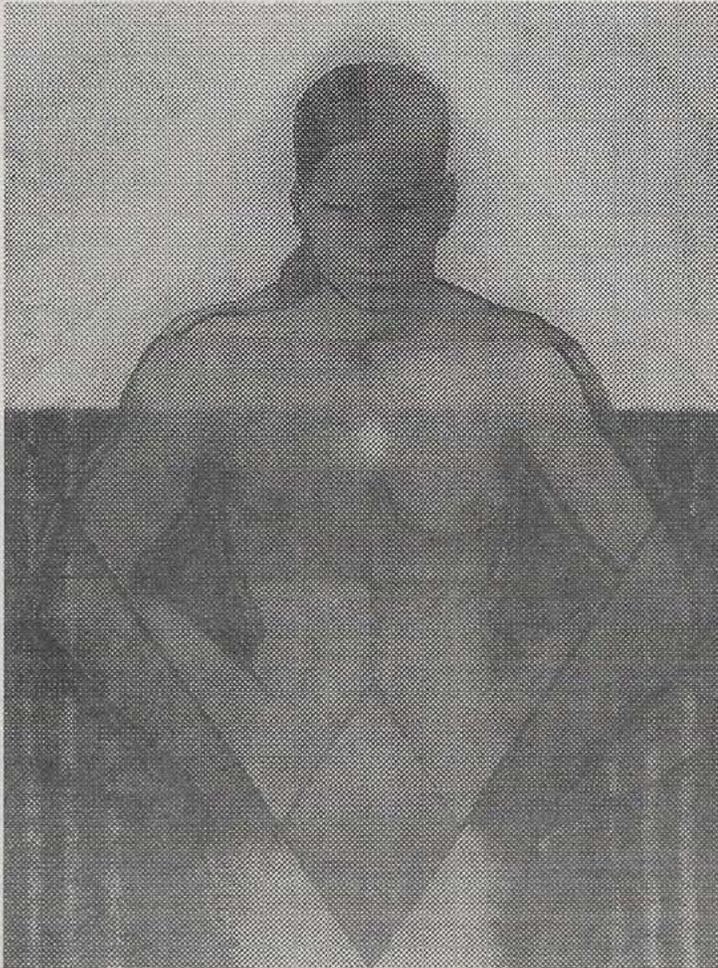


# Issue 49 Summer/Fall 2001



the world's most widely circulated periodical for the female-to-male transgender and transsexual population

\$6.95



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## FTM INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER

*The world's most widely circulated periodical for the female-to-male transgender and transsexual. Published since 1987.*

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For a biography of the artist see page 17.

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**DEADLINES:** Please submit articles, stories, art, photos, etc. by Oct. 10th for consideration for FTM #50.

### OUR APOLOGIES!

Thanks to our subscribers for patiently waiting. We had some staff changes while in the middle of production for this issue. Because he is working long hours at his day job, Sasha O'Malley has had to end his term as designer. Thanks to the mighty efforts of Kersplebedeb of Canada, issue #49 comes to you with a new look. We welcome your input.

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*Thanks for your continued support!*

*Late Breaking News* from Eli, Joel, Paul and Dion

Your long awaited Newsletter has arrived. We hope it is worth the wait! This issue was printed in Canada and distributed by our multi-talented and hardworking Vice President, Dale Altrows; and a huge thank you to his partner Kersplebedeb for his expertise as Designer. We also want to thank Sasha O'Malley for his work at FTMI as Designer.

FTMI has moved into a new office. Thanks to everyone who helped in searching and negotiating for and moving into our new office space. Volunteers Chris, Marty, Chav, Tamhas, Tony, and Drago made the physical move a snap with their muscle, vehicles, and hand trucks. Thank you! Please make a note of **our new address: FTM Int'l, 160 - 14th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103**. Our phone number remains the same: (415)553-5987. We are renting this space from **Community United Against Violence (CUAV)** and sharing with some other organizations that you will hear more about in the near future. Very exciting news on all sides! CUAV has worked to eradicate violence against and within the LGBT communities since 1979. For more information about CUAV call (415)777-5500; email: CUAV@aol.com; Fax: (415)777-5565. Their address is the same as ours, 160 - 14th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

We would also like to **thank Proyecto ContraSIDA Por Vida** and its director, Prado Gomez, for providing us with much needed meeting space. Proyecto ContraSIDA Por Vida is a sex positive, neighborhood based, multigender Latina/o bisexual, lesbian, transgender & gay community organization. For more information on programs, activities or events contact [www.pcpv.org](http://www.pcpv.org) or call (415)864-7278; Fax: (415)575-1645. 2973 - 16th Street, SF, CA 94103.

Exciting work has begun locally with outreach and recruitment of FTMs, SOs, and allies becoming members of the new **FTMI Antiracism Steering Committee**. The committee meets once a month to strategize towards running FTMI as an antiracist organization. FTMI is committed to becoming an antiracist organization. For more info or questions, contact Danny Kirchoff by emailing [dannysf76@aol.com](mailto:dannysf76@aol.com) or leave him a voicemail message at (415)553-5987. One of our goals is to diversify FTMI's organizational structure throughout, from the board level and volunteer base, to participants at meetings, and members and subscribers. We invite and encourage people of color (POC) who fall on the FTM spectrum (including POC genderqueers, butches, transsensual femmes, androgynes, male SOs, drag kings, third-gendered, transfags, trannyboys, boydykes, shinjuku boys, etc.) and partners who are people of color to be part of the committee and/or to gather together separately. For info and interest in checking out the forming of this POC group, please contact Paul Santos by calling (415)420-0671 or emailing [Paulkysan@aol.com](mailto:Paulkysan@aol.com) and/or Johnnie Pratt at (415)437-6127 or [bukwyl2@aol.com](mailto:bukwyl2@aol.com).

Once again, thanks to all of you who have renewed your subscription and/or membership to FTMI. A special thanks to those who included donations to our organization. Your generosity allows us to continue to support and serve the increasing needs and demands of our diverse and growing communities. You will find a **renewal/donation form** in your newsletter. To find out when to renew, check the renewal code on the mailing label next to your name. The number is the last paid issue and the letters indicate whether you are a member (M), subscriber (S), etc. A number 49 or less on your mailing label means it is time to renew! If the data on your mailing label is incorrect, please remember that we are volunteer-staffed and kindly take a moment to contact us with corrections. Also, if you have moved, or plan to move, please let us know so that we can update your info. Please consider renewing, and, if you are able, include an additional amount as a donation. Financial contributions are always greatly appreciated. Your extra contributions are tax-deductible and assist people who are unable to access us or who cannot afford the cost of a subscription. We are not as fundable as many other organizations, though our work is within and alongside many different communities. We encourage you to dig deep and give what you can.

As always there is an open invitation to encourage our supporters to become FTMI volunteers. Our current volunteers have a lot on their plates. The more people are actively involved, the stronger the organization will be. If you have talents to offer us, please let us know! Even if not available now, let us know of possible future availability and interest. We can keep your name on file, and when the need arises get in touch! Some of our current needs are people with the following skills: accounting (CPA); legal/paralegal; grantwriting and fundraising; community and meeting organizing; special projects; outreach; volunteer coordination; library/archiving.

Thanks to everyone who volunteers with FTMI. Thanks also to our members and subscribers. FTMI belongs to all of us! And remember to please note **our new address: 160 - 14th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103**.

## The Uninvited Dilemma A Question of Gender

by Kim Elizabeth Stuart

Research Supplement available separately.



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# UNITED WE STAND

By Dion Manley



Prior to last year, for me April 21 was the anniversary of my being clean and sober. On that date I celebrated quitting drinking 13 years ago. This year that date is the one year mark since Marcelle Cook-Daniels' suicide/death. His story is one too crucial to overlook or ever forget and in

thinking of him I write this. This time last year I was also in close contact with three transgender youth and another friend who were talking to me about feeling suicidal. One was going through a breakup, feeling alienated from friends they had as a couple, plus feeling like an outsider from the trans community genderwise. Another was dealing with his "first love" breakup with no hope of happiness or of relating to people. And yet another was dealing with the pains of being gender-different. In addition, another friend (trans-identified) confided to me that he was suicidal and afraid.

As an African, Native American and Irish FTM, Marcelle said he felt invisible in life which surprised me and yet didn't. We were only gradually becoming friends because he and I went to different FTMI support meetings and rarely saw each other. He was very angry with the games and dynamics among the queer communities and within the trans communities. It appeared to me he had it all—but inside, he and his longtime partner, Loree, both struggled for years with depression. I wish to highlight here that along with myself, every single FTM, FTM-identified and questioning person I know well has at one time or another talked about being depressed. Transition shouldn't be the lonely experience it is since we're all going through it. After quitting drinking I acknowledged to myself that my use of drugs and alcohol had been a slow suicide. Since early in life, my anger at the world helped sidetrack my depression, yet at the time I had no idea how unhappy being so very angry made me. Dealing with what led up to my giving up on life (and the living) has been the greatest challenge and is a long and gradual, yet continual, process.

Alienation and isolation are killers. I want more dialogue on how we work through depression, isolation and anger. How much shame we carry, which silences us in so many ways. This article is not directed only toward or about transies, I am including partners as well. I believe we need public discussions about depression. It should be considered a community issue, not just a private one. We are all in this together and need one another through the good and difficult since that is what community is all about! For me this is working towards helping folks hold on to life by being supported by the peer network of FTMI plus other organizations and networks. Part of my becoming visible is being there between that moment of alienation and the moment when it could become fatal. We need to look and talk about this and do more than make ourselves visible. Here's one recent example of what individuals are starting. A young FTM and his partner recently held a successful community fundraiser for his surgery! Another first in the Bay Area for FTMs which motivated another guy to do the same just one month later by combining a surgery fundraiser with his birthday! United we stand and together the math is 1+1=3.

## THE WHITE BOOK



Brandon Teena,  
trans man murdered in 1993  
This book is in his memory, and  
to make sure it never happens  
again.

### THE WHITE BOOK

is written and edited by Dr. Stephen Whittle, a trans man who began living in his new role over 20 years ago. A Senior lecturer in Law, he is also coordinator of the FTM Network and vice president of Press for Change. This book is written in an easy and accessible style, to enable female to male transsexual and transgender people, those who are exploring whether they are female to male, and families and friends to get to grips with many of the scary and difficult issues that trans men have to face. It is meant to make life easier, and that is what it does.

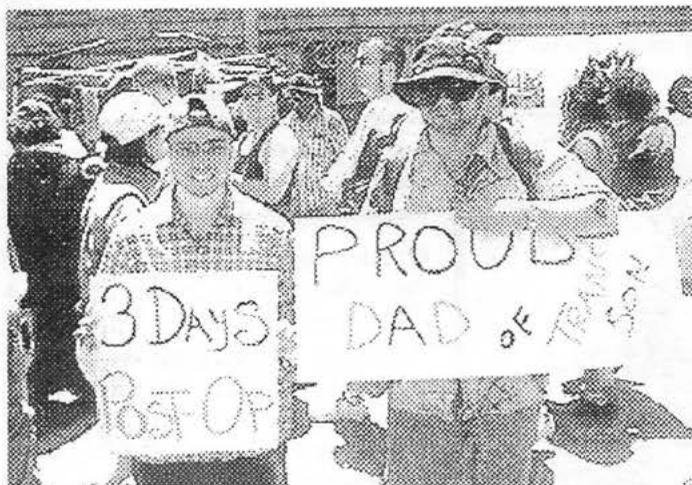
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Any profit goes to maintain the FTM Network.



Proud Dad at San Francisco Pride Parade  
(photo: Gwen Smith)

# HEART OF QUEERNESS

## Performing Gender With Ilya Pearlman

By Barnes

Ilya Pearlman may be new to Los Angeles, but his work as a director, writer and performer is already generating the kind of support that indicates he could create a national place for himself in the world of queer performance art. And speaking about gender from his unique perspective as a former biological female now reinvented as a sexy, smart fag, he has certainly caught our attention.

Pearlman transitioned after a career of creating challenging work like that of his company, Greek Active, in Seattle (co-founded with writer Dan Savage), which produced a cross-dressing *Medea*, an all-girl *Romeo and Juliet* and an award-winning adaptation of the camp classic *Madame X*, just for starters.

Not since we first encountered Ron Athey's tattooed and pierced personage have we seen an artist whose work is so embodied in his or her own flesh. I recently spoke with Pearlman about his new solo performance work *Unhung*, which debuted at Highways Performance Space in Santa Monica in mid-January 2001 and the ways in which his gender-outlaw adventures have been a part of his artistic life.

**Barnes:** Tell us a little bit about *Unhung*.

**Ilya Pearlman:** After re-learning to sing with my new testosterone-lowered voice, I had tons of ideas for a show. I knew I wanted to talk about and explore the illusions of gender and their performance. That sent me to the sideshow, where illusions were — and are still — performed, and where sometimes the performers actually were the illusions they presented. From a sheaf of ideas, some music, a little structure, and a lot of collaboration with my director, Chris Wells, came the current script for *Unhung*. It's a sort of a *hero's journey* play mixed with a circus sideshow mixed with a cabaret and with a dollop of social commentary on gender and difference thrown in for good measure.

**Barnes:** What would you say was the impetus for creating the piece?

**IP:** I realized after directing my best friend Mark Mitchell's play *All About Medea* in Seattle last summer that while I love his work and will certainly work with him again, that, at its core, it was written out of a gay male experience. While I resonate with and share much of that experience as an omniseual *trans-fag*, it's not my core experience. That made me realize I was ready and willing to present something from my own deepest place. Plus, I got to write myself a really juicy role, and play with things I really love: singing everything from rock to lounge and back.

**Barnes:** Would it be unfair to ask what you are looking to teach your audience about in this piece?

**IP:** Teaching can imply the idea of directives, answers. I am much more interested in the questions, both as an artist and as a human being. I hope the *Unhung* audience will end

up with lots of questions — about gender, about themselves, about our world, about me!

**Barnes:** It seems like you've always defined yourself and your gender in some of the more adventuresome ways in your work, and clearly in your life as well. It's rare that a performer's actual flesh becomes so much the medium. What would you say drives your investigation of gender as an artist?

**IP:** Well, the short and flip — but no less true — answer is I've always created the roles I want to play, and cast roles the way I want to be cast. What else does an outlaw artist who can't get work through central casting do? That being said, I am completely committed to and enamored of the concept of *gender-blind* writing and casting, because of its potential to throw everything into question.

**Barnes:** Being that you *pass* so completely, I know you must have gotten yourself into some very hot waters. What have been the most illuminating experiences?

**IP:** The reactions of people when I tell them: the confusion, wonder, fear and excitement — watching their brains do loop-de-loops as they try to parse what I have said. The difference between the ones that become more excited by me and the ones who shut down out of fear. The interactions with the excited ones as they feel their way

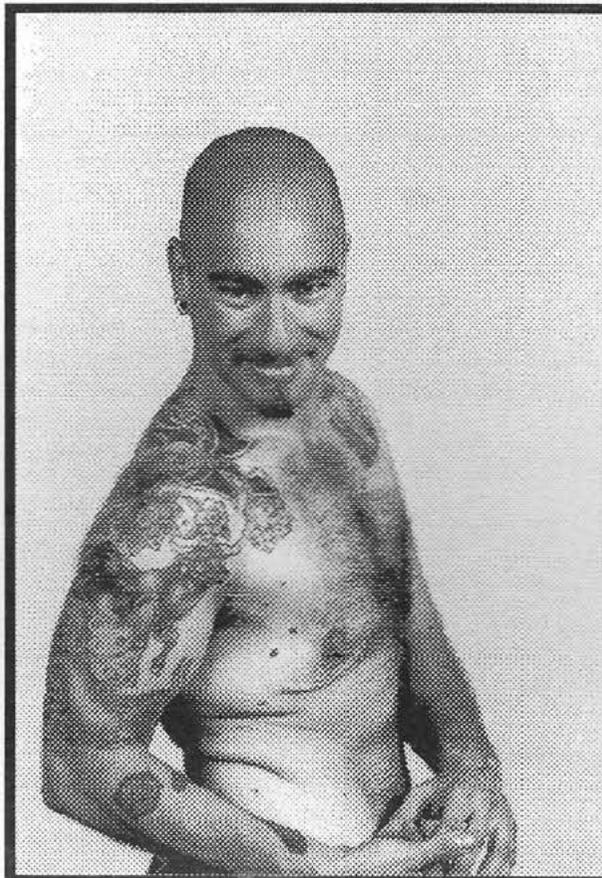


Photo: Tracy Mostovoy

through asking all their questions, watching them wonder what's appropriate to ask, what might offend me, and their mounting exhilaration as they realize they can ask anything and questions tumble out of them like a waterfall. Watching their whole concept of gender (mine, theirs, anyone's) change before my eyes.

**Barnes:** Why do you think the *tragic tranny* is such an enduring archetype in our consciousness?

**IP:** The tragic tranny is the late-20th century equivalent to the tragic faggot [or] dyke. Many trannies' lives have been tragic, but, like the tragic homo, that's generally because of societal and family judgments and lack of information, not because the state of being transgendered (or not straight) is inherently tragic. We've come far enough as dykes/fags/bis that information and the opportunity for empowerment exists, so we rarely see the tragic homo anymore. Political activism and shows like *Ellen* and *Will & Grace* have helped that. But the media always needs a figure of tragedy and tragic humor for those who need to feel better than someone else. The tranny is still that figure. But that's changing. There is more and more information, resources, support and understanding for transgendered people of all kinds. Transgender empowerment and activism is really growing. I don't think the media is going to make too much more money off tragic characters that are so just because they are any kind of queer.

**Barnes:** Although it's hard to imagine you as the coolest dyke in town, that is clearly what you had been, given your present sexy fag identity. Would say you got laid more as a cross-dressing dyke or as a transgendered boy?

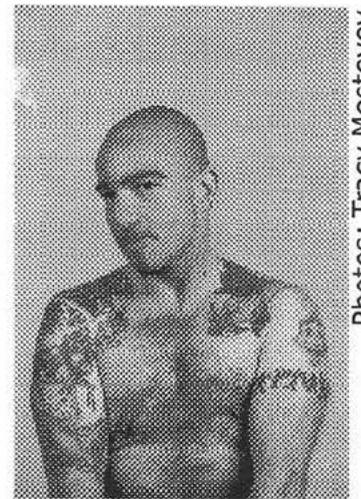
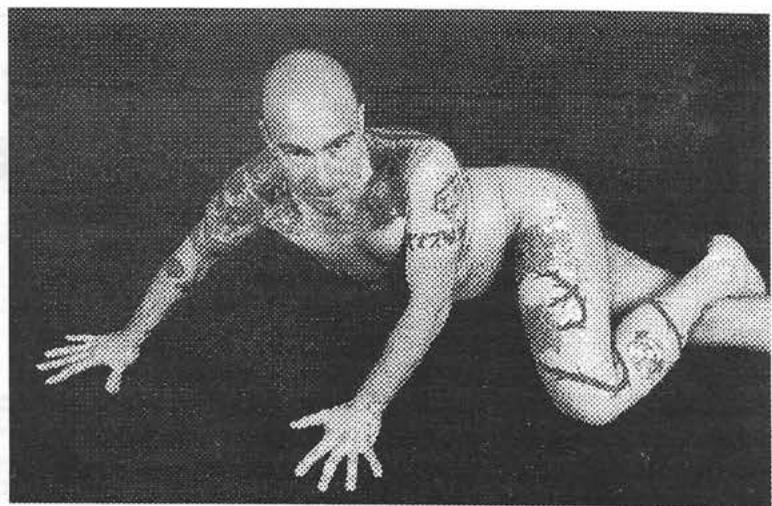
**IP:** Oh, well, the results aren't in. I'm still *conducting research!* When I've spent as many years as a tranny-boy as I did as a dyke I'll let you know!

**Barnes:** If relationships are complicated for the rest of us, I imagine them to be arenas of wild exploration for you.

**IP:** They certainly ain't simple! But then, when are human interactions ever simple? The most interesting thing about them that is trans-related has to be about how identities shift, internally and/or externally. If I'm with a man who identifies as gay, how does my, ahem, *different* anatomy affect his identity? How does my being out? If I'm with a woman who identifies as a dyke, how does that shift either of our identities? In the best situations, which I have been primarily lucky enough to have, there's no big deal with internal dynamics — people I've spent more than one night with are people who aren't going to have their identities threatened by the package I have (or don't have). Staying visibly queer going out with a non-straight woman is an interesting challenge. As marginalized people, being visible people is so important. The only answer I've come to is to be as out as I can be, and date people who are willing to step out onto the edges of even our fringe queer society.

**Barnes:** Since you deal with the performance of gender every day, I imagine there are a lot of opportunities to learn about the way humans react. What have the biggest lessons been for you in the transgender experience?

**IP:** One: Straight men say the worst shit about women when there aren't any around. Especially if they are over 30.



Photos: Tracy Mostovoy

**Two:** You only get (white) male privilege if you believe you have it. After 30 years of being socialized as female, one doesn't get the whole package just because one gets all the outer trappings.

**Three:** Street social interactions are reversed between men and women. As a woman, if I wanted to stay safe on a dark street my best bet was to ignore aggressors, who would then give up and move on to the next woman. But as a man, my best bet is to give just the right amount of attention to them, otherwise they feel dissed and they get more aggressive.

**Four:** Women and men make so many assumptions about each other, and, at least in casual conversations, never question them.

**Five:** Men don't lock bathroom doors or flush when they pee, so men's rooms are smellier!

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Note: This article first appeared in *Frontiers Newsmagazine*. Pearlman's Web site for *Unhung* is <http://www.unhung.net>.

# ART OF SURVIVAL

## Joshua\*

My Boots are brown instead of black  
 Because I just don't care anymore  
 My shirt is wrinkled and dirty  
 because I have no reason to iron it  
 My pants are torn  
 because they don't deserve to be fixed  
 Why should I care  
 when they take away my dignity  
 humiliating and belittling me  
 who will go to war  
 should my country need it  
 who would die for them  
 who doesn't appreciate me  
 who takes away my basic rights  
 to be treated as a normal human being  
 and instead allows the violence to continue  
 implying we are in the wrong  
 instead of those who persecute us  
 who beat us on the street  
 leaving us for death  
 who terrorize us in schools  
 with threats and taunts  
 when does the government  
 start accepting the consequences  
 of their actions  
 instead  
 of forcing them off on us.

## Florida Rep Blasts Queer Youth at Lobby Day

**Trovillion Tells Students,  
 "God... is going to destroy you."  
 "God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and he is going to  
 destroy you and a lot of others."**

Through a fire of homophobic comments, state Rep. Allen Trovillion, R-Winter Park, embarrassed the Florida Legislature on April 9, 2001, when he unleashed a personal tirade against Orlando students who visited him seeking help to end school-based harassment and violence. The students, part of a group of more than 80 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in Tallahassee for Equality Florida's Youth Lobby Day, visited representatives seeking to share their individual stories about the frequency of anti-gay violence in Florida schools.

"I don't understand why the gay population is becoming so vocal," Trovillion questioned. "You are going to cause the downfall of this country which was built on Christian principals."

**\* This poem by Aaron Michael Carter is dedicated to the brave young people that attended Youth Lobby Day in Tallahassee on April 9, 2001 and were humiliated and belittled by a United States Congressman (see article)**

"Sadly, we have a long way to go before we see the type of hate and misinformation that led to the rape and murder of Brandon Teena eliminated in society. As a transgender-identified activist, I take this as a personal challenge to make sure my voice is heard."

— letter from Casey L. Gradischnig to *Mother Jones*, 3/23/00



by Casey L. Gradischnig, 1998. Groovy Chick Productions

## Joanne Berg's Legacy

By Garin Chad Wiggins

Joanne Berg, who dedicated her last year of life to trans activism in Philadelphia, died of cancer on June 11, 2001. She was in her 50s. Her wife and teenaged daughter were with her to the end and honored her with the appropriate pronouns and dress at a private funeral. On July 1, friends and fellow activists in Philadelphia celebrated her contribution to the transgender community at a memorial service at William Way LGBT Community Center.

Joanne appeared first in my life at my trans support group. She was a 50-ish transwoman newly living as female. Soon she was involved in the Transgender Health Action Coalition's hotline and had impressed all of us with her compassion and intelligence. From answering the hotline, she learned of all the outreach we were not able to do with such a small organization. Soon she was staffing the T-HAC office full time, doing more than we will ever know. We agreed with her politics and appreciated her consistent advocacy for diverse populations, so we let her set her own agenda. She got involved in city politics, initiated trainings at social services agencies, and helped individual trans people. She built a web page for us, designed a flier, updated our resource guide, and started an online mailing list for trans community announcements.

Meanwhile the cancer she had been successfully treated for 5 years earlier had returned. Joanne called the tumor Carlos and attributed it to having waited so long to transition. After she had tried the chemotherapy and found it was not going to help this time, she went to work for the trans community with a passion and never mentioned her health problems or pain. Last November she organized the local Day of Remembrance for trans people whose lives were cut short, crying for others when her own life was nearing its end.

During her last year, Joanne made some special friends whose lives will be forever changed for the better from having shared this time with her. We of the Transgender Health Action Coalition had Joanne appear, give us her all, and pass on. Now we can best show our gratitude by continuing the work that she started.

## Penni Ashe Matz

Penni Ashe Matz, the managing editor and founder of Gender Advocacy Internet News (GAIN) <http://www.gender.org/gain/>, died of cancer at age 52 on March 25, 2001. We are indebted to GAIN for timely communication of trans community

news from its web page and by e-mail. GAIN has certainly been a valuable resource for this newsletter. Its mission, which must have mirrored Penni's, reads:



GAIN provides the latest news, press releases, conference announcements, editorials, and other items of interest to the transgender and transsexual community. In addition, GAIN will post news items that may foster improved relations between the transgender community and other (non-transgender) minority groups, following the belief that if we want *them* to care about *us*, then we need to care about *them*.

A friend of Penni's, Kim Carver, writes:

Penni was a systems analyst at Verizon and a Vietnam Veteran, and had lost her battle with cancer. She was best known in the trans community as an advocate for all those facing persecution or discrimination due to their gender expression or orientation.

Penni was instrumental in the founding of It's Time, Massachusetts (<http://www.tgender.net/itma>), a lobby and informational group guarding the rights of the gender-variant. In addition, she was a Board Member of GLOBE of Verizon, Inc., and was involved with MOCAA (Men of Color Against Aids). She died Monday, March 12, 2001, at the Wayside Hospice Residence in Wayland, MA. Penni leaves her mother, Phoebe, and her son, John.

Penni also leaves countless friends and supporters who know her best for her dedicated and tireless work on GAIN. Penni was a board member of Gender Education & Advocacy, Inc. She was also a director of Gender Education & Advocacy, Inc. ([www.gender.org](http://www.gender.org)).

Penni was 52. Donations can be made to the Wayside Hospice, 266 Cochituate Road, Wayland, MA 01778.

Penni was recognized at the International Foundation for Gender Education's 2001 conference with the presentation of the Trinity Award. These awards, in the IFGE's words, "honor our heroes and heroines, people who have performed extraordinary acts of courage and love." I'd arranged to come to Chicago in hopes of seeing her accept in person. Instead, I had the honor of accepting on her behalf.

Penni and I lived on different coasts, and I never had the chance to meet her personally. But over the phone and online, she was a constant source of support, patience and wisdom. Almost unheard of in our sometimes-contentious circle, she never had an unkind word for anyone. Penni represented the best our community has to offer, and I'm profoundly grateful to have known her.

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## TS/TG BENEFITS FOR SF EMPLOYEES

By Jamison Green

Thanks to efforts made by the San Francisco Human Rights Commission staff and members of the trans community here, transgendered or transsexual employees of San Francisco City and County will soon be free from exclusions that restricted access to health insurance benefits.

In the new benefit year that begins July 1, 2001, all San Francisco City and County employees who require psychotherapy and hormones may receive them under the routine psychotherapy and pharmacy benefits — NO MORE EXCLUSION for GID or Transsexualism. SF City & County employees who are transsexual may obtain surgical benefits (including FTM mastectomy, hysterectomy/oophorectomy, genital reconstruction, and MTF genital reconstruction) with a 15% co-pay in-network and 50% co-pay out-of-network, subject to a maximum benefit of \$50,000.00.

Surgery must be performed by a qualified provider as part of a treatment plan conforming to the HBGDA Standards of Care, or in cases necessitated by injury. Other cosmetic surgery and electrolysis will not be covered. Medical complications will be covered. No more exclusion for medically necessary surgical sex reassignment. Surgery benefits will be subject to a requirement of one year of Health Service System (HSS) membership, either as an employee, retiree, or dependent.

The Human Rights Commission and trans community members recognized that this plan has some shortcomings, and urged the HSS Board to address these areas in the coming year. The HSS Board called for the formation of a task force to identify qualified providers, examine the disparities that exist in the current implementation, monitor the usage of these benefits, and make recommendations for modifications in benefit provision.

This is the latest achievement in a decades-long public crusade for transsexual and transgender equality in San Francisco. Efforts to establish health insurance benefits and remove anti-transsexual exclusions began in 1996, following the passage of anti-discrimination ordinances that became effective in 1995. Many months of meetings, discussions, arguments, educational presentations, and several changes in HSS Board membership led to the establishment of the new benefits. There was only one dissenting vote on the HSS Board when this plan package was presented, and no public opposition.

Over 27,000 employees comprise the insured pool of San Francisco City and County employees, and the number of known transsexual employees is about 12.

Just as San Francisco paved the way for domestic partner coverage years ago, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission and the City's transgender activists are confident that statistics gleaned from this benefit program over time will be useful to other community group or employer efforts to remove exclusions and establish similar benefits in other insured pools. For more information, contact: San Francisco Human Rights Commission: Larry Brinkin 415.252.2510, or Marcus Arana 415.252.2519, or Jamison Green 510.658.0474 or 510.393.4785

## Transpeople Removed from California Disability Law Exclusions

By Jamison Green

In October of 2000, Assemblymember Sheila Kuehl scored another win for transsexual and transgendered people in California when Governor Davis signed A.B. 2222 into law. A.B. 2222 strengthens protections for Californians against disability-related discrimination under the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA). The bill is a response to recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions that significantly limited the protections under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Among other provisions, A.B. 2222 removes Transsexualism and Gender Identity Disorder (GID) from the list of conditions that are excluded from protections, and provides that the California law may provide greater protection than the ADA, which specifically excludes transsexual people and people diagnosed with GID.

The new law requires employers to enter into good faith negotiations with employees regarding "reasonable accommodations" for a disability. This means that those transsexual people who are forced to rely on the law for protection in medically-supervised on-the-job transitions may claim the condition as a disability or a perceived disability and look to this statewide law for support. Also, transgendered people who may be perceived to suffer from GID, regardless of any medical intervention, could be protected from discrimination in employment and housing on the basis of that perception.

FTM International, Inc. and the west coast office of Gender Education & Advocacy, Inc. hailed the announcement of A.B. 2222's enactment as a great step forward for transgender and transsexual civil rights. "The trans community owes a huge debt of gratitude to Assemblymember Kuehl," said Jamison Green, Chairman of Gender Education & Advocacy. "Her efforts got us into the Hate Crimes legislation in California in 1998, and into the Equity in Education Act in 1999. Now this protection in the area of employment and housing makes California one of the most trans-inclusive states in the nation."

The new law went into effect on January 1, 2001. California transpeople who feel they have been discriminated against in employment or housing and who wish to claim a disability or perceived disability may file complaints with their local FEHA office anywhere in the state.

"This statewide effort strengthens the local ordinances that are in effect in several California cities," said Dion Manley, President of FTM International, Inc. "Now transsexual people don't have to live only in the cities to have some protection against discrimination."

"Disability laws are not the only area through which transsexual people should seek civil protections, however," Green cautioned. "Medicalization is not the answer when it comes to de-pathologizing gender variance and gender expression. There remains much work to do to establish full civil rights for all transpeople and to ensure that we are reasonably safe from abuse and aggression, and have equal access to employment, housing, and quality medical care. For now, however, we can breathe a collective sigh of relief as one more barrier is removed, one more exclusion is struck down."

## Transgender Christians Speak Out

A groundbreaking cluster of articles highlights transgendered Christians in *The Other Side's* May-June 2001 issue, especially the unique concerns of transgendered people within the church. With particular attention to the spiritual ramifications of gender oppression, the articles in this issue invite the church and society to listen to and learn from the experience of transgendered Christians — both their personal stories as well as their challenge to mainstream cultural understandings of gender.

An article by Erin Swenson, a Presbyterian minister who transitioned and whose ordination was upheld, challenges the church about justice and inclusion — challenges that move far beyond gender issues.

**“The church, an institution characterized by its strong patriarchy (in spite of being the Bride of Christ), has entered a time when it must truly face the deconstruction of gender as we have known it. And my request that the church recognize my transgendered reality comes at a time when we as the church are disoriented by our own transgenderism.” — Erin Swenson**

*The Other Side*, <http://www.theotherside.org>, is an independent and ecumenical Christian publication advancing a healing Christian vision that is biblical and compassionate, appreciative of the creative arts, and committed to the intimate intertwining of personal spirituality and social transformation. Available by subscription only (\$24 per year in the U.S. for 6 bimonthly issues). Call 1.800.700.9280 or email [outreach@theotherside.org](mailto:outreach@theotherside.org) for more information.

## TSELF Scholarships

The International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) has announced that it will be awarding numerous scholarships to transgender-identified students in the helping and caring professions through its collaborative Transgender Scholarship and Education Legacy Fund (TSELF) in the U.S. and Canada.

Deadline: Applications for the Fall Awards must be postmarked by August 1st. Supporting materials should arrive within one week of each deadline. Applicants will be notified of their award status during the month directly following the application deadline. Applications are available online at: <http://www.tself.org>. TSELF can be reached at: International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE), TSELF Awards Committee, PO Box 540229, Waltham, MA 02454-0229. Phone: 781.899.2212. Contact Julie Johnson, Chair IFGE [julie@tself.org](mailto:julie@tself.org) or Carrie Davis, Project Director [carrie@tself.org](mailto:carrie@tself.org).

## THERAPY GROUP FOR FTMS AT NEW LEAF IN SF, CA

This group will be a safe place to meet others who share your issues and have a new perspective on them, and hopefully gain more clarity. FTMs of all sexual orientations are welcome to join the group.

For more information, contact Patrick Califia-Rice, MFTI, at 415.626.7000, ext. 423. Patrick is an FTM clinician at New Leaf, a community-based organization that provides mental health services to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered communities. New Leaf charges on a sliding scale. The agency is located at 1853 Market Street (at Guerrero) in San Francisco.

## Wheelchair Fund for Retiring Leader of American Boyz

The East Coast Female-to-Male Group has established The Wheelchair Fund to benefit retiring American Boyz, Inc. (AmBoyz) founder and former coordinator-in-chief Gary Bowen. Bowen, also the founder and former chair of the True Spirit Conference (TSC), lives with disabilities as he continues to serve on the boards of AmBoyz and TSC. Bowen has also served on the board of directors of other trans organizations, including GenderPac (GPAC) and It's Time America (ITA) and is an award-winning author and editor. Funds are needed immediately and those wishing to contribute should send their check in any amount by postal mail endorsed to The Wheelchair Fund at: ECFTMG, P.O. Box 60585, Florence, MA 01062

## IGLHRC Releases Activist's Guide to Human Rights

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) has released of the first comprehensive guide to international human rights mechanisms for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender people. The guide is titled *Making the Mountain Move: An Activist's Guide to How Human Rights Mechanisms Can Work for You*, and contains theoretical as well as practical advice and detailed descriptions about the use of United Nations' mechanisms, as well as those of the Inter-American, European, and African human rights protections systems. The guide is available in English at <http://www.iglhrc.org/news/factsheets/unguide.html>. A Spanish version will be forthcoming. Contact: Sydney Levy +1-415-255-8680, [sydney@iglhrc.org](mailto:sydney@iglhrc.org)

IGLHRC is a US based non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO) whose mission is to protect and advance the human rights of all people and communities subject to discrimination or abuse on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status.

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# Where are all the FTMs?

## a good effort at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Sex, Gender and Cross-Dressing

By B. Hover

The Renaissance Transgender Association's 4th International Congress on Sex, Gender, and Cross-Dressing took place October 5-8, 2000 at the Warwick Hotel in Center City, Philadelphia. When I first heard of this conference – back when it was supposed to be held in May 2000 – I thought there would not be any transguys there, or anything of interest to me as a boy-dyke somewhere on the FTM continuum. I figured Renaissance was all by, for, and about straight, rich, male, closeted cross-dressers. Despite my misgivings (and misperceptions), I went, and I'm glad I did.

While the majority of workshops and attendees were not necessarily FTM-related, I found myself having a good time. Partly, it's just always nice to be around a bunch of non-traditionally gendered folks;

or folks who are traditionally gendered but not in the gender they were assigned at birth; or, it's just nice to be around transgender folks and gender queers and our allies. But more than that, the organizers of the conference really made an effort to be inclusive of everyone on the transgender spectrum – transsexuals as well as cross dressers, transguys as well as transwomen, and those in between.

As with any conference, the quality of the workshops and sessions I attended ranged from mediocre to fascinating and intelligent. My main complaint of the presenters in some of the non-transguy-focused workshops and sessions was that they used the term "transgender" as if they were relaying information relevant to or about *all* transgender people, when really much of what they were talking

about was specific only to transwomen, or sometimes only transsexual women. Sometimes the ideal of complete inclusion gets in the way of thinking critically about what the point of that inclusion is... sometimes it's OK not to be inclusive, and better to be deliberately focused on one segment of the community than to aim to address the whole community and fail. At least there was some acknowledgment, however incomplete, that the transgender community is not monolithic.

All of the workshops which were focused primarily on transmen were held on Saturday. First, at 11am, Jamison Green gave a heartfelt and engaging talk/essay/performance piece

continued on  
next page



### Connecticut Sex Discrimination

#### Law Covers Trans People

The Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities has ruled that a state law banning sex discrimination covers transgendered people. The ruling came in the case of Ann Hopkins, an associate at the accounting firm of Price Waterhouse, who contended she was denied a partnership because partners considered her too masculine. "This is a very important decision for transgendered people, who have historically been excluded from many civil rights protections," said Jennifer Levi, a staff attorney at Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, a legal group. "The commission's ruling takes note of the still-pervasive discrimination that many people face simply because they do not meet society's stereotype of what people think a 'real woman' or a 'real man' should look like. This decision affirms the recent trend correcting the historical error of excluding transgendered people from our laws.

## NEW INTERSEX TEACHING KIT

### for Women's, Gender & Queer Studies Classes

The Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) has put together a new teaching kit designed for instructors of college-level Women's, Gender and Queer Studies and related fields. The kit packages everything a teacher needs to be able to introduce intersex issues in their classes appropriately: a 16-page booklet featuring an analysis of problematic ways in which the topic of intersexuality has been used, a sample ready-to-use course unit and an extensive list of recommended materials; a copy of *Hermaphrodites Speak!* (the first and only documentary film by and about intersex people); special issues devoted to intersex of two journals; a list of guidelines for non-intersex writers writing about intersexuality and intersex people; and other useful materials. The journal special issues included are *Chrysalis: Journal of Transgressive Gender Identities* and *Journal of Clinical Ethics*; both are guest edited by intersex activists and entirely dedicated to the discussion surrounding intersex. Comprising materials with a list price of over \$100, the kit is distributed by ISNA for only \$75. Founded in 1993, Intersex Society is a 503(c)(3) non-profit organization working to end secrecy, shame and unwanted genital surgeries for children born with atypical sex anatomy. For more information, visit <http://www.isna.org> on the web or contact Emi Koyama [emi@isna.org](mailto:emi@isna.org) or Cheryl Chase [info@isna.org](mailto:info@isna.org). Intersex Society of North America, 707. 283.0036.

called *Willful Destiny: The confusion, pain and courage endemic to changing sex*. He spoke about his work and life and defined himself, not as an activist – but as an “artist who speaks.” James made the powerful argument that a gender quest is really a kind of spiritual quest – a journey towards being the best self we can be.

Jamison then convened the panel workshop *Where Are all the FTMs?* at 4pm (after running Susan Stryker’s slide show and presentation in her absence – he had a busy day). It was the most populated workshop I attended, as well as the longest – there were 40 people there, and it ran over 2 hours. We talked about the merits of inclusion, why transguys might not come to events such as the Renaissance conference, and took a number of interesting detours into legal theory and practice, intersex issues, and other topics. (I found the off-topic conversations worthwhile, although some folks pointed out that such detours were a typical example of how attention gets shifted away from the lives and concerns of FTMs, even in a supposedly FTM-centered context.)

Some answers to the question of “where are all the FTMs” or why don’t transguys come to events like this one included:

- Lack of funds
- Choosing FTM-specific conferences as the “one conference per year” we can afford with limited time, money, or other resources
- The perception that this conference, and others like it, won’t have any transmen involved or attending, so what’s the point of going?
- Many folks who might be described as FTM identify as male, not trans, and stay away from transgender events
- Not feeling legitimated as “truly trans” – not having had surgery, etc.
- Transgender guys can “dress” and often pass all the time so we don’t need to go to conferences to get to be ourselves
- Just like “gay” often means gay male, trans often means transgender female
- The lack of FTM-specific programming at general trans conferences
- Lack of real inclusion, perception or reality of tokenism by conference organizers in including or inviting FTM folks



Photos by Ben Singer

From Top: (1) James Green receives a BIG check award from Renaissance; (2) Billy (l) and Bali (r) at the *Transgender Sex Workers Panel*; (3) Lyon Vick (B. Hover in background) at the *Where are the FTMs?* Panel.

Despite all these barriers to making events truly inclusive of large numbers of FTMs, the group did have some suggestions and examples of successful inclusion efforts. Jamison pointed out Southern Comfort has boasted ever-increasing numbers and percentages of FTM attendees, and this past conference was organized almost entirely by FTMs. Suggestions for more successful integration of FTMs into general transgender events included: offering child care, reducing costs, truly including transguys in the planning and organizing processes, and having a variety of guy-oriented programming. After a lengthy discussion on the need to include FTMs in research and what barriers there are to that inclusion, the workshop ended with some points about inclusion within the FTM community: we must make room for everyone on the FTM spectrum, include the younger folks who may

put less emphasis on identity, and not rely on the concept of realness to justify our lives. With that, everyone filed off to go find dinner, or go to the banquet.

After the banquet, the Renaissance organizers presented Jamison Green with a surprise award for his long service to the community. I had heard about the award in advance, and been told it was a “big secret” so I expected some big ceremony. Instead, Jamison accepted quickly and graciously and moved right off the stage. The formal

presentations were followed by “Grae Phillips, TG Chanteuse” who did a gag at one point in the evening where he asked for a “real masculine guy” to come up on stage. Wally Moyer, a big activist in the Philadelphia transgender community and a transguy himself, somehow got volunteered and ended up “dressed” in a costume that included fake breasts on the outside of his clothes, a wig, some makeup, and a little dress-like thing. I would have been mortified if it had been me, but Wally handled it with his typical affability and everyone had a good laugh.

I left the conference having met some good people, and with the sense that Renaissance was trying very hard to be inclusive of me and whole range of people who might not think of Renaissance as “our” group. I could have done with more FTM programming, more real inclusiveness in the presentations supposed to be about the “whole transgender community,” and some more trans guys in attendance, but in general, it was a successful conference and it can only get better from here.



# TrannyFest

Transgender and Transgenre Cinema  
Call for Entries

Tranny Fest: Transgender & Transgenre Cinema, in San Francisco, is calling for entries for films and videos. There is no entry fee and our deadline is August 1, 2001. Tranny Fest will be held some time in Mid-November, TBA. 2001 Guidelines and entry forms can be downloaded from their website: <http://members.aol.com/trannyfest>

They are also looking for donations and volunteers. Tranny Fest is a week-long celebration of the sweet complexities of the Transgender experience. The theme this year will be Tranny Fest 2001 *Gender Armageddon!*

Trans and fans will participate in a Multi-galaxy of performance, panels and parties ending in a glamorous marathon of "Finger-Snappin, groin-bumpin, tear-jerkin, heartwarming, gut-bustin mix of experimental, documentary, drama & pornographic films!"

## Dutch Film Fest

The Dutch Transgender Film Festival will be held on October 3-7 at the Cultural Center De Balie in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The 5-day event includes film screenings, presentations, panels and discussions, highlights of the latest releases on transgender cinema, shorts and documentaries. A special program on Asian expressions features southeast Asian comedies, gender bending in the Hong Kong cinema, and cult classics from Japan.

Location: Cultural Centre De Balie, Kleine Gartmanplantsoen 10, 1017 RR, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. For tickets, reservations & information, call +31-(0)20-553 51 00.

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Submission Deadlines are the 15th of the Month Before Release

INTRODUCING

# Phallocy

by Jay Sennett, Filmmaker  
Writer and Activist

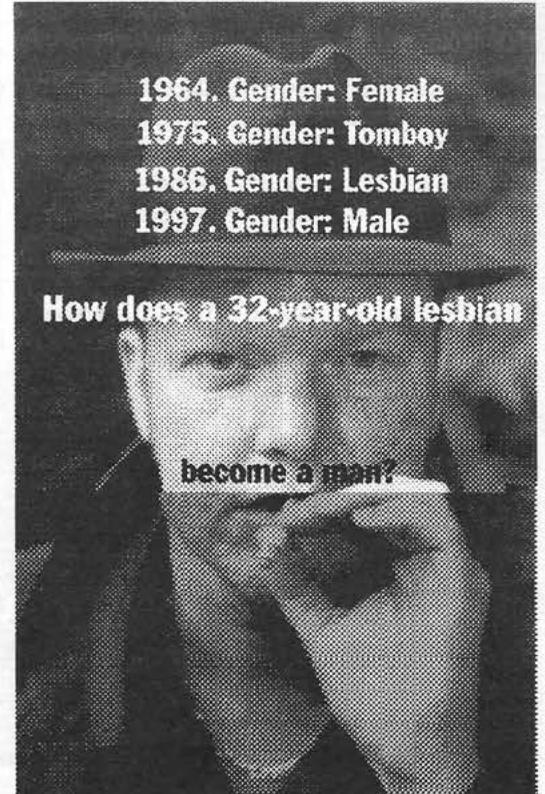
Jay Sennett has been in the trans community since 1994, and his recent video, *Phallocy*, has been playing around the country. According to Sennett:

"My private motto for my production company is 'movies for the rest of us.' I am passionate about including trans and intersexed people, fat people, people of color, people with disabilities, queers — my people — on the screen. My vision for the screen is the world in which I live."

*Phallocy* is an autobiographical film using spoken word, music and experimental techniques to explore the struggles of a female-to-male transsexual. The double-exposed, sepia-toned footage and sharp editing create the mood for the filmmaker's confrontation with living as a female-bodied man. *Phallocy* asks, but does not answer the question, "How does a 32-year-old lesbian become a man?"

"Whether we want to admit or not, FtMs (female-to-male transsexuals) struggle with the fact that we live in female bodies, without factory-direct penises. *Phallocy* is my attempt to come to terms with this reality, for myself," says Sennett.

*Phallocy* has screened at Women in the Director's Chair Film and Video Festival, The True Spirit 2001 Festival, the NW GenderQueer Film and Video Festival, and was a finalist in the Pink Apple Short Film Competition,



1964. Gender: Female  
1975. Gender: Tomboy  
1986. Gender: Lesbian  
1997. Gender: Male

How does a 32-year-old lesbian  
become a man?

Fraunfeld, Switzerland. Other scheduled screenings include Inside Out Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival, OUTFEST 2001: The 19th Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, San Francisco International Lesbian & Gay Film Festival 25th Anniversary, and Bologna Festival Internazionale di Cinema Gaylesbico.

Sennett is also the 2001 recipient of the prestigious Cultural Award, given by the Detroit Gay and Lesbian Pride and Community Service Awards Committee.

For further information, or if you would like a preview VHS, NTSC copy of *Phallocy*, please send an email to [jay@mrfancyproductious.com](mailto:jay@mrfancyproductious.com) or call 734 717 5093.



# Southern Comfort

## The Documentary

*Southern Comfort* (2000, 90 mins.) Produced, directed, photographed and edited by Kate Davis. Co-producer/sound: Elizabeth Adams. For HBO: Supervising Producer, Nancy Abraham; Executive Producer, Sheila Nevins. (The HBO Theatrical Documentary Presentation has been postponed from November until sometime in 2002, after the Academy Award nominations.)

*Southern Comfort*, an award-winning documentary, traces the last year in the life of Robert Eads, an FTM who died of ovarian cancer toward the end of the shoot in 1999. Kate Davis produced, directed, photographed and edited the documentary herself. The movie is intimate and provocative without being exploitative.

The film's first big showing in our community was at Southern Comfort 2000, <http://www.sccatl.org/>, a trans conference held each fall in Atlanta, Georgia — Eads' home state. Robert Eads was one of the movers and shakers at this event. Around the same time, *Southern Comfort*, the documentary, played at the Independent Films Feature Market in NYC, where TV programmers and even some theatrical distributors took notice.

When the 2001 Sundance Film Festival, the United States' top gathering for independent filmmakers, gave out its awards this January, *Southern Comfort*, took the coveted Documentary Grand Jury Prize. After the documentary won the Sundance award, HBO quickly made it into a commercial movie that premiered in New York on February 21 at the Film Forum. In April, *Southern Comfort* won the Golden Gate Award for biography at the San Francisco International Film Festival, where it sold out after two screenings. Also in San Francisco, clips from *Southern Comfort* were shown at Genderblast on April 28. Other awards include the 2nd place Audience Award Certificate at Berlin Film Festival and the Best International Documentary and Best Audience Appreciation Award at the Toronto HotDocs festival. It is still making the film festival circuit and may possibly be nominated for an Academy Award. So, more awards could easily be added to this list.

### Preview of *Southern Comfort* from the Web Site for the Southern Comfort Conference, 2000:

In a rural part of Georgia, north of Atlanta, there is a family gathering. A family of choice not blood. Three friends called brothers, celebrating life, love, and kinship. Their wives, lovers, and friends join the celebration.

An ordinary scene: talk, laughter, silliness, and some serious moments as well. Sounds like any other family function doesn't it? In a way it is, but in other ways this is far from the mere ordinary. There is a looming undertone present. You see this 52-year old country man with his cowboy hat and boots, a pipe in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other: this man is dying. He is dying of uterine cancer, which will take his life soon. Robert is no ordinary man. He is a special soul who just happened to be born female. It is his female organs that are taking his life, but not his spirit.

This film follows the final year of the life of Robert Allan Eads. He falls in love, though such happiness is bittersweet by the reality that his time is short.

He confronts visits from his biological family, dealing with the hurt and disappointment of not being accepted totally for who he is, who he has always been. They still see their daughter, everyone else sees a son.

Robert deals with the anger of rejection and prejudice from doctors turning him away, too embarrassed to see a Female-to-Male Transsexual. What would the other patients think? Does it matter: shouldn't life be more important than appearance? Could Robert's life have been saved if only someone sooner, some professional, put life before practice?

Robert worries about his 'brothers', both of whom are also Transmen. He has strength and stamina; holding on to life in its fullest. He makes plans, saying, "If only I can make it one more month, to one more special occasion."

A spiritual being, with all his faith intact, Robert makes a pact with God. "Let me live till Southern Comfort and I'll be ready to come home". *Southern Comfort* is the



Robert Eads and girlfriend Lola Cola

Transgender Convention held in Atlanta, Georgia every year. Robert is to give a luncheon speech at the conference in September. Through his pain he endures. Through his words he will be remembered. He even has enough will power to take his girl to the big banquet, dancing with the love of his life at the Prom.

Throughout all the suffering, there is joy. This family has love and support, even amongst the disagreements and petty jealousy that all families have. There is no easy way to say goodbye, to bid farewell to those you love.

Robert makes his mark in the world and peace with himself and those around him. "It's time bro., I'm going home to meet my maker".

# TRANS FICTION

## An Interview with Laura Antoniou by Michael M. Hernandez

The overwhelming majority of books about transmen are either academic or biographical in nature. Very few works of fiction exist. Laura Antoniou is a rather talented author with more than a few books under her belt. Her latest series, consisting of four books with more on the way, have a transman as a central character. Make no bones about it, these books are graphically erotic in nature and deal with the concepts of dominance, servitude, and sexuality in a clever and entertaining fashion. Enough about my thoughts, here is information regarding the series directly from the author's lips —

**MH:** How would you describe the Marketplace series to a new reader?

**LA:** A series of stories about the people who inhabit the world of a real-life, modern day consensual slave market; the potential slaves, their trainers and their owners.

**MH:** How did a transman become one of the central characters?

**LA:** Recently, I found my initial proposal for the first three books. In it, I wrote that "4 novice slaves enter training at a remote Long Island mansion run by two dynamic slave trainers who might be lovers and their mysterious majordomo" — at that point, I had no idea what about this majordomo might possibly be mysterious — I just liked the idea of having a suspicious sort of butler lurking about to do the dirty work like slapping sense into the would-be slaves. When I actually started writing, though, I got this picture in my mind of someone who carried himself like he had been in service before — someone who wasn't handsome or charming, but arrogant and snide... and then I had him reach into his fly and pull out

a very well made fake cock. And as I wrote that, I was thinking, "yeah, that's who he is..." even though I wasn't quite sure how that would fit into the story — which was about 4 other characters. Or, so I thought.

**MH:** How did Chris Parker come into being? [Please note: from his mama's womb does not count as a legitimate response.]

**LA:** Well, Chris didn't really come into being in his mama's womb. Chris is a product of growing up in the 70s, with an older gay brother who defines the word *macho*, in a home atmosphere that was somewhat less than supportive of non-standard gender and orientation roles and identities. Chris is, of course part me — all of my characters are part me — but he's also a touch of what *might have been* in the stories of a whole group of real people, trans and not, who came through part of what my fictional history for him deals with.

Chris, for better or worse, is also the repository for some of my more extreme fantasies and philosophies. He is also the result of a few years of my struggling with feeling stupid as I

To be thrilled at the touch of leather, aroused by the sound of harsh words, or satisfied by the security of rigid bondage is the mark of a lover.

To be thrilled at the opportunity to provide useful service, aroused by a pleased nod, and satisfied by the proverbial job well done, is the mark of a slave.

It may sound severe. Almost anti-erotic. Until you see two people, owner and owned, existing in a complementary relationship where each suits the other like balances on a delicate scale.

— excerpted from *The Marketplace*, by Laura Antoniou, available through Mystic Rose Books

Antoniou has conducted workshops on service in a dominant/submissive relationship at leather conferences throughout the United States, including the Vicious Valentine (Chicago), Boston Fetish Flea Market, SM Ball (Houston), Leather University (Ft. Lauderdale), TES 2000 (New York), and Southeast Leatherfest (Atlanta). She writes about such relationships extensively in her erotic s/m *Marketplace* series, regarded as "the SM fiction of choice among pansexuals" by the editor of *SM Classics*. Antoniou has also had great success as an editor, creating the groundbreaking *Leatherwomen* anthologies; as well as *By Her Subdued*, a collection of stories about dominant women; and *No Other Tribute*, which features submissive women. Her non-fiction anthologies include *Some Women*, and an homage to author John Preston entitled *Looking for Mr. Preston*. Antoniou's novels and anthologies have been published in the United States, Germany, Japan, and Korea, to international acclaim. Antoniou has been a featured speaker and presenter at the University of Washington (where her essay *Unsafe at Any Speed* was first presented), as well as Columbia University, the New School, and New York University, as well as leather, s/m, lesbian, and writers' conferences throughout the United States.



asked some very uncomfortable questions of various transmen about their own lives and histories. And, lastly, he is the result of my being a writer who wanted to create a character who was *different* — after *The Story of O* and the *Beauty* series and *Exit to Eden* and *Mr. Benson*, I wanted a hero who was a switch, who wasn't beautiful, and who was struggling with issues a lot deeper than "gosh, isn't it naughty to be a slave?"

**MH:** Was it difficult to gather background information?

**LA:** Difficult as hell. While I was writing the first two books, there was almost *nothing* I could find in printed matter. Everything about being trans seemed to be about male-to-female transitioning, with a line or two, or maybe a chapter about ftm. And, I got bad information, too, about hormones and therapy. After I finally broke down and started asking transmen some direct questions — something I still feel shy about, by the way — I started getting a combination of opinion, real life experience, and slowly, I began to get a better feel for when things had to happen for him and how they might have turned out — and how other people would have reacted. I do have to say that from my perspective, there's been an explosion of information on transitioning since the growth of the internet — one of the few nice things I can say about that medium.

**MH:** How does Chris identify? Sexual orientation?

**LA:** I think that would depend upon who was asking. There's no question that he's what society calls bisexual, and can form sexual, affectionate or loving relationships with people of all genders. He has not ever called himself transsexual or transgendered — in fact, he either says that he is a man or deflects a direct question by asking another question (well, he IS Jewish), as he does near the end of *The Trainer*, when Michael asks, "You're a woman?" — to which his response is "Do I look like a woman?" If pressed, he'd probably say he was a gay man with a very open mind, LOL. But he would not be a good candidate for Mr. Tranny Boy 2000. He'd probably rather eat glass.

**MH:** There has been a great deal of conjecture and discussion about Chris from readers of the first three books because you didn't just come out and say that Chris was trans. Rather you dropped a variety of hints. Why?

**LA:** Well — after my initial "gosh, isn't this a mysterious twist to add to the character?" glee, I then felt that his gender was so *beside the point*. The real mystery did in fact turn out to be "why is this man — so suited for slavery — not a slave?" So, when it came time to wind up *The Marketplace*, I thought that I *did* reveal that he was trans. The trouble is that the character who came closest to *figuring him out* was the LEAST trustworthy character in the book, Sharon. Therefore, her reasoning was suspect, I guess. By the time I wrote *The Slave*, Chris' gender wasn't an issue in the story, although his orientation was, and I played around with that for a while. Then, as readers started to find me and ask questions, I figured, well, I'd better put something clearer in the next book. So, I mentioned things like therapy and medications —

I had a throw away line here and there like "you've changed in more ways than the obvious", and then I painted a huge fucking phoenix on his chest, with the wings brushing *right* where the scars from chest surgery would be! And THEN, I put his dick in the sink! I mean, maybe you could believe that he put on a dick to scare the novices in book one, but really — why keep using it in book 3? *sigh*

**MH:** What was the funniest theory presented re: Chris by a reader?

**LA:** Funniest? That he is a member of a long-lost quasi-royal family from Europe who was raised as a boy because there were no male heirs to take over their prestigious slave-training family business.

**MH:** What was the most annoying theory?

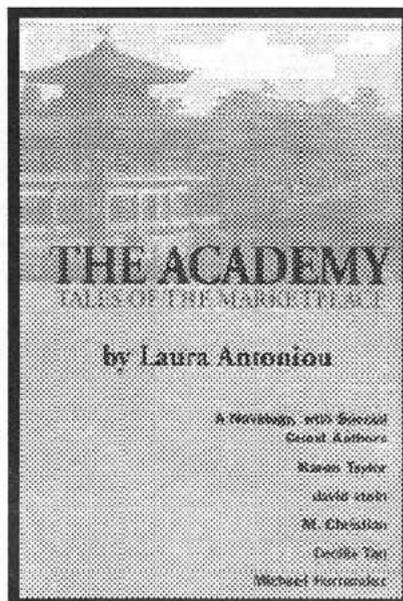
**LA:** That he was a man who cut his own cock off to please a former owner. I can't for the life of me figure out a way to rescue someone who would do that and make them a noble character. I would have too much of a mixture of pity and contempt for them. I don't know how I would place myself in their mind to write about them in any convincing manner.

**MH:** In *The Academy: Tales from the Marketplace*, you spell out clearly that Chris is trans. What was the response from your readers?

**LA:** Well, some of them are very offended. I have heard from about a dozen women — and a dozen *anything* is pretty major for me — who just feel betrayed in some way that he "isn't a real man". Some people have accused me of making far too much up — that *real* transmen can't fool anyone, that there would be *no way* for someone as *masculine* as Chris to have once been a woman. I write back to the one lady who said that and explained, "Chris would agree. That is why he never was a woman, but always a man." She didn't get it. One or two gay men were disappointed.

Some people are amazed because they had never heard of FTM transitioning. This is the saddest, weirdest part of it all, as far as I'm concerned. It just seems to me that when you know enough about the SM culture, you are pushing into all sorts of areas of sexuality which should lead you to more and more information, broaden your horizons, as it were. But somehow, that doesn't happen. I added some ftm websites onto my own web page for people who ask questions, and I try not to say things like "where have you been???" — which is not very helpful, and I know that.

More people just seem content — or at least they are not complaining. A lot of people have assured me that they *knew*, long ago. Hmph. Could have fooled me, from the number of people who asked me questions at readings and through the e-mail. And every once in a while, I get a note from a transman who is delighted, and that always makes my day.



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**Laura Antoniou from previous page**

**MH:** What would you say is Chris' greatest challenge? strength? weakness?

**LA:** His greatest challenge is overcoming the destiny laid out for him by the Trainer of Trainers, LOL. Or, at least, that's my perspective from my lofty perch above the soap opera that is my world. Down in the nitty gritty of the story, I think it's that he has always wished that he could see himself as someone more like his brother, and instead he has seen what he feels he lacks to be a *proper* man. He's got one of those twisted mirrors like anorexic people have — it shows him lies, which eat into him. His strength is that he really does love, without reservation, the concept of pure service for its own sake, and he has a canny ability to inspire that love in others. His greatest weakness is that while he expends so much energy seeing the potential in others, he often fails to take his own potential seriously. That, plus he has this annoying habit of falling in love with people he gives his loyalty *or* his direction to. You could argue that's a strength, I suppose, but Anderson would not agree.

**MH:** What is in store for Chris in the future?

**LA:** Oh, ye gods, loads of stuff. I am not finished with him, although it does seem like Arthur Conan Doyle, I've pushed him off a cliff. He returns in the next book, *The Reunion*, to meet up with one of his favorite trainees, Robin, and confuse, once again, the issue of which gender he likes best. (Grin — do we have to pick?) For once, it's a book where Chris is NOT the character carrying around a chip on his shoulder and angst in his wallet, so I'm having fun writing about him just relaxing and being on vacation and laughing at the absurdities of life. He is a major character again in *The Inheritor*, book 6, as well, and that will shift back to more serious conflicts. Then, I will see whether I need a break from novels and will work on a short story collection with my wife as the co-author, or whether I will start on *PARKER*, my ultimate Chris book, pretty much the story of his early years.

**MH:** Have you written about other trans characters?

**LA:** Well, in *The Marketplace*, I introduce Alison Cruz, who works as a spotter for potential slaves. She is a transwoman herself, whose story got a little rounded out in *The Academy*, where we learn that she went to Anderson seeking training herself at one time. As far as readers know, she is the first one to call Chris a transsexual. There have been people of mingled genders mentioned here and there as highly desired slaves —

but no word from them as characters concerning how they identify. Some people have called Ken Mandarin trans, but she is most assuredly a crossdresser, or a drag king on occasion, and would not considered herself transgendered. And then, there's Stuart, in *The Academy*, my nod to a more modern, 90's kind of tranny boy, cute as heck and not so shy about taking his pants off, LOL. I intend to write more about Stuart, too, once he gets out of his Boy Scout phase. Or, maybe while he's still in it. That would be a challenge, to show him topping, LOL...

**MH:** Why do you think that there is a lack of fiction re: transmen?

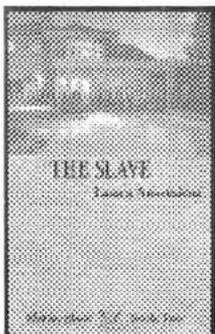
**LA:** Well, problem number one is the lack of an audience. Who buys porn? Mostly men, and mostly straight men who were born with their own dicks, raised as boys, etc. Straight men, as a group, would not be very interested in tranny boy smut. Now, no straight dude has written to me yet to tell me how betrayed he feels about Chris, because frankly — I assume that most of them are smug because they figure Chris is just a dressed up woman, and therefore unthreatening as a masculine character. I could be wrong. I just don't think I am. Of the few het guys who have discussed the books with me, I have found the common mistake many of them make is assuming that Chris is some sort of uber-butch dyke, and that somehow... *yawn!*

So, once we get past the audience problem and assume that there are people who would love to read more transman smut, the question concerns how to convince publishers that this is viable. If I had pitched my books to my first publisher as "books about a guy who used to be a woman", they would have passed and gone onto my next proposal, which was so dreadful, I can't even begin to remember it. Instead, they were SM novels with a wide spectrum of characters ranging in all genders and orientations. "Pansexual" was a hot buzzword back then. They bought it. That Chris became a break-out character was... well, I don't know what it was. I never expected it to happen.

Then, you have to find the writers. Let's face it — I *wanted* to write about a transdude, and I had problems asking and finding out information I needed. Most writers of porn can't be bothered to find out that the Mound of Venus is a part of the HAND, not a slang term for female genitalia. Do research to write porn? That's too much like work.

So, you turn to writers like me, with my hidden agenda of writing something new, and writers who actually do know more without having to ask personal questions of relative strangers — like transmen themselves... and I think there would be six people there, LOL.

There should be more, lots more. But it shouldn't turn into something people feel the need to do, like the obligatory *lesbian* sex in a straight porn video. It should be done because it's interesting and hot and people will get turned on reading about it or watching it.



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**MH:** How long have you been writing erotica/smut/porn?

**LA:** I started to write to tell the stories that were lurking in the parts of my brain that became active when SM stuff came to mind, which was at a real early age. I was always a pervert. I disguised my fantasies in the world of vampires and high fantasy and science fiction and a dabble into corporate espionage — but it was all a front for getting some of my characters tied up, kidnapped, tortured, beaten, raped, humiliated, abused, etc. Oh, and then rescued, trained, redeemed, etc.

**MH:** What advice would you give fledgling writers?

**LA:** Read, read, read, read, write, read, read, write some more, read, read, write...and repeat as often as necessary. You cannot be a good writer without reading. Make the library your friend. Respect your work — don't give it away so other people can steal it and make money from it. Find people who will read it and tell you the truth, and don't get angry at what they say.

Write what you know and research what you don't. Be nice to your editors, they don't mean it. Try not to take reviews personally, although you will. Make sure you know which friends can be counted upon for that wonderfully supportive "everything you do is good" sort of praise and feed them often. Don't give up your day job. Drink 8 glasses of water a day.

**MH:** If someone wants more information about you and/or *The Marketplace* where would they go?

**LA:** To my web site! [www.iron-rose.com/marketplace](http://www.iron-rose.com/marketplace)

**MH:** *The Marketplace* series was sold out and therefore out of print for a period of time. What books are available now and how would someone go about purchasing them?

**LA:** *The Marketplace*, *The Slave*, *The Academy*, and *The Trainer* are currently published by Mystic Rose Books, [www.mysticrose.com](http://www.mysticrose.com). I am working on the fifth book in the Marketplace series, *The Reunion*, which I hope will be released by the end of 2001. You can order them at [mysticrose.com](http://mysticrose.com), [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) and [bn.com](http://bn.com). A lot of classy, high-quality fetish/leather stores carry my books as well — places like Toys in Babeland, The Crypt, Grand Opening, [blowfish.com](http://blowfish.com), and [qsm.com](http://qsm.com). Or, you can order them at any mainstream bricks and mortar store, since they are nationally distributed by the largest paperback wholesalers. Thank goodness, too. It all keeps me going. ❖

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Holly Devor

This book provides a detailed, compassionate, intimate and inclusive 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.

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*Heroes, Rogues, and Lovers: Testosterone and Behavior* by James McBride Dabbs (with Mary Godwin Dabbs). McGraw-Hill Publishers, New York, 2000. 284 pages; \$24.95 Hardcover. ISBN 0-07-135739-4

Reviewed by Jack Griffin

With the recent release of Androgel, there has been a spate of media attention around the effects of testosterone on male behavior and health. There were cover stories in *TIME* and the *New York Times Magazine*, as well as articles in *Men's Journal*, *Salon.com*, *Esquire*, and many other places. These articles each tried to make sense of this "male" sex hormone, but none could give the complete story like *Heroes, Rogues, and Lovers: Testosterone and Behavior*, by James McBride Dabbs, Ph.D.

Testosterone, as many of us know, is a powerful little chemical. Its molecular structure is almost identical to that of estrogen, but for the one extra carbon atom in testosterone. Take away that carbon atom, and you've got estrogen. Men and women both produce testosterone, but men make about ten times as much as women. The normal testosterone range for a human male is 300 to 1,000 nanograms per deciliter of blood; for a female, it is 40 to 60 nanograms per deciliter. An FTM's testosterone level (my own included) can soar higher than a whopping 2,000 ng/dl just after an injection. At that level, you'd have more than twice as much testosterone as the high-normal male. That's like having the testosterone of two football players — or two actors, or two construction workers — racing through your bloodstream. Football players, actors, construction workers, and FTMs are just a few of the testosterone-charged people who play a part in *Heroes, Rogues, and Lovers*.

A professor and head of the Social/Cognitive Psychology Program at Georgia State University, James Dabbs has been studying testosterone and its effects on human behavior for more than 20 years. In this book, he answers the questions to everything you've always wanted to know about testosterone, but were afraid to ask. The book is filled with case studies and first-hand scientific research that explores testosterone's role in just about every aspect of the human mind and behavior. Dabbs writes, "Testosterone... is related to things as diverse as criminal violence and the way people smile. It affects our ability with language and our ability to navigate in space. It helps predict what occupation we will enter and whether or not we will marry, have extramarital affairs, or divorce."

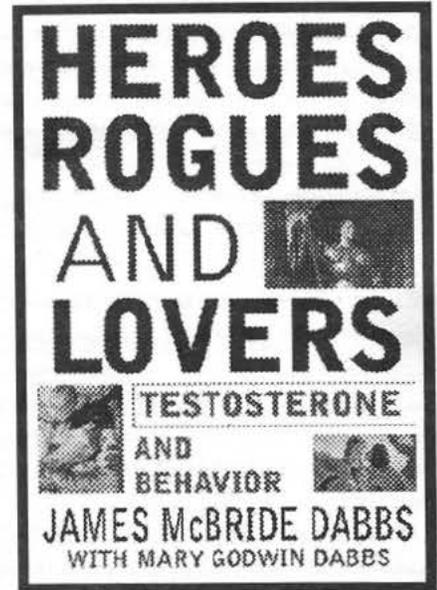
Violent criminals, Dabbs illustrates, tend to be higher in testosterone than most men and women (Dabbs does not limit his discussion of high-T personalities to men, but includes several high-T women, from local heroes to Buffy the Vampire Slayer), as are combat soldiers, blue-collar workers, firefighters, and actors. People with higher testosterone have more sex partners, are more likely to divorce, and they smile less than people with lower testosterone. People with lower testosterone tend to be better educated, make more money, and have longer-lasting relationships than those with higher levels of T. The hormone is related to navigation, spatial abilities, and travel. "After testosterone injections," writes the author, "birds travel farther, and mice are less afraid to enter new and strange places." It affects mental rotation ability, the ability to visualize objects from various angles.

"People who do well on mental rotation tests should have an advantage when it comes to throwing spears, chipping stone axes, using maps, and repairing carburetors." Dabbs continues, "Females who receive testosterone injections in preparation for sex-change operations show large increases in mental rotation ability."

It even affects the kind of art people like to look at. Men (or high-T people) tend to like "pictures with a faraway focus that showed the horizon, while women liked close-ups with details in the foreground." Like I said, everything you wanted to know about testosterone.

*Heroes* is written in a folksy style that makes the book feel less like capital-S "Science," and more like a collection of juicy stories. Dabbs' voice (accompanied by his wife and co-author, Mary) is gentle and rambling. While reading along, I got the feeling that I was sitting on the Dabbses' front porch, enjoying a cold beer, and listening to tales of heroism and true adventure. Like any good story, the book is filled with humor, intelligence, and characters who seem to be larger-than-life. And when you are done reading, though you didn't feel it happening, you come away with a first-class education, knowing much more than you did before you began. In addition to the wealth of information the book itself provides, there are several pages of notes at the end that will lead you, if you are the curious type, to numerous articles, books, and transcripts on the subjects of sex, gender, biology, psychology, testosterone — and a few items about transsexuals. While this is not a book about transmen, the third chapter does open with the story of a Dutch FTM and his description of the effects testosterone had on his mind and personality. Dabbs treats this subject respectfully, using male pronouns in reference to the FTM (a rare feat amongst non-trans writers these days).

Every transman currently using, or considering, testosterone should read this book. No one has more personal knowledge of testosterone's effects than (hormonal) transmen, and yet there is only one of us in this book. That is not the author's fault. If more FTMs took part in scientific research, we would know more about what makes us tick, and where our future lies. Biology may not be destiny, but it plays an important part. As transsexuals, many of us rely on science to make our lives more livable. It behooves us all to educate ourselves as much as we can about that science, and to take part in its advancement, should the opportunity arise. *Heroes, Rogues, and Lovers* is an important, fun, and fascinating part of that education.



# SEARCH FOR TRUTH + INTEGRITY through life, art and surgery!

By Jaimieson Marc Cahlll

I was born in 1954, the younger of dissimilar male twins, in Oxford, England. Due to misconception, anatomical appearance and my inability to speak at the time, my birth gender was incorrectly perceived. My initial experience was that my twin brother was referred to as a boy, and his anatomical bits were different from mine. Although I knew I was male too, in the face of apparent physical evidence to the contrary, and being the uneasy recipient of constant ridicule, my truth just wouldn't convert into words. In my silence, I unconsciously acted according to my true gender.

There followed an extremely painful childhood — and life. Feeling understandably unacceptable and unreal, alienated and lonely (despite my twin brother, who now rejects me entirely) I was also subjected to violence, and threats of abandonment and rejection together with a lack of parental protection. I sought refuge in all kinds of creative expression, spiritual contemplation, solitary outdoor adventures, books and dreams. Conversely, I made friends easily in school, finding that artists are allowed to be *different*.

All through my life I painted. I painted, and fell apart, many times. And I went on painting — over the cracks. And I continued to hide. And stay silent. And smile. And through all this, having missed out on any early sense of belonging, I did what was necessary, and created my own small family: my self, a son and a daughter. At last I was part of a *real* family. My daughter was very perceptive. When she was very small, she would tell me, "You are really a man." At such times, although still unready to face the truth, I felt recognized.

Still petrified, I tried to convince my self I was neither female nor male. I created a place of safety for my self: neutral territory. Which was fine while it worked. Not for long. *Truth* was close behind, its whisper growing louder. Sensing wordlessly and feeling I couldn't avoid it much longer, I booked myself in for some counseling.



It still took some time. And then, one morning I woke from a vivid dream in which I saw I was male. TRUTH. Immense relief. Fear and excitement. Self-recognition. Now for INTEGRITY.

Heaven and hell. Each day was an emotional, psychological roller-coaster. And those feared rejections. Not so bad, as I realized there are always enough people able to be real friends. Social stigma? Well, I'd always been different. I'm no stranger to that! We stayed where we were in our council house on a small estate in Oxford, as my daughter, then just 13, was certain she didn't want us to move.

I continued to interact in my usual friendly way with our neighbors, without explanation, modeling my own acceptance of my self. And they naturally continued to like and accept me, adapting to my changes as they happened. I was always willing to educate anyone, adult or child, who seemed to have any difficulties understanding my situation.

After waking from my dream, I had seen my local doctor, who immediately said he was 100% behind me. Not so my area health authority. Enter right: (private) Russell Reid, with my first injection of magic fluid.

Within 9 days, my voice began breaking. Four weeks later — 5 months after that first injection (Sustanon 250ml every 3 weeks) — I gathered my courage and began my counseling course. I needn't have worried: I was already easily passing as male, having started shaving within a month of the start of my transition, my voice already broken, and my body already a male shape. Since my first year

of transition, I have had a furry covering over my chest and stomach, spreading to hands and inside forearms, and then in my second year spreading to my shoulders. Now, nearly 4 years later, I am a *teddy bear* like my father and brothers.

I was doing casual gardening, in an effort to get together the money for the removal of those incongruous lumps of soft flesh on my chest. In December I had them removed. Sixteen months into my transformation, my newly discovered self-confidence allowed me to apply for my first permanent employment, at the age of 43. I was accepted enthusiastically and continue to make progress and work happily in mental health.

Today at 46, while I continue to work in mental health, now deputy in a day centre, I'm now also a trainee counselor. I am still living happily with my daughter on a small council estate in Oxford.

Relationship-wise, my first one developed unexpectedly 18 months into my transition when I became lovers with a close (straight) female friend who had known me 3 years previously, and to whom I had always been attracted, demonstrating to me that I was now thoroughly acceptable male partner material, despite my incompleteness and the frustrations that can be present within a sexually intimate context. Now I have met a very special lady who, due to circumstances, is for the time being a deeply special friend whom I may eventually marry when this is finally made possible in the UK.

My paintings, products of my waking dreams and my spiritual journey, equally grow in truth and strength. Having realized many years ago that we are all essentially one, I offer you my pictures, knowing that what moves me may also move you. Working intuitively and with love, albeit clumsily, I paint what comes to my mind and moves my being. I understand this is in essence healing or transformative work. I feel strongly that when any one of us offers whatever it is we are able to with a genuine wish that our efforts may benefit others, there is no essential difference in any work we do.

J.M.C., 13-06-01

For Jaimieson Marc Cahlll's contact information, please see inside front cover.

**The Michigan Eight?**

Perhaps I'm a bit dense, but I don't understand why any FTM would particularly want to attend a womyn/women/female-only event in the first place, unless it's simply to protest any sort of segregation by sexual organs. Personally, I'm not the least bit interested in such a thing.

I can see why a MTF might want to attend, and I think that should be allowed. After all, she's paid her dues, albeit in a different way, and deserves to be considered as much a woman as any born woman. I can also understand why androgynous, gender-variant, and persons along all the rest of the spectrum in between might like to attend. However, if you want to force the Womyn's Music Festival to admit transmen, you may as well try to open it to men who are born men also, or what's the point?

Kerwin L. Schaefer,

██████ B Street, New Bern NC 28560, (kerry@cconnect.net)

**Dear FTMI Newsletter Editors:**

I received my new issue of the newsletter (#48) today and was really quite surprised to see a book review by James Green of the novel *Sacred Country* on the front page. To be perfectly honest, I have not yet read the article. Given Mr. Green's expertise, I am certain it is an insightful, well-written and thoughtful review.

I am writing because it points up very clearly one of the main criticisms of the FTM "community." That is: Everything is continually being redone, everyone continually 'reinventing the wheel,' having no sense of what has come before and an apparent wish not to know.

You see, I wrote a review of this same book, and it appeared in the FTMI Newsletter #29, (January '95). If the editors had been even remotely aware of what had been previously published in the newsletter, it seems that giving the same information, again, would strike them as being as ridiculously redundant as it is. The space could have been devoted to something new.

Now, a few mitigating factors come to mind:

- 1) The redundancy was known, and no one cared.
- 2) Mr. Green's review of a book already reviewed almost 6 years earlier was deemed so vitally important as to warrant publication.
- 3) No one bothered to check to see if it had already been done.
- 4) The Newsletter staff is so thrilled to get material, they don't care if it's something that has already been printed.
- 5) They had checked and my review was so bad, and the new one so good, it was important to print the new article.
- 6) There is no such thing as an "FTM Community" with a background and history. All things are new, there is no continuity. There is only what is happening NOW.

Personally, I believe that #6 is the most likely. It has long been my contention that the concept of the "FTM Community" is merely an imaginative fabrication used simply as a convenient reference. What actually exists is a loose network of information and referral. The more I see, the more I am convinced of this. I have yet to see anything which alters that observation... including the FTMI Newsletter, which is one of the best examples of useful information and referral.

A longtime reader and contributor,

Jeff Shevlowitz

[Actually, the answer is #7: We asked James to write a comparison review between *Sacred Country* and *Trumpet*. This is not a negation of your earlier piece, but an effort to emphasize important literature. We erred in not referring to your piece in #29. — Editors.]

**Dear FTMI,**

I just wanted to drop you a line to say 'thank you' for hanging in there and maintaining your position as the primary resource available to people along the FTM spectrum. Some people in the community (especially here in San Francisco) might wonder why this organization means so much to me since, because of my no-hormone-non-op choice and relatively 'yin' demeanor, I probably appear to be a straight woman. (Meanwhile, just last night, a straight "friend" of mine actually called me "gender dysphoric" — as if I have a "problem"!!!) But transgender issues have meant a lot to me since I first became aware of them around 3rd grade, and I have suffered my share of unpleasantness (to put it very mildly) on account of my gender expression, having spent most of my life in the southeast (Virginia and Georgia). During my time in Georgia, which is when I first found out about FTMI, this newsletter was like my lifeline! I couldn't wait for the next issue to arrive, and I know that in places all over the country and world, there are many many people who feel the same way. In a place as diverse as the Bay area, it's easy to forget how isolated people on the FTM spectrum can feel — even if they seem to rank "mild" on the scale, closer to androgynous than male. When I came to San Francisco last year, I felt like I had reached the Promised Land! And when I went to my first FTMI meeting, I felt like, "Wow! THIS is FTMI!" It was so great... and even though I personally felt a little awkward (about not choosing hormones, not coming up out of the lesbian community, etc.) I felt relieved that the speakers at the meeting would frequently stress that everyone along the FTM spectrum was welcome, and that that represented a wide range of gender expression and sexual orientation. I felt that FTMI was doing a very good job of being inclusive. I hope that in the future, FTMI will strengthen and grow and become a powerful force in unifying and supporting the FTM community. Please keep on keepin' on — you are a much valued, loved and needed organization!

Love, light & all the good stuff,

Kim Makoi (San Francisco)

**Dear all,**

I have some wonderful news from Sweden for you. History was made on March 17th 2001 when RFSL, the Swedish Federation for Lesbian and Gay Rights, decided to include transgendered people in the charter. The decision was made at this year's RFSL conference, which took place in the north of Sweden last week. There was only one vote against trans inclusion.

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Best regards,

Gabriel Llewelyn-Silseth

██████@rfsl.se

The Swedish Federation for Lesbian and Gay Rights youth branch  
<http://www.rfsl.se/ungdom>



**The Michigan Eight?**

Perhaps I'm a bit dense, but I don't understand why any FTM would particularly want to attend a womyn/women/female-only event in the first place, unless it's simply to protest any sort of segregation by sexual organs. Personally, I'm not the least bit interested in such a thing.

I can see why a MTF might want to attend, and I think that should be allowed. After all, she's paid her dues, albeit in a different way, and deserves to be considered as much a woman as any born woman. I can also understand why androgynous, gender-variant, and persons along all the rest of the spectrum in between might like to attend. However, if you want to force the Womyn's Music Festival to admit transmen, you may as well try to open it to men who are born men also, or what's the point?

Kerwin L. Schaefer,

██████ B Street, New Bern NC 28560, (kerry@cconnect.net)

**Dear FTMI Newsletter Editors:**

I received my new issue of the newsletter (#48) today and was really quite surprised to see a book review by James Green of the novel *Sacred Country* on the front page. To be perfectly honest, I have not yet read the article. Given Mr. Green's expertise, I am certain it is an insightful, well-written and thoughtful review.

I am writing because it points up very clearly one of the main criticisms of the FTM "community." That is: Everything is continually being redone, everyone continually 'reinventing the wheel,' having no sense of what has come before and an apparent wish not to know.

You see, I wrote a review of this same book, and it appeared in the FTMI Newsletter #29, (January '95). If the editors had been even remotely aware of what had been previously published in the newsletter, it seems that giving the same information, again, would strike them as being as ridiculously redundant as it is. The space could have been devoted to something new.

Now, a few mitigating factors come to mind:

- 1) The redundancy was known, and no one cared.
- 2) Mr. Green's review of a book already reviewed almost 6 years earlier was deemed so vitally important as to warrant publication.
- 3) No one bothered to check to see if it had already been done.
- 4) The Newsletter staff is so thrilled to get material, they don't care if it's something that has already been printed.
- 5) They had checked and my review was so bad, and the new one so good, it was important to print the new article.
- 6) There is no such thing as an "FTM Community" with a background and history. All things are new, there is no continuity. There is only what is happening NOW.

Personally, I believe that #6 is the most likely. It has long been my contention that the concept of the "FTM Community" is merely an imaginative fabrication used simply as a convenient reference. What actually exists is a loose network of information and referral. The more I see, the more I am convinced of this. I have yet to see anything which alters that observation... including the FTMI Newsletter, which is one of the best examples of useful information and referral.

A longtime reader and contributor,  
Jeff Shevlowitz

[Actually, the answer is #7: We asked James to write a comparison review between *Sacred Country* and *Trumpet*. This is not a negation of your earlier piece, but an effort to emphasize important literature. We erred in not referring to your piece in #29. — Editors.]

**Dear FTMI,**

I just wanted to drop you a line to say 'thank you' for hanging in there and maintaining your position as the primary resource available to people along the FTM spectrum. Some people in the community (especially here in San Francisco) might wonder why this organization means so much to me since, because of my no-hormone-non-op choice and relatively 'yin' demeanor, I probably appear to be a straight woman. (Meanwhile, just last night, a straight "friend" of mine actually called me "gender dysphoric" — as if I have a "problem"!)

But transgender issues have meant a lot to me since I first became aware of them around 3rd grade, and I have suffered my share of unpleasantness (to put it very mildly) on account of my gender expression, having spent most of my life in the southeast (Virginia and Georgia). During my time in Georgia, which is when I first found out about FTMI, this newsletter was like my lifeline! I couldn't wait for the next issue to arrive, and I know that in places all over the country and world, there are many many people who feel the same way. In a place as diverse as the Bay area, it's easy to forget how isolated people on the FTM spectrum can feel — even if they seem to rank "mild" on the scale, closer to androgynous than male. When I came to San Francisco last year, I felt like I had reached the Promised Land! And when I went to my first FTMI meeting, I felt like, "Wow! THIS is FTMI!" It was so great... and even though I personally felt a little awkward (about not choosing hormones, not coming up out of the lesbian community, etc.) I felt relieved that the speakers at the meeting would frequently stress that everyone along the FTM spectrum was welcome, and that that represented a wide range of gender expression and sexual orientation. I felt that FTMI was doing a very good job of being inclusive. I hope that in the future, FTMI will strengthen and grow and become a powerful force in unifying and supporting the FTM community. Please keep on keepin' on — you are a much valued, loved and needed organization!

Love, light & all the good stuff,  
Kim Makoi (San Francisco)

**Dear all,**

I have some wonderful news from Sweden for you. History was made on March 17th 2001 when RFSL, the Swedish Federation for Lesbian and Gay Rights, decided to include transgendered people in the charter. The decision was made at this year's RFSL conference, which took place in the north of Sweden last week. There was only one vote against trans inclusion.

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# Disclosure

By Michael M. Hernandez

cases. Informed consent starts with a health care provider disclosing the risks inherent in the particular medical procedure that the patient is about to undergo, so that the patient can decide whether to proceed, seek a second opinion, or take some other action. Relationships are not medical procedures. The expectation that we should disclose our gender identity the second that we meet someone is unrealistic and inherently unfair. People don't start conversations by disclosing highly personal information such as annual salary, what spiritual beliefs they hold dear, their shortcomings or who they voted for in the last election. The fact of the matter is that conversations start within a context. We discuss the topic at hand. As trust develops and comfort levels

rise, we make decisions about how personal to get with the information which we divulge.

Why do we get so stressed out about coming out? The problem, in a nutshell, is that an early disclosure can result in rejection or widespread outing if the person you told decides that they have the moral obligation to tell the world about you. A late disclosure, and your partner feels betrayed or worse — the situation turns to violence.



continued on  
next page



# The Phantom Penis Or, Sex and the New Man

By Chav Doherty

I hope in this article to share some of my experience for the benefit of *new guys*, but *older guys* may find some of the strategies and info here of use as well.

Testosterone is a powerful and transformative agent in the life of an FTM. I will outline some of the changes a new guy is likely to experience on this hormone, specifically in the context of sexual experience and expression.

As we all know, testosterone drives libido. So long as a new guy is not deeply depressed or suffering from a physiological condition that interferes with his sexual responses, he can expect that his libido will be in overdrive on "T." At the same time, the FTM's clitoris will be growing. This is because the tissues of the vagina and outer genitals are sensitive to testosterone. It is important to remember that male and female genitals are homologous – quite similar – in terms of function and form. As the fetus develops, the same tissue, comprising the protogenitals, is influenced to take either a "male" or "female" form depending on the presence of certain hormones at the appropriate time. In the course of this article, I'm going to push this similarity to the limit.

Now, I'm going to share a bit of my personal history with you. Like many FTMs, as a female-bodied person I had no relationship

with my vagina. I'm not sure that the rest of my history is so common: I had absolutely no interest in sex involving penetration, and I had never had sex with a genetic man. But as my clitoris began to grow, it became extremely sensitive. Boxers were imperative. I found manipulation of my clit to be uncomfortable, even oral sex was too much stimulation. What was a new guy to do?

At the same time, I was having to deal with a very common reality among transmen... it was not likely that I would ever have the resources to afford genital surgery(ies). And even if I could afford lower surgery, I wasn't sure I'd be happy with the results. Like many FTMs I want a body like my brother's or my father's. I want a dick that can be seen – not a microphallus – and a dynamic penis, not a phalloplasty that must be pumped and primed for action. (Though I must say that, in keeping with some of the principles I'll outline in this article, if I had a phalloplasty that required either pumping or insertion of a rod to facilitate erection, I would learn to eroticize the activity of reinforcing my dick in preparation for sex. And if I had a metoidioplasty, I'd get over the fact that I didn't have five inches!)

continued on  
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## DISCLOSURE from previous page

While violence is not commonplace, it does remain possible, particularly if sex was a part of the equation. It's easy to sit back and make decisions in a theoretical vacuum, but when the time comes, what will you do? How will you tell someone about yourself? When will you tell them? What will you tell them? This article will hopefully provide you with a framework to determine which course suits you best under the circumstances.

### To Tell or Not to Tell?

Disclosure is emotionally difficult in the best of situations. Unfortunately, there is no magic formula. Not only will one size not fit all, what works for you will vary from situation to situation. Here are some factors to consider:

**Are you spending more energy not disclosing?** If you are expending more time and energy trying to avoid inadvertently disclosing your past than you care to, it might simply be easier to tackle the subject head on.

**How well do you know the person?** You may be less likely to tell someone about your past who you have just met than someone who you have known for a long time, and even that person may react unexpectedly. How tolerant is the other person in other areas of their life? Are there any potential hot buttons you can inadvertently trigger by your disclosure?

**What do you hope to accomplish by disclosing?** By this I mean, what is the goal of disclosure? Are you hoping to create a greater intimacy, share personal details, establish a rapport or shock someone who has just made a sexist statement? What can you gain by disclosing? What can you lose?

**How likely is the "relationship" to become sexual?** You are more likely to make a disclosure when responding to a personals ad than to someone you simply want to be friends with. The more likely the possibility of a sexual encounter, the greater the likelihood of disclosing. It is naive to think that someone who you are doing more than *tricking with* will never know. The past has a way of popping up at the most inopportune moments. Eventually your partner will find

out. Wouldn't you rather be the one providing the information in the light most favorable to you? Someone else might not be as kind in their depiction of your identity. Sometimes an early disclosure can save you a lot of time and effort as you will know the other person's position before you invest all your time and energy in them. Someone who has felt betrayed by your silence is more likely to spread the word about you than someone who knows up front (but there are no guarantees). There is no doubt that timing is crucial, particularly when sex is involved.

Keep in mind that every rule has an exception, and in this case, anonymous sex seems to be it. Some transmen are exploring sex with other men by going to sex dubs where oral sex is the primary activity being engaged in. Here the interaction is going to be of a short and definitive duration not to mention the fact that it's dark. For those of you who aren't in the know, an exchange of names is uncommon in these settings.

### How to tell

As with anything else, practice makes perfect. The more you experience talking about those qualities which render you unique, the easier it gets. That doesn't mean that it ever gets easy or stress-free. You just develop a knack that fits within your personality type for knowing what to say and when to say it.

**Suggestions:** Pick a place that feels comfortable for you. It should be a place that you can leave should things get too uncomfortable. The location may be a coffee shop, a quiet restaurant, a mutual friend's house or the park. While people are less likely to create scenes in public, some do. You should consider the potential factor for embarrassment.

Sometimes the perfect opportunity presents itself during conversation. The topic of discussion could be a book or movie that involves gender. *Boys Don't Cry* can be the perfect conversation opener. Sometimes you need to help create the opportunity. Loren Cameron's book *Body Alchemy* has proven invaluable in this regard. Placing the book on the coffee table can provide the opportunity to glide into the discussion. I have often asked a

prospective sexual partner if they have seen the book. If they have, the conversation becomes easier. If they haven't, I just need to start at the beginning. I'll ask if they have heard the term *transgendered* and what their understanding is. After doing a little gender 101, I always invite questions. Try to keep the lesson short. More than likely your partner is going through a bit of shock and disbelief. I've even been accused of making up the "transgendered story," to avoid sex.

Keep in mind that people have a tendency to pick up on non-verbal cues. The more nervous you are the more likely that your guest is going to respond in kind. Nerves and fear can provide the edge that you need, but they can work against you as well. You really don't need anymore stress in your life. Don't dwell on what could go wrong. Plan for what can go right. Think of the encounter as an opportunity for growth — yours and theirs. Humor helps a lot, but don't force it.

Think about what you are going to say long before you say it. Practice in the mirror if that's what it takes. Some folks need just enough dialogue to get them past the butterflies. Keep in mind that it is not a speech. You don't need to memorize what you are going to say, just have a game plan about what you intend to cover and how much detail you want to provide.

Words have a lot of power, so choose wisely. Some words trigger the other person to make default assumptions. Jason Cromwell in *Transmen & FTMs* (1999: University of Illinois Press) defines a default assumption as "something that holds true in the 'simplest or most natural or most likely possible model' concerning any particular topic or subject." He then proceeds:

"The critical thing about default assumptions is that they are made automatically, not as a result of consideration or elimination. To one degree or another, everyone makes default assumptions. For example, an effeminate man or masculine woman are assumed to be gay or lesbian, respectively."

When coming out to a woman words such as "I have unique insight into what women face," will be perceived far differently than "I don't have a penis." Both are factually correct. The former emphasizes an advantage that you have over non-transmen. The latter makes it sound like you feel "less than" non-transmen.



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I have noted a significant difference that telling people that "I was not born male" provides a different set of responses than saying that "I was born female". The latter has resulted in the other person making assumptions about me and my life. This may not work for everyone. Come up with your own way of saying what you want to say then observe how other people respond to your statements. Continue refining your technique of disclosing and by all means talk to other transmen about what works for them.

**Is "Thanks, But No Thanks" Really A Rejection?**

It is natural to assume that the studmuffin or the drop-dead-gorgeous babe who spurned you after your revelation has everything to do with you being trans\*. Keep in mind that "no" can mean any number of

things ranging from "I'm particularly sexual tonight". Face it, there are people who are into a particular types. If the object of your desires is into tall beefy blonds and you are a short thin red-head, transgendered or not, you just won't fit the bill.

It has taken me a long time to realize that while that "no" pertained to me, it was not necessarily about me. The sexual attraction that the other person felt suddenly caused them to question a sexual orientation which they had taken for granted — their own. For instance, a gay man or lesbian facing my disclosure might question whether they are *straight* while a heterosexual woman would question whether she is a lesbian. It's all about perspective. This orientation anxiety can result in a simple temporary set-back, if you can manage to keep from

**BELGIAN SURGERY from page 20**

The price of the Belgian phalloplasty ought to interest Americans: it's \$25,000.00 as a base price. However, it is rare that there are no hidden costs, that there are no complications requiring longer or subsequent hospitalization. It is possible for non-Belgians to obtain surgery there, but transmen will have to see the local psychiatrist or psychologist for approval before surgery can be scheduled, so plan for an extended stay, and try to make as many arrangements as possible before you go. Dr. Monstrey's office can be reached by fax at 011-32-92403899. If you're considering going there for surgery, write and ask for the steps you need to take and for referrals to the appropriate psychiatric or psychological authorities.

Personally, I think there are two major reasons why Dr. Monstrey's phalloplasties turn out as well as they do. First, he does not try to make the penis too large for the patient's body (the two examples were 4 to 5 inches long and an inch to an inch and a half in diameter); he obviously is careful and has finesse to his technique. And second, the quality of aftercare is far superior to that which we experience in the U.S. where we are moved into motel rooms instead of hospital rooms and rarely have any long-term care from trained nurses. There are surgeons here who can do excellent work, but the costs of our healthcare system (and often negative attitudes toward transsexual patients from physicians as well as support staff) contribute to our negative collective experience. Neither Axel or Ken had ever had sex with their new genitals, but quite a few people who saw their exhibition expressed interest in accommodating them! We're grateful to both men for being willing to expose themselves and share their knowledge and experience with us. ❖

taking the response personally. Just hang in there (assuming, of course, that the reply wasn't rude) and you might just be pleasantly surprised down the road.

**We Aren't The Only Ones**

Disclosures are not the sole province of trans\* folk. I was under that particular misimpression. I simply assumed that gay men had it good. When two guys found each other attractive, that's all there was to it. This illusion was shattered by a mentor who explained that people were faced with sexual disclosures all the time. The disclosure that he was talking about was related to his HIV status. He put my anxieties at bay by explaining to me that as an HIV positive man he got his fair share of rejections and experienced similar stresses about disclosure. Talk about perspective!

So get off that pity pot. If you are interested in someone, speak up. Without taking a chance, *no* is the guaranteed response. You might hear *yes* more often than you imagine. If you do wind up getting told no, it's their loss not yours. ❖

Any questions, suggestions, topics or requests for further information are greatly appreciated. Please write to Michael Hernandez at P.O. Box 390288, Anza, CA 92539 or via e-mail at [Lbear@koan.com](mailto:Lbear@koan.com); Copyright © 2000 By Michael M. Hernandez All Rights Reserved. Do not copy, print, reprint, distribute, e-mail, post on your website or otherwise disseminate.

## PHANTOM PENIS from page 21

So, I found that I needed some strategies for dealing with the body I have now, with all of the drive and potential for satisfaction my body provides me.

I encourage anyone who is going through transition, MTF or FTM, to explore her/his experience of her/his new and developing sexual self. I resolved to go wherever my libido led me, while adhering to the principles of the ethical slut. You know: play safe, communicate honestly and clearly, honor boundaries, and have fun! But there's a lot about your evolving experience of your new body that you probably can't appreciate with a partner – that's too much stimulation. So I really recommend experimentation with jerking off. (Okay, if you're FTM, you are not going to need any encouragement!)

I must say that I was not particularly sex-positive as a female-bodied person. I was raised with some very common attitudes about sex that were nothing if not contradictory. (Sex is an expression of love and commitment to your partner, sex is dirty and don't enjoy it too much... the usual.)

My experimentation led me to the place I least expected to go in my life. Within the first year of transition, I was having vaginal intercourse with a big ole bisexual bio-boy. If I hadn't been so distracted by my libido, I'd have been surprised. I also spent a lot of time with toys: dildos, plugs, all kinds of vibrators. I learned how to stimulate any nerve that had even the slightest potential to provide pleasure. I actually managed to accomplish other things in the first years of my transition – like write a master's thesis – but I had a whole lot of sex, solo and partnered. I felt entitled to every bit of sexual pleasure I experienced – it seemed just compensation for all the time I had spent denying my female body.

Particularly when I jerked off, I practised visualization. I saw myself embodied male. I knew that when surgeons construct a vagina for an MTF, they turn the penis inside out to shape the vaginal walls. I began to re-image the walls of my vagina as the shaft of my penis. I trained my body to experience vaginal orgasms. When having sex with a partner, I imagined that I was the one doing the penetrating, and my partner was the one being penetrated. This exercise was really facilitated by the experience of orgasm, when the boundaries between self and other dissolve in delicious release.

So what am I advocating here? What are my assumptions? First, I assume that sexual responses are, to some extent, learned responses. I was having serious difficulty experiencing clitoral

orgasms early on in transition so, in testosterone-driven pursuit of satisfaction, I trained my body to experience a different kind of orgasm. I believe that anyone who is sufficiently motivated can learn in this way. I advocate that we embrace the pleasure that is the gift of our bodies, even if that pleasure is derived from parts of ourselves that we seek to deny.

It is said that the mind is the most powerful sex organ. So one really effective strategy for dealing with the fact that I probably won't have lower surgery is to use my mind to re-interpret my experience as a sexual being and re-image my body as fully male. While some may call this delusion, it is not dysfunctional. I owe my positive adjustment to the harsh reality that I was not born in a male body (and several lifetime's worth of sexual pleasure) to the powers of the mind.

Post script: As the years have passed, my little dick has become less sensitive. I now enjoy clitoral orgasms, and oral sex is just as wonderful as I had always heard. My little dick has become quite a bit bigger than I expected, and at the height of arousal it's almost impressive (okay, now you know I'm a man!). I have found that I can get some extra length on my dick by visualizing, as my partner strokes the area of my G-spot and simultaneously works on my little dick, that all this stimulation is focused on one regular-guy sized penis. The combined vaginal and clitoral orgasms are amazing, a gift, and I really doubt that a bio-boy ever experiences an orgasm like this!

Note: Chav Doherty, Chav356@aol.com, works at San Francisco General Hospital (in the Lab). In addition, he is currently co-facilitating a support group for transgender parents at the Alternative Family Institute in San Francisco.

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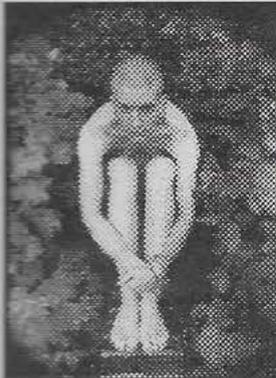
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Look for a review  
of his latest book  
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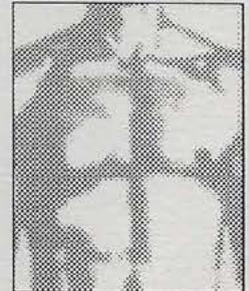
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## Resources

These are additional listings that have been given to us after the 2001 Resource Guide was published. It is not a complete listing of all that have come our way, as there are too many to fit, especially with the growth of online resources. We will add new ones/others in each subsequent Issue of the FTM Newsletter until they are incorporated into the FTM Resource Guide 2002. We apologize for those whose resources have not been included in this issue.

### SUPPORT & RAP GROUPS

**FTM Australia** welcomes all on the continuum of FTM, Transmen, tranny boys, butch - all sexualities and orientations. Contacts for support, growing resource of information, online Resource Manual, Aussie guys email group, Regular Events page, quarterly Newsletter and more. E-mail: [ftmaustralia@rubyrain.net](mailto:ftmaustralia@rubyrain.net) Web site: <http://ftmaustralia.rubyrain.net>

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**Youth In Transition** is a support group for transgendered, transsexual, and gender questioning individuals ages 12-23. The group meets every Tuesday from 7:30-9:00pm at The Attic Youth Center, 419 South 15th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146. The 2nd Tuesday of the month is an open meeting. Phone: Action Aids Transgender Outreach: (215) 981-3351 or The Attic Youth Center: (215) 545-4331.

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**Straight Spouse Network**, an international organization of heterosexual spouses or partners, current or former, of gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender mates. SSN provides confidential support and resource information by phone, email, letter, or in person, individually or in groups or regional gatherings. The goal is to help straight spouses and partners cope constructively, heal, and build bridges with their mates so there is less pain for everyone involved. Address: 8215 Terrace Dr., El Cerrito, CA 94530-3058; Phone: (510) 525-0200; E-mail: [info@ssnetwk.org](mailto:info@ssnetwk.org) Web site: [www.ssnetwk.org](http://www.ssnetwk.org)

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**FTM London** is a support group run by FtMs for FtMs. FTM London has a diverse cross section of FtMs of a variety of backgrounds, sexualities, ages, abilities and ethnicities amongst its members and has a policy of equal opportunities. FTM London defines an FtM as someone designated as female at birth or during childhood who self-identifies as male all or part of the time. Address: FTM London, BCM FTM London, London WC1N 3XX; E-mail: [FTM1000@aol.com](mailto:FTM1000@aol.com); Web site: <http://www.ftmlondon.org.uk/>

To let us know about other resources, please contact Dale at [emiec@colba.net](mailto:emiec@colba.net)

### ONLINE NETWORKING

**TSB/TSBrotherhood** is run by 2 FtM-guys; Kid & Alex from Sweden, in Swedish. TSB started as a FtM-site but has developed into a Queer/TG-site! They are also working on an English version. E-mail: [tsbrotherhood@tjohoo.se](mailto:tsbrotherhood@tjohoo.se) or [tsbrotherhood@yahoo.se](mailto:tsbrotherhood@yahoo.se); Web Site: <http://www.geocities.com/tsbrotherhood>

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**Clarity** is a new email list designed to allow teens with transgendered parents to get together with others in the same situation. It is hoped that teens will learn that there are others who are just like them. Listmoms are Julie Gilkey and Gwen McIntyre, MD. They will provide interested teens with an email packet that will include their charter and a form that is to be returned signed by the parent allowing the teen to participate in this email list. Please contact Julie at [julieg@amnix.com](mailto:julieg@amnix.com) if you have questions or are interested in joining.

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<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/phalloplasty>: Post pics of FTM surgery, penises, metaoidioplasties. Please no pics of genetic males. It is generally agreed that you will be an FtM or SO to join and post.

### OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES

**DIY Collective or Co-op Forming**: Looking for intelligent, reliable, compassionate, multi-cultural, autodidactic, intersexed and TS people with excellent social skills, communication skills, and reading comprehension to form a co-op or collective (books, art, fairtrade/organic products, etc). Must be anti-racist, anti-fascist, anti-econofascist, and pro-fairtrade. Must be comfortable working in a multi-cultural environment. (This is NOT an "unlearning" trans/inter-phobia and racism course) E-mail: [collorcoop@hotmail.com](mailto:collorcoop@hotmail.com)

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### POLITICAL ACTION CONTACTS

**Gender Machine Works / Gender Construction**, set in San Francisco is a direct action group committed to fighting the static, binary gender system, and demanding equal respect and space for all genders and gender expressions. We are about: creating new pronouns and new language, redecorating Male and Female gender-segregated public bathroom doors to welcome all genders, getting better health care and medical research for transnics, fighting job, housing, and gender-segregated clothing size discrimination, being visible, and educating the masses about how the binary gender system hurts everyone. Phone: (415) 401-8939; E-mail: [genderworkssf@hotmail.com](mailto:genderworkssf@hotmail.com)