

SF Weekly

September 27 - October 3, 1995

**Slap Shots bridges
the yawning gap
at a mayoral forum**

Volume 14, Number 33 FREE

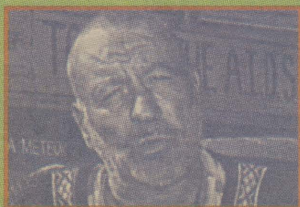


Drag

Sometimes girls will be boys
By Amy Linn

KINGS

Naked Guns: Shafer on the shame of the SFPD crime lab



**Bay View:
Have bus,
will be
homeless**

**Film: Short
Attention Span
Festival grabs you
by the short hairs**



**Music: Special
beat service —
Berkeley's Dance
Hall Crashers**

Drag

From
San Francisco
to London,

women are
donning
men's clothes,
assuming
male per-
sonas, and
challenging
the very
concept of
gender. Just
what is male
and female,
anyway?



J. Byrd Hosch (above) made her drag king debut as Pierre Byrd at Klubstitute this month. Jordy Jones (center) likes military dress best, but doesn't mind a nice suit. Stafford (far right) tries on different male poses.

g KINGS

The gender bending begins long before drag king Elvis Herselvis takes the stage under the red tinsel at La India Bonita bar.

Women stroll the 16th Street and Valencia hide-away in mustaches, suits, ties, and wingtips. Women saunter in perfect male slouches across the checkerboard floor and sprawl on bar stools in perfect male repose: knees splayed, hands dangling in their crotches to protect their balls. Which they've got. Their jockey briefs bulge impressively with handmade penises fashioned with secret recipes proudly held: They're made of hair gel or Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle slime squeezed into condoms, or they're fashioned out of rubber toys — those Day-Glo balls from Walgreens make pretty good testicles, and there's a soft rubber snail you can buy at a nature store that looks like a penis, if you castrate its antennae.

Crotches, it goes without saying, are all important. Particularly for tonight's Mr. Klubstutite contest, a drag takeoff on Miss America: a "he-man" event for the late-night Klubstutite club that meets at this bar each Sunday.

Sexual shapeshifting is the Klubstutite staple. Men dressed as women. Gay men dressed as redneck heteros. Women dressed as men dressed as women. But tonight for the most part, the crowd holds drag kings: women "passing" as men, and camping it up for "an evening of hyper-masculine hi-jinx," as the contest flier declares. "Be a dude, or just look like one. Pack a big one, draw on a mustache and march right down, Sept. 10," the flier reads. "No girls allowed!"

And so the women are doing the macho thing: leaning on walls, interrupting people, standing with their feet spread wide, belching beer vapors. They keep a hand in one pocket to jangle coins or check their bulges, while the girls in the crowd — drag queens — flutter fake lashes as if batting aggressive gnats. Two DJs cue up the Beatles' "I Wanna Be Your Man." A woman who calls herself KC from Chicago wears a mustache, short ponytail, and fawn brown tie, and she's practicing that poking thing that men do with their tongues in their mouths — that clucking-the-inner-cheek action that looks like a mini-erection fighting for air.

Another contestant, Crush Velvet, sports sideburns and a pink jacket from material vaguely reminiscent of fuzzy toilet-seat covers. She packs a mauve dildo, which she'll soon be using in the talent portion of the contest. And first-time drag king Buster Brown Eyes Feeling Blue — in real life a professional teddy bear stuffer — keeps checking her upper lip. She fears her mustache, which she made with her own hair and some spirit gum,

will fall off during her Frank Sinatra lip-sync.

"Are we feeling butch tonight?" Elvis Herselvis, aka Leigh Crow, kicks off the pageant, playing her own special version of Bert Parks, channeled through Elvis.

"Ugh," the drag kings respond monosyllabically.

"Let's not ignore our male side. Let's get in touch with it, let's embrace it!" Elvis says.

The three judges — also women in drag — motion for the eight contestants to come onstage. Selflessly, they allow in two gay men, one of whom normally dresses as a drag queen. "It's probably harder for them to look like straight macho men than for women to do it," judge Annie Toone, leader of the dykeabilly band the Bucktooth Varmints, will explain later.

By midnight, when booze has helped blur life itself, not to mention sexual boundaries, the fashion portion of the show has begun, to be followed by the talent segment and question-and-answer period (sample question: "What is your favorite household hint?").

And at this moment, under the glitter of twirling silver balls on the ceiling, as men and women, gay and straight,

bisexual, cross-dressed, transgendered, and pan-gendered, share beers and bathrooms — queens using the women's, kings using the men's — there appears to be a break in the universe: a disorienting, transmuted moment that sheds light, yet offers the very opposite of clarity. "She" and "he" — the bedrock of most cultures, the basis for forming our first, most basic impressions of each other — have been replaced by a murky, formless, ineffable spectrum where dyads don't exist. Male and female. Black and white. Good and evil. Breaking down the dualities, like splitting the atom, produces a charge that's staggering.

"What's your biggest problem with passing?" the judges ask contestant Pierre Byrd, who has wowed them with a campy country song about butt whipping and nipple clamps. On the TV above the bar, Fred Savage from *The Wonder Years* blows raspberries on the

school bus, and, for a brief flash, looks like a girl in drag.

"I have no problem with passing," says Byrd. She speaks with the conviction of a 45-year-old former cheerleader who was once married, taught Baptist Sunday school, raised a child, wore frilly clothes, worked for a corporation in small-town Crosby, Texas, and knew every minute that, God strike her dead, she was nothing but an impostor. "If other people have a problem with it," says Byrd, "well, then, that's their problem."

The world has always had a problem with gender anarchy. The world has a problem even describing what a drag king is, though women today are doing "gender fucks," as some call it, from San Francisco to New York, London, and beyond.

History only complicates mat- **Continued on page 12**



By Amy Linn • Photos by Pamela Gentile

Kings

Continued from page 11

ters, since passing women and male impersonators date back to biblical times, though they've rarely ever been referred to as drag kings (the term "drag" isn't thought to have surfaced until the mid-1800s, referring to gowns or trains dragging on the ground). Female-to-male transsexuals, who develop male characteristics via hormone treatment or surgery, don't necessarily call themselves drag kings. Neither do all female cross-dressers, or all hetero women experimenting with life on the other side, or all lesbians who call themselves butch, or all women who say they're transgendered (an umbrella term for any kind of differently gendered person, typically someone at ease with both "male" and "female" roles).

But many observers trace the modern, American usage of drag king to New York performance artist Diane Torr and Johnny Grant, a female-to-male transsexual makeup artist, who together planted the garden of a blossoming cult happening: They helped women turn into men through drag king workshops.

"It came to me in about 1989," explains Torr, 45, married to a man, and the mother of an 11-year-old daughter. A former go-go dancer, Torr had been doing male drag since 1981, exploring androgyny and turning heads. "It was a day that I'd done a photo shoot in male clothes, and I had an opening to go to at the Whitney. I decided to go dressed as a man just to give my friends a laugh."

None of her friends recognized her.

"Everybody was treating me like a man," Torr says. "So I found myself a wall to lean against and I got myself a beer and this woman started chatting me up — which I recognized, because it was how I'd chatted



Musician Annie Toone has used a male persona for 15 years.

men up — and it was really embarrassing. And the more I tried to get rid of her, the more interested, the more desperate, she became. And I thought, 'It's so humiliating, she's just laying herself out on the carpet for me.' So then it hit me. I thought, 'If this woman could see what I'm seeing, maybe

she could intercept some of her behavior.'

Torr started offering drag king training in Manhattan — "Have you ever wanted to dress like a man, try on the male guise and enter the male domain?" her ads ask. The idea, in a sense, was an obvious next step in a culture that's increasingly making drag queens part

of the mainstream. (The macho-men-in-dresses romp *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything!* Julie Newmar was the top-grossing new Hollywood release last week, with nary a peep from right-wing organizations).

In the past six years, 600 women have taken Torr's workshop: gay and straight, housewives and business execs, girls of 11 and women of 68.

Participants must arrive with a male persona in mind. Torr's alter ego, for example, is a lout named Danny who harks from Pittsburgh, Pa., works at a department store in Jim Thorpe, has four kids, and belongs to the NRA. Also required: hair gel, ace bandages or some material to bind breasts, and a fake penis — "not too large," Torr warns. She wants them to look realistic.

By the end of the day, after Johnny Grant's makeover has shaded the women with beards, goatees, or 5 o'clock shadows, the students hit a topless bar and start passing.

"It's so interesting how women can just snap into this persona," says Torr, who continues to perform — her New York show this year was *Drag Kings and Subjects*, a multimedia exploration of bullies and mod boys — and who continues to give drag king workshops in the States and overseas. In the meantime, synchronistic sex-role rebellions have led cross-dressing women to cross paths worldwide. London held its first drag king contest this summer, judged by two San Francisco transgender celebs, Stafford and Jordy Jones. But the world of male impersonation is still relatively small, and not yet masticated by the mainstream, so Torr is able to tick off names of acquaintances in San Francisco, and those acquaintances reciprocate, providing the outline of a loose-knit union of the gender-free.

"What drag kings are trying to do is very

ASHBURY TOBACCO CENTER

20% OFF
All Gifts • T-Shirts
Lighters • Pipes
Games

10% OFF
Cigars • Papers
Tobacco

FREE LIGHTER W/ THIS AD

1524 Haight @ Ashbury
San Francisco • 552-5556
Open Every Day • 9:30AM - 9:00PM

We've been voted "BEST BICYCLE SHOP IN THE EAST BAY" for the last 6 years by the readers of the East Bay EXPRESS, u.c.B. Daily Cal, & S.F. BAY GUARDIAN.

WHY?

BECAUSE WE DECIDED TO BE THE BEST.

<p>WE'VE BEEN COLLECTIVELY OWNED & OPERATED SINCE 1973 — THAT MEANS EVERY ONE OF US HAS AN EQUAL SAY IN EVERY BUSINESS DECISION WE MAKE.</p> <p>AND BEING DEDICATED CYCLISTS, WE'VE ALWAYS TRIED TO MAKE OUR SHOP</p>	<p>THE KIND OF SHOP WE'D MOST LIKE TO VISIT, SO WE VOTED TO HAVE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● THE MOST EXPERIENCED SERVICE DEPT. (APPROXIMATELY 100 YEARS, COMBINED!) ● COMPETITIVE — OR BETTER — PRICES ON BIKES & ACCESSORIES. ● NEW, USED & RENTAL BIKES. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WAY BETTER PARTS & CLOTHING SELECTION ● COMMUNITY SERVICES LIKE FREE LOANER TOOLS & REPAIR CLASSES. ● HONEST, INFORMED ANSWERS TO ALL YOUR BICYCLING QUESTIONS... WHETHER YOU RACE DOWNHILL OR JUST COMMUTE TO SCHOOL...
---	--	--

camp, very gender fuck," says Mr. Klubstitute judge Annie Toone, who knows Torr from her New York days, and who took the name Toone and her band's name — the Bucktooth Varmints — from Looney Tunes' Bugs Bunny, the original "pinko pervert," Toone says. "He was always in drag, and always out-smarting everyone."

A musician and songwriter for nearly 20 years, Toone worked and performed in Europe in the 1980s, cross-dressing, blending drag with punk, and later blending drag, punk, and country.

"I've stayed the same for the past 15 years, and slowly, society is becoming less frightened of me," says Toone, who is currently at work on a sci-fi drag king musical, *Hillbillies on the Moon*, in which she will co-star, along with Leigh Crow/Elvis Herselvis. The plot loosely resembles an Elvis Presley movie, with all the male roles played by women; it will open in February at Theatre Rhinoceros.

"It used to be that playing around with male roles was seen as buying into the patriarchy," Toone says. "What's happening now is not simply deconstructing gender, but opening up gender to all sorts of variants." The parodying, anarchy, music, and living as "gender number three," she says, "saved me from becoming an alcoholic junkie bar dyke."

Meanwhile, says Torr, it's important that male drag isn't typecast as "a lesbian thing." Cross-dressing is a hetero thing, too.

"Women have the information inside them, and they can use it by osmosis," Torr says. "All of us are extremely aware of the nuance of male gesture. Our survival depends on it," she says. "We know what their gestures mean, because we're prey to them. If I'm on a subway, I'm always watching them because I need to protect myself."

And by becoming men, Torr says, "women



It's not hard to pass, says Stafford: "Just walk like a man."

can access a certain part of themselves, a certain behavior they couldn't have used as a woman. They see how they smile all the time, or constantly apologize, and how that puts them in a weak position — if you can't engage in non-smile behavior, you're always going to

be in the position of having to acquiesce.

"As a man," she adds, "people step aside and give you a lot of attention. You're accorded significance without doing anything, without even using your voice."

The most difficult thing for women to

remember is to stiffen their faces, to stop accommodating, she says.

"Men are more reserved. They hold back, they let the world come to them, they don't go out to the world, which is the way women work: We are the facilitators," Torr says. And if they want to be men, women have to take up space. About 1 1/2 to 2 feet around themselves, to be exact.

How much space do women use?

"Zero. We are entirely pregnable," Torr says. It's a double meaning she intends. "I've been involved in the feminist movement since 1968," she says. "And basically, I feel after all this time, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em."

Back at Klubstitute, faux chaos shatters the calm. Interrupting the talent portion of the show, a gaggle of drag queens waving picket signs bursts in from the street, banging tambourines. They're protesting the flier for the contest that stated "no girls allowed."

"Sisterhood, Not Misterhood," the signs say. "Wigs Not Pigs," "Bitch Not Butch," "Fems Against Macho Butch Privilege," they read. Drag queen performer Justin Bond, looking gorgeous in a blond wig, starts berating drag king KC, who, as the imagined demands of power and testosterone take over, pushes Bond to the stage for a mock humping session.

"Security agents! Security agents!" Elvis Herselvis cries into the microphone. "Oh, this is a fiasco!"

"No chauvinists allowed!" a dramatic cry is heard from the crowd.

But finally the joking is silenced, and drag king contestant Crush Velvet takes the stage, whipping off her pink jacket at one point to lip-sync "Nobody Does It Better," in her ruffled

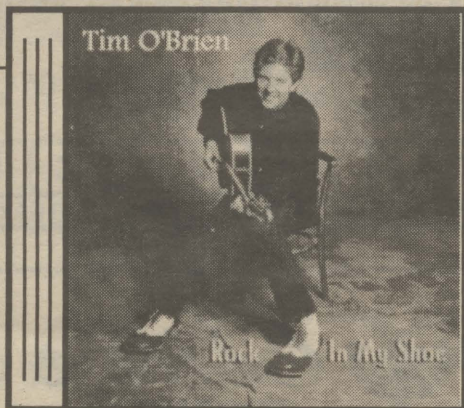
Continued on page 14

Tim O'Brien

SUGAR HILL

Rock In My Shoe

Appearing at
The Great
American
Music Hall
Thursday,
September 28



11.99 CD
CASSETTE 7.99



OPEN 9AM TO MIDNIGHT EVERYDAY!

SALE ENDS 10/3/95

TOWER
RECORDS • VIDEO • BOOKS

SAN FRANCISCO • SAN MATEO
CAMPBELL • SAN JOSE
CONCORD • BERKELEY
MOUNTAIN VIEW • EMERYVILLE
*LARKSPUR *FREMONT *DUBLIN
Now Open *SONOMA

*OPEN 10AM TO 10PM *NO VIDEO RENTALS!

1 • 800 • ASK • TOWER
SHOP BY PHONE OR FOR STORE LOCATIONS

DIGITAL PHONE FREE UNLIMITED EVENING & WEEKEND CALLS FOR 2 MONTHS*

*WHEN YOU SIGN UP ON A DIGITAL PLAN WITH THE UNLIMITED NIGHT AND WEEKENDS OPTION
FREE START OF SERVICE** A \$25 VALUE

 MOTOROLA Digital 950 \$9.54/mo.* for 24 Months <small>(Price without activation \$484)</small>	 AT&T 6650 Digital \$9.99/mo.* for 24 Months <small>(Price without activation \$514)</small>	 MOTOROLA Digital Lite \$11.63/mo.* for 24 Months <small>(Price without activation \$544)</small>
 ERICSSON DH 338 Digital \$12.83/mo.* for 24 Months <small>(Price without activation \$599)</small>	 NOKIA 2120 Digital \$11.63/mo.* for 24 Months <small>(Price without activation \$574)</small>	 ERICSSON DH 343 Digital \$10.99/mo.* for 24 Months <small>(Price without activation \$514)</small>

Service must be activated between 9/1/95-10/16/95. Minimum monthly charge of \$35 (digital), \$49.99 (analog) & early termination of \$100 applies. *Unlimited Nights and Weekend minutes apply to local calling area only and do not count towards total minutes used to calculate the Digital Flex Plan per minute rates. Option will be charged at \$15/mo. after promotion period ends, cannot be purchased separately and is available only with the Digital Flex or Digital Corporate Management plans. Digital phone required to activate service on these plans. **Excludes Security and non-contractual rate plans. Advertised cellular phone prices are conditioned upon subscription for a minimum period to a qualifying cellular service plan offered through INFINITEL. If you do not subscribe to a qualifying plan, your purchase price will be higher. Credit approval from Cellular One and possible deposit may be required at the time of purchase. Limited to stock on hand. Other restrictions and conditions apply. For TDMA Digital Dual-Mode Phone, sales tax not included. 0% Financing also available for installations, accessories and sales tax. Installation payment applications are subject to credit approval from Cellular One. Adequate insurance required.

PRO ENCORE  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •16 Memory •Delete Individual Messages •5 Tones NEW \$0 <small>(Annual Contract at \$8 mo.)</small>	ULTRA EXPRESS  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •16 Memory •5 Different Tones •Day & Time Stamp •Alarm NEW \$0 <small>(Annual Contract at \$8 mo.)</small>	CELLULARONE <small>Authorized Dealer</small> \$6.50 Airtime based on annual contract. FREE 1 MONTH VOICEMAIL W/ACTIVATION Activate your own pager for \$16 <small>(Plus Handling Fee/Restrictions Apply) (Limited To Stock On Hand)</small>
---	--	---

Infinitel
Communication, Inc

(415)957-1688
637 Howard St. (Btwn. 2nd & 3rd)
San Francisco, CA.

moment of orgasm, *blood*," Jordy says, totally droll. "Because capillaries do burst. It's not a pretty way to go."

"The crowd thought it was fabulous," Stafford says.

The drag that Stafford is personally most proud of is the gender blow she did for a San Francisco gallery opening, "Vegas in Space."

"I did a military space guy in drag," she says. "I was painted gold and I had a white jacket on, and gold tights, and high boots, and I packed really nicely, so it looked totally real. And I totally passed among people you shouldn't be able to pass in front of. Even the queens couldn't read me."

"It's fun to pass with fags," Jordy agrees. But it's also possible to get in trouble.

"I was cruised once," says Jordy, "by somebody who didn't know me, thought I was a boy, was being quite friendly, was in my field, was in a position to sort of hand out goodies, was horrified when he realized what the real scoop was, and only a couple years later has he finally settled down enough to talk to me. I think it really shook him up."

"It's like when Danny Bonaduce from *The Partridge Family* found out the person he was dating was a man, and he punched her. It's shocking to a male ego," Stafford says.

I find my mind won't budge from what Stafford said about packing "really nicely."

"What did you use?" I have to ask.

"I think I was using condoms filled with hair gel inside of stockings. Jordy makes them really well," Stafford says.

But what if someone gropes them and they break?

"You use more than one condom, you double or triple sack it, and then you put the nylon on," Jordy explains.

"I've been groped and Jordy's been groped and still passed," Stafford says. "I mean, if you

think about it, when you grab a guy's crotch, you can't squeeze very tight or you'll hurt him, so any guy who's going to grab you isn't going to want to grab you to hurt you. So you're just going to get a squishy feeling, like half hard." Stafford knows some of this from her work as a male model. "I did the Stormy Leather fashion show, and backstage I was wearing one under my underwear," she says, "and I totally passed."

They take me to a light box to show me slides of themselves and other drag kings, a term they use for people in performance mode, not for the daily grind. Today, for example, Stafford wears black jeans and a loose black shirt, her close-cropped blond hair curling slightly over a high, classically "masculine" forehead. Jordy wears glasses and a royal red, V-necked sweater befitting a country clubber. One can imagine her later in a man's satin dressing gown, savoring a martini. Strangely, though her face could definitely pass as a man's, it is her ears I notice. I find her ears uniquely male, though by this time I know the word means nothing.

"This is a woman who was a San Francisco fixture for a while," Jordy points to a slide. "Terrible drag king."

"What makes someone a terrible drag king?" I ask.

"She wore those high kind of girly platform shoes," says Stafford. "And I also think she did a butch striptease? Isn't that what she did?"

"Her talent was like, yecchh," Jordy answers.

"And also, we know she threw her act together in about five seconds, and if you're not prepared," Stafford says, "it's not going to come off. It's like Leigh — Elvis Herselvis — works on her drag all the time and she buys great costumes, and Jordy and I are con-

stantly going to vintage clothing stores."

"We've got about 30 suits and different outfits, lots of cool military jackets and hats and trousers and shoes and some band uniforms you can use for different things," says Stafford.

"I think when you talk about drag kings, Jordy and I take it a little further than most people do," Stafford adds. "We don't try to pass."

"We just *do*," says Jordy.

"We do it because it's aesthetically pleasing to us," says Stafford. "I always wonder, when somebody calls me 'he,' or calls me 'she' — I always wonder, what did they see in me to make them call me that? Because I basically look pretty much the same from day to day," she says.

"I'm never insulted by being called one or the other," Stafford adds. "The only time I'll point it out is if someone is using gender as a reason to treat me a certain way. If somebody is giving me male privilege, I'll refuse it. When I walk up to a counter with somebody who comes across as visibly, really female, 99 percent of the time, I'll be served first. Or the person will address questions just to me. And then I'll point it out to them," she says.

Both Stafford and Jordy, like most of the women interviewed, have memories of wanting to cross-dress from earliest childhood. Stafford at age 4 found a catalog of bride and groom outfits, fell in love with the tuxedos, hid in one of her brother's closets, put on a boy's shirt, and taught herself how to knot a tie. Instinctively, she felt she had to hide her behavior. "But I remember thinking the grooms were really lucky because they had all these great choices, but the brides basically had one boring white dress to choose from," she says.

Stafford's hometown, Gridley — halfway between Chico and Yuba City — didn't offer much room for experimentation, and her mother, by the time Stafford hit adolescence, became increasingly angry over her blossoming lesbianism. Stafford took solace in her skill as an athlete, and spent a year in college and five years in the Army before reaching a place where she could come up for air. She met Jordy after the two crossed paths at a San Francisco porn shoot.

Jordy, meanwhile, says her family forced her to wear girls clothes "in order to be taken places. We went to tea parties," she says, darkly. "Which meant I couldn't run around looking like a scruff all the time in boys jeans." She escaped during her teens and doesn't want to say how, or from where, except to describe her childhood home as somewhere around the Bay Area. But life took a major turn when she met Stafford, and found family.

"I consider gender a continuum along which I travel freely," Stafford says. "I don't really see people as men and women anymore." How can you draw lines, she asks, when you live in a world with people as amazing as Justin Bond, the drag queen performance artist? Or James Green, director of FTM International, a Bay Area support group for female-to-male transsexuals, himself a man who was "born in an apparently female body" as Green puts it, and who legally changed his sex in 1990. "James is a saint," Stafford says.

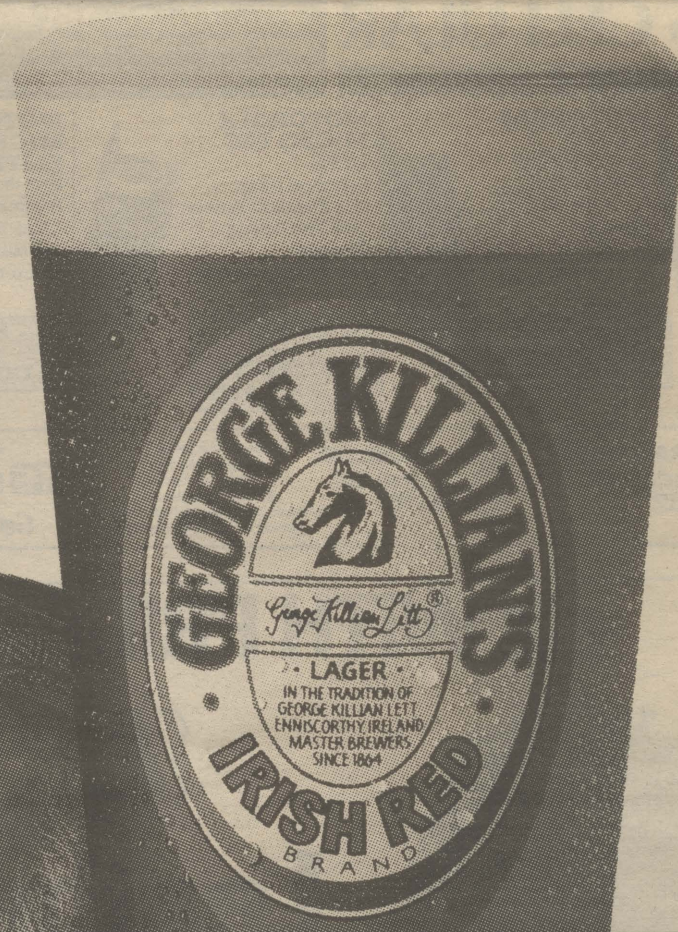
"I would just give a word of advice," she continues. "I would just say if you want to pass, climb over the fence like you belong there. Act like you belong in those clothes," she says. She searches out Jordy's reaction, and finds approval.

Continued on page 16

"Beware of the red beer

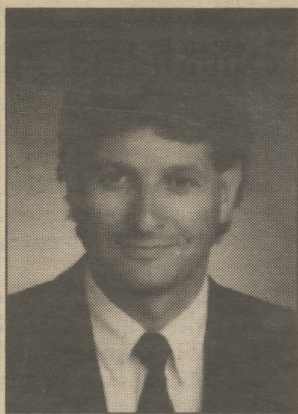
that hath no horse on its label."

(old Irish Proverb)



© 1995 UniBev Ltd. Golden, Colorado 80401.

GEORGE KILLIAN'S. THE IRISH RED.



CLAUDE SIDI, DMD

DENTAL CLEANING EXAM AND X-RAYS

- Teeth Cleaning
- Complete Exam
- 4 Bite Wing X-Rays
- Free Toothbrush

\$45*

450 SUTTER • SF • SUITE 1819

982-4242

WITH THIS COUPON - NEW PATIENTS ONLY

EXPIRES OCTOBER 15, 1995.

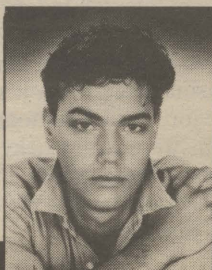
*(REG. \$100)

We Did it! You Can Too!

Have you ever been told you should be in magazines or commercials? If so, talent, inc. is **LOOKING FOR YOU!**

Open auditions are being held NOW, for Children, Teens and Adults of all ages, types and looks. No experience required.

If you think you have "That Look", all you have to do is call talent, inc. now.



talent, inc.

(415) 759-5890

AVS CELLULAR

DON'T BE CONFUSED BY MISLEADING ADVERTISING!
CHECK OUR COMPETITORS HIDDEN COST - THEN SEE US FOR COMPLETE PACKAGES

MOTOROLA PT 550
Less than 9.9oz.
One Standard Battery
Battery Charger

\$338.8*
COMPLETE

MOTOROLA MICRO TAC LITE
Less than 7.7oz.
One Standard Battery
One Slim Battery
Charger
101 Number Memory

\$179*
COMPLETE
Ultra Lite \$229

MOTOROLA MICRO TAC ELITE
Less than 3.9 oz.!
Answering Machine
2 Line Display
101 Memories
Cigarette Lighter
Adapter

\$549*
COMPLETE

SAN FRANCISCO
2212 Judah St.
681-8082

SAN CARLOS
711 Laurel St.
610-0618

No Dealers Please
Activation Required
*Price includes
\$25 Activation Rebate
All Prices with Economy Plan or Higher
(Without Activation Call for Price)

Authorized Agent
GTE Mobilnet
Get Mobilized™

WITH PRIDE...



Leather etc...

1201 Folsom at 8th St. • SF • 94103

Open 7 Days • (415) 864-7558

Dedicated to Rob Marvin

Kings

Continued from page 15

"Let's have a nice round of applause for the handsome gents." Leigh Crow/Elvis Herselvis is keeping things rolling at Klubstitute, though she looks a bit lonesome tonight without the company of her fellow band members, the Straight White Males.

Half-time entertainment remains ahead: She'll be launching into the lyrics, "One night with you is what I'm praying for," black shoes gleaming, hair perfectly poofed. At the song's end, she'll be on her knees, hands pleading with the ceiling in true Elvis fashion. Crow's been playing the King for more than five



King Me: Elvis Herselvis (Leigh Crow, left) and Annie Toone.

years, and though her male impersonation roles of late have expanded to Jack Nicholson and Erik Estrada, it's Elvis she loves most, and it's Elvis who stares down from the black velvet painting in her bedroom. The only thing she refuses to do on his behalf, she says, is wear a jumpsuit.

"I heard this statistic once that if the rate of Elvis impersonators keeps going the way it is today, by the year 2050, one in 10 people will be Elvis impersonators," Crow will muse a few days in the future. "So that's really a beautiful thing to look forward to."

In the meantime, contestant Raoul is stressed out.

He has to follow the act of Buster Brown Eyes, clearly the most popular Mr. Klubstituter with the crowd so far. Plus, Raoul's a real boy. Taking a deep breath, he mans the stage, strips off his shirt, and lip-syncs "Witchcraft," but near the end of the song he forgets the words. A drag queen arrives onstage to whisper the lyrics in his ear and help him finish.

"Behind every great man is a great woman," Elvis says, comfortingly.

Finally, it is time for the announcement of the semifinalists: Pierre Byrd; Jonathan Newt, who sang a nasty song about Newt Gingrich, plastic lizard in hand; and Ronnie Earl, an actual man, who portrayed a redneck jaw-jutter with the IQ of a plank.

"How many dildos do you own, and do you have names for them?" the judges ask Pierre Byrd, to test her intelligence and suitability.

"I have lots of little fellas, but they're not really little," Byrd says. "I call them my alter egos."

Sigmund Freud, the premier Mr. Id and Ego, would have had a tough time explaining drag kings. In fact, today's sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists — even therapists specializing in gender issues — find it difficult to explain the needs and behaviors of those now being called the differently gendered.

"There's so much new that is going in terms of gender fluidity — the more we know, the more we don't know," says San Francisco psychotherapist Lin Fraser, whose gender-issue

work spans 25 years. Perhaps, Fraser says, the amorphous new roles signal the first open flicker of a buried fire: a sign that the old notions of femininity and masculinity, and other dualities, are collapsing. "We don't know if this is just some kind of symbol of what's going on in the whole culture, or if it's a sign that we are moving away from a binary system. We don't know why this is happening at all," she says.

The only thing that seems clear, she continues, is that people are seeing more options. Instead of trying to fit into a stereotypical male or female mold, "people might say, 'I'm bigendered, or I feel somewhere in between,'" Fraser says.

But why do they feel in between? The literature offers few answers, experts say. Traditional psychotherapists sometimes theorize that the transgendered identity is a defense — something used to block pain. "Another theory being discussed," says Fraser, "is that the cross-gender or transsexualism is a dissociation," a kind of fugue state that people use to split off from reality and escape pain.

Most gender experts believe there is some kind of biological underpinning in differently gendered people, she adds. "But we don't even know for sure when gender identity is

established. We used to think it was between the ages of 2 and 4, and now we're not sure about that."

Statistics don't help; they mostly don't exist. Psychologists currently believe that the number of female-to-male transsexuals — loosely defined as people who take male hormones, have mastectomies, or have penises surgically constructed — is 1 per 30,000 in the population. About 1 per 100,000 female-to-males actually undergo sex reassignment surgery, says Judy van Maasdam, coordinator of Palo Alto's Gender Dysphoria Program. It is also believed, says van Maasdam, that there are just as many female-to-males as male-to-females.

Surgery is less common among female-to-males, though, because it's far less perfected. Phalloplasty, one of two available procedures, involves taking skin, typically from the forearm and wrist, to construct a penis. "The sensitivity isn't great, it doesn't function well, and it doesn't look good," says Fraser. The other option, metoidioplasty, involves injections of testosterone, which can eventually enlarge the clitoris, creating a sensitive "microphallus" perhaps an inch and a half long. The labia can also be pumped up with implants and fashioned to look like a scrotum.

The procedure, in any event, is not something sought by most of the women calling themselves drag kings. Cross-dressing, drag kings point out, is a far different thing than what is traditionally described as feeling like a male trapped in a female body. And no one has statistics on the number of drag kings in the world.

"It's a campier side of lesbians," says Leigh Crow, on a lunch break from work at a thrift store. Like Stafford and Jordy, Crow admits to being a thrifthead. "Drag is something a lot of people in the gay community — men and women — can relate to, as opposed to the really heavy political aspect of the women's community," Crow says. "It doesn't even have to be political. It's light, and funny, and has a certain whimsy to it."

It's play, says Bay Area psychotherapist Marny Hall. "I think that for many butch-femme or postmodern dykes gender is a role they can assume, and make fun of, and use as

a costume," Hall says. "And if you accept the notion that gender is costuming, instead of essence, then you can play with it however you want."

Portola Valley author and lesbian therapist JoAnn Loulan puts it this way: "On the whole, the world believes there are only two genders. I think there are thousands."

Francis Vavra, deep-voiced and dark-haired, wears a sleeveless red dress when she opens the door to her Oakland apartment. Her artist husband, whose nudes — all female — grace the walls, isn't home. The sun filters through her living room, glints off the wigged mannequin in the corner, warms the cat on the couch. In half an hour, Vavra will strip to bare breasts and jockey shorts and start preparing for an evening as a man. There's an AIDS benefit in San Francisco, and she's the "male" escort for Miss ETV, the representative of what is discreetly called Educational TV Channel, the largest transgender group in the nation. Miss ETV is a male-to-female.

And Vavra, 45, is a woman with two lives. "I'm my own kind of man," she says.

"I call myself a shapeshifter," Vavra explains. Each weekday she dresses as a woman and goes to her job in San Francisco as a secretary. Nighttime, she says, is typically "male" time. "I can play a gay man, but I'm really a bisexual man. And when I'm male, I'm actually attracted more to women," she says. She pauses. "The only way to really explain it is to say I'm attracted to people, and to some people more than others."

"I don't feel like man, and I don't feel like a woman," she says. If people consider her male, "then I can have adventures, be a fly on the wall and really open that side of my personality up." The journey is partly spiritual, she believes. Tibetan monks can change their vibrations and their aspect, she says, and what she does with gender follows the same path. By embracing both female and male

parts of herself — which everyone has — "I create a balance that's beyond gender," she says. "Because we are much more than our bodies."

Being in the male body, she says, is more difficult for her than being in the female. "It's a much more isolated, restricted world," Vavra says. "Men have a hard time making eye contact, saying what they want to say, expressing feelings. In the gay world, at least, men can laugh and joke, but the straight world feels so uptight."

Vavra plays the drag king every once in a while — it's a term she uses for performing, which she did in last year's drag king contest at the Eagle bar. But mostly she just puts on a mustache and passes.

"It takes about 20 minutes to do the makeup for both the male and female," she says. As she walks into the bedroom to change, Vavra's looks are unquestionably "feminine," though her voice is deep, owing to a course of testosterone she's been taking. She uses a cotton pad to wipe away the eye shadow, foundation, and lipstick of her female self. She takes off her necklace. She steps out of her dress, and pulls on a Lycra undershirt to minimize her small breasts. Tonight she will pack with her favorite recipe: a penis fashioned out of squishy rubber balls — kids toys — and the large, soft, rubber snail, sans feelers. She opens the closet, pushes past her 40 ties, and puts on black men's pants, a dress belt, a pressed white shirt. And she suddenly seems to stand differently. Her voice seems lower. I have a hard time with her hands especially: Just a second ago, they seemed like a woman's hands, and now they seem totally male.

"The eyebrows are the hard part," Vavra says. "I plucked them years ago, and they never grew back." She draws them in with tiny brush strokes. Her real-hair mustache comes from a theatrical company. She applies it with spirit gum and touches it up with wax.

Continued on page 18

Drag Herstory

History has always included women in drag.

Penthesilea, an Amazon, impersonated a male soldier to fight in the Trojan War, only to be slain by Achilles, who fell in love with her corpse, according to Greek mythology. Joan of Arc, of course, was burned at the stake.

More recently and with less terrible effect, Dr. Mary Edwards Walker dressed in men's clothes while working as a surgeon for the Union Army, meritorious service that brought her the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1865. The award was stripped from her shortly before her death, but reinstated posthumously in 1977, according to the late Lou Sullivan, San Francisco historian and female-to-male transsexual pioneer.

As "men," women could speak freely, win men's jobs, secure men's wages, travel, walk the streets safely, and fight in wars. "They could also open bank accounts, write checks, own houses and property, and vote," points out *She Even Chewed Tobacco*, a slide show on "passing women" created by the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay History Project.

S.F.'s Lillie Hitchcock Coit in the 1850s wore trousers and top hats for evenings on the town (such behavior often landed more impoverished women in jail; pants on women weren't socially acceptable until World War II). And in turn-of-the-century Stockton, the famed Babe Bean

lived as a man in hobo camps and on a houseboat, later assumed the name Jack Garland, served as a lieutenant in the Spanish-American War, returned to San Francisco to nurse the poor, and until her death was fondly known as "Uncle Jack."

In the past decade alone, jazz musician Billy Tipton died and left behind a wife and children. It was only then that it was revealed he was a she.

The transgendered life, it goes without saying, can be an extraordinarily isolated one, but relief in recent times has been offered by San Francisco cultural anarchists like Diet Popststitute, the driving force behind the punk-queer-gender warp of Klubststitute; Popststitute died of an AIDS-related illness on Aug. 21 (a memorial in his honor will be held at the Women's Building, 3543 18th St, 2 to 5 p.m., Oct. 1).

Perhaps even more daunting is any female-to-male transition, says James Green, who himself has survived it, and is director of the support group FTM International. Green took over the post — and the organization's newsletter — after its founder, Lou Sullivan, died of AIDS-related complications in 1991. The support group, says Green, has more than doubled since then, from about 20 to about 50 people. "I think it's just time," says Green, "for people to break down the barrier of the bigendered structure."

FTM International can be reached at (510) [redacted] ETV can be reached at (510) [redacted]

-AL



B&W BRAKE & WHEEL SERVICE CENTER

Complete Automotive Service Since 1978

3260 26TH STREET, S.F.
(BTWN. FOLSOM & SO. VAN NESS)

285-2439

OPEN: MON-FRI 7:30-6, SAT 8-4










BRING IN ANY VALID ESTIMATE PRICE, AND WE'LL BEAT IT!

CLUTCH SPECIAL

From **\$169⁹⁵***

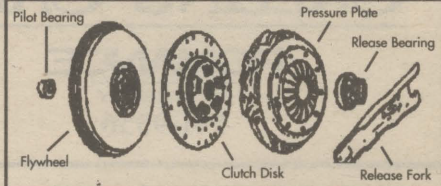
Front Wheel Drive Included

- New parts
- Lifetime adjustments
- Pressure plates
- Clutch disc
- Throw-out bearing
- Pilot Bearing
- Deglaze flywheel
- Adjust linkage or cable
- Check hydraulic system
- Road test
- Check front axle and drive shaft

WARRANTY:

1 YEAR, 12,000 Miles on LABOR

2 YEARS, 20,000 Miles on PARTS (for workmanship & defects)



(Most Cars, Vans & Light Trucks. Excludes commercial & Off-Road Vehicles) With This AD Expires 10/27/95 SF

"We keep up your Factory Warranty"













FACTORY MAINTENANCE SERVICE

<p>15,000 45,000 75,000 105,000 Miles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace spark plugs, oil and air filters • Replace engine oil with Pennzoil • Set Carb or EFI idle mixture where applicable • Adjust clutch • Check tire pressure • Rotate tires • Check and adjust brakes • Front and rear suspension check • Service all fluids • Check belts and hoses and adjust if needed • Road test • Inspect coolant system • Check lights • Adjust steering box if necessary • Lube chassis • Service battery • Replace fuel filter 	<p>30,000 60,000 90,000 120,000 Miles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspect cooling/heating • Inspect brake fluid • Adjust steering gear box • Adjust clutch free travel • Adjust parking brake • Rotate wheels • Test exterior lights • Lube and adjust hinges • Replace transmission fluid • Replace axle oil • Replace spark plugs • Replace fuel filter • Replace air filter • Change engine oil & filter • Replace engine coolant • Check and fill all fluids • Set carb/EFI idle mixture • Adjust drive and fan belts • Pressure test coolant system • Lube chassis • Inspect drive shaft & boots • Inspect ball joints/covers • Inspect exhaust system • Set tire pressures • Inspect fuel lines & hoses • Road test
---	---

\$99⁹⁵*

*Most 4 cylinder cars. Mid engines, 4x4's, 6 cyls, EFI and platinum plugs extra. Valve adjustment extra. Expires 10/27/95 SF

\$229⁹⁵*

*Most 4 cylinder cars. Mid engines, 4x4's, 6 cyls, EFI and platinum plugs extra. Valve adjustment extra. Expires 10/27/95 SF

BRAKE SPECIAL

Bendix

FROM **\$34⁹⁵***

Most Cars & Light Trucks. Semi-Metallic Extra.

INCLUDES:

- Install new premium quality pads or heavy duty shoes
- Inspect master cylinder, wheel cylinder, hoses, and calipers
- Apply anti-squeak treatment on pads
- Brake performance road test
- Check hydraulic system
- Repack wheel bearings
- Deglaze rotors and drums
- Adjust parking brake
- Refill system with brake fluid
- Free road test
- Tire rotation upon request

FREE BRAKE INSPECTION!

With this ad Expires 10/27/95 SF

OIL, LUBE & FILTER

\$16⁹⁵*

Most Cars & Light Trucks

- Drain & refill with Pennzoil (up to 5qts)
- New filter
- Lube chassis
- Check all fluids
- Safety check
- Includes Waste Disposal

With this ad Expires 10/27/95 SF

\$15⁹⁵

Most Cars & Light Trucks

2 WHEEL ALIGNMENT

Complete Suspension System Check

\$39⁹⁵

4 WHEEL ALIGNMENT

Complete Suspension System Check

With this ad Exp. 10/27/95 SF

TUNE-UP SPECIAL

\$35⁹⁵ 4 CYL. **\$45⁹⁵** 6 CYL. **\$55⁹⁵** 8 CYL.

- 1 year/6,000 mile warranty
- Inspect cap, rotor, wires, air fuel filters
- Road test
- New Autolite spark plugs
- Set timing and dwell
- Adjust carburetor
- Safety Inspection
- Check vital fluid levels

With this ad Exp. 10/27/95 SF

TIMING BELTS

From **\$129⁹⁵***

Foreign & Domestic
*Most 4 cylinder. 6-8 cylinder costs extra.

With This Ad. Expires 10/27/95 SF

WHY YOU NEED TO REPLACE THE TIMING BELT

If you have more than 60,000 miles on your timing belt, you're driving dangerously! If it breaks, you could have serious engine damage. Because it's hidden inside your engine, you can't see it, but don't forget to have it checked. Like all other auto parts, it also wears out!

DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU



FREE-RUNNING



INTERFERENCE

ONE DAY SERVICE * in most cases

**THINK YOU'RE
STRESSED OUT?**

The muscles of your neck, shoulders and back can hold stress. Dr. William H. Taylor (D.C.) and Suzanne Wilson (CMT) team up to release your stress. Try our proven combination of massage and chiropractic

- Relax your tight, hyper-contracted muscles.
- Enhance your posture and freedom of motion.
- Promote a stress-free healthy body.

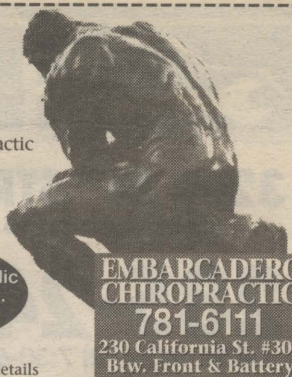
FREE

Get acquainted with our office. Meet Dr. Taylor and the staff. Ask questions. Call for a free brochure.

\$20

Get a medical history, orthopedic exam and a relaxing massage. Then, if indicated, a gentle & precise adjustment.

Bring in this ad. New patients only. Offer expires 10/11/95. Call for appt. or for details



**EMBARCADERO
CHIROPRACTIC**
781-6111
230 California St. #304
Btw. Front & Battery

INTRODUCING
**THE ROMANCE
CALLING CARD**

ROMANCE
SF WEEKLY
541-9556



**NEED A TELEPHONE NUMBER?
Have We Got The Answer For You!!**

Price includes a new private phone number answered 24 hours a day with your voice.

- Confidential
- Unlimited Messages
- Business or Personal
- No Credit Check
- 800 #'s Only \$4.95 Per Month (+ usage)

ONLY \$9.95
Per Month
Flat Rate
(+ tax)

OFFICES
COAST-TO-COAST



**START
TODAY!**

**American
Voice Mail**
(415) 923-1666
(510) 452-2315
(408) 923-1666

SFW595

EVER WALKED ON GLASS?



It's a sure bet your tires have! The asphalt jungle is full of it - along with nails and potholes and lots of other things that go "bump" in the night. The TIRE BROKER specializes in high performance and steel belted radials to fit any need, type of driving or price range - and all our tires have mileage and road hazard warranties available. It may be a jungle out there but our fast, reliable service and great prices will make buying tires a "walk in the park".

STEEL
BELTED
RADIALS
FROM
\$24.95

Major Brand MFG.
Complete brake & alignment service
tires plus service

THE TIRE BROKER INC.
368 11th St. S.F.
bet. Folsom & Harrison
552-0554



Francis Vavra lives half her life as a man.

Kings

Continued from page 17

All that's left is to comb back her hair, graying at the temples, and receding, thanks to the hormones, which also sparked male puberty: Her voice changed and cracked. She stopped suffering from cold hands and feet, she slept less, her sex drive took off. "My face also got more angular, my nose widened, my hips got more thin, and I started growing facial hair," she says. She now has to shave if she wants to pass as female.

Vavra's gender play started young: By the age of 4, her greatest thrill was to wear her father's fedora hats, or sit for hours in her grandfather's walk-in closet, admiring his smoking jackets and silver cuff links. Her role models growing up were dapper movie stars: Tyrone Power, Clark Gable, Ronald Colman.

But she didn't start cross-dressing for years. Born in St. Louis, she moved to Los Angeles after high school, worked as a model, and met her husband posing for his paintings. He dressed her in women's clothes, which, she says, he really wanted to wear himself. And eventually did. The two married and moved to Seattle, where Vavra began playing with menswear, while her husband cross-dressed female.

It wasn't until moving to the Bay Area eight years ago, however, that Vavra dressed head to toe in male drag: She wanted to be the "male" escort for her femmed-out husband, "Roxanna." The event was an ETVC Halloween party. "I took on the accent of a Hungarian and became a Gypsy man for the evening, with a mustache and a double-breasted pin stripe suit and wingtips. And when I looked at myself in the mirror, it just came out full force: the male part of myself. It was like my brain changed," Vavra says. The face in the mirror matched her inner feelings.

She began putting on her male persona — a dapper gentleman, like her heroes — as often as she could. She bought more men's clothes. She learned how to pee standing up — she uses men's room stalls, and cups a cut-out plastic coffee can lid between her legs, jutting out her hips, male style. (How-to pamphlets on the subject suggest pretending a sneeze in order not to arouse suspicion when tearing off toilet paper.)

"My husband didn't necessarily like me being a male," Vavra says. "But when he's cross-dressed, it works out for him. The only thing that doesn't work very well is if we're both men together."

Having a continued sexual connection with her husband, though, makes it difficult for her to find a relationship with a woman, she says. Particularly since straight women aren't often interested in someone transgendered, and lesbians often disapprove of her involvement with a male.

Her appeal to the world — a difficult and sometimes lonely one — is that people not

pay attention to outer appearances. Which happen to be the lifeblood of the culture.

"The more understanding there is about transgendered people," she says, "the better it will be for all of us."

"If you were a flower, which flower would you be?" the Klubstitute judges ask contestant Jonathan Newt.

"A voodoo lily," Newt replies. The crowd listens expectantly for an explanation. "They smell like meat, and they only flower once or twice a year," Newt says, obliquely.

Judge Lu Read ponders the answer, and tries to block out thoughts of all the work ahead. Not only is there a winner to pick tonight, but Read is the promoter of Merkinstock on Oct. 8, a drag event at the Transmission Theater that aspires to be the West Coast's "Wigstock," only wilder, since lots of performers will wear merkins (theatrical pubic hairpieces). Justin Bond has signed on — he's in town doing *The Moon in the Gutter*, a pulp noir performance piece playing at the Climate Theater. And Joan Jett Blakk and Elvis Herselvis and Patsy Cline are coming. But there's the rest of the lineup to organize.

"What's the most pressing problem in the world today?" Read manages to ask Ronnie Earl.

Earl, the macho thug, flexes in his sleeve-free jeans jacket with the Motorhead patch on the back. "There ain't enough guns out there," Earl croaks.

Not much more can be said. All three semi-finalists have answered their questions. It is nearly 2 a.m. A slip of paper is handed up to Elvis Herselvis.

"And the second runner-up," Herselvis declares, "is Ronnie Earl!" The first runner-up, she continues, "is Jonathan Newt! And the winner" — she pauses, as she must at a time like this — "is PIERRE BYRD!"

Pierre Byrd can hardly believe it. She waves her arms in joy, then holds them out so Elvis can secure the Mr. Klubstitute '95 belt around her waist. Byrd cradles the gold trophy she is handed. Her fellow kings and queens harrumph and cheer her victory.

Only days later, back at the candy store, can she sum up her feelings.

"I was tickled to death, and I was shocked," Byrd says. Just two years ago, she was still a corporate administrator, driving a church bus, leading a Girl Scout troop, "living in the same town I grew up in, carrying my little briefcase every day to the same job I'd had for 20 years."

By chance, her company transferred her to San Francisco. "I started meeting people who were really free, and I knew I had all these things deep inside me that I had beat down all my life," Byrd says. "I'd thought it was evil and of the devil and I would be cast into hell forever, and so it was something I fought like crazy."

Now she doesn't have to fight anymore. Except that, in keeping with the savage-male, macho tone of the Klubstitute contest, Byrd has heard faux rumors on the street that someone wants to knock her off.

"They're going to try to steal my crown," says Byrd, with her apple-pie voice. "I don't know what that means, but whatever it is, I'm looking forward to it." SF