

AEGIS NEWS

QUARTERLY 12 / 96 #9 ISSN 1077-162X

Vision 2001: A Gender Odyssey — Part IV

Local Organizations, Publications, “Those Darn Professionals”

The transgender community has more than a hundred local organizations of all descriptions. They come in all shapes and sizes, run by persons with varying levels of dedication, serving different purposes. Some appear amidst a flurry of fanfare and disappear in short order; others function quietly for decades. Most are sincere attempts to provide support and/or social opportunities to transgendered or transsexual persons; a few are exercises in self-gratification in which the putative leader(s) roll roughshod over the membership; and a few are commercial enterprises—including some which masquerade as nonprofits.

Most of the nonprofit local organizations are groups, but a few aren't. Some, like the late Gainesville (Florida) Information Network and San Francisco Gender Information, are mini-clearinghouses for gender-related information. Others, like Davis House and the Metro'on Catalina provide residential or group living opportunities for those in tran-

sition or those who have transitioned.

Groups offer support or social activities, or a mixture of the two, and can serve either a selected group of like-minded individuals or the entire community.

Support Groups provide information, peer counseling, and safe haven for their members. They may have social activities, but the primary focus is on support. An example of a group which exists primarily for support is the XX (Twenty) Club, which is associated with the Gender Identity Clinic of New England. Despite its name, XX is not a club, but a support group which exists solely to provide support for transsexual people in transition; this of course doesn't mean that there aren't social events, but any which occur are peripheral to the central purpose.

Social Groups provide their members with opportunities to cross-dress and mingle with other transpeople, either in a secure location like a hotel suite or clubhouse, or,

for those more daring, out on the town in fine restaurants and theaters. Purely social groups are not interested in providing their members with support; problems are to be left at the door. Of course, few social groups would be so hard-hearted as to turn away those needing help, but surprisingly, some do—sometimes without even referring them to a support group!

I'm almost reluctant to name any group as “social,” since even social groups offer much support, but I'll take the plunge by naming the Illusions group in Canada. The major function of Illusions seems to be (I've never visited, but can guess based on their newsletter) to provide a safe place to cross-dress; additionally, there are balls, and the newsletter is light in tone. Even so, the newsletter is chock full of “how to” articles and useful information. So maybe there are no purely “social” groups after all!

Social and Support Groups serve a dual function, providing members with opportunities to both get help with their gender issues and

to have a good time. Often, there are several monthly meetings, some dedicated to support, and some to socialization. Obviously, the larger the group, the more variety there can be. Truly large groups can have meetings which focus specifically on the needs of significant others, of first-timers, of FTMs, of youth, of transsexual people or of crossdressers; dinners on the town; and even banquets and balls. The newsletters of ETVC, a large group in San Francisco and even the moderately sized Atlanta Gender Explorations group have calendars of events which list a variety of meetings and functions from which members can pick and choose. When an area has several groups, options are even greater, as groups can afford to specialize to serve individuals with particular needs.

Open Groups welcome all transpeople, their families and partners, and others (like helping professionals) with a legitimate interest in gender issues. One's gender assignment at birth, sexual orientation, or self-identification as a crossdresser, transgenderist, transsexual, or intersexed person make no difference. Open groups attempt to meet the needs of all of their members.

The prototypical example of an open group is the Phoenix Transgender Group in Asheville, North Carolina. Founded by Holly Boswell in the mid-1980s, Phoenix was one of the first open groups and has always been welcoming of diversity.

Focused Groups do not have membership or attendance restrictions, but have a clear focus on an issue or specific group: transition from one gender role to the other, perhaps, or heterosexual crossdressing, or youth or couples' or FTM issues. The group is structured to deal with its focus issue or populations; other issues or populations are referred to the most appropriate organization—but anyone can join. A focus on a particular population need not be diminished and can actually be enhanced by a diverse membership.

An example of a focused group is the Eden Society of South Florida. Eden, as I understand it, has a clear focus on transsexualism, but does not restrict its meetings to only transsexual people. Nonetheless, one finds few people there who are not transsexual or partners or

family members of transsexual people. Why? The clear focus ensures that there is very little of interest for nontranssexual people. There is no need to close the gates so long as the focus remains clear.

Closed Groups restrict membership criteria based on one or more characteristics, most commonly sexual orientation or transsexualism. Others are not welcome, except perhaps peripherally.

There are two primary types of closed groups: those which allow only transsexual people (and perhaps their significant others); and those which allow only heterosexual crossdressers (and perhaps their significant others). But groups with any focus can be closed, and sometimes are.

I won't name any closed groups, but most readers will be able to think of at least one.

Commercial Organizations provide services in exchange for money. An example of this is Wildside in Toronto, an enterprise which offers a hotel, boutique, makeover services, photography, a night club, and a support group. Wildside formerly had a newsletter, *The Canadian Crossdresser*, but it is unfortunately now defunct.

Wildside is obviously a money-making enterprise, and makes no pretense to be otherwise. Unfortunately, some organizations either pose as non-profit or simply keep their mouths shut about their status. People in the trans community are rarely fooled by this, and talk abounds. I will let discretion be the better part of valor here, and will not name any such organizations, although I know of several which would qualify, (and of several instances of downright embezzling of community funds which rarely get spoken of).

For-profit organizations which go beyond misdirection and actively solicit money under the guise of being non-profit—and there are a few of these—are guilty of fraud. Financial disclosure should be the rule for all nonprofit transgender community organizations. It is mandatory for those which fly the 501(c)(3) flag.

I will note that JoAnn Roberts has questioned in print the Texas "T" Party,

which several years ago underwent, with some ugliness which was documented in community newsletters, a transformation from a nonprofit community event to what JoAnn believes is a moneymaking enterprise. The "T" is a fabulous event. However, I agree with JoAnn—the community, and for that matter, the IRS, should know if the "T" is a commercial enterprise. No one, so far as I know, really cares whether the "T" Party or any other organization is commercial or nonprofit, but clearly, there should be disclosure.

Publications

There are a number of organizations which focus on the production and/or distribution of literature. Some of this literature is "one-handed reading," otherwise known as crossdressing fiction. This material consists of stories of (often forced and frequently magical) transformation, sometimes with homoerotic imagery. Frequently, this is disguised by a heterosexual element, as when a crossdresser, now permanently transitioned into the female role, finds that the handsome gentleman who has been courting him/her is in actuality a female in disguise. But hey, guys, you're not fooling anyone.

Reluctant Press, Sandy Thomas, and Chevalier Press specialize in this type of crossdressing fiction.

Other publishers produce self-help books which may concentrate on helping transpersons to improve their appearance or on maintaining and building relationships, or on negotiating transition. IFGE, AEGIS, the Ingersoll Center in Seattle, and other nonprofit organizations produce such work, as do commercial publishers like JoAnn Roberts' Creative Design Services and Peggy and Melanie Rudd's PM Publishers. Other publishers specialize in magazines. Creative Design Services produces the slick *Ladylike*; Gail Sondegaard publishes the very well-done *Transsexual News Telegraph*; "Lois Commondenominator" produces the wickedly funny *Dragazine*; J.M.P.G. the *Crossdressers Quarterly*; and Kimberleigh Richards the monthly *Cross Talk*. Several of the national organizations publish magazines: AEGIS (*Chrysalis*); IFGE (*Transgender*); Tri-Ess (*Femme Mirror*); Outreach Institute (*The*

Journal of Gender Studies). ICTLEP does not publish a journal, but more than makes up for it with the voluminous and thorough proceedings of its annual conference and with the *ICTLEP Reporter*, a newsletter.

Distinguishing between a magazine and a newsletter can be difficult. Illusions' newsletter, for instance, is magazine-sized, more than 40 pages in length. Some newsletters— notably those of FTM International and Renaissance Education Association— are of excellent quality, surpassing that of some magazines.

Three now defunct magazines are worth mentioning. Virginia Prince's *Transvestia* was the framework upon which the transgender community was built. Davina Gabriel's *TransSisters: The Journal of Transsexual Feminism* was a forum for feminist thought about transsexualism and documented the birth of transactivism. And *gendertrash*, produced by genderpress in Toronto, was an angry, eloquent indictment of the way transpeople are mistreated in contemporary society. I'm especially regretful that its publishers, Mirha Soleil-Ross and Xantra Phillipa, were forced to discontinue it after only a few issues.

Newsletters! There are dozens. Some appear regularly, like clockwork, others sporadically. Some are full of original material; others are pastiches taken from popular magazines and other newsletters. Some are professionally designed; others are done with more love than talent. Some focus on crossdressing, some on transsexualism, and some push gender boundaries into new territory. Even the most modest, however, requires a considerable amount of effort to produce and distribute.

Perhaps more than anything else, the newsletters capture the spirit of the transgender community. AEGIS receives dozens every month. After I read them, Paulette Stephens, the administrator of the National Transgender Library & Archive, squirrels them away in filing cabinets where they will be preserved for some transgender historian in the year 2300. I love those filing cabinets. The sight of nearly a thousand newsletters, some dating back more than twenty years, is a testimony to two decades of hard work by hundreds of transpeople.

To list the many excellent books which have been and are being produced about the community would be a monumental work (in fact, it *was* a monumental work— my book for Garland Publishers, *Gender Dysphoria: A Guide to Research*, represents three years of effort and contains citations for more than 5000 books and articles. *Yes, I know it was a shameless, self-serving plug, but I worked hard and deserve at least one!*). Some books are designed to help transpeople get through their day; others aim to educate the general public about who and what we are. Some are published within the community, and some by mainstream publishers. Some are written by transpeople, some by journalists, and some by helping professionals. Some are excellent, and some, although well-meaning, fall short of their mark. A few, like Janice Raymond's *The Transsexual Empire* and Leslie Lothstein's *Female-to-Male Transsexualism* are vicious and uninformed attacks on transpeople.

Many in the community hope for the transgender equivalent of the Great American Novel, which will take the case of the trans community to the public. Actually, a number of books have already done that. The works of the early sexologists Magnus Hirschfeld and Havelock Ellis in the early part of this century, Harry Benjamin in 1966 and Green & Money in 1969 educated professionals and the general public about crossdressing and transsexualism. Autobiographies by Christine Jorgensen, Renée Richards, Canary Conn, Jan Morris, Carolyn "Tula" Cossey, and other transsexuals did much to educate the general public about sex reassignment. Virginia Prince's several books and her *Transvestia* popularized the notion that crossdressers can be heterosexual. Mariette Pathy Allen has continued Prince's work with her book of photo essays, *Transformations*.

There is a veritable new wave of books which have recently or will shortly be published, in which transpersons themselves speak as the authorities on our condition (again, Virginia was a pioneer in doing this). The work of transgenderist Leslie Feinberg has been very well received. His novel *Stone Butch Blues*, and more recently his non-fiction *Transgender Warriors* speak of the anguish and

pain faced by transpeople. Kate Bornstein's *Gender Outlaw* questions the binary gender paradigm, as does Martine Rothblatt's *The Apartheid of Sex*. Other books by Loren Cameron, Susan Stryker, Sandy Stone, myself, and others should be out within the next six months (in fact, Loren's excellent book *Body Alchemy* has just been released).

Even with so much transgender-related material being produced, it can sometimes be difficult to find. It can often be located at gay and lesbian bookstores, or at crossdresser boutiques around the country. AEGIS, IFGE, and other organizations maintain mail order bookstores, and Creative Design Service does a booming business online via the World Wide Web.

The world's first transgender bookstore was opened two decades ago in New York City by Lee Brewster; it is still in operation. Recently, IFGE opened Synchronicity, a walk-in bookstore in Boston. Support groups around the country maintain libraries which are transported to meetings with books available for checkout. And of course a few trans-related books can be found at libraries and mainstream bookstores.

For many years, the gay and lesbian community has maintained repositories for gay and lesbian historical material. Transgender history is preserved at various places around the world, most notably at AEGIS' National Transgender Library & Archive and the Transgender Archive in Northern Ireland. Tri-Ess has donated a great deal of historical material to the University of California at Northridge, where it is housed with a larger collection of sexological material donated by Vern Bullough and the late Bonnie Bullough.

Television, Film & Video

Films with transgender themes have always been popular. From silent film stars Julian Eltinge and Charlie Chaplin to the translasher films popularized by Alfred Hitchcock in "Psycho," to "Tootsie," "The Crying Game," and "The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert," to RuPaul in a cameo in "The Brady Bunch," the treatment has sometimes been dramatic, and sometimes humorous. Of late, film makers have

become more sympathetic, but the last translasher film has probably not yet been made.

Most documentaries have been very well done; these include the 1984 HBO film "What Sex Am I?", the two PBS Point of View films "Metamorphosis: Man into Woman" and "The Transformation," Rosa Von Praunheim's films "I Am My Own Woman" and "Transsexual Menace," and Cinemax' recently televised "All Dressed Up With Nowhere to Go."

Television treatments vary from the circus-like talk shows to dramatic treatments in such shows as "Diagnosis Murder" and "L.A. Law." The talk shows, which did a great deal to humanize transpeople in the 1980s, have degenerated into shouting matches stocked with flamboyant types who almost defy description. Dramatic treatments often tend to be sympathetic, but suffer from a dearth of factual information, as was the case with a recent episode of "Chicago Hope," in which a post-operative MTF transsexual killed herself rather than "revert to type" (i.e., turn back into a man) when a tumor made it necessary for her to discontinue estrogen. Of course, this would not happen in real life. She would have been at risk for developing osteoporosis, but would hardly have undergone a Jekyll & Hyde transformation from a woman into a man.

The transgender community has produced a number of videotapes which are commercially available. Most are geared toward self-help; Creative Design Services markets several of these. The Outreach Institute has released a number of tapes— some, like the FanFair Follies, for entertainment, and some educational. In 1993, IFGE produced "Gender 101," which was designed to make the gender community's message available on television screens.

FTMs have been quite visible in film, documentaries, and television— but unfortunately less so in the transgender community's own productions. Films featuring FTMs include Annie Sprinkle's whimsical pornographic piece, "Linda, Les, and Me," Alisa Lebow's "Outlaw," "F2M," and Monika Treut's "Female Misbehavior." FTMs appear in a number of early films, including "Queen Christina," "Sulli-

van's Travels," and (the earliest we have been able to document) the 1911 silent short "Algie the Miner." The *FTM* newsletter routinely profiles films about FTMs.

Newspapers & Magazines

Tabloid papers never tire of "sex change" stories, and neither does the mainstream media, which is every bit as fond of sensationalism as is *National Enquirer*. When a crime is committed by a transperson, the fact that the individual is transgendered usually takes precedence over the actual crime. This is also the case when a transperson is the unfortunate victim of violence. The press is much more reluctant to publish good news or press releases from the transgender community— although this is beginning to change. For instance, *Newsweek* recently covered the reaffirmation of the Reverend Erin Swenson's ordination by her Atlanta-based Presbytery. Gay & lesbian newspapers and magazines include articles or news about transpeople in almost every issue (a dramatic change from only five years ago, when such coverage was almost nonexistent), and even mainstream magazines have begun to document the rise of the transgender community and especially trans political activity. Of late, FTMs have benefitted as fully as male-to-female persons, with articles in, among other places, *The Village Voice*, *Details*, and *The New Yorker*.

The Internet

Computers have made resources available like never before— to those who have computers with modems and access to the Internet. Unfortunately, computers further polarize our already stratified society, dividing us into haves and have-nots. Such stratification runs not only along economic and racial lines: the un- and undereducated and individuals with learning disabilities or sensory deficits or with less than average intelligence become pedestrians on the "information superhighway."

E-mail accelerates the delivery of messages which would take days or weeks by conventional means. E-mail is usually delivered almost instantly. It's not

uncommon to receive a reply within minutes, although a one or two day turnaround is more common.

FTP sites store large amounts of information. The AEGIS FTP site, for instance, contains back issues of *Chrysalis*, resource information of various types, and even graphics files of our membership and order forms.

Web sites do the same thing as FTP sites, but in a snazzier and more interactive manner. With popular web browsers like Netscape or Mosaic, users can point and click their way through not only the information at a single site, but at related sites around the world. This can give access to a tremendous amount of information in a very short time. One caller to our help line said, "I found more in 15 minutes on the Internet than I did in 15 years of searching bookstores and libraries."

Chat lines enable users who are separated by wide distances to communicate in real-time. There are a number of gender-related chat lines. They work like a CB radio, but with printed rather than spoken words. Users type a line and hit enter, and others on the chat line can immediately read what they have written. Long and detailed conversations take place on chat lines in real time.

Usenet contains thousands of special interest groups, covering almost every subject known to humankind. My favorites (if I remember the names correctly) are "alt.barney.dinosaur.die.die.die" and "alt.flame.roommate"). These groups work somewhat like chat lines, but messages are not read in real-time. Accumulated posts are available for subscribers to read whenever they check in. Conversations unfold over days and weeks, as people check their messages and respond to them, if they wish.

Mailing lists distribute messages to a long or short list of subscribers. Some are one-way, with posting available only to the list owner or authorized posters. AEGIS operates such a list, AEGIS NEWS, on which we post press releases and news items; it's sort of a transgender Reuters, full of tidbits which are useful in newsletters, and handy for keeping list subscribers up-to-date on news items. Other lists are open to posting by all subscribers. TRANSGEN, which is devoted to transition issues, is one such list.

Most organizations in the transgender community have e-mail addresses and websites, and others will be going on line in the near future.

Special Populations

Entire groups of transpeople (and those associated with them) are underserved by the existing community. These include youth, those who are HIV-positive, the homeless, the elderly, racial and ethnic minorities, non-English speakers, those with sensory impairments, and the physically disabled. Female partners of transpersons have some support, but male partners do not—in fact, they are often spoken of in derogatory terms. Existing organizations do attempt to serve these populations, but are hard-pressed to keep up with inquiries and lack resources to broaden their outreach.

Intersex

At the Diversity Dinner at the 1996 Fantasia Fair, guest speaker Sue Hyde of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force spoke about the evolution of the gay liberation movement which arose after the 1969 Stonewall riots. At first, the movement was dominated by upper-middle class gay white men. Over the years, the movement broadened to include racial minorities, the young, the old, lesbians, and eventually bisexuals (in the late '80s) and (in the '90s) transgendered persons. Inclusion of each group happened very slowly, with considerable controversy.

The most recent group which has found a voice is intersexed people. The formation of the Intersex Society of North America by Cheryl Chase and a number of organizations for persons with specific intersex conditions (Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, Turner's Syndrome, Klinefelter Syndrome) has encouraged highly closeted intersexed people to come forward. Many are outraged by genital surgical procedures performed on them in infancy and early childhood. ISNA advocates reform of pediatric treatment of intersex persons, which currently force infants (usually via genital surgery) into male and female categories. Many ISNA members proudly identify as intersexed, and resent being robbed of their intersex genitals and identities.

Intersexed persons have begun to make their frustrations known. In October 1996, the first-ever intersex demonstration was called by a direct action group called Hermaphrodites With Attitude, was held at a conference of (very surprised) pediatricians in Boston. There is no doubt that intersexed persons will become increasingly active over the next decade. It's time to add the "I" to G/L/B/T.

Helping Professionals

Transpeople have always had close working relationships with medical and mental health professionals—partly because of the pain we experience in dealing with our issues, and partly because the medical treatments we require force us to rely on them.

This forced relationship can breed distrust and resentment of helping professionals—and in truth, helping professionals have collectively been responsible for a great deal of insensitive and arrogant behavior. Transpeople should realize, however, that the primary motivation of helping professionals is to help others. Most have done what they thought was right; if it was not always what we wanted, it was certainly done in what the caregivers considered our best interest.

As problems with the exiting scientific literature come to light and as new data accumulate, mistaken notions of what transpeople are like are slowly being put to rest. However, much of the existing literature suggests that we are quite dysfunctional. Despite the often questionable assumptions of such studies, there is not yet research to counterbalance them. Some clinicians and researchers have come to realize that much of the research is so biased as to be worthless; others haven't.

Many helping professionals have been in essence trained by the community. They have attended our conferences, have transgendered friends and perhaps lovers, or are themselves transgendered. Such therapists view us as human beings first, and clients second. Others, who have seen us primarily in the highly artificial environment of the gender clinic, view us as the literature suggests we are—disturbed individuals. This is rapidly becoming a minority view, thank good-

ness. Newer literature will not necessary prove us "normal"—whatever that is; it will instead presume our competence and address entirely different questions.

Professionals are scientists, and they form their beliefs based on the results of surveys and experiments. They are convinced by data. The more perceptive are coming to realize that much of the existing literature is of little utility because it was attempting to answer questions which are in the long run proving to be unimportant. Existing data must be re-evaluated in light of new understanding about the often sexist assumptions of early researchers, biased selection criteria of gender programs, and the negative influence of the client-care provider relationship on the data obtained. However, ultimately, new data will need to be generated to address emerging questions. Much of this data will be—in fact is already being—generated by transgendered and transsexual researchers.

As this data continues to accumulate, those who persist in their belief that we have all sorts of hidden pathologies will before long themselves seem dysfunctional. This has certainly happened with Charles Socarides, a psychiatrist who continues to insist that gay men and lesbians (and for that matter, transsexuals) are mentally ill. In the '70s, he was respected and other professionals listened to what he had to say. In the '90s, he seems a pathetic figure, a mean-spirited tool of the Radical Right, guided by strange passions and perhaps by a touch of denial.

The transgender community is fortunate to have so many compassionate and well-meaning caregivers and researchers who are interested in us. We may not agree with them all the time, but we can certainly persuade them—with data.

Standards of Care

A major source of friction between caregivers and transpeople is access to medical treatment. A set of consensual guidelines, developed and periodically updated by the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association (HBIGDA), regulates this treatment. These Standards of Care (SOC) are minimal guidelines; they require a period of therapy in order to obtain access to hormonal therapy and a

period of full-time crossliving in order to qualify for sex reassignment surgery.

Not all transpeople agree that access to medical treatment should be regulated, but AEGIS' survey of transpersons' attitudes about the Standards indicate that most post-process transsexuals feel that setting some limits on access to medical care is important. Few, however, would agree that the Standards of Care should impose additional requirements on transpeople. Unfortunately, all indications are that the upcoming revision of the Standards of Care will require a longer (two-year) period of crossliving before sex reassignment surgery, and will require therapist letters for previously unregulated procedures like breast augmentation and other plastic surgery procedures; moreover, they will not deregulate top surgery for FTMs (the current Standards consider the breasts to be genitals, which they clearly aren't).

Some months ago, Alice Webb, HBIGDA's Executive Director, was ambushed by the HBIGDA Board and forced to resign. HBIGDA has claimed that she resigned of her own volition, but statements by Ms. Webb and several HBIGDA board members clearly show that the resignation was forced. There is concern in the transgender community that the old school researchers and clinicians have taken over the organization. This is not a farfetched theory. Stephen Levine, who is certainly of the "old school," is head of

the revision committee for the Standards of Care. Last year, the HBIGDA newsletter noted that Levine, in his suggestions for revision of the Standards, believes that post-op transsexuals have no need for therapy "Asks what is the value of Principle 23, which states that some persons are in need of post [surgery] therapy. He feels that it indicates the pre-surgery therapy was inadequate" (Highlights of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Association Meeting, Kloster Irsee, Germany, September 7-10, 1995, p. 5.) Some of Levine's other suggestions seem homophobic, value-laden, and overly controlling (see the box on this page). I personally am very uncomfortable that someone who believes that surgery is a magical cure for everything that ails transsexuals has been made chair of the committee which will revise the Standards of Care.

Fortunately, HBIGDA members will have an opportunity to review and comment upon the proposed revisions before they become final. However, considering the unsubtle sacking of Alice Webb, I suspect that the Committee's recommendations will carry.

I predict trouble if the revised Standards of Care give more control of transgender and transsexual lives to professionals. Certainly, AEGIS will not support more stringent Standards unless there is factual and unequivocal documentation that they are needed—and such documentation does not exist. Nor, I

imagine, will other transgender organizations or the majority of the newer generation of community-trained caregivers accept more stringent standards. HBIGDA will certainly be singing its swan song if the new Standards are what I fear they will be.

This concludes Vision 2001.

What's that? Hooray, you say? You were getting tired of all this? Well, me, too. It was a rather ambitious undertaking, trying to capture a cross-section of a rapidly changing community. It was perhaps a foolish undertaking, too, since I seem to have made a number of folks mad with what I had to say. But it was a job that needed to be done, and now the end is here at last, here at last!

In the next issue of *AEGIS News*, I'll summarize what I've said (briefly, I promise!) and give my best guess about what it all means. I invite our readers to give us their thoughts on the state of the transgender community. Send us mail at AEGIS, P.O. Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724, by FAX at 770-939-1770, or via e-mail at ageis@mindspring.com.

Erratum

In Part III of Vision 2001, I wrote that the Be-All is a production of the MAGGIE consortium of gender groups. *Fall Harvest* is MAGGIE's conference. The Be-All was started and is run by a different association of support groups.

Stephen B. Levine's More Objectionable Suggestions for Revisions of Standards of Care

Would like Standards of Care to make cosmetic surgeries such as breast augmentation, cricoid cartilage shaving, vocal cord lengthening, etc. processes that need permission from the treating professional.

Association should take a stand on whether SRS should be done on HIV+ patients. He believes it is unfair to the surgeons to allow this, but would be willing to modify his view when an effective treatment for AIDS is a reality.

Asks what is the value of Principle 23, which states that some persons are in need of post (surgery) therapy. He feels that it indicates the pre-surgery therapy was inadequate.

He feels the Standards of Care do not reflect difficulties of treating GID patients as regards many phone calls, 50% drop-out rate before first appointment, high loss to follow-up rate after evaluation, frequent mind-changing and major characterological difficulties.

AEGIS' Questionnaire on HBIGDA Standards

In 1994, AEGIS conducted a survey of transsexual and transgender opinions about the Standards of Care. We mailed the questionnaire with *Chrysalis*, posted it on the internet, and distributed it with the help of FTM International, the Program in Human Sexuality at the University of Minnesota, and other transgender support organizations. We presented the results at the 1994 Eastern Regional meeting of the Society for the Study of Human Sexuality and the First International Congress on Cross Dressing, Gender, and Sex Issues in February, 1995. The complete study will be published in the printed proceedings of the Congress, which is forthcoming from Prometheus Press.

Better than 77% of the total of 339 respondents reported they had or planned to have sex reassignment surgery (SRS); 78% of total respondents believed that a real-life test should be required before SRS; 72% agreed that therapist letters should be required for access to hormonal therapy and SRS; and a full 88% agreed that the HBIGDA standards serve a useful purpose.

These results are important, for they suggest that the majority of transpeople support some sort of guidelines for access to medical treatment. However, comments of many respondents indicated that guidelines should be reasonable and flexible enough to meet the needs of diverse individuals. Not a single respondent suggested that the standards should be made more severe.

Contact Information

Publishers

Chevalier Publications
P.O. Box 194
Tulare, CA 93275

Creative Design Services
P.O. Box 61263
King of Prussia, PA 19406
610-640-9449 Voice
610-648-0257 FAX
<http://www/cdspub.com>

Cross-Talk
P.O. Box 944
Woodland Hills, CA 91365
818-776-8504 Information
818-347-4190 FAX

Dragazine
P.O. Box 461796
West Hollywood, CA 90046

J.M.P.G.
Box 7217
Burbank, CA 91510-7217

PM Publishers
1811 Crutchfield
Katy, TX 77449
713-347-6563 Voice
713-348-7847 FAX

Reluctant Press
P.O. Box 11936
Lincolnia Station
Alexandria, VA 22312

Sandy Thomas Advertising
P.O. Box 2309
Capistrano Beach, CA 92624

Transsexual News Telegraph
TNT
41 Sutter Street, #1124
San Francisco, CA 94104-4903

Residential

Davis House
P.O. Box 1861
Maple Grove, MN 55311
612-425-8595

Metro'on of Catalina
gallae@casagrande.com
<http://www.casagrande.com/~gallae/julia.htm>

Support

Atlanta Gender Explorations
P.O. Box 77562
Atlanta, GA 30357
404-325-3909 (before 9 pm Eastern)
ageinfo@aol.com

Eden Society
P.O. Box 1692
Pompano Beach, FL 33061
954-316-8470
edents@aol.com

ETVC
P.O. Box 426497
San Francisco, CA 94101
510-849-3439 Voice Mail
510-549-2665 Hotline

GIC of New England
68 Adelaide Road
Manchester, CT 06040
203-646-8651

HBIGDA, Inc.
3790 El Camino Real, #241
Palo Alto, CA 94306
415-322-2335 Voice
415-372-3260 FAX

Illusions
Box 2000
6802 Ogden Road, SE
Calgary, Alberta
T2C 1B4 Canada

Intersex Society of North America
P.O. Box 31791
San Francisco, CA 94131
415-695-0975
info@isna.org

Phoenix TG Support Group
P.O. Box 18332
Asheville, NC 28814
704-259-9428

XX (Twenty) Club
P.O. Box 387
Forest Park Station
Hartford, CT 06141-4387
203-646-8651

Archives

National TG Library & Archive
c/o AEGIS
P.O. Box 33724
Decatur, GA 30033-0724
770-939-2128 Voice
770-939-1770 FAX
aegis@mindspring.com

Transgender Archive
c/o Dr. Richard Ekins
Univ. of Ulster at Coleraine
Coleraine
BT51 ISA Northern Ireland, UK

Commercial

Wildside
161 Gerrard St. E.
Toronto, Ontario
M5A 2E4 Canada
416-921-6112

Bookstores

AEGIS
P.O. Box 33724
Decatur, GA 30033-0724
770-939-2128 Voice
770-939-1770 FAX
aegis@mindspring.com

Lee's Mardi Gras Bookstore
565 10th Avenue, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10036
212-645-1888 Voice
212-255-2148 FAX

Syncronicity
c/o IFGE
123 Moody St.
Waltham, MA 02154
617-899-2212 Voice
617-899-5703 FAX
ifge@world.std.com

Internet

AEGIS FTP Site
Host: [ftp.mindspring.com](ftp:mindspring.com)
Password (your e-mail address)
Directory: /users/aegis
<ftp://ftp.mindspring.com/users/aegis>

Event

9th Annual Texas "T" Party
11-16 March, 1997
Box 17
San Antonio, TX 78163
210-980-7788
txtparty@aol.com

Books & Articles

Allen, Mariette Pathy. (1989). *Transformations*. New York: Carol Publishing Co.

Bloom, A. (1994, 17 July). The body lies. *New Yorker*, 38-49.

Bornstein, Kate. (1994). *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us*. New York: Routledge.

Cameron, Loren. (1996). *Body Alchemy: Transsexual Portraits*. Pittsburgh: Cleis Press.

Denny, D. (1994). *Gender Dysphoria: A Guide to Research*. New York: Garland Publishers.

Feinberg, L. (1996). *Transgender Warriors*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Feinberg, L. (1994). *Stone Butch Blues*. New York: Firebrand.

Minkowitz, D. (1994, 19 April). Love hurts. *Village Voice*, 24-30.

Pedersen, D. (1996, 4 November). Crossing over. *Newsweek*, 66.

Rothblatt, M. (1994). *The Apartheid of Sex*. New York: Crown.

Yoffe, E. (1994, November). Becoming a man. *Details*, 56-58.

National Movement Founded

© 1996 by *In Your Face*
King of Prussia, PA, 2 November, 1996

In what at least one attendee called "the most important political event for trans-people since the Stonewall Riot," twelve organizations representing the heart of the transcommunity signed Articles of Association for GenderPAC today in this small suburban town outside Philadelphia, highlighting an often intense day-long meeting.

The signing marks the first time the gender community has ever assembled together to found a unified national movement against gender-based oppression. GenderPAC is a "public advocacy coalition" dedicated to "gender, affectional, and racial equality."

The meeting, which convened early in the morning and ran into the night, covered a wide variety of subjects, including diversity and minority outreach, deaf and disabled accessibility and participation, GenderPAC's political objectives and mission, the scope of its activities, and what shape its national structure should take in the coming months. Discussions were cordial and often fervent.

GenderPAC began in June of 1995 as a loose-knit advisory group of trans-organizations working together to raise money and direct activism. However its focus quickly grew to include such activities as congressional lobbying, hate crimes, employment discrimination, National Gender Lobbying Day, community-based research, and legal advocacy. Only a year later, member organizations called for the November 2nd meeting to formalize GenderPAC's structure and mission.

Signatories at the event included representatives from American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), FTM International, International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE), It's Time America! (ITA), Renaissance Education Association, The Society for the Second Self (Tri-Ess), the

American Boyz, The Intersex Society of North America (ISNA), Transgender Health Action Coalition (TEAC), Transgender Officers Protect & Serve (TOPS), The Deaf Transgendered Alliance, Expressing Our Nature, Inc., and the Outreach Institute for Gender Studies. The International Conference for Transgender Law & Employment Policy (ICTLEP) was unable to have a representative at the meeting, but will be given an opportunity to sign the Articles.

TS Minister's Ordination Upheld

Originally posted on *America On Line* by
GLCFWendy, 24 October, 1996

On October 22nd, the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta followed the recommendation of its Committee on Ministry in voting to continue the ordination and authorize the ministry of counseling of Dr. Erin Swenson. Dr. Swenson's ordination had been called into question because of her transition from male to female.

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta is the local governing body for the Presbyterian Church (USA). In 1995, the presbytery declined an earlier recommendation from the committee to affirm Dr. Swenson's ordination. After some members indicated that the issue would have theological implications that could resonate on a national level, the presbytery sent the request back to committee.

"It's actually the first time that I know of that a mainstream Protestant denomination has upheld the ordination of a minister who has transitioned within ordained office," Dr. Swenson said. "The future seems a little brighter for all of us today."

Young Wynona Ryder T-Bashed

© 1996 by *Southern Voice*

Actress Wynona Ryder said in an October interview with the Nashville Tennessean recently that as a 12-year-old she was mistaken for a boy and beaten up by two young thugs who thought she was gay.

"I got six stitches in my head, was slammed into a locker, got a fractured rib," she said. Ryder said she saw a woman who was the girlfriend of one of the boys a couple of years ago. Ryder asked the woman if she recalled the incident at school. "She remembered and said, 'Oh, that faggot?' And then I said, 'That was me.' I got a thrill out of that."

Same-Sex-Change-Sex Confusion

Two weeks after President Bill Clinton signed legislation to restrict marriage to unions between a man and a woman, an Ohio transsexual's desire to marry had officials in a tizzy.

On 30 September, Lake County Probate Judge Fred V. Skok issued a wedding license to pre-operative transsexual Denise Smith (referred to as Paul in non-trans media) and lesbian Debi Easterday. Smith, who dresses full-time as a woman except at work, plans to have sex reassignment surgery within the next three years.

Like the recently enacted Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), Ohio law also defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman. Judge Skok required what may be the first post-DOMA panty check; he ordered Smith to have a genital examination to confirm that she had male sex organs. Smith complied, and Skok issued the license. Smith and Easterday who consider themselves to be lesbians, were married on 3 October. Legal experts have said that their marriage will remain valid after Smith's surgery.

The newly married Easterday was in the news again on 14 November after being escorted off the property of her church in Akron. Police warned her that if she would be subject to arrest on trespass charges if she returned to the Medina Church of the Brethren. The church accused Easterday of "remaining unrepentant" and "mocking God"; Easterday, who had attended the church for four years, said, "I feel in my own eyes that no one has the right to tell me where I can go to hear God's word."

ANTIDEFAMATION RAG

National Movement Founded

© 1996 by *In Your Face*
King of Prussia, PA, 2 November, 1996

In what at least one attendee called "the most important political event for transpeople since the Stonewall Riot," twelve organizations representing the heart of the transcommunity signed Articles of Association for GenderPAC today in this small suburban town outside Philadelphia, highlighting an often intense day-long meeting.

The signing marks the first time the gender community has ever assembled together to found a unified national movement against gender-based oppression. GenderPAC is a "public advocacy coalition" dedicated to "gender, affectional, and racial equality."

The meeting, which convened early in the morning and ran into the night, covered a wide variety of subjects, including diversity and minority outreach, deaf and disabled accessibility and participation, GenderPAC's political objectives and mission, the scope of its activities, and what shape its national structure should take in the coming months. Discussions were cordial and often fervent.

GenderPAC began in June of 1995 as a loose-knit advisory group of trans-organizations working together to raise money and direct activism. However its focus quickly grew to include such activities as congressional lobbying, hate crimes, employment discrimination, National Gender Lobbying Day, community-based research, and legal advocacy. Only a year later, member organizations called for the November 2nd meeting to formalize GenderPAC's structure and mission.

Signatories at the event included representatives from American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), FTM International, International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE), It's Time America! (ITA), Renaissance Education Association, The Society for the Second Self (Tri-Ess), the

American Boyz, The Intersex Society of North America (ISNA), Transgender Health Action Coalition (TEAC), Transgender Officers Protect & Serve (TOPS), The Deaf Transgendered Alliance, Expressing Our Nature, Inc., and the Outreach Institute for Gender Studies. The International Conference for Transgender Law & Employment Policy (ICTLEP) was unable to have a representative at the meeting, but will be given an opportunity to sign the Articles.

TS Minister's Ordination Upheld

Originally posted on *America On Line* by GLCFWendy, 24 October, 1996

On October 22nd, the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta followed the recommendation of its Committee on Ministry in voting to continue the ordination and authorize the ministry of counseling of Dr. Erin Swenson. Dr. Swenson's ordination had been called into question because of her transition from male to female.

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta is the local governing body for the Presbyterian Church (USA). In 1995, the presbytery declined an earlier recommendation from the committee to affirm Dr. Swenson's ordination. After some members indicated that the issue would have theological implications that could resonate on a national level, the presbytery sent the request back to committee.

"It's actually the first time that I know of that a mainstream Protestant denomination has upheld the ordination of a minister who has transitioned within ordained office," Dr. Swenson said. "The future seems a little brighter for all of us today."

Young Wynona Ryder T-Bashed

© 1996 by *Southern Voice*

Actress Wynona Ryder said in an October interview with the Nashville Tennessean recently that as a 12-year-old she was mistaken for a boy and beaten up by two young thugs who thought she was gay.

"I got six stitches in my head, was slammed into a locker, got a fractured rib," she said. Ryder said she saw a woman who was the girlfriend of one of the boys a couple of years ago. Ryder asked the woman if she recalled the incident at school. "She remembered and said, 'Oh, that faggot?' And then I said, 'That was me.' I got a thrill out of that."

Same-Sex-Change-Sex Confusion

Two weeks after President Bill Clinton signed legislation to restrict marriage to unions between a man and a woman, an Ohio transsexual's desire to marry had officials in a tizzy.

On 30 September, Lake County Probate Judge Fred V. Skok issued a wedding license to pre-operative transsexual Denise Smith (referred to as Paul in non-trans media) and lesbian Debi Easterday. Smith, who dresses full-time as a woman except at work, plans to have sex reassignment surgery within the next three years.

Like the recently enacted Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), Ohio law also defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman. Judge Skok required what may be the first post-DOMA party check; he ordered Smith to have a genital examination to confirm that she had male sex organs. Smith complied, and Skok issued the license. Smith and Easterday who consider themselves to be lesbians, were married on 3 October. Legal experts have said that their marriage will remain valid after Smith's surgery.

The newly married Easterday was in the news again on 14 November after being escorted off the property of her church in Akron. Police warned her that if she would be subject to arrest on trespass charges if she returned to the Medina Church of the Brethren. The church accused Easterday of "remaining unrepentant" and "mocking God"; Easterday, who had attended the church for four years, said, "I feel in my own eyes that no one has the right to tell me where I can go to hear God's word."

ANTIDEFAMATION RAG

Vanessa S.

\$17.95 (paper)

Cross Purposes

On Being Christian and Crossgendered

Sullivan Press, 102. pp.

ISBN 1-889979-00-7

Quantity Discounts Available

In this monograph, the first offering from AEGIS' Sullivan Press, Vanessa S., author of *The Cross and the Crossdresser*, takes a hard look at Christianity, the church, and crossdressing. She argues forcefully and passionately for the need for inclusion of all Christians and calls on those who have been marginalized to claim their rightful place in the Church.

A New Book From Sullivan Press

To order, send \$17.95 + \$4 S&H to AEGIS, P.O. Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724 (770-939-2128 Voice; 770-939-1770 FAX; aegis@mindspring.com or aegis@gender.org e-mail).

We Accept Mastercard & Visa

Ship to:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

"There are those persons who discover themselves marginalized and/or discriminated against, at some point and for some reason, by the larger Christian community. During the course of my life I have become increasingly aware, on a very personal level, of the struggle for genuine inclusion and acceptance that exists for some within the powerful social institution of the Christian church. I have chosen to become a part of that struggle for inclusion due to my own status as a member of an often-misunderstood and definitely marginalized minority group: the crossgendered. I take this situation very seriously and so, in the pages of this book, I want to examine the nature of that marginalized status and its resultant struggles as they have affected and informed my life and the lives of so many others like me."

"In many cases the crossgendered have historically been the targets of ridicule, discrimination, ostracism, and death by representatives of the Christian church, all because we are 'different' in some way or because we do not necessarily fit the arbitrarily established, yet every-changing, social norms. That is not right, just, fair, or Christlike, and it is past time to take action so that we crossgendered Christians may claim and assume our rightful place and spiritual heritage as equal members within the Body of Christ."

The following article originally appeared in FTM, the newsletter of FTM International.

New Men on the Horizon

James Green & Riki Anne Wilchins

What is happening in the men's community? For years now, the cry among TS/TG activists has been: "Where are all the transexual and transgendered men?" Now it seems the men are showing up at local support meetings, forming their own regional groups, taking active roles in organizing educational programs and conferences and in political action. What has created this sudden visibility?

For years many transexual men accepted the dominant culture's definitions of masculinity and maleness: that both are defined by what is between one's legs—in short, how big one's penis is. This is not a definition which served the men well, or in which they were given much say. In fact, it has been downright oppressive to the self-esteem of trans-identified men, since it incorporates a bodily-characteristic-as-litmus test most are bound to fail. Thus the transmen were little different from trans-identified women, many of whom had accepted SRS and the "but can you orgasm?" question as their qualification for "real-ness," along with passing successfully as a non-transexual. But passing has proven a deciding factor in the different ways the men's and women's communities have developed.

It has always been a distinctive characteristic of any colonized people that those who can pass as the colonizer do so, leaving the others behind to bear the brunt of the struggle and the worst of discrimination. This has been true for the majority of our community as well. In fact, at most trans-conventions that cater to female-identified transpeople there is evidence of a distressing hierarchy of feminine "real-ness," in which those who are most non-transexual looking are awarded status and privilege, while those who look most obviously transgendered or transexual—for instance the six-foot tall transexual woman who still has obvious facial-hair growth and a strong bone structure—are often the butt of private jokes. This in spite of the obvious fact that these are the people who are most often visible, who do most of the "heavy

lifting" in this movement. And many of them have the emotional, financial, and even physical scars to show for it.

But the plain fact is that the majority of transexual women cannot and will not pass. They may stop drawing attention, they may even learn to be well turned-out (which is often all the non-transexual world requires of us), but they will not pass beyond the most casual inspection. The political implications of this fact is that transexual women were forced early on to confront, and to begin to contest, contemporary definitions of femininity, femaleness and "real-ness."

We do not mean to imply that such standards have been categorically rejected by all transwomen. Obviously, this simply isn't true: many transwomen cling to passing and a working vagina as a test of femaleness with the strength and tenacity of a drowning person clutching a leaky lifeboat. But as the waves of defeat wash over them, they are forced to ask themselves if this is the only way, and if they could not use some help. Hence, trans-identified women have begun to question definitions of femaleness which originate outside their own bodies and experience, even if they do not completely relinquish them. Early on they began to organize, for it was increasingly apparent that isolated action or returning to the woodwork would not be the unqualified success they had once imagined.

But it was different for the men. Almost any transexual man can take testosterone, grow a beard and drop his voice, and pass anywhere, anytime, with great success. Many can even do so without chemical assistance. Historically, this increased the benefits of staying in the closet, while decreasing the apparent costs of not being out or organizing openly. After all, if it was humiliating to be a woman with a penis, how much worse could it be to be a man with a vagina? A penis was the sine-qua-non of masculinity, and a "pussy," well, that was what everyone from football players to drill sergeants called you when they wanted to humiliate you in front of other men, leaving your manhood not just open to question, but squashed like some disgusting cockroach on the locker-room floor.

The result of accepting a penis = manhood equation has greater costs than the forfeiture of political activism. In

operating rooms across the country, trans-identified men continue to happily sacrifice their bellies, forearms, thighs, and whatever tissue and tendons are left in pursuit of the Magic Phallus, and there are more than a few on crutches for life as the result of such operations. Many more bear hideous scars on large sections of their bodies in exchange for a tube of skin that hangs ineffectually, forever dangling, a mocking reminder that they cannot "get it up."

This is not to say that any one of us doesn't have the right to follow his or her own star, to get whatever surgical operations we want and can afford—and certainly not all surgically constructed penises (or vaginas) fail to satisfy their bearers. But the standards we accept in pursuit of such surgeries need careful evaluation—for gender standards are always highly political in nature, reflecting, as they do, one dominant group's needs at the inevitably deflecting and delegitimizing expense of another's. In fact, the very idea that we ought to have gender "standards" in any way whatsoever, that some individuals can be judged "more male" or "more female" than others, is political at its core, instantly creating a hierarchy of legitimacy and status between the judged and the judges, those who meet (and therefore can set) definitional criteria, those who they determine suitably meet the standard (i.e., who pass), and those who are inevitably left behind.

What is happening now with the various men's groups across the country, on the Internet, and with the first men's convention (in San Francisco, August 18-20, 1995), is that the transexual men's movement is starting to reach critical mass: there are simply enough of them out now, that they are looking around and beginning to set their own criteria for manhood, or, better yet, to refuse to create, adjudicate and enforce any such criteria to begin with. They are discovering and saying aloud that masculinity and maleness do not occur solely on or within non-transexual bodies, are not defined by the characteristics of non-transexuals bodies, and are not the province of non-transexuals to adjudicate and police. This is powerful stuff.

America is a nation obsessed with manhood, its displays and its continuous enforcement, refinement, evaluation and

examination. From the violence of football, to the western gunslinger subduing the range (the women, the buffalo and any Native Americans who crossed his path), to wife-beating and date rape, to international military "exercises" staged to prove that the president of the USA is not a "wimp," a particular kind of masculinity is constantly asserted. Only in America is gender considered a matter of "realness": i.e., it is not enough simply to be a man or woman; one must be a "real man" or a "real woman."

To lose one's gender status as "real" is to simultaneously experience a profound drop in cultural hierarchy, status, and privilege: in fact, it is downright dangerous. In Washington, D.C., an Emergency Medical Technician withdrew medical treatment from Tyra Hunter when he discovered she was "not a bitch." In Falls City, Nebraska, Brandon Teena was refused protection by the police and ultimately killed when two men decided it was intolerable for him to keep telling people he was "a man." In Colorado Springs, Colorado, Sean O'Neill was charged with 32 years worth of sexual assault and criminal impersonation because he neglected to tell two girls he was sleeping with that he had a vagina and

was therefore "really" a lesbian, not a man. We are obsessed with gender and with litmus tests of its "real-ness," in spite of the fact that anything which must be so repeatedly tested for contamination or slippage is obviously a construction.

The men's community, by continuing to come out, to organize, to speak en masse, creates the most direct challenge possible to this cult of manhood which so enthalls us. These men can help redefine what it means to "be a man." They have found ways to be men without engaging in the fear and loathing of femininity, or the fear of being a "fag" or a "pussy," which seems necessary to shore up America's common cultural definitions of masculinity. While other non-transsexual men are trying to figure out how to get along with today's women, or how to combine feminist understanding with a male style, or simply trying to discover what it means to "be a man" in the first place, transmen have the gift of finding the answers to those questions within themselves, even in the face of a profoundly hostile culture. Transmen are increasingly displaying the courage to speak and act openly out of their own self-knowledge. As their voices grow, they have the potential to lead the way to a

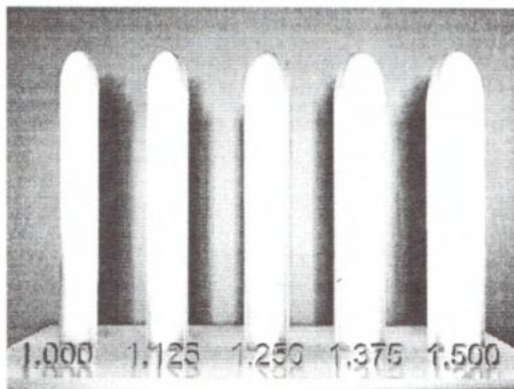
profound change in our cultural definition of maleness.

But it is not going to be easy to obliterate heavy centuries of belief in the infallibility of the visible body. The feminists said long ago that "Biology is not Destiny," but even many feminists believe "Biology is not Destiny, except for transsexuals." And the old boy's network will not open its doors for new men, only for young men born of rich old men. A true dialog between us as tran people and the rest of the world has not even really begun. It is time for transmen to step forward and take their place on the front lines in the battle for our dignity, alongside the transwomen who have been fighting since Christine Jorgensen stepped off that plane in 1952. The community of transmen can no longer afford to shrink away from their responsibility to contend with conventional definitions of masculinity and gender. The stabbing shame we feel when we think about being "outed," the very notion that we have to conform to specific gender criteria in order to be accepted as real, is a visceral reminder that we have work to do, both for self-acceptance and for our human rights. Here's to the men who are willing to do that work, whether locally or globally. —AN

Intelligence Engineering now offers improved therapeutic stents to medical professionals and the Post-Operative community.

Some patients have experienced difficulties trying to maintain a consistent dilation regimen using currently available stents. Our stents were designed by an engineer who has used the product herself, and has provided a limited number of prototypes to post-operative patients who report excellent results.

Modeled using computer-aided design, and manufactured of Delrin™ plastic, our stents satisfy the essential therapeutic objectives of achieving and maintaining adequate vaginal depth and width, and allow greater ease of use.



Each set consists of five stents in increasing diameters which allows the gradual stretching of tissues, unlike the abrupt stretching encountered when using the one

or two sizes commonly provided. An optimized nose shape allows easier penetration yet minimizes the danger of penetrating the vaginal wall. The eight inch length provides an ample gripping surface even during maximum penetration.

For more information, or to place an order, please contact:

Intelligence Engineering
PO Box 103
Southington CT 06489-0103
(860) 621-7001
Email: elspeth@intelleng.com
<http://www.intelleng.com/stent.html>

AEGIS News is published four times a year by AEGIS, the American Educational Gender Information Service, Inc. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership-based clearinghouse for information on transsexual and transgender issues. Our national headquarters is in Atlanta, GA. The photo above is from the National Transgender Library & Archive, located at the AEGIS offices.

AEGIS
P.O. Box 33724
Decatur, GA 30033-0724
770-939-2128 Business
770-939-0244 Help Line
770-939-1770 FAX
aegis@mindspring.com e-mail

AEGIS
American
Educational
Gender
Information
Service