

Volume 2 of 5

Linda

Adventures of ...

a Woman By Choice

Twice the Pleasure

Twice the Fun





Linda and Friends



Linda



Adventures of a Woman by Choice Volume 2 of 5

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History:

I Remember the “St. Charles”

Someone sometime is going to write the definitive history of drag clubs in North America. That someone won't be me. I don't know that much about them but I do remember a short period of time in the history of the St. Charles Hotel on Yonge Street in Toronto.

The St. Charles wasn't really a hotel; it was just a big bar. Actually, it contained two bars and an upstairs dance club. In the late 1960's the St. Charles was the only openly homosexual club in Toronto. (The appellation 'gay' was yet to take the politically correct place of terms like fag and queer) On many nights the two downstairs rooms, with their large matching horseshoe shaped bars, would be crowded with men. On Halloween, local television crews and curious onlookers would crowd the street outside the St. Charles to watch and hoot at the arrival of fancily costumed queens as they arrived for their big party. The girls must have been very brave indeed to face the derision and catcalls that were considered fair comment in those less enlightened days.

My personal experience at the St. Charles was limited to the early summer of 1968, so I don't know how long it was open or how popular it was. But even in that short time it had a lasting impact on my life. I was in Toronto, having just finished a year of graduate studies at the university. My wife and baby had been with me for much of the year. However, to cut our expenses they had gone back to spend the summer with her parents while I moved in to my fraternity house and enrolled in a summer course. I also worked at a restaurant on Yonge Street earning more money in two

evenings than I could in a week of working at my previous job in a bank.

I didn't have much free time but one evening my shift at the restaurant ended early so I decided to walk up Yonge Street to see what action I could find. As I neared the St Charles I saw two well dressed ladies leaving the cab and entering the club. To me, pretty girls mean a good party so I followed them up stairs to a second floor lounge. A nice looking young man took my admission and let me in to the lounge. There was a floor show just finishing and the house lights were going up. At first glance the crowd was overwhelmingly female.

Soon I was dancing with and sitting with a very cute blonde girl named Linda. She was a hairdresser and a lovely dancer. I still remember she was wearing a beige mini-skirt and matching jacket. I also danced with other girls in her group and was having a great time.

Now here I should perhaps pause and explain that at that time I didn't know much about cross-dressing. I don't think the word had been invented. I did know that I got excited by putting on lingerie and I knew about transsexuals like Christine Jorgensen and Britain's Roberta Cowell and about drag shows but it never occurred to me that men, gay or not would dress like women to go for a normal night out like the one I was on. I didn't think I could ever be fooled by a man passing as a woman.

So it came as a big surprise to me that, after looking around more carefully at the rest of the crowd, I said to Linda, "You know some of these girls look like guys." Her reply, "Honey, we're all guys." I was

surprised and fascinated; some of the girls were big and a little awkward and I could believe they were men but not Linda; she was so pretty, so feminine. If I had not had and purged several collections of feminine underwear, if I was not often wearing bras panties and negligees my wife had left behind I probably would have walked out of the club. Instead I stayed with Linda and enjoyed the evening with growing curiosity and arousal. When Linda invited me to go with her to a friend's apartment I agreed.

We were four in the cab, three 'girls' and me. Of course, the man was expected to pay the cab fare. When we arrived at the apartment two of the girls sat in the living room, turned on the television and lit up a joint. Linda and I retired to someone's bedroom where we talked and started kissing and caressing each other. I don't remember much of what we talked except that Linda was saving money to go to Japan for a sex change operation. Maybe that news made me feel that I was actually going to make love to a woman, not a man. Linda had every bit the appearance of a young, slim woman – lovely blonde hair, smooth skin and nice legs. And, like my wife, she wouldn't perform oral sex on me. She was my first anal sex experience and she taught me to be gentle and patient. Linda did let me hold her penis as I moved inside her so I know that after a short time of intercourse we climaxed together.

I would like to say that Linda and I spent the night together and became good friends and lovers but after our climax I had a serious attack of post coital let-down. I left and never saw her again. However, a few years later I read in a newspaper that a Toronto girl named Linda had become the first person to receive a sex change operation in Canada. I hoped it was my Linda. After our brief meeting Linda became an inspiration for

me. It started to occur to me that I could take my transvestite fetish from the bra and panties stage to perhaps dressing completely and going out in public myself. That was going to take a long time but years later when I needed a name to go with my new femme identity I 'borrowed' Linda's.

I did make a second visit second visit to the St. Charles. It was several weeks later and the lounge was much quieter than the first night. Instead of a young man there was a lady on the door. She told me that the previous night two police officers had visited the club and the girls had scrambled out the back door in a panic. The girls were pretty spooked so in those pre-Stonewall days they weren't likely to come back that night. I got a drink and returned to talk to the lady at the door.

We were soon joined by a very brash young guy who went on at length about how his mother had just found his closed full of drag attire and how he was about to be kicked out of the house. He was so flamboyant and outrageous in his gestures that I did not like him. However, years later I loved his movie and his club act. His name was Craig Russell.

At one point I asked the lady on the door about the guy who had been tending the door the first night. "Did he look like this?" she asked, pulling a photo out of her purse and showing it to me.

"Yes," I said.

"That's me," she assured me as she looked at my disbelieving face.

We talked a while longer and because it was such a quiet night she closed up early and invited me home with her. I went and this time my partner did give me oral sex; I remained a passive partner. I left soon after but for the rest of the summer I would go back to her/his apartment about once a week, sometimes finding a man,

sometimes a woman but always finding someone willing to take me to bed.

At the end of summer I left Toronto and resumed my wedded and straight life. Although my wife and I would soon divorce for reasons other than my infidelity I did not have another sexual relationship with a man until over twenty years later and those have been only as my own 'Linda'.

Ten years after that summer of '68 I returned to Toronto and to the St. Charles. It was a changed world. Formerly effeminate 'fags' had grown mustaches, put on leather and T-shirts and become 'gays'. The St. Charles was facing competition from a growing number of other clubs and the queens had disappeared from the scene. One man who said he'd been around

the St. Charles a long time even refused to acknowledge there ever had been a drag bar there. I was left thinking I'd imagined the whole thing.

Now the St. Charles is gone, the gay scene has become a village and queens, cross-dressers and transvestites have re-emerged in a number of bars, clubs and support groups.

Last summer I visited a transgender support group in Toronto and met up with a 'veteran' TS who had also been at the St. Charles in the heyday of the late 60's. She confirmed my impression of the fun times. But she was no help in telling me what might have become of my two lovers from the past, gone perhaps; but not forgotten.

Personality:

What Ever Happened To Kay?

The world of cross-dressing and transgender is a transitory one. As we start to come out we change at a rapid pace. We change who we are and as we move around we also meet new people. Sometimes they become our friends. Sometimes they come briefly into our lives and then disappear without a trace.

Of the latter type for me was 'Kay.' Kay was probably the most confident, competent and outspoken crossdresser I've ever met. She was also one of the first people I met when I went to my first 'TV party'. Her immaculate hairdo, nails and makeup, her confident air and her gorgeous clothes marked Kay as a special person.

In 1981 I found out about a Joyce Dewhurst party being held in Queens, New York for crossdressers and their friends. I just had to go and I wasn't going

to let the fact that it was being held in hot, humid July deter me. Three memories stand out about that weekend in New York:

1. Not many crossdressers go to parties in July.
2. New York's heat, humidity and one's tendency to sweat under a wig will play havoc with makeup.
3. I met Kay.

The first two facts were enough to drive me back to the closet. However Kay made the weekend a fabulous memory. Never had I met someone so outgoing and so full of facts and hints about dressing and passing and so confident about her persona. It seems she'd been everywhere and been there 'en femme'.

Kay was from California but traveled often to the Far East and to the east coast on business. When she traveled she always

seemed to be able to fit in a little R&R en femme. Despite a very masculine business life Kay transformed to a gorgeous woman at night.

Kay was very much into experiencing things and enjoyed retelling those experiences - whether it was shopping for shoes or visiting a nightclub - to others. That first night at the Joyce Dewhurst party we talked a lot. Kay convinced me not to be afraid of being dressed in public - everyone is entitled to their own space and while some may read you very few will make an issue of it especially in cities like New York. (It may be different in Butte, Montana or some other town where everybody likes to know everybody else's business.)



Kay's Banner in *Transvestian*

I learned many things from Kay that weekend and later by reading her series of articles, "Kay's Way," in *Transvestian* and other publications. When I complained about having to wear two pairs of pantyhose to cover leg hair, Kay told how she convinced her family that shaving her legs would reduce the effects of mosquito bites. Kay also had an effective way to get to try on women's clothes in a store even when she was dressed as a male. She carried photos of herself en femme to show the store clerk. She would claim to be a female impersonator looking for a

new outfit for a show or a pageant. Apparently the sales girls were sometimes thrilled with the idea that one of their outfits might be used on stage. I have occasionally used the pageant idea myself. That first weekend in New York, Kay took me to a Tri-Ess chapter meeting at Muriel Olive's boutique and to an S&M club called Club 'O' somewhere in the bowels of Manhattan's factory district. Access to the club was past a couple of burly guards and up a freight elevator. I had never been to anything like Club 'O' and I wasn't really excited by it. There were a few domina queens in their black leather outfits and many men walking around in their underwear asking to be whipped. You could oblige or not and I was a 'not' but Kay was quite into it and was determined to find a 'slave' to lick her shoes and feet. No problem, she found one. Although it didn't seem to be a sexual turn on for her, Kay seemed to really enjoy manipulating her 'slave'.

We finished the evening at an after-hours club called "Hellfire." Those who knew it will not be surprised that it was too much for this virgin's senses and I left Kay there to return to my hotel and get a short sleep before my flight home.

I never saw Kay again but we wrote to each other for a while and her articles continued to influence my life as I vicariously enjoyed her adventures in Washington, Pittsburgh and elsewhere. I also enjoyed her reports about various TV conventions and weekends. Her monthly articles were snapshots of brief moments in time but to me it seemed as if she were living her femme life to the fullest.

Eventually, I stopped seeing her articles. Her photos no longer appeared alongside stories of TV gatherings and her ad was no longer in magazines. Whatever happened to Kay? I worried that she might have passed away and there would have been no

one in her other life to get the word to her many TV/CD fans and admirers. One person who used to know her said she thought Kay had been found out by her wife and a messy divorce had ensued destroying Kay's business and leaving her unable to pursue her 'hobby'. But this person didn't know for sure what had happened to Kay. If you see her say Linda says 'hello' and thanks for the memories.

Postscript: Shortly after this article appeared in TGForum an acquaintance of Kay wrote to me that Kay was indeed alive and well, living with her wife and family but no longer living as Kay.

Apparently, a chance discovery led to a confrontation and a promise by Kay to purge her crossdressing lifestyle in return for family and business stability. That had been several years earlier and while many of us might have 'backslid'; not Kay. She has stayed purged for good.

I asked my correspondent to remember me to Kay and to tell her how much she had meant to me. I asked if she would pass on the message that I would like to hear from Kay to find out how her purge was going. I was told the message would be passed on but I almost certainly would not hear back from Kay. I didn't.



*Kay, fourth from right and Linda, third from right at a 1981 Joyce Dewhurst party.
Joyce is second from left. (Photo from Transvestian)*

Travel:

A Weekend in Vancouver

Somehow, when one least expects it, the strangest thing will happen. However, I guess I should have expected strange things to happen last weekend. After all, I was going to Vancouver, Canada to spend 3 ½ days totally, and I mean totally, en femme.

The first evening went exactly as I had scripted. My flight landed in Vancouver on time and I picked up my rental car keys. From there I headed to the rental car toilets and locked myself in the single stall washroom usually made available for the disabled and parents with infants. Well, I was giving birth to a new me, don't you know?

I had already given myself a close shave just before leaving home and I traveled wearing panties, nylons and a bra under my boy clothes. So now it was a simple matter of slipping into a blouse, more feminine slacks, low heels, make-up, a wig and some jewelry. The make-up was kept to a minimum and the transformation went without a hitch, thanked immensely by the fact that no one in a wheelchair had felt the need to empty a bladder bag and no diapers needed changing in that particular half hour.

Confidently, I think, I strode from the washroom, through the lobby and to the rental car lot. Hey this was easy; then a panic. The key I had been given didn't open the white car in spot 38. Would I have to go back to the counter? Would Linda be exposed? I started back to the counter determined to brazen it out.

"Now, where's that rental agreement?"

"Here it is. Hey, that's not a 38 that's 39." So back I go to spot 39, try the keys and

BINGO, the door opens, the trunk opens and soon I am on my way.

Next hurdle: registering at the hotel. No problem; I had made the reservation in Linda's name and the desk clerk was very courteous, accepted my credit card, also now in Linda's name, and gave me access cards to my room and the parking garage.

My flight had arrived about 8:30pm. Even with the change I was in the room and ready for a shower by 10:00pm. Showered, freshly dressed in clean panties and a hot leather skirt and jacket I was soon out on the town. I checked out a few of the clubs local girls had 'warned' me about including Denman Station (very gay!) and Celebrities (not very busy on that Thursday night).

Just before midnight I headed over to the Dufferin which I had heard about but didn't know anything about it. To my surprise there was a drag show on and the place was packed with people. Not a bad show, hosted by the reigning Empress of Vancouver's Imperial Court. Some young guy named Steve from California hit on me and we probably would have stayed together but he was on his way up to Whistler to go skiing. He had been driving up Highway 99 – Seymour Street – through Vancouver when he had spotted a tall drag queen entering the Dufferin. Curiosity got him to park his car and follow the queen inside. Apparently this was the night for Steve's 'walk on the wildside'. It was my lucky night, too. By the time I arrived at the Dufferin Steve had become excited enough to want to experience one of the girls. It reminded me of my first night at the St Charles in

Toronto. I was Steve's choice. He asked if we could get together. I hesitated but eventually said yes if he was willing to give me money for the hotel room. He agreed. We parked near the hotel and went upstairs. He was really good looking and fit. I was looking forward to running my lips down his body. But oh, the impetuosity of youth! No sooner did I have his pants open and my hand on his penis than he ejaculated in to my hands and on to the floor. There was a lot of pressure behind that explosion. It led to an immediate cooling of Steve's ardor. Suddenly he remembered Whistler, still a ninety minute drive to the north. He had to go; his friends would be worried. He left but true to his word Steve gave me four fresh new \$20 bills for the room. Despite my frustration at Steve's sudden departure I slept well.

However, I was still on Eastern Time so I was up early and raring to go. Feeling really adventurous I determined that Linda would go golfing that day. I got dressed in the closest thing to golf clothes I had and drove out to the university golf course.

The Plot Thickens...

That's when the first unexpected event happened. I remembered that an old girlfriend of mine, who knew about Linda, lived near the golf course. I decided to give her a call, expecting to leave a message with her service as she would surely be at work. Surprise; she answered the phone and after a few pleasantries she insisted I come over for breakfast. Even when I told her how I was dressed she insisted on me dropping by. "That might be better," she said, "I won't be tempted to take you to bed." She was right.

Breakfast led to a walk along a nearby beach and then to lunch before I finally got to the golf course. By then it was raining so I turned around and headed back to the hotel.

After a power nap and fresh make up I was on to Plan B – the shops. Eaton's and The Bay are two big department stores in Vancouver. Between them they provided me with about fifteen outfits to try on, but only one, a hot, low cut, electric blue, tight, stretchy dress that I later bought.

That evening I went back to my friend's place for dinner. I told her I was going out to a drag club I had heard about. She was keen to come along. I must have caught her on a slow weekend. We headed out on the town, first to Ms. T's and then we were supposed to go to a TG friendly restaurant for a late night desert. Ms. T's had a show, but a show so bad it made my friend want to go home. So I took her home and headed over to the restaurant by myself.

Fast forward to the next day. The phone in the room rings; it is Janie, an e-mail friend from the States who had told me she was going to be in Vancouver for the same weekend. What had she done last night? She had been to the restaurant and then to Ms. T's with Grace, a Vancouver TS who had been in the show. (Grace was one of the better performers) It was funny that we had been at the same club and not even thought to say hello. We had previously agreed to be on the look out for each other but neither had expected the other to have company. Anyway, we would fix that that evening as Jill Richards, another one of the local girls, was going to get us tickets to a Swing Night at a local nightclub. That's 'Swing' as in hot 40's music; not 'swingers' as in your dreams.

The Excitement Continues to Build...

The Swing Night, a second unexpected event, was basically for straight couples to dress up and flash back a few generations but we, in our cocktail dresses and gowns, were warmly welcomed by the management. This was probably helped by the fact that Jill is an absolutely stunning

knock-off of Marilyn Monroe and is very outgoing and confident. We were 7 in all; myself and one other CD with lady friends, a TS with her boyfriend and Jill alone. No Janie; she had cried off, sick, at the last minute.

My friend and I danced a bit which must have provided quite a show for the rest of the crowd as I tried this fast swing dancing, a lot like rock 'n roll in high heels. However, once I started to sweat and had to retreat to the washroom to wipe the moisture from under my wig I decided to take it easy the rest of the evening.

Too soon our venture into the straight world was ending. We drove Jill back to her hotel and headed back to my friend's place again. Then things started to get interesting and it seemed as if a little jinx cloud had settled over me. Part way to my friend's place a van pulled out in to the traffic in front of us. I had to swerve quickly to avoid it and my heart started racing with thoughts of an accident while in drag and the insurance I had declined two nights earlier at the airport. Those things must have really been on my mind as I think it took a while for me to see the police lights flashing behind me. Unexpected event #3. We pulled over and an officer approached.

"How much have you had to drink tonight," he asked.

"Nothing," I lied. That's what you say in Canada when you don't want to have a breath test at a roadside spot check.

"Are you sure, eh" he retorted, "because you were taking up two lanes for a long time."

"Well didn't you see that van pull out in front of me, eh?" (We Canadians say eh a lot.)

"Yes, but that was a long way back."

"Sorry, I guess it was still on my mind, eh (again)"

"From now on pick a lane and stick to it," the officer finished and walked back to his car. That was it; no I.D. check, no breathalyzer, no car search for drugs, no sarcastic comments about my dress. Nice place, that Vancouver.

Just When You Thought It Was Safe...

That was enough adventure for one evening but hold on, here comes unexpected event #4. It was about 2:30 when I got back to the hotel. My assigned floor for parking was full so I had to go to the front desk to get a new parking access card. There, I was hassled by a drunk coming out of the bar. Luckily the desk clerk was very nice and intervened diplomatically on my behalf.

Just as I parked the car the hotel's fire alarm went off. The elevators wouldn't work and guests came streaming down the fire escapes to the main lobby. There I was with about 100 other guests, most of them in night clothes, me in the electric blue dress. I felt conspicuous; I was conspicuous. We had to mill about for nearly half an hour before the all clear was given to return to the rooms.

While we were waiting I noticed one man lurking near me. He didn't bother me but I thought to myself, "I wonder if that's Janie? He's awfully clean shaven for this time of night and he is about the right height. If it is why doesn't he come over to talk to me?" With the 'all clear' I decided to walk the five flights of stairs back to my room rather than wait for an elevator with the other guests. My 'friend' followed. He didn't approach me until we were almost back up the stairs to my floor and no one else was around.

"How was the party?" I heard from behind.

"Oh lots of fun," I replied and we shared a brief conversation before saying goodnight.

Strange but other circumstances I probably would have flirted with him a bit and tested whether or not he wanted an intimate end to the evening, after all we had talked about it in an exchange of e-mails. However, when he ignored me and left me alone in front of so many others I wrote him off.

So the evening ended.

Sunday morning was a mirror of Thursday evening. After an early morning beauty run I packed up and checked out of the

hotel, returned the car to the airport and decided to 'retransform' in the same washroom I had used three nights earlier.

Too soon the weekend was over and I was headed back to my drab world in cold Ontario.

Would I go back to Vancouver? I would in a heartbeat. It's a beautiful, safe, friendly city and there's something somewhere for the crossdresser just about every night of the week.

Travel:

Spooktacular Time in Syracuse

"Get to Syracuse and fix that problem with widget sales," my boss said.

With that, my plans for Halloween were thrown into disarray. I had planned to stay home, give out candy to the neighborhood kids and then sneak out in drag to a local gay bar late in the evening. Now that I was going to be out of town my plans could become more elaborate.

I asked a girlfriend for help with a costume she invited me to come over and go through her collection. Her daughter had just been to a party as a gypsy girl and she thought that might do for me. I tried it and it looked nice but it wasn't very spooky and it really wasn't what I had in mind.

My ideal Halloween is to go to a straight bar and appear to be a female in costume. As the gypsy I would simply be a guy in a peasant dress. I really wanted something that would show my pretty, feminine body but disguise my face. I decided on a vampire theme. I already had a suitable wig so I visited the local costume shop to

buy a tube of white make-up, vampire teeth and a cape. Next I decided I could 'drag' out a nurse's uniform to be a vampire nurse. I would specialize in blood extraction. The uniform is from the early 70's and so is very short. For accessories I retrieved white stockings and garter belt.

Soon all was packed and I was on my way to Syracuse. My day work was routine and my first evening I scouted for possible bars holding costume parties that weekend. The local entertainment weekly listed many parties. It was possible for me to go to three different parties - one during 'happy hour', another at a singles bar called 'Neighbors' and a third at a gay bar called 'Trex'. (Gay bars always get going late). I got held up on work matters so I didn't get to the Happy Hour event but I did go to a mall where as a man I got to try on several new nurse outfits, saying truthfully one was needed for a costume. However, I couldn't find one better than the one I had.



Nurse Linda

Back at my motel I tried to rest for a while but while my body was tired my mind was anxious to get on with the business of dressing. Usual routine- bath, shave, moisture cream and then instead of my usual foundation I put on the white stage make-up, lined my eyes heavily in black and put on some dark red lipstick. The dress being short and white revealed my bra, panties and stockings quite clearly and to me looked quite sexy. I styled the dark black wig with a Dracula type bang and let the long hair hang over my shoulders. After taking a few photos I headed for Neighbors. The parking lot was almost full and so was the bar. After buying a drink I was able to perch myself on a stool at a small high table. My costume attracted a lot of attention. One woman suggested I get dental implants for my teeth. "No way I've had enough trouble with these," I joked as I pointed to my breasts but she didn't seem to understand. Later her friends had to tell her I was really a guy. Through the evening several people came up to compliment me on my costume and then ask if I was woman or man. I think a few bets may have won and lost on my answer.

At one point in the evening those in costume were called up to be judged. I thought I had a good chance of winning the costume contest but it was decided by

audience applause and the group at one table really cheered loudly for a friend wearing no more than a mask. Afterwards some new friends told me that they thought many in the bar still didn't realize that it was a man in the vampire nurse outfit.

Soon I was at my next stop, Trexx, probably the premier gay bar in Central New York. It was crowded. The Best Drag Award had already been decided and Scariest was under way. The costumes were great, much better than at the straight bar. The winner of scariest was a young queen dressed as Medusa- Yuk! I entered the final judging, Most Original, and was a little horrified to see the MC, a local drag celebrity, interviewing all the contestants about their outfits. 'Vampire Nurse' just wouldn't stand up to the clever remarks that others were making so I invented a new identity. When it came my turn I said in my best Boris Karloff (sotovocce), "I'm not what I seem. One might think I'm a nurse but I'm really a doctor. 'Doc Ulla' is my name and I specialize in blood disorders." (Doc Ulla / Dracula: Get it?)



Doc Ulla

To my disappointment the MC didn't get it. She picked five of her good friends as finalists, including one in nothing more of a costume than a scouts uniform, calling himself a 'virgin cub scout' and another dressed as a cowboy. Well, it turns out the

drag community in Syracuse is very incestuous and they take turns giving each other awards and that includes the cash prizes at Halloween contests. Outsiders need not apply. I didn't win, and probably shouldn't have won, but neither should the organizer have been pushing so hard for some good looking stud that was probably going to spend part of the night in her bed. Now what do you do when the contests are over and you still want to party? For me, I went to the ladies room, packed my teeth,

cape and a tiara in my purse and tried to cover my make-up with a little color. The only color I had was some blush. It looked blotchy over the stage make-up but it was good enough that I attracted the attention of one admirer who talked with me and bought me drinks and later took me to an early breakfast.

The evening ended in the early morning and the next day I returned home with some great new memories and a few new friends

A Favorite Memory:

Jeopardy! Revisited

Jeopardy! is the highly popular television game show where clues are given to contestants in the form of answers and responses must be in the form of questions.

Example: Category is "Transgender Personalities; Clue *"He/she wants to be the first crossdresser in drag to appear on Jeopardy!"* The knowing contestant responds, *"Who is Linda Jensen."* Correct for \$1,000.

The show sometimes seeks contestants in searches across the country and in Canada but most

often they are holding their tryouts at the Sony Picture studios in Culver City.



Recently TG Forum carried an account of my first attempt as Linda to pass the test

and get on the show. I fell short but I determined to try again. This is what happened the second time.

In mid March I happened to have a week's holiday in Southern California. The first weekend I played golf in Los Angeles and partied at the Queen Mary. I also learned that on the following Tuesday Jeopardy! would be holding a contestant search at the Sony studios. I couldn't resist. I would be there.

How does one prepare for a Jeopardy! tryout? I suppose some read up on current events, some study literature anthologies. I spent the day before the test playing 36 holes of golf, shopping for a new bikini and then being taken out for the evening by Sheila, a new friend from Massachusetts who was in male mode that night.

Despite the long day and late evening I was up early to prepare for the tryout. Preparation would be extra important as after the event I was going to travel to San Diego and check in to a motel there en femme. I loaded my car and finished my

makeup, checked out of the Days Inn in Studio City and headed to Culver City.

There was a large group of people waiting at the Sony main gate for the Jeopardy! Test. I tried to blend in with the others. I got a few looks but most seemed concerned with collecting their thoughts for the test ahead. While some may have been straining to remember which Presidents had been responsible for signing what international treaty I found myself wondering if my make up was right for the moment and if my perfume was not too powerful. Maybe we would get this clue: *He's the American dress designer with his own perfume label.* Response: *All of them.*

Soon one of the contestant coordinators arrived and invited us to follow the now familiar Jeopardy! limousine (it is actually a golf cart) to the studio. In the studio, Glen, the chief contestant coordinator, went through his spiel, explaining how the show was doing well and had just been renewed for another five years which was great because he had a job (laughter). He also said the test would be tough so if we don't do well we might want to try out for *Wheel of Fortune*, considered a low brow show (more laughter). Glen went on to explain that we would do a fifty question test made up of \$1,000 type questions. A minimum score of thirty-five would be required to advance to the next round. We would not be told our scores so if not successful we could tell our friends we missed by just one point (laughter again).

While all this was being said I found myself fidgeting with my skirt and checking my hair bangs. I also looked around to see if anyone was looking at me. I still didn't seem to be attracting any attention.

The test took about ten minutes and soon Glen and his partner had collected the tests and left to mark them. While we waited I asked one of the men sitting near me to take my picture with my camera. He obliged. When Glen returned I found out what I expected; the test went well but not well enough for me. I missed by one point. Twelve people were asked to stay for the next round. The 150 rest of us were ushered off the lot.

I consoled myself by looking for a new wig at the nearby Culver Center, because it must have been my blondness that had caused my temporary lapses of memory. I decided to try life as a brunette for surely a brunette would have known the name of a Spanish cubist painter or the name of the new Secretary General of the United Nations. Wouldn't she?

Then it was on to San Diego and the rest of my holiday. My television career was on hold but my holiday as not.



Leaving the Jeopardy! Studio

Fiction:

BIRTHDAY SURPRISE

Some birthdays have a particular significance in our lives. Becoming old enough to drink, 30, the big 5-0, 65 are typical examples. Thanks to his wife, Ginny, my friend Doug will never forget his 45th birthday.

I don't usually call him Doug but now that he has been 'outed' he does not mind. Doug and I have something in common. We are both cross-dressers. I usually know him as Lisa. We met at a weekend event called Paradise in the Pocono's where we found a common bond right away. At the time we were both 'closeted'. His wife and my girlfriend each knew about our penchants for dressing but neither were too happy about it and neither partner enjoyed it when we wanted to dress at home.

We also shared the fact that both of us voluntarily limited our cross-dressing. This was not so much because our partners demanded it but because no matter how much we were drawn to our 'hobby' we loved and enjoyed being with these ladies. In Doug's case he also had growing children to occupy his time.

However, from time to time we each had to let our cross-dressing 'genies' out of the bottle. Hence we both found ourselves in the company of each other and some hundred other like minded persons at the annual Paradise in the Pocono's event.

That was several years ago. After the event we kept in touch, telling each other stories of our experiences en femme and commiserating about our closet status.

Our contact died out for a while and then by coincidence we both found ourselves at a new CD event in Delaware. This time

Lisa was there with Ginny, his wife, and did they have a story to tell me!



Linda, Lisa and Ginny

This is almost exactly how Lisa told it. "Last June was my 45th birthday. Ginny gave me a present that changed my life. Before, as you know, my life had been one of private feelings and guilt as I had rarely been able to discuss my innermost thoughts with anyone. For almost a long as I can remember I have enjoyed the feeling of wearing women's clothing and for equally as long I've known that is something one just doesn't tell other people.

"You know that when I was a young teen I used to sneak into my sisters' room to try on their beautiful lingerie and dresses. I had lots of chances to be home alone and I used many of those chances to dress up and parade in front of their full length mirror. I admired my sisters and I wanted to be as pretty and as popular as they were. I think that is one reason I developed the urge to wear their clothes. I didn't think anyone had ever seen me although I had a few close calls and I sometimes wondered if my sisters ever noticed their clothes slightly 'rearranged'.

“After high school, I went away to college and lived on my own and I started to acquire my own wardrobe of slips, bras and dresses. I found a few adult books about ‘drag queens’ so I would spend some evenings getting dressed, reading my books and working myself to a sexual climax. Of course, all this made me feel very guilty and I often tried to purge my life of these activities but with little success. I finally was able to put aside my dressing when I met and married Ginny here. She is a very special person- a terrific wife, career person and mother to our three children, Vicki, Donna and David. We had a great life together, so busy with careers and kids and we were always together; even taking each other on business trips. I don’t think that I missed my cross-dressing - I truly thought it was a thing of the past.

“But as you know those cross-dressing feelings eventually were awakened and they started to consume my life. I looked for excuses to get away to dress and this put a strain on our marriage. I hated that I was lying to my wife. Trips to the Pocono’s events were explained as annual team building exercises that the company arranged for the ‘employees only’.

The breaking point almost came four years ago when Ginny discovered my secret cache of clothes. She confronted me,”

“I was sure he had a mistress,” said Ginny. “I was so embarrassed I almost confessed to the mistress thing but something told me to trust Ginny” said Lisa. “I told her everything. She took some time to think about it and then . . . Tell Linda what you told me, hon,”

“I sure spent a sleepless night that night. I had to leave the house to think it over. ” remembered Ginny, “but in the end I told Lisa that her cross-dressing was part of her when I met her, part of her when I fell in love and part of her when I promised to be

faithful forever. I said it was a total package and while I couldn’t completely warm to the idea I could accept this Lisa as at least a small part of our lives. But it had to be a part that I didn’t see”

Lisa went on to recount that in many ways this made their relationship stronger but in other ways it created new stresses. “With this new liberty, occasionally, late at night I would sneak out of the house to visit a local bar for cross-dressers. There I could relax, flirt a little and meet other cross-dressers. Of course there were also the weekends in the Pocono’s and one great week at Southern Comfort.

“So that’s the way we were for several years. With the burden of secrecy lifted, our

“Life together improved, we started doing things together again and from time to time

“Ginny would discreetly step aside to let Lisa to come out. But Ginny stayed with her resolve to not meet my other self.

“Then came my 45th birthday. Ginny said she was going to make it special for me. For a while she kept me in suspense. Then a few days before my birthday Ginny told me that she had arranged for us to be alone so that she could spend the evening with ‘Lisa’. What a great surprise! I was so excited I could hardly wait for the days to pass.

“The afternoon of my birthday, Ginny volunteered to help me pick out a new outfit for the occasion and we had a great time at the mall pretending we were buying an outfit for a friend. We settled on a black silk cocktail dress and we bought some new jewellery to complement it. I also talked Ginny into getting a new dress as well.

“Back home I started the ritual of getting ready for an evening in drag - bath, shave, moisturizer and make up. All the while Ginny busied herself in the kitchen saying

that she didn't want to meet Lisa until I was totally ready so I was under strict orders not to come downstairs. Once I thought I heard other voices but Ginny said she was only trying to find some music on the radio. I took what seemed like hours getting my makeup just right and then putting on my new dress. When I put on my newly styled blonde wig and looked in the mirror I could hardly recognize the beautiful person looking back.

"I called down to Ginny to ask if she was ready to meet Lisa. She said she was but asked me to wait a second while she turned off the lights. Then 'okay', she called and I started down the stairs, nervous but happy to finally being able to share 'Lisa' with Ginny.

"As I turned the corner to our living room, the lights went on and the room exploded in shouts of 'SURPRISE'. Now that was an understatement as there in the room was not only Ginny but several of my neighbors, my sisters and my children. I was in shock and I wondered how Ginny could have set me up for such embarrassment. I turned to retreat but my way was blocked by my neighbor and good friend, George. I wanted to die. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know where to hide.

"However it soon unfolded that these people were there to help and accept me, not to ridicule me. It seems that all the while I thought I was living a secret there were a lot of people that knew about my cross-dressing. When Ginny had left the house after our talk, she had met George who had asked her why she was upset. She went to George and Sally's and told them that she'd just learned a new side of me but she couldn't tell them about it. 'Did it involve women's clothes?' they asked.

"Astonished, Ginny said yes and they went on to say that they had known about it for some time, that apparently I hadn't always been too careful with my curtains when I was dressing at home and I'd been seen leaving home en femme. They had conspired not to say anything to Ginny because I otherwise seemed to be an 'all right guy' and they didn't want to hurt Ginny.

"Then a few months later when Ginny was out with my sisters they revealed they had known all along that as a teen I had been 'borrowing' their clothes. On one occasion they had even hidden in a closet to watch me dress up. Fortunately I guess that wasn't one of the times I had ended the session by masturbating.

"Eventually, Ginny learned that almost all who were close to me already had known of my cross-dressing. However, no one was saying anything to anyone else. She had decided to take a chance and get everyone together to help end the 'secret that wasn't' so she planned the party.

"Now my life is open to all my friends. They have all made it clear that they'll accept me as 'Doug' or as Lisa. Strange as it seems, I rarely do dress in front of my friends but they know what I'll wear to the Halloween party. Ginny and I have resumed our great life together, we are planning to travel a lot and Ginny says I'm to be sure that I bring along something for Lisa. We'll go out at least one evening as two girl friends. Could life be any better?" I doubt it. Lisa, Ginny and I spent the rest of our time together reminiscing about past events. We laughed when we recalled how Lisa and I had been friendly rivals for the 'Princess of the Poconos' title. Lisa won but I had been voted 'Miss Sophisticate'.

We parted with the couple inviting me to visit them as Linda. "Why not", they said, "Lisa can have friends, too."

True Romance:

A Date to Remember

Linda Jensen tells about her evening with one special man. A name has been changed to protect his innocence.

Let me tell you, girls: if you like dating men then you owe it to yourself to have a date with a man like Robert.

How do I know? I've been out with others and I've been out with him. He is not 'one of a kind', I'm sure, but he is one of the kind you want to get and to hold.

As Linda I like being with men. I like it when they are attracted to me. I like it when they hold me. I like it when they treat me like a lady and I especially like it in bed when I can get them aroused and they reach a sexual climax because of me.

The problem is that as a cross-dresser to be with a man I often have had to settle for less than ideal dates. Typically I would meet a man at a place like Cleo's in Montreal, the Queen Mary in Los Angeles or Backstreet in Atlanta. At least this type of date is uncomplicated. I'll know what they are after and they will read me as wanting it too. I think the current word for this is 'profiling'. What I get for it is a short bit of small talk, perhaps a drink or two, the cost of the hotel room and a chance to arouse and please a man. He gets me, he gets pleased and then he gets out.

. Some of my dates have been nice guys and I would have liked to see them again but such seemed the lot of this girl is that a man in bed one night is gone forever by morning. "I'll call you," means good-bye. So, on my recent visit to Los Angeles things seemed to be no different. Each evening I would dress up and make my way to the Queen Mary. I would chat with some old friends and make some new

ones. When the music was good I would dance- sometimes with a girlfriend, sometimes alone. I would have liked to dance with my old friend Paul but he was quickly taken.

There I was, on the last Saturday of my holiday, on a floor full of dancers dancing by myself. A good-looking, well-dressed man came up in front of me, smiled and started to dance along.

I'm a bit of a snob about things like that. If someone looks drunk, unkempt or dull and he was to approach me like that I would turn away or give him a light push away. But this man looked nice and he had a very nice smile. He could stay.

The next song was a slow one; he asked if we could dance together. I said yes.

His name was Robert and at least he could dance! I like a dance partner who can lead; who can place his hand on my waist and in my hand and by slight pressure let me know where we are going. I like a man who can move his feet in time to the music and who knows to take care of his breath before going out for an evening. Robert did all that.

We danced a few numbers and then took a break. Robert didn't offer to buy me a drink but that was okay. Too many of the Queen Mary's 'lizards' consider the offering of a drink somewhat akin to placing a brand on a calf's behind. Instead we talked- light conversation about life back east where we both were from and about his new home a short distance from Los Angeles. By the time we danced some more I was fully expecting and wanting

Robert to suggest we spent the night together. He didn't. He was ever the gentleman. We danced and we talked. We talked a bit about him being new to the Queen Mary, how he had discovered it by making some inquiries over the Internet. We talked in a sort of clinical way about his growing attraction to crossdressers. He confessed to his being very attracted to me, not in a pushy way but in a way that made me feel very comfortable.

As we danced I could feel a sign of his arousal against my thigh and that excited me.

I was wearing a light dress that swirled when I danced. Under it I had a pair of thong panties and thigh high stockings. I wanted to feel his firm hands on my bare behind. I wanted him to act on his arousal. I wanted him to know what a nice 'tush' I have. But he didn't stray- again ever the gentleman.

I told Robert that I was getting tired and that I had to be up early the next day. I wanted him to suggest that we get together. I expected and hoped he would be the next in my line of 'one night stands'

He didn't ask to leave with me. Instead he offered me his phone number and asked for mine suggesting that we get together for dinner and dancing the next evening. The exchange was made and we arranged a time for him to call. In truth, I really didn't expect to hear from him.

As we parted he kissed me. It was a perfect kiss – not just a kiss on the cheek, not one of those tonsil probing 'french kisses'. Instead it was a kiss on my lips that said he was attracted to me and not shy to let the world around see that he liked me. I prayed I would hear from him.

The next day my mind was on the evening to come. I was thinking of what dress I should wear, what lipstick would be best, how I should do my hair. In the afternoon I went for a short run then returned to my

motel, bathed, took care of other toiletries and went for a light bite to eat.

It was then 3 o'clock and I wasn't expecting Robert to call before 5. What was a girl to do? I tried resting but that wasn't happening. I tried sitting by the motel pool but it was a bit chilly. I went shopping at a nearby Macy's thinking maybe I could find a perfect dress. I tried on several but none really appealed to me. I did take advantage of their hosiery sale and I picked up a cute pair of earrings.

It was getting close to 5 by the time I got back to the motel. Shortly after the appointed time my phone rang. It was Robert. He told me that he had a bit of trouble convincing the desk clerk that there actually was a Linda Jensen registered. But persistence paid off and the clerk found my card and the room.

We agreed that he would pick me up at 7. He told me that the concierge at his hotel had made a reservation at a nice romantic restaurant in my area.

I needed all the intervening time to again bathe, redo my make-up and tidy up my room. I could not recall another time when a gentleman had called on me to take me out for an evening. I wanted it to be just right.

Just about 7 PM there was a knock on my door. I was ready and wearing a black and white print dress, the same one I had worn for my *Jeopardy!* audition a year earlier, and low heels.

Robert was dressed in a well pressed suit and tie. He was wearing an overcoat and holding a single red rose in his hand which he immediately offered to me. We kissed. I virtually melted; I wanted to take him to the bed but cooler heads prevailed and we readied to leave. Unexpectedly, it had started to rain. I didn't have a coat or umbrella. Robert gallantly held his coat above me as we made our way to his car.

It turned out we didn't have far to go. The restaurant, the Bistro Garden, was right across Ventura Blvd. from my motel. We drove there anyway. Inside the restaurant the hostess took the coat and seated us right away. Service was a bit slow in coming. I thought that might be because of them 'reading' me but Robert was very calm and reassuring saying how lovely I looked and saying it was probably because we were 'between sections'. Sure enough a waiter soon appeared and profusely apologized for the delay. We were offered a cocktail. I ordered a Dubonnet; Robert copied.

We ate. We talked about computers, about world issues, about cold weather back east and about the life of the semi retired in California. What a change from the usual 'drag bar' lines 'Have you got a place?' 'What are you in to?' 'Let's get together to party.'

I was really enjoying the evening. I was hopeful but I wasn't sure Robert was going to want to spend an intimate time with me. Nothing had been said or suggested. We had tentatively talked about going back to the Queen Mary to dance but nothing more.

As we were finishing our meal Robert asked if I was still interested in going to the 'Queen'.

"I have to be up early again tomorrow," I said. "We can go dancing or we can go back to my place. I won't have the time or energy to do both."

Thankfully he was willing to return to the motel.

He paid the bill, retrieved his coat and we returned to my room.

Once inside the room I turned on the radio to a light music station, set the lights on low and waited to see what would happen. Robert put his arms around me. He drew me close and we kissed. OHHH what a kiss!

This time as we kissed he ran his hands up and down my back. I love the feeling of a man's hand on the back of my bra. I loved it when he finally squeezed my behind. I especially loved feeling him get hard against my belly.

Nothing was rushed but we moved to the bed and he gently, oh so gently started to caress my legs, moving his hand up under my skirt. At the same time his lips moved to my neck, around my ear and down to my cleavage. I was quite passive to all the attention but a word from me that I didn't want my breasts squeezed or uncovered was enough. My top would not be exposed.

It wasn't long before we were stroking each other's most intimate parts. Then, with suitable safe sex precautions in place we were embraced in mutual oral stimulation. That's when a great evening got even better. Robert seemed to know that my most exquisite pleasure came from stimulation of my anal region. It is my 'vagina'. No vivid description is needed or warranted here. Suffice it to say that in his gentle way Robert was able to make me feel more like a woman than I had ever felt before.

We finished the evening in a lingering embrace. We parted with a promise to keep in touch.

After I watched Robert's car drive away it was really difficult to transform myself and pack things up for my early flight the next day.

The next evening after my flight back east there was a lovely e-mail from Robert waiting for me and we have been in touch every few days since then. We had been lovers, now we are becoming friends.

I don't get to Los Angeles very often but if I can see Robert again it will be soon. Until then I have such sweet memories.

Opinion:

Do the Rich and Famous Have the Same Rights as we “Nobodies”?

Each week I receive one of the many newsletters sent out in e-mail format that are aimed at the 'transgender' population. That is to say, I used to receive one of these newsletters.

It was usually a fairly interesting piece of reading. Produced by a businessperson in western Canada it carried postings from around the world. Usually fifteen to twenty short pieces on subjects as varied as 'first time out' to the fabulous success (or not) achieved by taking natural hormones. I enjoyed the reading despite the sometimes bizarre content. I often got the impression that the contributors were living their fantasy through their writing instead of 'just going out and doing it'. For instance, I felt that one's new 'nearly b-cup breasts' were more in the mind than behind the nipples.

I rarely, if ever, contributed anything to the weekly publication. I found my interests lay somewhere between those of the 'virgin venturer' and the budding transsexual. I am usually a reactive rather than proactive writer. However, I did enjoy my weekly lurk into their lives.

Why am I not receiving the newsletter anymore? Did I give it up? No. Did it cease publication? I don't think so. No, I committed the unpardonable error of reacting to and chiding the editor.

Here's the background. In one issue the editor ran a little piece in which she asked,



Linda debates with herself

"My question this week is: Is it true that (a well known, manly Hollywood actor, now deceased) was a crossdresser? Not only have I heard it in the TG circle but one of my daughter's teachers heard it as well. Does anyone have any viable proof of this?....How about any other celebrity who is a CD?? Do you know of any? Please don't say (famous basketball player). I meant real people. Please feel free to send in your thoughts about this and facts are always appreciated."

I deleted the names for reasons you may understand after reading the rest of this article. However, I took the editor at her word and felt free to send in my thoughts. I know that rumors abound about famous people, from magazine publishing gazillionaires, to mayors of large cities, to the heads of police forces. But I also know that transvestites and cross-dressers usually prefer their privacy. That goes for the famous as well as the ordinary among us.

Isn't it bad enough when the tabloids try to expose the secret lives of public people? How bad is it when the editor of an electronic journal aimed at a private audience (most who have assumed names for the very purpose of protecting their privacy) seeks to expose one of the icons of the Hollywood western movies. And at the same time she solicits the 'dirt' on others. That was too much for me.

I privately wrote to the editor with what I thought was a mild rebuke and reminder that we TV's are private people:

"Shame on you for trying to find out if certain celebrities are cross-dressers, I wrote. "Even the rich and famous (and deceased like the actor in question) have a right to their privacy and cross-dressing is such a private activity."

Two days later I received a not so mild reply.

"Oh please you are blowing this way out. What did you think that I would make a public announcement? Good bye to you."

No I didn't think she would make a public pronouncement but her newsletter was going to potentially hundreds or thousands of people who would communicate with thousands of others. The 'outing' would soon make its way around the cyber universe and in to the real world.

That was the last time I heard from her or received her newsletter. For me, the idea of 'feeling free to express our thoughts' ended quickly.

Life goes on and I can't say that I have missed the newsletter. But there are several principles involved here, are there not? Should one be cut off from a newsletter simply because one criticizes the editor? Should that editor be attempting to solicit information as to the gender preference and proclivities of well-known persons? Do we think 'outing' a famous person is somehow going to

legitimize our 'hobby' in the eyes of others? Is a newsletter sent to several hundred like-minded people really a private circulation? Is the editor correct in saying I should know that she wasn't going to broadcast the information to the world? If the actor in question had been an anonymous banker from Montana, very few people in the world would have cared to know that he liked to wear lingerie to bed. However, if he were like most of us, he still wouldn't have wanted anyone at all to know of his habit. We in the community generally know to protect the privacy of each other. Should it be different for a well-known person? Should the actor be considered fair game for exposure just because he was a household name? If his exposure were to be limited to the transgender community is that somehow less invasive of his privacy?

A famous humanitarian once wrote that a society should be judged by how well it treats its lesser citizens. Perhaps one of the benchmarks of our transgender community should be how well we respect the privacy of our greater citizens.

Linda Jensen

Travel:

Double Your Pleasure: Take Your Two Genders on Holiday

A Visit to Myrtle Beach

There are tens of millions of golfers in North America. Many of these use some of their vacation or retirement time each year to go on golf holidays. With so many golfers there are endless choices of destinations willing to cater to the golf travel market. From California to Florida, up to Atlantic Canada and over to British Columbia one literally can choose from the four corners of the continent and many places in between. There are hundreds of thousands of persons in North America who have some interest in transgender activity. They may be transvestites, crossdressers, transsexuals, female impersonators, etc or they are the people, mostly men, who admire them. Many of these also go on holiday to enjoy what they like about this activity. With fewer devotees and the interest being much more closeted it is somewhat more difficult for a man to find a place to go to enjoy being dressed en femme or to enjoy the company of like minded others. They have often been limited to a few large cities such as New York, Montreal or Los Angeles or 'gay destinations' such as Provincetown, MA.

The paths of the two groups would not seem to cross, would they? But what if one were interested in both activities? With so many golfers in North America it would be reasonable to expect that at least some of them would also be crossdressers. What if the golfing crossdresser (or the crossdressing golfer) wanted to combine both activities in one holiday? Where can he go? It seems the

answer to that is just about anywhere he/she chooses.

Take Myrtle Beach, NC, for example. My lady friend and I have been visiting there for winter golf holidays each of the last three years. It is a well-known golf and beach holiday destination. They also have some great theatre entertainment and lots of outlet shopping. It is a great place to take the kids for a summer holiday and golf dominates the other three seasons. It is not known as a gay destination.

Until this year I would leave 'Linda' behind when we headed to Myrtle Beach. Now, thanks to a chance thought and an Internet search things have changed. Now shoot me for my stereotypical thinking but while Myrtle Beach may not be a gay destination with all those theatres and retail activity it occurred to me that there was likely to be a sizeable local gay population.

Where there are gay people there are gay clubs. Where there are gay clubs there is a good chance there will be drag shows. With that in mind, typing in 'Female Impersonators Myrtle Beach' I did a search on the Internet for nightclubs in Myrtle Beach that might welcome Linda. I found two in particular that had shows on different evenings. One, *Time Out*, would have performances on Monday and Friday. The other, *Liquid Pearl*, offered shows on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Both were gay bars with a variety of theme nights on different evenings.

So after a little consultation with my lady friend, we brought along an extra suitcase so Linda could have some, shall we say, 'time out'.

Friday and Saturday were out of the question due to our travel plans so we decided I would go to *Time Out* on Monday and *Liquid Pearl* on Wednesday. Both shows were advertised to start at midnight.

One thing to know about when one goes to destinations such as Myrtle Beach, Rehoboth Beach and Palm Springs is that you are actually visiting a collection of towns that collectively market themselves as one. When I made our plans to stay in Myrtle Beach I knew we would be staying in Sunset Beach but we would be playing golf and shopping in Myrtle Beach, Litchfield, Briarcliff, North Myrtle Beach and a number of other towns.

I thought I'd done my due diligence in researching the location of the two clubs. I wrote notes from my Internet search. 'Time Out, 520 8th Avenue North Myrtle Beach' meant to me that I would be looking for a club in North Myrtle Beach.

So, on Monday evening I got dressed, tucked my girlfriend in to bed and made the half hour trip from Sunset Beach up Hwy 17 (Bus) through Myrtle Beach to North Myrtle Beach. Once there I counted down the avenues – 17th, 16th, etc, 11th avenue came and then nothing more. A big mall was in the way of 10th, 9th, 8th and a couple of others.

"Damn," I thought. "Maybe it's at 8th Ave north. Why wasn't I more careful in copying the address?"

I continued north, past Main Street, and counted off the avenues as the numbers climbed. 8th avenue didn't exist at Hwy 17. I found 11th but it didn't look very promising. It was residential. Maybe I

should be looking down by the hotels on Ocean Blvd, I thought. I found 8th but it was a short lane with no clubs.

Next strategy was to find a pay phone with a phone book. It was time to take a time out and double check *Time Out's* address. That proved to be more difficult than anticipated. I found several pay phones but no phone books. I was now well past midnight and I thought I'd have missed the show, anyway. Might as well head back to our resort, I thought. Instead I decided on one last effort. I stopped in at an all night convenience store to ask the clerk if I could check their phone book. I am fairly comfortable out in public but am still wary when I come across a 'bubba' type as this clerk seemed to be. He proved to be accommodating enough. He gave me the phone book. There was the listing – TIME OUT 520, 8th Ave N and the phone number.

"Is this book just for North Myrtle Beach?" I asked.

"No, they're all mixed in together," he replied.

"How do you tell what town the address is in?"

"Usually by the number."

"So where would this address be?" I asked as I showed him the listing.

"Oh, *Time Out*? I know where that is.

Give me one of those map sheets and I'll show you." He pointed to a free advertising map sheet on a nearby stand. His voice seemed to change the instant he recognized I was looking for *Time Out*. Gone was his bubba drawl, replaced by a pronounced gay lisp. He also became very helpful with the directions, drawing a route that took me directly to 520 8th Ave North in Myrtle Beach. It was as if once he knew my destination we became members of the same fraternity. In a sense we were.

It turns out I could have saved myself a lot of trouble if I had been careful enough to put in that comma separating North and Myrtle Beach when I copied down the address from the Internet site. I finally arrived at the club well after 1am. It is a 'private club'. I registered and entered. I thought the show would be long over but it was still in progress. Thanks to 'gay time' I had missed only three numbers. What I did see were good performances by talented performers.



Erica and Dana

Their friends lined up to tip the girls and that distracted somewhat from the professionalism of the numbers but a girl has got to live, I guess.

Wednesday evening was a different story. *Liquid Pearl* was very easy to find. It is well signed and located on the old Hwy 17. I'd passed it many times. I arrived about 10:30 to a virtually deserted club. There were a few gay couples sharing drinks. Jessica Diamond, the star of the show came over to introduce herself and we talked briefly. When she excused herself I picked up a copy of the local gay paper to read while I killed time.

While I sat at the bar and waited for the show one single gentleman came in,

looked my way but paid no particular notice. He bought a beer and sat at one of the many empty tables. He looked nice but he seemed to pay no attention to me. After a brief period I made a trip to the ladies room and then detoured my return past his table to ask if he would like some company. He did and I joined him.

He offered me a drink but I declined. My ginger ale would do me. I was not interested in mixing drinking, drag and driving. He told me that he hadn't approached me because he thought I was one of the entertainers and an interest in him 'wasn't going to happen.'

We talked about his hometown of Charlotte, NC. I knew more about the drag scene there than he did. While he had an attraction to cross-dressers, being married he did not get out much at home. His little experience with 'walks on the wild side' happened in Myrtle Beach where he came a few times a year 'to play golf'. He was disappointed that the show was to start so late. He had to return to Charlotte early the next day.

When he made a second reference to having to get back to his hotel I offered him a ride. He accepted and we made our way to my car. After a short drive we were at his motel. I visited him for a while (smile) but within fifteen minutes I was back at the *Liquid Pearl*.

The crowd built a bit after midnight but no more single guys showed up. Again on 'gay time' the show started.

Jessica Diamond proved to be an adept and entertaining MC. Her southern accent, feminine pitch and natural long blonde hair were very convincing. Her humor was spontaneous and free of the four-letter smut that many girls use.



Two views of Jessica Diamond

I left before the end of the show, stopping to pick up some Krispy Kreme donuts on the way. I was flattered by the compliment the clerk gave to my dress. It was a nice finish to a brief visit. But what of other activities a cross dresser could do in Myrtle Beach? It

seems one must just be passable enough for one's own comfort and then go for it. Our money is as good as any one else's. Want to golf en femme? Why not? You'll only be playing with your own partner and one or two others. If the others are uncomfortable they can make a change. Theatre? That's an idea. The hall will be dark and people will be looking at the stage, not at you. Shopping? Sure. The beach? Okay but make certain your wig and breast forms are secure before you venture in to the surf. Also, watch for wind blown sand getting stuck in your makeup. My two favorite seasonal activities are skiing and golf. I have now been able to vacation en femme for both activities and I must tell you that despite little difficulties like getting lost I am really enjoying these expanded horizons. My next trip will be to Orlando. Stay tuned.

