

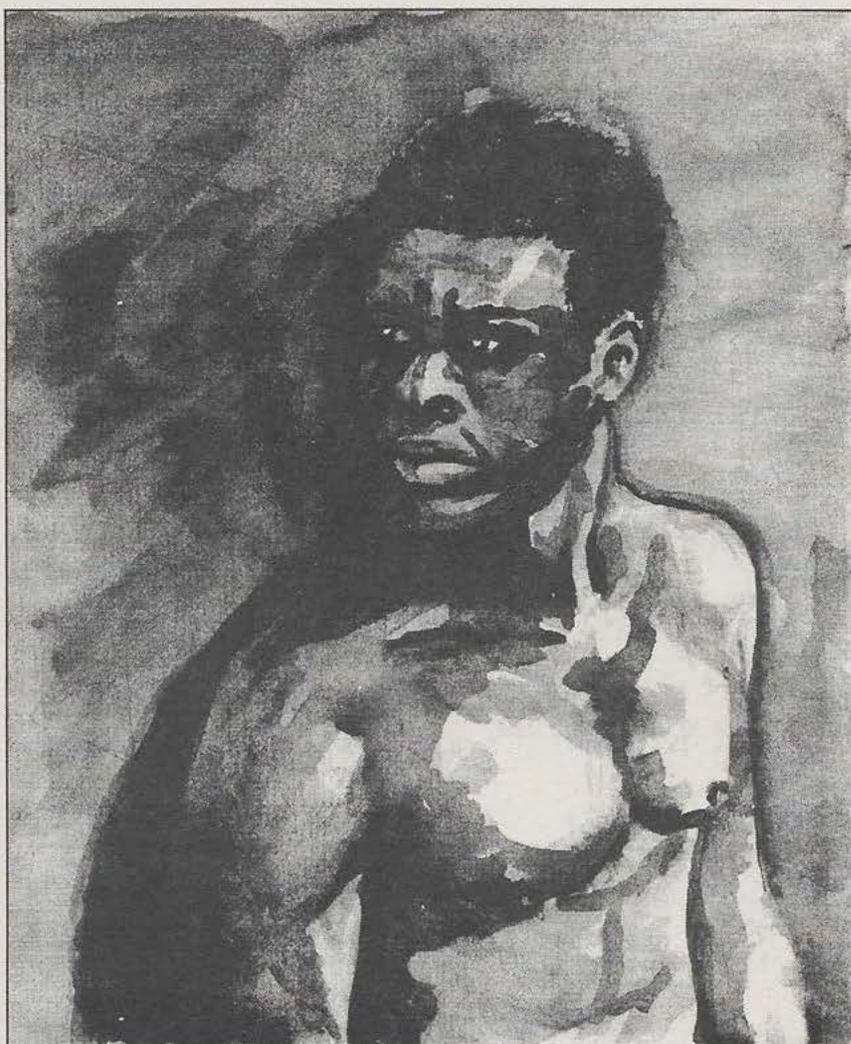
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THE WORLD'S MOST WIDELY CIRCULATED PERIODICAL FOR FEMALE-TO-MALE TRANSGENDER AND TRANSSEXUAL PEOPLE

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6.95

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by Matthew G.

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from FTMI President
Dion Manley—

COMMUNITY



Happy New Year. I hope we can keep the lessons learned from last years' tragedy and its aftermath. A dilemma in writing this is that it is too important not to write about, yet by the time you read this it will be months past. "I love you" were the last words of those on the flights that crashed, those in the buildings under siege, those at Ground Zero during and after the attack. Those that had the chance called their loved ones and simply said, "I love you". What else is there, what else do we have except our connections with one another and love?

(l-r)
Drago Renteria,
FTMI's
web host,
talks
with
Dale Altrows,
FTMI VP



Much of my challenge is to learn about and work with our differences, toward goals of equality and unity, peace and love. I look to those using the hard lessons of their lives, not to turn on others, but to stand up for something fine in the face of overwhelming pressure. In times of crisis our true character shows most and therefore creates opportunity: we can use this as a time to learn and change the world.

Likewise, oppression can create opportunity—women have the chance to be strong leaders partly due to what they face every day in a sexist world. Women give me inspiration and deep appreciation of community. As FTMs we have a special connection with women, a special history of (and need for the lessons of) feminism. I honor my own female upbringing, viewing it as a source of strength

despite the pain and conflicts that go with it. Being raised and socialized female combined with who I really am form a unique bridge.

When I ignore or deny any aspect of myself I deny the strength of that bridge, a bridge crossed every day whether I come out [as trans] or not. In forming and crossing it, worlds connect that would otherwise never reach each other. I speak for myself and acknowledge the valuable contributions of those who let go of or never felt a connection with femaleness in this way. All of our lives and visions need to be voiced now more than ever. That goes for our partners and family members who share this perspective! People who won't listen to us will hear you, not to mention how much we transpeople need to see and hear you! Collectively and individually we will find the courage to model a new way of living!

I wish to thank our friends from around the world for your support during this time—it helped tremendously (our Newsletter goes out to 17 Countries!).

I am uplifted to see growing involvement, faith and participation in FTMI, recently reflected with our biggest individual donation yet. A quote from this donor: "If it weren't for FTMI being there for years and years for me while I struggled with these issues, I would not be here today!"



photos on this page by Hope A. Berry

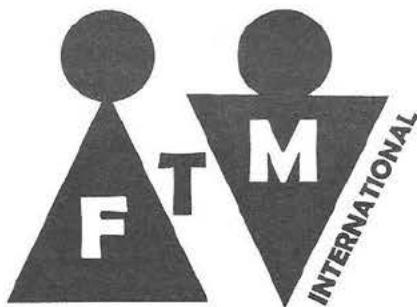
And now is the time to reach out and be there for one another. Here are three things:

- During times of increased stringency it is especially important for us all to know our civil rights and the law. Be aware of any changes at local and national levels. Even if you live in a huge metropolitan area and know the laws, you could for example come across checkpoints and have to deal with a National Guardsperson from outside your region. If your identification and gender presentation differ, it might help to take the precaution of carrying a letter from your medical provider, employer, etc. verifying your gender identity/status.
- If you are in the habit of making contributions to community-based organizations, I urge you to continue to do so. And if you are not in the habit and are able to, find out how you can volunteer or make a donation today. A little goes a long way!
- This also goes for the importance of attending community events and activities, which strengthen and unify us. No matter where you are, find a way to plug in and connect.

It's not just another New Year— we are stronger than ever because of the faith and love of our COMMUNITY. Loving speech, kindness and health in all of our actions— that's what it's all about, isn't it?

Dion

(l-r)
Armand Hotimsky
from France
(CARITIG),
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hang out during
Armand's recent
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Look, Lou! Our 50th Issue



Louis G. Sullivan started the *FTM Newsletter* and the support group that became FTM International.

Louis G. Sullivan was the gay-identified FTM author, activist, public speaker and letter writer who founded the FTM support group in San Francisco that later became FTM International.

He published the first *FTM Newsletter* in 1987 to recap of one of the group's quarterly meetings and announce upcoming events. Later it evolved into a compendium of information and a place where new men could reach out to connect with others.

Lou, working until his death to promote greater understanding of female-to-male issues, died of AIDS in March, 1991 at age 39.

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Published since 1987, the *FTM Newsletter* is the world's most widely-circulated periodical for female-to-male transgender and transsexual people.

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Gender, Identity Politics & Eating Our Own



by Alexander John Goodrum

I come late to organizing as a transgender activist. In doing so, I've learned a lot. I've learned that transgendered people truly are everywhere and not just in New York, San Francisco and Washington D.C. I've learned that many want to quietly assimilate into the white, heterosexual, middle class status quo that is the dominant culture of our nation. I've learned that quite a few of us have no wish or desire for such assimilation—that for some of us, our greatest desire is to shake up that dominant culture, to question gender and identity on every level: social, biological, political and personal.

I've learned that, perhaps right at this moment, there is a transgendered person—most likely an MTF transsexual or crossdresser, most likely a person of color—being brutally murdered. I've learned that people much younger than I are coming out as transgendered in ways I never believed possible when I was their age and are challenging not only the status quo but also “old” activists like me to take another look around and see the world through their eyes.

And I've learned that, perhaps like all other communities, we love to eat our own.

Some of you reading this are aware of the controversies and conflicts swirling within the transgender community, most of which focus upon the organization GenderPAC. For those of you who are not, here is an abbreviated version. There is a significant number of transgender activists and community organizations that have taken issue with GenderPAC's expansion of their mission and vision to incorporate a larger view of gender rights rather than a specific and focused emphasis upon civil rights advocacy for transgender people.

Depending on who you ask, this “reinventing” of GenderPAC is either the logical extension of its organizational vision to secure the rights of all people to free gender expression, or the cold-blooded abandonment of the very community by whom and for which it was created, nurtured and financially supported.

Being the baby TG activist that I am, I come to this drama late. Long after whatever battle lines that exist were laid down. Long after sides were chosen, opinions formed and set in stone. Long after the wounds (both real and imagined) were inflicted.

And through it all, I've been a rather casual observer, if one can be casual as they watch some of the best and brightest of their community consumed in an internal battle that threatens to tear the entire community apart.

I've watched carefully for the past couple of years as the battle has played out online, in Internet chat rooms and on mailing lists. I've read the statements from individuals and organizations that have publicly taken a stand on the issue. I've received press releases and announcements from one camp or another—a battle of media propaganda that would make the veterans of the Cold War proud. And through it all, I've been a rather casual observer, if one can be casual as they watch some of the best and brightest

of their community consumed in an internal battle that threatens to tear the entire community apart.

Of course my being just a casual observer has not stopped a few folks from demanding to know where I stand. I've been pulled aside at conferences and given “information,” primarily innuendo and accusation, so that I am “up to speed” on the situation. I've been directed to websites that were little more than character assassinations in badly laid out HTML. And I've been e-mailed privately and off-list by someone concerned that I was going to make the “wrong choice.”

continued on page 4 ▶

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▲ Gender, Identity Politics from page 3

Do you want to know what my answer to these people is? Okay, here it is: I really don't care. That's right. *I DON'T CARE*. You see, I believe that almost everyone entangled in this controversy is acting in what they believe are the best interests of whatever community they feel most closely aligned with and that they are doing the best they can with what they have. I believe that mistakes have been made by everyone involved, that the personal has become political in the most destructive of ways.

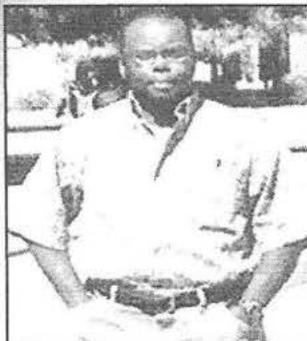
I also believe in change and evolution— that even organizations that have had to be forced to listen to me and to consider my issues can learn from their mistakes and realize that they must make a seat for me at the table if they are to truly realize the dream of civil rights for themselves and for others. But most of all, I believe in hope.

I was asked point blank whose side I was on. This is my answer: I am on the side of whoever has the courage and the guts and initiative to end this thing and to make a real effort to move our community forward out of this debilitating and destructive conflict. I am on the side of anyone who is more interested in healing the wounds than in proving who is right. I am on the side of those who have the ability and the willingness to put aside their personal and political animosities and seek some way to bring everyone involved together to begin a healthy dialogue, one without finger-pointing and name-calling.

But, until that happens, I guess I'm on the side of those who are the most negatively affected by this dysfunctional family feud. In case anyone needs a refresher course as to who those folks are and some of the issues they are dealing with, allow me to introduce just a few of them: the transsexual FTM who lost custody of his child when he began transition; the butch lesbian who lost her job because she refused to wear makeup or shave her legs; the crossdresser whose wife is seeking a divorce and sole custody of the children he adores; the effeminate gay man beaten to death and crucified on a fence in a lonely mid-western plain; the 17-year old MTF doing tricks in the back alleys of San Francisco because her parents kicked her out when they found "him" wearing dresses; the FTM who died of uterine cancer because he could not get insurance approval for a hysterectomy after he had completed sexual reassignment. And many, many others.

For ultimately it is these transgender, transsexual and gender-variant people and others like them who have the most to lose if someone doesn't step up to the plate and end this. ▲

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Alexander John Goodrum

Alexander John Goodrum is a professional queer activist, advocate, and troublemaker. While he doesn't actually get paid any money for what he does, he still considers it the best job in the world. He is a black, transgendered, disabled, low-income bisexual gay man who embraces each of those labels as well as several others depending on his mood.

When not educating people on GLBT issues (or pissing them off, as the case may be), Alexander writes science fiction, mysteries and erotica; plays with his friends who let him be who and what he is; and watches far too much trashy television for his own good.

Goodrum founded and directs TGNet Arizona, a 501(c)3 organization that seeks to identify, create and strengthen the opportunities and resources available to TG, TS, and gender-variant people in the state of Arizona. For further information, see www.tgnetarizona.org. Goodrum also wrote the popular *Gender Identity 101: A Transgender Primer*, which may be found at www.tgnetarizona.org/gender101.htm

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FTM 2001: A Gender Odyssey

by David Steinberg

At FTM 2001: A Gender Odyssey, a conference held last May in Seattle, some 400 trans men, family, friends, supporters, and allies came together to attend workshops, network, make new friends, enjoy trans-positive entertainment, and share the general euphoria that's guaranteed whenever marginalized people come together in a context that allows them to set their own rules, priorities and expectations.

There were a wide range of workshops, a series of large "town meetings" to discuss general issues facing the trans community, and an evening of excellent entertainment that served to bring everyone together in laughter and celebration. Keynote addresses were given by sex/gender writer Patrick Califia-Rice (formerly Pat Califia) and Phyllis Randolph Frye, a prominent Texas transgender lawyer.

A twin transitions

Brenda Shrum is the identical twin sister of conference coordinator Aidan Key. As children, she and her sister Bonnie were the sort of identical twins that even close friends have trouble telling apart. Now, although she and Aidan are still chromosomally identical, Aidan's changed body, closely cropped hair, and bearded chin insure that no one will have trouble distinguishing between them.

At a panel discussion on "Transitioning and Kids," Brenda very straightforwardly tells the story of the difficult adjustment she went through when Bonnie flew to her home in Juneau, Alaska, to say that she was in the process of becoming Aidan -- of becoming a man.

"Being identical twins caused me to have my own identity issues about Aidan's transition," she explains. "I had to ask myself, 'Am I not a twin anymore?'" The last time, the issue was Bonnie coming out as a lesbian. Now there was another acceptance issue to face. My initial reaction was fear, fear of being on the fringe of the fringe.



Twins: Brenda Schrum & Aidan Key

One thing that really helped was that Aidan left the door wide open for me to have any feeling whatsoever.

"I shared my feelings with Aidan's ex-partner. We wondered together what this would mean for the children -- for Aidan's daughter, who was seven, and for my daughter, who was nine." The extreme hostility of Aidan's partner to the idea of his transition helped Brenda realize that, even though it was difficult for her,

she had to be open with Aidan and supportive of his change. She consciously adopted her daughter, who accepted Aidan's change much more easily than Brenda could, as a role model.

"She kept on saying to me, 'Mom, you're over-reacting. It's still the same person; it's still Bonnie.' Humor helped." Brenda watched her daughter shift over time from talking about "Aunt Bonnie" to "Uncle Bonnie" and finally to "Uncle Aidan." "She's right there with Aidan," Brenda says proudly. "She even wanted to come to this conference and be on this panel."

Aidan describes the process as a "painful story with a good ending -- a hard road that I wouldn't wish on anybody." Faced with his transition, Aidan's ex-partner retained a lawyer and prevented Aidan from seeing his daughter for a year. "I had to be patient beyond words," he dramatically understates. After a year of "paying lawyers to educate them," Aidan won the right to see his daughter and is in the process of rebuilding his relationship with her.

continued on page 6 ▶

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FTMs and Dykes

A town meeting on "FTMs and Dykes," one of several such open-ended forums, brings over 100 people to a large room with several rows of chairs drawn into a circle. The air is charged as facilitator Jamison Green encourages everyone to listen to each other with respect and open minds. Relations between trans men, many of whom spent years as lesbians before transition, and the lesbian community, described by one woman as a "tribe being deserted by people who want the privilege of male identities," have been difficult and conflicted, to say the least.

A number of transmen talk about feeling rejected and scorned by a community that has long been important to them. "The lesbian community," says one trans man, "taught me to be where I am today. It taught me to grow and explore."

"I didn't choose to lose a community," another agrees. "I just chose to move on with my life."

Discussion focuses on what many of the trans men see as anti-male bias among lesbians. Dykes, they say, need to leave behind negative attitudes about maleness, even while challenging aspects of traditional male behavior. It takes some time before one of the lesbian women in the room stands and reads a long piece she has written about the loss and betrayal she has felt as various women she has regarded as lesbian sisters transition to being men.

"I know I'll get over it," she offers the group, but it's a process of adjustment that takes time. Her honesty, her avoidance of blame, and the poetic tone of her writing is welcomed by the group with applause, encouraging other lesbian women to speak their feelings as well.

"I want space to speak about the loss, even if it's just



photo by David Steinberg

Kory listens as lesbians voice their feelings of loss at "FTMs and Dykes."

the loss of my perceptions, of my dreaming process," says one woman.

"We're so afraid of losing the shred of safety we've managed to pull together for ourselves," says another. "It's hard on everybody. Now, in addition to everything else, trans men are taking lesbian lovers away from other lesbian women. In the end, it's fear that keeps us separated."

"Historically, the dyke community has not dealt with difference very well," another woman notes wryly, to everyone's shared amusement. For two hours, both the lesbians and the trans men in the group talk about feelings of loss and pain. A spirit of respectful listening prevails, in place of the blame and resentment that have been all too common in other contexts. Of course, as one person notes, the lesbians who have the most difficulty with trans men are not at the conference, but there is widespread agreement that the session has been an important step forward in communication between the two groups.

As rapidly-increasing numbers of people explore the option of aligning

their bodies and gender presentations with who they know themselves to be, issues of transgender acceptance are going to confront not only mainstream heterosexual culture, but the cultures of sexual and ethnic minorities as well. Gatherings such as FTM 2001, and the more numerous male-to-female-oriented conferences that take place each year, give transgendered people and their supporters opportunities to exchange information and support on issues ranging from medical to emotional, from personal to societal. As keynote speaker Patrick Califia-Rice pointed out, the transgender movement also has the opportunity to offer the larger society new ways of being men and women that transcend the limitations of traditional gender definitions.

One transwoman activist, attending her first FTM conference, noted that the movement of trans men had qualities that she would like to see more of in the MTF movement as well. "I see people at this conference dealing with their emotional and relational issues in much greater depth than I have seen at MTF gatherings," she said. "I like being here. I'm really very impressed—inspired, even."

My own feeling was very much the same. Integrity, authenticity, emotional honesty, and generosity of spirit abound in the growing movement of female-to-male trans people—qualities that I suspect all of us, transgendered or not, are hungry for these days. ▲

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Past columns are available at the Society for Human Sexuality's "David Steinberg Archives": <http://www.sexuality.org>.

If you would like to receive Comes Naturally and other writing by David Steinberg regularly via email (free and confidential), send your name and email address to David at eronat@aol.com. Two books edited by David, *Erotic by Nature: A Celebration of Life, of Love, and of Our Wonderful Bodies* and *The Erotic Impulse: Honoring the Sensual Self*, are available from him by mail order. Write to David Steinberg P.O. Box 2992

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Jeff Shevlowitz and Ilya Pearlman Honored at Trans-Unity

by Jacob Hale

Hosted by the Los Angeles County Transgender Task Force, Trans-Unity 2001 was held at West Hollywood Park from June 8-9. The celebration was the culmination of the City of West Hollywood's Transgender Awareness Week.

This year's Shirley Bushnell Trailblazer Award, named after its first recipient for her groundbreaking work on behalf of Los Angeles County's transgender community, was presented to Jeff Shevlowitz in recognition of his work organizing Under Construction.

Under Construction is an FTM support group that has met quarterly since 1983 with only two short hiatuses. It has provided a lifeline for many transsexual men first seeking information about the possibilities for transition, as well as providing support and information for those who have already transitioned. Under Construction's meetings in Southern California first inspired Louis G. Sullivan to form the San Francisco FTM group that has grown into FTM International.

In addition to organizing Under Construction, Jeff has been active as a speaker on FTM issues, an invaluable member of the Conference Organizing Committee and treasurer for FORWARD MOTION: Celebrating Cultures, Advocacy and FTM Lives, and an elected member of the FTM International Board of Directors.

The FTM of the Year Award was presented to Ilya Pearlman for his accomplishments in premiering his one-trans performance piece "Unhung" at Highways in Santa Monica and creating "Ilya's Sex-Change-Atorium and Poetry Corner" at Club Freakshow. "Unhung" was honored as the L.A. Weekly's "Pick of the Week," received terrific reviews, and led to invitations to perform excerpts at Trans-Art 2001 in San Francisco and FTM 2001: A Gender Odyssey in Seattle. Ilya's resume includes a long list of music, performance and theater work in Provincetown, New York, Seattle, and elsewhere.



(l-r) Jeff Shevlowitz, winner of the Shirley Bushnell Trailblazer Award, and Ilya Pearlman, FTM of the Year, pose with their awards.

photo by Jacob Hale

The Organization of the Year Award was garnered by the City of West Hollywood, the first jurisdiction in Southern California to adopt anti-discrimination protections for transgendered people (2000). In 2001, West Hollywood continued its support for the transgender community by forming a task force on transgender issues, declaring June 3-9 as "Transgender Awareness Week," and co-sponsoring Trans-Unity 2001.

Wheelchair Fund Successful

Gary Bowen, retiring American Boyz, Inc. (AmBoyz) founder and former coordinator-in-chief, now has the custom wheelchair and related equipment that he needed.

Thanks to donations from over 50 individuals throughout the U.S., the Wheelchair Fund raised nearly \$2,000 between June and September, 2001 through direct e-mails and a radio show promotion. Bet Power, of the East Coast Female-to-Male Group (ECFTMG) administered the Fund.

Nancy Nangeroni, host of GenderTalk radio show, allowed Bet Power to discuss the Fund on air during her broadcast on August 6 on 88.1 FM in the greater Boston area, reaching thousands of trans-friendly listeners.

According to Power, "The support to raise money for Gary's wheelchair has been tremendous—really heart-warming and inspiring—and it came together very quickly. Now that's true community!"

"Because the medical supply company Gary contacted gave us a discount of a few hundred dollars off the price of the chair, the Fund had enough money to make the purchase sooner than anticipated."

Bowen, also founder and former chair of the True Spirit Conference (TSC), lives with disabilities as he continues to serve on the boards of both AmBoyz and TSC.

by Garin Wiggins

The East Coast Female-to-Male Group (ECFTMG) is a free peer support group for all female-to-male (FTM) transgenders, transsexuals, crossdressers, stone butches, genderqueer, and questioning individuals of all sexual orientations, races, classes, and spiritualities, and our significant others. Meetings are on the second Sunday of every month at 3:00 p.m. in Northampton, Massachusetts. ECFTMG, P.O. Box 60585, Florence, MA 01062.

American Boyz (AmBoyz) is an organization that aims to support people who were labeled female at birth but who feel that is not an appropriate or complete description of who they are (FTMs), along with their significant others, friends, families, and allies (SOFFAs). American Boyz, Inc., P.O. Box 1118, Elkton, MD 21922-1118.

Nancy Nangeroni produces and hosts the award-winning weekly radio talk show *GenderTalk* at www.gendertalk.com. It airs weekly on WMBR-FM in Cambridge, MA, and worldwide via the Web at www.gendertalk.com



Gynecological Information for FTMs

by Chav Doherty & James Green

First the good news

Taking testosterone over the long term is probably not that harmful to our health. While there is a notable lack of hard evidence in the form of longitudinal studies, it is clear that testosterone protects FTMs from some of the risks of estrogen; namely, it reduces our risk of osteoporosis and breast, ovarian and uterine cancers.

And the bad news (you knew there would be some)

Please remember that anyone over the age of 40 who still has mammary tissue should have a regular mammogram; for those who've had top surgery, regular breast self-exam is recommended. If you have questions about self-exams, consult your primary care physician.

We know of one recent case of breast cancer in a post-op FTM (see *FTMs and Breast Cancer* by James Green in the next issue). Also, the FTM community is aware of at least two FTMs having ovarian cancer while on long-term testosterone. The main point here is that though we may not like, accept, desire, or otherwise relate to our female body parts, we must continue to care for them as long as we have them.

Testosterone increases cholesterol levels. Specifically, it raises the bad one, the LDL and lowers the good one, the HDL, both contributing factors in heart disease, which remains among the leading causes of death in this country.

FTMs on T should watch our weight, get regular exercise and quit smoking, as these are the three best

ways to raise the good HDL. We should also eat more fruits and veggies and avoid high-fat foods to keep the unfavorable LDL down. Regular aerobic exercise is very important for maintaining our health and well-being.

Dr. Kate O'Hanlan speaks

Dr. Kate O'Hanlan spoke to about 80 people at a special FTM International meeting held in San Francisco on March 1, 2001.

Kate is a lesbian gynecologist in private practice in Palo Alto and is past president of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA). She is a strong Trans activist in the medical community, including

...though we may not like, accept, desire, or otherwise relate to our female body parts, we must continue to care for them as long as we have them.

lectures to medical professionals, in her gynecology chapters and in her invited policy statements to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. She also has many FTM patients for whom she has done laparoscopic hysterectomies preserving abdominal wall vessels for later bottom surgery.

Kate heard concerns from some transmen about their vaginal discharges, some with urinary frequency, some with frequent bladder infections. Lower estrogen levels happen after a few months on T and can predispose an FTM to post-coital bleeding (for those of us who still derive pleasure from vaginal intercourse), urinary tract infections, bladder frequency, and bladder pain.

She reminded us that while estrogen seems like a "foreign substance" to most FTMs, a very low dose of estrogen placed in the vagina

could provide several benefits to the vagina and bladder while providing no absorption into the blood stream and no undesirable effects.

Estrogen thickens and maintains healthy vaginal walls, as well as the urethra and back wall of the bladder. She suggests the use of a topical estrogen cream such as *Premarin*® or vaginal pill such as *Vagifem*®. (A suggested regimen: 1/4 of an applicator of *Premarin*® or a tablet of *Vagifem*® every night for the first 2-4 weeks, then only twice a week thereafter.) An estrogen impregnated silastic ring called *Estring*® is similar to a diaphragm and will deliver a timed-released extremely low dose of estrogen sufficient to deal with any negative side effects of long-term low estrogen in the FTM who still has a vagina.

Remember that even though an FTM has ovaries, taking the high doses of testosterone that we do inhibits the production of estrogens. Without estrogens, these tissues can become so thin that they hurt, burn, bleed easily or become more easily infected.

Kate repeated emphatically that using a topical form of estrogen would not cause blood levels of estrogen to increase, except for possibly the first two or three days until the skin started to regrow. She said this treatment would be beneficial to the post-hysterectomy FTM who has vaginal symptoms as well. Whereas a normal estrogen level for a non-trans female is between 100-400 mg/dl, the normal estrogen level for an FTM on T is less than 20 mg/dl.

She also described how topical testosterone cream (2 – 4%) applied nightly directly to the clitoris can enhance clitoral growth and maintain orgasmic potential as FTMs (and non-trans women) age.

Irregular bleeding while on T

An FTM may experience irregular bleeding, even if he has been on testosterone for several years. While many doctors worry that vaginal spotting can mean cancer of the thickened uterine lining, a very thin uterine lining from long-term T can also cause spotting. Ultrasound can prove the uterine lining is safely thin without requiring the use of a speculum and/or an invasive biopsy, so Kate recommends that if you do experience irregular bleeding, you will want to have a pelvic ultrasound done.

It is important to determine the thickness of the uterine wall and to see whether you have endometrial thickening, which can be predisposing for uterine cancer. The ultrasonographer will need to place a narrow, comfortably small vaginal ultrasound probe in your vagina using plenty of KY to get a detailed measurement of the inner lining of the uterus. If the lining is 4mm or thinner, then you don't need to have concern about your uterine lining causing cancer, and you sure don't need a uterine biopsy!

Kate says the estrogen suppositories might be good for restoring uterine lining that has become too thin, but that can be variable. Vaginal walls that are too thin from low estrogen may also bleed, burn or make a discharge, which usually resolves on low doses of vaginal estrogen.

We also know that irregular bleeding, or "spotting," may be caused by too much estrogen in the system, as happens when testosterone is aromatized into estrogen. This can happen even when you are not "over-dosing" technically. Even when you are taking the prescribed dosage, your system is sometimes not able to use all the testosterone you are giving it. Whatever testosterone your system cannot absorb is converted into estrogen. It may be useful to periodically test for serum levels of both testosterone and estrogen to help determine proper testosterone dosages, which may change over time as your metabolism changes naturally.

'FTMs of size' and the progesterone challenge test

The adrenal glands produce androstenedione, a hormone precursor to estrogen. It turns out that fat cells convert this precursor to other female hormones that stimulate the growth of the uterine lining.

The progesterone challenge test is a way of determining to what extent our bodies are converting these chemicals into estrogen. In the absence of estrogens, the progesterone will not cause bleeding. If estrogen is present, progesterone will induce a "period" and clear the uterus of the potentially dangerous buildup of uterine lining.

Kate recommends that FTMs who are overweight and have not had hysterectomies should take a 14-day course of progesterone on a quarterly or semi-annual basis to reduce the likelihood of developing uterine cancer.

Do it quarterly if you bleed bright red as that means that you need it. If

you spot dark brown, then you probably only need it every six months or so. Reducing our body percentage of fat is helpful here, too.

Hysterectomy

There is no reason for everyone to have a hysterectomy, but there are several reasons why many of us do have them. Without a uterus and ovaries one eliminates the risk of uterine and ovarian cancers. Some surgeons require hysterectomy as part of the process of genital reconstruction. If vaginal walls are used in the creation of the phallus or urethral extension, the uterus and ovaries should be removed because without the vagina normal fluids cannot drain. Another reason to have a hysterectomy is if you really don't want to have those parts. If you are going to have other abdominal work done, you might as well get that hysterectomy done simultaneously.

Insurance companies don't like to approve or pay for hysterectomies for FTMs when it looks like the procedure is elective (when you are insured as a male or there have been no tests or problems that indicate the surgery is the solution). But if you can prove that real problems exist, it is possible to convince the doctors and the insurance companies that you deserve coverage for the procedure no matter what sex you are registered as. So if you have any pelvic pain that you can think of that occurs monthly, that makes you leave work, and does not respond to *Alleve* or *Nuprin* or *Motrin*-type drugs, then your insurance company must cover your surgery.

continued on page 10 ▸

Female-to-Male Transsexuals in Society Holly Devor

This book provides a detailed, compassionate, intimate and incisive look at the life experiences of 45 female-to-male transsexuals. It will serve as an invaluable resource for transsexual people and their loved ones.

Indiana University Press, \$27.50, paperback.
ISBN 0-253-1259-6. Available at your local bookstore, by calling IUP at 1.800.842.6796, by writing Indiana University Press, 601 N. Morton St., Bloomington, IN 47404, or at <http://www.indiana.edu/~iupress/>



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- Submission Deadlines are the 15th of the Month Before Release

Transgender, Transsexual, FtM, MtF, Trans-People Participate in a Research Study

Looking for transgendered/transsexual individuals (of any age) who are willing to fill out a questionnaire about their experiences concerning discrimination and violence, substance use, and their experiences (if any) within substance use treatment programs. This study will select the first 45 female to male (FtM) transgendered/transsexual individuals and 45 male to female (MtF) transgendered/transsexual individuals. You do not have to have previous experience with discrimination or violence, but you must feel that your current or past substance use to be or to have been a problem to be eligible for participation.

This is a voluntary study, conducted by the UCLA Drug Abuse Research Center. If you decide not to participate, it will not affect your relationship with any other agency or the services you get from them.

If you decide to participate, here's what will happen:

- ◆ You will need to contact our research office at the phone number or address below and let us know where you would like the questionnaire sent. The address does not have to be your home and you do not have to give us your real name, both will remain confidential and kept under lock and key.
- ◆ We will send you 1 questionnaire and 1 return envelope. The questionnaire will have a number code letting us know who it goes to, not your name.
- ◆ The questionnaire will have questions about yourself and your life, your experiences with violence and discrimination, your substance use and use of hormones, and your experiences within substance use treatment.
- ◆ Once you fill out the questionnaire, place it within the return envelope, seal it, and place it within a regular mailbox.
- ◆ You do not have to answer a question if you do not want to. You are also not under any obligation to return the questionnaire.

Once we receive your questionnaire, we will mail you \$15 to the address given earlier, or to a different one if you prefer.

You will also be eligible to receive an additional \$5 for each person that participates within this study that you refer to us.

To participate or for more information, call (toll free) Emilia Lombardi at 1-877-228-2291 ext. 312

▲ Gynecological from page 9

They know that they must provide their covered clients with surgical relief from disabling, monthly recurring, drug-unresponsive central pain if the person does not desire their fertility. Kate said, "You have to volunteer your history of pain so that it will be covered."

If you have decided you want a hysterectomy, but you think you still may want to pass on your genetic material someday, it is possible to freeze ovarian surface tissue (the cortex) to preserve eggs for reproduction.

Dr. Sally Tazuke at Stanford University is doing research on this now at no cost to participants. While she does not guarantee that the frozen eggs will be able to be thawed and inseminated, banking your ovarian cortex now at least makes it possibly successful. That research is ongoing at Stanford, but check to see if it is available at other institutions.

Dr. O'Hanlan uses a laparoscopic procedure when she does hysterectomies. This involves 4 quarter-inch incisions versus one six-inch incision that takes longer to heal. There is less scarring, shorter recovery time, and less post-operative pain.

In any type of hysterectomy procedure there is no risk of losing orgasmic potential, as the surgery does not take place anywhere near the nerves of sexual pleasure. Some people may experience clitoral or urethral tenderness after surgery, probably from being catheterized with a thin urethral skin from prolonged low estrogen levels in the blood. Kate recommends using estrogen cream for four weeks before the surgery to see if this prevents the problem. In many cases, bladder problems like increased frequency of urination or the inability to completely empty the bladder may resolve themselves over time.

Transguys often don't know a lot about the inner workings of our female bodies, so Dr. O'Hanlan's relaxed and humorous style completely demystified it for everyone who heard her speak. Don't be afraid to ask your own doctor to help you understand your body, because it's important to know what's going on so you can take care of it. We have to be informed and be our own advocates, although we're starting to get a lot of help from people like Kate. ▲

Dr. Kate O'Hanlan's office in Portola Valley, CA may be reached at 650.851.6669. Her Web sites are <http://www.gynoncology.com> and <http://www.ohanlan.com>.

Mary V. Cochran, PhD.

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over 20 years
service
to the
transgender
community

William's story

by a young man from the UK

Let me start with the second time I told my parents about my Gender Dysphoria. *Told* is perhaps the wrong word to use because I can't remember telling my parents I was unhappy at fourteen and a half, but I can remember crying and crying and crying. My communication with them was through wet eyes. I had lost the ability or felt too embarrassed to use words, and crying showed, I suppose, that I was upset without actually having to be too specific about what the problem was. And it also meant that I didn't have to say things like *gender* or *dysphoric* or *TS* (words that I barely knew anyway).

My mum saw my distress and realized I was asking for her help. And she did help me. She took me to the local nurse, the woman who used to come into my school and check the kids for nits. That's how I remembered her. I do vaguely remember that first meeting with her and my mum, talking over various gender-related issues in a room that looked exactly like it should for a local clinic—squeaky chairs and an abundance of half-filled tissue boxes. My mum sat opposite me and the 'nit' nurse in the middle.

I can recall very few things from that day and the months after that. My memory has gone blank apart from being able to picture the interior decor of that room. But I knew that it was a significant day for me because it was the first time I was forced to use words to tell my mum that I had a problem, that it was a big problem and that it had to be sorted out and taken seriously.

Now, the first time I told them was when I was about nine or ten when saying things to parents didn't seem hard at all. I think I just came out with it and said "Mum, I want to be a boy."

continued on page 12 ▶

'FASTER THAN LIFE'

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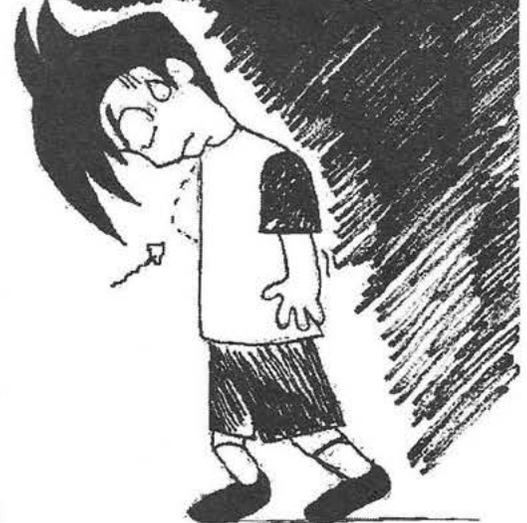
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Transe Generation

cartoons
by
Matt Nishii



PARANOIA



MATT 2001

William's Story from page 11

And although I'm not sure how she looked, whether she was shocked or matter-of-fact about it, I knew what she said back.

She said "Well, if you do we'll have to move away from here." As a child, to hear that is the most scary thing in the world. All you've ever known is *here*. You want to stay *here* forever. This scared me so much that it is perhaps why I tried a different approach four years later.

Talking to other people with Gender Dysphoria has made me think about the whole process of coming out differently.

Many people that I have spoken to say that they kept their secret in for decades because they were scared of hurting their parents.

My guilt lies now with the fact that I couldn't hide my sadness from my parents when so many other people thought it a priority. I have to honestly say that I was not racked with guilt after I told them. It was not until I was sixteen or so (and that was only through prompting by a psychotherapist) that I started wondering how my parents felt.

Yes, I was a selfish child and stubborn too, but I needed to be. The first time I told them I was only preparing them for what was to come. The second time must have been petrifying for them but not altogether a big surprise. And it was up to them. I was too young. I couldn't do anything more. And though I hate to dramatize it, when my parents first sought help with that nurse, it began a series of meetings that changed the course of my life and my parents' hopes and dreams for their child completely and forever. And for their selflessness, I am eternally grateful. ▲



William, age 21, is a Mermaids Committee member. Mermaids, seen at <<http://www.mermaids.freeuk.com>>, is a London group for gender variant children and teenagers. They offer support via telephone, email, snail mail, and bi-monthly meetings in North London. Helpline: 07020 935066 (12 noon-9pm UK time)



Meet the cartoonist, Matt Nishii

I'm Japanese-American. I go to college— somewhat of a 3rd year so far— and my major is art. I plan on having a career of doing either editorials or sports comics or whatever they want me to do. So far I write editorials for the school newspaper on campus events.

I'm a huge NHL hockey fan, and my favorite hockey team is the Detroit Redwings. However, I chose my name from an LA kings player named Matt Johnson (I think he's now playing for Nashville). Why? Cuz he's a tough enforcer who can fight.

I love sports, especially teaching people how to skate at ice rinks and playing hockey, even though I have to make do with street hockey. Hockey is hockey.

I also love women and have a musical knack for the piano.

About these comics:

They depict what has gone on in my life as well as other people's. I got some of my ideas from friends like Lando and Susan. In fact, I think Lando inspired me to do them when he was thinking of creating a TG sitcom or something. That just sparked me because he always has a knack for making life a joke. For more comics like these, go to http://www.geocities.com/transe_generation. You can email me at <nhlredwingsfan@onebox.com>.

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Rupert Raj, transactivist in Canada since 1971

Rupert Raj, Canadian Transactivist & Counsellor

by Garin Wiggins

For his 30 years of transactivism across Canada, Rupert Raj was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award plaque to a standing ovation of 90-100 people at Sexin' Change, a trans conference held from Oct. 12-14, 2001 at Ryerson University in Toronto. He received a similar award at the TransPlanetary Awards Ceremony in Toronto on Nov. 29, 2001.

Raj is featured in the 1999 video produced by Xantra MacKay, *Rupert Remembers*, chronicling TS/TV activism in Toronto from 1971 to 1990; in a 2000 Canadian TV documentary broadcast on the Life Channel, *Skin Deep*; and in a 2001 video produced by the Desi Queer Video Collective, *Rewriting the Script: A Love Letter to Our Families*, which reflects the experiences of queer South Asians and their families.

He's also listed in *The International Who's Who In Sexology* (First Edition, 1984).

In case you haven't heard of him, meet Rupert Raj, a Eurasian (East Indian and Polish), bi transman who has been living as a man for 30 years. He came out in 1971 in the queer community in Ottawa, Canada as a bisexual transsexual man, hanging out with gay trans and non-trans men. Raj had female to male surgical reassignment in New York the following year.

During the '70s and '80s, Raj established and operated three transsexual organizations: Foundation for the Advancement of Canadian Transsexuals, Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation, and Gender-Worker. At the same time, he also

edited and published three TS periodicals: *Gender Review*, *Metamorphosis Newsletter/Metamorphosis Magazine* and *GenderNetworker*.

Rupert provided counseling, research and education for transsexuals and transvestites, their significant others, and the medical-psychological community in Ottawa, Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto from 1971 to 1990. After almost 20 years of intense activity, he retired from community activism for a while due to severe burnout.

Since Comeback in '99

When he returned to activism in 1999, Rupert co-founded a peer-support group for transmen and female-to-males (part of the Meal-Trans Program at the 519 Community Centre) and a support group for TSs and TGs who use or have used alcohol or drugs. He now hopes to launch a peer-group for transpeople with HIV/AIDS.

Raj became involved with the HIV/AIDS Community Advisory Committee of the David Kelley Program, the Program Advisory Committee of the LesBiGay Addiction Services at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the Transsexual/Transgendered Youth Advisory Committee of the Children's Aid Society, and a working group to help establish primary health care services for the LGBTIQ community in Canada. Along with all of these commitments, Raj also serves as a consultant for the Police Liaison Committee regarding the policing of queer and transpeople.

He put together an event with Kyle Scanlon and the AIDS Committee of Toronto on November 27, 2001. Called *THE BATHS: Transmen & bioboy's talk it up*, the event's aim was to be a catalyst toward building bridges between non-trans gay/bi men and

gay/bi transmen in Toronto.

A Career Counselor for 5 years, Rupert recently made a career change himself when he earned an M.A. in Counseling from the Adler School of Professional Psychology. Through his newly-launched, part-time practice, *RR Consulting*, Raj provides professional training and consulting services for mental and sexual health and social service providers on gender identity and sexual orientation issues, as well as offering individual and group therapeutic support for queer and transpeople and their significant others.

Ideas for future projects that combine activism and his professional role include:

- compiling an online directory of local/national transpositive mental health care professionals
- consulting about community healthcare programming for the Toronto LGBTTQ population
- working with politicians and other transsexuals to try to appeal Ontario's recent de-listing of sex reassignment surgery.

Rupert enjoys networking with transpositive mental/sexual health care and community service providers, transactivists and allies. E-mail him at <rupertraj@sympatico.ca> or <rrconsulting@sympatico.ca>. ▲

Read his Working Toward a Transpositive Model: A Personal & Political Perspective in our next issue. -Ed.

SEEKING PUBLISHERS & CO-EDITORS

Rupert Raj, M.A. seeks leads for book publishers in the UK, US or Canada interested in publishing a book or book chapter on clinical issues dealing with gender identity. He is also interested in co-editing a clinical casebook solely dedicated to this population and specialty area.



Erdrich's

The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse

by Jacob Hale

Louise Erdrich, *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*. HarperCollins Publishers, 2001; \$26.00 U.S., hardcover, 361 pages. ISBN 0-06-018727-1



Louise Erdrich

Louise Erdrich was born in 1954 and raised in Wahpeton, North Dakota, where her Ojibwe-French mother and German-American father taught at a Bureau of Indian Affairs

school. She left the Red River Valley region to enter Dartmouth College in 1972.

Currently, she lives in Minneapolis and is enrolled at the Turtle Mountain Reservation. Most of the action in *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*, which spans nearly a century, takes place on Ozhibi'iganan, "an imagined place consisting of landscapes and features similar to many Ojibwe reservations" (357).

Father Damien Modeste, a character in some of Erdrich's previous novels beginning with National Books Critics Circle Award winner *Love Medicine* (1983), takes center stage in *The Last Report*. Originally named Agnes DeWitt, Father Damien is a priest on Ozhibi'iganan land, where he lives as a man and assiduously hides the fact that he has a female body.

As a young woman, Agnes enters a convent and takes the name Sister Cecilia. Her deeply sensual obsession with the piano works of Chopin leads to grave difficulties in convent, forcing her to leave. Wearing nothing but a shift so threadbare that it reveals that her breasts are bound, Agnes arrives in the barn of German-American farmer Berndt Vogel.

Berndt falls for her and wants to marry her, but she refuses because, she says, not only has she already wed herself to Christ, but she had already been unfaithful due to her passion for Chopin, so the state of her soul leaves her in no position to marry. Nevertheless, Agnes becomes Berndt's lover and a music teacher.

After a bank robbery in which Agnes is kidnapped, shot by the law, and steals some of the gangsters' loot, and after Berndt's death, a great flood destroys the town. The swirling, swollen river sweeps Agnes away on the lid of her piano. The piano sinks and she finds herself wandering disoriented through the wreckage of a tangle of rats, skeletal twisted machinery from tattered farms, a baby carriage with no baby in it, pieces of houses, a basket of eggs afloat, and a priest hanging on a branch.

The dead priest is Father Damien Modeste, whom Agnes had met briefly when he had stopped by the town en route to the reservation to take up the post vacated by the death of Father Hugo.

For a long while, she sat near the tree with the body, considering. She prayed for a sign—what to do? But she already knew. Once she was ready, she acted. She dislodged the priest with a branch that she used like a hook, pulling him down. (44)

Agnes takes Father Damien's garments and traveler's pouch and cuts her hair, buries the priest and assumes his identity.

Shortly after arrival on the reservation in the midst of a terrible famine, the new Father Damien meets Nanapush, an older, hilariously ribald Ojibwe who becomes a major

figure in his life, both friend and mentor. Nanapush has no use for white people's religion, but becomes intrigued with Father Damien because his attempts to shock the priest with overtly sexual and scatological talk fail.

This, for Nanapush, is an interesting challenge, and he also hatches a plot in which the unwitting Father Damien is supposed to convince Nanapush's old friend Kashpaw that polygamy is wrong so that Nanapush will get one of Kashpaw's four wives, Margaret Kashpaw.

Father Damien writes letters to the Pope—the reports on the miracles of the novel's title—and the young Father Jude is discharged to the reservation to investigate a local nun, Sister Leopolda, to determine if she is a suitable candidate for canonization.

Erdrich switches between masculine and feminine pronouns, between the names *Father Damien* and *Agnes*, depending on whether the protagonist seems to be feeling more masculine or feminine. This is not a transsexual novel: Father Damien is not described, explained, or justified in expressions common to transsexual rhetoric.

Indeed, Father Damien is never described as a man trapped in a woman's body, as someone who was always already a man before taking on a man's social role, as someone who always felt himself to be a man despite an incongruous female body, or as anything of the sort.

photo by Ben Singer

Jacob Hale is a professor of philosophy at California State University, Northridge. He is currently working on a book of his collected essays in trans studies, and stays as active in Los Angeles trans community work as his research allows.



Nor is he portrayed as a lesbian: Agnes' great loves, after Chopin and Christ, are Berndt and the young Father Gregory who is sent to be Father Damien's student and assistant on the reservation.

Further, Erdrich's prose does not reflect the notion—common in popular media and books like Diane Wood Middlebrook's *Suits Me: The Double Life of Billy Tipton* and Dinitia Smith's *The Illusionist*—that Agnes is deceptively, dishonestly, duplicitously hiding her true female identity.

To read Erdrich's character through the lens of concepts current in FTMs' and transsexual men's attempts to carve out conceptual space for ourselves as distinct from women, or to read Father Damien through the many attempts to keep us in the category *woman*, would be to misunderstand what Erdrich's novel is about.

Yet this kind of misinterpretation is tempting to those of us who are accustomed to thinking in European or European American concepts. Even the press materials sent by HarperCollins with the review copy call Father Damien “a beloved reservation priest who has hidden his true identity as a woman beneath his cassock.”

In *The Last Report*, explanations of the characters are spiritual or religious—not psychological—explanations. As the friendship between Nanapush and Father Damien grows, they become opponents in regular games of chess. The two friends shrewdly study each other's strategy and try various ploys to throw the other off his game.

When Father Damien is not fooled by Nanapush's opening gambit, Nanapush asked Father Damien, “who was deep in a meditation over his bishop's trajectory,”

“What are you?” ...

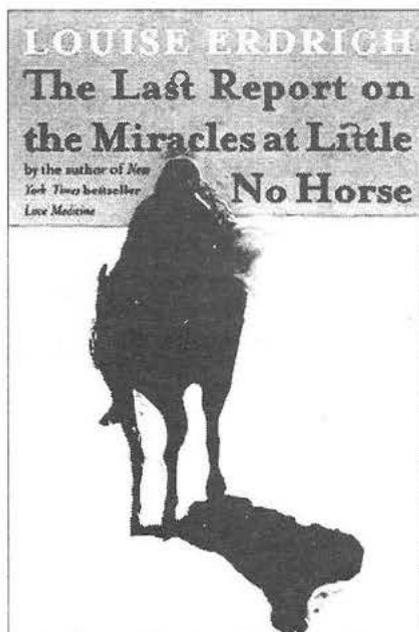
“A priest,” said Father Damien.

“A man priest or a woman priest?”

(230)

Eventually, Nanapush concludes:

“So you're not a woman-acting man, you're a man-acting woman. We don't get so many of those lately. Between us, Margaret and me, we couldn't think of more than a couple.” (232)



This moment of recognition, which Agnes realizes is not of importance to Nanapush although it is shattering to her, allows Nanapush to win the game with a crafty strategy that Agnes is too nonplussed to recognize until it is too late.

“I'm losing,” Agnes muttered. “You tricked me, old man.”

“Me!” said Nanapush. “You've been tricking everybody!”

Still, that is what your spirits instructed you to do, so you must do it. Your spirits must be powerful to require such a sacrifice.”

“Yes,” said Agnes, “my spirits are very strong, very demanding, very annoying.”

Nanapush nodded in sympathy.

“Check,” the old man said. (232)

In the next chapter, set seventy three years later, Father Jude struggles with his attraction to Lulu, an attractive Ojibwe woman, which is not spoken between the two priests but which Father Damien has figured out.

Outside the door of their house, the two men notice an “erratic tumble of ants scurrying to rebuild a nest rearranged by their feet” (236). His explanation explicitly given in reference to the ants, Father Damien remarks, “Because God has a very dark sense of humor.” He continues: “Every so often, as though for His awful amusement, we are overturned. The desperate methods we use to right ourselves must seem hilarious.”

The textual, if not temporal or topical, juxtaposition of this explanation with Nanapush's suggests that they are to be read together, and the juxtaposition of the two explanations—the one in traditional Ojibwe spiritual terms, the other in those of Catholicism—is emblematic of the ways in which Father Damien works to find understanding in a mixture of the two spiritual traditions that he forges throughout his life.

The trickery of which Nanapush accuses Agnes is not the trickery of which, for instance, Middlebrook accuses Billy Tipton or Smith accuses her Brandon-like protagonist Dean Lily/Lily Dean. The categories of explanation are different, rooted in spirituality, so the categories to be explained are different, despite obvious, yet superficial similarities.

Erdrich's prose has a dreamlike quality; it is the logic of dreams that structures *The Last Report*. This gives her characters passionate, larger-than-life personae. Myth and dream meet in her characters, and are viscerally embodied in their experiences, personalities, actions, and thoughts. As the novel proceeds, distinctions between myth and dream, on the one hand, and the ordinary causal relations of waking life dissolve, on the other hand, as dream and myth are increasingly part of in the characters' waking lives.

This reflects some aspects of Erdrich's writing method. In an interview with *Publishers Weekly* (January 29, 2001), Erdrich says that her dreams led her to the central characterization of *The Last Report*:

I thought about Father Damien writing those letters to the pope and never getting an answer. The first chapter was about his wistfulness, reaching for answers. I, too, was wishing for an answer in some ways. Why do these characters keep coming back to me in dreams? I dreamed about a woman obsessed with playing Chopin, and suddenly she became related to Father Damien—then she became Father Damien. In my unconscious mind, nothing seems totally disconnected.

continued on page 16 ▷

▲ **Last Report** from page 15

That's very much a part of the Ojibwe world, the tribal world is so interconnected. (64)

The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse is a beautifully written novel with unforgettable characters. From an FTM or transmale point of view, it is a problematic novel. But it is no less problematic from the point of view of anyone for whom a European or European American sex/gender/sexuality system— in which both FTM transsexuality and transphobia are embedded— is the paradigm, since it is written through a different paradigm.

Ultimately, although there is nothing ethereal about it, this lyrical novel is more about spirituality than it is about gender; more precisely, gender is only one of the manifestations of spirituality on Ozhibi'iganan and in the life of Father Damien. ▲

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THE NUTS & BOLTS OF
FEMALE-TO-MALE SURGERY

BY LOREN CAMERON

LOREN CAMERON GIVES US HIS MAN TOOL
New eBook explores female-to-male surgery

Photographer Loren Cameron, author of the best-selling *Body Alchemy: Transsexual Portraits*, released his second book in December. His new book, *MAN TOOL: The Nuts and Bolts of Female-to-Male Surgery*, addresses intimate questions about plastic surgery options for the female-to-male transsexual. Through anecdotal text and over 40 close-up photographs of body modifications, it explores personal issues about sex and gender relative to transsexual men.

Cameron's new book is only available as a World Wide Web-accessible eBook. For \$19.95, anyone with access to a computer with a web browser can view it at <http://www.lorencameron.com/mantool>. For this price, a person gets Web access to the eBook for one year and the option of downloading the book and/or printing it out.

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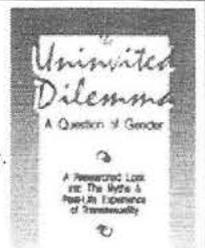
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MALE



Dear Editors:

I read with interest Jeff Shevlowitz's letter in Issue 49, as well as his editorial on the idea of FTM community in the most recent issue of *The Construction Zone*, his informative newsletter. I don't agree with all of his remarks; he and I disagree, in particular, about the meaning of *community*. But I couldn't agree more with his view that we (as a community, or as "a loose network of information and referral," as he believes we are) would do well to foster a better "sense of what has come before."

Jeff points to some practical advantages of paying more attention to our history, especially our recent history. Our organizing will be improved if we learn from both the successes and the shortcomings of previous efforts, rather than "continually 'reinventing the wheel'." Also, knowing that we have a history can help us overcome shame and feel pride in ourselves.

Personally, learning our history has an additional benefit for me. One of the negative feelings my variance from societal gender norms has instilled in me is a deep-seated, profound sense of apartness; I remember feeling radically apart from others at a very young age. Thus it is important for me to feel a sense of connectedness, including connectedness to the histories of groups of people with whom I identify. I don't know how many other transpeople share this feeling with me, but I know that some do.

So, I offer a little snippet of Los Angeles FTM history that I recently stumbled across, and invite any readers who know more about this piece of our history to contact me.

As of 1974, the Gay Community Services Center was home to the community-based Transvestite, Transsexual, Female Impersonator, and Gender Identity Program, under the directorship of Rose-Ann Prowett. An FTM group was part of this program; about seven FTMs were involved, and it was run by Jay West.

This information comes from *Mirage* 1:2 (1974), published by Angela Douglas and republished in Douglas' *Transsexual Action Organization Publications* 1972-1975, pg. 72, located in the Transgender Ephemera Collection, File: "Angela Douglas Publications and Note," of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Historical Society of Northern California. Thanks to Susan Stryker and Kim Klausner for their help with my research there.

If anyone has any further information about this group or about Jay West, please contact me at [redacted]H@aol.com. Also, I would be very interested to read more about FTM groups in other areas before FTM International was founded, and hope that other readers will write in with what they know about our past.

Sincerely,

Jacob Hale
Los Angeles, CA

Successful on the job transition at UCLA

I am an FTM who decided to transition on the job I have held at UCLA for 5 years. I thought the easiest way to get my co-workers to flow into the new me was to ask them to start calling me by my new name, Cameron. But since I was told that I could not have people calling me by my new name until my badge read as such, I picked up the phone and with trembling hands-or maybe knees-I dialed the Human Resources department. After I informed the woman on the other end that I wished to have my name changed on my badge, she asked me that echoing question, "Why?"

I swallowed hard and said, "I am transgender and plan on transitioning on the job. Do you know what this is?"

She said, "No."

My knees were shaking again. I explained exactly what it was, and to my amazement she said, "Great, wonderful for you!" She seemed so excited for me. She then transferred me to a woman who knew all about this very thing I was planning on doing and was just about jumping up and down on the phone. I could hear it, really.

She informed me that they had just had a huge symposium on transgender employees and wanted to know how she and UCLA could make my transition as easy and comfortable as possible. My knees were firm now.

She proceeded to give me the phone number to the LGBTCC so that I could have someone come and speak on my behalf to my co-workers and supervisors. She also told me she would call the security department that handles the badges and have my name changed. I only needed to show up for the photo. When we hung up, she immediately called my supervisor and informed him of UCLA's diversity policy, and the ball was a-rolling.

continued on page 18 >

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▲ **Successful from page 17**

I made the phone call to the LGBTQ and met with an FTM there. He set up a time with the director and my supervisors to have a staff meeting. About 10 of my co-workers showed up at that meeting in full support, but with many questions.

I have never before felt as close to people I have worked with as I do now. I have one more meeting to attend at the clinic where I also work, but I already know that it will go as well as the first because of the warmth I have been receiving from each and every person I work with in the hospital and the clinic.

Another department within the hospital recently approached me and had my picture taken for their bulletin board. They are setting up a collage of before and after pictures and a story to tell others about what I am doing. I have now become the official UCLA poster boy for transitioning. So my journey has just begun, but because of the warm and understanding people at UCLA, it does not look so long

Cameron J. Scott
Los Angeles, CA

What's a tranny-chaser to do?

I've been thinking a lot about the label *tranny-chaser* over the last few months. What a horrible thought: that someone might be attracted to and in pursuit of trans people only because

they are trans. I would never want to be like that. I've seen those personal ads, where they are looking for more of a toy than a person—where they use derogatory language or can't even get the pronouns/gender right.

After being lesbian-identified and having relationships with women for many years, my orientation shifted. I started dating men. Over the last four years, I've dated men that were straight and bisexual, genetic males and FTMs. I didn't really think I had any preference for any type over the others. But then, one morning, I woke up in bed alone and I suddenly realized that the last three people I had dated and slept with were trans.

"Oh my gosh!" I thought, "How did I miss this?" Usually I am pretty aware of what I'm up to. What did I think? That they all just "happened" to be trans? I had been doing this approach-avoidance thing, simultaneously pursuing FTMs and denying my interest in them. It's hard to find what you want when you don't admit what you're looking for.

Finally, I'd had enough of those moments of desire, where every pore in my body felt like it was longing for a partnership with someone who is FTM. Okay, I said to myself, I am into it. I can't help it. Right or wrong, I will just have to out and out pursue this desire. I think that if I hadn't been so concerned about that label *tranny-chaser*, what it might mean, how it might apply to me, I wouldn't have fought it so hard.

Cia Shater
Seattle, WA

Fighting the insurance company alone in Michigan

On June 29th, 1991 I traveled down to Norfolk, Virginia for a consultation and evaluation at Dr. David A. Gilbert's gender clinic. At the time of my appointment I really wasn't sure what my health insurance did or did not cover. But that didn't stop me from going. I paid my \$1200 up front and filed for reimbursement from my insurance carrier who paid me about half of the amount I had paid in Virginia.

When Dr. Gilbert sent a request for pre-authorization for surgery, BCBS (my health insurance company) stated that they didn't pay for such. As it turned out "sex change surgery and anything related to it" was in the list of exclusions in my insurance booklet. Funny thing though—it didn't and still doesn't stop them from paying for a lot of things even though they still claim they don't. They've paid for all my hormones, blood tests, mental health care, even a blood test to determine my genetic sex (which alone was almost \$400).

BCBS finally admitted to paying for all the services that they had said were not covered. Then they requested that I pay them back. It was their mistake, but I was supposed to refund the money (\$1250 to be exact) to them for their mistake. They also requested that my therapist refund them in the amount of \$3800. It only took three well-written letters and BCBS was backpedaling. My therapist and I both got letters of apology and were told we did not have to pay back the amounts originally requested.

After giving my insurance company time to "do the right thing," I contacted an attorney. That's where I stand now. My complaint has been filed and served. I suppose my next stop is the court house. My attorney has told me that I have an excellent case.

This is going to be a lengthy and expensive process. I have contacted various organizations in an attempt to gain support. Needless to say, I haven't been very successful.

I read stories all the time about how organizations help people out. Just how do they get these groups to help them? If anybody out there knows, I sure would like to hear from you.

S. Mull
Michigan

Send Letters to the Editors to FTMIamalebox@aol.com or to FTM Newsletter
POB 34500 Philadelphia, PA 19101.



The Privilege of Invisibility

by Suzanne Gamble



*Significant Others, Family, Friends, and Allies

One of the first times we walked hand in hand in public together, a man called out to my FTM lover, "Hey man, does she always smile like that or only when she's with you?"

Wow! I turned it this way and that. Odd. Funny. Nice. Weird. Sexist. Kindly.

Yes, it felt good to hold my lover's hand in public with no stingers from The World (or his wife). It was almost aphrodisiac after the social chill of being a femme on the street with butches. The guy on the street was responding to the glaze of pleasure that gleamed like honey on our skins; it sweetened people's tongues on the street.

My lover basked in the ease of this street acceptance. He had had many women lovers before his transition, but when we first got together the

experience of being on the street as a man with a woman was relatively new to him. It must have felt like balm on a wound after years of getting the hairy eyeball from heterosexuals. While I enjoyed his enjoyment and our baths of social approval, there was a little salt in the public sugar.

For him, it was a freeing experience: he was visible, free to be himself, accepted and acknowledged as himself. For me, it wasn't freeing. I was invisible—accepted and acknowledged (or ignored, at times) for something I wasn't.

I've never been pulled over for driving while white or ignored for standing in line while butch. My "rights, advantages and immunities"* converge at the intersection of genetics, gender and personal style. Experience taught me that, depending on where I stand and with whom, those privileges can be lost at any time, because my identity is refracted through a social prism.

With girlfriends from all walks of life, different races and diverse sexual identities, we could not be anonymous in public. And no matter what the race, otherwise decent men would flirt with me (the femme) to challenge her (the butch). When I'm with men, whether FTM or biologically male,

only "bad guys" get in between us. As a member of an apparently heterosexual couple, I am granted immunity from a lot of negative interference. We get a "Vive La Difference!" response. Men will do nice things, like that guy on the street did. The approval is sometimes galling, sometimes enjoyable, sometimes funny—usually all of these, like light striking a prism.

When I'm visibly queer and femme, I notice that some men can't believe a pretty woman is queer. It's an irresistible challenge—they sniff around to make sure, like dogs at a hedge corner. Now that my lover is apparently another man just like them, my traditionally feminine affect is unprovocative, unremarkable.

This lack of curiosity is most soothing in a Sunday morning crowd at the local bakery, nuzzling my lover's ear. He and I can sit together, unnoticed, and enjoy some *dolce far niente*.

That's a luxury queers can't take for granted—we live in special neighborhoods or visit them in order to stand kissing on a sidewalk unnoticed. We cannot have a bubble of privacy around us outside certain "safe" locations. Granted we can create those places, but it's relaxing not to have to go through all that just to kiss my baby.

I'm still torn. I enjoy his happiness and our freedom from insults, I enjoy our invisibility, but I'm living in a "Where's Waldo?" cartoon. Like geese, who rest their wings in the tail wind created by the birds flying in front of them, I now can rest in the social formation. But I know those birds whose feathers aren't of the flocks' are pecked to death or driven away. There's safety in invisibility, but is it safety when it can be rescinded so easily?

Is it a privilege to be unrecognized, unknown? I don't know. There are ways to take advantage of sexism and make it work for you, but it doesn't make the world a better place.

Are we obligated to make the world a better place? I don't know. But here's my advice: next time a straight girl smiles at you, smile back. She might be a femme Waldo. ▲

***privilege:** 1.n. right, advantage or immunity, belonging to a person, class or office 2. v.t. invest with privilege

Concise Oxford Dictionary



**FTMs from Arkansas you may have heard of:
Loren Cameron, Aaron Davis, Garin Wiggins**

Our first *focus* is on Arkansas, the state where I lived most of my life and then transitioned from 1997-98. Though I was well-informed about the queer community in the state, I found no resources for FTMs there at the time. For guys in states like this, the internet and lists are a lifeline. I became the American Boyz contact for Arkansas.

People still contact me from Arkansas, even though I have lived in Philadelphia since October of 1998. One was a guy who had transitioned 10 years earlier in a small town and was starved for contact with FTMs.

This year I met Matthew and Rob, whose art and writing will follow. We know of one other transman in Arkansas, and that's it. If there are more of you, get in touch with us!

Both of them offered to help paint my house when I went there in October. Matthew looked like he had seen a ghost when I let him in the door. When I asked him what surprised him, he said, "It's like if you had always believed unicorns existed and then you saw one."

Matthew painted walls for a whole day, but his real talent is as an artist. He did the painting on our cover, *Shades of Black*, an 8" x 10" black watercolor.

Below is Matthew's own introduction to himself and his artwork.

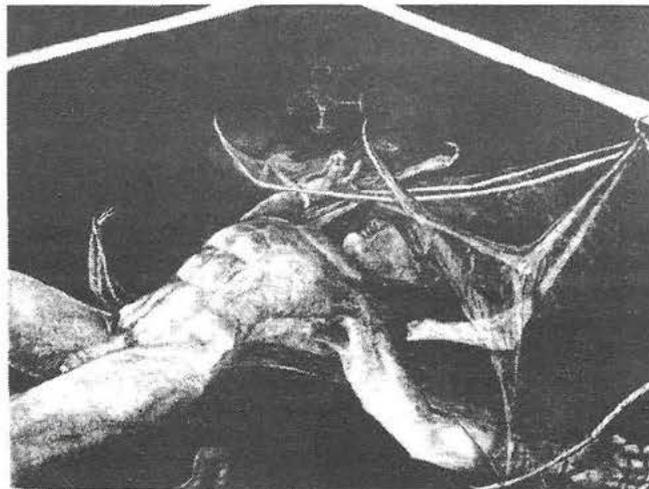
—Garin Wiggins

**Cover Artist
Matthew G.**

I'm a Southern California boy. Got slammed by the puberty fairy and had to grow up a girl— you guys know the routine. But with me, everyone thinks I'm straight when I know I'm gay. I got married to a man. Still am. I served in the Navy as a machinist for 12 years and then worked as a locksmith for 5. Now, at the age of 42 I'm getting a Fine Arts teaching degree. I'm also finally facing the trans stuff. I'm pre-op, pre-T— but that should change soon.

About my art

Most of my work deals with themes of sexuality, power and gender roles. I draw, paint, and sculpt in various media. Many of my creations are half human and half other. Feeling between worlds as I do, these images make sense to me. I focus on the male nude because the work is in essence a series of spiritual self portraits. The figures are often bound or vulnerable. They refuse to meet the viewer's eyes.



Above, *Chained Demon*; below, *Dark Angel*. Each is a 33 x 44 in. charcoal drawing by Matthew G.



They are to be observed.

The way I portray women is very different. The women stare out boldly, challenging the conceptions of women as object. They have an air of quiet command and untouchable otherness to them. Strength and steel and sexual power are theirs. They are to be respected and even feared.

Unlike Georgia O Keefe, I freely admit that all my work is about sex.

—Matthew G.

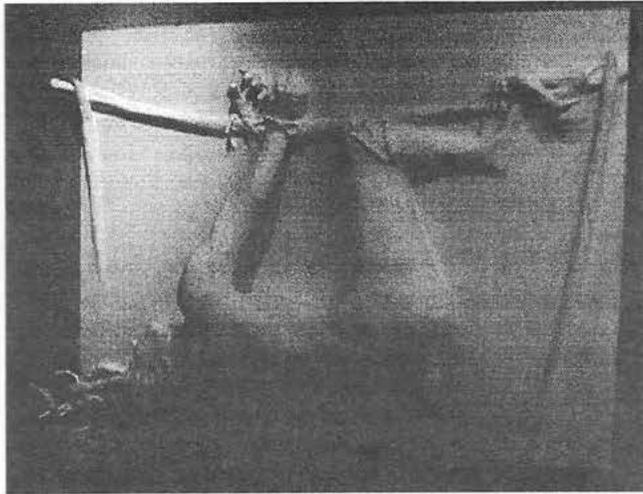
Arkansas Resources

The Women's Project
<http://members.aol.com/wproject/>
 2224 Main
 Little Rock, AR 72201
 501.372.5113
 Monitors and responds to hate crimes, teaches HIV prevention, and gives information/referral to social services, the pantry database, and the Job Vacancy Book. Free meeting space available. Helpful to trans people.

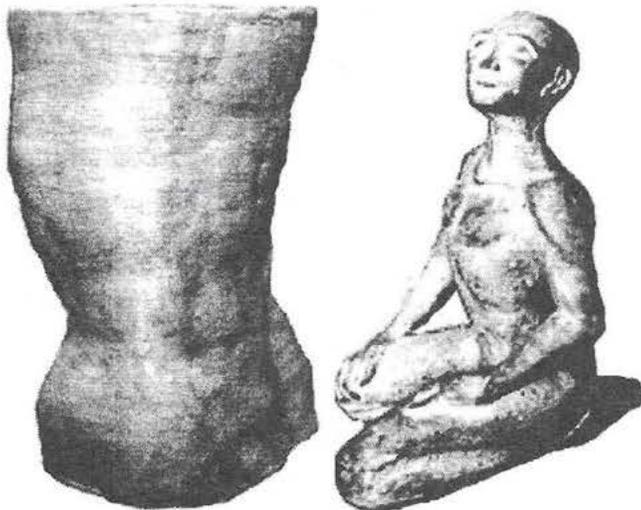
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Above, Ten Point Buck, bas relief; below (l-r) Geoman and Man Ascendant, in clay. All by Matthew G.



The ABCs of Manhood

(or, How I Learned About Accountability, Boundaries and Community)

by Rob White

My mother once told me that when I was two she tried to get me to wear a pair of frilly red lace panties and matching bra. She had thought they would look so precious on me. Sorry mom, I wasn't that kind of girl.

By age 14, I had somehow managed to communicate to my classmate Mary that I was in love with her. In this girl's eyes, as in mine, I was a boy, and joy of joys, she was in love with me too. We saw each other every day at school, talked to each other on the phone for hours every night, sent each other letters in the mail, and on Saturdays I'd visit her and we'd sit in the living room and talk.

This schedule went on for months, but we never had physical contact. Not until the big 9th grade choir Christmas party, that is. After some frivolity at our choir director's house, we all went caroling. We were a real four-part choir with some great Christmas songs in our repertoire, so it was fantastic.

At some point in the caroling, Mary and I broke away from the group and experienced our first kiss together. I remember it was very awkward for both of us, but once our lips met I never wanted to stop. I just kept kissing and kissing her, and with each kiss we both got a little better at it.

Not long after the party, Mary called me, crying. Her mother, who also happened to be the wife of a Methodist minister, had found Mary's shoebox full of love letters—all from me. And though in Mary's lovely eyes I was the boy of her dreams, in the eyes of her parents I was nothing more than a perverted sinner. We were forbidden to see each other or speak ever again. It was 1970, and popular culture was rife with movies, songs and books depicting young people running away from home to be free and do what they wanted. We decided to give it a try.

By the fifth day of our escape we were tired, hungry and running out of ideas as to where to go and what to do. We'd had adventures to be sure, like spending the night in a tree house, in an unfinished home that was left unlocked, in a church that was left open, and in a Goodwill can.

My next idea was to hang out in the hay barn that was near my house in the country until we could figure out what was next. On the way, a neighbor passed us in his pickup. He stopped, backed up and asked if we wanted a ride. I thought he meant to the hay barn, so we climbed in the back. To our dismay, he drove us straight to his house, locked us in a bedroom and called our parents.

continued on page 22 ▶

Issue 51: Focus in on CANADA

By March 5, we ask Canadians to send poetry, prose, photos, and artwork to garin@aol.com or by mail to our Philadelphia address. Send resources to ernie@colba.net or by mail to our Canadian address. See p.2 for addresses.

In this section, we will focus in on art, writing, and resources from FTMs who live in a different city, state, or country in each issue. Send corrections and additional resources to ernie@colba.net or by mail to our Canadian address. Information gathered will be added to the *FTM Resource Guide*.

▲ABCs from page 21

Once we were alone, Mary started to cry. At that moment she needed me more than she ever had. Yet something was wrong inside of me. I wanted to hold her and comfort her and kiss her tears away, but all I could do was stand there. I couldn't even make eye contact with her. Inside, I was frantically scanning my emotions for the love I'd felt so strongly moments before, but I felt nothing.

I told this story for a reason. I used to beat myself up for emotionally deserting Mary that day. I thought I had a major character defect. Now, 31 years later, I've finally figured out why I went numb. I was unable to respond to her because I had been jarred back to reality—the reality that even though Mary knew I was a boy, and I knew I was a boy, I wasn't really a boy. In that flash of a moment, I was totally naked before her and dickless. All I could feel was shame.

As you might guess, I continued to start relationships with women that I couldn't finish. I was incapable of consummation physically, which played itself out in my psyche and emotions as not being able to keep my commitments to the women I loved. I reasoned that if I could become male, I could commit.

In March of 2001, I took my first step toward becoming male by having bilateral mastectomy and nipple reconstruction surgery. My plan had been to resign from my job so I could cash out my retirement money to pay for the surgery, get on testosterone immediately, and return to the workforce in a new job presenting as male.

The first part was easy enough. But I couldn't find a physician in Arkansas who would administer testosterone. By the time the reality of my situation fully sunk in, I'd been without income for 3 months. The bills were piling up, and I was about to lose my apartment and car. By the middle of May, I was so financially desperate that I made another very risky move.

My many-years-divorced brother had been transferred to a town 50 miles North of San Francisco. San Francisco had just passed legislation that would allow city employees to claim sex reassignment surgeries on their group insurance. My brother invited me to come to California and stay with him while I tried to get on with the city. I left immediately and was there within days. Due to the abruptness of my move, though, I had sacrificed almost everything I owned. All furniture, desks, bookshelves and

books, dishes, lamps and anything else I couldn't fit into my car was left behind. It was a small price to pay, I thought, in exchange for the new life I would soon be leading.

However, when I'd been in California only one month, my brother informed me he was quitting his job and moving to Florida. His timing was great, too: the day after the repo man had taken my car. I was now stranded in California with no place to stay and no way to move back home.

As hard as I tried I couldn't wrap my mind around everything that had happened. The stress of this new event combined with the stressful events I'd just run from were too much for me. I'd taken some very big risks and none of them had paid off. I became so overwhelmed that all I could see was darkness. I calmly and sadly decided that my only solution was suicide. My plan was to wait until my brother was asleep and then go out and hang myself.

My brother's apartment was attached to the motel office he worked for. At 9:35 I stepped out into the dark, locked the door behind me, and walked with a top sheet across my arm to the end of the parking lot. The property's back lot was separated from a large empty field by a 5-foot brick wall lined on the field side by a row of trees. I reached the end of the lot, climbed over the wall and looked out into the darkness across the 300-yard field. I saw nothing that indicated I could be seen by anyone, and the 5-foot wall kept me out of the view of motel renters. I walked on looking for a sturdy branch.

I found a good limb and tested it with my full weight. Then I went back to where a discarded shopping cart lay and rolled it to the tree. I flipped it over on its back and propped it precariously onto a fallen log for added height while I tied the sheet around the limb. Still up on the cart's highest part, which was the front cart axle, I placed my neck into the now O-shaped sheet. It felt comforting to be in this position with my solution so near at hand.

I stood in this position for some time trying to recreate the same level of angst and despondency I'd felt prior to slipping my neck into the noose. Then the motel's fire alarm went off, which further distracted me. My biggest fear was that it would awaken my brother and he would find my note in the next room.

After a reasonable amount of time had passed with no apparent activity toward finding me, I began to focus on

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the task at hand again by shuffling my feet around on the axle I was perched on, in hopes I would lose my balance and that would be that.

Just then the bushes in front of me rustled. Since I'd already seen a mouse in the tree, I wanted to believe this was just another mouse. I stood very still and listened, but the rustling had stopped.

Suddenly, from behind me, a bright light was shining. Had the angel Gabriel come to give me a message? I pulled myself around to see a police officer standing next to his squad car aiming the spotlight right at me.

The officer had pulled his car into the field, but I knew that between him and me was a large, deep drainage ditch filled with water. The anxiety of being caught served to return my level of despondency to where it needed to be for me to act. It was my last chance for happiness, so I jumped. I immediately realized that the O-shaped noose would not hold my neck in. I had to use both of my hands to keep my head from slipping out the back. Even so, as I hung there, my head got tingly and everything went black with the exception of little bursts of light inside my head.

The next moment, I was shoved to the ground belly first and two knees were digging into my back. An officer I hadn't seen had come up from beside me and was not happy to be there. He pulled my arms behind my back until I thought they would break. Then he tightened the handcuffs until my wrists were throbbing. And there I was: alive but not so well to face another night on planet Earth.

Accountability

I'd never been to a psychiatric hospital. That's where the police had taken me. I found myself scanning every worker's face that I interacted with, watching for the slightest trace of cruelty. Movies and books had taught me that mental institutions were unfriendly at best, but what I experienced was understanding, respect, compassion, and even sacrifice.

My time at Oakcrest was exactly what I needed. For the first 10 days I was held in seclusion, due to my extreme tendency to isolate from the other patients. I used the time to retrace the previous 12 months of my life. Surely there were clues as to how I'd ended up nearly dead, homeless, jobless and penniless.

One word kept coming to my mind: *accountability*. One of my former bosses had said that word to me. Prior to my chest surgery, I had been attending a church with a

lady pastor and the theme of all her sermons had become accountability. I didn't know exactly what the word meant but felt very strongly that it was my first clue.

In the solitude of my 8' x 12' room, I slowly came to see how I had been avoiding being accountable in my life.

My avoidance was most evident in the area of romance. I'd fallen in love with the lovely lady pastor, and I'd been telling myself that it was okay to be in love with a married woman; that it was okay to be-friend her son and use him to get closer to her; that it was okay to pray that her husband (a pilot) would crash! Besides, he wasn't good for them.



In a fantasized relationship, there's no accountability. And there's no respect for boundaries either. As I sat in that room, I began to see that I was projecting the boundary-less state of being in love onto my pastor. Consequently, I trampled all over her personal boundaries; so much so that she sent me a registered letter saying she could no longer be my pastor. Even after receiving her letter, I continued to justify my intolerable conduct by telling myself she was "meant for me."

Finally, the 8' x 12' room provided me with the knowledge that I had been shunning and taking for granted the tiny TG community that existed in Little Rock. I felt I didn't need them and in fact, I felt I was better than them.

As the song says, life has funny ways of helping you out. And that's what life did for me. I was thinking that being male would solve my problems, but I was dead wrong. I now understand that being male and being a man are two different things, and what I want to be is a man. I want to live my life in accountability, both in thought and deed. I want to be grounded and have my life based in reality so that I don't overstep people's boundaries. And now that I've found a physician to monitor my transition, I want to honor and be a part of the TG community in any and every way I can.

Right now these are the ABCs of my manhood. I'll tackle the rest of the alphabet later. ▲



The New York City Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center's Gender Identity Project

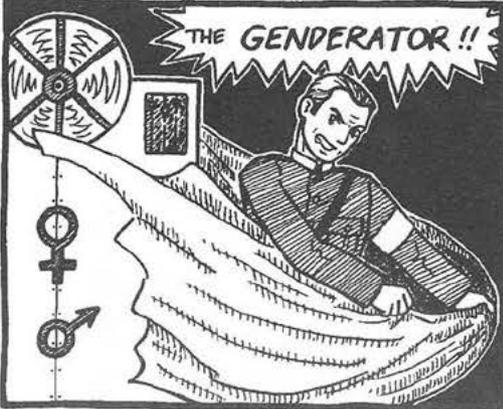
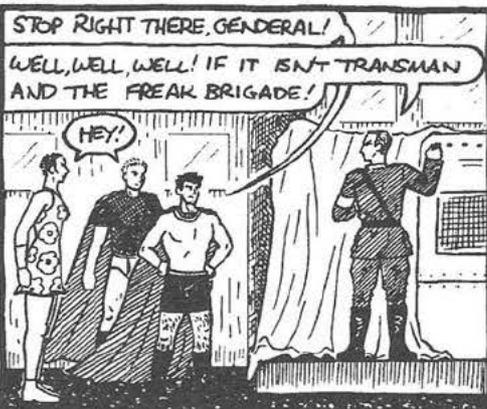
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Each year we update the *FTM Resource Guide*, while publishing selected new resources in every newsletter. Send resources or changes for the Guide or newsletter to Dale at <ernie@colba.net>.

The *FTM Resource Guide* is compiled through referrals, solicitation and research. Revised last May, the *2001 Guide* gives verified contact information for doctors, surgeons, therapists, gender programs, support groups and other resources organized by state and country.

Web Sites

Transster.com is a Web site where FTMs may view and show images of FTM gender reassignment surgery results. See at <http://www.transster.com>.

E-mail Lists

Aussie Guys, for FTMs from Australia, may be joined at <http://ftmaustralia.rubyrain.net/list.htm>. **Trans on Campus** is a list dedicated to discussing transgender issues on college campuses. Join at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/transoncampus>. **Queer Latinos** is a list for all latino, Hispanic, or Mexican people born with female bodies who identify/feel transsexual, transgendered, intersexed, queerly gendered, 3rd gender, StoneButch and Butch. SOFFAs and the StoneFemmes, femmes, etc. that love us are of course welcome. Join at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/queer_latinos

Tomboyfags is a list for tomboys who identify as gay. If you feel you're a true gay boy in female's body but don't consider yourself as a 100% FTM trans, then this is the right place for you. Join at <http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/tomboyfags>.

HeteroFTM is a list where Str8 or Heterosexual FTMs can seek women (all types) and discuss issues concerning relationships. Join at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HeteroFTM>.

Coqsure is a social group for people who were born or raised female but who don't presently identify as totally female. Join at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Coqsure>.

Support and Social Groups

US

California/Berkeley

United Genders of the Universe is an all age genderqueer support group for people who view gender as having more than two options. The group meets every Sunday night at 7 pm at: The Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph, Berkeley, CA 94705. For info and directions call 510.548.8283 x 0 or see <http://www.pacificcenter.org/>

Chromosomes is a support/social/discussion group for people ages 12-25 who are transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, or questioning their gender. Meets every Tuesday from 7-9 pm in Berkeley at the Pacific Center for Human Growth, 2712 Telegraph Avenue @ Derby St. For directions, call 510.548.8283.

Southern California

Genderqueer Boyzzz is a Southern California social and cultural group primarily for and about our

community, including people assigned female at birth or in childhood who have masculine self-identifications some or all of the time and significant others, family members, friends, and allies (SOFFAs). If interested, e-mail ZeroboyJH@aol.com or call 323.665.1130.

Florida/Tampa

Transcend FL is a support group for anyone who was born female but feels that is an incomplete or inaccurate description of who they are. Meetings held 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7pm at Sacred Grounds Coffeehouse in private meeting space, 4819 E Busch Blvd., Tampa. E-mail TranscendFL@yahoo.com or visit their website at www.geocities.com/transcendfl/homepage.html.

Minnesota

Minneapolis

Tmen, a support/discussion group for transmen in Minneapolis and the surrounding area, meets the first and third Wednesday of the month from 7:30pm-9pm at the Men's Center

in the Uptown area of Minneapolis. E-mail Dylan for further info at DMan1956@aol.com.

Washington Seattle

Seattle Boyz and Buddiez is a social group open to all people on the FTM spectrum and the people that socialize with them. See their web at http://www.angelfire.com/folk/sea_boyz/ or join the list at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SeaBoyz>.

Canada

Ontario/Toronto

Toronto FTM TS/TG Peer Support Group meets from 7:30 - 9:30 PM on the first and third Friday of each month. E-mail: ftmtoronto@yahoo.ca; mailing list: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FTM_Toronto; phone: 416.392.6874; address: 519 Church Street Community Centre, Toronto, ON M4Y 3C9

SOFFA group meets the third Friday of every month in Toronto. For info e-mail gtgrl@home.com.

FTM RESOURCE GUIDE

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The conference is just around the corner.... & it just won't be the same without you. Let's be real - times are tough, the world is changing, and nothing feels stable anymore. One thing that you can do for yourself this year is spend a weekend with other trans folks from across the country. Just in case you are sitting home wondering if it is worth your time, here are a couple of things that have been planned for the weekend.

Workshops, Institutes & Town Hall Meetings

Programming is geared to inclusively celebrate the diversity and complexity within our community. Some general topics include: relationships, spirituality, health and wellness, partners, legal and political issues, "basics", sexuality, activism, coming out, genderqueer, academia, professionals, and numerous workshops on various identities and experiences.

Southern Comfort Film Screening

Set in Georgia, this is a story covering the last year in the life of Robert Eads, a female-to-male transsexual. His life cut short by the ovarian cancer that over twenty doctors refused to treat. From Easter to Christmas of '98 you meet his friends, his family, his new girlfriend, and his final appearance at the Southern Comfort Conference held in Atlanta. It's a moving film about love, strength, and courage

Keynote Speakers

We are honored to announce that we have Dr. Terry Tafoya, Alexander John Goodrum and Emi Koyama as our evening plenary speakers.

Entertainment

Not only are we proud to be hosting the 3rd annual variety show with Missbaby, we are also planning on having a number of events that will provide you with numerous opportunities to meet other people and make new friends such as a singles mixer and a meet and greet on Friday night.

Private Play Party at a Local Club

* The conference is being held at the Washington Plaza Hotel in downtown Washington. Not only is the hotel easily accessible by the metro (public transportation) and National Airport, it is also a short cab ride from the Amtrak train station and Greyhound/Peter Pan bus station.