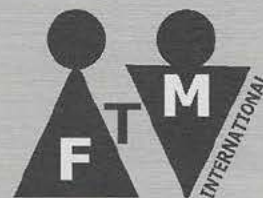


FTMi

Newsletter

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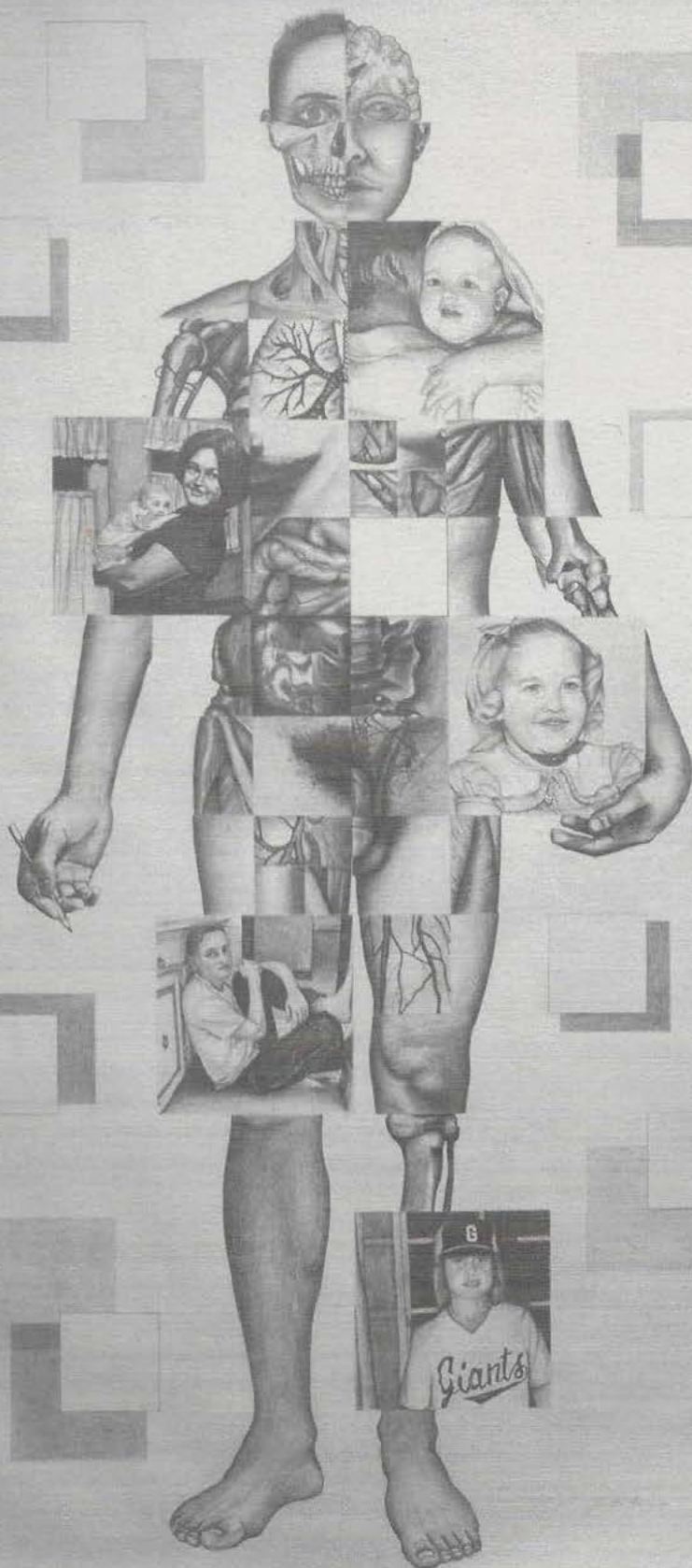
FTM International's newsletter for female-to-male transgender and transsexual people and allied partners, lovers, family members, friends, and professionals

**True Spirit 2002:
Making Trans Culture
Thoughts on Youth Policy**

**Work:
First Day on the Gender**

**Legalities:
2 Legit 2 Quit in NY
Kanteras v. Kanteras
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**Medicine:
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Reasons We're Proud

by FTMI President Dion Manley

Tis the season of Pride, when we all can join together to celebrate the history and courage of our people—from the POC and working class trans people who fought at Stonewall to our present LGBT communities—learning more about ourselves and each other as we grow and change with the times. People often talk about inclusion and what that might mean, but it is my belief that we are headed toward all joining in together now more than ever. And for those of you not into the LGB&T scene, how many of you had a great spring or are celebrating June wedding ceremonies?

I am proud to announce that FTMI has found ways to serve a more diverse community by reaching out more by starting many exciting new projects. These include the Transgender Health Law and Policy Project (covered in this issue on page 14), promoting performing arts, participating in gathering statistics and research, networking to provide expert testimony at court cases, working towards increased medical access for all and, as always, ongoing educating, advocating and supporting. Tune in to our updated website for more information about these and other projects. Our new Web address is <http://www.ftmi.org>.

All of this work is supported by dedicated volunteers. Remember, we can

always find ways for you to use your time, energy, and special skills. Let us know what you have to offer! We need help fundraising for office staff, representing FTMI at important gatherings such as conferences, updating our Resource Guide, sustaining projects, and covering operating costs such as insurance for our project office at the SF Community Center. As our organization and community grow tremendously, so do our expenses. To make these big changes happen we also need financial backers to step forward and help fund us to do this important work.

It is election time again, and we have had fantastic response from community members. **Results will be in our next**

“It is my belief that now we are headed toward all joining in together more than ever before.**”**

issue! For several years, we have been working hard at creating the structure within the organization that will help us reach out and build a stronger team. With the new board members who will join us after the upcoming election, what is yet to come will go beyond imagination. Thanks for staying connected, and for now read on about how ftms and transcommunities' legal battles have been in the news and public eye this past spring. Go out and do the work and spread the love! ▼

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

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meet the

artist



Cover Artist Eric Carter

Eric Allen Carter, born in Whittier, CA, in October of 1969, currently lives in Lincoln, NE, though he plans to move to Portland, OR, this June. Carter, who recently earned a BFA from the University of Nebraska, has work displayed in the Noyes Gallery in Lincoln. He began transition in June of 2000. He has a very supportive family, one cat (Pablo) and a partner/soul mate (Kirsten) whom he loves completely.



Artist's Statement

By Eric Allen Carter

"I intend to confuse things, to unite them, make them new-born, intermingle them, undress them, until the light of the world has the unity of the ocean, a generous wholeness, a fragrance alive and crackling."

--Pablo Neruda

I don't believe in dichotomy. There is a danger in seeing the world and our worldly experiences within the context of there existing only relations of a polar opposite nature. If everything is seen as black or white, are we not left blind to a spectrum of color? If the Earth's turning is classified into only day and night, what

are we to make of the mystery and beauty of the sunset?

I'm not in love with any particular medium—it's the questioning that drives me. The content determines what medium it needs in order to be realized. I want my work to ask more than it tells. It always starts with a question and from there develops the idea. What is it to be in physical form? A soul embodied? What is the relationship between our soul/spirit/essence and our body? Between our body

and how we experience/relate to the world? To each other?

I am the subject of most of my work, in part because the work is personal. But are any of our individual experiences really that mysterious? Can we not all relate to each other in some way, if not through similarities then through empathy? Personal experience is by nature universal. I like to think of the work as a human testament to thoughts and feelings that we all share. ▼

Editor's Note

This newsletter has had a different look each time for the last four issues, including the current one. You could say we have been going through transition and have tried on several different identities in the process.

Our staff has changed again. Marcus Iannozzi, of Iannozzi Communications in Philadelphia, has joined us as designer. Marc, an FTM who is a writer, designer, and web developer, is such a pro that he makes it look simple. And Ben Singer, no longer co-editor, is devoting his full concentration to finishing his dissertation.

If you are interested in editing or designing the newsletter, please submit a resume and samples of your work so we can have them on file. And if you have short pieces of writing, news, announcements, graphics/photos that you think would be good in the newsletter, send them on. This is a place where we can share our journeys and come to appreciate the many varieties of FTMs and people who love us.

--GCW

Kit Rachlin, Ph.D.

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True Spirit 2002: Making Trans Culture

by Dean Spade and Chris Boots

Dean Spade:

I had been looking forward to TSC for months. The idea of being surrounded by trannies, the rumors I had heard of the variety of gender presentations, and the amazing conversations at previous TSCs, and the chance to see my long-distance trans friends and reconnect were all thrilling. But as the conference came closer and the uproar my bathroom arrest in February (see story on page 12) had caused in my life seemed to continually increase, I became more and more nervous about going to D.C.

I went with great hope for a good experience, but nervous to reveal to anyone that I was the person whose arrest story they may recently have heard. I was glad to hear that my arrest had sparked interesting conversations and debates among trannies about what place non-traditional transitions have in our struggle for liberation, but it was also difficult to face having those conversations take place with reference to my actual body.

What surprised me was to arrive and find that so many other, *traditional* FTMs,

genderqueers, trannyfags, boydykes, kings, and more, were having some of the same anxieties I was experiencing. I heard from all kinds of people that they worried that their embodiment of transgender would be judged by others at the conference. Some thought that their passing would be looked down upon as overly traditional or conservative. Others worried that their use of female pronouns or their desire to not have surgery would make people say "you're not really trans, you don't belong here." The more I spoke with people, the more I discovered that most of us, in some way or another, were concerned that we would be judged on the basis of our gender presentation not fitting some norm of trans expression at the conference or in the community generally.

Chris Boots:

Along with this sense of vulnerability and anxiety around "belonging," we also got to share in something much more positive and reassuring. There is a sense of

clation that comes with being surrounded by people who, more or less, understand something that our families, friends, and communities can have a hard time grasping.

Whether or not we all agreed on questions of passability, genderqueerness, or fashion, the basic ways in which spaces can be made safe for transpeople were generally well respected. People listened when we requested a particular pronoun. Around one another, we could use whichever bathroom felt comfortable. We all applauded when one of us said or did something brave. Regardless of the size of our trans communities at home, we all recognized the pricelessness and rarity of such a situation.

“What can we do to make this experience accessible to those who are currently excluded... to create new and different venues for trans culturemaking in our own communities in ways that can be determined by sets of people who are currently not represented at TSC?”

Even within this sense of belonging, though, there were moments when our fears and anxieties were realized. Hearing from friends that there were a number of instances in workshops in which tension or arguments arose around gender presentation and identity that involved inappropriate, oppressive and painful accusations that a person who claimed a particular gender "wasn't that" or "didn't belong," I myself made the conscious choice to skip certain workshops I sensed might be contentious or where I might

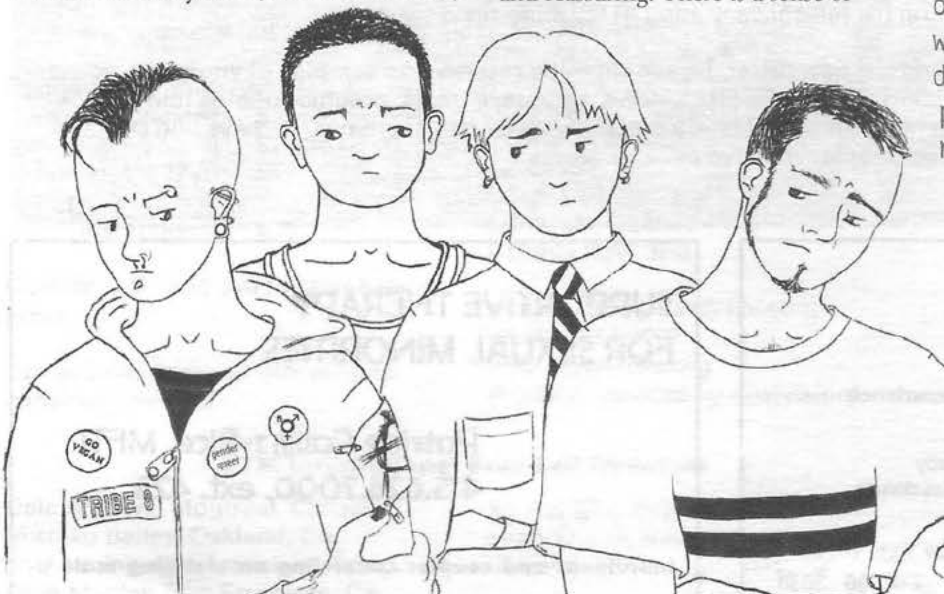


Illustration by Ray Soltis

open myself up to gender policing (though these couldn't necessarily be predicted).

This deliberate avoidance felt strange to me; I consider it of great political and personal importance to engage productively with people with whom I don't necessarily agree. But in this context, it just felt a little too risky, a little too raw. Perhaps this was a result of being at TSC for the first time, perhaps it was an extension of my nervousness about being deemed "not trans enough" as a trans-boygirl fagdyke who (at this point) uses "she" as a pronoun and is pre-op and no-ho.

Fortunately, and to my surprise, there were a number of workshops that accommodated and catered to the less gender-cohesive of us. I heard marvelous feedback from people about the "Femmeboy Caucus." I attended both lo-ho/no-ho workshops ("Lo-Ho FTMs and Other Hormonal Alternatives" and "Occupying the Middle: The No/Low-Hormone, Non-Operative Transsexual"). It was both a relief and an inspiration to see, hear from, and talk to other trannies who are finding their own ways of making gender work for them that don't necessarily cohere to a script of gender-appropriateness.

One of the highlights of the weekend was the chest surgery panel. We live in a culture whose mainstream vigorously polices body alterations and modifications that are not gender-normative, and that simultaneously encourages "gender-appropriate" surgeries or other modifications. It was exhilarating, even just for a few hours, to centralize and marvel at our own bodies and what we do with them in an environment in which we were not stigmatized, but rather celebrated, applauded, and loved. For myself, and I think for others, it was these experiences of validation that began to eclipse fears and insecurities about the way we all differently enact and embody our transness.

Dean Spade:

What we are doing when we are at TSC, in part, is experiencing the clashing and intermingling of all of our own trans cultures—our local cultures, the trans cultures we develop amongst our friends at home or online, and what gender meanings we develop within ourselves.

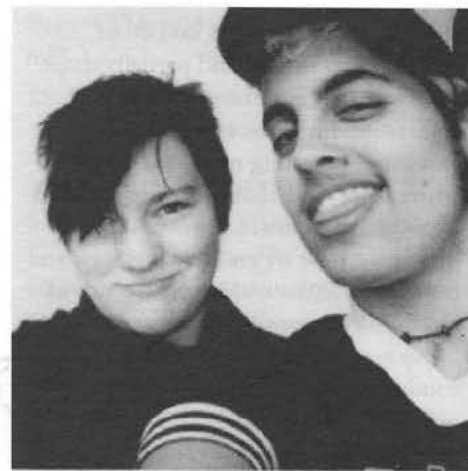
At the same time, we are engaged in a culture-making process. The conference itself is a set of conversations taking place in panels, in bars and restaurants, and in hotel rooms. Those conversations produce new possibilities, new standards by which to judge and experience things, new analytical insights into how gender is being understood and transformed by our actions.

Also, because of absences like the under-representation of low-income people, and people of color, and because of inequities of treatment in terms of age, the culture-making process is defined and limited. The costs of the conference, its location, the ways in which its existence is communicated partly by word of mouth through certain networks, and its history all determine who is able to access it and who feels comfortable coming to participate in this culture-making.

For that reason, the culture that occurs represents those limits, some of which are inevitable (any regional location will exclude some who cannot travel), and some of which require us to continually reevaluate our strategies for inclusion and access. What can we do to make this experience accessible to those who are currently excluded, and what can we do to create new and different venues for trans culturemaking in our own communities in ways that can be determined by sets of people who are currently not represented at TSC?

In moments like the chest surgery panel, I think that the culture we are forming is one of acceptance, one of broad-based embracing of a variety of body types, trans experiences, and expressions of masculinity and femininity. Moments like that are rare in mainstream culture, and sadly too rare amongst trannies, who can be our own harshest critics and gender police, and it gives me hope that we could create such a moment during the conference, and create a space where people feel safe and celebrated in our varied and beautiful bodies.

This is the trans culture I want



Chris Boots and Alix Kolar at True Spirit

to be creating and living in, one where we embrace each other's gender expressions, and fight to protect the ability of all people to self-determine their gender rather than forcing each other into confining norms. This is the kind of trans culture I want to bring home with me and share with people I meet—and replicate in my local activism in ways that build on what I've learned in D.C.

Chris Boots:

Coming away from the conference, I feel that we accomplished something spectacular in simply carving out a space for ourselves to exchange ideas, to celebrate ourselves, and to work towards a vision of trans liberation, however near or distant that may be. As with any convergence, there are a number of things that might be improved on to create a more productive, welcoming, and accessible space for ourselves and for others who may attend in the future.

I returned home brimming over with ideas, which felt and which continue to feel precious and exciting. I found myself wondering about the ways in which people's regionally localized experiences

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and unique trans, queer, and other communities inform and partially shape their experience of transness. I came back to Seattle with a renewed sense of the thrill about meeting new trans people where I live, and about reviving conversations with trannies in my own community about how we are enacting trans and how it may differ within and outside of our local communities. The opportunity for the coming together of so many different kinds of transpeople from such differing communities and environments

formal and informal, we can generate ideas to share with conference organizers (hoping they will simultaneously do the same) about how to increase access to TSC. It is counterproductive to inadvert-

So many different kinds of transpeople from such different backgrounds coming together allows us not just to teach and learn about ourselves, but also to find new models and ideas.



Illustration by Ray Soltis

affords us a possibility not just of teaching and learning about ourselves, but also of providing possibilities of new models and ideas to bring back to our homes and communities.

Reinvigoration of the drive to organize and learn from our local trans and ally communities is both a result of attending the TSC and one of the things that will help to shape the conference in the future. Within our local projects,

ently barricade those who are not able to attend the conference for reasons of economic, geographical, or age-related access or because the issues made central to the conference are not of interest to all transfolks. This cuts us all off from an important potential exchange of ideas and information. In this project of trans liberation, inclusiveness is our responsibility. That means scholarships for low-income youth, a wide variety of

transpeople on planning committees, and a conscious circulation of information about the conference.

In addition, in order for the conference to feel even more productive and significantly safer than it did in terms of gender policing, racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and so on, we might invoke the words that preceded the chest surgery panel. Intended just to set ground rules for the panel itself, they might as well have set ground rules for the entire conference, if not for a trans liberation project in general. To paraphrase: 'None of these is better or worse than the other, they are just different. Please respect *everyone* who has the bravery to do this. And remember, *all* of these boys are hot!' ▼



Boots lives in Seattle and engages in low-level acts of hooliganism. She is a B-movie monster-gendered, bicycle-riding fiend who spray paints for fun and for liberation. She is a science nerd and co-facilitates a political reading brigade.



Dean is a devilish gender buccaneer and lawyer, sailing the high seas of trans radicalism. He lives in New York and inspires fear in the hearts of all that are mean and boring. He engages in gender terrorism and anti-capitalist disruption as a co-conspirator of makezine.org.



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How do I explain being an FTM feminist to independent women?

One night on one of the many television news channels covering the war in Afghanistan, Ashleigh Banfield reported the extreme oppression of women under Taliban rule. She spoke to a woman who is struggling because the Taliban government made it illegal for women to work— even to support their families and to survive.

Banfield repeated a joke popular in the US about how Osama Bin Laden, if captured, should be subject to sex reassignment surgery so he could see what it is like for women to live under this regime. The woman, who was surprised that surgery that changed one's sex existed, then asked, "Could my daughter have surgery to become a boy so she can work?"

How do I inform the independent women around me that FTM identity is not about escaping sex discrimination? How do I tell them how that assumption and the reality of trans people being discriminated against sends FTMs a mixed message?

How do I explain to non-trans working women, including my mom, that I am not ignorant of the progress women have made in professional careers (implying that FTMs must suffer from internalized sexism, since otherwise we would be identifying with the sex we were assigned at birth)? How do I explain that FTMs are not making fun of strong women by our identities and gender expression?

Unfortunately some transphobic feminists have bought into the myth that trans people are trying to be something they are not. Perhaps it is because

Patriarchy has historically discouraged women from taking non-traditional jobs and activities by calling women who pursue them masculine. Both FTMs and non-trans women feminists understand that the breadwinner role is not necessarily a male or masculine one. We need to present a united

Banfield assured the woman that women deserve the right to work and that the daughter should remain a girl and be allowed to earn a livelihood too.

I agree, but

front: FTMs and non-trans women, let's roll!

--Melanie Paho, La Habra, CA

Help for letter writer S. Mull from issue 50, p. 18

The problem may be with Dr. Gilbert's pre-authorization request format or the State in which the surgery was performed. Michigan's Blue Cross Blue Shield covers out of State procedures only under restricted situations. I am a sex & gender therapist working in Michigan; my primary focus is assisting FTM patients who are seeking surgery through BCBS. In Michigan. Michigan's policy requires that patients be residents of Michigan and that the surgery take place in MI, unless under certain proscribed circumstances.

S. Mull may obtain more precise details by e-mailing Dr. Don Sidelinker at [redacted]@aol.com. ▼

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I am interested in becoming a penpal. Thank you for making the Pen Pal Place available. Donald Wclf, [redacted] E. 4th St., [redacted] Long Beach, CA 90802.

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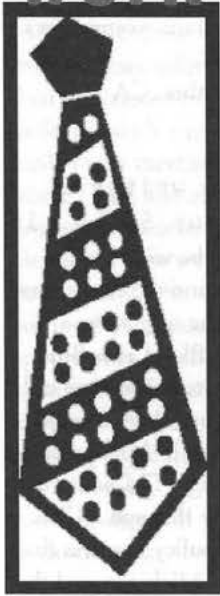
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First Day on the Gender

by Marty Wilder

I didn't really know what to expect on my first day at my new job. I'd been on T for 6 months and out of work for 5. I thought I still looked like a dyke. I had been vague about my gender in the interviews. I'm sure some of my references must

have referred to me as "she." I had come in a week prior to my start date to fill out personnel forms. It was a government job with separate departments and forms for everything. They had copies of my driver license, identifying me as female. The medical questionnaire asked me to disclose the reason for my last hospital stay – live birth by Cesarean section, a dead giveaway.

I hadn't been able to come to a decision about how to present myself. If I present as female, I'm just going to have to reverse it in a few months. If I present as male, I might still have explaining to do. If I present as trans, well to be quite honest, that's braver than I want to be on a new job.

So here I am waiting at the security desk for my supervisor to come down and get me in. I'm wearing men's clothes. I always do. It's nice but not too dressy. While I'm trying not to look nervous, a very kind looking woman comes walking up to me with her hand extended and asks, "Marty?"

I find out that my supervisor is not in yet. Instead, I'm led up to the top floor and through a maze of cubicles by Carol.

"This is Marty," Carol chimes cheerfully to the co-workers we meet, "Marty's gonna be working with Ken."

I say my hellos and return handshakes. We go through about 4 or 5 people and then she leads me to another office down the hall. I'm trying to think up more creative responses than "Nice to meet you" and "Glad to be aboard" when Carol says to a face in a cubicle, "This is Marty, he's gonna be working with Ken."

I smile to myself as I shake the person's hand. I have that same feeling I have when the customer service rep on

the phone calls me "Sir" or the anonymous cashier calls me "Mister." But somewhere between that handshake and the next greeting, I realize that unlike the service rep and the cashier, I'm gonna see these folks again tomorrow. She's introducing me as "he" now to everyone. I didn't correct her the first time, so I may have just inadvertently answered any question she might have had.

"Well," I think to myself, "This could turn out to be easier than I had ever anticipated." I start to feel proud of myself even though I haven't really done anything. Then I have a sudden flash of self awareness. Maybe it's not such a good idea to stick my chest out in pride. I might give myself away. I've gotten into a habit of curling my shoulders forward. That way my loose shirt hardly touches my chest. I used to be a 38C, but 6 months on testosterone have sagged them down to where I can hide them pretty well. Carol is still making rounds with me and I'm beginning to wonder if she intends to introduce me to the whole floor.

"What about Ken?" I wonder. He's seen my ID. He's talked to my references. Will he contradict Carol and call me "she"? What will I do then?

Ken is still not in. Carol deposits me at my cubicle with another stack of forms to fill out. I hesitate. What name should I use?

My official name is Marti. I had decided that Martin seems more convincing. I went to DMV a month earlier to change my name. They wouldn't let me do it until I changed it on my Social Security card. I went to Social Security and they wanted my new name on an official government-issued document. "Like a driver license," the agent suggested. That figures.

Well, this is a government job. If I put Martin on these forms, does that count as a government-issued document? I decide to go for it. I fill out form after form. Martin, I sign each at the bottom. It's amazing the difference one little letter can make.

Just then, Ken pops in. I rise to my feet, offer a firm handshake, confident stance. Oops, not too confident—hide the breasts. These small gestures suddenly seem much more important than they used to. We chat a bit about the ground

I've covered so far. Then Ken takes me over to a co-worker.

"Take Marty over to the copy machine and make him a copy of this user manual," he instructs. So, it's unanimous. Did he and Carol confer? Did he make a guess? Whatever the reason, I'm relieved that I don't have to deal with it, yet.

I go back to my desk and start setting up my voice mail, when I realize that I have to pee. Uh oh, I hadn't thought about this. I've been successfully avoiding public restrooms the whole time I've been out of work. I pulled the office map out of my stack of papers.

It's a floor plan of the entire floor. In precise little ovals, I stared at the depiction of the five urinals I'll need to walk past to get to one of four stalls. I had hoped that there might be a unisex bathroom for wheelchairs, but no such luck. I never thought I'd be so intimidated by a bathroom.

"I didn't really know what to expect on my first day at my new job. I'd been on T for 6 months and out of work for 5. I thought I still looked like a dyke."

"What's the worst that could happen?" I ask myself. Someone could confront me and ask if I am in the wrong bathroom, and I could just say "no." I tell myself that there's really nothing to be afraid of. It's 99% attitude. I map it all out in my head. I see myself striding confidently past the urinals and finding the safety of a secluded stall. I carry that image with me as I walk down the hallway. I maintain an outward cool even as my heart pounds while I approach the door labeled *MEN*. No one else is in the hallway, that's good. I'm at the door. My feet just keep walking right on past. Suddenly, I don't have to pee anymore. I hope that I'll be braver tomorrow.

When I go back to the office, people are leaving for lunch. I find a restaurant bathroom across the street. I can't afford to eat here, but this will work for today. With my bladder relieved and away from the office, I take a breather and evaluate

my day. The impact of the gender switch is hitting me. I feel surreal. Am I really passing? I didn't think my transition was that convincing yet. It hits me that Ken might have met with the staff beforehand and prepped them. What would he say?

"I'm not exactly sure of the new person's gender. So call him 'he' and see if he corrects you."

Now I feel confused on another level. Who really thinks I'm male and who knows I'm trans? It's too much to digest while trying to deal with all the stress that usually goes along with the first day on a new job. I head back up to the office.

It's time to go back to the Personnel Office for an orientation. As far as I can tell, we're all male. All these guys in the orientation are new today, and they're from all different departments. There's no way Ken could have prepped them. While we wait for things to get started, one guy tries to stir up conversation.

One thing I noticed about men from my past experience as a construction worker, is that when they're alone they fall into a pack mentality. I call it the Big Dick, little dick scenario. There's one guy who has to be the Big Dick. He leads the group in inane conversation. The little dicks all nod their heads and grunt, "Uh huh" or laugh at the Big Dick's jokes. If you don't go along with it, the Big Dick may see you as a threat to his alpha position and may argue with you, pick a fight or try to insult you back down to a little dick.

So this alpha guy starts yakking and the other guys all smile and nod. He starts to refer to the group of us in a way that I know he assumes I'm a guy, too. I'm smiling now, not in deference to the Big Dick, but in amusement that I really seem to be passing today. I feel elated and at the same time, I feel a dread of losing this place. I also realize that unlike my

construction worker days, when the guys made exceptions for me or ignored me, I'm now being seen as a pack member. I'm not sure how I feel about that. I don't really want to be a Big Dick or a little dick. I just want to be me.

When I go back upstairs, I look at the posters on the bulletin board. A big one states the non-discrimination policy. Down at the bottom is a long list of people who are protected. I see sex and sexual orientation. I don't see anything about gender identity. I think I remember hearing that the State of California protects trans folks from employment discrimination, but I want to see it in writing.

Then Ken asks me to come into his office. He welcomes me and asks me if I have any questions for him. Then he pulls out some forms that I had turned in to him earlier.

"I see that you are using the name Martin on these forms," he states, "Isn't your official name Marti?"

"Well, I'm in the process of changing my name," I explain, "I didn't see the point in using my old name and then having to change everything all over again."

"Oh, it's no big deal," Ken counters, "Once you change your name, there's just one form to file and they go and change your records everywhere. You should use your legal name on all these forms."

"This will be my legal name as soon as the paperwork comes through," I plead.

"And when it does, you can change it then," Ken maintains.

I decide to be candid with him. "Well, actually it's a chicken and the egg thing. I went to DMV and they can't change my name until I change it at Social Security. Social Security needs me to change it here."

Ken looks perplexed. "All I know is that it's my job to see that you fill out these forms properly with your true legal name."

I can see that he's not going to be flexible

on this. I can feel a Big Dick dynamic coming on. So I drop my gaze and nod my head. He hands me back my papers. I take them back to my desk. I fumble through the phonebook and look up the nearest Social Security office. Turns out that it's half a block away. I decide to take a risk.

I leave my office and head on down to Social Security. I grab a form and complete it while waiting in line. I nervously watch the clock, I'm supposed to be on a 15-minute break. Finally, I get to the counter. I hand the woman my form, my current driver license, a check and brand new ID badge that I had just gotten that day. On it is the name Martin E Wilder under a picture of a smug and happy new guy. She gathers these things up and takes them back behind the partitions where I can't see her. I try to appear calm and not gulp too loudly. A moment later, she reappears with my two ID cards and a printed receipt.

"You'll get your new Social Security card in about four weeks," she says. The receipt documents my new and old names and records that my new identity is paid for. I thank her and run back up to the office. I pick up the stack of forms from my desk and put a copy of the Social Security receipt on top. I march up to Ken's office and hand him the stack of papers.

"My paperwork just came in," I announce. Leaving him the forms, I go back to my desk, tidy things up and go home. ▼

Marty Wilder lives in Berkeley with his primary partner Kaseja, 3 wonderful children and a dog. He has a new job at UC Berkeley that he likes a lot better than the one in this story. He uses men's bathrooms freely and is now working on getting up the nerve to go into the men's locker room at the Y. He'd love to network with any other bisexual, FTM, pagan, polyamorous parents who abhor coconuts and cream cheese. His email is mwilder@springmail.com.

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A Little Dab Will Do You

by Dr. FTM

What you don't know *can* hurt you. I believed that I was well informed of the side effects of injectable testosterone enanthate, after needling myself with it since July of 1979. Beginning when I was 20, I "shot up" 200mg every two weeks. I tend to be a compulsive person, so it was on a very regular basis. When I was doing a lot of heavy exercising I raised the dose ever so slightly, and when I was more sedentary I lowered it a little.

Starting in July of 1997, I started having hot flashes, particularly in the morning. Perhaps, coincidentally, this was six months after having a vaginectomy. I also started to become quite heat intolerant to the point of having to donate blood at least twice a year. People around me remarked that I looked like I had "been in the sun a lot." Then, after having pneumonia in March of 2000 and feeling cold for the first time in years, I decided that I needed to do something.

First I started to decrease my dose, which left me feeling too lethargic by the 10th day of the two-week cycle. I then tried to extend the period in between shots, decreasing it by a day (to 16 days) for three cycles and then adding another day. From March to August, the longest I was able to go was 19 days. At first I felt abdominal pain similar to menstrual cramps, despite having had a hysterectomy in 1988. My body was clearly going through some kind of withdrawal. I felt like I couldn't concentrate near the end of each cycle and also had extreme mood swings, hot flashes, and heat intolerance.

I am sensitive to the effects of all medicines, so these side effects should not have been a surprise to me. Back in the early '90s when it was hard to get the brand name *Delatestryl*® of the enanthate type of testosterone, I first tried the generic and then *Depotestosterone*® (brand name for testosterone cypionate). With each new preparation, I did not respond well. The generic enanthate is suspended

in mineral oil, as opposed to sesame oil in the brand name, and obviously my body did not metabolize it in the same manner. The *Depotestosterone*®, in addition to being testosterone cypionate (a slightly different preparation) is suspended in cottonseed oil, to which I had a slight allergic reaction. This preparation also gave me extreme mood swings.

Effects of Androgel®

The biggest surprise though, was my reaction to the new *Androgel*® 1% gel made by Unimed. This new gel, which I apply every morning, has literally made a new man out of me. Within a few weeks, my skin was less oily and red, I had few if any mood swings, I slept great, my concentration improved, and I became less heat intolerant. My reaction to things that used to make me angry is much more mellow, as I do not feel a need to physically pound on things. My beard does not come in quite as fast, which is not a problem for someone who had a 5 o'clock shadow at 2 o'clock!

I have noticed that my muscles don't bulk up as much as before even with weight training, and my libido is not as strong, which means it's probably more typical for a 41 year old guy. When my physician tested the level of T in my blood it was 493, as compared to 714 when I was on the shots. The normal range for testosterone is very wide: 260-1000.

Another drawback to the gel is its expense. One box can cost up to \$180 in southern California, almost double what I was paying for a 5cc vial of *Delatestryl*® that lasted 3 months or more. It pays to shop around at different pharmacies. Fortunately, with insurance your co-pay may be much less. You can have different concentrations of gel compounded through the pharmacy, which may be less pricey.

Application

Androgel® comes in little foil packets similar in size to condiments one would get at a fast food restaurant. The gel looks like a combination of cooking and motor oil and smells a little like rubbing alcohol.



Each box contains thirty packets in pairs. Each one has to be cut open. Because I generally use only half a packet, a box can last me for almost two months.

The application is very much like putting on aftershave. It is recommended that you do it after showering in the morning and that you not shower for at least 4-5 hours after putting it on. You rub it on your upper arms and shoulders. Some less hirsute folks can use their abdomen as well. It evaporates enough for you to get dressed after about 5 minutes.

The package instructions warn against touching/hugging female identified people until it's dry as you don't want to transfer any onto them. Also, never put it on your genitals, as it could more easily transfer to your partner this way during sexual activity, which could be a problem if this person is happy with their current testosterone level.

As with most things, your results may vary. My physician tells me that the few patients he has who use the gel report feeling better, but not in the dramatic way I am reporting. I know of one man using the patches who has *not* noticed a difference. I know of yet two other men who have felt worse in terms of hot flashes and night sweats with the gel. I have yet to see any literature on using this preparation pre-hysterectomy. So if this is a question you have, ask your physician.

Note: This article was submitted to the FTM newsletter in fall, 2000. Over time I found that using half a packet was surprisingly increasing fat in my hips and chest, despite no change in diet or exercise. The sleeves on my long sleeve shirts were also getting longer, which implied that my shoulders were shrinking. In approximately early 2001 I switched to three quarters of a packet, and most of these negative side effects have been reversed.

My testosterone level in February, '02 was 469 with a reference range of 270-970. It was fascinating that without my having ovaries (they were excised way back in 1988) some "feminizing" reappeared. Another way to view what had happened was that the masculinization was decreased. Another negative side effect now noted by pharmacies is sensitivity to sun. Because I sometimes feel flushed in the morning about an hour after putting the preparation on, I am considering using a divided dose—half in the morning and in the

evening. I am hopeful that the evening dose will not keep me awake, as I used to sometimes have even more insomnia than usual the night after my injection.

I hope that this information is helpful. It makes me aware in reading it again that no matter how many years "post-transition" we are, we still have to deal with some aspect of being trans. I am hopeful that future hormonal preparations and knowledge about the use of testosterone will lead to an easier time for all of us who choose to use the almighty T. ▼

Dr. FTM is a clinical psychologist with more than 20 years of personal and professional experience in the trans community. His clinical, educational and community activities are directed towards assisting individuals, families, mental health practitioners and university students to learn about and advocate for transpeople. He has conceptualized and organized three Malibu Men's Retreats and was a member of the conference organizing committee for the FTM Forward Motion conference in Burbank in 1999.

Lo Do Ho by Joe Ippolito

Being a trans person who identifies as an amalgamation of both genders, resists all forms of the gender binary and is rooted strongly in the butch-femme dynamic, I wanted to know more about the effects of taking low doses of hormones (lo do ho) and non-injectable forms of testosterone treatment. I want to give birth to a child biologically someday, but I also wish to masculinize my upper body. After contacting a number of medical professionals in New York and Philadelphia though, I was disappointed to learn that doctors specializing in trans health could give me so little information and practical knowledge about these options. So I turned to the Internet and other trans people for insight and suggestions.

As social awareness around transgenderism, a concept and/or belief system that challenges imposed sets of gender rules, continues to grow, more people are exploring non-traditional avenues to transition. Whether you identify as FTM, genderqueer, gender-liminal and/or two-spirited, some of you

may have begun to question the role of traditional testosterone treatment and wonder how it can actually benefit your personal experience with transition.

Like me, some individuals may simply want to "experiment" with testosterone first to see whether they like the way it feels. Others may be looking to try alternative forms of treatment that are not injected. One person I spoke to wanted to lower his voice, increase upper body muscles and keep his periods from coming back. He takes 40 mg of testosterone a week and is very satisfied with the result. A standard transitioning dose is usually 200 mg every two weeks.

Social factors such as having difficulty transitioning at work or while in school and coming out trans to family and friends may also play a part in why an individual decides to take a lower dosage. According to Dr. Mark Watkins in Philadelphia, "Some people may not be looking for dramatic changes, but still want to be doing something."

Also available by prescription are non-injected forms of hormonal supple-

mentation, such as the T-patch (an androgenic dermal patch that releases testosterone through the skin) and Androgel®, an FDA approved testosterone gel. Certain combinations of over-the-counter supplements, such as zinc, pumpkin seed, B-complex and ginseng, are also known to boost natural testosterone levels and enhance sex drive.

Regardless of the option you choose, remember to consult you doctor first and get regular medical checkups along the way. The trans community is a diverse population of people with a variety of needs. As powerful consumers who desire safer and healthier alternatives to our evolving transitional experience, we can demand that our medical professionals provide information about options other than the usual testosterone dosage and the traditional surgeries. ▼

Joe Ippolito is a pre-op FTM who lives in Philadelphia, PA. He is a licensed social worker who works in the mental health field. Currently, he is also working on obtaining a doctoral degree in psychology from Chestnut Hill College.

Female-to-Male Transsexuals in Society Holly Devor

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

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



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2 Legit 2 Quit

by Dean Spade

On February 2, Dean Spade was arrested for using the men's room in New York City's Grand Central Station. Police followed him into the men's room and, despite his willingness to leave, dragged him out in handcuffs as bystanders watched. Spade and the 2 friends who tried to help him were

held for 23 hours at 3 different precincts before being released. At the arraignment, the courtroom was filled with friends and allies wearing "Living Trans is Not a Crime" stickers.

The trial held about a month later was over so fast that their yellow-uniformed supporters with giant fake yellow flowers never got to wear their signs reading "NYPD: Stop Harassing Trannies," "23 Hours In Jail For Being Trans," and "There Is No Wrong Bathroom". All charges against Spade and his companions were dismissed.

Spade continues his efforts to start a new law project focusing on the needs of low-income transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, and gender variant folks in NYC. The arrest has only reinforced his commitment ~Ed.

'What was he wearing?'

'He was asking for it!'

'If you're not going to be a REAL MAN, don't use the men's room.'

I am deeply grateful to everyone who advocated for us and who showed their support in court and by email and phone. The most unsettling unexpected consequence of my arrest has been the trans legitimacy and image maintenance conversations it has spurred. People all over the Internet seem to be wondering: Is my claim to use the men's room legitimate? Have I failed to meet the conditions of manliness (or transmanliness) such that the arrest was deserved? What do I look like?

To some, whether or not I am to blame depends on whether or not what I did was illegal (which it was not). To others, whether or not I am to blame depends on how much I look like a man. And a third set seem to be saying that the fact that this experience happened to me means that it was deserved, because I failed to pass as a man and that is my shortcoming.

Ow. It is awful to be told that something so humiliating, unsettling, violating, and

violent was treatment I deserved. But more than that, it is frightening to be finding out the strict limits that people who would identify themselves as trans or trans allies have on what dignity gender non-normative people are entitled to. Am I only entitled to use the bathroom that I want to use if I can 'pass' as a man all the time? If I fail to conform my gender presentation such that I consistently pass as male or female all the time, do I not deserve to pee anywhere? If I don't choose to or can't afford body alteration or the procedures of changing my legal sex, do I not deserve to express my gender identity?

What's legit transness?

This problem of what counts as a *legitimate* trans-ness, who is entitled to a quest for equality, and how the fight becomes so narrow that it only protects

people who aren't usually in harm's way extends also to legal strategies being used to supposedly secure rights and recognition for us. The existing legal precedents about the establishment of gender for trans people and about our rights are closely and restrictively tied to the medicalized models of gender transition that already haunt us at every turn.

Besides there being many people who cannot afford medical and legal transition, we have people like me who DON'T WANT a gender-cohesive, gender-normative, state-sanctioned body and mind. How can I invest in a liberation project that requires me to conform to seriously invasive gender-adjusting procedures and processes in order to deserve to pee without false arrest?

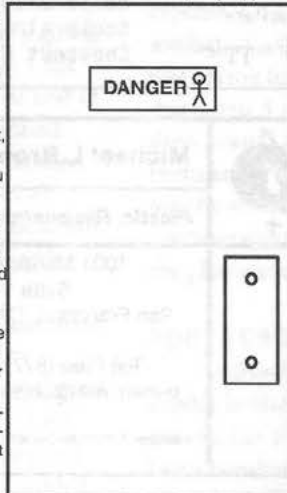
Fighting to Win

So, as a trans person, and as a lawyer, how do I resist the contortion of my narrative to fit gender policing ideologies? How do I struggle for trans legal rights, equality, and

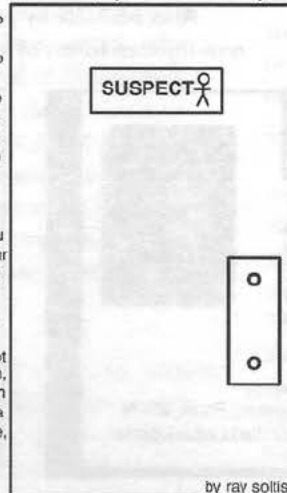
“Let's just say, it's time for Tranarchy. Whether you know it or not, we're fighting for your freedom, and we're fighting to win.”

By entering these doors you are claiming an uncomplicated membership in one of two binaries. If you cannot prove this membership--by appearance, by identification, by the structure of your genitals--

then you are vulnerable. You may be harassed, shouted at, or threatened. You may be met with violence. You may be chased out by security, you may be arrested. If you enter these doors--remember--you are not safe.



If you do not fit neatly into one of these two categories, you have no right to enter these doors. You forfeit your rights to safety, privacy, dignity. You are not a person, you are an exhibit, a spectacle, a challenge.



Before you choose a door, look at yourself. What does your license say you are? What messages do your face, your body, your haircut send? Do you sit or stand to pee? Do your genitals match your presentation, your ID? Enter with caution.

by ray sallis



A line of police hold back an angry crowd after arresting a trans man for using the men's room in NYC's Grand Central Station.

dignity without engaging in legal narratives that further overdetermine gender difference and 'biology as destiny'? And how do I deal with the pain of rejection and blame from my own supposed community members who see my post-top-op, no hormones, faggy, dykey, pervy appearance as justification for any degradation I run into?

As you may know, I am currently working to start up a new law project focusing on the needs of low-income transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, and gender variant folks in NYC. It was funny to spend a week writing a grant about issues such as the discriminatory treatment of this population in criminal justice contexts, as well as the inadequacy of

many lawyers to provide sensitive and appropriate services to us, and then to experience these very problems myself on that same weekend. The experience has reinforced my commitment to this work.

I am outraged by the double bind in which gender segregation of bathrooms leaves transgender, transsexual, gender variant, and genderqueer people. Like many people, each time I use a public bathroom I face the fact that no matter what choice I make, I may encounter harassment and potential violence and arrest. This experience, and the ways in which my body has become a battleground for debate about what constitutes a legitimate trans complaint, who deserves freedom and bathroom access, and

TG Restrooms at UM

On the third floor of the Student Union at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, between the Michigan Student Assembly and Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Affairs offices, you'll find a transgender unisex restroom. This is a full-fledged restroom with multiple stalls and sinks.

Kelly Garrett, coordinator of programs and student development in the LGBTA office, said, "People who don't fit into gender norms come to the Union specifically to use this bathroom. Our goal is to have a safe bathroom in every building on campus."

whether it is okay that we live in a police state, has only further convinced me of the necessity of a grassroots, unapologetic, non-medicalized, broadly inclusive movement for free gender expression of all people. Let's just say, it's time for Tranarchy. Whether you know it or not, we're fighting for your freedom, and we're fighting to win. ▼

"This is a well researched book that advocates liberty for sexual minorities." Alice Purnell, Candys Network

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SF's Free TG Law Clinic

New project prepares to provide legal services and advocacy to San Francisco transgender community

by Chris Daley, Transgender Law Project Coordinator

The Transgender Law Project (TLP) is a brand new effort to create effective and long-lasting legal advocacy for the San Francisco transgender community. We are co-sponsored by the National Center for Lesbian Rights and Pride Law Fund and housed in downtown San Francisco. FTM activist and attorney Shannon Minter oversees and guides the work of the project and I coordinate our day to day activities.

At TLP, we utilize educational publications and workshops to link San Francisco's transgender and legal communities. We do not act as anyone's lawyer. Instead, we help members of the community understand the advocacy options open to them and, when possible, connect them with effective and competent legal representation.

In February of '01, while I was finishing up law school at UC Berkeley, Shannon and I applied for funding through the Pride Law Fund's Tom Steel Post-Graduate Fellowship. That funding lasts through August of this year. We're in the process of looking for ways to keep the project funded beyond that date.

In fact, our long-range plans are to create a stand-alone organization providing legal representation and policy advocacy to transgender communities across California. Much of the project's current focus is on linking community members who are experiencing legal problems with existing legal service providers.

We have defined "transgender law" as those laws and regulations that affect a

person's ability express their gender identity. Such laws could deal with discrimination, identity documents, immigration, safe and appropriate health care, and marriage and custody rights. We have produced several pamphlets on these topics as they apply to people living in California. You can request a copy of any of our pamphlets (housing, employment, asylum, document changes, and Medi-Cal) by contacting me (see box below).

While our efforts primarily focus on addressing issues specific to gender identity, issues of racism, sexism, and classism are often inseparable from the gender identity of the diverse people who make up the transgender community. In order to recognize this reality, we are taking steps to reach out to all communities of transgender people in San Francisco. The most significant manifestation of this effort is a commitment to publish all legal education pamphlets in English and Spanish. In addition, TLP is holding legal clinics both at the NCLR office and at the offices of social service providers in San Francisco. While TLP still faces many challenges in making its work relevant to different populations, members of our advisory board and other community advisors, such as the Bay Area members of FTMI, are doing their best to help us meet them. The National Center for Lesbian Rights and FTMI are the two major cooperating organizations involved in the project.

In addition to offering free "advice and counsel" legal clinics, TLP is hosting trainings for the Bay Area Legal community. These trainings are offered to legal service organizations, who provide free legal counsel to low-income clients, and to private attorneys as a way to increase the pool of attorneys who are competent to represent transgender clients. The trainings are a combination of general information about the needs of the transgender community and an overview of Transgender Law.

Another main component of the project is the creation and implementation of a community legal needs survey. Very

little concrete data exists on the legal needs of San Francisco's transgender community. Therefore, we are undertaking a community survey to get a better picture of where at least some members of the community are having legal difficulties and which legal difficulties should be confronted first. The results of the survey will then be used as an advocacy tool for guiding and promoting our future work.

In addition to these main components, we are offering information and, when possible, attorney contacts to people from across the country that call and email us with questions. While, again, we aren't able to offer these folks representation, we can talk to them about their situation and help them understand what role a local lawyer might play. The other significant piece of work that we are doing is around creating and advocating for policy changes. We are primarily doing this on a state and local level by working with school districts and other state agencies whose current policies do not support the transgender community. ▼

Note: At press time, Chris indicated that he and Dylan Vade had secured the bulk of the money needed to keep the work going as the Transgender Law Center for the next two years. They will be the first two employees of the Center, and starting in 2003, the Transgender Law Center will be a new California non-profit. The work of the TLP (including the clinics) and the Health Law and Policy Project (see box on next page) will become part of the Center. ~Ed.

Chris Daley, Boalt Hall '01, is a current Tom Steel Fellow working at the National Center for Lesbian Rights as the coordinator of the Transgender Law Project (TLP). Over the last six years, Chris has worked with various social justice organizations throughout the Bay Area on issues relating to HIV/AIDS education and prevention, homelessness, police accountability, and immigrants' rights.



Legal Help from NCLR

If you are having legal problems and would like information or a lawyer, call Chris Daley at (415) 771-7304, email him at daley@nclrights.org, or send mail to:

NCLR
870 Market Street, Suite 570
San Francisco CA 94117

NCLR holds free advice and counsel clinics in the Bay Area on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month at the above address. Call for an appointment. Drop-ins served if time allows.

Transgender Health Law Project

Starting September 1, 2002, the Transgender Health Law Project will help transgender and gender non-conforming people in the San Francisco Bay Area get health insurance, use that health insurance, get procedures covered, and find respectful doctors. Co-sponsored by the Echoing Green Foundation, Yale Initiative for Public Interest Law, FTMI, and NCLR, the project will be a part of the Transgender Law Center. The goals of the Project are to:

- 1) increase transgender people's access to and ability to use health coverage by creating and distributing a list of transgender-friendly insurance companies, educating insurance companies about transgender people, and urging insurance companies to stop rejecting transgender people outright;
- 2) increase transgender people's access to transgender specific services by urging companies and schools to cover transgender surgeries and hormones;
- 3) increase the utilization of Medi-Cal's coverage of transgender specific treatments through education, assistance with Medi-Cal applications, and training of attorneys in the relevant law as well as transgender sensitivity;
- 4) increase transgender people's access to culturally competent doctors by providing transgender sensitivity trainings for doctors and creating and distributing a list of culturally competent doctors.

Contacts Chris Daley at daley@nclrights.org or Dylan Vade at tghealthlaw@hotmail.com for more information.



Kari Hong on Legal Responses to Healthcare Discrimination

By Garin Chad Wiggins

Most trans people have had to deal with being denied healthcare or insurance payment for medical treatments necessary for their health at some time—if not many times. While some doctors prescribe all necessary medication, including hormone treatment and surgery, others refuse to even treat transsexuals. Some insurers cover SRS and hormone treatment, while other insurance companies refuse to cover any injury or illness presented by a transsexual. The denial of treatment and coverage is contrary to medical practice. And, given the number of doctors and insurers that will cover our medical services, they must like our money. So how do the providers who deny us healthcare get away with this?

Kari Hong decided to look beyond the medical system to discover whether there might be a legal basis for discrimination against transsexuals. In her article, *Categorical Exclusion: Exploring Legal Responses to Health Care Discrimination against Transsexuals*, Hong argues that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the 14th Amendment should be used together to draw attention to their discrepancies when applied to trans people.

ADA

The ADA is a law that ensures that patients with stigmatized health conditions are not mistreated by doctors and insurers precisely in the ways that we are. But the ADA includes an explicit exclusion clause denying transsexuals its protection.

By examining legislative history, Hong found that this exclusion was not made because of medical concerns. Senators Armstrong and Helms supported the clause out of blatant ignorance of gender dysphoria and hostility towards transsexual individuals. She argues that Congressional conduct motivated out of such animosity is contrary to the guarantees of equal protection in the Fourteenth Amendment based on gender and social animus toward a social group.

14th Amendment

The 14th Amendment prohibits any government animosity based on race or gender or targeted towards a small minority with the intent to disadvantage them. But the 14th Amendment does not protect against all forms of discrimination. For instance, a private employer has the "right" to fire someone who has a different astrological sign.

Her point, then, is that the ADA

exclusion clause is contrary to the protections guaranteed by the 14th Amendment. In the context of the ADA, transsexuals are not seen as a random unprotected group, but as people discriminated against because of our transgressions of *gender*, as a *targeted social group*. Since Gender Identity Disorder is classified as a psychological disorder, they are stigmatizing us for our medical conditions. But it is acceptable for doctors and insurers to stigmatize transsexuals, since the added clause makes us exempt from the protections of the ADA.

Keep Categories Open

Hong also surveys how state and federal courts are protecting transsexuals, noting that when we are protected, it is from being assumed to be gay or lesbian or on the basis of gender or transsexuality. Hong thinks that the courts' understanding of what constitutes *sex*—from women, to men, to people who do not conform to traditional gender roles—has evolved enough for them to understand that transsexuals should be included under the rubric of such protection.

Using the ADA as an example under which the same act or and discrimination can be addressed by at least two categories, ►

gender and social group animus, she concludes that it would be better for those working to gain protections for transsexuals to not consolidate protection into just one category (such as gender) but to insure we are protected under all available categories. ▼

Kari Hong has published a report of her research in the *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*, 2002. *Categorical Exclusions: Exploring Legal Responses to Health Care Discrimination against Transsexuals*. 11 Colum. J. Gender & L. 88.

Kari E. Hong is Law Clerk to the Honorable Judge Jeremy Fogel, U.S. District Court, Northern District of California. She earned a J.D. from Columbia University and a B.A. from Swarthmore College.



Kantaras v. Kantaras: Unprecedented Revelations

by Jamison Green

Michael Kantaras, a 42-year-old bakery manager and FTM transsexual man, had been married to 33-year old Linda for nine years when they made television history together earlier this year. After roughly six years of marriage, one adopted child (she was pregnant when they met, he adopted the baby) and a second child conceived using sperm from Michael's brother, Michael fell in love with Sherry Noodwang, one of Linda's best girlfriends. Linda asked him if he was attracted to Sherry, and Michael told the truth: yes. They split up. That was over three years ago. It wasn't pretty. Linda was furious. Sherry divorced her husband to be with Michael, and Michael started divorce proceedings against Linda. Linda decided to tell the children that "their father was a woman" with her sister and some other people present in a dramatic scene that was guaranteed to upset the kids. Linda felt she was doing the right thing.

According to Michael, Linda has dragged the divorce process out for nearly three years now and made a concerted effort to poison their two children against him (which he diligently worked to prevent, so that now the kids feel safe with him again). But now it is down to the wire, and they are finally before a judge. Linda has pulled out all the stops, claiming Michael is not entitled to child custody because he is a woman and therefore their marriage was never valid, so he should have no parental rights. Oh, by the way, he should still pay alimony and child support.

This is not the first time a woman

has attempted to publicly emasculate her FTM husband. But it is the first time such a case has been nationally televised on Court TV. Well over 120 hours of testimony, analysis, and commentary about the validity of FTM identity and civil rights has been broadcast into millions of homes across America. The Rev. Jerry Falwell has made his typical pronouncements. Doctors have declared that the size of a penis isn't what defines a social man or a fit parent. A court appointed psychologist testified that Michael should have custody because he was the better parent. Linda's sister testified that she and the rest of Linda's family felt compelled to tell the children "their father wasn't really their father, but, in fact, he was a woman" without consulting with Michael or inviting him to be present. Another doctor described the phalloplasty procedure in such a demeaning way as to make Michael seem absolutely reasonable in his decision not to have that surgery. Jeb Bush's Florida courts will soon make a proclamation about legal maleness in a state where only a man and a woman may wed. In an unprecedented number of public polls conducted on the Court TV web site, Michael has won popular approval day after day. All in all, the coverage has been quite fair, in spite of the inept, ignorant remarks and questions that have occasionally spewed from reporters or commentators in their effort to understand or explain such a complex phenomenon as transsexualism in fragmentary sound-bites, and in spite of how painful it has been to watch Michael have to explain

how he has sex and how he urinates.

Some great moments in television occurred because of this coverage, though. In Court TV's New York Studios, FTM social worker Ray Carannante was brilliant in his extended commentary on the case. Paisley Currah, political science professor and board member of the newly formed Transgender Law & Policy Institute (www.transgenderlaw.org) was solidly informative, as was attorney and ally Ken Choe of the ACLU. Yours truly appeared via satellite link-up on the Catherine Crier commentary show in a brief segment on January 31st, opposed by a ranting Florida attorney who categorically denied that it was possible to change sex and therefore, "no matter what she calls herself, or what she wears, or what kind of hormones or surgery she takes, she was born a woman and she'll always be a woman. You can't change essentials. And the state of Florida should not have to be a party to this bizarre social experiment!" I responded calmly that this wasn't an unprecedented case, that this phenomenon is hardly new, and while it may be new in Florida courts, it was really not all that unusual.



In a Florida courtroom, Michael Kantaras fights for custody of his children in divorce proceedings with Linda Kantaras (opposite), his wife of nine years.

Toward the end of the 3-week hearing (it was supposed to go only for 5 days!), one opposition commentator stated that he thought the reason this case was televised on Court TV was because one of the attorneys working for the Michael Kantaras side was a transsexual, and this attorney probably wanted to use this poor family to make a political point. I was appalled by this statement, which the Court TV announcer interviewing this man did nothing to correct. In fact, the attorney he referred to was Shannon Minter, Senior Staff Attorney for the National Center for Lesbian Rights. Mr. Minter is, in fact, an FTM, and he was present in the courtroom during the proceedings, seated at the table alongside Michael's attorney Collin Vause. I asked Shannon for his reaction to this comment, and he said, "NO! We wanted to keep Court TV out of this, but we had no choice! We couldn't stop them. They pick the cases they want to televise. If we could have done this quietly, we would have much preferred that. No. It's important that people understand we didn't ask for this coverage."

Michael Kantaras is not all FTMs. He is not all husbands or all fathers, or all FTM husbands or fathers. But he has been dissected and scrutinized in a way that no other FTM ever has before, and to many people who have watched Court TV from late January through early February 2002, he does, for better or worse, epitomize female-to-male transsexual people. There is a way in which all transmen are on trial here, and the fact is we fared pretty well.

As I write this, the case is still before Judge Gerard O'Brien, who is faced with the daunting task of determining (first) what constitutes a man in the state of Florida, (second) whether Michael and Linda Kantaras's marriage was valid and, if



Help the Equality Florida Legal Advocacy Project

Equality Florida Legal Advocacy Project's director, Karen Doering, was one of the three attorneys representing Mr. Kantaras at his trial, along with Shannon Minter of the Transgender Law & Policy Institute and Collin Vause, a private family law attorney in Clearwater. Ms. Doering worked for months prior to the trial preparing Michael's case and locating the expert medical witnesses necessary to prove that Mr. Kantaras is male, that his marriage is valid, and that a transsexual man can be a good father to his children. Litigating this case has been enormously expensive, and the Advocacy Project has depleted its resources.

Donations can be sent to:
Equality Florida Legal
Advocacy Project, Inc.
3708 W. Swann Ave
Tampa, FL 33609-4522

Due to the nature of the case, the Advocacy Project will not recoup any of these costs even if the judge rules in Mr. Kantaras' favor. Transgender individuals and anyone who recognizes the importance of this case are urged to make a monetary contribution to the Equality Florida Legal Advocacy Project. All funds received are tax deductible and will help the Advocacy Project continue to fight for the rights of the LGBT community in Florida.

so, whether (and on what grounds) he should grant them a divorce, and (finally) what custody arrangement should he allow? The eyes of a nation are upon him: a religious nation, a secular nation, a homosexual nation, a homophobic nation, a trans nation. Many "special interest groups" have a legitimate special interest in the outcome of this case. And, as in almost every family law case that goes this far through the court system, no matter what Judge O'Brien decides, someone is going to get hurt.

While there have been cases like this before in other states (the Vecchione case in Orange County, California in 1997 and 1998 comes to mind, in which an FTM's maleness was upheld in court, his marriage validated and dissolved, and joint legal custody of his child established), the weight of case law is against transpeople. Shannon Minter thinks Michael Kantaras stands a good chance of winning, but we all will have to wait and see what the judge decides. ▼

Jamison "James" Green transitioned in 1988 and since then has been involved with the FTM community in the U.S. and internationally. He led FTM International from 1991 to 1999. Currently, he serves on the board of the Transgender Law and Policy Institute and is board chair of Gender Education & Advocacy (GEA). View his Web site at <http://www.jamisongreen.com>.

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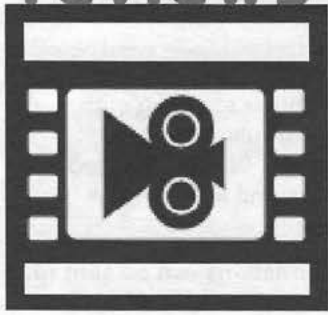
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BOOKS

Blessed Bi Spirit

Blessed Bi Spirit: Bisexual People of Faith, Edited by Debra R. Kolodny. Continuum, New York, 2000.

Reviewed by
Sheila Koren

Bisexuals *are* blessed, according to many authors in this collection, and not just because, as Woody Allen joked, bisexuality doubles your chances for finding a date on Saturday night. They suggest rather that, because sexuality is sacred, those who live and love outside the dualities of common practice best express a divine capacity for connecting by soul and not by superficial physical attributes.

Bisexuality, in this collection of articles, poems and essays, is explored from a diverse array of religious perspectives, from Catholic to Tantric to the increasingly ever popular “sex positive, gender anarchist, pagan, peace and pleasure activist” (Lynn Dobbs). Edited by Debra Kolodny, former National Coordinator of BiNet USA and current facilitator of the National Religious Leadership Roundtable, authors in this volume explore “the inherent blessing of loving beyond the bounds of gender.”

Transsexuality becomes a significant thread throughout much of the book because, to many authors, both the bisexual and the transsexual seem to best reflect the hermaphroditic co-gendered god(ess)head of the supreme being, the bisexual in his or her ability to be attracted to both genders, and the

transsexual in his or her embodiment of the female and male in one. Both live in what author Rosefire calls “the seed germ dots within each teardrop” of the yin yang symbol, male within the female side, female within the male.

“When one understands bisexuality as the sum total of all the implications of loving others at the level of the SOUL, and not merely at the level of the physical BODY,” writes Kolodny, “one understands that this capacity is indeed our most fortunate destiny, and a state of exquisite grace.”

Several authors, including transboy Gary Bowen, speak to the history of being transgendered that has been honored and even iconic in other cultures and other times: the Dagara of West Africa; the *hijra* and the *berdache*, or Two Spirit, of many Native American tribes; Lord Shiva and Mother Kali, each sometimes male, sometimes female in Hindu mythology; the Greek Aphrodite Urania “who wears a beard on her lovely feminine face,” (Raven Kaldera); and the original, mythic or historic (take your choice) Atlantis and Lemuria, from which we all descend and to which we all—according to those who believe so—aspire to return.

The ‘berdache,’ varying somewhat among different Native American cultures, was not so much defined by anatomy but by spirit, by being able to integrate the genders in a special way, to reconcile an original split (that some suggest is represented in the Adam and Eve story: paradise involving androgynous creatures, separated by God for the challenge, perhaps of finding their way back or to a higher level of sexual integration).

Ganapati S. Durgadas writes eloquently of her (Hindu) traditions’ challenges: “It seems they have placed me here, forever between worlds, for it is only when I am between that I feel most alive. Therefore I suspect the tension of my dilemma itself is part of the divine...God appeared to be most at home in the borderland between male and female.

Particularly refreshing in this era wherein to be queer in any way is often taken as an anti-Christian abomination to right-wing fundamentalists, who cite the Bible as backup to their fears and hatred of difference and diversity, comes Amanda Udis-Kessler’s piece about Jesus’ true spirit of inclusivity. Citing from the Galatians 3:28, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”

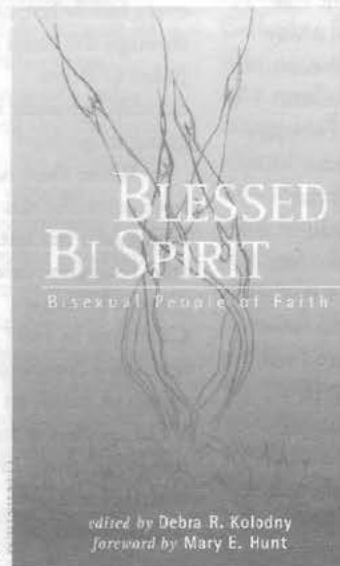
Calling God a “Divine Androgyne,” Soror Ocho reveals fascinating stories of occult theory and practice; including alchemy and Rosicrucian doctrine and other ancient mysteries. In the former case, gold becomes a metaphor for the spiritually integrated male and female aspects, and, in the latter, all is evolved from the Universal Hermaphrodite.

Many authors speak to the integration of body and spirit that bisexuality entails. Religion for these writers is a bodily experience. “My Eros and my spirit meet at the altar,” writes Laurel Dykstra.

Some pieces are more down to earth and practical. One woman’s experience is of trying to make room for bisexuals in the Presbyterian Church; another piece is a bisexual’s lament at being ostracized by both the gay and straight communities in which she’d worked as a minister.

By the editor’s own admission, the collection is sadly missing an Islamic or Muslim perspective. It is also sometimes confusing to have the concepts of bisexuality and transgenderedness interlaced the way they often are, as if they are almost the same thing. Many transgendered people do not identify as *two spirits*, but rather as a singular gender identity wrongly packaged. And many if not most are not bisexual. There is also a disingenuous thread throughout the book, though certainly not in all its pieces, that bisexuals and transsexuals somehow love *outside the body*, and transcend in their attractions the base instincts of others.

This expectation that there is something better, more spiritual, less physical—yet still quite different and



other—about any group can serve to further distance rather than include in the full spectrum of human possibilities people who happen to have certain qualities and traits, inclinations and leanings in some areas and not in others. It reminds me of when I thought (way back in the 60s and 70s) that lesbians would never be corporate presidents because to be lesbian was to be above all

that capitalistic stuff. Similarly, I wonder if there are really more spiritual bisexuals or transsexuals than there are spiritually inclined any other kind of person, if these qualities aren't just another way that diversity exerts itself in the human condition, randomly and with no particular correlates.

Nevertheless, in a society where we who experience our gender and sexuality

outside the cultural norm and who can tend to feel cursed, sometimes literally, it's validating to read these thoughtful pieces about the blessings of bisexuality. ▼

Sheila Koren is a writer and psychotherapist. Her book reviews and articles have appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle and Parenting Magazine, among others. She lives in San Francisco with her FTM partner and 2 grown children.

FILM

Review of *Sir: Better than the Average Documentary*

Sir: Just a Normal Guy
Melanie La Rosa, Director
(USA, video, 55 min.)

Reviewed by Alex Gino

Being your everyday genderfreak, I was hesitant to review *Sir: Just a Normal Guy*, a documentary directed by Melanie La Rosa. A normal guy? How conventional. Luckily, my assumptions were unfounded.

Sir: Just a Normal Guy follows the first year and a half in the physical transition of Jay, an FTM in Seattle. This film, La Rosa's first full-length documentary, runs about an hour and is a solid piece of work. It is aimed at folks who are considering physically transitioning, and effectively disseminates a large amount of information in an enjoyable format.

The film touches upon most of the areas of Jay's life, including the decision to



The website for *SIR* is www.geocities.com/sirthemovie

Purchase information:
Available for purchase for \$25 plus postage (\$3.50 in the US and more for international)
Contact Melanie La Rosa, Director
sirthemovie@yahoo.com

transition, the physical effects of testosterone and top surgery, identity, relationships, family, and the work environment. Most topics are covered in detail, with several conversations with Jay that take place over time. In fact, one of the only topics not discussed in much detail is the increase in libido, and it is understandable that someone might prefer not to air his sexual feelings to the world.

One of the most interesting threads in this documentary is the path of Jay's identity. At the beginning of the film, Jay struggles with feelings of being a "freak", which are followed and resolved as Jay feels more and more like your average, straight guy. We also get to watch Jay's views on identifying as queer evolve over time.

In general, Jay reminds me a lot of many young transmen I know. He always felt masculine, spent time as a dyke, and is now surprised to find himself feeling comfortable and normal now that he's living his life as a man. As this is a

documentary about one man's journey, it certainly can't tell everyone's story, but many of the themes here of respect for self-identity and the value of one recognizing and following one's own path, are much more general and relate to change of any kind. Many people will find themselves and their lives reflected in the story of Jay.

I would recommend this film for folks questioning their gender identity, those wanting to see their lives reflected in film, and those considering physically transitioning, as well as non-trans people who are wondering more about FTMs and transitioning. It is straightforward and informative without being overwhelming. It is focused on one individual, but the tone recognizes that this is only one life, and that there are as many ways of being trans as there are trans people. ▼

Alex Gino lives most happily in Philadelphia, PA. Ze works at the Spiral Q Puppet Theater and is involved with the Transgender Health Action Coalition and the LGBT community center's Transgender Programming Committee. Zir self-identifies as one or more of the following: omnisexual, genderqueer, nonaligned, femmeboy, bouncing fag, kinky, glitterboi, bundle of righteous indignation.

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Canada



FTMs Take on Victoria: One Guy's Perspective

by Joshua Mira Goldberg

When my family was in England 18 years ago, we heard, on an almost daily basis, "Hey, you're from Canada—do you know a guy named Bob Smith in Toronto?" As the character in a recent ad by a Canadian beer company replied, "Bob the accountant? Yeah, he's dead." Even on primetime TV, Canadians like to make fun of how ignorant people outside Canada are about the vastness of this country. So it would be awfully presumptuous of me to try to do some kind of cross-country description. FTMs across the country are doing just about everything you can think of, from legal Advocacy to peer support to HIV/AIDS education. Many of us are involved not only in trans movements, but also in other social and environmental justice efforts.

So, taking it down to a provincial scale: it's an exciting and depressing time to be an FTM in BC. Exciting: in the last six years there's been a very rapid burst of growth in the development of FTM communities. Depressing: the recently elected provincial government is slashing and burning just about every social program that benefits our communities, gutting welfare, health care, legal aid, education, the Human Rights Commission, and funding for non-profit agencies. Instead, the government is putting its money towards tax breaks for rich people and a very expensive PR campaign aimed at sabotaging First Nations' efforts to assert their sovereignty. We live in grim political times. Nevertheless, there are reasons to celebrate our accomplishments over the last six years, even as we dig our heels in to regain the ground that has been lost since the Liberals came to power.

I live in Victoria (a small city of 200,000 people, on the southern tip of Vancouver Island in the Pacific Northwest). Although there were probably

informal networks of FTMs here prior to 1996, I have no sense whether people were primarily closeted and isolated, or were out and active but outside my little bubble of awareness. When I came out as FTM that year, there was a small transsexual support group (Zenith) that, although theoretically open to all, was in practice focused on MTFs and a few people from the dyke community who self-identified on the trans side of butch (as a big old sissy fag, I didn't quite qualify for that scene). David Harrison's performance at our local Fringe Festival was the first time I had seen another real live FTM transsexual.

Eventually I hooked up with a few FTMs in Vancouver (a large city on the mainland, roughly 5 hours away by ferry and public transit) through TGC-L, an email listserv for Canadian trans people. I was extremely fortunate to connect with three guys who were further along than me and could provide perspective and helpful tips on surviving the ups and downs of transition. I was also fortunate that we shared not only the experience of transition, but also a commitment to equity and justice and some experience as activists. The four of us created the province-wide BC FTM Network, offering peer support, advocacy, and a forum for trans guys who had felt our needs were not being addressed by MTF-dominated groups. One of our first actions was to represent FTMs on the BC Human Rights Commission's Transgendered Advisory Committee, a cross-spectrum group advising the HRC on efforts to include "gender identity" in provincial human rights legislation (recommendations that were eventually approved by the HRC, but rejected by the provincial government). Although we've remained primarily Vancouver- and Victoria-based, the network does include guys from rural and remote locations

throughout the province.

The FTM scene in Vancouver is huge, and I'll leave it to one of the guys from Vancouver to write more about the many fabulous things they've done in that city. Here in Victoria, individuals have made many contributions to the growth of FTM communities. Non-trans allies have helped FTMs to connect with each other, have pushed for recognition of FTM concerns, and have challenged transphobic discrimination within their communities. Many people in mixed trans and LGBT/queer groups have made an effort to become more FTM-inclusive. And a number of new groups initiated by FTMs have come (and some have gone) in the last five years.

FTM Etcetera, a monthly drop-in peer support group for anyone born female who identifies some or all of the time as masculine/male, ran for two years. The drop-in is no longer running, but individuals provide one-on-one support to FTMs across Vancouver Island.

Genderqueers (genderqueers@hotmail.com), a group "open to anyone wishing to speak out against racism, classism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, heterosexism, and transphobia", has done a number of campaigns on issues such as bathroom accessibility and intersex rights, hosted video and discussion nights, and provided workshops for several local groups. Although Genderqueers is no longer meeting regularly, the group continues to host an email discussion and news list, and members of the group continue to work together both socially and politically.

Transcend (transcend@islandnet.com) provides peer support, advocacy, and education, with the aim of addressing "the systemic social, political, and economic conditions that negatively affect trans people, intersex people, and our family members." The (mixed) peer

support group meets monthly, our Speakers' Bureau has facilitated around 35 workshops, we've created a lending library, and our resource guide (online at <http://www.transgender.org/transcend/guide/index.htm>) is being used as a template by other trans activists across the country.

There's also a burgeoning FTM arts scene, with drag performers, cartoonists, spoken word performers, and a stripper who describes his shows as "Fat Man Dancing". Local artist Julian Gunn's enterprise, Radiant Fracture, (radiantfracture@hotmail.com) has singlehandedly put FTMs on the comic map, with three FTM zines (*Transmissions From Beyond*, *Girl Name*, and *Cunt Boy*)

and numerous features in non-trans publications. A new 'zine, *Avoid Strange Men*, showcases local queer & trans talent, and Captain Snowdon's Queer Words Project (queerwordsproject@hotmail.com) has sponsored a number of events that have featured FTM writers and performers.

FTMs from Victoria have been extremely active in networking with people in other locales. FTMs and allies here are working with people in Prince George to have the murder of a First Nations trans woman legally recognized as a hate crime.

I'm sure there are many small and large contributions I've inadvertently left out. But I hope this off-the-top-of-my-head retrospective conveys that for a small

community, we are kicking some big ass. There is still a long way to go, both internally (to address sexism, racism, classism, antisemitism, etc. within FTM communities) and externally. With the government cuts, many FTMs will be forced to spend more time scrambling for the basics of food, shelter, and health care. But we've come a long way from 1996 when, scared and lonely and more than a little peevisish, I had to travel all the way to Vancouver just to see another FTM. I'm optimistic that the next six years will be equally productive. ▼

Joshua Mira Goldberg is an unrepentant crossdresser who looks fabulous in sheer fabrics.

TS and TG: Two Threads of the Tapestry

by Rupert Raj

You've likely heard of the "border wars" between feminist lesbians and transmen during the 1980s. Closer to home for us has been the historical (and even now continuing) "battle" between people who identify as transsexual and those who identify as transgendered. Well, here are the thoughts of someone who has identified as a bisexual, "affectively androgynous" transman since I first reassigned over three decades ago.

Generally, I use the term *transsexual* (TS) as an adjective when speaking of TS people, and often use the words *transmen* and *transwomen* to effectively identify us. Some TS folks I know, including myself, object to such terms as *transie*, *tranny*, *trannyfag*, *she-male* and *sex change* as disparaging, viewing these descriptors as pejorative labels that denigrate, diminish and dehumanize us as unique human beings and well-rounded individuals, each in our own right. In contrast, some TS individuals embrace such terms as *transperson*, *transpeople*, *transfolk*, *trans community* and *trans-identified* as celebratory identifiers when used by their peers and transpositive allies.

Many of the transsexuals I know do not like being labelled *transgendered* and do not identify as such. This umbrella term derived from the narrower word *transgenderist* (coined by Virginia Prince in the 1960s and popularized by Richard Docter in the 1980s) which applied to genetic males who passed and lived as women most or all of the time, usually with the benefit of female hormones and sometimes breast implants and facial surgery. Transgenderists (sometimes called *she-males*), however, did not surgically alter their male

genitals and did not identify as TS women. In the 1990s lesbian women co-opted this term, as well as the term *FTM*, to describe masculine lesbians who identified, not as men, but as both genders or as neither.

Instead, we willingly embrace the term *transsexual* precisely because it denotes that we are changing (want to change or have already changed) our sex (i.e., physical body, including our genitals, where possible), not our gender (i.e., gender identity as masculine or feminine, as feeling like a man or a woman). The emphasis for transsexuals, then, is on feeling male or female in a real physical way, in addition to already feeling masculine or feminine in a more intuitive, affective and cognitive manner.

For TG men (some of whom are transgenderists and feminine or effeminate men who identify as she-males) and TG women (many of whom are apparently masculine lesbians who identify as he-shes or boychicks), the focus is on breaking down society's binary system of the polarizations of male and female, masculine and feminine, becoming a third sex and third gender, rather than identifying as the opposite sex as transsexuals typically do. I have also met some TS folks who

post-surgically ID as *both* transsexual and transgendered: a dual location on the continuum of gender identity.

In sum, our limited language cannot always adequately convey the ephemeral nature of complex gender and sexual orientation identities and presentations—let alone the fact that people might locate themselves at different places on the four continua (physical sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and sexual [orientation] identity) at different times and places and contexts in their lives. But since our identifications and presentations can be fluid and tend to change over time and space dynamically, our language must continually evolve. That is the challenge for all of us, both as consumers and as providers. It is my hope that all of us (TS, TG, IS, two-spirited, crossdressers, gender-variant, genderqueer [or *transqueer*—my term]) will learn to embrace our unique diversities, as well as our common intersections, in a rich tapestry that weaves all our threads together: our trans community. ▼

For more on this issue, see: Herdt, G. (Ed.). (1994). *Third sex, third gender: Beyond sexual dimorphism in culture and history*. New York: Zone Books.



You make it hard for us because you pass... society makes it harder

by Keenan

Do you think that you would have still transitioned if society was accepting of gender variance? By the time the word society makes it out of her mouth I'm already on the defense. I know what she is about to ask because I've been asked numerous times before, and it's coming from a whole bunch of places, not just within the trans community.

It's a fair enough question, so why am I so pissed? What is it about that question that makes me want to run screaming with my hand over my ears???

into the whirling wind

I'm triggered in more ways than one and I'm trying not to show it but my body language tells her that she's hit a nerve.

I think it's this

I hear
gender betrayer

When asked questions about my choices around transitioning I feel like screaming that I wouldn't have done this **NO MATTER WHAT** if I didn't feel like it was necessary for me, but I know that that is not the way in which to approach it. If tomorrow, society suddenly became accepting of gender variance it still wouldn't change the fact that I hated my body as female. I didn't rejoice in having breasts or celebrate my vagina. I didn't have a life, save obsessing about gender reassignment. I lay in my bed and hoped I would die. My choice was not about blending in. I didn't transition to take my place at the patriarchal table, I did it to have a life.

What I feel in that question is that I'm being compared to
trans guys who are sexist, misogynist pigs *you know who I think betrays us*
trans guys who abuse their partners
trans guys who don't question male privilege or acknowledge that they are taking up male space.

too trans

The top of my head is about to blow off with such force that I should stop but I kind of want to see where this is taking me.
the bottom line
sellout
not trans enough

nanananana Keenan is missing what I had discovered yesterday.

It's taken me awhile to drown out the whispering, and the wind has finally settled down, but I'm at the point where I know that the way in which I choose to express my gender is right for me.

And it's not an easy answer, it's been something that I've been struggling with for quite some time. I've heard that question often enough that I started to question my own reasons for transitioning and embracing the male pronoun. I wondered if I was in fact selling out, taking the easy road, making it harder for those who decide not to transition. You know you hear something often enough, you start to buy into it. I started listening to the whispers that go unchallenged about the trans community, that those who don't transition just aren't ready yet, that those that do aren't fucking with gender—they are assimilating into it, that they are betraying those that want to expand the confines of the box.

I stare blankly
My screams are deafening me, holding me at arms length from the meaning I wish to get out of this

Doesn't the fact that I question, challenge, exist in and embrace my transness fuck with and expand the notions of masculinity?

AM I FUCKING
GENDER OR HAS IT
FUCKED ME

"What do you want?"
"Gender, gender, gender"

it sings through my head like a children's nursery rhyme. Mocking me, surrounding me, inching closer and then running away laughing. ▼

Keenan is a Trannyboy activist dedicated to creating space for hard conversation and calling it like it is. He lives in Victoria, BC, Canada.

So Deep in the World

by Julian Gunn

Deep-bellied sister

I wanted to write you a poem
about a man so deep in the world
he was green

a soil you could seed with
every ecstatic uncomplicated yes
you never got to say

But the truth is

I don't want to share
not even in a poem

I want all that cock for myself

There are no equal pieces in sex
desire punches a hole in your sky
and you try to write it closed

If I spend my words conjuring a green man to
unwind his thread

in the red maze of your cunt

would you do the same trick for me

Or would you go on spinning hymns to your twat
as if you were the only one who had one

Oh my life is a rich red fruit
clotted with garnets

as sweet and bitter
as anyone could ask for

I have nothing to complain about
Still here I am

counting my words from hand to hand
while you hold your cunt open like a grin

Julian Gunn is an FTM poet, performer, editor, comic artist and statistical clerk living in Victoria, BC, Canada. He knows for sure he is good at being a statistical clerk. Zines he has created (*CuntBoy*, *Transmissions from Beyond*, *Girl Name*) or co-edited (*Avoid Strange Men*) are available from PO Box 8673, Victoria, BC, Canada, V8W 3S2.



Thoughts on True Spirit's Youth Policy

by Max Spit

I love the True Spirit Conference. This was my third one, and True Spirit continues to be a space like no other wherein we can safely explore and share valuable experiences. I recognize that much goes into the planning and organizing of the event and that often the work of the organizers goes unnoticed or unappreciated. I more than appreciate True Spirit and hope that nothing ever happens so that the conference can not continue.

Unfortunately, this past year at True Spirit, an age policy was put into effect that limited access to certain workshops and panels to youth under the age of 17. This policy was implemented for a number of reasons, mostly because there was a lot of fear of parents suing the conference organizers. An accusation of contributing to the delinquency of a minor or pedophilia could get someone a long time in prison. And for transgendered people, prison is a terrifying and life-threatening prospect.

When conference-goers, myself included, found out about the age policy, we immediately wanted to know the reasons why it was put into effect in the first place. While I recognize that I did not work on the organizing board, I did feel, as a member of the community, that such a decision should have been made with input from everyone—youth under

17 included.

An impromptu meeting was called to discuss the policy at True Spirit, but time was limited, and I felt frustrated. It was very difficult to voice my disappointment and concerns in such a context. Everyone felt very passionately about the issue, and the discussion definitely took on an "us-versus-them" or "kids-versus-grownups" sentiment.

I for one felt frustrated for a number of reasons. One, there seemed to be the assumption on the side of the organizers that the young people in attendance did not understand the reality of the situation, that we were idealists, and that they were attempting to make the only truly reasonable or lawful decisions. I think that trans youth everywhere understand the "real world"—they're young, transgendered people in a society that devalues and hates them for these reasons. Some of them are homeless, some of them have been criminalized for their identities, and most have unsupportive home and school lives. As a young transman, I

know that the world is no easy place, and I can't imagine the courage and self-knowledge it must take to be out as trans in high school.

Maybe it is idealistic to want so much from one conference, to work to make it a space where everyone is welcome and their voices can be heard. It is also important to recognize the work done by older generations to create a space like True Spirit. It is necessary, however, for us to continue to embrace young people and welcome them into our community. ▼

Max spit is a 22-year-old transman and queer activist. He is currently involved in a project documenting the lives of young transpeople all over the U.S. He will not be running for president anytime soon.

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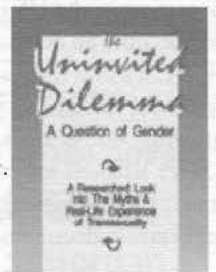
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By Garin Chad Wiggins

World

Japanese Speedboat Racer Transitions

Chinatsu Ando, a Japanese speedboat racer with a reputation as a strong competitor, recently announced her transition to male. "With my sex change operation, I'm basically throwing 38 years of my life away, but I was just filled with a feeling that I could no longer live out a life of lying," said Ando, who has taken the male first name of Hiromasa.

Not only was Hiromasa's decision accepted by the Japan Motorboat Racing Federation, but it also failed to get much of a reaction from the public.

Japan is only gradually coming to terms with sexual minorities, and particularly the issue of transsexuals. Ever since a doctor was successfully prosecuted for performing sex change operations in 1969, the medical profession appeared to opt for safety and largely ignored the issue. It was in 1997 that guidelines were adopted for sex change operations. Hiromasa's announcement, and the reaction to it, may be a sign that Japan is moving towards a greater tolerance.

There are also other signs of changing attitudes. The Mie University in western Japan has appointed transsexual activist Masae Torai* to lecture on the issue of sexual identity to medical students. Torai changed from female to male in an operation in the US in the late 1980s and has become an activist for transsexual rights, leading the group FTM Nippon - female to male. But if acceptance is growing, transsexuals still face barriers. Under Japanese law, they must be listed under their original gender on family registration documents.

*Masae Torai was the winner of FTMI's Community Service/Outreach Award in 1998.

Sri Lankan 'Scam'

A young Sri Lankan woman filed for divorce three months into her marriage after discovering her husband was really a woman, reports Sri Lanka's *Daily Mirror*. The young bride had been whisked away on her wedding night by her parents who were suspicious about the groom's feminine gait and high-pitched voice.

After the transvestite groom went to the girl's residence to take his wife back, her parents took the matter to court in Colombo. In her statement, the girl said she didn't know her lover was female until she was told by her parents.

The article did not say how the bride was lured into the marriage, but said the transvestite had carried out similar scams in the past. The plaintiff has asked the court that the marriage be declared void, since it was entered into on a false declaration of identity. They have also asked for costs.

United States

Trans Rights Protections Snowball in 2002

Halfway through 2002, as many nondiscrimination laws for gender-nonconforming citizens have already been legislated in US cities, counties and states as were passed in the year 2001. Three major cities—New York City, Dallas, and Philadelphia—have already enacted protective legislation this year.

On April 24, New York City became the third jurisdiction in New York state, the others being Rochester and Suffolk County, to pass such a bill. "As the largest jurisdiction by population in the U.S. to ban discrimination against transgender people, it might have a positive spillover effect elsewhere because it suggests to legislators in other cities that transgender inclusion will eventually become the norm in human rights laws," said Paisley Currah, an associate professor of political science at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York.

Also on April 24, the Tacoma, Washington City Council voted to add "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to the city's anti-discrimination law. "This leads us to look at all people as people," said Councilwoman Bil Moss. But this

being the second time the City Council has approved the amendment since voters repealed the additions after the first vote in 1989, some supporters expect it to again be voted down by the public.

On May 8, Dallas became the first city in Texas to extend protections to all of its transgendered citizens. Houston had already, last July, been the first city in Texas to extend protections based on gender identity to its city employees.

Then on May 16, Philadelphia became the sixth local municipal government in Pennsylvania to enact nondiscrimination laws for gender-nonconforming citizens—making Pennsylvania the first state with 6 municipalities that cover gender identity in civil rights legislation. Said Philadelphia Councilman Frank DiCicco who sponsored the bill, "It is the right thing to do for this community, and in line with most other municipalities in the country." Erie County and Allentown had already added such laws in 2002.

Chicago may soon follow. "I think New York gave us an example that we will quickly emulate in Chicago," said Clarence Wood, chairman of the Chicago Commission on Human Rights. About 20 Chicago aldermen, including 3 lead co-sponsors, have expressed support for an amendment that would seek protection from discrimination in employment, public accommodations, credit and housing. The measure is currently before the council's Human Relations Committee. Mayor Richard M. Daley has yet to take a public position on the proposal, but they expect the mayor's support.

Since the ball started rolling in 1975, 2 states, Minnesota (1993) and Rhode Island (2001), 37 cities, and 6 counties have passed nondiscrimination laws with statutory language that explicitly includes people of transgender experience. The 45 states and municipalities that have enacted protections have not done this spontaneously. Trans activists and an increasing number of our LGB and political allies have worked behind the scenes for years to make this happen. When the people of every state insist on human rights protections for trans people because "it's the right thing to do," it will be because the hard work of dedicated activists has snowballed. ▼

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- Once you fill out the questionnaire, place it within the return envelope, seal it, and place it within a regular mailbox.
- You do not have to answer a question if you do not want to. You are also not under any obligation to return the questionnaire.

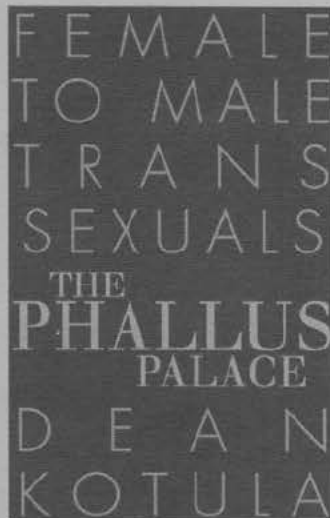
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