



A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE: Report on What's Happening

by James

This is Issue #20 of the FTM Newsletter. That means five years of regular publication. The changes in gender consciousness in that time have been tremendous. In September 1987, Lou's first issue of FTM consisted of a single sheet of 8-1/2 x 11 inch paper. Now we fill 8 of those pages easily, and only the cost of postage keeps us from publishing more each issue. It used to be nearly impossible to get information about gender issues, cross-dressing techniques, transsexual processes and options, but now we find publications circulating everywhere, from the academic and mainstream presses (books like Holly Devor's *Gender Blending* and Marjorie Garber's *Vested Interests*) to new TS and TV groups springing up all over the world (like Jasper's group in Australia, Bet and Lonnie's group near Boston). We now have advocacy organizations like IFGE, AEGIS, and Press For Change--a legal rights advocacy group in London--, and service organizations like Georgia's Montgomery Medical & Psychological Institute (which has opened a new chapter in Gainesville, Florida) and Seattle's Ingersoll Gender Center. Enterprising FTMs are developing and marketing new products for our special market, some of which are described in this issue. Artists like Kate Bornstein are taking our stories to wider audiences. Many of you have friends who have been on national TV (I mean television!) talkshows. And the FTM presence has been growing at the regional gender conferences such as IFGE and Southern Comfort. The first International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy takes place in Houston, Texas, this August. And the Gay and Lesbian International Film and Video Festival, an annual event in San Francisco, screened a record number of genderrelated films, videos, and shorts subjects to audiences that were very mixed, and very receptive. (The festival is guestcurated by Jenni Olson, a selfproclaimed genderbender, who writes in the "Endless Summer" issue of local 'zine *Girljock*: "...when I recreate myself in my father's image, I am what I wanted him to be -- and I'm the man of my dreams.") There seems to be an expanding consciousness of gender issues, and an expanding willingness to examine them. Just a few years ago, "pc" lesbian audiences nearly rioted just because a penis was shown in a lesbian-made film; this year I sat among a mostly-female audience and was amazed that there were no angry outbursts over the image of a male body with super-imposed breasts, of a female body with super-imposed penis, of Jasper explaining himself as a man with lesbian consciousness, of a bearded lesbian explaining that because she is so often treated as a man she has come to be able to behave

as a man, and has achieved an understanding of herself as "other"--more than simply male or female. Sound familiar?

Anyway, there's a lot going on these days. At our April meeting (attended by about 30 people) I gave a report on the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) conference in Houston from which I had returned, exhausted, just an hour before. In summary, there were 15 FTMs at the conference, a full 10% of the attendees. Our presence was acknowledged and appreciated by such notables as Dr. Sheila Kirk (author of the book *Hormones*), Virginia Prince, *grande dame* of the MTF crossdressing/transgender scene, and Sister Mary Elizabeth. Another FTM attendee writes of his experience at this conference elsewhere in this issue. As for me, it was great to meet the other men, share information with them, and to make our presence known. The transsexual program was coordinated by Christina, an MTF, who worked hard to include joint sessions on issues that affect TSs in both directions (employment, legal rights, insurance, transition, gender perception, socialization, selecting service providers, religion), but, frankly, the FTMs wanted to be together, getting to know each other, building our own network. The joint sessions might have been enhanced by the presence of FTM leaders and "oldtimers" on the panels, and more FTM-oriented content in the topics. It was painful to hear so many instances of "MTFs will find their lives changed in (this) way, while FTMs can expect to experience the opposite." To illustrate this oversimplification further, the statement "MTFs will have to adjust to secondclass citizenship and reduced earning power, while FTMs can anticipate increased respect and earning capacity" made me cringe. Don't they realize we have a transition to go through, too? Don't they know many of us also lose our careers or experience periods of unemployment? Don't they understand we haven't been socialized as captains of industry? Well, they'll never know unless we tell them. We were invited to contribute to the planning for next year's conference (March '93 in Philadelphia), and Jason Cromwell and I agreed to be the FTM coordinators for that meeting. This will be good practice for the '94 conference which will be held in San Francisco.

The April meeting also featured Katherine Gordon, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, who discussed issues TSs should explore in therapy besides getting "the letter": grief over the loss of the self of the past; present relationships and family; future friends and lovers; other life issues (beyond gender) that can benefit from a therapeutic setting. Katherine's presentation was very caring and helpful. It's important to remember that we are whole persons, and while gender can be all-consuming at times, we must keep our perspective if we are to grow.

¹²⁹During the ensuing discussion a mother asked what to

expect when her 23-year-old daughter begins taking testosterone. Many people responded to her and complemented her on her willingness to become educated and support her child. FTMs and therapists who were present gave her advice and encouragement, and talked about their own mothers. It was an emotional and intense session, fruitful for everyone.

Our May social meeting, a picnic in Golden Gate Park, was poorly attended, but that's okay. We'll continue to offer the "no-host" social gatherings for those who want them.

The June support meeting, attended by about a dozen FTMs, was full of good talk, especially about the issue of surgery before hormones. Principle 13 of the 1990 draft of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association Standards of Care states that "Hormonal sex reassignment should precede surgical sex reassignment as its effects (Patient satisfaction or dissatisfaction) may indicate or contraindicate later surgical sex reassignment." But several pre-op FTMs expressed frustration over the fact that they are in working environments in which it would not be safe for them to transition. The jobs pay well, and the guys have plans to change careers at particular times. It would be best for them to have their mastectomies now, quit their jobs and then start hormones, so they could begin the obvious part of their transition in the new environment, as men already. This is an interesting dilemma, and if any of our readers cares to comment on it for publication, please send us your thoughts.

Our next informational meeting is scheduled for July 12. It will be held at a new location. Call P.B. for details at [REDACTED]. The rest of the year's schedule is shown below. I will be out of town for the month of July, and I look forward to seeing everyone at future meetings. Mark your calendars!!

JULY 12 '92	Informational Contact P.B. [REDACTED]
AUG. 16 '92	Social Contact Sky [REDACTED]
SEPT. 13 '92	Support Contact Billy [REDACTED] or Michael [REDACTED]
OCT. 11 '92	Informational Contact James [REDACTED]
NOV. 8 '92	Social Contact Sky
DEC. 6 '92	Support Contact Billy or Michael

All meetings are on Sundays from 2 to 5 p.m. Call for location. Support meetings are restricted to FTM TSs and TVs only; other meetings are open to all.

FTM CROSS-DRESSERS AT EVENTS AROUND SAN FRANCISCO

March 27 at DNA Lounge, a "Gender Bent" benefit was attended by numerous MTF and FTM cross-dressers and transgenderists. A costume contest included an handsome blond FTM CD named Stafford, who won as "Best Woman Dressed As A Man." Francis donned a blonde wig, long diamond earring, and with corporate suit and mustache won second place in the "Wild Card" category as "Cross-Dressed Marilyn."

Elvis Herselvis (Leigh Crow) did a great acting job as the young male hood (John Travolta in the movie), in the Sick & Twisted Players' version of Steven King's "Carrie" at Fort Mason recently. Her character was a combination of teenage horniness and sadistic perversion that was extremely humorous, as was the entire gender-bending (in all directions) play. Elvis continues to bring her unique interpretation of Elvis to benefits around town.



ELVIS HERSELVIS

In April at Cafe San Marcos, a benefit strip contest took place with amateur and professional women dancers. Rainbeau was the lovely first place winner. Second prize went to an imaginative act by Kerry, whose alterego slowly and stylistically stripped out of a 1900's suit (with vest, watch, spats, and holstered gun), down to his underwear with a realistic penis which he revealed briefly to an appreciative audience.



FRANCIS

May 14 at Cafe San Marcos, Francis appeared on stage in a 40's pin stripe suit, red vest and white shoes at a benefit for Project Open Hand. He did a rendition of two Spanish love songs, including the theme from the movie "Mambo Kings," to which he also danced. His loyal fans surrounded him, but a loud and rowdy crowd made his performance a good dress rehearsal at best. His performance a week earlier at Lily's in memory of Tina Tanner (in connection with ETV) was well received.

Stafford had a photo in the June 4 Bay Times, which is part of a photography show entitled "Gender

Anonymous" at RAM Studios, with portraits and genitals (displayed separately) of local people, including a number of MTF and FTM CDs. Although admitting to being a "male impersonator," Stafford prefers no gender pronouns and goes by "just Stafford." Stafford's other photos (besides suit and tie) were graphic, brave and beautiful. There were also several portraits of Elvis Herselvis exuding masculine sex appeal. T-shirts with Stafford, Elvis Herselvis, and "Glam" Justin Bond likenesses were available as part of the benefit for Project Open Hand.



STAFFORD

Singer Kathy Korniloff of the group Two Nice Girls was depicted in an article and photo in the June 10 Bay Area Reporter appearing in drag as "Tyler Moore, male bisexual stud. The character of Tyler sported facial hair and, well, the appearance of being anatomically correct." Also in that paper, defending her masculine mode of dress, singer k.d.lang was quoted: "If I had to wear high heel and a dress, I would be a mental case."

May 27, a Canadian film crew shooting a documentary of lesbian social scenes across the U.S. filmed a dance sequence at the I-Beam. Francis danced with a blonde woman in a black dress, and as the cameras rolled she slithered all over him in a spontaneous version of "dirty dancing." They also shot a closeup of Francis adjusting his hat at the bar. There was at least one other crossdressed woman there, and reference was made to them in a general way ("women with mustaches and suits") in the Two Nice Girls article.

There is a growing phenomenon in S.F. among younger lesbians to blur the gender line as they sport crew cuts, baseball caps and unisex clothes, and move and look like young boys (as opposed to "men"). Some are deliberately taping their chests, and experimenting with combinations of male/female looks. Check out Faster Pussycat on Wednesday nights or Girl-Spot (Endup) on Saturday nights to catch this scene.

Thorough The Eyes of This Man Becoming

I believe I walked away more of a man than I was before. After the I.F.G.E. conference in Houston in April, I felt 1cc of happiness for the first time in my life. I'm far from a full dosage. I have never been happy in my life except for when at the conference, in one fleeting moment I came to the realization that after all my pain and agony, the test of time, trial, and error, it's going to be all right. It's going to be all right, and things can only get better.

Thursday, the first thing I did in Texas was make the mistake of trying to shake Jason's hand. He slapped my hand away and said, "We don't do that." Then he proceeded to give me the warmest bear hug that side of the Rockies, with which he squeezed out all my pre-conditioning; a man can do more than just shake a friend's hand. Jason introduced me to Taylor. I heartily shook Taylor's hand, and Taylor gave me a heavily Texan dialect, "Hiya doin'?"

We went downstairs to dinner (in the Southwest Hilton) and I have never seen so many male-to-females in my life. I was overwhelmed all over again like I was when I met Lou Sullivan. When I got past the sensory overload, I saw that they were smiling broadly, comfortably feeling good, and that energy eased into me. It was a great sense of relaxation.

Friday, we had our FTM discussion. We talked about our hopes and especially our fears. The topics ranged from lavatory issues to homophobia, hormones, the men's movement, wives, lovers, partners, children, and a myriad of other topics that seemed to congeal in my head. We had a "show-and-tell" that was for "Men Only." I saw on two men the most beautiful top surgery... done 10 years ago, and my heart jumped with joy, but conversely I saw another man's bad top surgery that made me cry. After that revelation, those of us who were bound for top surgery sat there in a dumbfounded daze, failing to pick our jaws up off the floor. I concluded that we need to network much harder. Top surgery is not just the removal of the mammary gland, fat and excess skin, but it is cosmetic in nature, like a work of art. There are people out there who can and will do it. With intestinal fortitude, we revealed ourselves below the belt and I found it was a whole new ballgame. We have a long way to go!

Dinner that night with the guys and lady friends... that was the greatest sense of belonging I ever had. With 20 people we waited 20 minutes and then finally sat down at an 'L' shaped banquet table. We were served by two waiters, and every other word out of their mouths was "Sir." The restaurant was large. Periodically, I looked around and found many eyes upon us for many reasons: sometimes because we became loud, women gazed upon us from afar, men hot-stared the women for gazing upon us from afar. Out of 15 men, two of us were pre-treatment, but it didn't matter. We still belonged.

Come Saturday afternoon, a majority of us went to a buffet for lunch. There the guys literally let it all hang out. At the half of the table where I sat, a couple of

them started talking about the horror stories of when they first started seeking health care professionals: the fear of discovery seeking help as a man with a female body, offers to go on shopping sprees to change their minds, the metaphysicalspiritual yoga course, the "Get God and Heal with Jesus" routine. They took the most stressful situations in their lives and turned them into the best material I've heard for a situation comedy. In our cases, I often wonder if the laughter is theraputic. Are they at the point when it has finally gotten betterbetter enough to poke fun? I was laughing so hard that I had Texas iced tea dribbling out of my nose. I'm still trying to work the memory of "kahboy" versus cowboy.

Saturday evening's formal banquet proved to be something a little short of the academy awards and a roast. It dawned on me that I was the tallest man there after I looked at a polaroid of the men together. We'd gather together for one photographer and it ended up being a celebrity photo shoot and interview. I hope people will respect many of our wishes and not publish us without permission. I was saddened that one man would not join us for photos.

Throughout the evening I drank in the sights: one of our very own was dressed in dashing white. His lady glowed with white sprinkled with pearls. Though one man arrived better late than never at the conference, groomed in tails, he reminded me of a southern gentleman. Shiny lips and bouffant hair, perfumes redolent in the air, tuxedos and sequins on shoulders, corsages on pouty breasts and boutonnieres on robust chests, lace and chiffon on waists, pumps and flats on feet and nonetheless, legs for days. As the evening progressed, I found many ladies had become bold. They approached me from all directions to talk to me. If they weren't opportuning a chance to kiss one cheek, they were pinching the lower. Never had I so much attention. I realized that in their eyes, I was more handsome than I could ever believe myself to be.

A family of a wedding party staying at the hotel came by the banquet hall to gender-educate themselves and their 9-year-old boy about FTMs. They had seen all the ladies, but weren't aware of us men until they saw me. No matter how I tried to tell him he did not believe I had a female body. "I don't believe you!" he said over and over. At that point I began to question if I was lying to this kid. Did this kis see truth, illusion, or both? They thanked me for my time and left.

Later on, I joined Jamison, Jason, and Taylor. During a serious discussion, the bridegroom from the wedding party walked into the quiet lounge where we were sitting. He looked as if something immediately needed to be corrected. Barging through the discussion and slightly apologizing, he asked if we were all women. My counterparts hesitated at the rudeness. I stood up and introduced myself. His eyes widened as if I had lodged some sliver of threat into his heart. Arising to one inch under his six feet, I looked him in the eyes and shook his hand with a purpose. He was accompanied by an older man whose face displayed chagrin upon the young bridegroom's behavior. With reluctance, since it had been a long day, Jamison proceeded to correct him

on his thinking, with Jason and Taylor chiming in. Though our analogies seemed exceptional and our language clear, the bridegroom pointed to the bearded Taylor and said, "So she's a girl?" The older man with him hurriedly took his hands out of his pockets and rolled his eyes. I replied with a touch of lividness, "Does he look like a girl?" "No," he said. "Then call him a man." After a little more explanation, a smoker came by to prove his manliness by refusing to move his smoldering stick out of Taylor's face. He displayed defiance by hesitating to move. Several security rounds were made by a hotel staff member to see if we were all right, then the curious thanked us for our time and left us in peace.

There had been a 'rap' party in the bar, and the town's young black folk had been checking us out in the lounge and gawking at me as they entered and exited the lavatories which were in direct line of sight. Since the banquet hall bar was closed, we decided to get one more drink in the bar.

Earlier that evening, I had gone to look in on the discotheque. The event staff stopped me. Because I was well-dressed, one prompted me to pay to enter. I told him I just wanted to take a look. Another staffer furrowed his eyebrows at the man at the door and told him with some annoyance, "Let him look!" I looked, saw there was a serious party going on, then left as the eyes began to stare at me. I walked back down the hall with the same sense of purpose I had brought with me, despite the ignorant behavior and the loud intentional whispers, "That's a girl!"

With intrepid steps, the four of us walked down the hall and into the ignorant behavior and loud whispers. Jamison's simple explanation that he just wanted to get a drink gained him a "Yes, Sir," and the door widely opened. Jason and Taylor followed, but when I stepped forward I promptly got the event staff's hand smack in the middle of my chest. I thought I was discovered as I bounced off his outreached palm. He said I had to pay. "I'm/he's with them/us," Taylor and I chimed together. "Oh, sorry, Sir. Go on in and enjoy yourself." With the same sense of annoyance, the event staff member had to tell the doorman to let me in again. We got our drinks and left, only to be greeted in the hallway by the bridegroom. He stopped us to be introduced to his new wife. When I shook her hand and she looked into my face, she was not at all apprehensive. Perhaps she did not believe either. We took our leave, but this time the ignorant behavior and whispers did not appear, and all the remained were blank stares into our backs.

Everything under the sun (stars) has been done before, it is just that we today have more material to work with than the late naked ape. It is the mind that makes us the man or woman that we are. The body is but a vessel that harbors our minds, our souls. But in the world of appearances, clothes do create the illusion and the reality the body cannot. With my "Herbie" securely tucked front and center, I did not hang my head low and worry about the eyes of other men that shoot their glance between your legs and validate in their minds your status in relation to them. We are dependent on these woven threads for it is this material that not only sheilds us

from the environment, but it helps us to attain a quality of life that is comfortable, an emotional life that is bearable. When we believe that nature has messed us over with an incongruity, we cover the mistake. This naked animal cannot bear exposure, but other animals bear their deformities--fur or no.

It is said you never have a second chance to make a first impression. Never say never. For those who are transitioning, you impress twice, and you certainly get a second chance.

As Jamison led the group into an uncertain situation like a squad leader into a mine field, he straightened his shoulders and poked out his chest and suddenly this 5'4" man was taller than me. His gait was strong, and I thought I was running behind him like a little brother. I believe if I hadn't emulated his mind set, the event staff member's protruding hand would have surely groped some boob.

This man becoming: one day I hope to walk this earth as a man first, instead of as a black man. I am an American who is Native, I am an American who is African, I am an American who is French. To escape the stigma of my minority status, I prefer to dress sharp, with dignity, with pride. I believe it is the best way for the world to take me seriously and to avoid much prejudice. I shouldn't have to try so hard to come across as a respectable human being, but people must go to the extreme to be able to have a chance to walk in the middle.

This man becoming... I wait long and hard for my rebirth. I'm glad I have the company, support and guidance.

In the Brotherhood,
Titian



WILLIAM A. HENKIN
P S Y C H O T H E R A P Y

1801 Bush Street, Suite 111
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 923-1150

MFCC License No. MU 22960
Board Certified Sex Therapist

NEW PRODUCTS

We've received the following new product notices. The FTM Newsletter does not necessarily endorse any products or services advertised or reported on within its pages, though in principle we support entrepreneurial FTMs. Consumers are solely responsible for their purchases; any disputes should be resolved directly with the merchant(s), though, again in principle, we at the FTM Newsletter will report on problems experienced by our readership if those problems are wide-spread and unresolved.--ed.

Taylor McGowan and his partner Rebecca have

formed their company, Sensuous Skins to make custom garments for the transgendered community. (Yes, Taylor is the guy Titian wrote about.) Taylor makes female-to-male "Fantasy Genitalia" that look real, feel real and stay put in your clothing. Most types are wash & wear. They also make custom swimwear, and custom "Comfort" breast binding tops (not tubes) that are worn as T-shirt/undershirt. For more information, or to discuss your custom order, call or write:

Sensuous Skins
P.O. Box 3547
Comroe, TX 77301-9998
(409) 539-3432

From July 1 to August 31, "The Herbie Maker" will be having a Special Summer Sale. Buy one undyed "Herbie" the FTM prosthesis for swimming, at the great sale price of ONLY \$28.00 (includes shipping and handling). ["Herbies" were introduced in Issue #19.]

Rhonnie Reed ("The Herbie Maker") is also announcing the introduction of his latest product: "TRAMP" (Totally Realistic Artificial Male Penis)!! Rhonnie says, "With "Tramp" you will have the ability to stand and urinate, create an endless erection, be personally stimulated during intercourse, and look and feel totally normal. Only a real close inspection will disclose "Tramp" as a replacement to surgery. With the cost of surgery, some of which does not perform as expected, the price of "Tramp" is an attractive alternative...only \$500.00." If you are interested in "Tramp," Rhonnie will mail you an information packet. Send a stamped, self-addressed business size (#10) envelope to:

Creative Growth Enterprises
4480 Treat Blvd. Suite 227
Concord, CA 94521

Rhonnie also wishes to offer his services to our community as a peer counselor. Write to him at the address above, or phone him at [REDACTED]

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Randy Ingersoll, another Texan, has developed what he calls the "Transitional Prosthesis." (see photo) Randy says: "This is a prosthesis that is designed to bring you closer to living as the man that you are, whether you're cross-dressing, in transition, or waiting on surgery. I am an FTM and have been developing this for several years now.

"Once having made the decision to change my outer shell to match my maleness inside, I soon discovered that imagination was indeed an integral part of my transition. An extremely frustrating part of this process was that a sensible prosthesis had not been developed that would permit me to live as closely to maleness as possible.

"I was very athletic and enjoyed water sports; however, when I started living as a male I had to give up these things due to a sock that was either waterlogged or moving all over in my pants whenever I ran or played

basketball. I decided to experiment, and with every device I can always remember worrying about them falling out of my pants (PANIC).

"This prosthesis has been developed and redeveloped to get to this stage--there is more to come. My interest is to continue to improve it until such time that a prosthesis is available that will function exactly as a penis and will interact with the FTM's biological body. This will give us an acceptable existence without paying dearly for non-functional surgeries. I will be submitting updates on the latest advances concerning the prosthesis to the FTM Newsletter.

"At present the Transitional Prosthesis is 85% waterproof and will dry within approximately 15 to 20 minutes. Due to the harness, the prosthesis follows your body just like a penis (here's a first--you can go without underwear or a jock strap to hold it in place). It feels real; of course this is a major concern, since women tend to be more aggressive these days and may have their hand in your crotch before you can stop them. If you happen to brush against someone accidentally (or on purpose), they won't feel a hard lump in your pants and wonder what the problem is. Again, this prosthesis is designed to allow you to live as freely as possible without always being in fear that someone will detect that six-pack of socks in your pants.

"The prosthesis can be washed in the washer and easily dried on a towel. Though the prosthesis is not an exact replica of the penis in appearance (let's face it, if they're that close they'll know it isn't real), for now I have chosen to pursue functional use.

"Since I am a TS, I also know how much money the whole transition costs, and there doesn't seem to be tons of cash left over after paying for chest surgery, hormones, hysterectomy, tailoring of clothes, dildos, socks, and highmaintenance women! My interest is to keep the cost down. Each prosthesis is handmade and takes roughly four to seven hours to make. They are..available in different skin tones. The life of the prosthesis is mostly determined by how carefully you follow the instructions which are provided.

"I am available to anyone who has suggestions, concerns or problems. I also guarantee complete refund if you decide that the prosthesis doesn't bring you more satisfaction and peace of mind than any other prosthesis that you have worn.

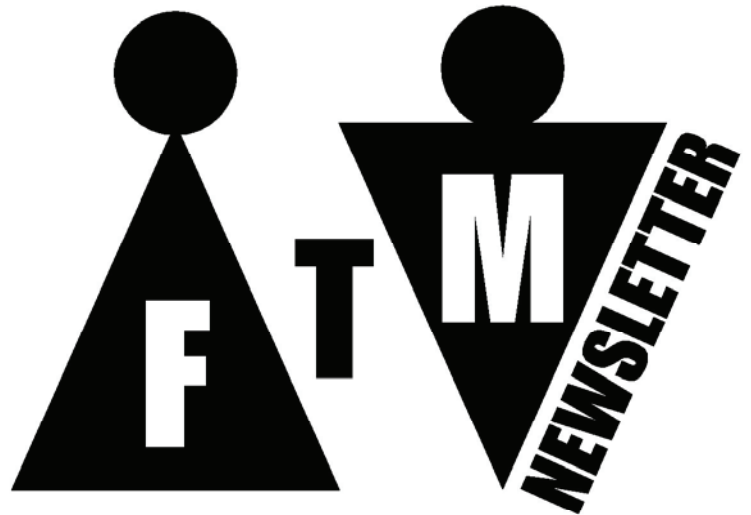
"Each of us has something to contribute to the advancement toward our goal of being able to have the body that goes with our minds. I suggest that each of you continue to support the FTM Newsletter which is a vital part of our success and serves to address the challenges we face in our struggle to live our daily lives as normally as possible. I will be contributing a portion of the funds from the sales of the prosthesis to support this newsletter so that it will continue to serve our population along with our concerns. In this manner, your funds will help you twice. It is important that our resources go to help us.

"I have made quite a few prostheses for friends of mine, and they report that this is the best, most realistic one they have ever tried, and it is very comfortable to

wear. It is undetectable, unless (of course) you are naked. I know what freedom, comfort, and normalcy it has contributed in my life.

To order a Transitional Prosthesis (patent applied for), contact Randy at the address below. Indicate your skin color as either light, medium, dark, or brown. Prices are \$65.00 for one, \$120.00 for two, or \$375.00 for three. Buy four or more at \$55.00 each. Shipping and handling is included. Allow two to four weeks for delivery. Personal checks accepted, but orders will not be shipped until the check has cleared. Also, Randy is very interested in feedback and suggestions on his product; all correspondence will be held completely confidential.

Randy Ingersoll
315 Running Brook
Mesquite, Texas 75149
(214) 288-5089
(ok to leave message/order)



Leather Stitches

CUSTOM DESIGN
FASHION TO FANTASY
ORDINARY TO OUTRAGEOUS

By Appointment Only

PAT YANCEY-JONES
(415) 546-4075

FTM MALE BOX

Dear FTM,

It is my pleasure to introduce myself to you as a partner of an FTM. In April I attended the IFGE "Coming Together" conference in Houston in hope of meeting other partners to develop a support system for myself. The people I met from the FTM community were incredibly warm and encouraging!

Throughout the week as we (both FTMs and partners) shared our stories, we discovered that we have similar issues in our relationships. Many of us came through the lesbian community and have experienced rejection as a result of our choice of partner. We talked about defining roles in a relationship. Some of us are working through our own issues of incest and sexual abuse and are newly experiencing a man in a positive way. For nearly every couple, there seemed to be issues around touching during love-making. We talked about being with our partners pre-transition, during hormonal and surgical transition, and post-operative. And some of us expressed feelings of isolation as a result of not wanting to expose our partner's status to the community at large which can be unsupportive and hostile.

During the course of the conference, I was disappointed that IFGE did not provide a program format specifically for partners of FTMs, and I was grateful to the FTMs in attendance for sharing their time. I expressed my concern to the FTM representative on the IFGE Board of Directors, and suggested that next year IFGE provide a format especially for partners of FTMs. And the entire FTM contingent suggested that IFGE also provide a future program format for couples.

Our suggestions were met with great enthusiasm, and I have volunteered, at the request of the IFGE Board of Directors, to submit a proposed "issues" format to them for their use in preparing the schedule for next year's conference.

I am excited both to be contributing to next year's program, and about the possibility of developing a list of partners interested in a support network. I would love to hear from you if you have any suggestions for IFGE, or if you would just like to get acquainted. Please feel free to pass my name, address, and phone number along to other partners of FTMs that you may know. However, please do not pass my name to people outside the FTM community without my permission. Also, in your communication with me, please let me know how you feel about having your name (etc.) passed along within the FTM community.

I am looking forward to hearing from other partners and will be keeping in touch with those who respond.

Sincerely,

Karen T.

P.O. Box 20216

Oakland, CA 94620-0216

Dear FTM,

I'm an FTM looking for others in the Los Angeles area interested in forming a network to share information, offer support, and socialize with. In

addition, I'm also looking for three FTM roommates to share my home located within the San Fernando Valley, near Cal State Northridge. If interested, please contact:

Bryan Speaks

██████████ Louise Ave.

Granada Hills, CA 91344

██████████

Dear FTM,

GF partner of FTM seeks to correspond with other partners. Are you feeling a little alone like me? I know we could help each other as our partners help their fellow FTMs. I would love to hear (read) from you so that I know that I am not alone out here. Please write soon.

Alex

P.O. Box 661931

Sacramento, CA 95866-1931

Hey guys,

I've just moved to Salinas and would like to make contacts in the Salinas/San Jose area. Also, I will be needing a roommate and I would appreciate hearing from another FTM or understanding friend (so I don't have to hide at home). I pass and won't bring unusual attention to anyone. I don't have a local address yet, and my only phone number is at work, so please send me a note at my mailing address below. Hope to hear from you soon.

Thanks!

Andy

██████████ Ave. de los Arboles, ██████████
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

TELEPHONE (415) 922-9240

MFC 8288

DR. LIN FRASER
PSYCHOTHERAPY

OFFICE HOURS
BY APPOINTMENT

2538 CALIFORNIA STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94115

Dear FTM,

I have a very serious problem that is causing me incredible sadness and frustration. I hope to get some feedback from other FTM fathers and from any professionals who can help.

I have a six year old son who saw me briefly undressed one day as I was going to the bathroom and neglected to lock the door. I have not yet had phalloplasty. He was between 3 and 4 years old, and we were attempting to toilet train him at the time. Since this incident, he has adamantly refused to use the toilet. He gets completely hysterical and totally unmanageable any time we try to coerce him to use the toilet. No reward,

no matter how appealing and wonderful can alter his outlook. Likewise, no threat of punishment makes any difference either.

I have tried to explain my situation to him by telling him I have a birth defect. I compare it to disabilities, such as people who are visually-impaired, hearing-impaired, or confined to a wheelchair. I have kept it in simple terms, as I feel he is way too young to be told anything more.

He has somehow convinced himself that if he uses the toilet he will lose his penis. He truly believes this to be true, despite any explanations from anyone, including family and doctors. We went to a child psychiatrist for one whole year just for this issue, and it did not help one iota.

I am very scared for him--as it seems he will never conform and give up his diapers. Soon he will be in first grade and will have to attend school all day. Kids can be so cruel and will make fun of him. Then he will refuse to go to school at all. When we don't put the diapers on, he just goes in his pants, no matter where we are or who we're with. This affects all of our family's social interactions. Everything we do is built around whether he's had his bowel movement yet. My wife and I have read everything on the subject of toilet training and we have tried many different approaches. Nothing helps.

The guilt that I feel for having caused this problem is eating me up alive. I have always resented being a transsexual and having a lifestyle that so few people understand or accept. Anyone I talk to about the toilet training problems in general always asks me first if I showed him how to urinate standing up. And of course, I cannot. Then it is stressed how vitally important and imperative it is for him to have a male role model to toilet train him. The result of this nightmare is a self-hatred in me that is literally interfering with my desire to go on. I thought that once I started living the way I was meant to be, that all that self-hatred would disappear. But now, I feel worse than ever about what I am lacking. I am a very private person and I don't share my change with anyone, other than for medically necessary reasons. I cannot afford another therapist--and it is very difficult for me to explain this to anyone I don't know well and trust thoroughly. Except for this problem, he is the greatest kid in the world. If anyone out there can help in any way, please write to FTM (*your letters will be treated confidentially and forwarded-ed.*) I pray someone out there has a solution for this awful dilemma.

Freaked Out Father Who Feels Like A Freak!

Dear FTM,

As many of you know, most of us experience tremendous problems in seeking and finding qualified medical treatment when we make the decision to enter therapy. There may be difficulties in finding a psychiatrist or psychologist with sufficient knowledge of transsexualism who is even willing to talk to us. We may not be able to find a qualified endocrinologist who will willingly monitor hormone therapy. And the surgeons who will help us achieve the physiological

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changes we need in order to live in the gender that nature has chosen for us--by way of the powerful hormonal charge that our brains receive prior to birth--are elusive, sometimes not always competent, and demand their money first before they venture into a surgical procedure that is far from perfected.

Transsexualism is a neuroendocrinological disorder, the study of which has been sadly lacking. There have been studies published--notably by the MIT press ("*Sexual Differentiation of the Brain*") which detail the research done on rhesus monkeys and other species of animals to determine the effects that the presence of testosterone has on the brain in the critical stages of fetal and infant development; yet this disorder has not been classified as a genuine **medical** disorder by the majority of health care providers. Health care insurers refuse, by and large, to even consider coverage for the disorder. Yet we can draw comparisons to infants born with other medical disabilities which health care providers will treat and insurance carriers will cover; and we can only ask Why? Why are we singled out in this fashion?

The answer, of course, is lack of research, and lack of general knowledge, which leads to prejudice. But is there a solution? Can we demand to receive the serious attention of health care professionals, and also the benefits that we work to pay for through our health care insurers?

I say the answer is yes. We need to find a voice in Congress that will, first of all, lend support to research in this area. If the U.S. can spend millions of dollars on Star Wars research that never even leaves the ground, they can surely make a grant to [study] a disorder that affects thousands of people in our country. Another way to gain credibility in our quest towards gaining qualified medical treatment and coverage is to institute a class action suit against major health care providers who have deemed our medical disorder as frivolous and not worthy of their attention or coverage.

If you think my ideas have merit, please either write to FTM and toss your idea into the hat, or write to me:

Michael Quinn

PO Box 201

Wakefield, RI 02880-0201.

[Michael, I sure do agree with you that more research needs to be done, and I think we will need a solid body of scientific evidence that we are suffering from a medical disorder before we can start shaking our collective fist in the face of prejudice. I have faith that this will happen someday. And one thing we can do to help speed that day along is to respond to Dr. Kirk's appeal below. -ed.]

My dear friends,

Your help is wanted to develop a Health Care Professional Referral List.

One of my tasks working with IFGE is the development of a Health Care Professional Referral List. I want to identify Internists, Endocrinologists, Surgeons, and Mental Health Professionals who have an interest in and expertise with transgendered individuals. To compile such a list, and be able to refer members of the

transgendered community to these professionals anywhere in the country is such an important undertaking.

If you have one or several professionals you are seeing and you feel they are empathetic, caring, and knowledgeable, I ask that you forward their names and addresses to me. Let me make contact with them. However, do not ask them of their interest in referrals. My approach to them will be on a professional level and always with their security safeguarded. The inquiry should always come from me.

We appreciate any help you can give us in this project. Any information you have should be sent to us, care of IFGE.

With much gratitude, cordially,
Sheila Kirk, M.D.
c/o IFGE
P.O. Box 367
Wayland, MA 01778

Dear FTM readers,

My thanks to each and everyone of you who responded to my questionnaire. A few are still trickling in and I continue to tabulate results. As of May 1st I will no longer be taking responses and will begin final tabulations. I expect final results to be available July 1st. Anyone who requested results should receive them some time after that date. Again, my thanks to all who participated.

Sincerely,
Jason Cromwell

Dear FTM,

I am a 34-year-old GWM interested in meeting FTMs in southern California. I live in South Orange County and would like to find someone close, but will travel from L.A. to San Diego. I am very understanding and affectionate. Please write or call. I'm looking forward to hearing from you!

Paul
P.O. Box 701
Lake Forest, CA 92630-0701

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REVIEWS

"The Opposite Sex Is Neither"
Theater Piece by Kate Bornstein.
Review by Beau Rutherford.

"The more times I find I don't belong, the easier it is to be alone; the easier it is to belong to myself." So says one of Kate Bornstein's characters in her one person show "The Opposite Sex Is Neither" which I had the pleasure of seeing on the evening of April 17 at the University of California at Santa Cruz. It became evident to me early on that while most of the audience was there for entertainment, I was there for cathartic release. I didn't laugh when most people laughed. The material was often too true to be funny, too close to my own fresh (and not so fresh) wounds. It is interesting to me that I've cried much more as a man than I ever did as a woman. That night's performance was an excellent example of that phenomenon. My eyes were never dry for very long.

It's not that "The Opposite Sex Is Neither" is a great piece of theater. Quite frankly, if you saw Lily Tomlin do "The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe" you've seen Kate's show already, only with different characters and better execution. I was never able to suspend disbelief long enough to buy the narrator as a "goddess in training" who was channeling all these different personae.

But when each personality did finally speak, Kate's sensitivity, insight, and brilliance came shining through. What each character had to say was sometimes humorous, often painful, and always the truth. Many of us could probably relate to the character who talked about feeling like a freak as a child. Although not speaking directly to me or my experience, much of the material felt quite validating. It showed me that while we might be very different along the gender spectrum, we also have a lot in common. I hope that is the message the nontransgendered portion of the audience went away with also.

So, thank you, Kate: for your gift, for telling the truth, and for calling me a "brave guy." I'll carry that with me.



From *Penioplastica Totalis to Reassignment Surgery of the External Genitalia in Female-to-Male Transsexuals*, by J. Joris Hage; illustrated by Ruud de Haan; 131 pgs. *Vrije Universiteit (Free University) Press, Amsterdam, 1992.*
Review by P.B.

This work is a refreshing and welcome addition to the literature on Sex Reassignment Surgery for F-to-Ms. It is Dr. Hage's post-doctoral thesis for which he obtained his current registration as consultant plastic surgeon (F.A.C.S) at the Free University in Amsterdam, Netherlands. "Penioplastica" is, to date, the most comprehensive work of its kind. Each chapter begins with an introduction; proceeds with a review of the

available professional literature on the history of the subject being presented dating from 1936; reviews the experience of the Free University's Academic Hospital; discusses the pros and cons of various techniques and approaches; and then, draws conclusions.

Chapter II, entitled "Phalloplasty in Female-to-Male Transsexuals; What Do Our Patients Ask For?" provides the first recorded attempt by professionals I've seen to understand what FTMs want. The same validation appears throughout the thesis as Dr. Hage refers to FTMs consistently in the masculine gender and refrains from calling genetic males "real men". He refers to masculine-identified anatomic males as "nontranssexual males", in recognition of the fact that FTMs are also men who just happen to require surgical assistance to become anatomically correct. Included in this chapter are the results of a questionnaire Free University (V.U.) sent to 200 FTMs, 150 of which were returned.

Chapters III and IV deal with the challenge of constructing a male urethra capable of passing a steady stream of urine and which does not develop leaks (fistulae) or retain urine residue. Dr. Hage described what I have often contemplated--removal of the ovaries, fallopian tubes and uterus through the vaginal opening and incorporating at least a portion of the vagina in making a leak-proof extension of the female urethra. The Academic Hospital at V.U. has succeeded in significantly reducing fistulae of the fixed part of the urethra (pars fixa) by using a flap from the upper front portion of the vaginal wall. Problems with leakage and retention of urine residue in the moveable part of the urethra (pars pendulans) have yet to be resolved.

Chapter V deals with the construction of the neoscrotum; Chapter VI with that of the neophallus; Chapter VII with penile erection; Chapter VIII with sculpturing the glans (head) of the neophallus; Chapter IX is a summary (written in English and Dutch). There are three appendices and the references are extensive. Some of the photographs of surgical sites are quite graphic, however, the illustrations and photography are good enhancements to the text and show some of the best post-operative results I've seen.

Appendix 3 is of special interest because it deals with silicone genital prostheses for FTMs. V.U. sent questionnaires to 120 ftms, 70 of which were returned expressing their desires. Such a device should:

1. Look normal in regular briefs or a tight swimsuit.
2. Be soft to touch.
3. Match the skin color of the wearer.
4. Adopt the body temperature of the wearer.
5. Retain its form, even when wet.
6. Be washable.
7. Be lightweight.
8. Stay in place either when dressed or when naked.
9. Permit swimming and showering.
10. Not interfere with urination.
11. Not interfere with clitoral stimulation.

The end result is a life-like prosthesis which can be provided with or without a scrotal portion for about \$300.00. It is affixed to the wearer through one of three methods: either with a collarstud-like device enabling it

to attach to the pants; with a flat base instead of a collarstud, enabling it to be fixed to the body using medical glue; or, with a 3cm-wide tongue, enabling it to be hooked behind a surgically-created full thickness skin flap in the pubic area.

Dr. Hage candidly discusses the failures as well as the success stories with regard to FTM genital surgery. Some of the possible risk factors he suggests every prospective candidate understands are: urethral fistulae; inability to hold one's water; narrowing or constriction of the neo-urethra; neo-urethral urine residue; testicular implant leakage; loss of motor control or death of tissue in the donor area; extensive scarring; death of various grafts; and infection, failure, rejection, erosion, or extrusion of penile implants.

All in all, the work being done at V.U. is exciting and hopeful, even though it is not perfect. Their goal is to ultimately produce a penis which is: aesthetically appealing with erogenous and tactile sensation; permits the patient to urinate while standing; and permits the patient to achieve sexual intercourse via penetration. "Peniplastica" is addressed to medical professionals and, therefore, assumes the reader has a working knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and medical-surgical terminology. However, it is still a valuable addition to the FTM's library, even if a medical dictionary has to be purchased or borrowed as a companion volume.

For availability/ordering information, you may contact Vrije Universiteit University Press, V.U. Boekhandel/Uitgeverij Bv, De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam, Netherlands. Phone: (020) 644-43-55.



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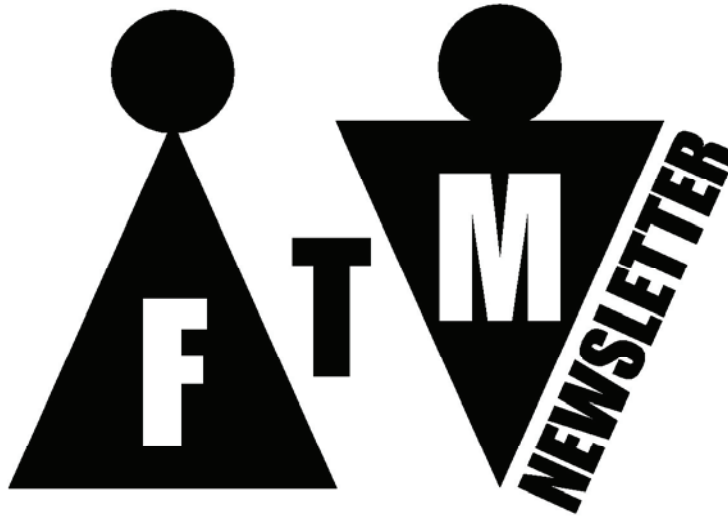
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