

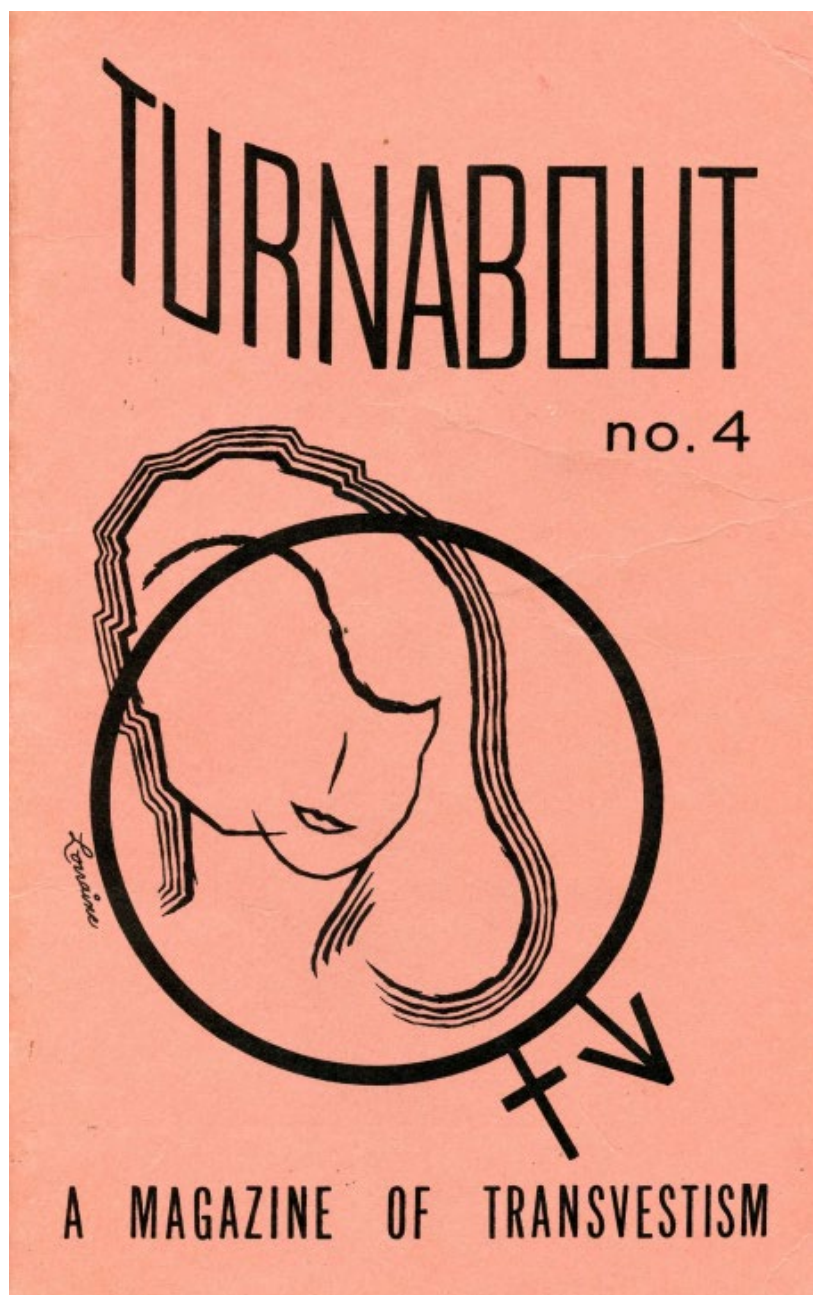
Turnabout: A Magazine of Transvestitism

Tuesday, June 4, 2024 by Catherine Cassels



This month, Special Collections & Archives (SCA) is celebrating four new acquisitions that document the diverse experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Tune in each week for a new post highlighting one of these acquisitions and learn how they complement SCA's existing collections with a focus on gender, sexuality, and social justice.

One of the challenges facing archivists who support researchers interested in queer and trans history is that the terminology used to describe gender and sexual expression has changed considerably over time. In these posts, we will use the terminology that most closely aligns with how the authors and publishers describe themselves and their readers. This may include terms, such as transsexual or cross-dresser, which some may find offensive today. For more information about the changing nature of vocabulary and how librarians and archivists make decisions about how to describe queer and trans materials, please visit [Homosaurus Vocabulary Site](#).



SCA is pleased to announce that we have acquired five issues of the groundbreaking periodical [Turnabout: A Magazine of Transvestitism](#). First published in the United States in June 1963, Turnabout is one of the oldest publications written by and about people who identified as transvestites or cross-dressers. The periodical, which ran until 1969, featured articles, poetry, stories, letters, and photographs that offer a snapshot of what life was like for non-gender-conforming people living in the 1960s. In an era of heightened discrimination, Turnabout helped to foster a sense of community

for trans people by providing a space where readers could see their own experiences, feelings, and struggles mirrored on the pages.

Turnabout: A Magazine of Transvestitism

Turnabout was produced by [Siobhan Fredericks](#) under the moniker of Abbé de Choisy Press, named to honour François-Timoléon de Choisy, a cross-dressing French abbé, or abbot, born in the 1600s. The press also produced several books or novelets written by Fredericks and Nan Gilbert. Titles include [One Summer in Petticoats](#), [Lingerie and Lace](#), and [Miniskirted Male](#), each designed to tell a story of transvestitism from a trans perspective.

Fredericks likely wrote most of the content published in Turnabout [under a variety of pseudonyms](#), a practice that was common in these early years of queer and trans publishing. This tactic was often used to convey a sense that the publication was the product of a vibrant community of voices, affirming its legitimacy despite limits to freedom of expression. The goal was to grow a community of contributors by inviting readers to submit their own pieces on topics ranging from make-up tips to short fiction.

An Emerging Trans Print Culture

Although one of the earliest trans publications, Turnabout was not the only periodical to address the experiences of gender-non-conforming people. Transvestia: The Journal of the American Society for Equality in Dress was [first published in 1952](#) by Virginia Prince in Los Angeles, with two original issues. Eight years later, in 1960, the publication was brought back as [Transvestia](#), dropping its more academic subtitle with the intention of reaching a broader audience. These publications, and others like them, aimed to create and strengthen community, foster dialogue, and increase representation of trans people by allowing them to share stories and resources.

Even though gay and lesbian publications, such as One Magazine and The Ladder, had paved the way – a topic we will pick up in a later blog post this month – Fredericks continued to take on considerable risks by publishing Turnabout. Wearing gender-non-confirming clothing was [still illegal in many jurisdictions](#) across North America; anyone found cross-dressing could be arrested by police. Promoting trans publications could also be difficult, as [readers would often not want to purchase them at a magazine shop](#) or other brick-and-mortar retailer for fear of exposure. This made it difficult for

potential readers to find Turnabout on the shelves. Distribution was therefore mainly through word-of-mouth resulting in a subscription - \$3 per copy - or issues were passed along from friend to friend, acquaintance to acquaintance.

Issues Available at SCA

SCA has acquired issues 3 through 7, published between 1964 and 1966. Each issue is signed "Henry Guze," and likely belonged to [Dr. Henry Guze](#) (1919-1970), a psychoanalyst and professor in New York. Dr. Guze was a founder of many psychological organizations, including The American Academy of Psychotherapists, the Society of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis, and [the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex](#). He published papers about sexual behavior, including transsexualism and cross-dressing.

Below is a description of each issue in our collection with some highlights from the contents. We welcome anyone from the Waterloo community and beyond to book an appointment with SCA to come see these in person!

Issue 3 (March 1964) includes several articles of note. "Advice to a Transsexual" is written by Harry Benjamin, a contemporary of Dr. Guze and co-founder of the Society of the Scientific Study of Sex. Benjamin offers advice on how and where to obtain gender affirming care, which he refers to as "medical transitioning." He also discusses female to male transitioning, a rare conversation for Turnabout's readership who were mainly those assigned male at birth.

The issue provides a recap of a symposium on transvestitism and transsexualism held as part of the sixth annual conference of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex. In this article, the author expressed disappointment in the symposium for its focus on transsexualism and lack of information on transvestitism. Notably, the issue mentions the contemporary publication *Transvestia* and updates on its founder Virginia Prince, suggesting how tightly knit the community is and an overlap in readership. Finally, it offers advertisements for the services of a Helen Lancaster, who will make or shop for clothing for the trans community discretely and privately in their sizes, an excellent service for those who do not want to be seen shopping for women's clothing on their own.

Issue 4 (April 1964) begins a series about trans issues and the law, specifically the legal issues associated with cross-dressing in public. The first

installment in this three-part series, spanning from issues 4 to 6, is about what to do if one gets arrested for cross dressing. Laws regarding cross-dressing varied from state to state at the time, and while they were not strictly enforced in some regions and getting arrested for cross-dressing was not common, it was still a possibility that many faced or feared when appearing in public. The article offers legal advice on what and what not to disclose if one was arrested, and ultimately advises the reader to only disclose their name and address until they can seek the advice of an attorney. Further legal discussions occur in the article "Kaleidoscope", which discusses the arrest of a trans person for cross-dressing and the community efforts to raise money to appeal the conviction as a form of protest, in hopes of bringing it to a higher court and legalizing cross-dressing. Other interesting articles include advice to trans people who are married, places to shop for mail-order clothing, and an advertisement for electrolysis hair removal where trans customers are welcomed.

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Secondly, he should secure the services of a reliable attorney. Preferably, this should be done before he makes his debut in public in feminine attire as part of his preparation for it.

The recent arrest, trial, and conviction of a New York TV, described elsewhere in this issue, have convinced the editors of TURNABOUT of the urgent need to publish a set of ground rules — in the form of "do's" and "don't's" — to guide those among our readers who must go out in public in feminine attire on what to do and what not to do in the event they are arrested.

Compiled by a prominent attorney especially for TURNABOUT, the following pointers may well prevent an arrest from becoming a disaster which can destroy a TV's status in his society:

- DO** ADMIT your male status, if you are questioned in a public place by an officer of the law.
- DO** CHECK the identification of the officer, especially if he happens to be a plainclothesman.
- DO** OFFER your male name and address only, if you are asked to do so by a bona fide policeman.
- DO** SHOW the officer your own legal masculine identification when it is requested from you.
- DO** FOLLOW the officer peacefully to the police station if he decides to take you there.
- DO** INSIST upon contacting an attorney or public defender as soon as you arrive at the station.
- DO** REQUEST postponement of your court appearance if your attorney is not in the courtroom.
- DON'T** ATTEMPT to flee or evade arrest if a police officer challenges you.
- DON'T** TRY to bargain with the arresting officer or with any other officer.
- DON'T** GIVE any statement whatever, whether it is a written one or an oral one.
- DON'T** ANSWER any questions with regard to the subject of homosexuality.
- DON'T** GIVE any information as to your job or the identity of your employer.
- DON'T** ADMIT or DENY the charge which the arresting officer places against you.
- DON'T** DISCUSS your case with another prisoner or anyone else before trial.

These ground rules are important enough to be well worth your time in committing them to memory, whether or not you ever

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Vol. I, No. 4 Special Feature • 9

DON'T CALL ME ROOMMATE!

• A TV WIFE'S BILL OF RIGHTS

My husband is a transvestite. The reasons why he is what he is have little to do with this article I am writing at the invitation of the editors of TURNABOUT, so I shall not go into them. Suffice it to say that I knew that my husband was a TV before we were married and love him enough to accept that portion of his personality with very few reservations.

In our years of marriage, nothing in my husband's practice of transvestism has undermined my love for him as a man or my acceptance of this facet of his personality. However, from my experience as a "TV wife" and my observations of married TVs and their wives among our friends, I should like to pass on a few tips to the readers of TURNABOUT based on more or less prevalent problems which can throw a marital relationship involving TVism off-balance.

Some of these pointers I will make are drawn from admittedly minor irritations or annoyances; others are based on conflicts which can bear the seeds of destruction into a TV's marriage. I call them "The TV Wife's Bill of Rights":

• Don't call me roommate! I have no wish to be your roommate ... or your "sister" ... or your "girlfriend" — I am your wife and want to be treated as your wife, no matter how you may happen to be dressed at any given time.

• Never let me forget you are my husband! Nothing will make me feel more insecure in our marriage and in my own femininity than for you to become carried away by some mystical "girl within" and forget you are a man and my husband.

• Don't compete with me when we are out in public and you are "dressed." I don't mind your having a good time with the femininity you've achieved, but I bitterly resent any competitive comparisons you might make between your ersatz femininity and my own appearance. If others at a TV party are so rude as to make these comparisons, I want you to be on my side.

• Don't abbreviate me or other women in my presence. Whatever nut thought up such abbreviations as "RG" (real girl) or "GG" (genetic girl) certainly must have a deep-seated contempt for women. Unless you make me doubt my own femininity by your actions or attitude toward me, I need no abbreviated reminder that I am a "real girl." How would you like it if I called you an "RB" or a "GB?"

• Don't tell me TVism is "normal" whenever I might express misgivings about your dressing up as a woman. I threw the word "normal" out of my vocabulary years ago, when I found out that it no longer had any real meaning in a world where no two people are exactly alike. So let's leave such words as "normal" and "abnormal" to the psychiatrists, the psychologists, and the social workers, who spend their lives pigeon-holing human beings.

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Vol. I, No. 4 The. Roundtable • 11



MALE ORDER or MAIL ORDER ??

An interesting new concept in merchandising has been advanced in the latest catalogue from John Aaron Fashions, Inc., sent to many of our TV friends. Although their business is aimed mainly at women at large, rather than TVs, they will custom-cut dresses on a mail-order basis for a charge of \$10 added to the \$25 to \$60 asking price for the garments.

TVs may find the prices a bit steep, but the chance to have a dress that fits "the problem figure" is attractive to some. The people at John Aarons suggest careful measuring in such instances and, if possible, a front and side view photo to work from.

The full-color catalogue we saw from Aarons has a few items we found attractive, but the overall stock still seems limited. However, those who wish to take a look at what they offer may obtain a catalogue by writing John Aarons Fashions, Inc., 6311 Yucca Street, Hollywood, California 90028.

Generally speaking, mail-order buying is not nearly as satisfactory as buying-in-person or having someone familiar with your particular problems, figure-wise, do the buying for you. As we have said before, TVs who fear going in and asking for what they want overestimate the degree to which this lets the world in on their private lives. The awful truth is, no one really cares enough whether a person is a TV or is not a TV. It rarely enters the mind of a salesperson, in any case.

For TVs who don't mind shopping in person, the Paradise Bootery, located between 46th and 47th Streets on Broadway in New York City, provides completely private fitting rooms for men to try on high-heeled shoes ranging in size up to 13.

TVs with "problem feet" may also be interested in the catalogue of a firm in Philadelphia which specializes in mail-order handling of large or unusual sizes, particularly for wide feet. Offering a large selection of women's shoes from size 4 to 12 and widths C to EEE, the firm is Syd Kushner, Inc., 733 South Street, Philadelphia 47, Pennsylvania. Catalogues are free.

Transcript

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ELECTROLYSIS

- ☐ Reasonable Rates
- ☐ Results Guaranteed

UNWANTED HAIR REMOVED

... permanently and painlessly via a new scientific method in the strictest privacy. Beards thinned or completely removed. Backs, chests, limbs cleared. TV customers are welcomed...

Ernest V. Capaldo

33 West 42nd Street :: Suite 837
New York City :: Phone: PE 62920

ANNOUNCING . . .

A Brand New Series Of **TV-FICTION BOOKLETS!**

Work is under way on the first in a new series of unique TV novelets, which are to be published as time permits. Each will contain 40 to 50 pages, 5½" x 8½", and will be illustrated by such artists as Lorraine Channing and Barbara Jean. Emphasis will be on TV themes, with as little interference by subsidiary affectations (sado-masochism, etc.) as is possible. Each novelet will cost \$3.00.

For your convenience, an order blank is enclosed in this copy of TURNABOUT

The Abbé de Choisy Press

P. O. BOX 4053 • NEW YORK, NEW YORK • 10017

Vol. I, No. 4

TV Marketplace • 45

Transcript

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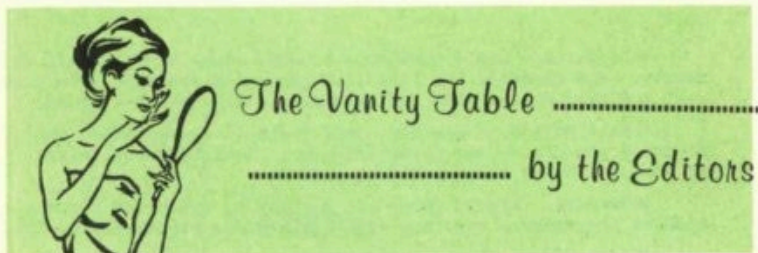
The Abbé de Choisy Press

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Vol. 1, No. 4 • TV Marketplace • 45

Issue 5 (Spring 1965) was published a year after the previous issue, listing the editor as Fred L. Shaw, Jr. The letter from the editor announces that Turnabout will be moving from a monthly to quarterly publication cycle due to operational issues.

This issue includes articles by two doctors, one in support of trans issues, and the other against, as well as the editor's reactions to the ongoing debate. The second installment of "Transvestism and the Law," series also appears, this time focusing on "Arrest Without Trial." The ongoing "Kaleidoscope" feature follows up on an ongoing legal battle first outlined in issue 4. The issue also highlights makeup and grooming tools that one might need or want and contains a handwritten note in the photo gallery about the known height of one of the models, suggesting the owner knew them personally.



A Basic Makeup Wardrobe

Probably the most difficult problem faced by the TV who enjoys making his transformation complete is the selection of a basic makeup wardrobe. Advertisements and television commercials bombard one with tantalizing visions of a promised new beauty if only one follow their commandments and acquire a wide range of cosmetics bearing their brand name.

So the question asked by many TVs is, "How many of these things do I really need?" You should keep in mind that rouges, lipsticks, powders, eye shadows, nail polishes, and the like should be available in varied colors to harmonize with changes of costume and season (as when one is tanned, for instance). Assuming this, here is a basic recommended makeup wardrobe:

- Cleansing cream for dry skin. Cleansing lotion (or soap and water) for oily skin.

- Astringent for oily skin. Skin refresher for dry and normal skin — to remove final traces of cleansing product — or a clear water rinse for soap users. The idea is to close pores, tone and stimulate skin, and give a finer-textured surface.

- Moisturized cream or lotion for all skin types. Provides smoother, more evenly distributed color when applying lotion or cream foundations and protects skin while makeup is on.

- Cream foundation for dry skin; lotion foundation for normal or oily skin.

- Cream rouge for dry skin; liquid rouge for normal and oily skin. Dry cake rouge is best for touch-ups during the day.

- Blemish-covering stick for covering up dark areas where beard might be difficult to cover with foundation. Miner's Stick or Max Factor's 'Erase' are fine.

- Face powder which blends properly with foundation cream or lotion. Avoid so-called all-in-one makeup creams which promise to dry to a finish which requires no powder. They just don't work well for TVs.

Spring 1965

Vanity Table • 33

Transcript

The Vanity Table by the Editors

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Spring 1965 Vanity Table • 33

Issue 6 (Winter 1966) is a bit lighter in tone than the previous two issues but does provide a final update on the legal battle outlined in the previous two issues. The editor notes that the resolution was disappointing because the court had refused an appeal to overturn discriminatory laws. The real focus is to celebrate four parties that have been hosted in *Turnabout's* new

headquarters. The issue features photographs of party attendees in a gallery and estimates that about 50 people came together to socialize.

A new addition to the magazine is a comic by the art editor, adding a lighthearted and humorous touch to the issue.



Transcript

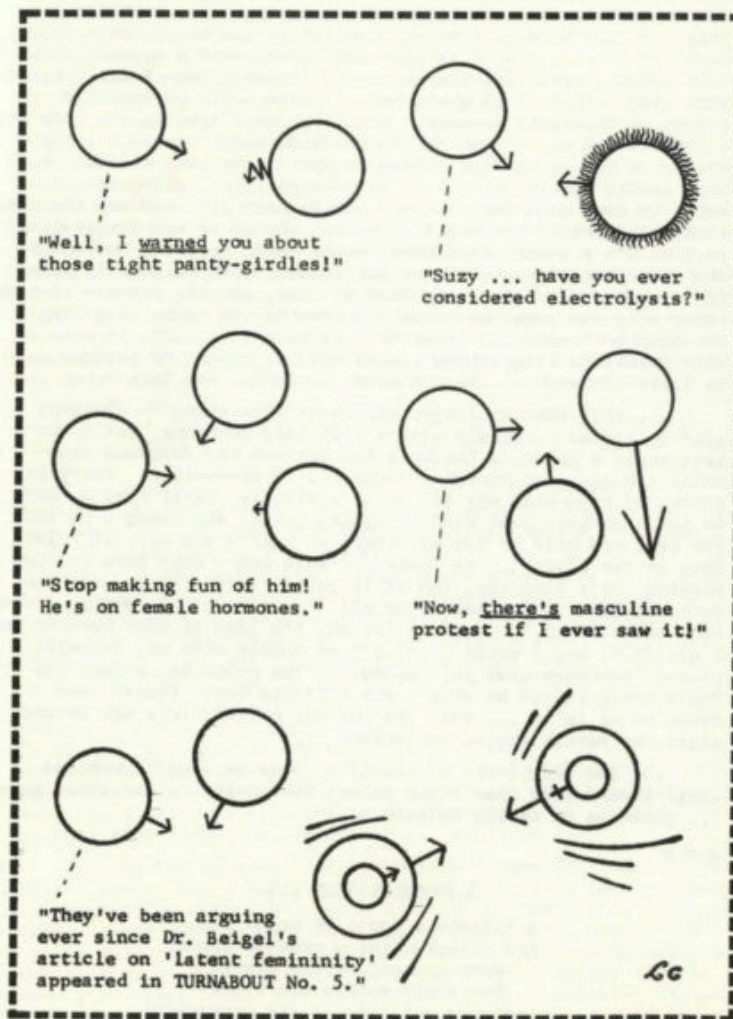
Turnabout Throws a TV Party !!

Includes 2 black and white images of women captioned KAY and JEANNETTE and BERNICE RYLEY on page 24, and 2 black and white images of women captioned ANGIE SAXON and JOAN and BARBARA JEAN on page 25

SYMBOLIC TRANSVESTISM

With Apologies to
PLAYBOY Magazine

By LORRAINE CHANNING



8 • Humor

TURNABOUT

Transcript

Five-panel cartoon.

Panel 1: Male symbol to another male symbol with a squished arrow: "Well, I warned you about those tight panty-girdles!"

Panel 2: Male symbol to another male symbol with hair surrounding the outside of the circle: "Suzy... have you ever considered electrolysis?"

Panel 3: Two male symbols talking about a male symbol with a small arrow: "Stop making fun of him! He 's on female hormones."

Panel 4: Two male symbols talking about a male symbol with a very large arrow: "Now, there's masculine protest if I ever saw it! "

Panel 5: Two male symbols talking about two fighting male symbols, one with a male symbol on the inside and the other with a female symbol on the inside: "They've been arguing ever since Dr. Beigel's article on 'latent femininity' appeared in TURNABOUT No. 5."

LC 8 • Humor TURNABOUT

Issue 7 (Summer 1966) includes a centerfold featuring the work of Dr. Harry Benjamin, who has categorized several types of transvestitism and transsexualism in a chart titled "Sex Orientation Scale (S.O.S): Sex and Gender Disorientation and Indecision (Males)." A review by the editor describes how this scale has divided the opinions of community members. Some categories, for example, appear preferable to others and many believe that the categories represent Benjamin's largely outdated worldview.

The issue also continues with the comics began in the previous edition, and has a short obituary for Sonn   Teal, a regular contributor and columnist in previous issues, who passed tragically in a plane crash.

Where to Lean More

An important historical artifact for the early representation of trans people in publications, SCA is happy to add these issues to our collection. If you are interested seeing more images of trans folx from this period, the AGO in Toronto currently has a photography exhibit titled "[Casa Susanna](#)" which features many of the regulars from the photo galleries in *Turnabout*, as well as issues of *Transvestia*, *Turnabout's* contemporary. Additional resources for trans print material include the [Digital Transgender Archive](#) and the [ArQuives](#).

The Digital Transgender Archive aims to "increase the accessibility of transgender history by providing an online hub for digitized historical materials, born-digital materials, and information on archival holdings throughout the world." The online collection offers materials from institutions

and private collections across the world to make trans materials more accessible, and is a great resource for anyone, from researchers who would like to explore trans history to folx who are just curious about trans experiences. All scans of the issues in this blog post are sourced from this archive!

Another great resource to explore trans history from a Canadian perspective is the ArQuives. As one of the largest LGBTQ2+ archives in the world, the ArQuives is a great place to find all sorts of reference material about trans history and beyond. They have even put together a handy [Trans Collections Guide](#) to help users navigate their trans-related materials.

Stay tuned for our next Pride Month blog post on Isidor Schneider's *Doctor Transit*, and happy Pride to all!