

Passing the Torch

by Marcus de María Arana

I have truly enjoyed my time as the Editor of the FTM Newsletter. For a number of reasons I have chosen to resign as Editor after this issue. Some reasons I'm not willing to discuss on these pages. The reasons which I will share are two-fold: I have recently lost my longtime companion of 12 years, my dog Malcolm, and have decided to leave the pugilistic realm of politics to pursue more tranquil endeavors in music, writing, and art.

Malcolm was closer to me than any other family member and losing him is an emotional challenge for me. Politics have worn me down after 10 solid years of activism and I haven't the heart or guts to endure the cannibalism of progressive politics. If I've learned anything from being an historian, it's that eventually leaders in all revolutions begin to eat their own. I choose not to remain available for this moveable feast.

You needn't read between the lines—I'm not talking specifics as much as generalities. However, if you really care about achieving civil rights in your lifetime, then become involved and don't wait for others to change the world. If more of us participate, perhaps the rate of attrition won't damage our chance of success. If we don't, then more will crawl away from the fight too exhausted to continue.

Jed Bell will be the new Editor, and Shadow Morton will come on as Managing Editor. As you can see, the job of producing the Newsletter has grown beyond the means of a single person's ability to do it all. Jed has been doing all the production and Shadow has been the all-around-do-anything-guy at FTM for the last 100 years. Please welcome them to their new capacities on the newsletter.

In this issue, we'll hear from Sam in Germany about the Euro-trans scene. Stephan Thorne writes about the "Perils of Hysterectomy" and of his experiences at the Malibu retreat. James Green revisits the topic of PCOS, and Michael Hernandez wraps up his article on masturbation. My last installment of "A New Man's Meanderings" tells about being verbally assaulted by a bully. Plus, there's letters, networking, and more. Thanks for having me in your lives for the last 18 months. It's been an E-ticket ride for me. Carpe Diem! — Marcus



Malibu Men's Retreat

by Stephan Thorne

The first Malibu Men's Retreat, sponsored by Under Construction of Southern California, happened May 16, 17, and 18, 1997, and everyone who attended seemed to hope that it would become an annual event. I arrived Friday afternoon and met Mike, who picked three of us up at the airport and drove us up into the Malibu Canyon to the private ranch site where the retreat was held. From the hillsides we could look out over the ocean, Catalina Islands, and across at other mountainous canyons. It was beautiful. There were 19 of us there on Friday night, and on Saturday another five joined us. We were all male-identified, female birth-assigned men.

One of the things that made this weekend valuable to me was that it forced me to be introspective. Some of the exercises that Max led both caused us to look inward, but also enabled us to present what we saw or felt when we looked inside to the other men in the group. Some guys were less comfortable than others, but we all were able to give each other a glimpse into ourselves, and this made us able to feel connected to each other. It was also a great pleasure to be out in nature with other men. There was no traffic noise, and the stars, when we could see them through the fog, were incredible. While it was somewhat rustic, I also really appreciated the fact that there were two toilets! And running warm water in the sinks. The food was great, and there was plenty of it. Anyone who's thinking of organizing such a retreat should be aware that more than 25 people would require more than one facilitator and breaking people up into smaller groups so that each man has an opportunity to be heard and to process the exercises.

Some of the topics we worked on were disclosure, transitioning at various life stages, intimacy, dealing with partners, friends and family, feminism, reverse sexism, and personal responsibility for political action. On Saturday night we had s'mores around the campfire, and that was really fun, too. We had a workshop on sexuality and our bodies, including our body images, which was the core of the weekend for me. It was originally scheduled as another 2-hour workshop session after dinner, but the issues were so deep, and the conversation so rich that we went on past midnight. Some men talked about feeling, as I have, tremendous pain about not having a functioning male body, not just a penis, but also the ability to father a child. Other men talked about feeling okay with their bodies and their sexuality. Some of these men had had genital reconstruction of various types, and others had not. We each had the opportunity to feel heard and validated regardless of our perspective.

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Guilty by Gender

Poems by Hap Hanchett (self-published, 1996)

Reviewed by James Green

To be honest, I'm not much of a poetry reader. But Hap Hanchett's volume of 31 insightful, scalpel-sharp poems have won me over. Hanchett delivers some of the most direct and articulate verbal images I've ever read about how it feels to be FTM, transitional, a man, short, a man with female experience, a child, a daughter, a son, ultimately a person who has thought and felt deeply about his life. This slender volume is well-produced for a low budget effort, and includes 17 evocative snapshots of the author at various stages of his life. There's nothing sentimental or sappy here, though there is certainly emotion, and the net effect of the photos and poems (with occasional commentary) is one of an examined life, obviously worth living. One of my favorite poems in this collection (though many are excellent!) is:

FREEDOM

Women don't know what freedom feels like; if they did the world would be forever changed.

I first experienced freedom on a walk home one night when for the first time in my life I didn't feel the need to cross the street to avoid an approaching male stranger. No longer was I a victim simply by virtue of my sex. I was free from the fear of...

the truck driver
the electrician
the plumber
the accountant
the roofers
the insurance adjuster
room service
my dentist
the window washer
the locksmith
the carpet cleaners
my doctor
the gardner
the painter
the telephone repairman
my attorney
the cab driver
the milkman
somebody's brother
my mechanic

help arriving

Hanchett is an artist who deserves reading. I cannot recommend his book strongly enough. To order a copy, send a check or money order for \$12.00 (in US funds) to:

Hap Hanchett
P.O. Box 27876
Seattle, WA 98125

I hope he sells thousands and will use the money to finance a second book. Better yet, I hope a publisher will pick him up and let him share his voice with an even broader audience. Mr. Hanchett deserves it.

New Meeting Logistics and Volunteer Coordinator

by Yoseño V. Lewis

FTM International, Inc. is proud to announce that we have a new Meeting Logistics and Volunteer Coordinator—Mr. Vinny Tango! Vinny comes to us with a great deal of experience in coordinating and volunteering. He will be responsible for making sure we have adequate space(s) for our Support and Informational Meetings (note: for the rest of 1997, all Support Meetings will be held at the FTM office site—1360 Mission Street, Suite 200, between 9th and 10th Streets; all Informational Meetings will be held at 25 Van Ness Ave., 3rd Floor Conference Room, between Market and Fell). Vinny will also be responsible for selecting restaurants that we can go to for socializing after the meetings conclude. Additionally, Vinny will coordinate volunteers to facilitate the meetings.

But wait, there's more! Vinny has graciously agreed to be our Volunteer Coordinator, in charge of making sure we do have facilitators for the meetings, as well as having volunteers to help with packaging the newsletter for distribution (stuffing, sealing, stamping parties), getting the office organized and for special events (such as our recent elections).

If you are interested in volunteering for FTM International, Inc. in any way, have ideas for meeting topics, or need more information please leave a message for Vinny on the FTM office line: (415) 553-5987. Thank you Vinny, for being our Meeting Logistics and Volunteer Coordinator!



Brett and Ben, Boston Pride — June 7, 1997

Let's Talk About Sex (Northampton)

The topic is steamy: FTM sex of all types—het, bisexual, gay male. What do we like? How do we do it? What's it like for ourselves and our partners? For this meeting, "FTM" stands for "Fuck Time Magic." Let's talk about who we really are. Sunday, September 14, 3 pm. ECFTMG. (See back page).

Omission The article "NGLTF Speech" in FTM #37 was introduced, and made available to the FTM Newsletter, by Yoseño Lewis.

Sex and the New Man

PART II

by Michael Hernandez

MASTURBATION AS RITUAL

As with anything, practice makes perfect. Some people just rush through the deed as if it were an annoyance or inconvenience. If you can't pleasure yourself, how can you expect someone else to be able to do it?

Time is a valuable commodity. There are some occasions when you barely just have the time to meet your basic needs. Creating a special ritual around masturbation will help you slow down, relax and just get into a better state of mind. You don't have to create a five hour ordeal, ring certain bells or burn a special incense. You can make it that complicated if that's what you're into. If you masturbate regularly you will have a general idea of how long it takes to achieve orgasm. You may want to set aside an hour to ensure that you don't rush through what you are doing. You want to take the time necessary to learn what your body likes instead of just carrying out a series of rote actions. A little effort is establishing some time to explore will more than pay for itself in the long run by extending and prolonging your pleasure. Who knows it could even make you a better lover than you already are.

Before even changing your current methods, there are a couple of things that you can do to find out what will work best for you. Pay attention to patterns in your life. When do the phones tend to ring? When are you most likely to be interrupted? How long does it take for you to unwind? Are you hornier in the mornings than the evenings? What kind of music gets you in the mood? Are you hornier after your shot? Keep track of timing. Is the first day after your shot the most intense or is it the fourth? Do you tend to have difficulty orgasming right before shot day? A simple analysis of these cycles will give you a general idea of the best time to perform a masturbation ritual. If you are hornier in the mornings you may want to plan your longer sessions for the weekends, when you can take your time without worrying about being late for work. If it's in the evenings you will want to start early enough that your usual sleep patterns are not interrupted, particularly if you have to go to work the next day. If you are so busy that you just can't factor it in, try a late Friday night when you have the weekend to recuperate.

Now that you have a general idea of when interruptions occur, you can set some time aside when you are not likely to be interrupted. Turn the phone off, the answering machine on, or both. Make the effort to change the space slightly when you do masturbate.

For those of you who require elaborate ritual, candles are excellent to soften the lighting and set the mood. You might want to burn a little incense. Put on some of your favorite music and get comfortable. Take a bath. Put on a favorite silk bathrobe, boxers, g-string, jock strap or other clothing.

Get together whatever toys you plan to use.

Start to explore your body. Pay attention to textures and sensations. If you have never seen yourself before get a hand mirror. What's the shape of your AC? What does it look like before you get started? During? After? Does the glans (i.e. head) get red? Purple? What do you feel as you become aroused? Can you feel yourself get hard? Does it throb? Does it feel better when you stroke the right side or the left, the underside, the top, etc.? Does the sensitivity roam? Do you like stroking the glans or the shaft? Pay attention to your patterns. Even when you are doing a "quickie" listen to what your body is telling you. Hey, all you speed queens out there! This ain't the Indy 500. It's an exercise to figure out your responsiveness to certain stimuli not to see how fast you can get off. If it helps you get off faster, fantastic, but don't force it. By making the goal exploration as opposed to orgasm, you encourage relaxation. While working on speed is great, it should not be done to the exclusion of all else. There should be no need to rush. If you are getting too frustrated stop for a little bit, stimulate another erogenous zone, try a fantasy or some erotica, visual or verbal. Try to avoid falling into a routine. Vary the days, techniques, and positions that you use. Think about using an aid whether it be a vibrator or different brand of lubricant.

PRODUCTS

LUBRICANTS: Lubrication will help to avoid chaffing thus making you a much happier person. You don't have to swim in it, but a little dab will do ya. You have the option of using water or oil based lubes. The water based versus oil based dilemma is not really an issue here unless others are involved in your session or penetration is part of the mix. If penetration is going to be a part of the mix, condom usage is recommended. Anytime that you use latex water based lubricants are preferable as oil will break down the latex. My personal preference is oil-based for jack off sessions and water-based for most penetration. Keep in mind that water soluble and water based are totally different things.

Your two basic considerations at this point will more than likely be the clean up process (i.e. potential for making a mess, staining the sheets, etc.) and the possibility of allergies. An allergic reaction to a condom or lubricant containing spermicide such as Nonoxynol-9 are pretty common. Allergic reactions include irritation, redness, itching, yeast and/or bladder infections. In short, not a very good time. You may be better off avoiding this substance altogether. Read the label as some brands (such as Foreplay) have two formulas, one with Nonoxynol-9 and one without.

If you don't already have a favorite brand of lubricant, shop around. A number of places (usually not the drug stores) have tester bottles which provide the opportunity you to check out the product before you buy. Test the viscosity by place a

dollop of lube between your thumb and forefinger. Rub them together and keep rubbing until the lube becomes tacky. Pull your fingers apart to test for stickiness. The length of time that it takes to do so will give you an idea of how well the product holds it's viscosity. Less viscosity basically means that you will need to apply lube more often. Oil based lubes are more viscous than water based lubes, but beware of scented or spiced oils as they can also potentially create an allergic reaction. A good way to determine whether you have an allergy is to rub some of it on your skin. The problem of course is that your wrist or hand or elbow are likely to be a lot less sensitive. If you must have a spiced oil, try a dropping 3-4 cloves into some mineral or baby oil.

Examples of oil based lubes: mineral oil, baby oil, Vaseline, Crisci, Wet - Oil formula, lotions. Examples of water based lubes: Probe, K-Y Jelly, Astroglide, Foreplay, Elbow Grease and Wet original or light formulas. I recently discovered Personal Lubricant, a water based and water soluble. It is condom compatible and contains no spermicide. I was impressed with it's ability to retain viscosity. I haven't taken it for a test drive yet, but will let you know what I learn in a future article. It comes in 2 oz. (approx \$4) and 8 oz. (approx. \$9) sizes.

Lubricants are about more than just viscosity. It's a matter of personal preference. You can go in search of the most viscous product to find that you just don't like it. If you are experimenting, you may want to buy a 2 oz bottle or the smallest size that you can get or better yet, most lubricant suppliers provide small one use samples of their products called "pillows." Some are easier to find than others. Be patient and try what you find until you settle on your favorite brand(s).

Towels versus Chux: You may also want to take a couple of precautions so that you aren't running off to do laundry after every session. It's awful trying to get oil out of the sheets and mattress. Placing a towel under you will reduce the risk of the lube getting onto or staining the sheets. Rather than ruining a perfectly good bath towel, you can buy small towels in bulk at a store such as Costco/Price Club. These are great for sex anyway, so the \$12-15 that you spend for the 10-20 towels is worth the small investment. Pay attention to the dimensions of the towels as they come in two different sizes. You don't want kitchen towels. Hand towels are the desired size.

If you are a lube hound or you have the ability to ejaculate, the towel won't be enough. To be absolutely sure that you aren't going to leak through the towel and create a wet spot use "chux." Chux are pads primarily used by people suffering from incontinence or for changing babies. No they are not diapers. Depends are not dependable in this situation. What you are looking for has a rectangular blue plastic backing and use cotton or other

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FTM International Board Election Results

Many thanks to all who voted in our recent elections for the Board of Directors of FTM International, Inc., and special thanks and acknowledgment to all the candidates who expressed a willingness to serve on this guiding body, whether they lost or won. We deeply appreciate the interest and support of all who participate in any of our activities.

Here are the new Board Members, in alphabetical order, and their residence locations:

Maxwell Anderson, Seattle
Aaron Davis, Seattle
Jeff Dickemann, SF Bay Area
James Green, SF Bay Area
Jacob Hale, Los Angeles
Yosefio V. Lewis, SF
Marc Andrew Mario, upstate NY
Shadow Morton, SF
Jude Patton, Seattle
Bet Power, Boston Area
Sean Romeo, SF Bay Area
Ben Singer, Philadelphia
Moonhawk River Stone, upstate NY
Stephan Thorne, SF Bay Area
Alice Webb, Houston

Since the general election, the board has elected officers from its members. The officers of FTM International, Inc. are:

President, James Green
Vice President, Yosefio Lewis
Secretary, Shadow Morton
Treasurer, Jude Patton

I am very excited to have these 15 dedicated men and women involved in helping to chart the course of FTM International, to assist in fundraising and organizational development, and building an organization we can all be proud of.

I'd like to take this opportunity to express most sincere gratitude to several donors of significant sums of money and who wish to remain anonymous. The three members who donated a combined total of \$1750 know who they are, but we wish to give them special acknowledgement. And one other man donated a CD-ROM drive and speakers for our office computer and the time to help me get it up and running. Such generosity is the life blood of organizations like ours, where everyone does the work of the organization in their spare time and without compensation, and where the costs for providing the information we have are increasing as the demand increases every day. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!

And I'd like to remind everyone that even though some people have been extra generous, we still are seeking grants and donations to enable us to initiate and complete various projects and to keep the office going. We do have a wish list, which includes a scanner. If anyone can help with such items, or funds, or fundraising ideas or energy, please let us know! We can use all the help we can get!! And, once again, THANKS to everyone.

James Green

PCOS Again

by James Green

According to Sheila Kirk, M.D., board certified gynecologist, from 1 to 5 percent of the natively female-bodied population is afflicted with the disease known as Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS). However, 25% of FTM individuals have PCOS. (FTM Newsletter, #36, March '97, page 5.)

In 70% of cases, PCOS is accompanied by elevated levels of a particular androgen released into the bloodstream by the adrenal glands: dehydroepiandrosterone. In more than 50% of cases, another male hormone from the adrenal, 11 beta hydroxy androstenedione, is elevated. These substances increase the risk of heart disease and hypertension. Combined with exogenously administered testosterone, the effects "could lead to serious lipid metabolism alterations and consequent heart disease." PCOS also increases the risk of ovarian cancers and uterine endometrial malignancy, and there is evidence of increased risk of breast cancer when PCOS is present.

**25 per cent
of FTM
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PCOS is often characterized by obesity, and irregular, prolonged, or heavy menses, and some masculinization (voice pitch changes, temporal balding, facial hair growth, altered hair growth patterns on body trunk and about the genitalia and extremities, and distinct clitoral growth), but many people show no obvious symptoms.

Dr. Kirk recommends that all FTM individuals, prior to starting testosterone, have pelvic and/or transvaginal ultrasound to study the ovaries, and a blood test to determine possible elevation of the two adrenal

androgens mentioned above. If PCOS is diagnosed, it is possible to treat the disease, sometimes using female hormones (estrogens), and until the transition process is begun (testosterone use initiated) it could be reasonable to treat the condition in the "normal" (for women!) manner. If the transition process is already begun, surgical removal of the uterus and polycystic ovaries may be advisable, even if genital reconstruction is not anticipated or is planned for the distant future.

However, it is not always easy for an FTM person to obtain treatments that some people believe are too frequently forced on women by a scalpel-happy medical establishment. Hysterectomy/oophorectomy (removal of the uterus and ovaries) is an expensive procedure, especially in cases where an abdominal incision is necessary (vaginal entry is not always possible) and a hospital stay of several days is required. If an FTM person is transitioned or cross-living and insured as a man, his insurance company is likely to balk at the revelation of his female body parts that need attention. Ironically, if the FTM individual is known as a female, doctors may be reluctant to remove reproductive organs, fearing that the person may want to have a child someday. And if the person has revealed his FTM identity, doctors may be reluctant to perform a hysterectomy/oophorectomy because they see the procedure as assisting in the masculinization process, and they may not wish to be involved in treating medically what they view as a psychiatric condition. Or insurance companies may deny payment for the procedure if they deem it associated with sex reassignment, which is almost always (in the US) excluded from coverage. All of these situations have been known to happen.

Trans-positive health care reform must include the acknowledgement that our bodies deserve medical care regardless of our gender identity. PCOS is not a psychiatric condition, and just because an FTM person has the disease does not mean he should not be treated for it with every consideration given to relieving both the physical distress caused or threatened by the disease, and the emotional distress caused by being male-identified and living in a female body. Until such reforms are in place, each FTM person must negotiate his own solution to the PCOS problem. With the help of understanding and supportive physicians, we may someday win the battle for trans-inclusive health care. Please let us know how you have fared in getting necessary medical attention for "female problems" so we can keep a database that may be helpful someday in resolving our health care dilemma.

The Perils of Hysterectomy

by Stephan Thorne

I read an article on the "hysterectomy industry" in the *San Francisco Chronicle* that was reprinted from the *New York Times*. It ran on February 17, 1997. I know that's a long time ago, but I've been thinking about this because I've been deliberating whether to have a hysterectomy myself. Now I decided that I wanted to share this information and ask readers of the FTM Newsletter to share their thoughts on this topic.

The article, by Natalie Angier, a frequent contributor to the *New York Times* on science and medical subjects, states that "each year about 560,000 women" in the US have hysterectomies. "By age 60, 1 in 3 American women will have had her uterus removed. By comparison, in Italy the figure is 1 in 6 women; in France it is 1 in 18." In the US, "cases of cancer of the uterus, cervix, or ovaries accounts for only about 10% of the total." The most frequent reason for hysterectomy "is the presence of fibroids, benign growths of the uterine muscle that, depending on their location, can cause considerable pain and bleeding."

I know that our bodies are different from the average woman's. Especially if we are taking testosterone, which shuts the ovaries down and, for some people apparently contributes to the growth of fibroids and/or endometriosis. Many FTMs believe they must have a hysterectomy in order to "be a man." But do we all really need this surgery?

According to Angier, the uterus "not only responds to hormones...it creates a few compounds of its own. Among these are beta-endorphins, the body's pain killers, and a type of prostaglandin called prostacyclin, which inhibits blood clotting. The loss of this source of prostacyclin could help explain why women who have had

hysterectomies are prone to cardiovascular problems."

"There have been studies in the last couple of years showing that women can develop hypertension after a hysterectomy," said Dr. Herbert A. Goldfarb, director of gynecology at Montclair Community Hospital in New Jersey. "Hypertension is something that we have to watch out for already because of the testosterone we take. Would a hysterectomy increase our risk?"

"Nora W. Coffey, director of Hysterectomy Education Resources and Services, contends that the effects of a hysterectomy are profound and that women must be warned of them in detail before undergoing the operation." What about us?

"The most frequent problems that women report are loss of energy and stamina, loss of physical and sexual sensations, diminished maternal feelings," Coffey said. There are consequences of the anatomical change as well. "Without a uterus you lose bladder support," she said. "It's very common to have urinary problems like leakage and increased urinary frequency. And the bowel moves down to take up the place where the uterus has been, so over time it can become very difficult to have a bowel movement."

"Dr. Sam Kirschner, a psychologist in Philadelphia who has counseled many women with hysterectomies, said that some became depressed and lost their sexual appetite without realizing the surgery might have something to do with it. For a number of women, the rhythmic contractions of the uterus and cervix during orgasm are an important part of their pleasure, and the loss of that capacity can leave them with a sense of lessened



sexuality." I know that for us testosterone pretty much ensures heightened libido, but I worry about loss of orgasmic sensation. I know that during my orgasms I do experience contractions of the uterus, and if I no longer have that organ, will my orgasms be diminished? This is something that I am concerned with, and I want to be able to make an informed decision about having a hysterectomy.

I wonder how many FTMs would report loss of bladder control or loss of sexual response if they were ever asked about it. It's possible that a man with noticeable changes in his bladder function might attribute it to his genital reconstruction rather than his hysterectomy, if he had both procedures done. I don't really have any answers. I just wanted to bring this information and these issues into focus in case others had similar concerns.

[Please write in to the FTM Newsletter to respond to Stephan or report any concerns or problems you might have had with hysterectomy. --Ed.]

NEWSLETTER NOTES

"Kweer Korner" will reappear in future issues.

Ads—Due to the process of the recent move into the FTM office, we may have lost track of some newsletter ads. If your ad did not appear in this issue and you are still owed one or more, please contact the managing editor.

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Malibu (cont'd from pg.1)

On Sunday, we were talking about some of our fears and some of our blessings, and one man told how his friends, instead of abandoning him (which was what he feared), had given him a "transition party." They gave him gifts for his new life as a man, and it brought tears to his eyes when he spoke of it, reminded of the love he felt blessed with.

It was so wonderful to be outdoors, to have the entire weekend. Something special happens when you have all your meals together, and sleep together, and razz each other about who snores the loudest. You can't get that in a three-hour support meeting. I hope that there will be more retreats like this one, and that more men will be able to attend them in the future. I'd like to thank Max Fuentes Fuhrmann, Jeff Shevlowitz, Pat Magee, Jude Patton, Mike Hernandez, L.R. Smithline, and Sky Renfro for all the great work they did. I came home feeling that the gift of being transgendered outweighs the burden.

Transsexual Meeting in Frankfurt by Sam M.

Once a year the German organization, Transidentias, organizes a big meeting for transsexuals and crossdressers in Frankfurt. The costs were: conference fee \$16 for the whole weekend, additionally a bed could be booked at the youth hostel where the meeting took place for \$30 a night (I stayed with a friend). Meals were extra, but the smell from the kitchen wasn't encouraging so I didn't try. The official invitations including the exact date for that meeting were distributed in March, however about 150 FTMs and probably the same number of MTFs were present.

Friday afternoon consisted of several boring talks by MTFs, who were the majority of the participants. Most participants arrived in the evening, so next day was more crowded. However, I managed to get hold of some nice information. The new "Gesundheitsstrukturgesetz" is not changing anything specific for transsexuals. Nobody knows what future changes will bring.

One MTF lawyer managed to win her third case at the constitutional court; name-change now includes the right to be addressed in the new gender by all institutions, including governmental ones, like prisons. Work-history documentation must be changed accordingly. However, after three months, a former employer is free to refuse issuing new certifications. This time-frame holds true for several professions with union arrangements.

Another issue is that closure of the vagina for an FTM cannot be required for a legal gender

change, as the basis for that law was that homosexual conduct was once illegal. After the unification of Germany, intercourse between men was legalized, so now an FTM has the official right to be male and have whatever kind of sex he desires. (Except of course consensual s/m, if one looks at the European Court in Brussels, so don't alert the neighborhood with suspicious sounds at night.) It's doubtful that hormonal sterility would be recognized for a legal gender-change as my referral shrink claims, but because Germany is a federal republic, things differ between the states. Perhaps I'm lucky here in Berlin.

Later I was warned that this lawyer will charge you for phone consultations. But she gave a very efficient impression; her presentation was the best one at the conference. Another good tactic is to call her twice, as she sometimes reconsiders a case after first claiming not to be interested.

A conference for medical staff who treat transsexuals took place in the same building. However, our participation was officially discouraged by the organizers and as I met a former lover who recently had his coming out as FTM I was too occupied to sneak in. The basic idea was to lure specialists to the trans-meeting. It worked and probably cut down the costs. I also went to the meeting of TS parents and met two other gay FTMs with kids. It was great to meet somebody face-to-face who also had biological kids. We all agreed that the sterility requirement for gender change was insulting, as this was not an attribute of either gender. So far I had never met a German FTM who had kids; now I've heard of 3 who unfortunately live at the other side of Germany.

Saturday discussion groups were offered covering topics like gay/straight relationships (separate for FTM/MTF), identity, mobbing at work, religion and TS, internet, TS parents with teenaged kids, and operational techniques with surgeons (Exner's team and Daverio from Switzerland). Unfortunately, the top-surgery issues were grouped into a discussion open only for people without any background, so I missed the slides shown there. But I did talk to some guys, getting info about the surgeons they'd seen. Somebody made a documentation of all brothers willing to drop their pants and remove their shirts for a photo session, showing the results one would get with surgery. I hope my surgery results will be better than those I've seen on these pictures. The results of top surgeries looked worse than the phalloplasties.

Saturday evening most FTMs went to the medical forum with doctors present. It was quite a divergent crowd, with many pre-T* FTMs distinguishable from those who had been on it for some years, and two or three very old guys in their sixties (?) were present. Apart from the fact that the docs had agreed

among themselves to show no slides and refused to comment much about top surgery, it was good. Dr. Louis van Gooren, an endocrinologist from the Free University in Amsterdam, was the main attraction. Most questions concerned osteoporosis and the side-effects and administration of T*(testosterone).

Side effects: He favors the injectable form of T*. He suggests to take T* in pill form mainly to keep menopausal side-effects at bay while on holiday, if unable to inject. He wasn't overly concerned with the side-effects of pills when taken over such a short period of time. He did not mention an increase of risk for diabetes, but focused on the increase of blood pressure and cardiological risk. He strongly discouraged smoking while using T* as well as being too much overweight. Smoking has a bad effect on the healing process and the options plastic surgeons have to model tissue. Stop smoking at least 3-to-6 weeks prior to surgery. He generally thinks that T* is a very harmless drug with few side-effects and said he'd never observed any.

Administration: Muscle has the best storage abilities, fat is worse. The more fat one has, the larger the needle should be. The muscle at the leg is smaller than that of the butt, yet can be used for injections. T* Capsules, which are implanted under the skin of the belly with excellent results and are available in the US, can lead to scarring. However, they're not sold in Germany as the production costs are too high and the profit too small. One surgeon imported them from the US.

Osteoporosis: He admits there was a risk because T* was less efficient than estrogen. However, T* can be converted into estrogen in the fatty tissue, so maybe this helps when the level is high enough. He hasn't observed a major drop in the estrogen levels in many of the FTMs he treats. He does studies on the bone density, checking every 5 years as the changes are small. He thinks every 3 years is too often. Because after about 17 days after an injection (200-250 mg), all T* has gone from the body, he suggests that, at first, one should inject every 2 weeks, and afterwards every 3 to prevent osteoporosis. He has noticed that FTMs who stretched the intervals to about 4 or 5 weeks had noticeable bone-density loss. A holiday of 6 or 8 weeks won't be a problem, only a prolonged time of lengthy intervals. I asked if he had data concerning FTMs with ovaries, but he hadn't. The ovaries are routinely removed, so not much data is accessible. He thinks it might be dangerous to keep them as they often become polycystic which has been connected with a risk of cancer in genetic females, but had no data about whether the same problems was present in FTMs. He did no tests to see if the estrogen present was produced by the retained ovaries (I could only think of C13 marking, which he had not done), or came from

Cont'd
pg. 14

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Clothing Guide for Short Men

This is an excerpted article taken off the internet detailing how and where to find clothing and accessories for the "short man." The author's name could not be determined by print time, but his writing is republished here in the public domain spirit of the world wide web.

SOCKS

After you get smaller shoes, you will need some smaller socks to go with them. In general, look for socks labeled as sock size 9-11 (standard men's socks are labeled sock size 10-13) if you have a smaller foot (7 or smaller) in boys' departments, at short shops, or through Short Sizes mail-order. Tired of too-big socks that bunch up? Read on.

White athletic - Standard men's crew socks in Fruit of the Loom brand seem to fit better than other brands, but you will still get some bunching of extra fabric after they are broken in (just not as bad). Definitely the value leader. If you want an ideal fit and don't mind paying extra for it, look for Gold Toe socks in the boys' department of Macy's. White socks in boys' departments in general are the bottom line of what to look for.

Casual or dress - Gold Toe socks from the Macy's boys' department available in dark colors. Sears has Casual Wear socks in their boys' department in a variety of light and dark colors (black, tan, rust, green) and are cheaper than Gold Toe. I've seen dress socks in other boys' departments, but nothing of suitable quality.

SHIRTS - CASUAL BUTTON

For short sleeve shirts, simply look in the boys' department of a store with quality merchandise. If you are borderline between men's and boys' sizes, look for a Large (14-16) or XL (18-20). Because sleeve length is usually not an issue, you can concentrate on shopping for the style and quality you like.

For long sleeve shirts, look in a quality boys' department. The sleeves are actually much more likely to fit in boys' sizes, as I have never found a shirt in a men's size where the sleeves truly fit. If you have a small neck and small chest and are borderline men's and boys' sizes, you might fit a 14-16, which has shorter sleeves (closer to 30"). The 18-20 shirts have sleeves that tend to be between 31-32". They are shorter than men's long sleeves, so you will get a better fit. Levi's denim shirts, including Dockers, are good quality choices and can be found in Sears and Macy's. Keep in mind these will shrink.

SHIRTS - DRESS

Look for shirts in a trim fit to avoid excess fabric, unless you are heavier or larger than average. Boys' dress shirts just don't cut it for fit or quality.

For getting shirts with 30 or 31" sleeves (down to 14.5" neck) right out of the package, you can go with Trafalgar Park. These are available from: Short Sizes and local short shops. Short Sizes also carries a shirt in these sleeves made by Individualized, as well as some Yves Saint Laurent shirts with a sleeve length of 30/31".

You can find Arrow Brigade (trim fit) shirts at Sears. These will be like the Land's End shirts in that if you get long sleeves, you will need to have them shortened for sub-32" sleeves. If you are slim, these are the best choice outside of a short shop because the body, shoulders, and length are more appropriately sized for a short man than any other shirt I have tried so far.

Sears now carries several colors and styles of shirts in 30" sleeves in their own Stafford brand. The shoulder and body sizes are acceptable, but they are longer than any other shirt I have tried so far. Shortening the shirt length is easier than shortening sleeve length.

Paul Frederick sells a number of shirts in 30" and 31" sleeves. They have a large selection of colors, stripes, checks, and other patterns, and many collar and cuff styles. These shirts can be ordered direct via mail order.

Nordstrom has their own line of shirts with a 30" sleeve right out of the package, all cotton and a "classic" (non-trim) fit. The shirts are high quality, but expensive and likely to be sized too large.

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Tattoo: Rite or Wrong?

by Patric A. Magee

Rites of passage are as old as civilization itself, and most primitive cultures had some sort of initiation from boyhood into manhood—a ritual of pain and blood that would forever leave the young man marked with a symbol of his acceptance by his tribe. Women have their own version, which occurs naturally (and of which we are all too familiar). In present society, some ceremonies do exist. In Judaism, there are rituals of circumcision and bar mitzva; gangs "jump in" new members [*beat them up—ed.*]; and the military has its own initiation rituals. Ordinarily, there's no way for men in our culture to be acknowledged. The sacrifices of pain and blood are perceived as barbaric and cruel, not to mention unsanitary.

Personally, I believe there's something very powerful in the ceremonies of pain and blood—a commitment unknown to a high-tech hell-bent on sterilizing itself out of existence. There's also something lost which leaves today's young men in search of a way to be recognized and to leave their mark, other than the pursuit of the almighty buck. We, as new men, feel this loss as well. We become men, often without the approval or acceptance of our families and friends. We are on our own to re-create ourselves as adult males.

Tattooing is ancient art form, very "tribal", permanent, and common among men in our society. I felt this was a visible, acceptable, and highly personal way to express my own creativity. I'd seen documentaries on primitive rites of passage and

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It's the PACKY!
& the NEW
Pack-n-Play

The Packy and the Pack-n-Play are high-quality pants stuffers developed by and for FTMs in association with Vixen Creations, manufacturers of premium adult sex toys. The Packy is a small one-piece "flaccid" penis, and the Pack-n-play is a larger "working" model which hangs down, but can be held straight out or turned

balls up for a belly-hugging hard-on. They are made of high-quality, durable silicone and are easy to keep clean—you can even

boil them. They look very natural in jockey-style underwear. Believable size & weight. Wear it swimming! They don't ride up. Comfortable!

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US orders add \$5-S&H
International orders add \$10-S&H
Please allow 3-6 weeks for delivery
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Send check or money order to:

J Stallory
1261 Howard St.
San Francisco, CA 94103
94103-2711 USA

6.5" long
and
3" deep

we carry the entire Vixen product line.
Send \$5.00 for a catalog or visit our website at
<http://www.tenderbuttons.com/packy>

Clothing (cont'd from pg. 7)

For a broader selection of fabrics, colors, and fits (trim for example) in a quality dress shirt at reasonable prices, order Land's End dress shirts in 32" sleeves (down to 14.5" neck) and then have the sleeves shortened locally (their Oxford shirts have the widest range of fits, colors/stripes, neck sizes, and fabric types). You'll spend the same or slightly less than buying the shirts with 30" sleeves, yet get a wider selection. If you are slim, the body and shoulders may feel too generously cut.

If you don't care about sleeve length, want short sleeves, or want to avoid the hassle of getting a shirt you like in sub-32" sleeves, simply shop for short-sleeve shirts by neck size. However, the body, shoulders, and length may still be too big. Try Arrow Brigade shirts or shirts from a short men's clothier.

JEANS

Levi's - The 501's (button fly) and 505 (zipper fly) are great for leaner short men and are available down to a 28 waist and 30 length in men's (although 29/30 is the smallest commonly available). If you prefer a jean with more room, try a 550 relaxed fit. If you need something smaller than men's, you can get student size boys' jeans (501, 505, 550) in 29/28, 28/28, and smaller. 28 inseam boys' jeans can be hard to find for a 29 waist jean, so special-order from JCPenney or look in the Macy's boys' department.

Land's End - They have traditional (trimmer fit), relaxed, and loose fit, with waists as small as 28 inches. However, *Consumer Reports* says these jeans run big, so order the waist an inch smaller than normal. You can request any length inseam you want, down to the closest 1/2 inch, which allows you to order, for example, a 28 waist (more like 29"), with a 26.5" inseam.

Arizona Jean Company (JCPenney) - They make all their jeans down to size 28/30 (30/29 is also available in relaxed fit). You can only buy or

order these through JCPenney. If you have a 28" waist, this is a cheaper alternative to Levi's boys' jeans or Land's End jeans (although you can't get an inseam under 30 inches, unlike the other two).

Wrangler - They make good Rugged Wear jeans in men's sizes down to 29 waist, 30 inseam. Can be ordered from JCPenney and found at local retailers.

PANTS - CASUAL DRESS

(appropriate for corporate casual)

Hagger - Available down to a 29 waist/30 length. If you need this smallest size, but can't find them, special-order through JCPenney. These pants have a trimmer fit than the Dockers for exactly the same size. Available in plain or pleated front.

Levi's Dockers - These are available down to 29 waist/30 length or 30 waist/28 length. While I like the construction and style of Dockers, they seemed large, especially in the thigh. Probably good for bigger or heavier shorter men, or if you like them on the baggy side. You can find 29/30 Dockers at Macy's. JCPenney and other retailers usually only offer down to a 30/30.

PANTS - DRESS

These can be obtained through Short Sizes mail-order or a local short shop. You may find some small enough at some men's clothiers. They will require hemming, as is common with dress pants.

SUITS AND SPORTCOATS

You can find suits and sportcoats in small sizes and short lengths through Short Sizes mail-order or a local short shop. Some men's clothiers also carry these sizes. Men's Warehouse (California) carries down to a size 35 sportcoat, and possibly a 34 in suit. Crack open the yellow pages and call men's clothing stores asking what the small sizes they carry are. Trying on suits and sportcoats at a local store more reliable than mail-order because of the variety in fits and personal preference.

BELTS

You can always try the boys' department, but the belts there tend to be of lower quality. 30" belts are somewhat difficult to find in men's, and 28" belts are non-existent.

Quality casual and dress belts made in the USA can be purchased from Aesop. Since they are sold as unisex models, you can find them as small as 24". Sizes for small short men are commonly 28 or 30", which are tough or impossible to find in stores.

For casual belts, look for Levi's belts in a boys' department. Sears and Macy's have a good selection. The Levi's boys' belts are of a quality more comparable to adult belts.

For dress belts, I found a belt made by Bavelle (made in Taiwan) in a local short shop. It is a fully adjustable leather belt that doesn't use holes. Instead, it has a special buckle that engages in 1/4" increments on a plastic strip on the inside of the belt. The buckle clamps on the end of the belt, so you can cut the belt to ANY length needed. Another dress belt you can buy is Coach if you are willing to spend big bucks to get a very high quality leather belt. Find them at Coach stores down to 28" and at Macy's down to 30". Look for other belts of various brands that have buckles that clamp down on or screw onto the end of a belt. Remove the buckle, cut the belt to the length you need, then reattach the buckle.

TIES

You can find short men's ties through Short Sizes mail-order or a local short shop. I have not yet come across a source of quality ties in a boys' department and the men's ties are always too long. Let me know about other sources.

CLOTHING SOURCES

Short men mail order:
Short Sizes 1-216-475-2515 or 1-216-475-7440
(fax) (OH, USA). <http://www.shortsizesinc.com/>

Short men retail clothing stores:

California:
Ken and Company Menswear,
5'9" & Under, Valley Fair
Shopping Center, 2855 Stevens
Creek Blvd., Suite 2249
Santa Clara, CA 95050
Phone: 1-408-246-2177

The Short Shop
49 Kearny St.
San Francisco, CA 94108-5503
Phone: 1-415-296-9744

Men's Ltd.
Country Club Center
3364 El Camino (near Watt)
Sacramento, CA 95821
Manager: Steven
Sloan
Phone:
1-916-489-9505

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

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The Center, 208 West 13th Street, New York City, NY 10011

A New Man's Meanderings

by Marcus de María Arana

ONLY MY FRIENDS CAN CALL ME "FAGGOT!"

I'm usually caught like a deer in the headlights whenever anybody calls me a name. It's astounding to me that anyone is that immature to revert to grade-school behavior—"You Big Doo-Doo Head!" Yesterday, somebody called me a "faggot."

I was on my lunch break. I work in an anti-violence agency that is concerned with anti-queer attacks. I run a speakers bureau that sends volunteers out to schools, agencies, and city departments, to address stereotypes and demystify homosexuality, bisexuality, and transsexuality. I coordinate over 100 folks who help teach tolerance, and I also work our crisis line, so I'm well-versed in how to counsel survivors of hate-motivated attacks. That's why it was shocking to me when I was unable to counsel myself after the attack.

I had just walked a TS sister (MTF) to the bank and was on my way back to the office, when I noticed a man sitting under a tree. He didn't look well at all, and I was about to offer help when a police officer approached him. I noticed that the officer was one of my favorite volunteer speakers, so I waited for a moment to try and catch her eye, just to say hello.

A bus was blocking the intersection where the injured man sat, and the ambulance couldn't get through. Cars were honking at the bus, the siren was wailing, and a crowd started to gather. I quickly realized that I wouldn't be able to share a casual chat with the officer, so I backed up to leave the fray.

A middle-aged, white guy, with gray hair tried to engage me in a conversation. "Oh, it's just a wino. They're practicing, you know...?" Thoughts raced through my head: Who's practicing what? Was the cop practicing assisting the man? Was the alleged wino practicing being inebriated? Or, were the paramedics practicing rushing through non-moving traffic. Furthermore, the man under the tree was NOT drunk, he was sick.

I've worked at 6th and Market in San Francisco for three years, and I know what the street-drunks look like. This man didn't smell of booze, wasn't covered in vomit, and showed no signs of urine-soaked clothing. Every sign pointed to this being a medical emergency. This bystander's remark seemed to me to really be about racism - the downed man was African-American. In the split-second it took me to process these responses, I made a decision not to jump on his bigoted bandwagon. I also decided that I couldn't walk away without saying something about his prejudice. "Well, I'm glad that you're not the Judge of the World," was all that I said to him, as I started to walk away.

I really wasn't expecting the toxic, verbal abuse that he spat out at me. "I don't care what you think, you fucking faggot, you little faggot!" I froze, midstep, in the intersection. Spinning on my heel, I marched back over to him, yelling at the top of my lungs, "What did you call me?!?"

Instead of having the guts to repeat his slur, he looked away without a word, acting like a dog under the dinner table who has just been scolded for begging. "What the fuck did you just call me?" I repeated, using "fuck" as punctuation. This time, he backed up and started mumbling, "It wasn't me, it wasn't me" Yeah, right, it was your evil twin, Skippy. "Bullshit," I said, "I heard it quite well. You called me a faggot."

Just then, the officer came over to me. "Is there a problem, Marcus?" she asked me. "Yeah," I said, "This guy just called me a faggot." She walked him over to the fence and started taking his statement. His companion, an Asian-American woman, joined him. He indicated to the officer



47 people rode or walked behind the FTM International Banner in San Francisco's Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender Pride Parade on June 29, 1997. The Transmen's Motorcycle Club headed up the contingent. Photo courtesy of Telzey Adams, ETVC.

that I had called his girlfriend a racial slur (never happened), and that was why he called me a faggot.

Let me be queer, uh...clear about this one point: I don't care if anyone thinks I'm a faggot. I'm proud to be a bisexual, transsexual man and I don't care who knows it. I work in an all-queer office, and have many gay, lesbian, and bisexual friends, as well as heterosexuals. The point is that only my friends can call me faggot. It is a term of endearment, an acknowledgment that I'm not a straight guy, despite the fact that I have a female lover. I feel loved when my queer friends call me fag.

Most people don't know the derivation of "faggot." A faggot was a bundle of sticks used to start the fires at the witch-burning stake. In order to make the fires burn hotter, they would throw a couple of gay guys on the fire, the fat of their burning bodies fueling the flames. After time, gay men were called faggots. This is the most used slur in any school yard, prison, or office setting. Considering the history, I don't feel loved when absolute strangers call me fag.

The officer returned to my side while he waited by the fence. "I'll just use your work address and phone number, so I don't need any info from you other than your date of birth." I learned that it's illegal to call someone a faggot in San Francisco, and that even if the DA didn't pursue the case, he still had to have a court appearance, as would I. No problem, I'll be there, I thought. Even if he never is formally charged, I hope the whole experience will make him think twice before he ever calls anyone a faggot again. The officer sent me on my way, and the fear didn't hit me until one block later.

I was devastated! I wept like a baby. I wanted to punch him out. I wanted to deck him. I wanted to hit him for every gay guy that ever got bashed. Then, my inner child became terrified, and I realized that words do hurt. My inner sexist kept saying, "Be a man. Shake it off." I thanked myself for sharing, and continued to cry. I resolved to never call anyone a name in anger again, because name-calling is hate-motivated violence. I became both a client of my own agency and a statistic for the SFPD all in one short lunch break. I'm still feeling the emotional aftershocks of that one mean-spirited word, "faggot." Rationally, I know that he can't hurt me and that he was a bully—one who would attack a smaller person believing that I would be too afraid to stand up for myself. Emotionally, I'm still frightened and won't go back to that corner for awhile.

I'm glad I defended myself by confronting that bully blowfish. I feel good knowing that I stood up for all queers by not just walking away. I scared the livin' shit out of him when I turned around to confront his challenge. He obviously didn't know who he was dealing with. I may be short and transsexual, but he picked the wrong "faggot" to fuck with...

Tattoo

(cont'd from pg. 7)

observed tattooing as a practice passed from generation-to-generation, and culture-to-culture. (For instance, sailors getting designs common to the remote places they'd visited.) I found that a tattoo was the most ideal method for me to achieve that rite of passage. My first tattoo, while not a spiritual experience for me, did transcend the ordinary and was a personal step signifying my journey into manhood. It was done alone and virtually without any influence or knowledge of those meaningful to me.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not an expert, and I'm certainly not suggesting that everyone go out and get one. I wanted a tattoo as far back as I can remember, and I think that either you have the desire deep down inside or you don't. I can only express how meaningful the experience was to me. There's something very powerful in the process; it takes time, it takes pain, and it takes a commitment that people aren't accustomed to. If it's something you've considered, I strongly suggest weighing the pros and cons—and then completely re-thinking the idea. If you're still fascinated with the idea, and you haven't been scared off yet, read on.

A tattoo is permanent. Yes, lasers can erase them, but they too leave a scar. A "tat" becomes a part of you and a part of who you are. It's ink that's injected into the subdermal layers of skin by thousands of needle pricks and will mark your body for the rest of your life. Needless to say, what and where you tat is of utmost importance. Don't walk into any parlor and point to a design on the wall—it probably will be a mistake. If you're going out for this as a rite of passage and a meaningful experience as well as a creation of body art, consider carefully what you want to have done.

First, you need to find the right design. I chose a lion, representing my strength and courage. I searched for over a year to find the perfect lion. I sought out a design that could be easily translated into a drawing (photos can be difficult) and the expression of the lion's face was extremely important. I wanted intensity, but not outright anger or aggression. I also think that lions' manes are powerful and remind me of my new facial hair, that I was incredibly proud of. I searched wildlife books in libraries, as well as any animal resources I came across. I found a sticker at a beach front store catering to rock/punk skateboarding tourists. I've a respectable knowledge of the animal kingdom, and the behaviors and characteristics of the lion suit my own personality—laid back, independent, fiercely loyal, and when provoked to fight, will go up against any adversary regardless of size. The lion is also a favorite of my ex-wife, who was extremely instrumental in my present journey. I felt the lion not only pre-

sented myself, but paid tribute to her as well.

The second consideration is the location of the tattoo on your body. Mine is on the upper-arm/shoulder for maximum exposure, yet is easily concealed for professional purposes. It's also important to be aware of any future donor sites for surgeries—forearms, thighs, and buttocks—and avoid them.

Third is choosing the shop or parlor that will perform the work. These days, most places are acceptably sterile will use new needles. Remember, any disease will be as permanent as the tattoo, so consider your health first and foremost. Some shops look like someone's family room, others like a dentist office, most are somewhere in between.

You're getting the equivalent of thousands of shots, so if you wouldn't feel comfortable being treated there medically, then don't even consider it. All the needles should be new, in wrappers, and all surfaces covered and sterile. The guns and equipment should be autoclaved. The ink should be in individual-use cups, as re-used ink can also carry disease. The artist should wear gloves and be fastidious in keeping clean the entire work area. Most shops are open, or partially open so you can observe a work in progress. Don't be afraid to ask questions, especially about cleaning procedures—if they don't want to talk about it or show their sterilization procedures, get the hell out of there.

Choosing the artist is another consideration. If you've chosen a saying, words, or basic design, it's not hard to find somebody to do a decent job. If your design requires much detail, shading, or refinement, look through the artist's portfolio. Find a version similar to what you want and see if their work is acceptable to you. Tattoo magazines are great resources for ideas, parlors, and/or particular artists. Most of all, do your homework. The extra time you take could make an incredible difference, and could mean years of satisfaction versus years of regret. Remember, a tattoo is a part of you and should be done for you and not someone else. Tattoos tend to last longer than the someone else.

Okay, let's talk pain. With any new experience, the apprehension tends to be more traumatic than the actual occurrence. It may shock at first, hot and stinging, but it usually isn't downright painful unless it's on a bone, such as elbow, knee, or collarbone. Different parts of the body have varying sensations. Some describe it as irritating, like a cat scratch; mine hardly hurt at all. There's also an endorphin rush as the body reacts to the continuous sensation, giving a feeling of euphoria which has a strong appeal to many. Many also describe tattoos as "addictive". I tend to agree. There's a bonding process that

Cont'd
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Clothing

(cont'd from pg. 8)

Big Tall and Short Men's Wear
12458 Oxnard St.
North Hollywood, CA
91606-4510
Phone: 1-818-985-7273

Jimmy Aus Small and Short
131 N. La Cienega Blvd.
Beverly Hills, CA 90211-2206
Phone: 1-310-657-2700

Jockey Club Ltd Short Sizes
3940 S. Bristol St.
Santa Ana, CA 92704-7451
Phone: 1-714-662-0449

Other states:

Wallaby Station, 1022 1st Ave.
Seattle, WA 98104
(206) 624-3882
Wallaby Station
P.O. Box 5649
730 Hastings Lane
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089
1-800-4-Wallaby

Napoleon's Closet
685 S. Adams Rd.
Birmingham, MI 48009
(810) 642-5262

Short's Inc.
12420 73rd Ct.
Largo, FL 34643-3046
Phone: 1-813-538-4835

Major brand special order/mail order:
JCPenney 1-800-222-6161 (special order for pick-up in local store or mail order)

Specialty mail order:

Aesop 1-617-628-8030 (MA, USA) - shoes and accessories
Heartland Products 1-800-441-4692 or 1-515-332-3087 (IA, USA) - shoes and accessories
Okun Bros Shoes 1-800-433-6344 or 1-616-342-1536 (MI, USA)

Mail order clothes:

Paul Frederick 1-800-247-1417 - men's clothing (good for small shirts)
Land's End 1-800-356-4444 (24 hrs/day) - full-range of clothing
L.L. Bean 1-800-441-5713 (order) or 1-800-221-4221 - casual and outdoor clothing/shoes
J. Crew 1-800-562-0258 (order) or 1-800-932-0043 (customer relations)

Clothing manufacturers:

Levi Strauss 1-800-USA-LEVI

This list was created and is maintained on the internet by: piner@best.com

Tattoo (cont'd from pg. 10)

happens, and the tattoo goes beyond a possession that people are used to, and becomes a part of the person. This powerful experience, as well as the endorphin rush, are what I believe are addictive about tattoos. In fact, I'm considering a second one as soon as I can be certain of what and where, and when the money is available.

It's important to take care of your new tattoo. Precisely follow the instructions your artist gives you. A beautiful tat can be ruined by ignoring common sense precautions during the healing process (about 2 weeks). A good artist usually charges \$100 per-hour—tips are greatly appreciated. How long it takes depends upon the design, color, site, and complexity. Tell the artist about any details that concern you—they can't read minds and it doesn't grow out like a haircut. If you're still intrigued, do some leg-work and see if the enthusiasm lasts.

Once tattooed, you belong to a select group, a brotherhood, and you'll forever feel different. You may feel a little "bigger", more confident, and notice an unspoken respect from those around you. You're now a tribe member and will feel a bond with others who are tattooed. You'll carry a mark of self-significance and have survived a journey from the ordinary into the exotic. Most of all, you've experienced a rite of passage and belong to a select group. It doesn't matter who you are, or what you look like, you'll always be a member for life. You will belong.

Addendum: Since writing this essay, I got my second tattoo—a tribal armband. It was done with an FTM as witness which completely changed the experience. This time, I felt more of a passage into adult manhood—not just of my passage into being a man. Now I'm accepted into the clan not just as a man, but a brother.

New Editorial Policy

Due to the increasing number of excellent submissions to the FTM Newsletter, we will not be able to publish everything we receive. Submissions will be edited for length; our goal is to have room for a broad range of information, stories, and voices. When writing, aim for a maximum of 600 to 1000 words if possible. This is just a rough guideline; longer pieces will still be considered and often printed. We don't want to scare you off—we want *more* people to give writing a try, not less!

We are also initiating a submission schedule. The writing for the next issue (#39) is due by September 20. For future issues there will be longer advance notice.

Sex and the New Man (cont'd from pg. 3)

absorbent materials for the top and middle layers. They can be purchased at your local pharmacy: (Walgreens, Walmart, Long's, Savon, etc.) Packaging varies, but they are usually sold in small, medium and large sizes. The mediums should work just fine. You can also purchase them at a medical supply stores. Don't be afraid to ask about pricing. Sometimes purchasing individual sheets are less expensive than the prepackaged box. A recent trip to Choice Medical Supply in Seattle resulted in single sheets being sold at \$0.71 per individual unit versus \$.99 per prepackaged unit. Prepackaged units were only sold 30 or more to the package.

Vibrators: Before you start rallying the lynch mob, yes men do use vibrators. Some use them on their balls, others on the shaft of their penises, yet others stimulate the glans. In some instances it's all of the above. Don't let pre-conceived notions get the best of you. If that's the case, hide the quiche now. If a vibrator feels good why not just do it?

There are some options when purchasing these devices. The first is a decision between battery operated or electrical. Variable speed is another option. Some vibrators have only one speed while others have two or have a knob which allows the speed to gradually increase.

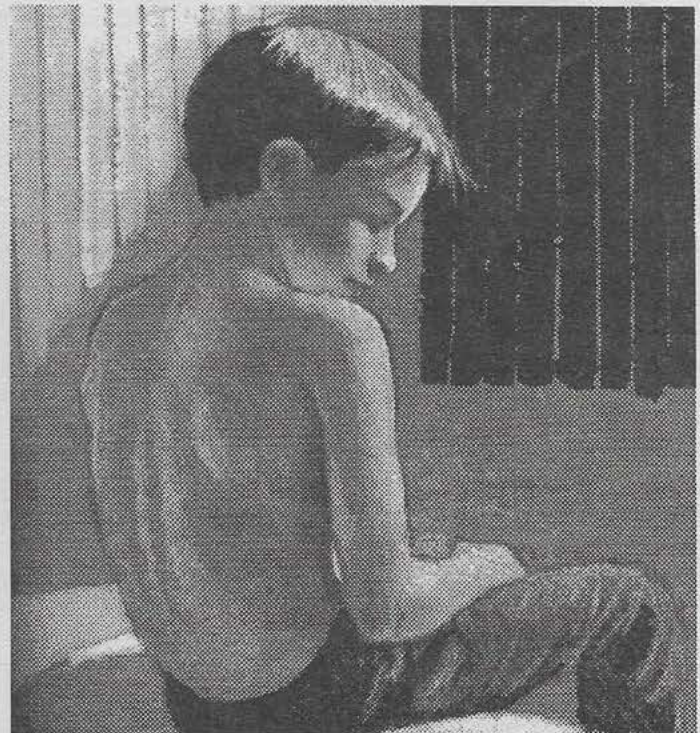
While the battery operated vibrators are often half the cost of the electrical ones, their life span is not predictable and will inevitably poop out long before the electrically operated ones. Battery operated vibrators are more mobile, but there is always the risk of having the batteries run down while on the brink of orgasm. If you feel that this will add excitement rather than frustration, then it's the way to go. The last caveat is with respect to battery size, so all you size queens listen up. A vibrator taking double A batteries will provide less get up and go than one which takes C batteries. By now there must be some that take D's. Estimated cost of the vibrator, not including batteries, is between \$10 to \$20.

There are two main types of electric vibrators, wands and coils. The wands are usually about twelve inches long and have a vibrating knob on the end. The coil vibrators tend to be smaller (about 7 inches long) and have been described by Dr. Ruth Westheimer as resembling "a portable electric mixer [which] includes various attachments to provide different kinds of sensation on the body." Again what you chose depends on personal preference. Examples of wands: Hitachi Magic Wand, Sunbeam Stick Massager, Panasonic Reach Easy, and the Relaxus Rechargeable. Prices vary between \$35 and \$60. Examples of coils: Prelude 3, Wahl coil, and the Sunbeam coil. Prices vary between \$25 and \$30 with attachments ranging from \$5 on up.

RESOURCES

These days you don't need to go to an adult book store/sex shop to buy the above products. Most major pharmacies such as Thrifty's, Long's Drugs, Savon Drugs, Walmart and Walgreen's carry all of the types of products mentioned above products. While you may obtain a costs savings, selection may be limited. Major Department stores are also a potential venue for vibrators.

*** Please send questions, suggestions, topics or requests for further information to Michael Hernandez at P.O. Box 390288, Anza, CA 92539 or e-mail at Lbear@earthlink.net.





been open to being educated about FTMs who like penetration, and would have taken the sentence out of my review. Such an exchange would have constituted professional, ethical, and accepted behavior between editors and writers.

Your way of handling the situation was childish and hostile. Don't expect any more free contributions (or even paid) from this writer in the future.

Marcy Sheiner, Emeryville, CA

Dear Ms. Sheiner:

You are absolutely right! The inserted comments were inappropriate. As the Editor, I take full responsibility for allowing a newsletter staff member to insert their editorial comments into any articles. As a novice editor, I didn't know to contact you, but could have been advised by the person who wrote the comments since he has a journalism background (mine is in History). Please accept my most humble, and sincere apologies for this outrage. I hope that future editors learn from this most unfortunate occurrence. I know I have.—Marcus

During the two years I completed a graduate degree in journalism at UC Berkeley, editors at publications that included Newsweek, the San Francisco Chronicle and the SF Examiner changed my copy for publication many times, sometimes with a courtesy phone call, often without. Because the comments I added to the movie review—which did not strike me as snide, inappropriate, humiliating nor politically correct, and which I cleared with the editor—involved no actual changes to the original text, I did not think to call. I sincerely apologize for any consternation this may have caused. But I stand by my edits. Brynn Craffey

Dear F to M:

Regarding your discussion "Gender Identity Disorder - Time For A Change" in the March issue of FTM Newsletter:

I notice that my health insurance policy specifically excludes transgender surgery. Health insurance providers are apparently under significant pressure to cut costs. As more health insurance providers yield to these pressures, the hope of health insurance-financed access to transgendered

Dear FTM Editors:

In my 25 years as professional writer I have never felt so humiliated as I did by the "editing" of my review of the video "Bi And Beyond, Part 6." It's not "editing" to insert snide remarks into the text of an author's piece in order to suit one's own politically correct agenda.

When an editor has a problem with an author's point of view, the customary procedure is to call the writer and discuss it. I would have gladly clarified the fact that my criticism of the condom-wearing actors was in actuality a critique of the lack of condoms on the other actors in the video. I would have

I believe my condition is medical, and I resent the psychiatric community calling it otherwise. I'm not pathological.

surgery and hormones may disappear.

In the past, the diagnosis of illness for cross-gendered persons was either a result of ignorance, or of attempts to discredit cross-gender preferences, that is, a discrimination mechanism.

Apparently, the controversy about whether minority gender preferences are bona fide illnesses may only be resolved by removing the consequences of community discrimination from the list of medical findings reported to justify a classification of illness. For example, to classify cross-dressing as a mental illness, psychiatrists should study the mental health of FTM and MTF cross-dressers, who are long-time residents of a neutral community—that is, a community that does not habitually express prejudicial attitudes or habitually practice police, employment, retail service, or child custody discrimination against cross-dressers.

Psychiatrists probably underestimate or incorrectly classify the consequences of prejudicial community attitudes and community discrimination practices because most cross-gender persons may not remember the many complicated and insidious ways that community prejudice and discrimination have entered their feelings during periods of from 10 to 30 years or longer.

Lynnifer

Dear Lynnifer:

Thank for your comments regarding GID. I don't know of many (there are some: see next letter) insurance companies that pay for transsexual surgery. They will cover the costs of Gynecomastia, enlargement of male breasts, even though it could be seen as "cosmetic," because enlarged breasts negatively affect a man's self-esteem. Well, the same could have been said about my "enlarged" breasts, yet my insurance company would only pay for "Mary" to have a bilateral mastectomy because I have a bad back. Had they found out that I was Marcus, they would have refused surgery, citing that as a transsexual I was ineligible, regardless of medical need.

I believe that GID keeps us from being seen as healthy people, the same way that homosexuality was seen as a psychiatric illness until 1972. I believe that my transsexuality is NOT a mental illness. Yes, I may have come out 20 years earlier if it were not for negative pressure, from friends and strangers. I believe my condition is medical, and I resent the psychiatric community calling it otherwise. I'm not pathological.

If GID were changed to a medical diagnosis, more surgeons and endocrinologists would work in the field, making access to services much more affordable (supply and demand). With a medical diagnostic code, health insurance companies would have to cover the expenses - and we would be still be protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), except as a physical disability, not a mental one. We would no longer lose child custody due to our "psychiatric instability."—Marcus

Dear FTM:

...Just a tip. I know you have a therapist listed (in the resource guide) named Lee Padula of Livonia, Michigan. I didn't think he was very experienced in dealing with TS folk. He sells himself saying he's a sex therapist and Harry Benjamin member. He made me undergo psychological testing that wasn't necessary, wasting time and money. Then he wrote a report that could have hindered my progress except for the intervention of my main therapist, Dr. Lyda of Southfield, Michigan. Dr. Padula spent very little time talking to me about my gender dysphoria, nor did he focus questions to explore the issue. I wouldn't him to anyone.

Also, I'd like to share with you a good report about my transition. Seems most of what I read leads me to think there's not much good around transitioning, but I was fortunate. I gathered several reports from therapists, submitting them to my insurance company for pre-authorization for surgery. After several months of waiting, I received what I was waiting for.

At this time, I had already started talking to surgeons about top surgery, along with hysterectomy at the same time. The surgeons at the University of Michigan Hospital were helpful. The U. recently started a gender pro-

MORE MALEBOX

gram; that's where I had the surgery done. I informed my employer after my surgery, about my gender change (I had already been on hormones for over a year, and had my name changed without any questions from management). I was afraid of losing my job, working in a school system for 16 years as a custodian. The community was conservative and I wasn't sure to what lengths they would go to get rid of me.

The day I informed the administration of my gender change, I also scheduled a meeting with my union board and shared the same information. This was done to keep the rumors from spreading and to make information available to those who might request it. I presented to both groups a list of organizations to contact as well as therapists and University staff who were available to talk to people. I pointed out that this was a medical condition and that I would answer questions. Everyone was informed on the same day with the same information.

After I was fully out, I expected the worst, but was pleasantly surprised to find very little trouble at all. Many people were at least making the attempt to understand. Others became supportive. Yes, there were still those calls made to the school, parents complaining and wanting me out of the building (which was an elementary school). They didn't think I should be around little children. Others wanted me terminated, but management treated my transition as a non-issue. There was a period when I wasn't sure what would happen to me, but many teachers and staff came to me and vocalized their support. I had worked in the building less than a year, so many of the staff were unfamiliar to me. I'd purposely kept my distance to avoid getting hurt, or seeing anyone else hurt if I was forced to leave. So, their words of encouragement were a pleasant surprise.

It's been over a year since I came out. I'm married, and have been voted the President of the union that represents most of the transportation, food service, para-pros, and custodial/maintenance staff (about 200 people in all). Like most workplaces, word travels fast, so I know everyone knows of my life changes. If anyone has said anything to me about all this, it was to say they respect my choice and courage. No one has faced me with words of rage or disgust, so I do count myself as a very blessed person.

I must also admit to you that I went into this process with a lot of prayer, using scripture that states I would find favor with God and man. It seems my faith and prayer have worked. I hope many of your readers will be encouraged with my report, if you care to use it to edify anyone. Thanks again.

Your brother, Christian Stone

Dear Christian:

Thank you for sharing information about your experiences with the therapist you didn't care for, and your successes in transitioning. I hope people find some hope and inspiration in your story. Good luck! —Marcus

Dear FTM:

Hello. My name is Danielle. I'm a 20 year-old female (parts and all since birth). I'm on the hunt for an FTM partner. I come from a small town, which makes it hard to find the someone I want and need. When a so-called "man" comes up to me and asks if he can buy me a drink (I don't look my age sometime), I say "Yes, you can buy me a drink. But, first, I've

**"Yes, you can buy me a drink.
But, first, I've got
a question for you:
Are you a female-to-male
transsexual?"**

got a question for you: Are you a female-to-male transsexual?" Each one looks at me funny and goes: A. Hell No! B. Are you crazy? C. What's that? Pick A, B, or C. Sometimes it's all three! Every time I hear "C. What's that?" it makes me think "That's what I want!" I don't care what other people think. I think that all of you going through what you have to are very brave and so much more. I was just lucky enough to be born with the right parts. Everyone is different, you are all just extra special. Go ahead, write me, I want to understand. Your age or race doesn't matter. But You will. You've got nothing to lose but the cost of the stamp, and you'll gain a good, caring friend - me! Take care all of you, and good luck! Be happy and well,

Danielle Kimball

■ Sigma Drive, Cottonwood, CA 96022

Dear Danielle:

Thanks for your letter. I'm sure you'll receive some correspondence! — Marcus

BEARDS (AN EMAIL EXCHANGE)

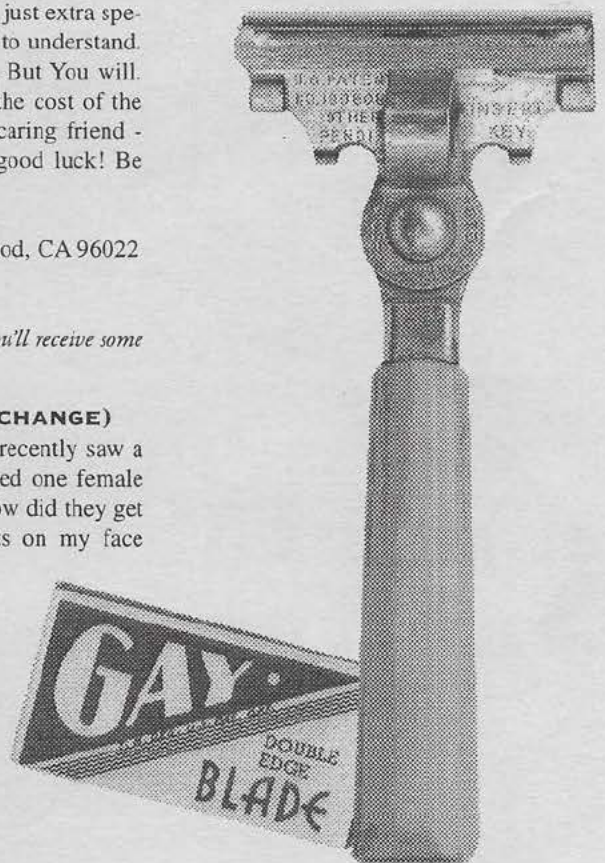
I am a 23 year old male who recently saw a show on transsexuals, and noticed one female to male who had a full beard. How did they get this? Because I have bare spots on my face where it won't grow, and I would do anything to get the hormones that this person was using. I felt unmanly because I was born a male, and still couldn't grow that much facial hair! Could you help me out, or lead me down the right path? Thank you very much!

Brian,

Female-to-Male (FTM) transsexual people are prescribed the hormone testosterone, usually under the generic names of testosterone enanthate or testosterone cypionate. The medical goal is to create the same balance of hormones that a non-transsexual male (like yourself) has. Many men, both transsexual and non-transsexual, are not able to grow full, even beards. This is due simply to their genetic make-up and the hormone receptors their bodies naturally possess. You cannot change the hormone receptors in your body. The FTM that you saw was fortunate enough to have the genetic capacity to produce facial hair when stimulated by testosterone (as with non-transsexual men). Many non-transsexual (and transsexual) men take a long time to develop beard growth. It's possible that by the time you are 30, your beard may have come in more fully. Look at your male ancestors on both sides of your family: did any of them have difficulty with beard growth? If so, you may have their gene pattern for this secondary sex characteristic.

If you are concerned about your natural testosterone level, your doctor can have it checked for you by drawing a blood sample and asking the lab to check for your serum testosterone level. This test usually costs about \$115.00. Then your doctor can determine whether your testosterone level is below normal, or on the low side (there is quite a wide range that is called "normal"), and if so, he may want to prescribe supplemental testosterone for you to see if that will balance your system, and perhaps accelerate your beard growth. However, you should be

Cont'd
pg. 14



BEARDS (cont'd from pg. 14)

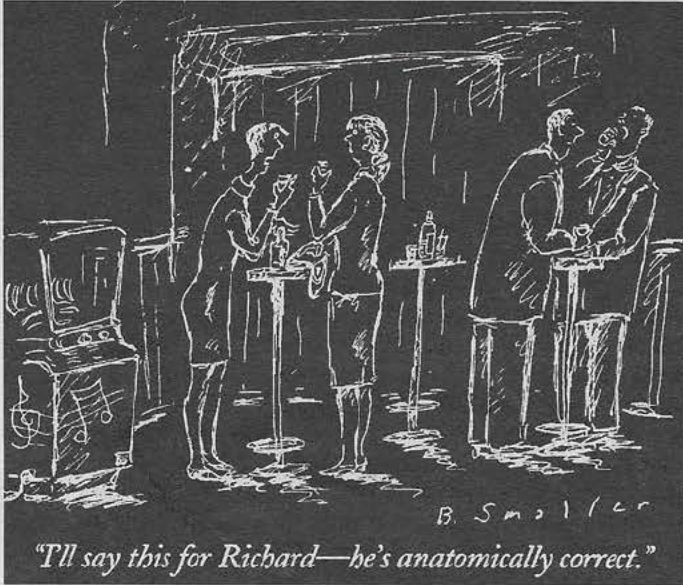
aware that use of supplemental testosterone can actually cause your natural testosterone production (in your testes) to stop, which could be harmful to you, so you should not do this without competent medical advice and supervision.

I know that a full beard is certainly a sign of manhood, but "manliness" is a composite of qualities and characteristics. I hope you will think carefully about your feelings of "unmanliness," realizing that being able to grow a beard is not the only thing that makes you man. Your sense of self must come from deep within you, and it is possible to develop confidence in yourself as a man even if you don't have a beard, much as many FTMs have confidence in themselves as men even if they don't have penises—or beards.

I hope this response has been helpful to you.

Best Regards,

Jamison "James" Green



FTM MEETINGS IN BERLIN

The Berlin group meets every second and fourth Wednesday (7 pm) at the Infoladen of the Sonntagsclub. A cafe for socializing is every Tuesday from 5 pm to 11 pm at the club (Rhinower Str. 8/Prenzlauer Berg). FTM/MTF mixed, with 2 to 8 FTMs present at the average. Hotline every Friday evening for trans-related issues.

We have one smaller and even more fun-oriented event planned (I guess there will be dancing on the Saturday evening in a club as last year) for the weekend of the 12th through 14th of September 1997 in Berlin. Costs max. \$ 20 or less. International guests welcome.

Butch/FTM Conference

A working group has been formed to develop a conference in San Francisco on issues and connections surrounding butch and FTM identity. We're recruiting, especially for women and men of color, youth, etc. The conference is tentatively scheduled for March/April of 1998.

For more information, contact Adele Morrison: 415-982-8399, ext. 352.

Germany (cont'd from pg.6)

converted T*. Of course it depends on the individual's body metabolism and the T* doses. He suggests monitoring one's body closely and pay attention to warning signals.

Concerning bottom surgery: Most doctors in Germany only perform phalloplasty. They have less experience with metaoidioplasty. One doctor insisted in taking the clitoris away to generate no new hermaphrodite, but admitted that this location was still the most sensitive after phalloplasties. He takes the nerve of the clitoris and attaches it to the nerve of the forearm skin, but he doesn't know if it works there or if it's the nerves of the skin.

He advises that surgery is better if the skin has less fat under it and encourages patients to lose weight. Over here, the urethra is usually made from forearm skin, but they don't know if using skin will create long-term problems. They think it might, as they have observed problems with urea on the skin of handicapped patients. As the progress in cultivating tissue is improving it might be an option to wait until they can grow our own urethral channels from a piece of one's own body. Currently, there's much research done in that field, so I asked him for some good addresses for post-doc(sic) positions. The other doctor reported he was more flexible towards the wishes of the client.

In summary, the meeting was informative. I made some new contacts, and it was nice to spend a weekend in the south where the trees are already green, and to renew some old memories.....even if it was only in the city and not camping. It seemed that the MTFs had less fun than we; they all looked so grave. While being gay or bisexual and FTM is neither well-known or nor morally acceptable to many shrinks, which causes problems in the referral and name-change process, the gay fraction seemed to have most fun with each other. It gives the word transsexual a completely new meaning. Apart from that, there's still much to achieve politically before we can be content with our legal status over here.

The Uninvited Dilemma A Question of Gender by

Kim Elizabeth Stuart

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Transsexual Menace T-shirts first appeared in New York City as worn by Riki Anne Wilchins and friends, and later cropped up in Silicon Valley, Lone Star State, and Capitol Hill. Now, by popular demand, these attractive, high-quality shirts are appearing on MEN. Since most of the Menace have been women, and since transsexual men are scattered all over the world, it was suggested that more men would wear the shirts if they weren't tied to a city, or if the shirts would help negate the common assumption that all transsexuals are women. So the Menace Men Shirt was created to fill the breach. These are 100% cotton, Hanes Beefy-T's, black with white and menacing red lettering, available in Small, Medium, Large, and Extra-Large. These fabulous shirts cost only \$12.00 (plus \$5.00 shipping and handling for each one or two shirts ordered). Get yours now from FTM International, or contact Tbhawk@AOL.com (make checks or money orders payable to FTM). And never be at a loss for action wear!

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FTM RESOURCES

UNITED STATES

California- *FTM International*, 1360 Mission St., Suite 200, San Francisco, CA 94103 phone: 415-553-5987 email: info@ftm-intl.org
Under Construction, P.O. Box 922342, Sylmar, CA 91392-2342. Contact: Jeff Shevlowitz

Genderqueer Boyzzz, Los Angeles area. Contact: Jacob Hale 213-665-1130. email: zeroboyzjh@aol.com

Florida- *Eden Society*, P.O. Box 203, Deerfield Beach, FL 33443-0203 Contact: Lee (305) 247-6254 Nature/Services: Open transgender support group. Newsletter: EdeNews.

Massachusetts- *East Coast Female-to-Male Group*, P.O. Box 60585, Florence Station, Northampton, MA 01060. Phone 413-584-7616, Bet Power. Nature/Services: support group for female-to-male persons and their significant others. *Boston Enterprise*, P.O. Box 193, Bellingham, MA 02019. Phone 617-639-7968, Mike. Nature/Services: weekly support group for FTMs; monthly social events open to all. *The Officer's Club*, c/o IFGE, P.O. Box 229, Waltham, MA 02254-0229. Phone 617-899-2212. Nature/Services: an FTM support group which meets at 7 pm on the first and third Monday of every month in the offices of IFGE.

Wisconsin- *Gemini Gender Group*. PO Box 44211 Milwaukee, WI 53214. Voice mail #414-297-9328. Notes: The local "professional" TG program in town is PATHWAYS, directed by Gretchen Fincke (and Roger Northway). The program offers a connection to endocrinologists, surgeons, etc. The program has separate FTM and MTF groups. The phone # for Pathways is 414-774-4111. I may start a "social" support group for FTMs in the Chicago/Milwaukee areas. There seems to be a growing # of FTMs within these 2 cities and we have special needs and concerns that aren't getting addressed. - #414-276-8877. Michael.

INTERNATIONAL

Australia- Boys Will Be Boys, BWBB, P.O. Box 5393, West End, Brisbane, Australia 4101. Nature/Services: Newsletter and network for FTM persons. Notes: Boys Will Be Boys newsletter

Belgium- Kortrijk, Genderstichting (Belgian Gender Foundation), Plumstraat 48, Belgium B-8500

France- C.A.R.I.T.I.G, B.P. 17.22, 75810 Paris Cedex 17, France

Germany- TS-gruppe d., *Sontagsclub* e. U., Rhinower Str. 8, Berlin 10437

Japan- *FTM Nippon*. Contact: Masae Torai, Adachi-ku, Adachi-Nishi-post office-dome, Tokyo 123

United Kingdom- London-FTM Network, BM Network, London WC1N 3XX, England. tel: 0161 432 1915 (Wednesdays 8 pm-10:30 pm GMT or BST) Nature/Services: Support group for female-to-male persons

NOTE: Send in your meeting times! Please keep us informed about organizations, support groups, newsletters and other services which specifically cater to and/or include FTMs. There are many more resources out there than are listed here, and we'd like to know about them so we can tell you!

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Thanks for your continued support! 8-97

FTM MEETING SCHEDULE 1997

FTM meetings are on the 2nd Sunday of each month, from 2 to 5 p.m., in San Francisco. Call FTM Voicemail (415-553-5987) for details. Mark your calendars in advance!

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Editor: *Marcus de Maria Arana*

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