

## ATTENDANCE STILL STRONG

by James

I wish I could give you all the vital statistics, but just a week before Christmas my jacket was stolen, and my notebook (with all the facts I wanted to report) was in the pocket. So I'll have to wing it here, and those of you who remember things differently can write me letters about it if you like.

October's Informational meeting featured two short presentations: Yours Truly displayed a variety of publications of interest to FTMs, including "Chrysalis Quarterly," "Boy's Own," and "Transsexual Voice." A summary listing is included elsewhere in this issue. Also, P.B. gave a report on his experience attending the "Southern Comfort Convention," where he met Dr. Gilbert and learned much about his surgery. The tapes he made there helped Kevin in preparing his Surgery Update article, also in this issue. Approximately 40 people attended.

In November, about 12 of us socialized while bowling at the Park Bowl in San Francisco. Kiki and Girl George graced our gathering with their charming ways and winning bowling styles. Few of us boys were experienced bowlers, so we all felt pretty confident that it didn't matter how well we did. I don't think I was the only one who was surprised at how much FUN we all had! Some of us even talked about making this an annual event.

Our Support meeting in December was attended by about 16 guys. These gatherings are an excellent place to ask those persistent, perplexing questions about the mechanics, philosophy and politics of transgenderism and/or the transsexual process.

January 19, 1992 will bring us more information in the form of a presentation by Walker from the Gay & Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California. He'll be showing us the program "She Even Chewed Tobacco" which reflects the lives of cross-living women in our early history—were they macho women, butch lesbians, or transsexuals without the hormones and surgery we have available today? Walker will also tell us about Lou Sullivan's research and papers which are housed in the GLHS archives.

The next Social, scheduled for February 16, will be held at The Kennel Club, 628 Divisadero in San Francisco (north of Fell Street). It's a Gender Day Tea Dance, and all genderists and persons of all sexual and identity persuasions are invited. Come and hang out with us guys and practice asking Ladies (or whomever...) to dance. Admission will be charged at the door. Contact Sky at [ng Information R](#) for more information.

The next Support group meeting—FTM-identified TSs or CDs only—will be held March 15, 1992. Contact Billy at [ng Information R](#) or Michael at [ng Information R](#) for more information.

April 12, 1992 is the next Informational meeting, from 2 to 5 p.m. at M.C.C., 150 Eureka St., San Francisco. James (Yours Truly) will return that morning from the IFGE conference in Houston, and will give a full report. Contact James before April 8th at [ng Information R](#) for more information.

Other dates to remember/plan for are:

MAY 10, 1992 SOCIAL Contact Sky  
JUNE 7, 1992 SUPPORT Contact Billy or Michael.

Mark your calendars now and plan to attend!

Also, we're continuing the Tuesday "Real Person Nights" so that you can be assured of reaching someone in person when you call for FTM information. From 8 to 11 p.m. Pacific Time one

of us promises to stay at home to answer calls. Here's the schedule:

First Tuesday of every month:

James.....[ng Information R](#)

Second Tuesday of every month:

Sky.....[ng Information R](#)

Third Tuesday of every month:

Michael.....[ng Information R](#)

Fourth Tuesday of every month:

Billy.....[ng Information R](#)

Fifth Tuesday (as required):

James.

We're here to answer your questions or just to talk, peer to peer. It's about helping each other.

SPEAKING OF HELPING.....

IF ANYONE HAS ANY IDEAS FOR GRAPHICS OR A LOGO WE CAN USE IN THIS NEWSLETTER, PLEASE WRITE OR CALL US!!

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## SURGICAL UPDATE: 1991

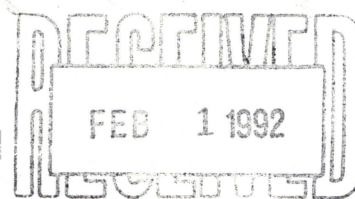
by Kevin Horwitz

*"The circumcised head was a work of mastercraft With perfectly bevelled rim, Of unusual weight, And the friendliest red. Even relaxed, the shaft was of noble dimensions With the wrinkles that indicate Singular powers of extension..." (W.H. Auden)*

Surgery is a fascinating topic which is pursued with boundless enthusiasm by transsexual persons. Generally, surgery provides an aesthetic continuity which brings with it greater psychic and physical comfortability. Particularly upper surgery for FTMs makes it a lot easier to pass. However, nobody ever said that the results were going to be perfect. Surgically created genitals cannot yet replicate the natural-made stuff, especially when it comes to penises. If you consider the fact that snakes (and lizards) are issued two penises at birth, and can regenerate both of them in case of injury, the lower surgery issue takes on an entirely different perspective. Genetic scientists in Russia are currently studying this phenomenon among our reptile friends, and attempting to isolate the enzyme(s) responsible. However, it looks as if, at least for now, transsexuals must rely upon the surgeon's knife. This article will cover the two main kinds of lower surgery, and is based partially on a previous interview with Sean [m](#), a recipient of the forearm donor phalloplasty.

The inadequacy, if you will, of lower surgery in particular, is sometimes cited as one reason why fewer genetic women seek gender reassignment as compared with their male counterparts. If so, it might be interesting to note the relatively recent origin of the penile inversion technique (which inverts the penis to create a vagina and clitoris). Dr. Barou, a French surgeon (who operated on Jan Morris) developed this procedure during the early 1960s. Not until the early 1970s did U.S. surgeons begin using it with any kind of finesse. Compared with earlier techniques such as castration, the penile inversion seems like an excellent option.

Perhaps this discovery speaks optimistically to the evolution of FTM surgeries. In a sense, things are just starting out, and the FTM procedure represents a much more difficult equation to solve. However, the 1990's may prove a good decade for





research, and maybe the magician will pull something out of the hat. Meanwhile, let's take a look at the two best options on the market at this time: genitoplasty and phalloplasty.

Let's start with genitoplasty, which is actually the most commonly requested form of lower surgery. This procedure actually "frees" the enlarged clitoris from the hood, and makes it jut out more prominently by re-positioning and optionally "wrapping" it with a portion of labial tissue. The penis, albeit small, has good sensation, is natural-appearing, and gives an overall male (rather than female) appearance. A realistic scrotum is generally achieved through testicular implants. Three different sizes of "balls" are available, but generally speaking, the small size might be the one to consider, since it more nearly matches the 1" to 3" penis. [Some surgeons have custom size testicular implants available which can often more realistically reflect the body size of the recipient-ed.]

The resulting genital construction looks (because it is) more like an enlarged clitoris than a penis. Another way of describing genitoplasty is to say that it's about the same size and shape as a handgun bullet (a Winchester 38) with a small mushroom on the end.

An important factor in genitoplasty is in letting well enough alone. If you request a vaginectomy, several erogenous zones will be scraped out, and the closure sometimes causes the penis to appear even smaller than it is. Most pre-operative FTMs who look nearly genetic with their clothing on are going to feel mortified in situations which require them to undress. At least, with genitoplasty, people who see you will not be thinking "where is it?" They might think, "My God, that's a small one!" But, ultimately, the trick is not to care so much what other people think.

Phalloplasty is the most difficult of surgeries, yet offers the greatest hope of normalcy. It defies the laws of physics in an attempt to build something substantial out of not enough existing tissue. So far, surgeons have "borrowed" skin, muscle, nerves, and even arteries from various other areas of the body. Until recently, phalloplasty failed to provide erotic sensation—it amounted to having a realistic dildo permanently attached to your groin. In some instances, the clitoris would be embedded into the base of the penis, or simply left intact below the phallus (check out the February 1989 issue of Hustler Magazine, "I Love A Woman With A Cock").

Dr. Gilbert, of Norfolk, Virginia, has recently broken some new ground with phalloplasty surgeries. He basically takes the meat out of your left forearm—one of the two arteries, nerves, skin, and the gooshy tissue underneath—and creates a penis which has its own blood supply. The head of the clitoris is actually

severed so that its dorsal nerve can attach to the radial nerve (taken from the forearm). This should give the penis erotic sensation, although everything depends on whether or not the penis "lives." Sometimes the tissue doesn't like the new environment, and a few of Gilbert's clients have had them turn black and fall off. In such cases, the person's arm was still damaged, yet he didn't have anything to show for it. The forearm donor site is considered the best, and Gilbert thinks it has the highest odds for success.

The penis is extremely swollen after surgery—about the size of a can of frozen orange juice. After it has completely healed, Gilbert sizes it down several times until it is 4" to 5" in length (length is determined by the size of the forearm). The skin texture and color are more uniform than they are on a genetic penis, and there are other differences, too. The head is defined, but doesn't have the usual reddish color with the slightly thickened skin. The urinary opening is much larger than usual, and is extremely wrinkled.

Sean is one of the early recipients of this type of

phalloplasty, and his willingness to speak with me prior to the writing of this article provided a great deal of useful information. In particular, Sean has documented both his and another friend's stages of surgery on a video which I was fortunate enough to take a look at. Sean was a particularly good person to speak with about the Gilbert phalloplasty because he is basically very happy with his surgical results. During just about every stage of the surgery, Sean suffered some kind of infection or fistula which required that he fly back to Norfolk for revision. His donor forearm was covered with a skin graft from his thigh, and after it had healed "expanders" were inserted which literally looked like "balloons." The idea is that the expanders force the skin to generate new nerves and skin cells. However, it is an extremely painful healing process, and Sean even purchased a hospital bed because of the length of time (approximately two years) it took to get things back to normal. The final surgical procedure involves the insertion of a pump which enables the penis to become erect (or flaccid) by tapping on the stomach, or, more recently, on the scrotum. Here, again, the pump became infected, had to be removed, allowed to re-heal, and was re-inserted one year later.

In addition to surgical complications, Sean stated that his penis had a lack of resilience which caused it to be more sensitive than a genetic penis. This caused difficulties in certain sleeping positions, or even walking, until he got used to a different way of doing things. He feels that the erotic sensation is good, however, and he can void standing up. For Sean, having a normal-sized penis with good sexual function was absolutely essential. Had this not been the result, his overall attitude might have been less positive. In addition, a very strong marital relationship enabled him to weather most of the trauma and unforeseen obstacles that popped up throughout the surgical processes.

The Gilbert phalloplasty represents a major breakthrough in lower surgery. It has erotic sensation, can be urinated through, and has a basically realistic appearance. Gilbert continually improves upon and refines the basic procedure, but the drawbacks remain fairly profound and irreversible. Therefore, Dr. Gilbert requires some arduous testing and interviewing before accepting potential candidates. If you are seriously considering this kind of surgery, Sean has agreed to share some of his knowledge and experience on this particular topic. He can be reached at [Information@Re](mailto:Information@Re). Additionally, if other phalloplasty recipients would be willing to be contact persons [or to write an article about their experience], please write to us at the College Ave. address.



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## LIFE AFTER DONAHUE by Francis

Being on the Donahue show November 7, 1991, has had some interesting results for me. Sandy, Information (who was responsible for getting the panel together for the "People Are Talking" show on female cross-dressers last spring) and I were invited to join several New York women who had attended a



female-to-male cross-dressing workshop and then passed as men for a day in New York. Although Donahue never made it clear that Sandy and I had not been part of that workshop, but were cross-dressers from the West Coast (Sandy announced that she was from New Jersey, and my mic was cut off as I tried to shout that I was from San Francisco), I was able to get across a short personal statement, and was glad to have the opportunity to appear on national television fully cross-dressed.

Because of the wide viewership of Donahue, many more people have approached me to discuss gender and cross-dressing. This happened to some extent after "People," but now a number of women have talked to me about also being "full cross-dressers" with mustaches or other facial hair, male personas with names, and a slightly different way of seeing the world when dressed in that way. They were each relieved to know they were not alone in their desire to bring out their male side, and that they could have those feelings without being transsexual or male-identified women. In turn, the positive feedback from being on Donahue has increased my confidence to continue my "performance art" as a full cross-dresser at clubs and events (not to mention "normal" activities like movies and dinner), and will hopefully lead to more understanding and awareness of cross-dressing and gender issues, in their many forms.

## NETWORKING COLUMN

Dear FTM's,

I'm living in Seattle and have my first stage pencilled in for May 28th with Dr. Laub in Palo Alto. I'm writing in hopes to find somebody to assist and care for me for those 12 days after surgery. Ideally they are an FTM to whom I could return the favor at some time.

Any names or networking is appreciated.  
Thanks!

Paul  
Identifying Information Redacted  
WA  
Identifying Information Redacted

Dear FTM,

I am looking for others interested in forming an East Coast network to share information and offer support. Please write to:

Eskimo  
Identifying Information Redacted  
Identifying Information Redacted

Dear FTM,

My mother would like to hear from other parents who are coping with a TS offspring, preferably in Southern California. Please have any interested parents write to her at my address. I travel, and my mail is forwarded to me, so there might be a slight delay in responding. At first my mother thought she couldn't handle seeing me, but she has more than come around. She now wants to help with surgery and views it as giving birth twice. She has been doing some reading on gender dysphoria, which helps her not to blame herself, but she has asked me if I know any other parents she can talk with. Thanks guys!

"Debby"  
c/o Andy  
Identifying Information Redacted  
Identifying Information Redacted

Check out the *Loved Ones of Transsexuals (LOTS)* group in the Los Angeles area-ed.

Support group forming for transsexuals who've been completely nixed from all family ties. Issues of concern: survival, personal finances and transition, how the isolation affects us on all levels, etc.

Contact  
Information  
Identifying Information Redacted  
San Francisco, CA  
Or, phone

A new support group for heterosexual-identified FTMs and their significant others and friends will be meeting on the third Saturday of every month, beginning November 23, 1991. The group plans to focus on the issues and concerns of FTMs who are contemplating surgery and having heterosexual relationships.

Meetings begin at 7:30 pm, and are held at the New Community of Faith Church, 6350 Rainbow Drive, San Jose. To get there, take 280 to the Wolfe Road exit; Go west on Wolfe; Wolfe becomes Miller; proceed approximately 4 lights to Rainbow, and turn right. The church will be on the left side; parking is available in the rear of the building.

For more information about this group, contact

Shaun  
Identifying Information Redacted

Pre-Op FTM/TS wants international network with other Gay/Bisexual FTM/TS. Contact

"Flicker Network"  
Identifying Information Redacted  
Identifying Information Redacted  
San Francisco, CA

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## PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST TO FTMs

### Boy's Own

started May 1991  
donations accepted  
published by:  
Stephen [redacted] Information [redacted]  
Identifying Information Redacted  
and Information R [redacted]  
Identifying Information Redacted  
England

### Chrysalis Quarterly

started Spring 1991  
subscriptions \$20.00/year  
(4 issues + includes informational booklets)  
published by:  
AEGIS: Atlanta Educational Gender Information Service  
Ms. Dallas Denny, Editor-In-Chief and Publisher  
P.O. Box 33724  
Decatur, GA 30033-0724

### Gender Identity Center Newsletter

started ?  
subscriptions \$15.00/year (4 issues)  
published by:  
Gender Identity Center of Colorado, Inc.  
3715 West 32nd Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80211

### Insight

started ?  
subscriptions \$22.00/year (4 issues)  
published by:  
Montgomery Medical & Psychological Institute, Inc.  
P.O. Box 33311  
Decatur, GA 30033

### The Transsexual Voice

started 1981  
subscriptions \$18.00 (6 issues)  
published by:  
Phoebe Smith  
P.O. Box 16314  
Atlanta, GA 30321

### TV/TS Tapestry Journal

started ?  
subscriptions \$30.00 (4 issues)  
single copy \$12.00  
published by:  
I.F.G.E. International Foundation for Gender Education  
P.O. Box 367  
Wayland, MA 01778

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## SAN FRANCISCO GENDER INFORMATION

A non-profit service providing referrals and networking to transsexuals and other members of the gender community in the San Francisco Bay Area and Northern California. Call 415/346-0475. Send \$2.00 for complete listing, SASE for all other inquiries to:

SFGI  
P.O. Box 423602  
San Francisco, CA 94142.

Current categories of providers include the following:

Attorneys, books, electrologists, gynecologists, hair care, hormones, informational services, newsletters, organizations, programs, psychiatrists, cosmetic surgeons, sex reassignment surgeons, support groups, therapists, and voice coaches...And more!

Bay Area social group forming for any man who identifies as "soft," "effeminate," or "non-macho." All sexual orientations, gender identities, and cultural backgrounds welcome.

Contact

[redacted] Information R [redacted]

Information [redacted]

Identifying Information Redacted

San Francisco, CA [redacted] Information R [redacted]

Or, phone [redacted] Information R [redacted]

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## FTM MALE BOX

Dear FTM,

After recently becoming involved with a female-to-male transsexual (FTM), it was with great enthusiasm and curiosity that I sat down to read Marcy Sheiner's article in the November 20, 1991 edition of the San Francisco Bay Guardian entitled "Girls Will Be Boys" and the anonymous response which appeared with the letters to the editor in the December 25, 1991 issue.

I was pleased with the clarity and non-judgmental manner in which Ms. Sheiner presented details of the surgical procedures and choices offered to the FTM. She answered many of the questions I had been too shy to ask, and too unfamiliar with the world of transsexualism to know where to look for the answers myself.

But the majority of my interest in both articles was in the relating of these women's stories of their own relationships with FTMs.

While I consider myself to be a liberated woman (independent, self-reliant and capable of holding my own in the world), I began to realize that I do not share many of the "politically correct" attitudes of the feminist community as applied to the FTM.

I do not share the view of surgical alteration of the body as "mutilation". In many ways I see a similarity between a woman's right to an abortion and a person's right to have a body consistent with their self-identity.

I do not question my boyfriend's moral right to seek surgery to obtain congruity of body and soul. As a person who has at many times in my life felt trapped by circumstances beyond my control, I feel that I can offer compassion and understanding to the person who has suffered a lifetime in the ultimate trap...the wrong body.

I do not see the process of FTM transsexualism as "selling out" to the patriarchal culture. I respect and admire the courage it takes to pursue the process of coming to terms with one's



identity in the face of judgment and rejection by so many facets of our society.

Since becoming involved in this relationship, I have struggled with letting go of the lesbian label with which I had become quite comfortable, but obviously did not control my heartfelt emotions. And I have encountered rejection from the community that offered me a great deal of comfort, support and validation over the past several years. (And in fairness, some of my lesbian friends continue to be extremely supportive.) But I am beginning to see labels as a self-imposed trap, limiting my choices and narrowing the possibilities for enriching my life. I was relieved to hear Ms. Sheiner express my feeling that my boyfriend's transsexualism is, "at this point almost incidental", to our relationship. A friend of mine asked, "Isn't it strange to be with a transsexual?", and I found myself responding, "the strange thing is that it isn't strange".

I feel fortunate to be sharing myself with a person dedicated to self-improvement and grateful for the opportunity to increase my awareness by looking through his eyes. This rare person who is able to see life through both gender experiences and is willing to share that experience with me. At times I feel pushed to my limits, but never without the reward of having my consciousness expanded and experiencing myself as a transformed person.

Karen m 1/10/92

Dear FTM,

I need some ideas QUICK! I don't have the money to get hormones and much to my surprise, I have a hard time passing. What do I do until I can afford them, before I wind up beating the shit out of the next asshole who calls me "she" when it's obvious that I'm not dressed like a woman and I'm wearing every prosthetic and cosmetic I can think of?

I can't lose my temper with the world, for Christ sakes, but when you tell someone your name is Steven or Joseph and people are still stupid enough to call you "Miss," how are you supposed to feel? Often, I try to diplomatically tell them they made a mistake, but there are people in the world who don't appreciate courtesies!

Can anyone write a reply and speak to this issue? I know a lot of other people going both directions feel the same think. Thanks for listening.

Yours truly,  
Joseph nformatio

*I sincerely hope other people will write in with advice and encouragement for you, Joseph. I know how painful it is to be reflected as someone who is not you. I don't know if you've tried this, but often masculinity is perceived through self-confidence. That is, if you project calm, self-assuredness, and you are not so emotionally intense, people might perceive you differently. Also, maybe you're giving mixed signals in other ways. For example, you might want to adopt a more conservative male appearance in your attire and haircut, at least until you're able to get hormones. Especially in San Francisco, I've noticed, people are so used to seeing butch lesbians that they ignore the masculine signals FTMs give out, and assume the feminist ethic. Hang in there. If it's right, it will work out - James*

Dear FTM,

...I was wondering if the Products and Resources booklet compiled by Kris Hollinger [mentioned in previous issues of FTM Newsletter] is still available or not, and how I could receive a copy of it if it is. Thanks...

Also, some information on the "willie" (March '89 FTM): It is important to spray it with Armor-all at least once a month as the manufacturer suggests. If the "willie" is worn with a jockstrap you can get a case of jock itch, which can be cured

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with the standard jock itch spray or creme that is stocked by the athlete's foot spray in the store (for those who didn't know). It's also very important to bleach a jockstrap on a regular basis. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Brian Information

ifying Information Red

ifying Information Red II. Informatic

*Thanks for the "willie" advice, Brian. As for the Kris Hollinger booklet, I don't know the answer. Perhaps Kris will write and inform us... -James*

Dear James,

Thank you for giving [J2CP Information Services] a plug in the October issue of FTM.

J2CP will be phased out on December 31, 1991. I have done my best but I can no longer support it alone. The income from the half-dozen packages each month doesn't come anyway close to providing for postage, phone lines, space rental and printing/copying costs. All materials, with the exception of "Legal Aspects of Transsexualism" (\$11.00/First Class Postage Paid), have been uploaded to the BBS.

TerraNet has changed its focus also. It is now dedicated to providing information on HIV/AIDS and operates as the HIV/AIDS Info BBS. Gender information and international echo conferences can be accessed by typing "B" (no quotes) at the main menu.

All data files are available for reading and file capture via scroll-to-screen. Registration is required ONLY if the user wants to join an on-line echo conference. Users are allowed up to 90 minutes per day on-line in 30-minute increments. Three hours per day, in 60-minute increments, with full download privileges (files are compressed to reduce download time) can be had for a \$25 donation to the Sisters of St. Elizabeth.

HIV/AIDS Info BBS currently has over 20 MB of gender related files with another 40 to 50 MB of legal files awaiting author/copyright owner permission. The system runs on a 386SX20 system with 660 MB of storage and supports 9600 baud (v.32bis, v.42bis, HST, MNP1-4, and MNP-5 standards).

May God bless you in your endeavor to continue Lou's dream.

In His lovingkindness,  
Sr. Mary Elizabeth, SSE

Dear Sister Mary Elizabeth,

*Thank you so much for all you have done for the transgender community; and thank you for the services you are continuing to provide as we move into the electronic bit stream of the future.*

Respectfully,  
James



## REVIEWS

### Body Politics by P.B.

The November 20, 1991 S.F. Bay Guardian featured an article on female-to-male transsexualism entitled "Girls Will Be Boys", by Marcy Sheiner. The article, which included excerpts from and commentary on an interview with a post-operative FTM, was sensitive and informative. Ms. Sheiner explored the gamut: theories of causation; the history of the United States' recognition of gender dysphoria as a medical condition; an explanation of the role played by the Harry Benjamin Standards of Care with regard to the diagnosis of gender dysphoria and the stages of sex reassignment. She wove into this her own process of achieving a level of understanding which moved her from being "simultaneously fascinated and repelled by a copy of the FTM newsletter" to describing her relationship with her FTM boyfriend as one in which she can "soar into new levels of consciousness, transported by the dissolution of gender distinctions into a territory far from a planet that can seem to accommodate only two strictly delineated genders."

Two of the things mentioned in the article about FTM surgery need to be corrected. First, the ratio of female-to male versus male-to-female candidates for surgery in the United States is closer to 1:1 than 1:4. Second, the 1990 revision to the Standards of Care eliminates the mandatory year of cross-living prior to bilateral mastectomy. In spite of this, Ms. Sheiner deserves to be commended for her attempt to shed light on the F-to-M phenomenon. In order to approach this issue objectively, she first had to struggle to get beyond her own lesbian feminist politics and strong feminine gender identity, which must have been no easy task.

By her own admission, her initial gut-reaction was, "What kind of woman... would mutilate her body in a quest for male status? If these FTMs dug other women, then why couldn't they just remain butch dykes? Their drastic action, I speculated, constituted psychological disorder, female self-hatred, and profound betrayal of their sisters. After all, what kind of lesbian -or, for that matter, woman - would want to become a M-A-N?" These feelings are very similar to those expressed in an anonymous letter to the Bay Guardian's editor which appeared in the December 25, 1991 issue: "Like Mickey Larsen, my ex-lover probably seems a remarkably feminist man; I imagine that the physical scars are fading, and I hear that feminist men are in short supply. To me, though, she (sic) is a cross-gendered being who had the misfortune to be born at a time when doctors have the technical ability and the narrow-mindedness needed to treat gender variance with such barbarism. I feel deeply sad that so many cross-gendered people have internalized society's abuse and are driven to such extremes of self-hatred."

Both of the afore-mentioned quotes reflect the feelings of women who are strongly identified with their female bodies. They articulate what is possibly the most difficult thing for a non-transsexual to grasp - that one's anatomy can feel foreign, inappropriate, or even repugnant. The image staring back from a mirror seems like a stranger; the act of making love frequently requires dissociation from the body in order to perform. All female-bodied persons are not women! FTMs are not women who want to be men; we are men who desire to have our bodies conform to our internal self-concepts. This could be hormone therapy only, upper and lower surgery after long-term hormone use, or any stage in between. Whatever the outcome, the thing that distinguishes us from others who push, bend, or blend gender is body image.

This is not so readily understood by non-transsexuals because gender identity—an individual's concept of self as male or female—is intangible, invisible. Anatomy is far more obvious.

Most FTMs report feeling different from other female-bodied persons from their earliest conscious memories. This says at least three things: 1) that gender identity develops very early in life—whatever the causes; 2) that the environment (social, cultural, political) in which the FTM grows up either consolidates, reverses, or sends his gender identity into flux, but does not create it; 3) that gender identity is not determined by the anatomy of birth. It is unclear whether genetics or environment is the major factor in gender identity development, but what is clear is that the socio-cultural environment dictates how thoughts, behaviors, actions, etc. are perceived, interpreted and judged based on the individual's anatomy alone. A pre-pubescent FTM who plays with "boy's" toys and seeks out male-identified companions to affirm his masculine gender identity is labelled a "tomboy." In adolescence, this same seeking out of male buddies is labelled "boy crazy," whether or not the FTM is gay-male-identified. Sexual attraction/advances toward other female-identified person's is labelled "lesbianism." His profound sense of the inappropriateness of his female body is labelled "penis envy" or "female self-hatred." Admiration for a male role model is misinterpreted as sexual attraction. An FTM asserting his masculinity from inside an obviously female body is "rebellious against society." If he is non-operative he is a "champion of feminism," rebelling against the female gender role. If he undergoes surgery to correct his anatomy, he is a "sell-out," a "betrayal of his sisters." And on it goes.

The FTM lives with constant lack of congruity between his psyche and his body and, for the most part, lives with constant misinterpretation of his actions when dealing with other people. His female body is a barrier between himself and the rest of the world. He is not able to be himself as long as his female anatomy is the context within which he is viewed. This is a lifelong source of disappointment, frustration, anger, depression and, for some, despair. Some FTMs can forego surgery indefinitely or forever; others cannot. What seems to the anonymous author to have been her ex-lover's "sudden decision to change her sex" was the result of an accumulation of psychological pressure throughout his lifetime. As the late Dr. Paul Walker said, "one day the pain of living a lie simply becomes too great". When viewed in this way, it becomes easier to understand why the FTM who undergoes surgery to transform his female body into a male one views it a part of the process of becoming whole and not as mutilation. It is not so much sex reassignment surgery as it is gender confirmation surgery. Notwithstanding the risks inherent in this and any major surgery, far more damage and torment is experienced internally and for a longer period of time by the FTM than the temporary physical pain associated with the "smell of fresh wounds". Far more damage is done through the ingestion of drugs and alcohol in an attempt to achieve numbness than by receiving hormone therapy under a doctor's supervision.

Moreover, once the body matches the mind, it is as Mickey Larsen said in his interview with Ms. Sheiner: "I feel more comfortable with myself now and I don't hold myself back. Before people didn't know how to perceive me. Now they see me as a man and that's that. I get to leave off a whole lot of baggage I was carrying around and put my energy into other things."

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### Second in Trilogy Completed by Kevin Horwitz

Kate Bornstein has written a new play entitled "The Opposite Sex...Is Neither." This is the second completed work for a trilogy in which "Hidden: A Gender" was the forerunner, and "How to be a Girl in Six Easy Lessons" will presumably



The one-woman show is basically a series of six character sketches of persons not fitting into prescribed gender roles. Among the characters are two female to male transsexuals, Billy Tipton, the former jazz musician, and Dean, a body builder who is seriously into dildoes. Bornstein's acting abilities are considerable—they enable her to movingly and fluidly portray any number of characters while simultaneously remaining a detached observer who tosses philosophical possibilities out into the audience.

The play is basically "threaded" via a narrator named Maggie—a Goddess-in-training who apparently possesses a poor sense of direction. She made a wrong turn at the moon and landed on planet earth by mistake. Once she figures out where she is, she seizes an opportunity to earn her wings by channelling half-a-dozen gender-ambiguous souls through her own body. This, basically, is the play's premise, and it is a highly effective method for congealing all of the diverse characterizations. Lily Tomlin, in "Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe" similarly empowers one of her characters (Trudy the bag lady) as a sort of informal narrator.

The play is worth seeing, and you might especially enjoy the humorous rapport and interaction Kate maintains with the audience (no two shows are exactly alike). She will be doing an East Coast tour sometime in March and April... March 13 and 15 at National Performance Arts Festival in Cleveland, Ohio; later in the month she will perform at Real Art Ways Raw in Hartford, Connecticut; and she will be giving a lecture/demonstration at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. For further information, contact Noreen Barnes via the Bay Area Reporter, or contact Outlaw Productions message hotline at 415/863-0345.

## HORSEXE, ESSAY ON TRANSEXUALITY

by Catherine Millot

first published 1983,

translated from the French by Kenneth Hylton

(New York: Autonomedia, Inc. 1990) paperback 143 pgs.

Review by M Baker

The "HORSEXE" essay is divided into three sections. In the first section, Millot asks the fundamental question: How is a transsexual formed? The views range from transsexuality as a psychotic symptom (psychiatrists) to transsexuality as due to hormonal difficulties at the intra-uterine stage (surgeons and endocrinologists)

Within the first section in the chapter "Keys to Transsexuality," Millot presents three very technical answers to the fundamental question. Each answer is based on theories by Lacan. She uses semiotic theory, propositional logic, and topology to present these answers.

Unfortunately, some of the mathematics is sloppy at best, and at worst may be incorrect. For example, in the theory using propositional logic, the statement read as "all (sic. biological) men are related to the phallic function" is to be "co-ordinated" with it's negation. But any conclusion reached using a statement and its negation is not logically valid. On the other hand, using topology to generate a hypothesis about the transsexual and the Oedipus complex is fascinating.

Millot spends the second section discussing the history and mythology of the castrati. She frames part of the discussion within the structure of the technicalities used in the first section.

The last section is about female transsexuality. Some statements are accurate, but many are not. I agree with Millot's comments about the diversity and stability of FTMs, and even agree about FTM dreams of transplants and belief in the power of science. But Millot goes wrong with "Some female transsexuals stick to their manly pretensions, but in many cases this claim masks a hope of escaping the duality of the sexes."

In conclusion, Millot questions that transsexuals can only be remedied through sex-change and suggests they are the guinea-pigs of surgeons and endocrinologists. Her solution to transsexuality is psychoanalysis. This is not surprising since she is a Professor of Psychoanalysis at the University of Paris, VIII. The only redeeming quality about the book is some of the case histories are very well-researched.

## Marjorie Garber, Author of "Vested Interests," Speaks in S.F.

by Francis

I recently attended a talk and book signing at Modern Times Bookstore in San Francisco (a similar talk was held the following night at A Different Light) given by Marjorie Garber, author of the recently-published book "Vested Interests, Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety." Kate Bornstein, S.F. playwright/actress and gender outlaw (lesbian male-to-female transsexual) wrote about the book in a recent issue of the Bay Area Reporter, and she introduced Ms. Garber to an enthusiastic crowd which packed the bookstore despite the torrential rains outside.

Ms. Garber appeared Peter Pan-like (one of her favorite characters), dressed in her "Michael Jackson outfit," a becoming black velvet catsuit with gold piping at the sleeves. An astute researcher (Harvard professor) and obvious fan of drag, costuming and gender topics, she approached the subject of cross-dressing in a playful, reverential, historical and positive light. Her talk was anecdotal, with examples from the book, and a number of "behind the scenes" stories of gathering information, illustrations, and attending drag shows and gender forums.

It was heartening to note that she gave much attention to female-to-male cross-dressers and transsexuals, throughout Western history to the present, since so many books and articles on cross-dressing usually emphasize male-to-female, or leave out FTMs entirely. A number of fine illustrations in the book were female-to-male, including Billy Tipton, Gluck, Lady Una Troubridge, Madonna, Katherine Hepburn, Frida Kahlo (a self-portrait I had never seen before, showing Frida with short hair and wearing a man's suit). The male-to-female stories and illustrations were equally well-done.

After her talk, Ms. Garber took questions and comments from the audience, which included a number of FTMs. There was a lively discussion of political and philosophical ramifications of cross-dressing, and expansion of Ms. Garber's "third sex" theory, which is the realm of possibility beyond the limited polarity of two genders, and not just one additional category, but many. Her opening statement, an early quote in the book, "There can be no culture without the transvestite," was included in a recent review of the book in the New York Times, and it was without hesitation that I instantly purchased a copy upon entering the bookstore, even before meeting the author.

I might add Ms. Garber quotes liberally from Lou Sullivan's first edition of "Information for the Female-To-Male Cross Dresser and Transsexual." "Vested Interest" is a truly welcome addition to the field of gender-related writings.



## FTM NEWSLETTER

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Kevin Horwitz

## FINANCIAL REPORT 1991 Fiscal Year

When I started editing the Newsletter and coordinating the FTM group in March, 1991 (just after Lou died), we had several reams of paper to print the Newsletter on, and about 100, 29-cent postage stamps. I appealed to you for donations to keep things going, and you responded. Thank you very much! I opened a basic savings account at First Interstate Bank in the name of FTM Newsletter. for the duration of my responsibility for the financial affairs of FTM, I will publish an accounting of income and expenses each January. The figures for 1991 are as follows:

|                                                  |            |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>INCOME</b>                                    |            |
| Donations & Interest                             | \$2138.09  |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>                                  |            |
| Newsletter production<br>Issues 15, 16, 17       | \$ 367.64* |
| Postage                                          | \$ 376.99  |
| Meeting site rental fees<br>Jul/Aug/Oct + Jan 92 | \$ 145.00  |
| Meeting supplies<br>& refreshments               | \$ 22.75   |
| Mailbox rental thru 8/92                         | \$ 95.00   |
| 1 bounced donation check                         | \$ 9.00    |
| Total expenses                                   | \$1016.38  |
| Balance forward 12/21/91                         | \$1121.71  |

\*Newsletter production costs reflect only 3 issues, for 2 of which paper and printing services were donated, so no costs were incurred. Expect 1992 newsletter production costs to be significantly higher, as we will have to pay all costs for all four issues this year. Estimated costs per issue, including postage, are \$400.00

Again, I wish to express my gratitued to all our donors for enabling us to keep publishing.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jamison "James" Green

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Outlaw Productions presents PERMISSION, Catherine Harrison's provocative play about the lives of sex industry workers who specialize as dominatrices. PERMISSION not only probes the issues of power and sexuality in the context of professional S/M, but also explores the subject of transgenderism in integral ways, through all its characters.

PERMISSION did a successful run at Theatre Rhinoceros in March of '91 and now returns with a new production, at "21 Bernice" in San Francisco, from February 27 through March 15. The show then tours the East Coast from March 21 through May 14. Some of the cities included are Philadelphia, Hartford, Boston, Buffalo, and Toronto.

For more information about performance dates and locations, please call Outlaw Productions at 415/863-0345.

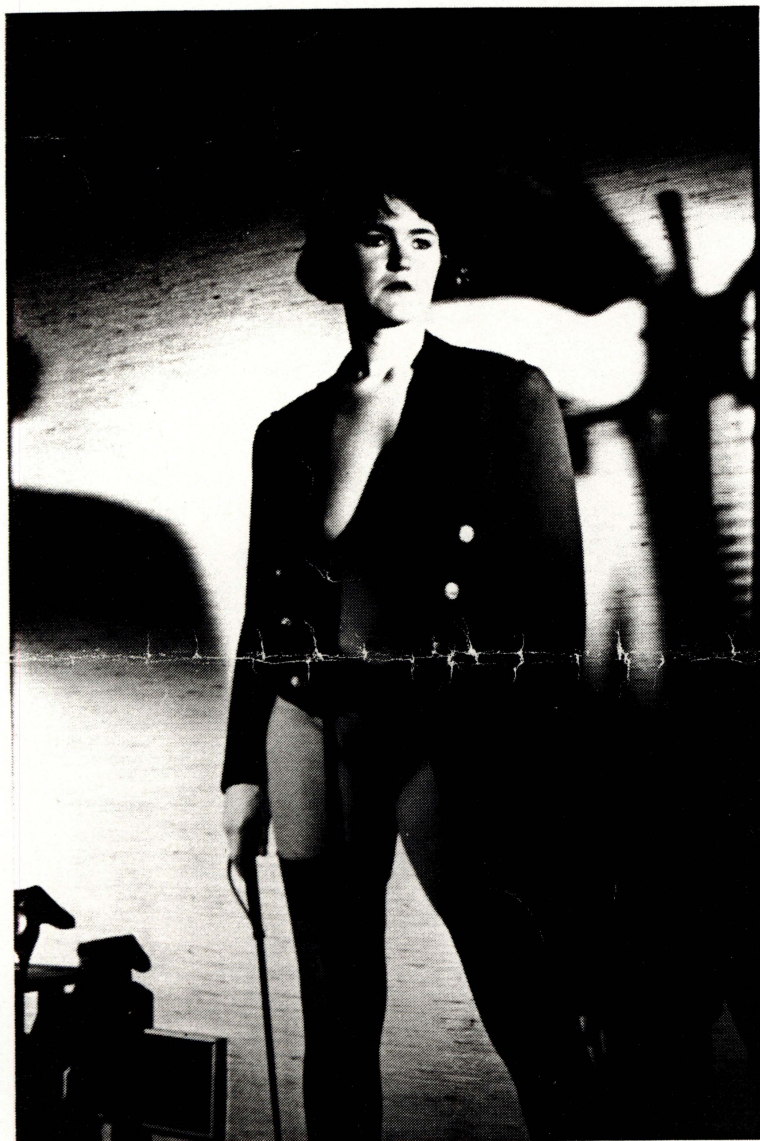


PHOTO: MITCHELLE TANNER