

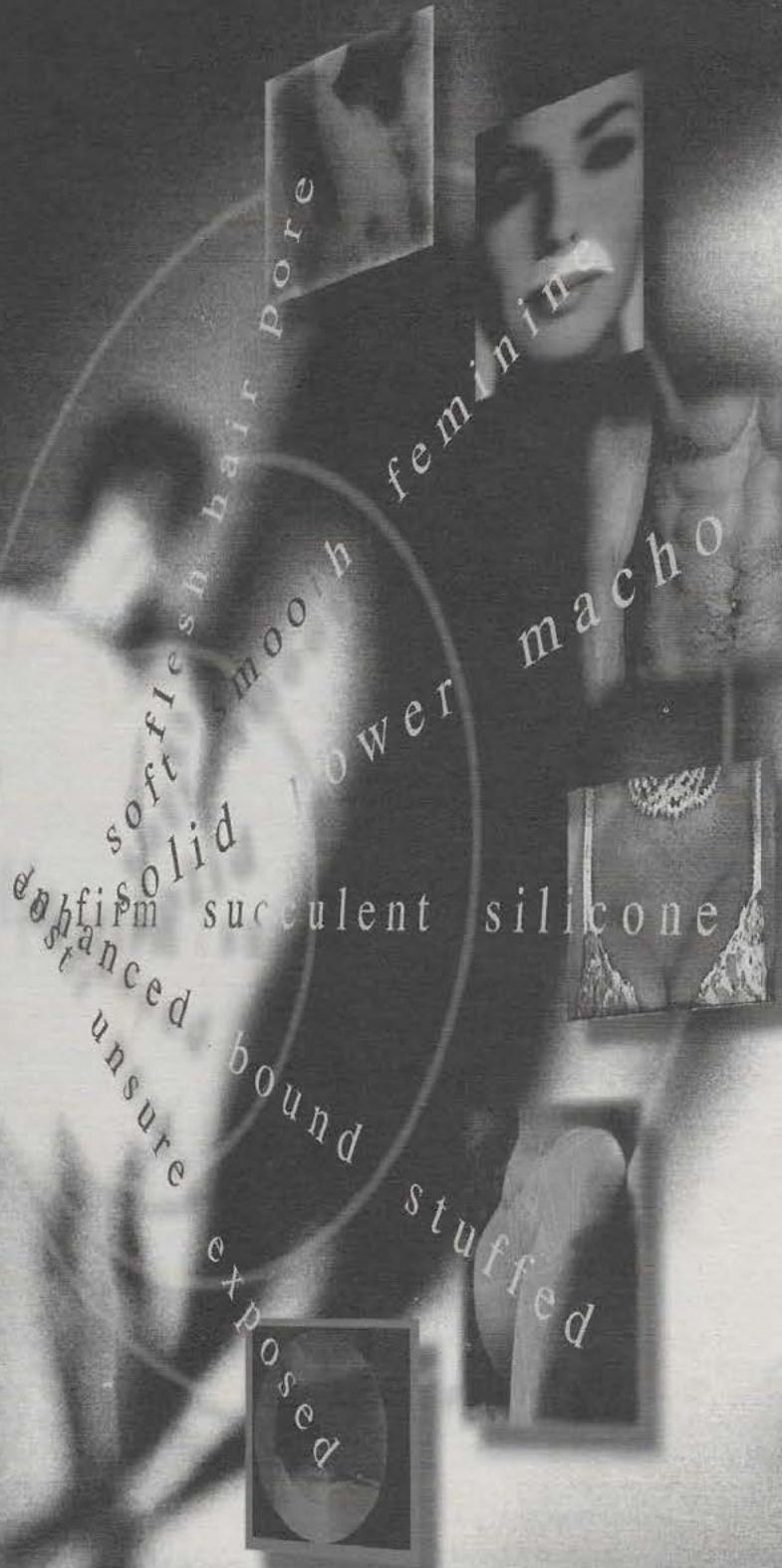
FTMi

Newsletter

issue 52 : fall 2002 : USD 6.95

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MALE



FTM International's newsletter for female-to-male transgender and transsexual people and allied partners, lovers, family members, friends, and professionals

Features

**On the Land:
Plan Z and Camp Trans**

**Sex
Behaving Myself**

**Health
Acne and FTMs
Near-Lethal Injection**

**In Memoriam
Day of Remembrance
Bear Goodrum**

**FTMi
We're Growing!
Meet the Board**

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Look Beyond the Stars

by FTMI President Dion Manley

Dedicated to the life and memory of my friend Alexander "Bear" Goodrum, his family members and all who knew and loved him. May we take the higher road where Alexander advocated for all to join together.

Here we have it ... a new FTMI board of directors for all of us. Expect great change to come your way as this new group of folks comes together. This will be my last letter to you as president of FTMI. It is time for me to pass on the Prez role to someone else, but I plan to stick around on the sidelines. FTMI's new leadership will be by co-chairs.

Ever felt that you were in the presence of something much larger than you were? "We are making history! This is a historical event!" Now how many times have you heard that? True—yet at the same time we are all regular folks, showing up to do the work and have some fun while creating community. Let's move to sports for a minute. Take the spectrum from playgrounds and amateur to Olympic and professional sports. I grew up competing in many individual and team sports: track and field events, *baseball* (as I called it), ultimate Frisbee, tennis, table tennis, co-ed water polo, intercollegiate varsity athletics—and moved on to compete nationally and internationally in volleyball and basketball. Throughout much of that time I was lucky enough to be coached by All-American Olympians and many others whose solid fundamentals, values, and ethics made a lasting impression on me.

Have you been drawn to competition and challenge? Which games came naturally or brought out the best in you? Which challenged, intrigued, intimidated or excited you and what did you do with it? Turning points? Choices, priorities, dreams, desire, luck...how were you defeated and what did you do? After competing for many years, one day on a basketball court I realized that in just ten minutes of watching a complete stranger play, I could tell a surprising amount about who they were as a person.

How do we balance and bridge being on a team with being the "star"—the only FTM or trans-identified person among family, friends, school, workplace, church or spiritual group, in our neighborhood? How many of us are someone's first gender-

different partner, brother, parent, child, student, boss, co-worker or teacher? Each of us is a small part of a much bigger picture coming together over a very long period of time. Today is a small part of history, not History itself—yet each experience is so dramatically large and significant.

Everyone loves those star moments and personal accomplishments. Sportsfan or sportsphobic, society has many personal relationships with "sports-heroes." For me it was the connection with my teammates and coaches combined to perform strategies that were the most satisfying. For me setting records and being undefeated in individual sports or being named MVP does not equal the thrill of playing a good game as a member of a dedicated team. I believe that any given person is inclined to, talented or drawn toward either individual or team games. Harvey Milk, the late San Francisco City Supervisor, said there were two types—that a person gets into politics either to be a star or to serve the community. There is a reason we have individual and team sports, as it takes all kinds and there is value in both. The same goes for community-building; the tricky part is combining individual and team towards a great cause.

Before playing sports came to mean big money, people got involved and played for the love of the game. That all changed when big money came around. The people changed, dynamics changed, the game itself truly changed. Like sports history, as a community or movement, we too have turning points. Growth as a person brings growth as a community, but in what direction. What are our goals and priorities? People who have been here for the love of our community are alongside a growing number of professional transpeople. We are activists and professionals together living and working towards politics of justice. We do have our differences and

will continue to have more. As people get to know us both individually and as a community, we have more and more choices as to how to act, react and interact.

To be honest it is hard to let go of all that comes with the role and title *Prez*. I want others to share this honor. Thanks to my partner Hope for her political roots and vision, my brother Gary, longtime pal Rhondell, all past board members of FTMI—and Jed Bell who pushed me beyond my scope into this Presidency. With everything happening right now in the world and among our communities, we need your help now, more than ever. I urge you to dig deep for any financial assistance you (or someone you know) can provide to help us through these challenging times to get the work done. I again acknowledge all of my sisters and brothers who came before me. I appreciate the valuable contributions of Dale Altrows and Joel Levine, who will continue with the new board members. The last of the past FTMI board to say thanks to is Michiko Bailey, Kit Rachlin, and Leah Schaefer. Much of their unselfish work goes unrecognized, so I say to all of you, please remember and continue to acknowledge the lasting effects of the contributions each person has made. One humble two-time All-American Olympian once told me that finding great athletes is not a matter of finding great talent, there is no shortage of amazing talent. It's more a challenge of finding some-one with ethics and values, the ability to overcome obstacles that is the rarity. I say look beyond the stars and recognize the players who keep the ball moving forward. ▼

Cover Art

Cover Art by Casey L. Gradischnig, Yikes!art

Casey Gradischnig is a queer transman artist living in Des Moines, Iowa. Check out his site at: <http://yikescasey.home.mchsi.com>

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FTMi is Growing

By Dylan Wade

This fall, FTMI moved into its second office, this one located at the new San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center (Center). We are very excited to be at the Center and participate in its programming and collaborate with the many other non-profits.

And, FTMI's Center office now has a full-time staff person. FTMI and the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) are co-sponsoring the newly founded Transgender Law Center (TLC)—which will be housed at FTMI's Center office as well as FTMI's 14th Street Office.

TLC is a legal civil rights organization that connects transgender people to technically sound and culturally competent legal services in California. TLC employs legal advocacy, community organizing, and education in working towards a world in which every person can freely, fully, and safely express their gender. TLC is providing free Transgender Law 101 workshops, free legal advice and council, and some limited (free) legal representation, particularly in the area of health care access. TLC also provides Transgender 101 and Transgender Law

101 trainings to attorneys and service providers in order to increase the number of attorneys who can represent transgender clients in a technically and culturally competent manner. The Transgender Health Law Project (THLP) is part of TLC. The THLP provides policy and legal advocacy in the area of transgender health care. The THLP is working to increase transgender people's access to and ability to use health coverage, to enforce Medi-Cal's coverage of transgender specific treatments, to increase transgender people's access to culturally competent doctors, and to increase transgender people's access to transgender specific services.

TLC is also working in collaboration with other organizations to help create and implement effective public policy initiatives. For instance, TLC is working with the San Francisco Human Rights Commission on their effort to make the "Guidelines to Prohibit Gender Identity Discrimination" more inclusive of people who do not identify as female or male. TLC is working with the National Lawyer's Guild, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, and the Trans and Gender

Variant in Prison Working Group to improve conditions for transgender inmates in prisons and jails in California. And, TLC is working with the California Safe Schools Coalition to ensure that California statutes preventing discrimination and harassment against transgender public school students, teachers, and employees are meaningfully enforced. ▼

Dylan Wade, an FTM who just graduated from law school, will be working with TLC at FTMI's Center office. Chris Daley, a non-transgender man who recently graduated from law school, is working with TLC and will be doing so at FTMI's 14th Street office.



Dylan Wade of the Transgender Law Center

For more info on FTMI's and NCLR's **Transgender Law Center**, contact:

Chris Daley, 415.392.6257 x308 or Dylan Wade, 415.865.5619 or 5642

You can also e-mail us at info@transgenderlawcenter.org.

For more info on the **Transgender Health Law Project**, contact:

Dylan Wade at 415.865.5619 or dylan@transgenderlawcenter.org.

FTMI's website: www.ftm-intl.org
TLC's website: www.transgenderlawcenter.org.

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Meet the Board!

Last June the FTMI membership elected a new Board of Directors, possibly the most diverse representation in the history of the organization. The backgrounds, skills, and aspirations they bring to FTMI could take us to a whole new level of service to the FTM community.

Dale Altrows is a Jewish gay FTM anarchist father of 3 who was first elected to the Board over 3 years ago. His roles while on the board have included member at large, secretary, and Vice President. Other responsibilities he has assumed have been negotiating contracts, e-mail correspondence, and Newsletter and Resource Guide distribution and outreach. He has attended several conferences on behalf of FTM International. In addition, Dale has totally updated the Resource Guide, which he edits and publishes while continuing to do research to verify and expand its listings. He enjoys connecting with other activists around the world, especially those who are marginalized and less privileged than those of us in established communities. He maintains his commitment to represent Canada in FTMI's pursuits, as he feels that the FTMI Newsletter could use more of an international slant. Altrows has already won a major precedent-setting legal battle against Quebec's government enforcement of genital surgery as prerequisite to legal sex change.

Ray Carannante, MSW is a die-hard native New Yorker who is currently working at the Michael Callen-Audre Lorde Community Health Center, the city's only LGBT health facility. He has had several roles at Callen-Lorde: therapist for the trans community, HIV counselor, trans/HIV support group facilitator, trainer, token trans, etc. He has also worked with (and still does, in various capacities) the Gender Identity Project of the LGBT Community Center doing individual counseling and providing support groups for the trans communities. A community organizer, Ray led the group that put together "Body and Soul," a healthcare conference for FTMs and those on the masculine spectrum. In his free time, he likes to take spinning classes, pet every dog he sees, ride roller coasters, and play silly amusement park games to win useless stuffed animals. He started his transition 5 years ago, and is still engaged in the continual struggle to get his grandparents to call him "he" in public.

Tyler Fong, an American-born Chinese, was raised in Antioch, CA and currently resides in Concord, CA. He is a radiologic technologist with Kaiser Permanente in Walnut Creek, and active member of the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra, Cal Aggie Alumni Marching Band-uh, substitute horn for the Contra Costa Chamber Orchestra, and volunteer facilitator of Gender Quest in Pleasant Hill. Affiliated with FTM International since 1996, Tyler is the current Advertising Editor of the FTM International Newsletter. His experiences as a heterosexual Asian female in a predominantly Caucasian city have brought some interesting perspectives to the educators, counselors and students in attendance at his various speaking engagements. He has represented TGSE, FTM International, and Catholic Charities of East Contra Costa County as an FTM/transgendered male.

Recently he helped organize and participated in the annual TGSE Cotillion to crown Miss TGSE 2002. As a scientist, technologist, musician and educator, he hopes to continue his activism in trans awareness in both the queer and mainstream communities.

Tamhas Griffith is a new transman with strong roots in the Bay Area lesbian community who strives to be an ally to people of color. He would like to see more people of color in roles of power and responsibility on the board of FTMI, but that is not yet the case. He ran for the board to help insure that FTMI's support network is a welcoming space and useful tool for the wide range of FTMs and SOFFAs seeking support. An information technology professional, Tamhas is currently helping renovate the FTMI office computers and website. Aside from updating the design and general content, he wants to promote more content specific to people of color on the website and perhaps to feature one article from the newsletter quarterly that is translated into a language other than English. Having gotten tremendous support from the guys at FTMI, he hopes to offer something in return.

Juan Alejandro Lamas is a working class Latino/Hispanic Transgendered person. An auto-mechanic by day and a closet writer by night, Juan is a published writer and playwright whose latest work will be seen shortly in an upcoming book about transgender and gender variant folks. Juan is also the founder of the Bi-lingual (gender) group "Queer Latinos". Juan is an avid boxer also into weight training, kickboxing and off street fighting. juan@bigblock.com.au

Malachi Larrabee-Garza is a 22-year-old queer mixed race (Mexican-Irish) transman. Raised in a born-again Christian missionary family, he partially grew up in Mexico City in government assistance/poverty on both sides of the border while dealing with the overall oppression of the anti-queer and trans religious movements. When he came out as queer and trans at 16, he was sent to an Exodus International "healing" center, a secluded house where queer and trans youths in custody undergo psychotherapy to make them turn to God and away from sin. Malachi ran away and ended up in the street economies of San Francisco, where he started to rebuild his life based on the principles of equality and justice. On issues from equal housing rights, to passing statewide legislation to keep LGBT youth safe in school, to working with TransAction to expose police abuse of transpeople, he has worked with youth agencies and community non-profits to better the conditions of queer and trans youth. He currently works with a non-profit called C-Beyond as a youth educator and mentor. multi_issue@hotmail.com

Dion Manley has served as acting Executive Director and President of FTMI for the past 2 years. Under Dion's leadership, FTMI has initiated new projects in legal advocacy and moved into a new office at the LGBT center in San Francisco, as well as continued its outreach through its publications, support for performing arts and other events, and the continual fight for medical access and research. His immediate focus was to create a team, build structure, and strive toward reaching underserved groups within the trans communities. He has represented FTMI publicly and politically on a national level, helped raise funds and write grants, served on the advisory board of the Youth Gender Project, organized trainings, and worked to initiate and enhance communication. His dream is to incorporate people of color, working-class people, international members, partners, and other under-represented folks into FTMI's leadership. As your average, everyday working-class Joe, Dion has found it both a challenge and an honor to strive toward bringing people together in a spirit of respect, bridging gaps between communities, and maintaining FTMI's consistent voice in our fight for social justice.

Jennifer A. Mantle says, "Find a need and fill it." Having herself come to FTMI to connect with other partners, she wants to help the organization to include and support partners, whether current, former, or hoping to be in a relationship with an FTM. Seeing outreach as a vital function of FTMI, Jennifer's has 7 years of experience in coordinating, facilitating, and establishing workshops, retreats, and meetings to offer as assets in helping to reach those who would benefit from services if they knew about them. Her vision is to establish partners' spaces and retreats for all of our constituencies. Jennifer wants to help the underserved through training seminars and the production of materials to assist in their development. She also hopes to see partners represented in the newsletter and on the burgeoning website.

Martin D. Rawlings has been one of the tireless worker bees within FTMI since 1998. He ran for the board this year because he wants to get more involved in the process that guides the daily workflow. He has done everything from answering the voice mail to Pride organizing. He sees answering the phones as high priority because it makes us look bad and hurts us all when people call and nobody answers. Though Pride organizing may be fun, it is an important way to show new men what we are about. Since we need members who follow as well as lead, he believes he has a lot to offer the board both as member and as volunteer.

Dragonsani Renteria (Drago) is a deaf, Chicano/Italian transman who grew up in El Paso, Texas. A UC Berkeley graduate and current President and CEO of DeafVision, Inc., he brings over 15 years of media and non-profit management experience and activism to the FTMI board. Widely known as a "doer" who gets the job done, Drago is a former Director of the Deaf Gay and Lesbian Center who currently serves on the

Advisory Board of the Youth Gender Project. He was chosen as a Grand Marshall for San Francisco's Freedom Day Parade in 1995 and was recently honored as a "Local Hero" for LGBT Pride month by KQED Public Broadcasting. Drago believes in the mission of FTMI and wants to make a difference. One of his main goals as a board member is to make the organization more accessible to Deaf and disabled transmen everywhere.

Pablo Ky Santos is committed to making FTMI an antiracist and anti-sexist organization through diversifying the board and membership to be more inclusive of FTMs of all colors on the gender identity and sexual orientation spectrum. A Filipino and African post-op FTM, Santos has expertise in diversity training about POC issues and other multicultural aspects of transgender and LGB issues. He is also skilled at technical and grant writing, public speaking, community mobilization, and outreach. He wants to see the website and newsletter reflect more diversity by including more articles, photos, referrals, advertisements, and experiences of people of color on the FTM spectrum.

Gwen Smith is driven by passion. In 1993 she spearheaded efforts to change AOL's Terms of Service Agreement, work which eventually led to AOL's first transgender forum. She has continued to infuse her passion throughout cyberspace, creating web projects like the *Remembering Our Dead* project and webmistressing Loren Cameron's Online *Alchemy* and *Man Tool* sites. She writes regular columns for the *Bay Area Reporter* and the *Philadelphia Gay News*. Other writings of hers have appeared in publications and Internet sites as diverse as Gay.com, the *FORGE Newsletter*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Transgender Community News*, *Out Magazine*, *Penthouse.com*, *Transgender Tapestry*, *Willyboy*, and others. She envisions a community where no one is left out, where no one is made to feel less important than anyone else, and where we can take our strength from each other's talents.

Marcus Rene Van appreciates the history behind FTMI as an organization that has taken transgender activism to a whole new level by advocating for social and legal change. He wants to be a part of the forward motion, one of many voices in this revolution of claiming gender. Van is an outspoken transgender writer/activist of color who has presented his work over the past 4 years at events through LYRIC, SFWAR, the LGBT Center in San Francisco, the Harvey Milk Institute, National Slam Poetry Finals, and many other organizations advocating for social change. He has also written commentary on trans-sexuality and participated in trainings and panels dealing with race, class, and gender on a national level. As a board member, he wants to combine creative programming with conventional activism, using our creative voices to shatter the status quo through community organizing. Says Van, "The energy I bring comes from the soul of living in this skin and the need to make this world an easier place for us to reside."



Plan Z: Gender Euphoria in the Tennessee Woods

by Camden, Plan Z Collective Member

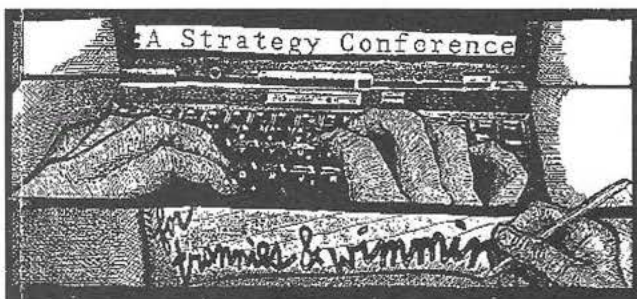
At IDA faerie land, eighty trannie and wimmin activists formed a circle. Interspersed among them were radical faeries in fabulous drag and various states of undress. There was a go-around of names and preferred pronouns and an announcement of a solstice party. Then all dashed off for a faerie-made feast.

The 1st annual *Plan Z: a strategy conference for trannies and wimmin* took place from June 17th through the 23rd, 2002 in rural Tennessee. Designed to give trannies and wimmin a space to spend less time battling gender oppression and more time forming political strategies, Plan Z was an inspiring event. Daily working group meetings created strategic plans including a protocol for a domestic violence task force, a youth liberation/radical parenting conference, and a network for health-related activism. Topics ranging from mental illness to Plan Columbia were covered in workshops designed for each day's theme – sensitivity, home/community, health/environment, militarization, and global solidarity. The presence of so much new information and energy seemed to keep people strongly engaged through a week of intense exploration and discussion.

Based in a tradition of anti-authoritarian organizing, the Plan Z collective tried to make all decisions by consensus, a process by which individuals work together toward a unanimous final decision. This organizing method continued through the conference with daily meetings, which all participants were encouraged to attend. The topics of these meetings ranged from scheduling to substance-free activities. Participants had an opportunity to give their own opinions

of how the conference should be run and devise methods for implementing changes. It was an empowering, though sometimes lengthy, process.

One of the goals of this first Plan Z was to begin bridging the gap between radical feminist bio-wimmin and radical feminist/transfeminist transfolks. Starting with the first day's theme of sensitivity and continuing through the week, workshops and individual conversations created new allies and allowed participants, trannies and bio-wimmin alike, to actively fight their own transphobia. Often, small groups of trannies gathered to share their frustration and stress at listening to others air their



transphobic issues. However, the supportive atmosphere and the obvious willingness of all participants to learn from each other made the conference a safer space to wrestle with these lessons.

Plan Z's greatest shortcoming was its lack of diversity. In the organizing of the conference, outreach was regrettably lacking. There were very few attendees-of-color and, though the land was made as accessible as possible, the absence of many mobility-impaired folks was obvious. In addition, while the bio-wimmin and the younger gender-queer and tranny-boy circles were well represented, very few transwimmin attended and the voices of most of the older trans generation were

missing. Creating alliances across these gaps can, perhaps, be a future goal of Plan Z. Hopefully, the organizing collective will be able to improve upon last year's work



and attract a more diverse pool to next summer's conference.

Too much of politics and strategy will, of course, addle the brain, so the evening was a time to unwind. It was also our best chance to spend time with our faerie hosts who were often much amused by our anti-authoritarian lingo and the occasional shock at faerie customs (if you ever visit faerie land, keep in mind that hissing is a positive reaction). The connections formed between the faerie community and the wimmin/trannie communities, including building a 44-foot bridge together, were enlightening, amusing, and long overdue. The last night of the conference the IDA faeries brought out their drag, faeries arrived from nearby land, and everyone dressed at their most fabulous. In the center of the ensuing dance party, four figures could be seen – a three-year-old in a taffeta ballgown, a tranny-boy in hotpants and binding, a faerie in a corset, g-string, and 5-inch heels, and a womyn in a red sequin leotard and top hat. It was a light-hearted example of gender liberation and a fitting end to an amazing week. ▼

To find out more about next summer's Plan Z 2003, please email planz2003@hotmail.com

This article represents only the author's impressions of the conference and does not in any way speak for the Plan Z collective or the attendees of Plan Z 2002.

Camp Trans and the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival

by Max Spit and Alex Gino



Max Spit:

In August I attended my third Camp Trans. While I feel strongly about the issue at hand—that is, the inclusion of transwomen at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival—I also see the issue as really indicative of a larger transphobic society, which due to fear and ignorance, persecutes and excludes trans people.

This August's event was drastically different than the first one I attended in '99. Few believed me when I gave accounts of Camp Trans 1999, when almost everyone went onto "the land" to protest, and I was left alone with one other transguy shivering in a tent, while a group of Festival-goers literally put a curse on the Camp Trans campsite. It was scary.

This August, Camp Trans was an entirely different place. First of all, the space was different—bigger and better—with a lot more room for outdoor music and workshops. I missed being right across from the festival gate, but then I remembered that curse and thought better.

Unlike years before, most of the over 100 people in attendance this year camped at Camp Trans, boycotting the Michigan festival altogether. The space felt much more unified politically; that is, the majority in attendance felt they were there for a twofold purpose—to get the festival to change its don't-ask-don't-tell, essentially anti-transwomen policy and to work together to end hatred against trans people everywhere.

However, Camp Trans has its problems. First, over the years the number of transwomen in attendance has dwindled dramatically. Why? Camp Trans is now overrun with transguys and others assigned female at birth, whose own issues of inclusion have overshadowed Camp Trans' original intent of winning access to MWMF for those assigned male at birth. Many discussions revolved around this issue, and in one community forum-styled meeting, the notion of FTMs harboring sexism and misogyny against MTFs was brought up. These are the things we should be talking about. These discussions, led by transwomen, made many of the FTMs there rethink their original reasons for coming to Camp Trans.

While much of the entertainment came from within Camp Trans—including music, poetry, and a really-funny skit about obnoxious comments Festival-goers had said about trans people—one night a group of Drag Kings performed. I normally enjoy drag performances and have found many transfolks and allies within that community, but this night of entertainment felt wrong.

Hundreds of people from the Festival came over to watch, and after it was over, they all went back to the women's festival—the performers included. I later found out that, although a number are trans-identified, all of the performers attended and camped at the Festival, not at Camp Trans. They



used our space for their performance but showed no allegiance to the larger purpose of Camp Trans. Also, only a couple of people from the Festival ventured out to Camp Trans during the week. I know for a fact that a significant number of FTMs attend the Festival or work there every year. Why don't they show their support? This feels like a betrayal!

I know that Camp Trans is for many folks something still up for debate. But while I played and danced and camped and played with grrls and boys and genderqueers, grownups and little kids, I knew that Camp Trans is something I really care about. Though I realize that Michigan Womyn's Music Festival is something that only happens once a year (and I have no personal desire to attend it) I am certain that the exclusion of transwomen anywhere is wrong. I will continue to support my sisters.

Alex Gino:

The Michigan Women's Music Festival, now in its 27th year, is a women's campout held every August. Roughly half the women at MWMF support Camp

Trans and are for eliminating the event's "womyn-born womyn" only policy. (Read: "no trans people") However, other attendees, as well as festival and land owner Lisa Vogel, are invested in keeping the policy in place. These attendees often say that they are trans-positive, but that the festival is not a place for trans-inclusion.

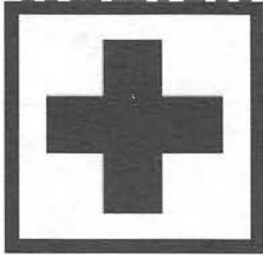
Numbers at this year's MWMF were down to about 4,000, from 5,500-6,000 in recent years. Some believe this is a result of people boycotting it because of the anti-trans policy. A number of performers have also refused to play at the festival until the policy changes.

The stance of the Camp Trans organizers was that the MWMF policy should be changed to include *all* self-identified women, but they encouraged discussion. Should transmen and genderqueer people who do not identify as women be allowed at the festival? Camp Trans facilitated conversation and dialogue on this and other trans-related issues both internally and with MWMF attendees through workshops, one-on-one conversations, performances, moderated discussions, and a parade complete with giant puppets.

But many at the camp were not aware of each other's issues, and intersex issues were barely discussed. There was an upsetting lack of transwomen, people of color, older people, and people with disabilities present. However, attendees were generally careful about recognizing who was and was not there and discussing what that meant and how it could change.

Outside of the political message, the campout was also an incredible amount of fun. Communal vegan dinners and daily camp-wide meetings fostered a caring, giving atmosphere, and nightly dance parties provided heaping quantities of fun. Resources were shared and, in fact, many cars remained unlocked for the week. It was a heartening example of non-hierarchical community and togetherness.

While people at Camp Trans hope that the festival changes its policy soon, we would like to continue to get together in the woods, on our own terms. For more information about Camp Trans, visit <http://www.angelfire.com/emo/joshisahottie/>. ▼



Acne and FTMs

by Nick Edwards

Although family genetics often predispose people to have acne, taking testosterone is more likely to be the culprit for FTMs. When female-bodied people inject or apply testosterone for the purpose of transition, they go through a male puberty. Male puberty is a magnet for acne flare-ups due to the overproduction of oil in the skin. In most cases, acne occurs in the beginning years of testosterone therapy, but it can flare up any time in later years.

Why does testosterone often cause acne problems? Not only does testosterone cause the skin to produce more oil, but testosterone also affects the way the skin is able to slough off dead cells. These cells get caught in the pores and hair follicles, especially the follicles starting to produce whiskers.

Acne develops in the hair follicles, in the lining of the skin ducts surrounding hair follicles, and in the sebaceous oil glands. The oil and surface dirt get caught behind a plug of waxy oil and skin cells, causing inflammation and infection. This event triggers the body's immune system to send out infection-fighting white blood cells that also get caught in the affected area. Then a red bump or cyst appears.

There are 2 different types of acne that can appear on the face, back, chest and scalp: inflammatory and non-inflammatory.

Inflammatory Acne

Severe inflammatory acne can cause disfiguring cysts and deep scars. Inflam-

matory acne causes whiteheads to become infected and produce large pustules deep under the skin. These generally hurt before you can see them—always a good indicator that one is about to get out of hand.

One thing you can do at this point is to schedule an immediate visit to your dermatologist. He or she can inject each deep cyst with a combination of *Lidocaine*® to dull the pain, antibiotics, and an anti-inflammatory cortisone steroid while the cyst is still small. This will lessen the chance of the cyst becoming larger and more painful. Immediate action also minimizes scarring. Using moist heat packs on these spots before the visit and after is recommended. This helps with the pain and helps the affected area drain.

Non-Inflammatory Acne

Non-Inflammatory is a milder form of acne consisting of whiteheads and blackheads that easily be treated with over-the-counter topical ointments or lotions like *Oxy-10*®. This type of acne can be above or below the skin, either as a closed comedo, also known as a whitehead, or as an open comedo when the plug gets larger and comes away from the duct. Blackheads are not dirt trapped under the skin; they are the result of the dark skin pigmentation called melanin building up within the comedo. That's why they don't wash away when you wash your face.

Acne Tips

There are other contributing factors not associated with testosterone use that should be taken into consideration. Here are some tips to help keep acne problems at bay.

Eat a lot of fruits and vegetables. Try to avoid a lot of fat in your diet. Avoid stress. Get a lot of sleep. Use vitamins high in iodine with caution. The recommended daily dosage of iodine is less than 150 mcg. Anything higher can cause acne flare-ups.

You may notice more acne when using medications for depression, such as Lithium and *Elavil* or when using anti-seizure medications such as *Dilantin*. Don't stop these medications if you notice acne problems. Consult your doctor or dermatologist for help.

Use sports supplements such as Androstenedione and DHEA, with caution. They can elevate natural testosterone levels in females, resulting in acne.

Avoid rubbing alcohol, also known as Isopropyl Alcohol, because it irritates the skin, strips off good bacteria, and dries out the skin. This stimulates the oil glands to produce even more oil to keep the skin surface in balance. Also, avoid any face washes or astringents that contain alcohol. *Sea Breeze*® is mostly alcohol. Avoid shaving products like pre-shave lotions for electric shavers that contain alcohol.

Use colognes like musk and others with ingredients like ambrette and cinnamates sparingly and only on the

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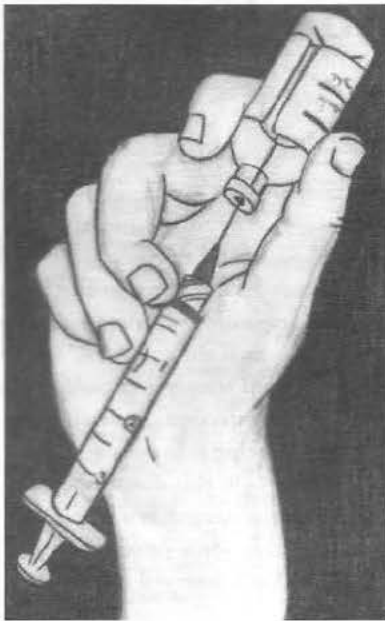
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D. Soltis

neck, because they can cause flare-ups. These also contain alcohol.

Carefully choose your dandruff shampoo. Use a dandruff shampoo that contains tar, zinc, or salicylic acid. When using hair spray or mousse, avoid the skin of the face. Those that have breakouts on their scalps from testosterone, should be sure to wash their hair daily.

Wash your face in the morning and evening. You can use a variety of over-the-counter acne washes or preparations such as

Proactiv Solution® or *Murad*® that you can order on-line or from television.

Prescription Medications

If your acne becomes a problem, there are a number of medications prescribed by your doctor or dermatologist that help combat acne, especially severe inflammatory acne.

- Oral antibiotics: Tetracycline, Doxycycline & Ampicillin
- Topical antibiotic lotions: Erythromycin 2% and Clindamycin 2%
- Topical gels: *Differin*®, *Metrogel*®, Clindamycin and *Azelex*®
- Topical creams: *Retin-A*® or its generic; Tretinoin, Salicylic acid
- Oral medications: *Accutane*®.

In closing, try over-the-counter acne preparations first. If you find one that works well for you, use it regularly. If no over-the-counter topical medications or acne washes work for you, you might ask your doctor whether lowering your testosterone injection by a few milligrams might help. This has helped some people, including myself. You can also try using testosterone enanthate (brand name, *Delatestryl*®) if you find your acne is more profound while using testosterone cypionate (brand name, *Depo-Testosterone*®) or vice versa. This method has also

worked well for me as well as for others. If you do decide to try a different form of testosterone, give yourself at least 6 weeks to give your body plenty of time to get used to it. Don't give up after a couple of weeks with any new regime or medication you are trying. Often the effects of any new form of acne medication, injection regime, or type of testosterone won't be noticeable for 7-12 weeks. If all else fails, consult a dermatologist or your regular doctor. ▼

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Nick Edwards was born 43 years ago in Oakland, California. He moved to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in 1970, where he has lived the majority of the time since In May of 2002 he celebrated 10 years of sobriety. Nick has been on testosterone since 1995. He created and continues to expand an excellent Web resource, the Transitional Male, which claims to be a comprehensive educational site for transmen, spouses, family and friends. Indeed it is.



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TG/TS/ICD Counseling Individual, Couples, Group Counseling and Referrals for the Transgendered Community, Partners, and Families. Open Monthly Events. 310.475.8880 www.lagendercenter.com



The High Price of Manhood

By Marcus de María Arana

On December 26 and 27, 2001, I underwent two surgeries on my left thigh, due to an abscess caused by a testosterone injection: one surgery to drain the abscess and another to remove diseased and dead tissue and bone. It was hard to hear that, after 7 years of being my own needle-jockey, I had infected myself. In all, I spent two weeks in the hospital and six weeks staying with my father while I completed an IV course of antibiotics, and was out of work or worked less than 15 hours-per-week for seven months. I nearly died, I nearly lost my leg, I needed to have nearly 25% of my femur (thighbone) cut away, and I spent four months changing my own wound dressings twice daily until the cavernous crater (9" long, 5" wide, and 1.5" deep) healed close on its own. Now, I have an angry red crevice to remind me of the personal price I have paid for my masculinity.

It's not as if I hadn't tried to get medical help before I went into septic shock (that's blood poisoning to us lay people) and returned to the ER at UCSF in San Francisco after Xmas. Ten days earlier, I spent nine hours having various ER staff who examined my back for sciatic pain and eventually sent me home without intervention. The ER staff consulted my orthopedic surgeon (who hadn't examined me and had only conversed with other doctors via telephone) and performed an MRI, although I had that procedure one week before. I kept asking them to look at my leg, which was swollen, reddish, squishy feeling, feverish, and had unrelenting pain running down the back of my leg. I had spent weeks at home, sick with a fever and unable to sleep, tossing and turning in bed in between standing in cold showers trying to break the cycle of pain and fever. The staff refused and continued to focus on my back.

From the start, the staff lost all pretense of caring about me after learning I was FTM and my injury may have been testosterone-related. Despite my 101-degree fever, I sensed the prevailing attitude was that I brought the injury on

myself by messing around with steroids. Without examining me or asking a question, the surgeon told them to send me home with "inoperable sciatica" regardless of my fever and unexamined leg. The ER staff released me. I wept uncontrollably as I struggled with my shoes.

The nurse asked me why I was crying, and I explained about the pain and the lack of sleep. Her response was "At least you got two shots of morphine." I was horrified- I wasn't there for the drugs. I was there because I was afraid I was dying and I needed immediate help. And the truth is that I was slowly dying because of two types of nasty bacteria that had infected my thigh muscle, the infection slowly working its way into my femur.

The reality was that I had cleaned a small area on my thigh with alcohol and then missed that target when I started to inject. I should have immediately withdrawn the needle and started over. I had also forgotten to wash my hands before filling the syringe, and I am aware of my mistakes. Any other man on this hormone could have made the same mistakes and had an identical injury. The difference is that a man who is not FTM would not have met with the same prejudice and transphobia, and his health insurance would have covered the high cost of the complication.

In fact, most insurance companies specifically exclude any treatments associated with transgender or transsexual care, which has often been interpreted to exclude complications as well, regardless that they may be life threatening. I was lucky that I am a San Francisco City employee, and SF is the only municipality that offers TG health coverage to its employees. I was very fortunate because the hospital bills alone exceeded \$60,000.

As the weeks passed after that ill-fated injection, I got increasingly sicker and even canceled a trip to NYC after puking into the trashcan at the SF airport. I finally recognized I was in a losing battle with my mystery illness. The day after Xmas, the ER staff did take me seriously when I returned with a 104.5-degree fever. This time they did examine

my leg and, after an ultrasound revealed a 500cc abscess, they rushed me into surgery. There are far too many tales of transphobia to render here. Suffice it to say that my injury somehow became regarded as that "transsexual abscess in 907B". I was no longer viewed simply as an unfortunate person with an infection, but rather the disease was in being transgender. Somehow, I had brought this down upon myself by injecting testosterone as a transsexual. I got the vibe from some providers that I had gotten what I deserved for messing with nature.

I do have tales of kindness about my father, stepsister, friends, and colleagues sharing their time, resources, and love by helping me on a grueling climb to survive the injury and rebuild my shattered life. There have been kind strangers helping me with my wheelchair and walker. And, I have developed a great love of life and gratitude for what I have. Certainly, I learned that transition must be taken very seriously, recognizing the risks of hormonal injections. And, I am one of the lucky ones to survive medical transphobia, unlike Robert Eads or Tyra Hunter.

Mostly, I have learned to be present, taking each day as though I may never see another. Being that close to death has inspired me to enjoy life and all that it brings, good and bad. After all, how can I complain knowing that each day is a precious gift that nearly became a casualty of my masculinity? ▼

Marcus de María Arana is a Discrimination Investigator for the San Francisco Human Rights Commission specifically addressing complaints based upon gender identity. Since coming out as FTM in 1994, Marcus has been the site manager for the 1995 FTM in the Americas conference, Editor of the FTM Newsletter from 1995 to 1997, Faculty member at Creating Change Conference's Gender Splendor Institute 2001, and educator on transgender awareness and legal rights.





Identity

by Michael

When you look at me, what do you see?
When I tell you who I am, do you hear me?

What is identity? How do people identify? These two questions have intrigued me for many years. Throughout my life, I have taken on many forms of identities, along with role expectations prescribed by those identities. Biologically, I was born male. However, I was never very successful at playing the boy role. Growing up, I was always getting in trouble for playing with dolls or acting like a girl. People treated me like the stereotyped sissy, dishing out disapproving looks and hurtful remarks which, try as I might, I just couldn't understand.

By the time I started high school, I had been given the labels *faggot* and *poofier*, even though I didn't have the faintest clue what these names meant. When I did learn what these names meant, I went along with them because they seemed to describe me. After all, I was attracted to boys, so, I thought this must be what I am. As a consequence of these experiences, I identified as a gay-boy for many years. I grew up to become a hairdresser and, more importantly, personified the gay male hairdresser stereotype to perfection.

By this time I had moved to Brisbane, Australia, living within the gay community, fully engaged in the gay nightclub scene. Counter to outward appearances, however, I wasn't entirely comfortable anymore with the *gay* label. Rather than gay, I began to identify myself as queer, with my definition of *queer* being, "anything different and unusual". Different and unusual in comparison to what, you may ask. In my mind, and within myself, I felt I was different and unusual in comparison to both the straight and gay communities. After all, I slept with men, so I couldn't possibly be straight. However, I also slept with women, so I didn't feel I was entirely gay either. Given my biological status, it seemed faintly ridiculous for me to identify as lesbian; and for some reason I couldn't explain at the time, the term bisexual had

always made me feel uncomfortable, so *queer* I became.

I was very happy with my new chosen identity and, within it, I found a freedom to be. Unfortunately, even though I found this concept of *queer* to be quite a simple one, many people around me seemed to find it quite confusing. Their confusion seemed to be compounded by one of the most important events in my life.

I met a boy and fell in love. Even more fortunate, my feelings were reciprocated. Many of my friends, at the time, couldn't seem to get their head around the fact that my new boyfriend had been born, biologically, female. Ironically, I received more support and encouragement to explore this new relationship from my 'straight identifying' friends, than I did from my 'gay identifying' friends. Some couldn't understand why a gay boy would want to be in a relationship with a woman. One person asked me if this relationship meant that I was straight now. I have always felt that friendships have a natural expiry date—after all people change and grow apart. What I couldn't predict however, was the number of close friends I would lose at this time in my life.

Don't get me wrong. I am not trying to imply that I was the hard-done-by and misunderstood innocent within this period of turbulent change, because I certainly wasn't. I was absorbed within that beautiful thing which is falling in love, wanting to spend every waking moment with the person I was in love with, coupled with a new identity crisis of my own. I just didn't have the energy or the patience to be dealing with negative criticism and ignorant opinions about what I was doing with my life. In many ways, I went through my own period of transition over the next few years, with the greatest impetus to my transformation being the support and encouragement I received from my partner.

When I stopped and surveyed my new reality, I discovered that most of my old

chosen family, my closest friends, had disappeared from my life for one reason or another. I now found I was no longer the person I once thought I was, so I set about recreating, yet again, a new reality for myself. This reality encompassed my new chosen family, my partner and friends and also, because of my having moved away from Brisbane, a new living environment.

Another fundamental change had taken place within me. I no longer wanted to work within the so-called beauty industry. The continual questioning of my own and other peoples' beliefs and ideas concerning sex, gender and sexuality led me to the recognition that I wanted to learn more about the world I had been living in. The question of how I would go about this seemed to have quite a simple answer. I decided I wanted to go to university.

That decision, made many years or a lifetime ago—however you choose to perceive it—was one of the best decisions I have ever made. With the support and encouragement of my partner, I have rediscovered a passion for learning.

One constant that has remained with me, throughout my studies, is the question of identity and how people choose to identify. Being in a relationship with someone who is FTM, has certainly operated, on one level, as a challenge to my own beliefs and opinions concerning questions of identity. At the same time however, this remains only one aspect within the intricate web of social relations and forms of self-identification that I come in contact with on a daily basis. Given that all human beings are generally viewed as unique individuals, it seems a logical step to suggest that all human beings will also have a unique method of self-identification.

One point that continues to fascinate and, at times, frustrate me is the way people seem to cling to one overarching identity marker for their expression of

continued on p. 24 ►

In Memoriam

Death and Transition

by Garin Wiggins

For many FTMs, Alexander John Goodrum's suicide on the last Saturday in September cast a pall over the month and a half before this year's Transgender Day of Remembrance. I know the pressured isolation that can claim a fellow activist in the midst of a million projects, but I have not experienced the racism aimed at those of us whose transition makes them men of color. I never met Alexander, but somehow I took his death personally. He was family.

At work that Monday, while reading the slew of e-mails on Goodrum's death, I received an AOL Instant Message from my daughter, who told me that my grandmother had died on Sunday. They were having the funeral as we typed. I felt a lead balloon drop in my heart. We had a good online conversation—which she ended abruptly with no warning. The next day I wrote to her about how hurt I was that my mother had not told me my grandmother was dying or let me have a chance to come to the funeral. No response. And my mother still has not communicated with me.

I mourned for my grandmother having died without knowing why I suddenly disappeared from her life. When I realized that my mother's not telling me of her death was a strong message in a long line of such unspoken erasures, I finally understood that it is time for me to face the reality that my mother, father, brother, daughter, grandson, and granddaughter, though living, are dead and gone from my life—and I from theirs. Five years have passed since I have seen any of my family members, and the body, name, and gender role they knew as me is indeed dead. They have adjusted to my absence, made it clear they want me to stay away, and gone on with their lives.

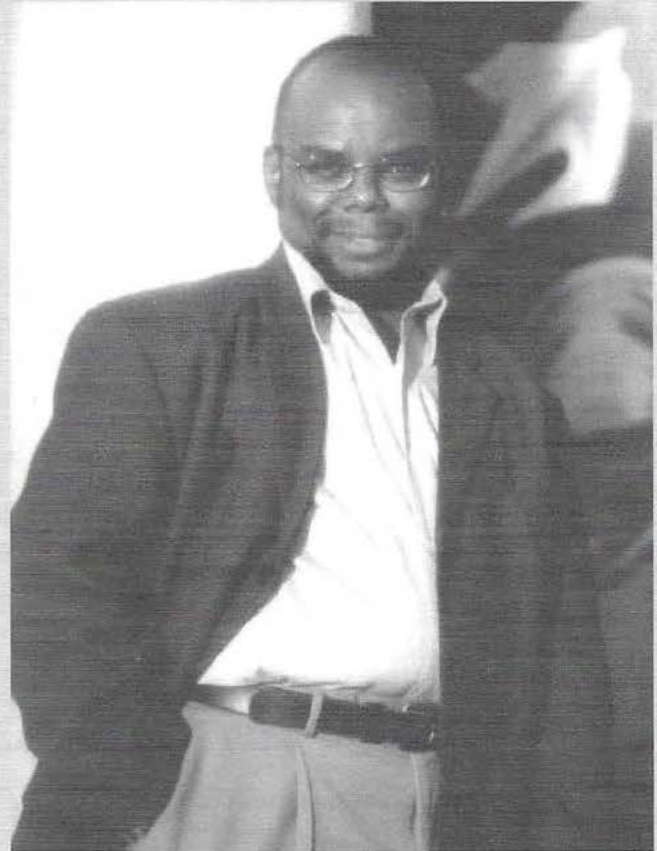
Another FTM committed suicide not long after Alexander. Then, less than a month later, we were all shocked by the brutal murder of 17-year-old Gwen Arujo by her peers. More poignant than my personal grief has been my pain for the murdered trans people and those suffering inner problems difficult to bear. This November 20, the Transgender Day of Remembrance events held in more than 90 locations around the world attested to the outrageous fact that the number of transgender murders continues to increase. We demand justice, public education, respect for our gender status, and the recognition of these murders as hate crimes.

Trans people and our supporters from the Philadelphia area came together on the Day of Remembrance and read the bloody details about those of us who became statistics. Several who had been moved by Goodrum's death spoke of the connection they felt with him. But we sang and recited poems and read testimonies and told tales of our determination and dignity and triumphs too. I realized then that the trans community and all who have minds and hearts large enough to embrace people of all kinds are my family. We who have died in more ways than we remember can be there for each other. "He ain't heavy, he's my brother. So on we go."

Alexander John Goodrum

October 3, 1960 – September 28, 2002

Chicago, IL • San Francisco, CA • Tucson, AZ



Alexander John Goodrum, a transgender activist and community leader, hanged himself in the early morning hours of Saturday, September 28, while hospitalized for depression and related psychiatric observation at La Frontera Psychiatric Health Facility in Tucson, Arizona. He would have been 42 on October 3.

"Bear", as he was affectionately known, was a disabled African-American bisexual female-to-male transsexual activist. He was the driving force behind the transgender-inclusive non-discrimination ordinance in Tucson in 1999. Goodrum founded TGNNet Arizona, a grassroots transgender education and advocacy organization, and remained its director until his untimely death.

Goodrum also started the Arizona Transgender Workplace Project, an educational program to help the Arizona business community deal responsibly with transgendered employees. More recently, he was part of the just-announced HRC study that gauged the perception of the American public on transgender issues.

How Can You Help?

By C. Michael Woodward, TGN Arizona Advisory Board

“Even in his death, Alexander was teaching me, challenging me, daring me to stretch myself, to show my true spirit.”

In my 39 years on the planet, I've never had a week quite like the one that began on September 28, 2002. It began that Saturday evening when I drove to La Frontera Psychiatric Health Facility for a long-overdue visit with my friend Bear. Earlier in the week, I had missed getting a chance to see him because I got the visiting hours confused, so I was left to simply drop off the items he'd requested. Among these items were his vial of testosterone; two pair of blue jeans to help him stay warm; and some TGN Arizona paperwork for a grant proposal he was, despite his hospitalization, driven to complete before the October 5 deadline.

Although we'd talked on the phone nearly every day since he checked himself in, I had not actually been to visit Bear for more than a week. I arrived at the hospital on Saturday, this time *on time* and eager to see my friend.

I carried with me a stuffed bear named Charlie, a gift from his friend Joe Cox, who asked me to convey his love and tell him that when he was feeling better, he should pass Charlie on to someone else who needed him more.

Imagine my surprise.

I went back to my car, still clutching Charlie. I wasn't sure what to do next. I thought, "Why didn't someone tell me??" Then I realized: there was no one TO tell me. Other than his family, hundreds of miles away in Las Vegas, no one had a clue.

I'm not even sure who I called first as I drove the long stretch back into town, but the first live voice I reached was that of Kevin Maxey. I searched for words to convey the news. Finally they just spilled out. From there, the news spread faster than an Arizona forest fire. From there, the world was changed forever.

As the week progressed, I found myself being continually challenged in ways I never had before. I fell into the role of family representative. With Lori Swan, I

retrieved his belongings from the hospital. With Joe, I drove his car from the hospital back to his apartment. I picked up and sorted a month's worth of mail that had accumulated. I had conversations with reporters and attorneys and postal employees. I repeated the news of his death to dozens of people by phone. At some point, I think I shut down the part of my mind that was grieving and shifted into the role of coordinator. I let the business of his death take over. I had to. I did not like my new role, but I knew it had to be done, and I was the one who needed to do it. And I think Bear knew it too.

Even in his death, Alexander was teaching me, challenging me, daring me to stretch myself, to show my true spirit. Well, this is it folks, and you have Alexander John Goodrum to thank. Does that make me special? No. My story is only one of dozens. We will never know how many lives and hearts he changed, one at a time. I'd only known Bear for just under two years... and my, oh my—how I wish I'd known him longer.

Alexander John Goodrum was an incredible man. He was also incredibly ill, and he was incredibly skilled at hiding his illness. But when he DID reach out, were any of us really there for him? Are we ever REALLY there for each other?

George Bernard Shaw once wrote: "The only service a friend can really render is to keep up your courage by holding up to you a mirror in which you can see a noble image of yourself."

We cannot let Alexander's death go unnoticed or unresolved or be misunderstood as something it was not. This was not about his gender status. Alexander John Goodrum was the most well adjusted, most comfortable, most blatantly delighted and proud transgendered person I've had the honor of knowing.

We cannot afford *not* to learn from his lessons—or from his mistakes. Let us also

remember that even those whom we hold in the highest regard are still human, and they are not perfect. There is no shame in being different. There is no shame in having an illness you cannot control.

All we have to give and receive is love. We must be sure that we, as a community, are there for each other, in spite of each other. We must stand together. We cannot let personality conflicts and hurt feelings and misunderstandings stand in the way of what is most important: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Everyone's happiness, not just our own. We must continue to fight for what is right and just in a world that is unforgiving and impersonal and closed-minded to anything outside of its comfort zone. We must continue his work. We must continue to change lives and hearts one at a time. *This* is what you can do to help. This is what Alexander would want for us. This is what he would demand! We cannot deny him this legacy.

Alexander's friend and colleague Michael Woodward launched a web site for friends and allies to share their comments, stories, and memories of Alexander. To view and/or participate in the "graffiti wall", please visit www.transcribes.org/alexander/graffiti.htm.

“Diversity is not for the squeamish. It means making (and taking) a space at the table that includes people you don't like, don't agree with, or who you think are just plain wrong.”

—Alexander John Goodrum
TSC 2002 Keynote address



BOOKS

Peering Inside *The Phallus Palace*

The Phallus Palace, by Dean Kotula. Alyson Books, 2002.

Reviewed by
Max Wolf Valerio

If only *The Phallus Palace* had been published fourteen years ago when I first began to hunt down information about female-to-male transsexuality! This book is a compendium of information and perspectives, a photo/essay book that inspires and educates. Dean Kotula, the book's principal author, is an FTM photographer who has been making photography for at least twenty years, taking pictures of subjects of men in shipyards, fishermen, and now—transmen and transsexual surgery.

It was the “photoevangelist” Cherie Hiser who persuaded Dean to begin a book of his photographs of FTMs. Her groundbreaking photographs of secret subcultures and underground communities (unlikely people with full body tattoos before tattoos went Hollywood), were already well known. She had originally meant to take on this project herself, but upon meeting Dean, realized quickly he should be the one. Dean then began the book project that would become *The Phallus Palace*. His intention was to photograph transsexual men in the ordinariness of our masculinity, and to capture the distinctive qualities of character and personality in each man.

Later, Cherie introduced Dean to William (Bill) E. Parker, a notable and passionate multimedia artist whose

visionary work as a photographer/painter and printmaker has grappled with issues of masculinity, nature, and recently (after working on *The Phallus Palace*) gender. His participation added another layer of depth. It was Bill Parker who persuaded Dean to open up the book and make it more inclusive and ambitious, an overview of female-to-male transsexuality with a broad base of contributors. He became the Consulting Editor, working to structure the book into a forum including essays and interviews with family members, surgeons, and therapists. There's even a poem and moving self-portrait from a fifteen year old FTM. It was William Parker's belief that such a comprehensive work could more capably address the many incendiary issues involved in FTM life and transition, and convey their complexity to a larger American audience. He feels that this communication is especially important given the current political climate. Stating, “You have to have (some) way of addressing it so that people who are sitting comfortably in their homes, (hearing) the current administration, or hearing the Christian fundamentalists making their pronouncements, and they are deadly people, make no mistake... This is what happened with National Socialism... So my point was I felt like you had to get a broader segment (of contributors)” ... (from my interview with William E. Parker - Boston, July 13th, 2002).

The Phallus Palace is unpretentious; there isn't a whiff of academic jargon. The prose is immediate and thoughtful, with feelings and impressions genuine and close to the surface of the writing. At the core of the work are Dean Kotula's distinctive portraits of transsexual men. Each transman photographed has contributed a personal essay, bringing another “speaking” dimension to each photograph. *The Phallus Palace* also includes graphic photographs of the genital surgeries phalloplasty and metoidioplasty, as well as a mastectomy, as they are being performed.

One of Dean's greatest influences, the photographer W. Eugene Smith, sheds particular light on these photographs. Eugene Smith's images of war were instructive to Dean. He states, “My point is that with Eugene Smith's work...

even with those brutal graphic images that he took of war images, he made those images completely accessible through his very sensitive compositions. They turn into these magnificent, beautifully rendered images. So, that has definitely influenced me, and that's one thing I try to do through my surgical photographs... If you could bring a well balanced photograph, with certain lighting conditions, you could bring a certain atmosphere to that photograph, you can bring a certain aura to it... it's not as harsh a reality - but you're still getting the message across... and the fact is, with these surgeries too, there's something absolutely beautiful going on with the creation of what's happening here - this is something that is going to dramatically improve somebody's life.” (interview with Dean Kotula - July 13, 02).

My largest complaint about the book is that the publisher chose not to print all of the photos on better stock. Better paper would have really shown these photos off. Maybe next printing.

MTF writer O'Hartigan is her usual indomitable self, devastating in her critique of the Alan Hart Identity wars—recounting in scathing detail how a lesbian group in Portland, Oregon tried to “honor” Alan Hart while denying his hard won male identity. She, (along with other transsexual activists including Rachel Koteles, Ken Morris and Candace Hellen Brown), fixed that.

Dean's autobiographical essays outline his adventurous life journey—revealing him to be a romantic, exuberant world traveler and a talented writer. Dean's journeyed to Thailand, joined the Peace Corps, studied and practiced taxidermy, and worked in shipyards, on fishing boats, and recently as a dealer of antiques and vintage clothing. Finally, he reveals an ambition to become an organ grinder with a monkey, adding a strange, whimsical twist to a wayfaring life path. Dean is unsparing in his description of the intense pain that his gender dysphoria has caused him, yet positive in his account of the effects of transition on his psyche and life. His account of joining the Peace Corps is especially troubling, and a surprise. Ultimately, Dean's transsexual journey is hopeful, although the pain sounds overwhelming and haunting.

Transsexual writers map out fresh ways of viewing transsexual transforma-

tion. Consulting Editor Bill Parker has a strong affinity to visionary art and the integration of myth and modernity. It was he who brought in Rachel Pollack, and her essay contributes a shimmering mythopoetic element. Discussing the myth of Osiris, in *The Transsexual Book of the Dead*, Pollack reconfigures Egyptian mythology into a multi-layered map for transsexual experience. I was also astonished by FTM art therapist Jeff Brody's essay on transmale experience as self-determining and "dynamic", a growth process that is ultimately, "a creative act".

Accompanying his photo, the essay of Ken Morris relates how Ken's closeness to nature informs his experience of transition's hormonal changes. His male horse changed its behavior around him after he had begun testosterone treatment. Ken's essay confirms that the biological changes FTMs induce in our bodies through the use of testosterone are profound; wishful thinking or "social (de)construction" alone cannot create a change of sex.

Sharon Kotula, Dean's sister, speaks with candor about her changing view of her family history as she witnesses Dean's transition. In one of the most painful and intense essays in the book, another family writes of their struggle to care for and understand their young FTM child.

Each essay offers a unique vantage point. Cherie Hiser offers a personal, and artistic perspective—combining her role as therapist and her vision as a photographer. Diane Ellaborn discusses her groundbreaking work with FTM teenagers. There's also a fascinating interview with Dr. Milton Diamond, the sex researcher who helped John, "the boy who was raised as a girl," to reclaim his original and genetic male identity after it was repeatedly denied by Dr. John Money.

Surgeons are interviewed, including Dr. Toby Meltzer and Dr. James J. Reardon.

In July I attended the book launch party in the Boston area. The celebration was a blast, with a large ice sculpture of an erect cock as the centerpiece. It was a yard party, at least until mosquitoes attacked, and we were all chased indoors. Torches were lit, silver, red and black balloons floated on the fence, and good food, wine and music were enjoyed by all. The celebration was attended by many of the contributors, whom I got to meet. I saw an interesting T-shirt sported by a San Francisco expatriate who is now living in Northhampton, Massachusetts:

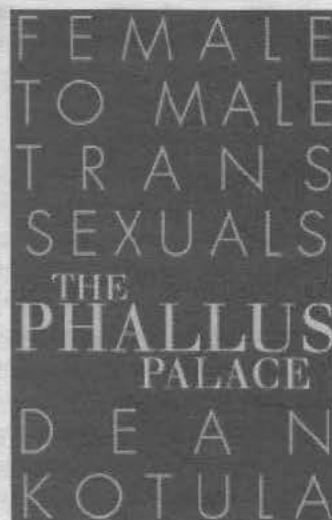
Northhampton—where many of the men used to be dykes! Without question this book is a group effort, and in that it is unique. It's hopeful that so many different types of people would work so hard to bring such a positive transsexual book to fruition—or maybe, it's just a sign of the times.

This is one of the only FTM books published that I would actually give to my family, to educate and inform them. Its breadth, integrity and intelligence make it a useful testimonial to FTM lives and to our transition process. *The Phallus Palace* got its title from the small tent erected by surgeons over the neophallus as it's being

THE PHALLUS PALACE: FEMALE TO MALE TRANS SEXUALS

BY DEAN KOTULA

Deeply personal essays accompanied by more than 100 photos capture female-to-male transsexualism in a candid and informative context that provides readers with a groundbreaking psychological, historical, biological, and cultural understanding of the journey from female to male.



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created in phalloplasty. Besides being right out there, funny, and proud, this title also suggests a perspective on transition that's inclusive of the medical process—welcoming of its insights and perils, and willing to acknowledge a debt to its medical gatekeepers and technicians. A recurrent theme is that the body has its own agenda: biology constructs us as much as culture. *The Phallus Palace* acknowledges the insights and burden of the body's deepest intelligence—that incessant call towards decisive transformation of our physical birth sex that finally creates us as transsexual men. ▼

Female-to-Male Transsexuals in Society
Holly Devor

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



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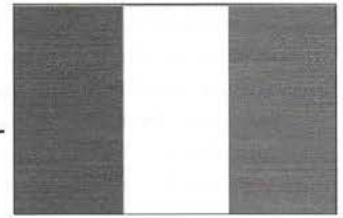
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FRANCE



Parisian TG Org Offers Personalized Service

by Frank Martin

Dedicated to providing active assistance to the multi-ethnic transgender community of Paris, PASTT (Prevention, Action, Health, Work for the Transgendered) aims to counteract the effects of transphobia in a positive way. As an organization created by trans folks, PASTT offers a number of diverse services divided into separate programs: AIDS/STD Prevention, Welcoming and Orientation (which provides access to medical, psychological and social aid), a Legal Program, prison visits for incarcerated trans people, employment and emergency housing assistance, referral to French language courses, makeup advice, and an International Program to network with other organizations.

Their AIDS/STD Prevention Program is intended for all trans people regardless of whether they happen to work in the sex industry. Not merely an educational service, PASTT has at least one medical doctor on board and works with public health officials. Until the recent French law legalizing the sale of syringes, PASTT vans regularly visited hot cruising spots like the Bois du Boulogne,

passing out free syringes to fellow transgendered people and transsexuals.

Motivated by the spirit of the Trans-Lesbian-Gay revolt after the 1969 police raid on the Stonewall Bar in New York, PASTT's involvement in Paris' annual "Lesbian-Gay Pride" march includes proposing the name "Trans-Lesbian-Gay Pride" to reflect the leadership role that the trans community has had in the ongoing liberation of sexual minorities.

PASTT's director, Dr. Camille Cabral, is an MTF whose dedication shows in her caring personal interactions with transsexuals and transgendered people as well as their significant others. According to Dr. Cabral, France is not the best place to have gender reassignment surgery. "French medical personnel are neither the best informed nor the most tolerant," she says. "It is nevertheless possible to follow a program of hormonal therapy in Paris under the medical supervision of an endocrinologist and a psychologist. When it comes to gender reassignment surgery, French practitioners are inferior to those of other countries such as England," she adds.

PASTT no longer has an active Web

site, nor do they publish a newsletter, but it is possible to e-mail them at either past@club-internet.fr or at cabralcamille@net-up.com. They are open Monday through Friday from 10am to 1pm and from 2pm to 6 pm at 94 rue La Fayette, 75010 Paris, France. Telephone: 01 53 24 15 40. Fax: 01 53 24 15 38. From the US, substitute 011 33 for the first zero. Donations are accepted by check made out to P.A.S.T.T. ▼

Frank Martin, an American FTM who began transitioning in 1983, is a writer living in (not to mention sleepless in) Seattle. He is the author of several humorous magazine articles and is currently at work putting his passion – mystic cosmology – into book form. As a volunteer correspondent with the Paris-based organization CARITIG (Center for Assistance, Research and Information on Transsexuality and Gender Identity), Frank has been working, since 2001, as a liaison and translator in an effort to promote international cultural exchange and dialog between transsexual/transgender communities in the United States and France.

More about PASTT's Programs

PASTT is a visible community association created, organized, inspired by and dedicated to the transgender community. Their current programs include:

- Mobile HIV/STD Prevention Program reaching out to transgender folks whether they are working in the sex industry or not
- Welcoming, Help, Information and Orientation Program providing resources for medical and psychological help and to information about social rights
- Legal Program linked to gender identity and common rights
- Prison Program supporting and visiting incarcerated trans folks
- Employment Program promoting transgendered people in the workplace and helping them find jobs
- Housing Program providing emergency hotel stays and apartment sharing
- Training Program with make-up application and French courses
- International Program networking with ethnic European, American, African, and Asiatic community organizations

Gender: Beyond Appearances

by Monoik



I hesitated a while before tackling the subject I'm going to debate, because even though it is familiar to me as a personal way of functioning, I nevertheless suppose it is somehow odd.

But why not? After all, couldn't this open a path of reflection for us? I shall explain myself, instead of going around in obscure circles.

Gender...masculine or feminine... is something that we perceive with our eyes, our ears, our senses. And something that we deduce with our reason, our intellect. I see this person with his strong build, I hear his deep voice, I immediately deduce that it is a man. I've had in front of me a physical and tangible phenomenon.

Let's take the problem in a different manner. I will no longer say: "I see, I hear, I deduce, I think", but: "I perceive, I feel (within limits), I imagine, I sense (a psychic phenomenon)". It becomes blurred; I no longer use my reason, but my intuition, my feeling, shall we say. I put another pedal of my brain into action.

And then... I perceive that every being has his own personal and unique manner of being a man or a woman, and that femininity and virility are distributed in many varied ways, in men just as in women.

The palette of gender shades is a rainbow, delineated in a very subtle way, a way far more subtle than what square, bipolar thought would like us to believe, a thought which divides and separates categories in a strict manner. Of course, I think that the average "Mr. Everyman" would have very little access to my discourse.

But I invite you to try and perceive beings with the intuitive processes of your brain (and not just the intellectual processes) ..., without falling too much into the projection of personal fantasies, of course (a very difficult task indeed!). But this can open a whole field of discoveries.

Don't feel guilty about any difficulties. It's not a sign of slow-wittedness, it's only a lack of intuitive calisthenics. As far as I am concerned, I have a rare capacity to sense beings beyond their appearance. Maybe this is due to my particular identity. I make sure I don't get too proud of it, since otherwise my boots would no longer fit into my dancing shoes! Furthermore, you must always keep in mind that the compasses of intuition are extremely capricious.

But my memory holds some striking anecdotes on this matter. Twenty years ago, I was introduced to someone who was to become an old friend. The youth I saw seemed cautious, classical, introverted, and, although nothing in his appearance would lead anyone to make any kind of suppositions, in an unexplained manner, I felt that there was a woman in his secret inner being, an ethereal and sensitive woman. My intuition was confirmed when I got to know him better; this homosexual, refined, romantic and shy boy carries in himself a "feminine" sensitivity, and knows very well that his heart leads him towards androgyny, even though he is fully aware that he cannot take that upon himself, neither physically nor socially, and refrains from living fully this part of his deep self.

Another example: one of my friends, TS FTM. At the time, when meeting him in the workplace, a long time before his transition, I first saw a girl looking quite boyish, and, very suddenly, I sensed "her" to be a boy. This was obvious, inexplicably obvious.

The delicacy of her physique couldn't contradict my conviction, nor the feeling I had of her irrefutable masculinity, even as

compared to those who were more "butch".

In fact, some girls who are described as "truck drivers" don't seem to be the same at all. One can be quite a masculine woman, and, why not, (yes, let's dare!), an effeminate FTM.

Another example: in a sociable Gay place, I one day took notice of a boy, who has now become a close friend. Like the flash of a slide, in a spontaneous and subconscious manner, another vision of this handsome boy with his sporting look imposed itself on my mind: just the same, but as a girl. The fact is that this person lives the androgyny of his mind through transvestism, sometimes dressed as a boy, sometimes as a woman. He feels fine in both genders, but periodically feels the need to dress as a woman (and not to seduce or excite himself, as one might believe).

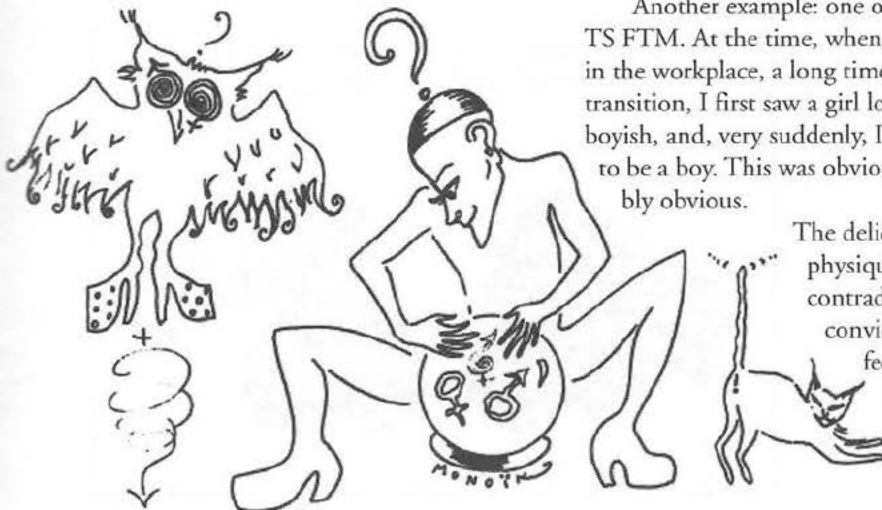
In one of them, I sensed the shy woman, in the other one, the sensual and assertive woman. All this to say that when you listen to another person in an intuitive way, you "sense" him/her in his/her deep reality, beyond the dictates of an appearance one bears just from belonging to a certain kind of genetic group.

It's a way of sensing beings which is not taught to us, as we are used to registering boys in blue and little girls in pink. "Pampers for girls", "Pampers for boys"... It goes on and on! As if they wanted to pound biological reality into us with a great deal of help from the ideological sledgehammer.

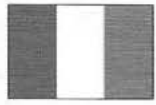
Therefore, let's allow ourselves to see that a woman who appears very feminine in her ways and her accessories is capable of developing qualities of character and behavior generally attributed to men, in her chosen field.

As far as I am concerned, masculine and feminine come in different doses according to each person. Beyond the reality of masculine or feminine identities, it seems to me that offering only two categories in which to "classify" beings is very narrow and inadequate.

The audacities of my discourse are a necessary counterpoint to the ambient ideology which reigns supreme over brains



continued on p. 18 ►



CARITIG
by Frank Martin

Founded in 1995 by a trio of European gender and human rights activists, CARITIG (Center for Assistance, Research and Information on Transsexuality and Gender Identity) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the social acceptance and the rights of all transsexual/transgendered persons. CARITIG defines its main objectives as being the full integration into society of TS/TG persons as first-class citizens who have access to quality health care with dignity and respect; access to employment, housing, and parental rights; and access to the special transitional ID documentation needed by transsexuals in France. In addition, the organization is involved in countering the progression of HIV and other STDs, as well as furthering thought and research into gender identity.

While CARITIG has branched out by creating regional groups within France, its main headquarters are in Paris, where volunteers are available during scheduled hours to offer assistance and support (most speak English) through telephone hotlines called *permanences*. In-person support groups are also offered, as well as individual guidance for those with legal, family, or medical concerns and for those needing assistance with finding employment.

"Gender" continued from p. 17 and hearts cut apart, each one confined to its own place, in the solitary confinement enforced by our society.

Yes, we live in an "apartheid of gender". It's up to us to free ourselves by setting up other ways to tackle our personal realities, first of all in our heads and then in our lives, and by taking our gender upon ourselves, in a true and personal way.

Translated by Siegfried and Sébastien. Corrected by Frank Martin, correspondent in Seattle.



As well as representing TS/TG issues at major events such as the recent International

Human Rights Commission in Geneva, CARITIG

also organizes meetings, debates and conferences, while networking with other allies such as FTM International.

CARITIG is represented in France by its founder Mr. Armand Hotimsky, who is a sexologist and a member of the FTMI Advisory Board; in England by co-founder Phaedra Kelly; and in the Netherlands by co-founder Germaine Nijsten. CARITIG volunteers in Paris publish a monthly newsletter called *The Green Letter* which is

also available to e-mail subscribers, and a quarterly magazine called *CDT*, both of which are in French.

The bilingual French-English website www.caritig.org offers subscription and membership information as well as certain *CDT* articles in English. There is also a chat group at www.caritig.org/chat/index.php3.

Those interested in photos of TS surgical results and procedures will find both top and lower surgeries shown at www.caritig.org/photos/choix.html. Telephone Hotline: 01.53.17.05.27 (from the U.S. dial 011.33. then omit the first zero). Hours

are listed in *The Green Letter*. Walk-Ins are welcomed at *Le Centre Gai et Lesbienne* (CGL), 3 Rue Keller, 75011 Paris — Metro stop Ledru-Rollin, but call the CARITIG Hotline first to confirm. E-mail: caritig@caritig.org. Mailing address: CARITIG, B.P. 756, 75827 Paris Cedex 17, FRANCE.

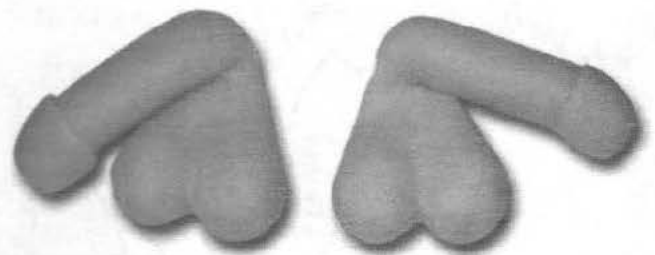


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Behaving Myself: The Celibate Lifestyle

by Tucker Lieberman

Identifying as gay and transgendered has, for me, never had much to do with sex. I am simply not a very physical person. I have felt alone in this respect, and periodically experimented with a celibate identity, but this only made things worse. Celibacy is a high-maintenance identity because it focuses on what is missing from my life and requires that I practice self-denial on the rare occasion when I do desire sex. Instead I prefer to think of celibacy simply as a habitual behavior and as a way of developing the virtue of self-respect.

When my chest reconstruction surgeon asked me whether it was important to retain nipple sensation, I replied that I did not know what nipple sensation was. I knew that other FTMs took it seriously, but the only feeling I knew was soreness. I was relieved when one nipple graft died. The same problem applies to that little fold of skin between my legs. It hurts. I'd be more likely to orgasm by stroking or tugging on my thumb. No: vibrators, relaxation, running water, vacuum pumps, and the tongue do not help. I used to wish that the ugly piece of tissue would disappear, and I guess I still do. It's not a penis to me and it's not a source of pleasure.

From a very young age, I believed that passion was reserved for an elite caste of the lucky and the beautiful. After I went through puberty at age nine, I developed a fantasy world in which all the angels and deities (including myself) wore hooded robes, which, I realize in retrospect, served to conceal any indication of physical sex. People like me—rather, deities like me—were not part of the world of sexuality.

I was serene about the voluntary removal of my ovaries. And it's not a coincidence that my first novel's main characters were eunuchs. Like many FTMs, I never felt like a woman; it's perhaps more unusual that I never felt like a female, nor like a male, but rather like a sexless outsider.

What spurred my FTM self-discovery at age 14 was interest in mental and physical intimacy between men. Sexual-

ity—gay male sexuality in particular—has always been part of my FTM identity. But in another sense, my desire to be masculine was also to be less sexual. A man, it seemed, was not automatically perceived as a sexual being, as a woman is. He could choose at any moment to present himself as a scholar, craftsman, artist, warrior, or lover. That was masculine identity to me. I wanted the freedom to be seen as a person first, potential sex partner second—and indeed, self-reliance, nonviolence, compassion, spirituality, and iconoclasm have held a more prominent place in my life than sex. It can be nice but doesn't have to happen every year. It would be grand to fall in love and build a life with another man, but so far, I have chosen to spend my energy in healing from past hurts, learning to make friends, graduating college, finding a job, and practicing the art of writing.

Testosterone supposedly causes men to think from their balls and to feel aroused by most animate objects, based on everything I've heard. But since I began taking testosterone, more than ever, any desire for sex reduces to the desire for intimacy, self-esteem, and diversion. If that's womanly, so be it. If that's eunuch-like, so be it. I have kept silent about my lack of sex drive out of fear that I was not a good representative of FTM sexuality, that I shouldn't talk about something I don't experience, and that feminists would tell me I was ignorant, repressed, self-hating, or chauvinistic. But I must speak: because it is the honest thing to do, because diversity is the spice of life, and because other people may need to hear what I have to say, whether they know it or not.

Sometimes I want sex and when I get it I don't enjoy it. Sometimes I don't want sex but when I get it I do enjoy it. The vast majority of the time, I don't get any sex at all, whether I want it or not, and life goes on. In these respects, I'm just a regular guy.

My worst experiences with celibacy have been when I've tried to make it an identity, which leads to a sense of isolation since there are few who share the identity, and which means that the slightest interest

in sex can trigger an identity crisis. Usually I thrive on solitude, but occasionally it is healthy and desirable to be touched. I prefer to give myself the freedom to touch or to abstain according to my pleasure.

Very recently I've taken to thinking of my sexuality and my celibacy as behaviors, not identities, to avoid the intellectual and emotional baggage that identities produce. Guilt isn't always a wholly useless thing where ethical commitments are concerned, but for behaviors whose sole purpose is to help us love ourselves and stay true to who we really are (such as sexuality and celibacy), guilt is counter-productive.

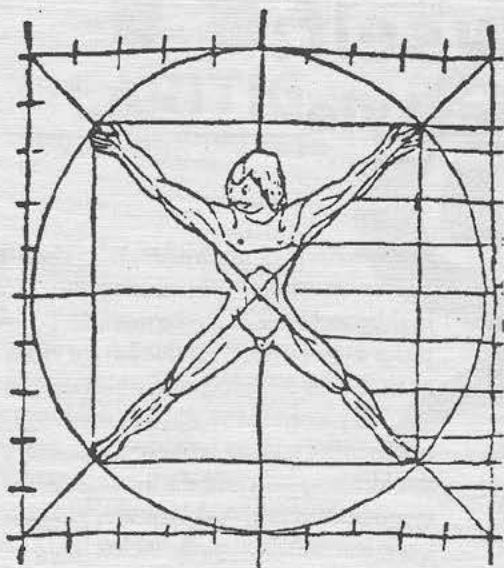
Thinking of celibacy as opposed to sexuality causes problems too. That's just another dichotomy, like man vs. woman, straight vs. gay, that we don't have to embrace. During a recent vacation to the West Coast, I scheduled an "erotic massage" with a gay male practitioner and learned that it was possible for me to be sexual and celibate in the same moment. What does that mean? Well, the sexual facet is probably the more comprehensible and predictable. The massage was an overwhelmingly positive sexual experience: I didn't have to do any trans education, and the only question he ever asked about my body was whether I was feeling good.

That a gay man could become aroused by my FTM body was deeply validating. The sexual contact was deeply, uniquely sacred. But the part where I stopped the unprotected sexual contact out of concern for my own safety was equally sacred. At the moment I made the decision to stay safe, I did not think of it as self-control so much as self-love. That was the celibate value. I now remember the experience for the sexual love he gave me and for the celibate love I showed myself. We are creatures of duality. When we unite the halves, we become whole. ▼

Tucker Lieberman is a unemployed novelist in Providence, RI. He likes tofu, cooperative living, and dogs. He transitioned in 1998, graduated college in 2002, and is hoping to be accepted into divinity school.

No Hesitation

by Patrick Skater



In my own existence there is no hesitation, no lack of understanding that would cause me to not know that I am alive, as much as the trees or the plants, or the dog that lies next to me, her chest falling and rising as her breath moves in and out of her warm body.

In my own existence I am quite simply as real as I will ever be. The fact that I was born with something very incongruent between the gender of my brain and the gender of my body is of absolutely no consequence to the joy I feel as I walk with my dog through the trees gazing at the green of the plants. The fact that I was born in a quandary has nothing to do with my happiness or lack thereof. But the fact that other people have insisted on defining me has had everything to do with my happiness or lack thereof.

I always knew just exactly who I was, and I was prepared to set the course of my life in a manner fitting. From the start that course was interrupted at every turn. And every interruption damaged more than the one before. That I ultimately sustained a level of damage that would seem to some, myself included, to be unbearable is yet to be seen.

I was born a male child enclosed in a female body. This became apparent to me at a young age. I knew who I was then exactly as I know now. I am quite sure I spoke of it. I lived it. The adults called me a tomboy. Good enough for me at five. In *tomboy* I heard only *boy*, which meant something very right to me. But I was also called a girl. This was something I learned

to endure as I endured unfamiliar and particularly loud relatives on holidays, the dentist, teachers who did not like me, and uncomfortable clothes.

A bright child, I learned about powerlessness and hidden danger and secrets. The secrets were not all about me. Alcoholism and sexual misconduct and cruelty and hypocrisy swirled around my

neighborhood between the smiling faces and fresh-baked pies. That my secret was not a common one made no difference in the larger spectrum. Lined up beside all the other masks of all the other faces, I wore a mask and made my world inside myself.

No matter how my gut wrenched and tore at the shape of my existence, I endured. I did, and though I did not succeed in it the way many might have hoped, the fact that I moved through the days unnoticed and grew older year after year, mingling at the birthday parties and at football games, laughing and playing and *seeming* fairly ordinary, attests to some sort of success.

I had no language for self. Boys were boys and girls were girls. I was not a girl, and I knew that always, regardless of appearances. Given no option to flourish, I didn't. When I began to menstruate, to grow breasts, to emit a horrible odor between my legs that I knew to be not only unfamiliar but incorrect, I chose to rage rather than to succumb. What anyone thought about that I will never know. My rage was not discussed.

Eventually I was hospitalized and given fancy diagnoses, one after the other, by a series of psychiatrists, each more brilliant than the one before.

But though I clung to the concept of *crazy*, glad for an explanation of my inability to know the beginnings and endings of me, I knew I never was crazy, never truly fit amongst the ones who were. Deeply ashamed that I was a failure in this as in all else, I was the odd duck even in being insane.

College and marriage, a baby, jobs and new jobs—life goes on no matter what. But in the night after everyone else has long ago fallen asleep, I move through a darkened house and out the door to stand on the lawn and look up at the sky and think, *Horribly wrong. Something is horribly wrong here.*

I have no one to collaborate my truths. No brother to stand up and say, "I always wondered," or "it all makes sense because..." No friend, no lover willing to say, "I saw some things, I wondered...."

People see signs of homosexuality, emotional distress, hyperactivity, brilliance, or delay, but gender is completely assumed. The body says *boy* or *girl*. There is no discussion; absolutely everything is interpreted from within a blindness so complete that it seems a part of us as integral as taste or sight.

The fact that those of us who are not born in ordinary gender states are unable to convey our situation to others and in many cases, for many years even to ourselves, makes all the sense in the world. It is not a matter of sudden change as many suppose, "He used to be a woman." "She decided she wanted to be a man." Ours is a song sung in the deep dark

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woods. It is the gut-wrenching sobs of a terribly unhappy child cried alone under the covers and forgotten by dawn. We all live mostly in secret places, alone. Some of us have to tell our secrets eventually in order to survive. It's the telling that sets the world asunder. Secrets are expected. Truth is not.

When I lived in silence I was the only one who suffered. When I began to speak many began to suffer as well. As a result, my healing has always come in bits and pieces. It is difficult for me to understand why there is so much resistance in this world toward the suffering. Perhaps my view has become unusual because I have spent much time in institutions. The suffering does not scare me, yet the secrets cause me to tremble, to want to run and run and never stop.

Every day when I leave my house and head out to get on with life, I am acutely aware that I am in a state that most others find frightening. My truth is far more frightening to them than my silence, my secrets, my existence as it was a few years ago. The fact that I am a man born female is somehow perverse. Misery is not. It is expected and accepted.

What I find most interesting is that those who know me now, newly, and see me in their gender perceptions as an ordinary man, seem to enjoy me and

respect me without thought. As I move through their lives without undue friction, I realize that it doesn't matter as much as I wish it did that they see me as an ordinary man. I know I would have a completely different reception if they knew my truths, and somehow that makes me almost as sad as I was when I lived I my own mind, far removed from everyone in so many ways, a secret boy in the body of a girl, a secret boy all alone.

Of course I am grateful for the surgeries I have received, the way the hormones have changed my body into one that feels so much better for me to live in. Of course I am grateful that I can live in most respects as the male I have always been in my brain, my heart, my soul. But there is something much larger at stake here in this life that, perhaps because of my condition, I have come to be acutely aware of. I am aware that differences are seen as much more powerful than they really are.

Race, class, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and various physical and emotional conditions—differences in general—are somehow seen as the most important aspects of people and not as the truly small bits that they are. This puts us all in danger of rejection, humiliation, oppression, and abuse. It causes us to move through life under a veil of fear

rather than one of love and trust. We approach each other with hesitation, rather than with intent to embrace.

This is much bigger than you or me. Our fear of difference is more significant than penises or the lack thereof. The secrets don't just kill people like myself. They kill even the greatest of us, the most powerful. They kill us all.

In my own existence there is no hesitation, no lack of understanding that would cause me not to know that I am alive as much as the trees or the plants or the dog that lies next to me, her chest falling and rising as her breath moves in and out of her warm body.

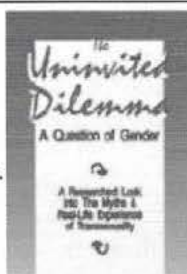
You cause my hesitation as I cause yours. It is our undoing. When will we move past this place that stinks of death? This is what I ponder most. The fact that I am transsexual has only been a door for me. I see that now. In the opening of this door I have seen far more than I might have wished to or chosen to if there had been any other way for me.

Now I wonder where your door is.
I wonder where you exist.
And I wonder where are *we*?
And where are *we*?

Patrick Skater is an FTM writer from Vermont.

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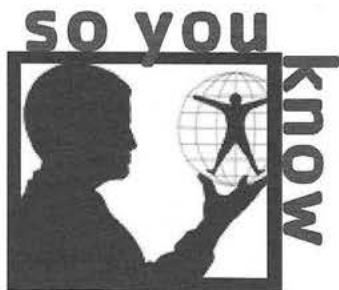
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HRC Survey of US Attitudes About Trans People Finds Acceptance

by Garin Chad Wiggins

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) released the results of their survey of people's attitudes toward the transgender community on September 22 at the annual Southern Comfort conference in Atlanta. In the study commissioned by HRC for \$75K, 61% of 800 randomly selected voters believe the United States needs laws to protect transgender people from discrimination. 57% believe that it is illegal to fire people because they are transgender—which it is not. And 67% agree that it is possible for people to be born as one sex, but feel themselves to be another sex inside. Though the positive attitudes expressed in the survey were a pleasant surprise, the overall findings also pointed to the need for significant public education efforts.

HRC has come a long way for an organization long mistrusted by transgender activists for not including gender protections in the proposed Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA). In March, 2001 they amended their mission statement to include "gender expression and identity" and "transgender Americans". Since then, HRC has increasingly put energy into transgender issues, working with activists to pursue transgender victories both in the courtroom and at the local and state level. The results of this survey have strengthened the organization's commitment to make transgender rights initiatives part of its core organizational goals. They want to pursue transgender rights legislatively in 2003.

But whether HRC adds gender language to the ENDA in the near future depends on what legislative strategies they and allied advocacy groups prioritize in January. Even transgender activists are mixed in their opinions about whether the timing is right for transgender inclusion in the

ENDA, but most are pleased with the fact that HRC has shifted priorities and released this important survey.

"I think it would be nice to think that all of the success we're having on the local level with gender inclusion should equate to getting federal legislation passed," Mara Keisling said in a panel discussion on September 20 at Southern Comfort. "But that's not the way Washington works."

Dallas Denny, a transgender activist with a long list of accomplishments in trans politics, publications, and archives, was more enthusiastic. "I take this as proof we need to include gender identity in ENDA, and this makes it a lot harder for groups to argue trans-inclusion is going to cost legislative votes."

Mara Keisling, co-chair of the Pennsylvania Gender Rights Coalition and a public opinion and polling specialist for the past 25 years, says that would be "jumping the gun."

"The results of their study are a road map for how to move forward," said Keisling "It's very clear that there is major education to do, and this shows us how to do that education." She says we need to teach the American public: that we exist, and that we are not protected and face discrimination and victimization.

Gender Neutral Bathrooms Coming to SF

By Dylan Vade

On September 24, 2002, the LGBT Advisory Committee of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission met to discuss revisions to the 'Guidelines to Prohibit Gender Identity Discrimination.' Currently, the Guidelines state that those who identify as male can go into the men's room, and those who identify as female can go into the women's room. This is a victory in and of itself. However, it does not help those who are harassed in BOTH the women's and the men's restrooms.

As we all know, many transgender and non-transgender people have no safe places to go to the bathroom because they get harassed, beaten, and arrested in both women's and men's rooms. Many avoid public bathrooms altogether and develop health problems.

A few quotes from a survey I did last summer with the San Francisco Human Rights Commission: "security chased me,"

"I have been slapped, pushed, and dragged out by security guards," "got the shit kicked out of me for using the 'wrong bathroom,'" "having the door almost knocked down by teenagers," "I have spent so many hours avoiding public multi-stall bathrooms that I have damaged my bladder and put pressure on my kidneys," "I run into problems 80% of the time," "This is a problem every day."

This affects not only transgender people who do not identify as female or male, but also transgender people who do identify as female or male, as well as many butch women, and feminine men. We would like to find a solution that provides safe bathroom access for everyone. We would like to provide more options. That was the purpose of the meeting.

At the meeting, ten panelists spoke of their extremely difficult experiences in gender-segregated bathrooms. Many had experienced physical violence. For many, finding safe bathroom access is a daily struggle. Some panelists spoke of their experiences with gender neutral bathrooms—and the relief that brought. Thanks to all the amazing panelists for sharing their experiences and feelings and thoughts!

In addition to the panel discussion, Jodie Marksamer and I did a presentation about: the problem, the relevant law, the hesitations, examples of successful gender neutral bathrooms, and possible solutions. Thanks to Jodie Marksamer for all his awesome work! If you're interested in the handout summaries, please let us know.

At the meeting, the LGBT Advisory Committee was very much in favor of revising the Guidelines to include a requirement for gender neutral bathrooms. Most likely, the revisions will include a requirement that all single person bathrooms be gender neutral. And, most likely, the revisions will also require a pilot project of multiple person gender neutral bathrooms. These revisions should happen in the near future. I want to thank all the members of the Advisory Committee, the organizers of the panel, the panelists, everyone who came—and Jodie—and everyone who has worked on providing safe bathroom access for all people.

For more information and/or to get involved in the process of revising the San Francisco Guidelines, please contact Jodie Marksamer [redacted]@hotmail.com or Dylan Vade [redacted]@neteze.com>.

West Village Trans Legal Clinic in NYC

A monthly legal clinic that helps transgender-identified people get legal name changes opened almost 6 months ago at the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Center in NYC. Also providing information on how to go about changing gender on identification documents, the free clinic meets on the first Monday of every month starting at 6 pm. The West-Village Trans-Legal Clinic, the first of its kind in New York, is a collaborative effort of volunteers from half a dozen legal and social service groups serving the gay and lesbian and TG communities.

Must FTMs Register with the Selective Service?

FTMs in the US are exempt from registering for the draft, but we need to get a letter from the Selective Service stating this. They will issue a letter to FTMs stating that we are exempt from registering but does not say why. When FTMs between the ages of 18 and 26 fill out applications for educational loans that ask whether they are registered for the draft, they face the possibility of getting into serious trouble as well as not getting the loans if they answer *no* to that question. The safest answer is *yes*, but answering *no* while including the exemption letter is also safe. It might be a good idea to get the letter if you are between the ages of 18 to 26 whether or not you are a student, just in case there are other situations where the question may come up. The Selective Service is prepared for this, so call them at 847.688.6888 if you have any questions.

TSC Conference 2003:

The 7th annual True Spirit Conference (TSC) will be held at the Washington Court Hotel, Washington, D.C. from February 14-17, 2003. This year's theme, "Masculinity: The Magical Mystery Tour," stresses the conference's focus on the trans experience in its entirety—from multiple identities, to early, long-term, and non-transition issues—and negotiating current and new relationships. TSC focuses on the social, physical, emotional, spiritual and relational health of all gender variant people on the FTM spectrum and their partners, family and allies.

The event's workshops and panel presentations will address a variety of topics, including relationships, health and wellness, legal, political and employment issues, spirituality, and the specific concerns of diverse groups—such as youth, older, people of color and individuals with physical challenges. Town Hall meetings will provide an opportunity for highly focused group interactions with a panel of experienced transgender activists, while workshops and support groups will allow participants to have in-depth discussions and to examine specific issues. Conference entertainment, ranging from artistic to gospel to spoken word performance, will give people a chance to socialize and network on a different, more relaxed level. This year's conference continues to feature keynote speakers, access to medical screenings with trans-sensitive providers, author readings and a film festival.

Workshop submission requirements, hotel information, registration fees, and directions are available on the website <<http://www.true-spirit.org>>, along with increasingly detailed programming information as the conference date nears. Conference registration fees range from \$50 to \$90, with a discount for early registration. Write to True Spirit Conference, P.O. Box 1, Falls Church, VA 22040 for more information.

TSC is organized by the American Boyz, Inc. <www.amboyz.org>, a national organization for people who were labeled female at birth but who feel that is not a

complete or accurate assessment of who they are (FtM) and our significant others, friends, families and allies (SOFFAS). Founded in 1994, American Boyz provides education, support, social events, newsletters, web sites, email lists, local meetings, political action and the annual True Spirit Conference.

Studies

New Study on Gender Transgressors. Lori B. Girshick, a sociologist, social justice activist, researcher, and writer, is researching issues of masculinity and femininity and the gender binary. Her new study focuses on how trans people define what it is to be male or female and to be neither or both. The questionnaire is available on Dr. Girshick's web site at www.warren-wilson.edu/~lgirshic under the link, Gender Shackles Study. She will also mail it to anyone who contacts her. Write to Lori B. Girshick, Ph.D., WWC-6124, P.O. Box 9000, Asheville, NC 28815 or e-mail her at girshick@mindspring.com.

Transsexuals' Experiences in Psychotherapy. Sam E. Bales, a graduate student at John F. Kennedy University, invites people who self-identify as transsexuals to participate in a study about our experiences in psychotherapy. He will ask you to complete a very brief survey that takes approximately 10-15 minutes. If you or someone else you know, who self-identifies as a transsexual person is interested in participating in this study, please contact Sam either by phone at [REDACTED] or by email at Transexperience@aol.com.

WANTED: 1 or 2 reliable, punctual, intelligent, FTM transmen of color to start an autonomous self-sufficiency collective. You must have intellect; enthusiasm; social, communication, listening, and comprehension skills; an ability to finish what you start; a desire to create what we don't have; and a DIY (do-it-yourself) philosophy. You must be reliable, punctual, and grounded (no flakes or space cadets).

It's not mandatory but would help if you are bilingual or multilingual, have computer skills (esp. Internet), and are skilled in natural healing arts, alternative economics/ economic justice, and organic, biodynamic and/or container gardening. Knowledge about worker-owned businesses, micro-businesses, and self-employment is a plus. (Even if you know nothing about economics, natural healing arts, etc, what matters is that you understand that these things are *urgently* needed and are capable of learning about them)

Our focus is on healthcare (body/mind/spirit), organic/GMO-free food (joining a CSA, and/or growing our own), safety, protection, freedom from *any* hate-violence, immigrant issues, and low-cost housing. We will share resources and skills. Please contact Cerveau/Corazon at bienetre@riseup.net We are located in Berkeley but apologize for not having a phone number at this time. We are working diligently to get a business number.

THERAPISTS & COUNSELORS

"Identity" continued from p. 11

being. Whilst I recognize a certain usefulness to such identities, I also found them to be quite problematic. I myself have had a succession of these markers throughout the years: *gay-boy, hairdresser, queer.*

For other people their marker may have nothing to do with sex, gender or sexuality. Rather, their strongest source of identity seems to be derived from such things as race or nationality. The frustration I feel with this, lies in the divisive nature and segregating ability strong identification with only one aspect of our being engenders; the discrimination, abuse of power and senseless violence, directed towards those who do not belong to one group or another. What fascinates me the most are the ways people either deal or don't deal with another being's identity change as a challenge to their own thought processes and abilities to perceive *who* other beings really are.

At this time in my life, I feel that I am all of the labels I have identified myself by, while at the same time, I am none of them completely. I feel most comfortable with an identity marker of a *being*, whatever that means, who is known by the label *michael*.

This is the fundamental label I was given at birth; it has been the only constant throughout a multitude of changes; and it is the only label which I now willingly choose to identify by.

My partner and I have been together for approximately six and a half years now and within this relationship I am still continually inspired and challenged to revisit and question my beliefs and ideas about the world within which we live. ▼

Michael and his partner live in Sydney, Australia. This article was first published in *Torque*, edition 3, February 2002 and may be found online at <http://torque.ftmaustralia.org/02/02/08.html>

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