

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

Buffalo Belles Newsletters

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

11-2001

November 2001

Buffalo Belles

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

Recommended Citation

Buffalo Belles, "November 2001" (2001). *Buffalo Belles Newsletters*. 74.
<http://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/buffalobelles/74>

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

THE BUFFALO BELLES NEWSLETTER



November 2001

Issue

Article from Michelle

Fox;

This is the first issue of the newsletter printed by yours truly. Please forgive the crude appearance. As time goes by my skills will improve (Hopefully).

I'd like to share this article with you that I found on the Internet. It seems we all have to deal with this at some point or another no matter where we're going-if we are dressed it happens.

"Read" on.....

What happened at the

November 2001

meeting?

Well for one thing as a group we decided that we didn't want the Belles to fold up and close the doors. So long as there is available funding we will continue to be a resource for the community can call upon. And besides, if we had lost our meeting place, replacing it or getting it back would have been next to impossible. Our current meeting place offers privacy, parking, a kitchen and lots

INFO-LINE:

(716) 879-0973

Mail Correspondence to:

Buffalo Belles

P.O Box 1701

Amherst, NY 14226

Or Email:

buffalo_belles@juno.com

of space. That is something other groups may not be able to say.

Also its not such a crisis if members cannot attend the meetings. We all have personal lives and our own unique situations. When attendance fluctuates to below average levels, it is normal. And members need to know the Belles will be there when they need to come-whether its to dress up, chit-chat or discuss a recent happening in their life. We will continue to be a social support group for the CD/TS community and we're not going anywhere.

We also had in attendance for November 8 members. They were Michelle Foxx, Melissa (guest), Jean H., Colleen R., Patty J., Denise P., Victoria C., and Jo S.

Belles Christmas 2001

Party December 8th!

Our December meeting will also double as a Christmas party. Members are asked to bring a wrapped gift under(\$10) for a gift exchange. We will also collect new, unopened toys for a donation to underprivileged children. If you would like to bring a dish or snack feel free. I am keeping a list as to avoid duplication of items brought. Please e-

mail me for the updated list
[redacted]

So far I will bring lasagna, Denise will bring Soda, Melissa said she'd bring in cider & cookies and Jean will make a "mystery dish" .Mmmmmmm can't wait!

Whats coming up in December?

I am currently unaware of upcoming current events in Buffalo or nearby areas. I'd like to ask that if some members know of such events to keep me posted so I can pass it along in the newsletter.

There is the possibility I will invite a make-up saleswoman to a meeting soon. She is CD/TS friendly and will hold a demonstration on how to apply make-up and she will also attempt to sell us some cosmetics. Members who are interested in possibly purchasing make-up from her should e-mail me in advance [redacted]. All members are otherwise welcome to join in and watch & learn.

E-mail address;

If anyone did not receive an e-mail from me on Nov. 11th in which I had introduced myself and reminded everyone about the upcoming Dec. meeting and Christmas party then you are not in the Belles address book-or at least not the one I have. If this is so please send me your e-mail address [redacted] and I'll add it to my list and send it to Kathy who can add it to the Belles

Notice from Jean Hopkins;

Gay, Lesbian, Transgender Spiritual Concerns Group.

When, We will have a meeting starting Dec. 22, 2001. 3rd Sat every month
Where, United Church of Christ
822 Cleveland Ave.
Niagara Falls, NY 14305
downstairs

When 6:00 PM to about 9:00 PM
Purpose, To address any spiritual concerns one may have due to gender issues. This is a non-denominational type of discussion. All are welcome to join in this new adventure. With you, we can find truth and ease of life.

Jean
[redacted]

Notice from Camille Hopkins;

Dear Friend,

I would like to invite you to an original & thought provoking evening of entertainment: The "Vagina Dialogues" - an anarchist & queer perspective on the subject of Vaginas.

As before we expect all four shows to sell out - so don't wait too long to call for tickets.

Take care.

-Camille Hopkins

Nov 16, 17, 30, Dec. 1st. At 8 p.m.
Hallwalls Black n' Blue Theater
2495 Main Street, Buffalo
Parking and entrance on Halbert

Reservations 879-0935 Tickets

\$12 fixed income \$14 general admission

An anarchist and queer perspective on the subject of

Vaginas.

Featuring original work by Robbie Butler, Susan Cahn, Kate Elliott, Juanita Evans, Taunee Grant, Jeannine Giffear, Emily Glenn, Garland Godinho, Camille Hopkins, Kara McLuckie, Kim Meyerer, Tika Milan, Kara Tucina Olidge, Leah Russo, Alisse Sikes, Margaret Smith, Susan Smith, and Mary Alice Boyd.

PS Unfortunately, Camille will not be appearing at this time do to an unfortunate conflict in her schedule.

How To Handle A Read

By Angela Gardner

You've just spent hours shaving, putting on make up and slipping into your nicest conservative daytime outfit. You've primped, plucked and powdered. You top it off with your sexy new lipstick, take a final look in the mirror at the gorgeous, passable woman there and climb into your car. As you drive to your objective for the day, perhaps a trip to a friendly store, a walk through a distant mall or dinner with a friend. You feel confident and feminine. The jangled nerves of getting to the car and out of your neighborhood are beginning to settle down. Then, as you wait at a red light with your hands on the wheel in your most graceful pose, you hear an ominous sound. A strange cackling and hooting is coming from the car next to your or behind you or across the intersection. Yes... you've just been read. At this point, most of us are more than a little red at being read. No one likes to feel that she wasted two or

three hours of preparation time spent that day, not mention the hours and hours of perfecting her feminine ways in the past years just to be read by the first carload of cretins to drive by.

How do you deal with being read? What should you do and what shouldn't you do. You should try not to hide. Get away from the area certainly, but don't hide. That only draws more attention to yourself. Lying down on the car seat or jumping behind a bush may seem like the only thing to do, but it is not something a real woman would do. The act of hiding will only confirm the reader's assessment of your gender. Move away from them with dignity. As for their derision, take it until you can move away. The words "take it" really sum up what your attitude must be. If a group of immature jerks were laughing and pointing at a woman, she might wonder what they were so excited about, but she would not do anything other than ignore them. There is nothing you can do to convince your tormentors that you are a real woman or that they should pick up a dictionary and learn the meaning of the word "tolerance." If they decide you are a man in drag, all you can do is not react and hope to leave them with some doubts. Try to appear as if you don't know they even exist. Look straight ahead, play with the radio or study your manicure. Don't get aggressive yourself. Don't make obscene gestures or tell them what you think of their manners or parentage. That type of response could make you a candidate for plastic surgery, even if you didn't need it before. Of course, you could adopt a belligerent attitude if you packed a .357 Magnum in your purse,

Nancy's Perspective

Hi,

Remember me? I wrote a monthly column for the Belles Newsletter under the title: "Nancy's Perspective." I'd like to start writing that column again by going back in time a wee bit.

I never claimed to be an author. Some found fault with what I was trying to say but I plugged along anyway. My goal was always to present something related to our lot in life while at the same time putting it into a format as I saw it. If one were to look back at my attempts they will note I tried to get others involved in our group and I often challenged people to volunteer their expertise so that everyone would benefit. I have no idea if that effort was successful or not. I can only hope it was.

Way back in May I ran into a buzz saw at the meeting. Those of you in attendance were witness to a pretty ugly scene. I didn't see it coming and I wish it had never happened. Part of my motivation now is to offer my side of the story, so to speak. A lot of false accusations were hurled at me without provocation and I'm still hurt.

I know that change is inevitable in any setting. We all have different goals and ideas. The secret to being successful - in my opinion - is to have ones ideas presented so that all of those involved can come to some sort of agreement as to how they want to proceed. When anyone tries to ram something through or impose their personal convictions on others, the stage is set for an explosion.

Anyone who read the June and July issue of the newsletter is aware that we have split into two camps. A new group was formed that will be separate from the Belles. A number of people who were longtime members are washing their hands to get a fresh start. This exodus is something that happens from time to time in the transgendered community. Last time I heard 27 varieties of gender have been identified so it's no shock that some people want to travel a very different road. Perhaps they feel they are being held back.

I had written a column for the April issue that was loaded with questions I felt were relevant to what was going on and needed to be addressed. I thought the newsletter was a good forum since all members get a copy and would at least be aware of things that were being talked about. For a lot of reasons we have members who can't attend each month. I thought they should have the chance to decide for themselves about programs that would carry the Belles name in public. When that column hit the desk of the powers that be, it caused some real problems. I got a call asking me to reconsider a couple of items I was questioning and I had no problem with that. When the newsletter was published my column had been edited to fit the preset parameters our leaders at that time thought was more appropriate. I didn't agree with the editing, but proceeded to go to the May meeting.

When I approached our former editor and past president, I got a dressing down that was totally out of control. An ass chewing about sums it up. I was accused of things that are not only hurtful but simply not true.

I was told my questions were irrelevant. They had no basis. If I were to read the newsletter I wouldn't be asking anything. It was also related to me that I should not question others and perhaps I should mind my own business. I was told I was not a very good writer, I should pay attention to what is going on around me, that my time spent at national conventions was obviously a waste of time and money since I hadn't learned much from the many professionals I've met, and that my attitude was not appreciated. I have it from a good source that behind my back I was also accused of being homophobic. I was also told that the tone of the person doing all the ranting and raving was loud to the point of yelling. Caught in the middle without warning leaves me a little fuzzy except to know that I would refute all of the insults.

but we get enough bad image stuff from Thrillers in the movies. Besides, it isn't ladylike! To some, it may sound sexist to insist on your acting passive. Passive worked for Gandhi. Give it a try. Granted, there are women who would not take the kind of harassment you might be subjected to, but one of them is not there to help you out. Violent responses will not help you or change your tormentor's attitude. It's a lot more embarrassing to be in the emergency room of a hospital with a ripped dress, torn stockings and fat lip than it is to take a little abuse while remaining dignified and demure.

What does it mean to be read? Not all reads are as raucous as the example I've just used. Sometimes you will be in a public place and you will see someone's lips move in the "That's a man!" pattern. What do you do about that? Well, you're most likely not facing any physical danger so what's the big deal~ You've just entertained a bored housewife or an accountant whose idea of excitement is a new calculator. Ignore them. Go on about your business and continue to act like a woman. You will stop being a novelty if you just continue to do what you were doing. If they absolutely won't stop staring, try staring back and smiling! Most likely they will turn away and try to ignore you.

If you're going to be read at all, the nicest way is to hear someone whisper, "That's a man?" The question in their voice lets you know that all though they suspect you're not exactly what you appear to be, your beauty and poise have left large doubts in their minds. Of course, any read, even the nicest ones, can be a pain. What should

you do afterward? Do you drive home, rip off your wig (if you are wearing one, please check beforehand), wash off your makeup, and vow never to indulge in this humiliating behavior again? Of course not! That impulse, like the urge to hide, will get you nowhere. For every read you detect, there are a few you are not aware of at all. There are also hundreds of people who see you on your public outings and have no idea that you are anything but what you appear to be. Don't let being read discourage you. No one passes all of the time. As long as we only cross the gender line a few times each month, there will always be something masculine about us that, from the right angle, in the right place, to the wrong person, will give us away.

What's important is your attitude. You have as much right to be where you are, dressed as you choose, as anyone else in the place. Ninety percent of the time, if you look and act relaxed, as- if you belong there, you will pass. don't worry about the other ten percent. As long as people whom notice don't think it's their duty to rearrange your body parts, then don't let their attention bother you. Another component of passing that is hard to gauge is the 'getting away with it' factor. Many members of the general public are perceptive enough to notice that there is something wrong with this picture, but they have manners, breeding, style or they're just too apathetic to care. The point is, don't worry about what they think. Project the image you want to the best of your ability and enjoy yourself. Use discretion about where you go and how you dress. Look appropriate and stay

I got home from that meeting and sat down to let all the disparaging remarks sink in. I pulled out a copy of several newsletters that were published prior to April and noted something I hadn't seen before. I always keep the original copy of everything I submit. My copies showed that the "staff" at the newsletter had really been doing more than editing my work. They had been acting as a censor. That means they had been suppressing anything they found objectionable. In addition, I have to think they were also trying to be politically correct. There is an awful fine line between edit and censor. I noticed words had been dropped from the text, words added, punctuation marks moved or omitted, whole sentences dropped, etc. I don't normally read my own column once it's been published since I spend upwards of 2-3 hours getting it ready for submission. The assumption had always been that what I wrote was what was in the newsletter. What this cute editing does is change the way an article reads and also tends to change the thought I had in mind when I wrote it. Anyway, there were a lot of changes being made that were just not necessary.

Looking back at my involvement with the Belles and the things I tried to accomplish I really didn't need anyone tearing me down. The very fact we have a newsletter is good, but to let it become a voice for just one or two people is not good. If anyone has a problem - with anything - they can use the newsletter to make a counterpoint or express their own view. I would also hope that if someone has a problem with another person that they would adjourn to another area and discuss the problem there. Being humiliated in front of others is not a good thing. Believe me.

I hope the Belles always prosper and I think the groundwork is in place for that to happen. New people seem to be coming forward and we welcome you. The success of any group is dependent on its members, but you know that. I'll be writing again and hopefully you all will gain something from my renewed effort.

To be politically correct (which I hate) I won't sign off as your sister, but rather:

Your friend,
Nancy

Coming out in our society

Dear Ann Landers: I was happy to see a reasonable point of view expressed in your response to "A He or a She in New Jersey." The writer was upset because a man, dressed as a woman, had used the ladies restroom. You said the person could have been a woman who simply looked masculine, or he could have been a cross-dresser, in which case, he should use the restroom he is most comfortable in.

This man also may have been a transsexual — meaning he was born male, but is living as a female. Transsexuals have a very difficult time coming out in our society. They often lose their jobs, their spouses, and their children, friends and families. Transsexuals receive little or no health care for their condition, and the only "cure" is a sex-change operation. Their suicide rate is alarmingly high.

I am a preoperative male-to-female transsexual. I am not a sexual deviant or a child molester. Transsexuals are average people trying to achieve some degree of normalcy and happiness in their lives. Your readers may sit next to us on the bus or work in the same office and never know. Fortunately, in Portland, Ore., transsexuals are protected by city and county ordinance. We are permitted to use the bathroom that fits our gender presentation. Thank you for your compassionate reply.

— Love from Henriette in Portland, Ore.



Ann Landers

Dear Henriette: Thanks for an informative letter. Again, Oregon is ahead of most states when it comes to enlightened legislation. Vermont is also one of the more enlightened. Read on for more.

From Houston: I don't want any man following my daughter or my wife into the ladies room, no matter what he is wearing. A man who has an abnormal fixation on wearing women's clothes should wear them at home. If everyone were allowed to express their sexual preferences in public, a person could bring a sheep to a restaurant for a romantic dinner.

Los Angeles: I am a cross-dresser who wishes to say "Bravo" for your intelligent response. In your single column, you have reached more people and opened more minds than you will ever know. Thank you.

New York: I am a tall, heavyset woman. I never wear dresses unless I have to. I also have hair on my face due to a hormonal problem. My hair is long, but that isn't enough. I have received some mighty strange looks in the restroom.

Any City, USA: Way to go, Ann! My partner and I are lesbians. I am very feminine, while she is very "butch." When she uses the ladies room, many women mistake her for a male and make ugly remarks. One older woman hit her over the head with her handbag and called her a dirty old man. Please continue to try to educate these ignoramuses.

relaxed. It's up to you to make your outings a fun time that can help you grow personally. Try to remove the anxiety from the experience and enjoy!



Jean & Kathy at Sheas in July for premier of "Manna From Heaven"

Article from by Bobbi

Swan;

Maturity

by Bobbi Swan

On Sunday, September 9th I left Buffalo and driving home in Canada and passed through Canadian and U.S. Customs entering Michigan at Port Huron. That may well mark my last visit across borders dressed for a long time. Two days later I watched in amazement as the horrors of the WTC and Pentagon flashed in front of my eyes on television. Like many of you I stayed riveted to the tubes in my condo for days. A new type of global war was unfolding that would affect our lives for a long time to come.

And so it will for many of us in the Transgender scene when it comes to passing as travelers in public. Unless we are fully equipped with adequate photographic ID's it will be best for us to stay away from customs and immigration as well as limit our air travel. At least for personal security unless you wish to brave some of the strongest interrogations possible. I have gathered

lots of confidence for this now but I do not want to stretch my luck and gamble with what has become comfortable and enjoyable. Perhaps I may be overstating these inspections but for the present I believe they will be pretty intense.

So, let's look at some suggestions for passing that I have enjoyed with my maturity that may appeal to many of you in yours. Being retired and on my own 'clock' has been a great benefit for me. In the last year I discovered a new modern 30-screen movie theater nearby. I can attend their matinee discount showings from 4:00 to 5:00 PM for slightly over the cost of the videotape that I will not be able to rent for another six months. Best of all I see them in wide screen and full stereo sound - and usually with very open seating in the theater. This modern theater seating is generous and comfortable and more like living room style with beverage holders and plenty of foot space for both access and comfort.

The women's restrooms are very large and plentiful with bench seating in the middle between rows of sinks on one side and shelves and more mirrors for makeup and hair brushing on the opposite side. They are kept very clean and most 'users' are in a hurry and rarely loiter keeping very much to themselves. As such they provide a perfect situation to gather your confidence in using women's facilities. If there has to be a first for any of you in a woman's restroom these are the safest and best bets for you. With all the hustle and bustle that you may find (although rarely at matinee discount times) this is a great place to watch how other GGs go about their ablutions. Just be sure that you never stare at anyone, quick glances are fine, or use the big mirrors across the room to look behind you. I've also found

some fine benches in the center lounge area of these theaters to sit and wait for a friend and let the time pass watching how others are dressed and go about their business buying snacks before they enter the individual viewing rooms. And yes, they all have a unisex restroom if you are really nervous - but these are small and sparse in comparison.

The part I love best about these show times is that I am ready to leave around 6:00 to 7:00 PM and that is perfect for dinner out and shopping in a supermarket or store like Wal-Mart that is also located in the same plaza. In this mall that I often frequent there are several restaurants from a McDonalds to Max and Erma's and a cute little family café with good food and reasonable prices. These are only vanilla shops and not the 'TG friendly' facilities like some of my friends refer to as the TG ghetto where we really can rarely ever pass. It's great to have these supporting facilities with their friendly management but they expect to see and read us and so do all their other patrons. Further down the highway to my home are a host of restaurants and even more shopping centers so I can make a night of it if I wish or just head home and feed Katie and get my own dinner.

I most always dress in stylish tops and skirts most purchased recently and many on sales at Blair that I love. I keep permanent acrylic nails polished usually in a modest natural pink and consider this combination essential to good reception I receive when out en femme. Even if I have been 'read' I will be treated politely. I'm guessing now that this may have

happened to me more times than I ever suspected. So who cares? Remember that clerks will see your hands more than anything else except for the glance to your face they give you as you approach their counter. Theirs is one of a pleasant greeting and thank you for being a customer. It's not a look of discovery for what you are. The same is true for a waitress or waiter. The advice I gave in my recent column in driving and stopping at way-points is just as appropriate for these outings. Watch your posture and gait doing your best to keep them small in step and feet together when stopping. And don't forget that femme smile when you pass another and they glance at you. No teeth showing now, just a sign that you are confident and are having a pleasant time.

I've found that I now do this several times a week and vary the shopping cycle but best of all I get some continuity and confidence with myself in passing. It's even become natural to have several clerks recognize me and greet me with a smile and casual, Hi! Now in some cases I may never be sure if I've been 'made' but as long as I am treated with courtesy and smiles I don't care. I am comfortable and feel I've made a friend with approval. Maybe it's just that they like my business, but believe me that's all female clerks wanted from that macho male when he made a purchase. I've got one very cute checkout clerk at Kroger's that gives me a big smile as Bobbi but hardly notices Bob when he passes by. And if you've guessed by what you've read here so far you will understand that Bobbi does nearly all the shopping now!

I've also gone ahead and purchased season tickets for some stage plays and events at local community centers for femme nights out. I love to plan these

and then dress more formerly for a good play or performance. These are high spots for me in passing and the only new challenge they provide are those long lines at the women's restrooms. I do my best to use them before the first act and late at the intermission. The basic rule here is to speed your way along and never linger at the sinks. I satisfy myself with quick washing of the hands and a touch of the powder puff to my nose. Your lipstick should still be fresh and nice cologne will hold for the entire performance. Just remember who you are and when you laugh and applaud just be sure and do it like a lady! I'd love to have you join on one of evenings out. How about two seats on the aisle for Ragtime at the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts?

Article from Miss Suzie James;
My Mother's Closet
 By Miss Suzi James

My earliest memories of feminine delights coincide with my remotest memories of practically anything at all. Mother was just so beautiful and she had a closet full of the most wonderful things, way back in the early 1960s (which is as close as you will ever get to finding out Miss Suzi's actual age, teehee!). Precious moments were spent laying on Mother's bed each morning... watching... as she sat poised at her glamorous dressing table applying makeup, fixing her hair, and working her feminine magic. We engaged in casual chitchat as she worked... and I took in her many beauty secrets and vicariously absorbed into my young psyche the pleasure she derived from her efforts. Those were *our* special times together

and the memories of those times have remained vividly etched upon my brain.

When she had finished her daily makeup, she would slide up and garter her sheer full-fashioned nylons. With the swishing sound of her accordion-pleated lace slip against her stockings, she would step into her wonderful closet to select her dress and shoes. Whether she chose a long slim wool skirt and sweater or full swirling shirt-dress, she always found just the right shoes to match... classic stiletto pumps with very pointed toes and heels at least four inches tall. Then, with precise rhythmic clicking of high heels, she would walk briskly but elegantly toward the mirror, turn, and while looking back at herself over her shoulder, turn again.

The self-satisfied look in her eyes as she vogueed and modeled her day's attire inspired me then and to this very day. Mother would then ask, knowing full well what my answer would be, "Does Mommy look pretty?" Then with a generous hug and kiss for her little one, off she would go to the office to earn a living, which supported me, her only child, my dear Nana, and her lovely hard-working self.

After Mother had gone off to work, and with Nana busy in the kitchen, it was my turn to practice what I had learned. First, a visit to her bureau drawers to retrieve lace slip, nylons, panties, and six-garter rubber girdle... then I would enter the wonderland of her closet filled with beautiful dresses and racks of neatly-arranged shoes. I was in heaven with the combined aromas of leather shoes, latex rubber foundations, and Mother's perfume swirling about my little nylon-clad legs and loosely-girdled body. I still recall the distinct sounds of the rustling and swishing of much-too-

large lingerie and the scuffing and clicking of oversized high heels on hardwood floors as I attempted to mimic Mother's vogueing and modeling in her full-length bedroom mirror, satisfied, even at that preschool age, that I, even though supposed to be a boy, was in fact, pretty pretty girl... just like Mommy.

Throughout my life, I have had a reoccurring dream in which I find myself anxiously entering dimly-lighted attics, basements, and closets filled with wonderful and beautiful feminine clothing, lingerie, and shoes. Although the settings and contents of these dreamland wardrobes have changed and evolved over the years, I know now that my always-stimulating repeated reveries represent the excitement of my early childhood taboo play in Mother's feminine boudoir.

It is precisely that exciting energy and feminine sensuality that I have carefully recreated in my Buffalo, New York Studio and Boutique. It has been my goal to create a fantasyland

atmosphere which stirs up sensual emotions of feminine bliss at the first peek through my store-front windows filled with beautiful glamorous dresses, lacy ruffled gowns, and sexy high heeled shoes. Now, I am the "Mommy" and it is my desire that each person who enters my "boudoir" feels the excitement and joy of being like a child in a warm and accepting place where femininity and fantasy are not taboo but are encouraged and assisted so that each can feel safe and secure as they experiment and grow strong in the opportunity to live out their dreams of sensuality, femininity, and girlish camaraderie. Thank you for allowing me to share; and I hope you will join us soon.

Thank you all !!
Hugs and kisses,

Miss Suzi