

Dragging with Mary Kay

by Billy Russo

It was on my birthday last year, that I last donned the tiara of Princess Cirius, Crown Princess Royale of the Roseburg Court. My birthday wasn't the occasion. It was MCC Roseburg's Installation/Dedication weekend, and I was going to co-MC a community concert at the local college with my long-time friend, Daphne Hatfield.

Applying makeup is not my forte. And among my friends, there have always been plenty of good makeup artists. Since moving to Douglas County eight years ago, I have relied on fairies passing through, and more recently, members of the Roseburg Court.



The Roseburg Report

And anyone who has ever had the experience of making me up knows my favorite line which I repeat over and over until the job is finished: "Are we done yet?" I hate sitting perfectly still and makeup artists are so very temperamental.

On the occasion of the MCC Roseburg Installation/Dedication one of the brothers at Mixed Company had agreed to help me get ready for the show. I was supposed to meet him at Mixed Company about six that evening. When I arrived only the dogs were there to greet me. Bandit — not my favorite — immediately bit me on the leg.

I sat out in the driveway with the hot July sun beating down on me for about half an hour before Ron showed. He was sorry that he was late, but earlier in the afternoon he received a call from one of his old high school buddies. He needed to talk to Ron right away. As it turned out, the man took his first baby step in coming out: he confided in Ron that he was gay. What could Ron do!!?! He couldn't just say, "Well, that's nice. I got a drag queen to make up in half an hour. Gotta go." Anyway, that's why he was late. But Ron's an expert with makeup and wigs; he had me all ready to go 15 minutes before showtime.

There was a problem though. Since there's 30 miles of I-5 between Mixed Company and Umpqua Community College, I was definitely

going to be late for the show. There is also no phone at Whipple Auditorium, so I couldn't even let anyone know that I'd be late.

I dashed out and hopped into my car — with the dogs fast on my heels — and headed for the Interstate. My little Chevette chugged up Robert's Mountain, just north of Myrtle Creek, and picked up speed as I cruised down the other side. I was doing 85 mph when I passed the only other car on the road: a late model pink Cadillac with Washington plates and a Mary Kay Cosmetics bumper sticker.

I hardly noticed the Cadillac's three occupants, as I was busy watching for the big white cruisers of the OSP. I didn't relish the idea of a confrontation as Princess Cirius. As I passed the Winston/Coos Bay Exit I glanced in my rearview mirror, and to my surprise, the pink Cadillac was coming up fast and about to pass me.

They didn't overtake me, though. They pulled up alongside. I looked at my speedometer: 85 mph. I checked my Tiara in the mirror: it looked okay. Finally I looked over at them. The passenger in the front seat was holding up a large placard. It said, "YOUR DRESS IS DRAGGING."

That was too much. My guffaw set the little car oscillating dangerously and the pink Cadillac fell safely in behind. But not before I made eye contact with the person holding up the placard. And by the way her eyebrows flew up, there was no doubt that she knew she was not dealing with an ordinary Roseburg housewife.

I opened the door and hauled in my dragging gown. I just couldn't believe that that had really happened. I soon put the incident in the back of my mind as I approached the Roseburg city limits. I continued scanning the on-ramps and overpasses, watching for the big, white police cruisers. I slowed considerably as I passed the county fairgrounds and encountered light traffic. Two miles later, once safely on the north side of the last Roseburg

exit, I continued my high speed pace for the last five miles that separate Roseburg from the community college.

As I climbed that last mile long grade that separated me from my destination, I noticed the pink Cadillac coming up on me once again. This time it passed me at high speed, but not before the passenger held up another placard. It read "DO YOU USE MARY KAY COSMETICS?"



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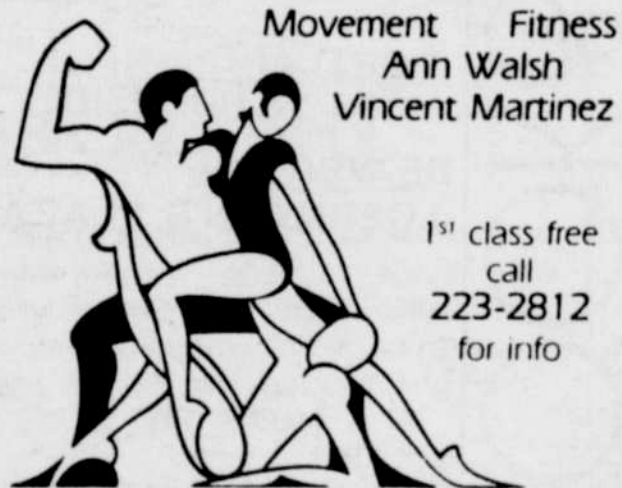
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