get sleepy at night. So far I'm only half way through it. I'm very impressed, but this is not light reading.

The book seems intended to be read by crossdressers and especially their wives. It seems overly pro-crossdressing, to the point that it's almost propaganda. I guess we're supposed to hand it to an unsupporting wife and have her read it and understand us. It's probably very good for that, although Beth is already the most loving and supporting mate a girl could wish for, so I can't exactly try it. Nonetheless, it struck me as constantly carrying the message "Crossdressers are

just like regular men, only a lot better." Gushing like this tends to make me suspicious of the author, who loses some credibility with me. After all, there are some real problems, too.

One section that bothered me basically tells the unaccepting wife to consider her alternatives, which are to accept her husband as he is, or to get a divorce and become impoverished trying to support herself. Having recently gone through a divorce, I can assure you that a woman who divorces because her husband is a crossdresser can take him to the cleaners financially!

However, I can see that the "there's obviously nothing wrong with crossdressing" attitude might be appropriate to convey to a wife who is unsure how to handle things, but loves her husband.

Husband is from the point of view of a wife, who happens to be a psychologist. Both viewpoints are strongly represented. There are also substantial chapters about parents, and about children. The issue of whether, when, and how to tell the children is covered in quite a bit of detail. There are numerous case studies of people who have told their children, some of whom accepted and some of whom didn't. I was very impressed with this.

One thing that bothered me somewhat was that the author almost constantly refers to the crossdresser with the masculine pronouns *he, him, his*, etc. This is probably how wives think of their husbands, even though we like to be referred to with feminine pronouns, but it can lead to some strange passages:

I know this is true in the case of my husband. He has assumed the feminine name, Melanie, to honor the feminine personality that has always been a vital part of his total self. Soon after my introduction to Melanie she told me her life story.

All in all, both *Husband* and *Speaking* are both quite good. If you have family that you need to explain yourself to, *Husband* is strongly recommended. If you want to learn to make your voice pass, *Speaking* may not be enough, but it's your best bet. If you are serious and will spend hours with a tape recorder recording your own voice and listening back to it, you may be able to succeed using this booklet.

Mary Ann

Editor's Edict By Rochelle

I'm glad to see new faces at the meetings. We hope that you will grow with the rest of the sisters of Crystal Club. I wish that more of our older members would come to more meetings because I seem to learn so much from them. I guess that I want to learn all I can about what I am and where I am in this. I believe that our meetings are getting better and a little more structured. We are learning from each other what we want from Crystal. Our list for support and

friendship grows with each and every meeting. I'm grateful to all the members for their help and support since I've been part of Crystal Club. As we grow and structure even more I know that I'll learn more and more about myself. I'd like to say thanks to the members for their help and support.

I'd like to share something that happened to me after the last meeting. Some of us travel to and from the meetings dressed. We don't always think of some of the things that could happen as we travel. On this night I went to and from the meeting dressed as I always do. This time on the way home I had something happen that I was not expecting. I had a blow-out on the left rear tire. Many thoughts were going through my mind. I knew that I had to change it, but, what if somebody would stop to help while I was changing it? In today's time very few people stop to help someone. By this time I knew that I had to get out of my van if the tire was to get changed. It seems that everyone was coming or going at 1:00 A.M. that Sunday morning. The traffic was a little heavier than I remember it being before that late at night. I got the jack out of the back and started to jack up the van. This is not easy when you're trying not to mess up your dress. I was trying not to give myself away.

I noticed that the light I had to work with got suddenly brighter. When I looked over my shoulder there was this car pulling up behind me. Panic and run were my first thoughts, but I knew that causes more problems from reading other articles. I had to think about how this man was getting out of his car and coming my way. How can I get rid of him without giving myself away? He stepped up and asked if I needed any help. [Flashing through my mind: stay calm, be polite, and think like a lady.] I told him thank you, but it was just a flat and I could change it. He says that he'd be glad to do it for me. What now he's not going to go and I don't want to give myself away or did this guy already know. I said thank you and showed him where everything was.

I felt like a creep letting this man change this tire for me. I just wanted to go home. The sooner this is over the better I'd feel. I just couldn't help wondering if he knew I wasn't what I seemed to be. I kept trying to think the way I wanted to be taken.

After he finished he put the tools up for me. Then as he was putting the tire back on the rack to be sure to get this tire replaced before I do too much more traveling. I told him that I would and told him thanks and asked if I could pay him for his time and trouble. He said no that he was glad to help. I thanked him again and got into my van and left. Things turned out great but I hope that never happens again.

We can make it through a bad spot if we just don't panic. Take care sisters and safe traveling.

Until next time

Rochelle Richards

Policies

The Crystal Club is an open support group for cross dressers. We welcome TV, TS, TG, and others who assume a complete feminine identity. We welcome their wives and significant others (SO's.) We welcome guests from other cross dressing organizations, when cleared through an officer.

We do not care about the sexual preference of the members and attendees. We do, however, require that all attendees behave like ladies at all times. Everyone has the right to feel secure, knowing they will not be ridiculed for their dressing or their appearance, and knowing they will not be "hit on" by anyone present.

We require that all attendees come completely dressed in feminine attire, or not dressed (i.e. in masculine attire). It is expected that most members will normally dress, but this is not required. Persons are *not* permitted to arrive partially dressed, for example, a dress and male hair, or a dress and an unshaven face, as this may draw unwanted attention to the rest of the group. Ladies pants and casual wear are fine. An adjacent changing room is available if you prefer to come in male clothing and dress at the meeting site.

Meetings are open only to cross dressers who have been screened or approved by an officer, and to cross dresser's wives/SO's, helping professionals, and approved guests. The location of the hotel is given out after the screening process, in order to protect our members from people looking for cheap entertainment.

The Crystal Club may be reached at:

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