

Lipstick & Lace

Rosalie
Our May
Covergirl!

More
inside!

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Presidentially Speaking

I hope everyone is enjoying the spring weather and especially the "Fashion Research", seeing what is popular this year and having those very tough questions to ask one's self...What should I wear...What should I wear??"

From pretty sun dresses to mini skirts I'm sure you'll find what's perfect for you!

Being a cross-dresser, life can be very stressful with all the desires we have to express ourselves by wearing something that makes us feel complete.

Add to the equation the outside influences such as family, work and friends, and the freedom to simply be ourselves seems to be such a remote possibility.

Yet it doesn't have to be that far away as many of our members will be quick to agree.

Perhaps the reason so many of us keep our feminine sides hidden away from family and friends is what we just aren't prepared to answer the questions we've grown up building a solid brick wall against.

Why? Many of us grew up hiding because we didn't know the answers ourselves so we simply don't really know how to answer them should those questions be asked of us.

Many people have their own pre-conceived ideas of what a "crossdresser" is and many of those definitions don't apply to us in the first place.

Will people understand our answers to their questions and how can we be prepared?

The diversity of our members at Masquerade and the many wonderful people in the TG Community are perhaps the best resource available.

Just like going through our every day life, learning a little about this and a little about that, getting feedback on this and feedback on that, from parents, family, our schooling etc, taking it all in, we are better prepared for life's little "Situations" that pop up now and then. (Ever tried to fix a computer without asking ques-

tions??)

When I first began meeting others like myself, I was told that no matter how hard I try to hide from family and friends, it is inevitable that someone will find out at some point in time. And yes, I too feared that kind of confrontation.

I know for myself it wasn't so much a fear of the confrontation, it was the fear of not knowing what to say. I mean, how do you explain this to someone?? Especially when we think we re the "Only Ones!"

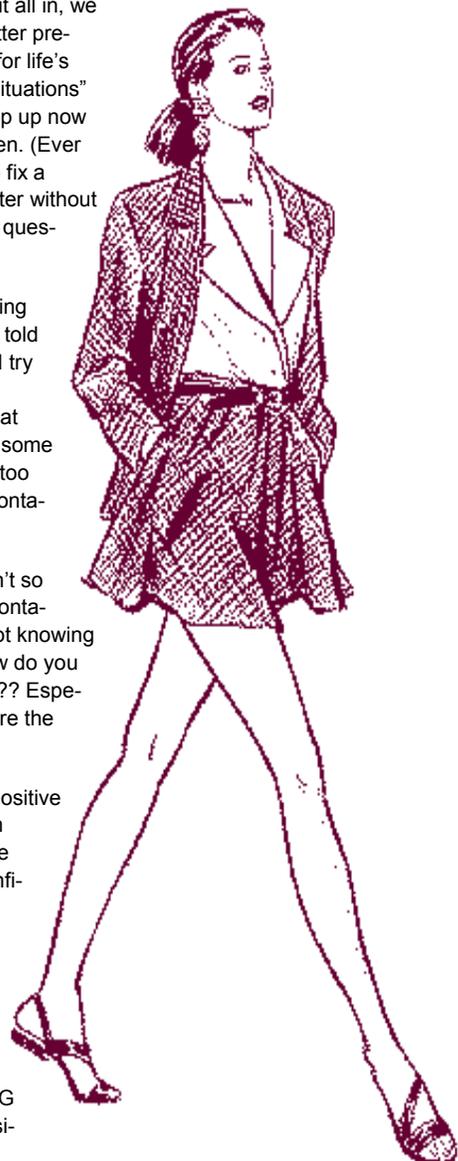
Every time we share a positive experience or learn from another's experience, we are building our own confidence in ourselves. Our own strength to live our lives knowing it is OK to be who we are. When and where we choose.

As we learn from each other, everyone in the TG Community will be a posi-

tive influence on another's life and for that you all deserve a standing ovation!

No, I'm not asking people to run out and tell their boss. It's kind of like going on a trip knowing you can change a tire. You don't want the flat, but if it happens, you're prepared!

Sabrina



Our own strength to live our lives knowing it is OK to be who we are.

Shandi's Corner

Last meeting, I shared a bit of my recent experience photographing my friends' wedding on April 8th, and I have been asked to write something here for everyone.

I have known Garth for many years through our association in the science fiction fan community. We were both involved in it for a long time but had moved on and lost touch. A few years back we reconnected then Charm and I were introduced to his fiancé Lee, with whom we took an instant liking. We invited them to our 10th Anniversary Wedding in 2003, and a few Masquerade get-togethers. They are very nice accepting people, whom, you might remember, invited our members to attend their wedding social last fall.

I had been a wedding photographer for nearly 20 years, but retired from it a few years ago, except for the occasional one for friends or family. Garth and Lee asked me to do their photos and I happily accepted. Their wedding was to be a fun affair, with a James Bond theme. Being a fan of those movies I had lots of ideas of the images we could take and have fun with. They encouraged all of their guests to dress in theme, and I was no exception, as I was also a guest. Of course what Bond event would be complete without "Bond Girls" so I suggested that I could be their photographer and a Bond Girl too. They quickly agreed and encouraged me to have fun with it. The only problem was "what to wear"!

But seriously, I wanted to make sure that it really was okay with them and triple checked that neither they or their family would have problems with me not only attending but working with them as a girl. Of course I was reassured it was no problem and that they were thrilled about it.

It really did take me a while to decide -

We did all the poses with him and his parents and attendants (who are also friends of mine) and went on to the next location. There we did Lee's portraits and some of the special effects shots for the ideas we had. All just like any other wedding with various other friends, family members, the flower girl and ring bearers. It was great, I was doing something I loved to do, dressed as I loved to be.

We ended up with some time before going to the ceremony so we relaxed and caught up, talking about the good old days, new movies and our lives. All very comfortable and relaxing.

On to the ceremony at the Southwood Supper Club. A public place with staff and other weddings happening there at the same time. My daughter and I arrived with our equipment, and were assisted to the right areas by the friendly staff.

Things soon got underway, we took our photos of the ceremony and formal photos afterwards, with various family members all along with me being treated like I



I was doing something I loved to do, dressed as I loved to be!

decide on what to wear, as there were so many different outfits that the various Bond Girls have worn over the years, and a since bikini would have been inappropriate, I chose a lovely green sparkly evening gown that Liz had given me a few years ago. But I couldn't very well wear that to work in all day. So I came up with a tasteful ensemble that was not only feminine, but classy and practical.

The day of their wedding I had my hair done at Rob's got ready and arrived at Garth's parent's home to do the preliminary photos. He had not arrived yet as there had been a wardrobe malfunction with one of his attendants. My daughter Crystal who was my assistant, and I set up the gear and chatted with his parents until he arrived and then we went right to work. Just as I would with any other wedding.



Making sure the pose is perfect!

was the person I was hired to be, their professional wedding photographer. No one seemed uncomfortable or apprehensive at all. I was doing my job, and they were doing what they were there

(Continued on page 4)

Shandi's Corner cont'd

(Continued from page 3)

for.

So that out of the way it was time for the reception. The formal photos were out of the way and it was on to the fun stuff. Charm arrived after work just as we were finishing and with her assistance I changed into my gown in the girls' bathroom and freshened up.

Now came the rest of the evening. Not only continuing my work, but mingling and interacting with more people. More old friends who were there for the event as well as other friends, family and guests.

Now as most of you know, I like attention, and I have no problems walking through public places, shopping malls, downtown streets, being on stage, etc etc.. But I was not prepared for the experience of walking into a room full of people and having all eyes turn towards me. I knew I looked good in that gown (Thank you Liz!) and I knew I felt good about who I was and what I was doing. But walking into that room was like something out of a dream. I could feel *everyone* looking at me. I could feel their amazement. It seemed like they had all stopped what they were doing to take notice. It was a moment frozen in time that I will never forget.

And it gets better! The three of us sat at our assigned table with some old friends and acquaintances. We caught up and soon it was like no time had passed. Not once was my gender an

issue. I was even pleased to see as I read the program card (that was on each and every table), listed with the wedding party as "Photographer" was my name, *Shandi Strong*.

In between I was getting up and taking more photos, walking across the room, interacting with people, talking with people and even get-

ting compliments from men and women alike, including a whistle from the bride!



A special moment!

Later in the evening I continued to socialize with other old friends in attendance, and found out that one person (whom I have always considered a little "different" in his social abilities) was apparently having a difficult time with the way I was dressed. Others at his table tried to explain, but it was not until I

walked over and said "Hi Mike, how are you?", that he visibly relaxed. From then on everything was fine, I sat conversing with everyone and catching up. There were even discussions on how some of us had changed over the years, and remarks (in good humour) about how I had especially.

In keeping with the James Bond Theme, part of the evening's refreshments were martinis, shaken, but not stirred if you prefer! Several times I went to the bar to get drinks for myself, Charm and Crystal and I got along

fabulously with the female bartender. Making martinis was something new to her, but she did a great job.

The most touching part of the whole day was during the speeches. Garth and Lee were at the podium, thanking everyone for their parts in making their wedding day a spe-

cial one. Friends, family, special guests, and me. Garth thanked me for taking all the wonderful photos and for being "the best Bond Girl ever". The room seemed to explode with applause. I still get choked and teary eyed just thinking about it. It was truly unexpected, and meant so much to hear.

The evening, as all things do, came to an end, but not until after we danced and partied with our friends. As I walked to my car with my gear, in my glamorous gown, I was happy with the way the day had gone. I was not sure leading up to it what really to expect, but I was sure that the day had been better than I could have hoped. Because I had such accepting friends, and because they had the same in other friends and family another chapter in my life was complete. My acceptance of myself had allowed me to face old friends and make new acquaintances on my terms. Being accepted as a person of importance for an event as special as this on those terms was likewise reaffirming. Making a positive impression on total strangers under such circumstances was another step for all of us. I am hoping that the effect that I had on those people was that they took some enlightenment home and shared it, and that it spreads.



Me & Charm with the Newlyweds!

Thank you again, Garth and Lee for being such special people. Many of us fear the world is not an accepting place, but it's people like you that show us that in fact, it is.

Luv always,

Shandi



Charm, Crystal & me!



Upcoming Events!!

Hey Girls! You don't want to miss out on these!!

May 13th—Watkin's Party at Laura and Rosalie's

June 2nd— 4th Annual Boat Cruise! Tickets \$20, see ad on Page 9!

June 1-11, Celebrate the 20th anniversary of the first Pride March in Winnipeg for more details visit <http://www.gaypridewinnipeg.com/> dance at the Convention Centre plus much much more!

June 24th - BRING IN THE SUMMER SEASON afternoon picnic or BBQ party - location and time TBA

July 8th - Movie and dance night - movie @ Grant Park theatre around 7pm *depending on show times* followed by dancing at Gio's

Hope to see you there!

Upcoming Meetings!!

June 13, 2006 - Theme TBA

Meeting Begins - 7:30 PM

Program - 8:00 PM

Guest speaker out to talk with the group about electrolysis.

Make-up/Dressing tip of the month -A simple way to create "The Right Shape"

Membership attendance draw -Gift Certificate for Lady Godiva Boutique - "Mary Money"

Magazine Swap - Bring your old "Girl stuff" magazines to swap with other girls!

July 11, 2006, theme TBA

Meeting begins –7:30 pm

Program 8:00 pm topic TBA



Mariah's Testimonial

Since I was a teenager I have been interested in cross-dressing. I always fantasized about it but I couldn't do it because I was living at home with my parents at the time. About eight years ago on a Friday I started going to Club 200 I don't know what drew me to that bar but I guess I was just interested in checking out what goes on there. There I saw a drag show for the first time and I thought to myself that this is something that I would like to try and do. I very much liked the bar because I felt that I could talk to anyone there.

Last summer I went to Lady Godiva for my first time to see if I could find a pair of ladies shoes in my size. I was very nervous when I went in there, until I found out that Mary gets a lot of customers like myself, so she was very helpful and understanding. I spent about an hour in the store talking with Mary and she told me about Masquerade and how she was the den mother. I looked through an issue of Lipstick & Lace and saw all the pictures of the girls and Mary suggested that I should come out to the meetings to see what they were all about. Mary wouldn't take no for an answer and I talked to her several times through the month of May 2005 only because I had to keep going there to try on several pairs of shoes to find a pair that would be comfortable and fit my size 14 feet.

In June 2005 I went to Club 200 for a few drinks and I met Shandi and Charm for the first time. I went up to them and introduced myself because I remembered them from the Lipstick & lace issue the month before. I told

Shandi that I was very much interested in doing what she does and she also told me that I should come out to the meetings. Shandi and I kept in touch by email from that day on.



When I finally got myself a pair of shoes, a dress and some make-up Shandi and Chantal were nice enough to come over to my place and help me get dressed and put on my make-up. When we were

about to leave and head for the meeting I was completely terrified! I was worried what the public would think of me and I was worried what all the other girls at the meeting would think of me! When we got outside people saw me but they didn't stare or say anything that I was aware of so I got into Shandi's car and she gave a ride to the meeting. On the way there I was nervous and knocking myself down thinking that I looked so terrible and that the other girls would think of me as a loser or something. Shandi was always saying things to me that would uplift me and I thank her very much for that.

When we got to the meeting I was terrified when I walked in the door but it didn't take me long to get comfortable knowing that I was no different than anyone else there and it felt really nice to be accepted by the rest of the group. I am still to this day a little nervous about going out as Mariah but I do it anyways and I don't really care anymore what the public thinks. I have now as Mariah been out to

the meetings several times, Club 200 and the Black and Blue Ball. I have received many compliments on the way that I have dressed and how I look which has really uplifted my spirits and makes me feel good about myself and what I do.

The only person in my family, besides my wife, that I have told about what I do, is a cousin of mine that I have been close to all my life. I was very surprised to find out that her boyfriend does this too, but I don't think he does it on a regular basis. I am trying to talk him into coming to the meetings and maybe one day he will.

Before I end this letter I just want to thank Mary our den mother for talking me into going to the Masquerade meeting and for not taking "no" for an answer. I really enjoy the meetings and all the parties that I have been to. I want to thank Shandi for all her encouraging and kind words of support and her friendship. I want to thank Chantal for helping me on the day of my first meeting. I especially want to thank my wife Alfreda for all her help and support even though someday I have been concerned that she dislikes what I do. But when we go shopping together she is very supportive and she picks out things for me. She also helps me when she can with my make-up and my hair which has been absolutely great! Finally I also want to thank the whole group of Masquerade for all the friendship and support you have shown me since I joined. I am so glad I did!

Hugs

Mariah

it didn't take me long to get comfortable knowing that I was no different than anyone else



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Friends of "The Girls of Masquerade!"

Adventures in eBay-Sitting!

If you're like me, your summer is sun, biking, and garage sales. While V V Boutique (Value Village, to the common folk) can help me through the cold, dark months, garage saling is an unparalleled joy. Weird things, neat things, bargains and great discoveries, garage sales are fun even when I don't buy anything.

Well, ebay is the twenty-first century, on-line, world-wide equivalent of a garage sale. The biggest, weirdest, neatest garage sale ever.

But it's not always the best bargain, and can even be a rip-off, if you aren't careful. I know someone who ended up paying \$45 for an old t-shirt. That didn't fit. That was ugly.

On the good side of the story, I have found wonderful bargains for pennies. Since your average Masquerader is probably not too interested in buying ratty old toy cars (my brother's passion) I'll talk about one of mine: buying neat clothes on the interweb.

Let's see... To use ebay, you need a computer, a reasonably fast internet connection (or it's just ssssoooooo slow) and some money. Different sellers accept different forms of payment, but credit cards and PayPal (see ebay for more on that) are the most common. (Money and payment are a whole article in themselves, so lets go on to the fun parts.)

eBay has a "fabulous" search engine built right into the site. Type in "dress 12" and every ebay ad in the world that has the word "dress" and the numeral "12" will be listed for you! Dresses for 12-year-olds, men's dress shoes (men's size 12), wedding dresses (size 2) with 12 little flowers on them, and dresses, size 12. "Thousands and THOUSANDS" of ads.

But it only takes a second to select a smaller category after this mishmash is presented to you, a category like, oh, "women's clothing." And then the hundreds and (still) thousands of ads for women's dresses pop up (usually size 12, but sometimes not... sometimes just with that number, for whatever reason).

eBay is mostly an auction, which means that the soonest-ending items pop up at the top of the list. Don't bother looking at them if they're about to be sold, like in less than a minute or so (it tells you right there) because you won't have the time to make a bid anyway. Start with the items with a few minutes to go, and start shopping.

Click on an item you are interested in and a page of descriptions and (usually) better pictures pops up. It has info on the seller (are they a store? a private person with one or several items for sale? Are there complaints about them and their stuff for sale?)

Somewhere on the page there should also be information on shipping costs and restrictions. If it says "I ship to the US only," well, it ain't gonna be shipped to Canada. If it says it will cost \$20 (US) to ship, and it's an item worth maybe two dollars, well, be aware... it's really a \$22 item...



Another thing to be aware of is that size 12 doesn't always mean size 12, at least to my way of thinking. Size 12 in England is about a size 8 here. Size 12 in Europe (most of it) is about a 10 here. In China, wellll... it might be anything. So when a seller gives actual measurements (like bust, waist, sleeve length) THOSE are the size, not the number 12, don't even mention SHOE sizes to me...

But if you decide you like the item, the dress from Russia, size 12, and like the price (12 Rubles) and don't think the shipping cost (\$12 US) is too bad, and the seller has a TON of happy customers... and if you have the money (if you don't pay, it can

get nasty on eBay) then make a bid.

There are all sorts of strategies for bidding... maybe another article there... But you make a bid, check that it's the highest bid, and wait. There might be people bidding against you... raising the price! (It's an auction, after all) and you might want to bid again. Or quit. Decisions! Eeeek!

If you WIN (yayyyyyy!!) you arrange payment for the item and for shipping, and wait. You might have to pay Canadian duty when it arrives, you might have to wait a month (Russian mail and all) or you might get it in three days by FedEx, too. And it might be less than you hoped for, or much nicer and better than you ever dreamed, but you bought it! A dress, size 12, all the way from Russia!

If only you were a size 12...

I'll write another article about bidding, strategies for winning, and maybe the fun you can have with the search engine... they have EVERYTHING! But for now, happy garage sailing!

Thanks for reading!

Michelle

Hey Girls

Show your support!



**Get your Masquerade Pin
today! Only \$6.00**

Available at every meeting!

Shopping: A Further Reflection

In a recent *Lipstick and Lace*, a correspondent suggested that store owners do not care who they sell to, as they are in it for the money. That is a view I have heard often before, and have myself passed on at times, but I now have second thoughts.

One of positive influences that *Masquerade* has had on me is that I now "talk" to clerks and store owners. Most of the clerks I talk to enjoy assisting polite customers; and for most of the owners it is a point of pride to offer quality goods and services and to do their best to serve their customers' needs.

Numerous studies have found that most people rank job income as only their 3rd to 6th job priority. Money is important, certainly, but once basic needs are met, then as motivational guru Bob Nelson phrases it, "More than anything else,

employees want to be valued for a job well done by those they hold in high esteem."

Mayhaps not many clerks and owners esteem cross-dressers specifically, but they do often esteem appreciative customers. A sincere "Thank you, you have been very helpful," or "I would recommend you to my friends" is received as more than just a calculated probability of a future sale: it is a reassurance that they are valued as a person, not just as a socio-economic unit. A credit-card may get you the cute skirt, but it is the smile that gets you the "Welcome back!"

Tess

(Editor's note, Last issue I mistakenly credited Tess' article to Linda, for which I sincerely apologize. Shandi)



Women of the world, unite...with LGBT people

Could advances in human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people have been possible without the women's "lib" movement?

Many factors contributed to LGBT liberation in Canada. Legally, decriminalization of homosexuality came first, then human rights laws across the country and more recently, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and its equality provisions, where sexual orientation was read in as a protected ground.

March 8th was International Women's Day so it's appropriate to underline the intertwining of the women's movement with LGBT rights.

The women's movement itself received a second wind from the 1950s American civil rights movement which sought the full equality of black people. This helped set the stage for the rise of feminism and gay rights in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Social movements are never completely clearly-cut from each other. One doesn't end neatly before the next one begins.

Yet there seems to be a progression from civil rights for blacks to increased freedom for women (and liberation from gender roles) to gay rights ("gay" being the first shorthand for LGBT people).

Paul Robinson, a history professor at California's Stanford University, gave a talk last month in which he called "gay liberation" the "third wave" of the 1960s and 1970s political storm. Robinson suggests gay liberation was a "logical extension" of the social tumult that fostered the rise of the civil rights movement and then women's liberation.

The Stonewall riots, named after the New York bar where huge riots erupted in 1969, are viewed by many as the catalyst for the gay liberation movement. Professor Robinson noted that many of the patrons at Stonewall were drag queens and this underlines the connection between gay liberation and freedom to express various forms of gender identity. "It's not just about sexual orientation. It's also about this issue of gender."

Robinson isn't the only one who links oppression based on gender and oppression based on sexual orientation. Over three decades ago, Huey Newton also made a strong connection with race-based oppression.

Newton, founder of the Black Panthers, gave an August 15, 1970 speech that likely shook up stereotypes. "Whatever your personal opinions and your insecurities about homosexuality and the various liberation movements among homosexuals and women, we should try to unite with them in a revolutionary fashion."

He said both women and homosexuals were oppressed groups and a true revolutionary should be in solidarity with them. "We say that we recognize the women's right to be free. We have not said much about the homosexual at all, but we must relate to the homosexual movement because it is a real thing."

Many feminists and women's advocates have been strong allies of the LGBT cause. Women are usually strong supporters of LGBT equality. For example, polls on equal marriage bear this out.

LGBT people, in turn, should support the aspirations of women to achieve full equality.

Inequality - or oppression, to use a stronger term - works against everyone, regardless of the specifically targeted group. And women's liberation, like ours, is not yet fully achieved.

by Gilles Marchildon, Executive Director of Egale Canada

Egale Canada ©2006

Advancing equality and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans-identified people and their families across Canada

Recent Event Photos!



Vanessa dances with the groom at his social!



Vanessa and Chantal having lunch in the Mall of America!



Vanessa poses with a race care in the Mall of America!

*Girls,
just
having
fun!*



Cute Easter Bunnies Sonya & Charlene at the April meeting!



Linda, Liz, Rosalie and Vanessa at Games Night!



Looks like Ardra's winning!



Linda does the deal!

Submit your stories and photos to shandi_strong@hotmail.com.

Every issue needs interesting stories and photos about our members and their own experiences!



EVENINGS > LATE NIGHTS > EVENTS

WEEKLY SPECIALS

MONDAY

Members Night - Really cheap drinks
(a valid 06 mbshp card must be shown)

TUESDAY

Sorry, we are closed

WEDNESDAY

Karaoke - Starts at 10:30
Great Prizes!

THURSDAY

* NEW * Gio's Hip Hop Night
Cheap domestic beer & bar shots.
DJ Ryan at 10pm

FRIDAY

All night fun, late night
dancing with DJ Danno

SATURDAY

Weekly events*

SUNDAY

We are open! 4 - 12 p.m.*

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SPECIAL EVENTS

THURSDAY, MAY 4th
THURSDAY, MAY 11th
THURSDAY, MAY 18th

> Gio's Pride Idol Competition <

Are you a great singer in and out of the shower? Then why not enter Gio's Pride Idol! Finals and crowning of the Gio's Pride Idol on Thursday May 18th. The winner will represent Gio's at Pride on the mainstage! Contest applications and rules are available at Gio's.
Shows begin at 10:00pm

SATURDAY, MAY 6th
> Womyn's Night <

Everyone welcome, DJ Ian at 10pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 29th
> Destiny's Fantasy Five <

One of our staff members is getting married! So come down and celebrate equal marriage for all! Door prizes, silent auction, 50/50, Late Lunch, All Night Happy Hour drink prices
Drag Show at 11pm STARRING our *NEW*
Ms. Gio's 2006/07 Destiny with special guests
DJ Ian at 10:00pm
\$10 non-members cover
\$5 suggested member donation

Date Correction, should read Saturday May 27th

Masquerade

c/o Lady Godiva Boutique
832 Corydon Ave.

Winnipeg, MB R3M 0Y2

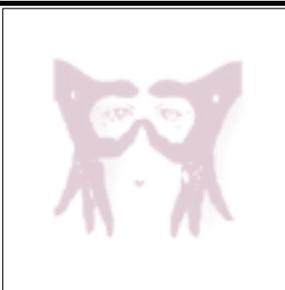
Phone: 204-452-1100

Email:

girlstuff@masquerade.ca

For the girl inside us all!

www.masquerade.ca



ABOUT MASQUERADE

*We are a FUN LOVING support group for
cross-dressers, and transsexuals.*

*Our purpose is for people with like/common interests to
associate and socialize.*

It is not for the purpose of soliciting or engaging in sexual activities.

*All gender gifted individuals, who are 18 years of age or older, and are
prepared to respect our bi-laws, are welcome.*

*Spouses and significant others are encouraged and welcome to attend
meetings and functions and join if they wish.*

We regularly meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month.

The meetings begin around 7:30 p.m. and go until 9 or 10.

Socializing and dancing are done afterwards!

*We endeavour to maintain a fun, friendly, laid-back atmosphere. We
are all there for the same reasons-a place to go to that is accepting,
private and relaxing. Change facilities are available. Dressing for the
first meeting or two is not required, but encouraged!*

Special Girls!

Happy Birthday!

Billie-Jean

Cissie

Shandi

Liz

Krystal

May 6

May 7

May 14

May 14

May 28

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