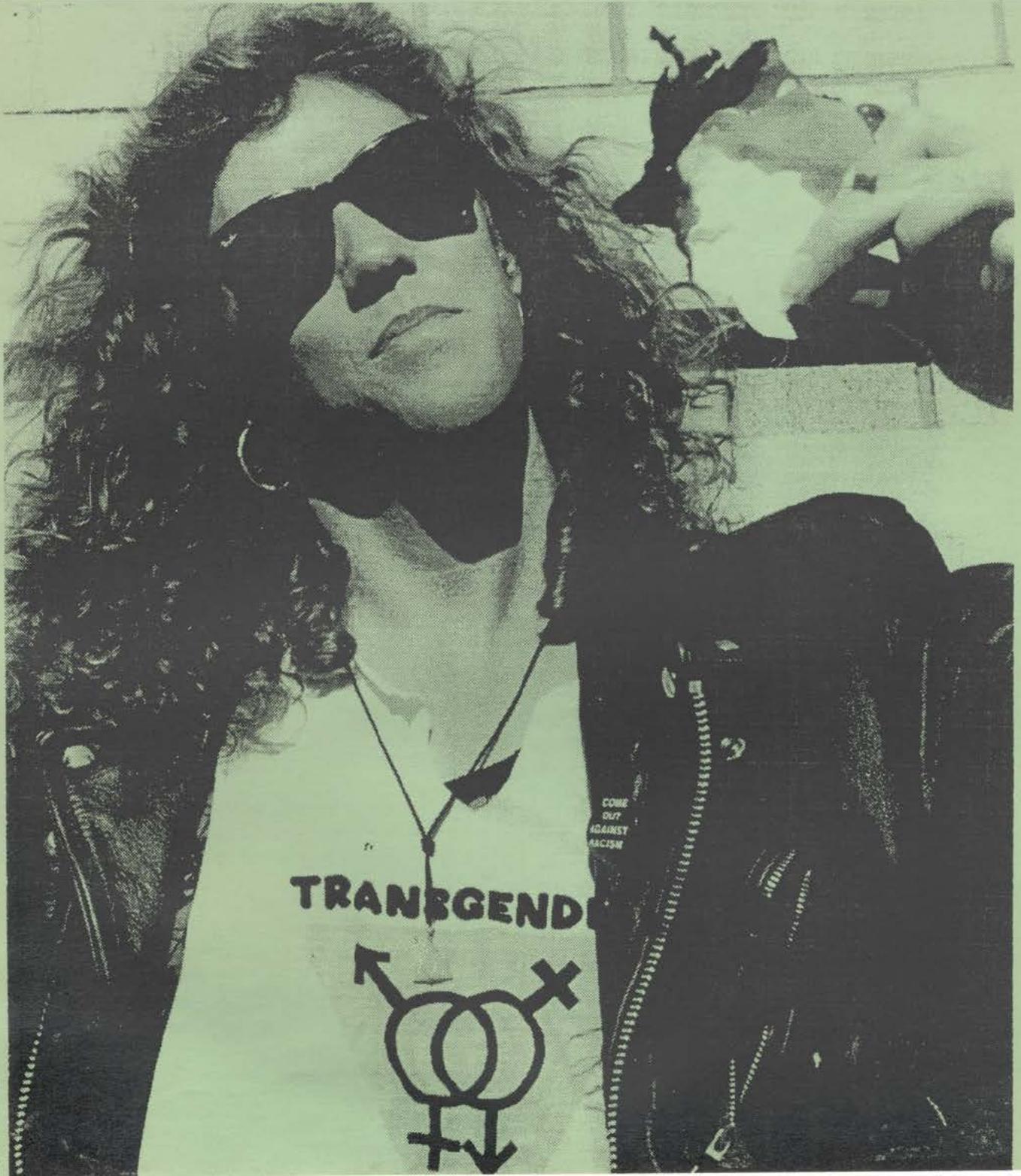


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Summer '93

TNT

TRANSSEXUAL • NEWS • TELEGRAPH



Find out what it would take to get the DMV in your state to remove the gender from the licenses. Pass this information out to everybody around you. Talk to others about doing something to change it. ⇨ Write a transsexual "Our Bodies, Ourselves." ✨ Do incredible transsexual art ● Start a transsexual co-op living situation. ▼ Become involved in the debate over the DSM ✎ Write to Bill Clinton and your representatives in Congress about pressuring the Mexican government to investigate the killing of transgendered people in Chiapas. ♪ Start a local group to study the history of transgenderism. * Fight AIDS ▼ Come out to someone. X Make friends with someone from a different part of the transgender community. ■ Organize a transgender festival. ☞ Call Gail and ask her what she wants written for TNT ☞ Organize a transphobia workshop. Advertise it with all the local political groups. ✨ Have a fabulous life, just to prove them all wrong ✎ Organize a training for "helping professionals." Make it transsexual positive. ○ Print up bumper stickers ✓ Get one person a week to call the local public radio station and ask about programming for transgendered people for 12 weeks. Call the station and ask how to get a transgendered radio program on the air. ◆ Talk your local gay and lesbian newspaper into letting you do a column of transgender news. Make it terrific. Send us copies. ⇨ Start a Transgender Nation. ▼ Picket a psychiatric hospital ☆ Demand humane treatment of transgendered people. ✨ Run for office as an out candidate. Don't make it a freak show. ⊕ Start a transsexual drop in center X Protest the harassment of a transsexual woman in a public place. ● Protest to a lesbian/gay/bisexual organization about leaving transgender out of their title ✨ Complain to a lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender organization about always putting transgender last ☞ Complain a transgender/bisexual/gay/lesbian organization about not doing anything to back up their name ● Befriend a young transsexual ✨ Learn how non-profits work. □ Start a transition house. ☆ Build a big surgical center where all employees are transsexual and all care is free. □ Start a clothing line that fits transsexual bodies ☞ Start a transsexual performance company ♠ Start a transsexual puppet show ● Live well * Do photography of the transsexual experience. > Smuggle new plates into the presses and run TS positive articles in your local paper. ★ Fuck the A.P.A. ✓ Set up a table in the middle of downtown and do education. → Help with the protest of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. ↗ Work in a local electoral campaign as an out transsexual. ✎ Write to your local paper about never covering transsexual issues. ⊕ Involve Amnesty International in the struggle for transsexual rights. ✉ Do international networking for transsexual rights. ↓ Start a transsexual religion. ☞ Be out. ✨ Be proud. * Have transsexual pride □ Make alliances with the psychiatric survivors movement. ⊕ Make alliances with young feminists. ✨ Stay Alive ▲ Make alliances with people of color. * Make alliances with liberal religion ● Join a liberal Church. Get them to take up the cause of transsexual rights. ⇨ Write theological articles chiding clergy for ignoring transsexual spirituality ✨ Make us popular in the new age movement. → Start a substance abuse program for transsexuals in your community. ✨ Start a surgery fund * Watch the police on the transsexual prostitute stroll. • Educate the people who answer the local hot lines. ⊕ Look critically at how we treat each other. Improve it. → Look critically at the whole transsexual talk show circuit. • Make alliances with the reproductive rights movement. * If you aren't out - watch the papers & media. Report transphobic things to others who are. * Work with Transsexuals In Prison → Ask employment agencies about their policies about transsexuals ⊕ Compose a transsexual songbook ☞ Record transsexual music ⊕ Turn in a doctor who's trading sex for hormones ▲ Talk to the cops ☆ Volunteer for a public position ✨ Go on the fund raiser circuit > Laugh ✓

Kara

I HAVE RECENTLY UNCOVERED THE BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN SEX REASSIGNMENT SURGEONS, AND SPACE ALIENS. IT SEEMS THAT YOU AND YOUR SURGICAL TEAM AREN'T THE ONLY ONES PRESENT DURING YOUR SURGERY. SPACE ALIENS ARE THERE ALSO. HERE IS HOW IT WORKS:

SPACE ALIENS HAVE A TASTE FOR HUMAN GENITALIA. ITS A DELICACY KNOW THROUGHTOUT THIS PART OF THE GALAXY. DURING YOUR SURGERY THEY MATERIALIZ IN THE OPERATING ROOM TO DINE ON THE EXTRA PARTS YIELDED BY THE SURGERY. THE SURGEONS ARE PAID IN GOLD OR GEMS, AS THEY PREFER.

THE REALLY TRICKY PART IS THAT THE SPACE ALIENS ROUTINELY VISIT EARTH TO TELEKINETICALLY MISWIRE THE GENDER AWARENESS OF SELECTED DEVELOPING HUMAN FETUSES. THIS INSURES A STEADY HARVEST OF THIS DELICACY. I CAN JUST IMAGINE SOME OF THE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN UFO'S - "IF YOU'RE EVER IN THE EARTH SECTOR AT LUNCHTIME, YOU HAVE JUST GOT TO STOP IN AT THIS PLACE... .. FRIED IN BUTTER WITH SOME GARLIC..." "Bon Appetit!"



Editorial

Transgender Liberation

Transgendered people are finally becoming politically active. Our ways of being politically active are as diverse as we are ourselves. Some, inspired by Queer Nation, have started Transgender Nation chapters, with more direct, confrontational politics. Others try to produce change within the psychiatric/medical system. Others search for empowerment through electoral politics, legal reform, or building coalitions with the larger women's or queer communities.

Choosing to be politically active means visibility, something many transsexuals shun. Yet political activity itself brings personal liberation, as we come together not as victims, but as people who refuse to be victims any more. As Rachel Pollack says, "Victims cannot celebrate their lives."

The question of tactics runs through all liberation movements. People who choose one method complain those who choose another are being ineffective or damaging. Badly applied, any tactic can be ineffective or damaging, but none are inherently so. Direct action can backfire or devolve into impotent, destructive rage. Electoral politics can become a pointless drain of energy, and transphobia can be manipulated to stab our friends, with a consequent backlash to us.

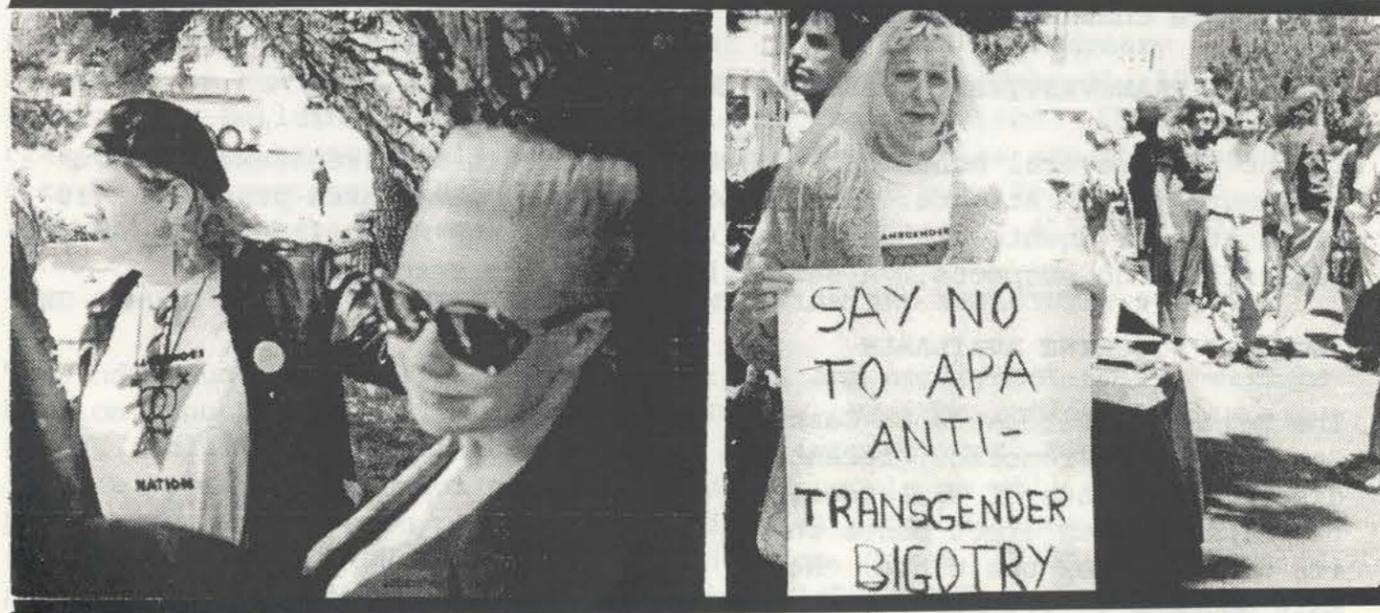
But we have also seen very effective examples of each of these tactics. Direct action produced change in the March on Washington when working within the system became stalled. Direct action often provides the fuel that the "suit and tie" people use to create change. Electoral politics can make us powerful poli-

tical allies for the future. We are beginning to win in the courts. Transphobia is becoming out of fashion in feminist and queer circles. Personal exploration is a necessity - without personal change, we have no strength for the outside fight.

We must recognize that I will use the most effective tactic for me, not the most effective tactic for you. If you are a wealthy attorney, you have access to tactics like legal action and the skills to engage in political maneuvering. Only the street queens have the raw courage, rage and street smarts needed in direct confrontations with the police. As a liberation movement, we cannot afford to limit our tactics to those only a small segment of our population can participate in. The process of liberating ourselves politically is part of the process of liberating ourselves spiritually.

This is a movement for Transgender Liberation, not just a movement for transsexual rights. Many of us are searching for change in ourselves, examining our relationship to the world with a social critic's eye. The Survivors of Transsexual Anonymity, the people discussing transsexual spirituality, and the body awareness movement, are also part of the struggles for Transgender Liberation.

If our political dreams came true tomorrow - if we were protected by law and had good, affordable, responsive medical care, we would not be liberated. We would still carry with us the leaden weight of shame, like a prisoner with a ball and chain. The chain can be unlocked from our ankle, but we have to cast away the ball to be truly free.



Transgender Nation members protesting at the APA convention in San Francisco in May.

NEWS ON THE MARCH

•IFGE BOOTH; PROTEST AT AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION CONVENTION

The gender community was out in force at the recent American Psychiatric Association (APA) in San Francisco. IFGE set up a booth for four days and passed out information packets to the psychiatrists inside. Meanwhile, transsexuals and other groups protested outside Moscone Center to put pressure on the APA to remove the mental illness designation of transsexuals from the new version of the DSM. At least three Transgendered Nation members were arrested in a demonstration.

All of this obviously had some affect on the APA. The 5/28/93 SF Chronicle reported that "The APA proposed that well-adjusted transsexuals (should) not automatically be considered to have a mental disorder." Everyone who took part in confronting the APA deserves a pat on the back for even getting this much out of them.

•TRANSGENDER FILMS AT 17TH ANNUAL SF LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL

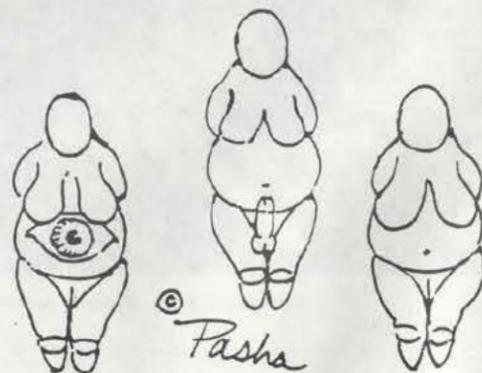
For the second year in a row, the Lesbian/Gay Film Festival had a number of transgender-themed films in it, furthering the ongoing rapprochement between the two communities. East is Red and P[illain Truth were two of the highlights. East is Red was a kung-fu spectacle with an impossible-to-follow plot about Asia the Invincible, who self-castrated to gain extraordinary kung-fu abilities (the program notes described its "narrative continuity [as a]shifting ambiguous thread"). P[illain Truth was a 20 minute work of evocative and expressive images of an FTM experience that was quite powerful.

•ATLANTA TRANSVESTITE/TRANSSEXUAL KILLINGS

In the past several months, 10 black transvestite and transsexuals have been murdered in Atlanta. The majority of them have taken place in a 10 block area of downtown Atlanta centered around the Marquette Club. As yet police have no suspects. A serial killer may be responsible.

•GODDESS FIGURINE AVAILABLE

The Bead Store, located on Castro Street in San Francisco, recently displayed a Venus of Willendorf figurine with an erect penis in its window under the title, "New Male Goddess". (*Penis of Willendorf* might have been a



catchier title.) The pieces were created by Pasha, a local SF artist. The small pieces can be purchased by mail for \$10. Make check or money order payable to Freya's Folk and send it to Pasha, 537 Jones Street, #165, San Francisco, CA 94102. Wholesale prices available on request.

•PANTY CHECKS AT MICHIGAN

The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival hasn't budged from their previous position. This year's festival literature restricts the festival to "womyn born womyn" only (a code phrase to bar transsexual women). Womyn for Womyn is again calling for a boycott of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.

•NEW FEMALE-TO-MALE FILM

"Female Misbehavior", a new film by lesbian film maker Monika Treut, has one section on female-to-male transsexual Max Valerio, a former lesbian who now identifies as a heterosexual male. The film has gotten good reviews in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. The movie is in nationwide release.

•AMSTERDAM CONFERENCE ON TRANSSEXUALS AND THE LAW

The topic of the Council of Europe's 23rd Annual Colloquy on the Law this year was "Transsexuality, Medicine and the Law." It was held in Amsterdam on April 14-16 and included representatives from over 20 nations. Perhaps the most radical position expressed was by Michael Will, a German law professor, that basic law should recognize a person's expression of their own identity, not society's.

•TRANSGENDER RAP SESSION II

A meeting to plan transgender involvement in the 25th anniversary of Stonewall in New York City in June '94 will be held on July 11, 1993 at the Women's Building at 18th and Valencia in San Francisco. Drag queens, transvestites, transsexuals and other interested parties are encouraged to attend. The meeting is scheduled to start at 1:00 p.m. For further information contact Sister Vicious Power Hungry Bitch at 415/ [REDACTED]

•2ND ANNUAL INTL. CONFERENCE ON TRANSGENDER LAW AND EMPLOYMENT POLICY

The 2nd annual conference on transgender law and employment policy will be held on August 26-29, 1993 in Houston, Texas. Besides employment law, topics include health, military, family and imprisonment law. The conference is intended for all transgendered people as well as attorneys. For more information on registration and hotel accomodations, please write to: Phyllis Frye, [REDACTED] Houston, Texas, 77035-5515. The phone number is 713/[REDACTED] fax line is 713/[REDACTED]

•NEW DOCUMENTARY IN PROGRESS

A new documentary (working title "A Natural Woman"), exploring the lives of transgendered women is being filmed in San Francisco. Participants interviewed range from ex-criminals to business executives. The film documents the experiences and contemporary life of this segment of the communities. It is being produced by Steve Greenberg, a gay man and Rachel Lane, a transgendered woman. Financial, technical and emotional support is needed to finish and release the film. Please direct contributions and correspondence to: Steve Greenberg, 2261 Market St., Suite 141, San Francisco, CA 94114. Ph: 415/441-5402.

•BILLY TIPTON MEMORIAL SAXOPHONE QUARTET

is the name of a Seattle-based group of women musicians. In explaining why the group chose Billy Tipton, founder Amy Denio said, "If there's a statement [in the group's name], it's to encourage people to follow their true paths, whatever that means, not bow to society's expectations, just to strike out on their own....It was so incredible that Billy Tipton lived his life the way he wanted to, and we really respected that. It was not an easy lifestyle to choose, borne out by the fact that he died of ulcer problems." The group has a CD album coming out on the Knitting Factory label entitled Sax House.

•PROSTITUTION CRACKDOWN

A recent police crackdown on all types of prostitution in the Tenderloin has brought increasing pressure on the Motherlode, a ts/tg bar with heavy prostitution action. The crackdown began because of complaints by local residents. As one of the last affordable areas in San Francisco, the Tenderloin has attracted many Asian immigrant families as well as other respectable citizens.

It's not unusual on a Friday or Saturday night to see a caravan of several dozen cars looping around the three blocks of Post, O'Farrell and Ellis while dozens of girls offer themselves for sale. Meanwhile, the Motherlode is jammed inside with ts/tg/tv's, (some just in the city for the night), local transfans, t-birds and the curious.

What's the solution? No one wants to admit that transsexuals (and T-prostitutes) are extremely attractive and a turn-on to a significant number of men and women, plus being good for business (Before it became a tg hangout, the Motherlode was a sleepy gay bar.) We agree prostitution should be legalized; we also know it that day's a long way off. Right now the Motherlode is trying to move from its present location to another closer to Polk Street.

•THE ICEMAN

A naked, mummified corpse with its genitals missing, was found frozen in the ice at 10,000 feet in Europe. While scientists are currently debating the origins of the corpse, NOTM thinks this was a transgendered person. Modern Indian and ancient Mediterranean transsexual rituals for treating a person who dies during SRS resemble the way this person was buried. The iceman was found buried under a thin sheet of ice at 10,500 feet in the Austrian Alps. His/her clothes were found nearby. Transgendered people who died during SRS were traditionally buried naked. He/she was also buried near an ax, bow and arrows.

•'TALES OF THE CITY' MOVIE

An English television movie of Armistead Maupin's Tales of the City is currently being filmed in San Francisco. Some of the book's Russian Hill locations are being filmed in Noe Valley. The book's transsexual character, Anna Madrigal, will be played by Olympia Dukakis. The movie is said to be faithful to Maupin's casual, even positive outlook on recreational drug use, so we don't expect it to be broadcast in America anytime soon.

•OUT TRANSSEXUAL RUNS FOR CITY COUNCIL

In St. Paul, Susan Sylvester is running for city council. She served as a council member from 1974 to 1978 and it is no secret she had a sex-change in 1984. She is said to have a good chance of winning her district.

•AND FINALLY...

It seems like gender issues are bustin' out all over. From Kitchen to drag music videos to Crying Game to Camille Paglia, almost everywhere you turn these days someone's playing with gender boundaries. Even the staid Atlantic Monthly had a story about sex change in its January '93 issue. Try as we might, NOTM just can't get excited about all this gender coverage in the media. We remember a few years ago when Isabel Allende's Eva Luna stories with a transsexual character were popular; before that there was Jan Morris, and before that there was Renee Richards. In fact, you can go all the way back to Christine Jorgensen and beyond to see that transsexuals and sex change have always excited the masses. Titillation does not mean acceptance, however, or even understanding or tolerance. The latest media splurge on gender and transsexuals strikes us as nothing more than spectacle. Like a bad Donahue show, only louder and this time on every channel, coverage of transsexuality and different gender expressions are nothing more than entertaining sideshows, something to amuse the masses with and then discard when people no longer watch. So when it comes to gender expression in pop culture, as far as we're concerned, i-i-i-it's showtime!

An ongoing issue in the community is whether SRS should be available with the written consent of a doctor or not. Here are two very different views on that question.

YES - SURGERY ON DEMAND

by Christine Tayleur

The Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association's (HBI/GDA) Standards of Care of are misogynist, classist, and homophobic. They assume that transsexuals are pathetic, pathologic people who cannot make informed decisions about their own lives. They put all of the power for transsexuals seeking gender confirmation surgery into the hands psychotherapists (usually non-transsexuals) who may approve or deny it at will. There is no appeal. We have the right to control our own bodies and lives. We should not be subject to the whims of care providers, much as a non-transsexual woman has the right to abortion on demand.

The Standards of Care were developed by a group of non-transsexual psychotherapists with little or no input from the transsexuals whose very lives are affected. This group was predominantly white, heterosexual, male, and wealthy. The Standards are based on a pathological view of transsexualism - that transsexualism is somehow a "disorder" or disease.

We need medical services. However, there is no reason that our community should be a medical colony. We have a great many expenses: hormone therapy, doctor visits, electrolysis, legal expenses and surgery. Only a very few enlightened insurance companies will pay for surgery, but the overwhelming majority will not. The earning power required to pay for the other attendant expenses is usually only available to white men.

Transsexuality is not a mental illness. Because transsexuals live and grow up in a transphobic society, many transsexuals suffer from social harassment and family abuse. As a result, many transsexuals suffer from emotional problems and internalized transphobia. The Standards of Care are based on the medical/psychiatric model that so dominates and oppresses.

While supportive counselling can certainly be helpful to many transgendered people, especially those who have suffered as a result of transphobia, there is no reason to require people seeking gender confirmation services to undergo counselling. As a counsellor with some ten years of experience, I know that results are generally poor when a person is forced to undergo counselling because it sets up a dynamic of mistrust. The individual will wind up telling the counsellor whatever he or she wants her to know or thinks the

counsellor wants to hear. I don't blame her. A counselling relationship must be based on trust.

Transsexuals tend to have to struggle with finances. Many are downright impoverished, particularly transsexual women. She often earns "women's" wages, earning 59% or less of what a man makes. I Pre-operatively, we have the expenses of electrolysis,

The Standards are based on a pathological view that transsexualism is somehow a "disorder" or disease.

hormones and often legal fees. Sometimes we may have



child care or child-support payments in addition to everyday expenses. To add mandatory counselling to this list adds unreasonable expenses. It is classist. It assumes an individual has money to spare. It is racist for the above-mentioned economic facts. The huge economic resources required to pay therapists are often available only to white males.

It is a situation of "caveat emptor". Therapists can charge whatever the market will bear. The Standards make it unethical for a therapist to overcharge. However, there is no genuine cost containment written

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We were transgendered - there was no closet big enough to hide us.

preference that made us visible, it was our gender expression. We were transgendered there was no closet big enough to hide us.

So for a long time it was the transgendered lesbian and gay community that was the observable tip of the iceberg of a huge submerged population. We fought the battles resulting from our intertwined oppressions and those struggles ignited the four day uprising in 1969 -- the Stonewall Rebellion -- which birthed the contemporary lesbian and gay liberation movement.

The movement blew millions of closet doors off their hinges and enabled the world to see that lesbians and gay men were everywhere in society in large numbers. It also became clear how diverse gender expression is

within this huge population.

The erroneous belief that being lesbian or gay meant you were automatically transgendered was challenged, but a new misconception arose. Butches, femmes and drag queens were believed to be merely an embarrassing cusp of the lesbian and gay community and viewed as an "outdated stereotype."

The young women's and lesbian and gay movements were striving to develop theory that could help to explain the world and become a tool for fight-back. But strictly dividing our allies and enemies into women/men or gay/straight was not an effective tool and it served to limit the movement and its understanding of its own history.

Butches were referred to as male chauvinist pigs; femmes were accused of not being "real" lesbians and selling out to the patriarchy. Drag queens were charged with "mocking women's oppression." We were labelled oppressors. We didn't have the language to explain that we are in fact an integral part of the oppressed.

We didn't have the history at our fingertips to prove that transgender has always been a part of human self-expression but it has not always been hated and reviled, that we were once held in high esteem by communal societies. We weren't able to provide the evidence that transvestism pre-dates women's oppression.

Pogroms set in motion by the chattel slave owners and feudal landlords that targeted transgender arose in historical tandem with the debasement of women and same-sex love. It was our common enemies who declared all that was once considered natural to be its opposite.

But today, almost a quarter century after the Stonewall Rebellion rocked the world, a new movement is rising -- the movement for transgender liberation. The coalescing of this young community, organizing and fighting back, is enabling another previously hidden social iceberg to emerge. Now the world can see how diverse we are, how many ways there are to express

by Leslie Feinberg

BUILDING BRIDGES

I am a transgendered activist; I am a lesbian. I am the way I am; I love who I love. I have a right to be whole. Trying to choose one identity over the other would be as untenable as standing with a foot in each of two rowboats drifting apart

So this question has great urgency for me: What is the relationship between the lesbian/gay and the transgendered communities? I believe the answer has enormous importance for the forward direction of both movements.

When I came out as a young butch in Niagara Falls and Buffalo, New York, I found those pre-Stonewall bars filled with women like myself, femmes and drag queens on a weekend night. On weekdays, in the factories, butches like myself were referred to as "he-shes" much as our drag queen sisters were labelled "she-males." People used to say we "looked gay" but in fact, unless we were holding hands with our lovers or walking out of a gay bar, it was not our sexual



Blade Runner - the Director's Cut.

Directed by Ridley Scott, written by Hampton Fancher and David Peoples.

Reviewed by Gail Sondegaard

Blade Runner is a movie that's filled with ts resonances, from the opening titles to the final scene. I'm sure no one realized it could be viewed so successfully like this when it was made (just substitute 'transsexuals' for replicants) but it works so well as a transsexual story it's tempting to believe that someone, somewhere knew exactly what was going on. Ever since I first saw it, I've always cheered for the replicants.

The director's cut differs significantly from the 1982 and subsequent video versions. This is the way Ridley Scott originally edited the movie. All voiceover narration is gone, as well as the happy ending. Enough scenes are different to make it a completely new movie.

The opening titles explain that blade runners can "...shoot to kill, upon detection, any tresPASSING replicant" (italics added). From the very beginning, passing is a first-degree gender felony punishable by death. Paranoia about transsexuals passing is not as far-fetched as it seems; I've heard quite liberal people suggest transsexuals be given special markings "so you can always tell" when one is around.

The storyline is still the same: Cynical burn-out Deckard (Harrison Ford) is pressed back into service to track down four replicants who've come back to earth hoping to expand their life span past its four year maximum. Nominally the 'bad guys', the movie consistently sabotages our view of the replicants as villains. When the replicants lash out, when they kill people, when they strike back at people, it's because they are so human. It's always understandable. Only humans will lash out so destructively when they are hurt.

These contradictions run throughout the movie. The replicants aren't supposed to have emotional responses, yet they show strong emotions: pride and dignity in escaping slavery, fear of death in wanting expanded life spans, nostalgia, and, most importantly love and concern for one another. One of my favorite lines in the movie comes when Leon (Brion James), beating up Deckard for killing his lover Zhora (Joanna Cassidy), says to him: "Did you ever have an itch you just can't scratch?" It is this love for one another and respect for humanity that not only will save him, but eventually change him as well.

The scene with Rachel in Deckard's apartment after the killing of Leon is subtly altered so it is more apparent

how twisted is Deckard's involvement with Rachel. Deckard mistakenly thinks she's so upset because of killing Leon. "It's part of the business," he tells her. She turns to him. "I am the business," she shoots back. "Oh yeah, right," Deckard mumbles weakly. Unpleasant pause. Will they come after me? she asks. Yes, Deckard says.

Deckard's behavior isn't surprising: each man kills the thing he loves.

As the scene progresses Deckard comes on to her. Now, however, her panic is understandable. This is a blade runner, a gender cop. He kills people like her. She goes to leave, but he won't let her go. He slams the door and pins her to the wall. "I love you," he says to her. "Say you love me." A scared Rachel replies, "I love you." Deckard keeps going. "Put your hands on me." She does. "Say you want me." "I want you." Then he begins to make love to her.

Deckard is obviously a sick fuck, but his reaction is common in transsexual experience. Many non-transsexuals can't handle the fact they love or even care about a transsexual, and act out those feelings in weird, disturbing ways. Deckard's behavior isn't surprising: each man kills the thing he loves.

There's another aspect of transsexual reality in this scene. In this future society, Rachel is going to be hunted because she passes as a genetic woman. I always wonder why anyone in the movie even cares -- after all, she's only going to live a few years before eventually dying. But I also know that, even in the real world, a surprisingly large number of people are very upset when transsexuals pass as genetic men and women. This includes the many people who play with gender boundaries. While it's OK to push the boundaries of gender, crossing the gender boundary between men and women is going too far.

Other scenes resonate with ts reality. "Show me something," says J.F. Sebastian (William Sanderson) to Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer) and Pris (Darryl Hannah), evoking the experience of being related to as freaks solely here for other people's entertainment. Just think of any Oprah/Donahue/Montel/Sally Jessie show. Sebastian's saying "You're so perfect" echoes the grating nontranssexual "You're so beautiful" response that is so patronizing. Many people actually believe this is a positive response. Sometimes they even think we like this.

Roy's killing of Tyrell (Joe Turkel) is not an act of out-of-control violence. For all intents and purposes, Tyrell created a form of life. Replicants have consciousness, self-awareness and emotions, created to be slaves, exiled from earth, shot on sight if they return. Tyrell made a fortune from his creation of a slave class. It's no wonder it drives Roy batty. (I also love the way Tyrell is



Caring for someone, even an outcast, is the most dangerous and life-affirming act of all.

so smugly certain that he can speak to Roy like a small child, and Roy won't figure it out.)

The final confrontation between Roy and Deckard shows the how much more human Roy is when compared to Deckard. When I first saw this movie in 1982, I wanted to see Roy fling Deckard to his death; I was more passionate than smart in those days. Now, Roy's saving Deckard makes sense to me and even fills me with pride. Roy has been shown throughout the movie as being involved with and caring about the other replicants. Deckard barely cares about himself. While Roy saves Deckard, it's unlikely Deckard would have saved Roy. I think Deckard knows this, too.

It is this action which changes him. By going back for Rachel, Deckard at last comes to his senses. In the movie's most inspired change, there is no happy ending of escape to beautiful forests and mountains or open-ended longevity for Rachel. The final scene of the director's cut is of Rachel and Deckard getting into the elevator and the doors closing. We don't know if they'll make it or not. The doors may open onto an army of gender police waiting in the lobby. But a single elevator ride with someone you love is better than going down the elevator a thousand times alone. Deckard has finally become human.

All in all, I can't praise this movie enough. From the sets to the theme, it is one of my favorite movies and one of the few works of science fiction I like. I've never been a fan of science fiction because of the values it promotes: hatred of nature, enthusiasm for technology no matter what the result, the corrosive cynicism it sees all human relationships with, and the covert praise of military, almost fascistic virtues. (Even though it now seems an increasingly accurate description of the world we live in.) Blade Runner is one of the few works of science fiction to show those values for what they are, reject them and say that caring about someone, even an outcast, is the most dangerous and life-affirming act of all.

Fear and Loathing in Westwood

Reflections on the 20th Anniversary of the 1st West Coast Lesbians Conference

by Mustang Sally

This April marked the 20th anniversary of what was perhaps the first lesbian feminist conference, the West Coast Lesbian Conference held at UCLA. While preceded by gay rights conferences specifically for women, such as the national conventions of the Daughters of Bilitis in the 1960s and the 1971 Gay Women's West Coast Conference (also in Los Angeles), the 1973 West Coast Lesbian Conference was the prototype gathering for the specifically feminist meld of politics and culture that would come to call itself the "women's community" or, more grandly, Lesbian Nation.

In an ideal world, or even a world more in tune with the visions of the California women who organized this conference, its anniversary would be cause for celebration, as well as reflection on the progress, in the real world, of the ideals which inspired it. Unfortunately, it has turned out that the WCLC can be remembered for two things, neither of which is worth celebrating. One is that favorite lesbian conference party game, "Let's Trash the Organizers." The other is the emergence of transphobia as lesbian feminist party line.

Neither of these was the intent of the conference organizers, nor had these results been even remotely imaginable to us. We the organizers were, by and large, women (mostly white, some Hispanic) who had worked in pre-Gay Liberation "homophile" organizations and experienced the pre-Stonewall lesbian bar culture. Some of us were ripe for women's liberation because we were already in rebellion against men relegating us to secretarial functions in homosexual rights groups. Nearly all of us, it seemed, felt constricted by the bar culture's insistence on playing butch/femme roles, that is, having our lesbian relationships mimic heterosexual marriages (with a masculine husband and feminine wife). Some of us rejected this role-play because we were hippies. We were rebelling against both the

The WCLC can be remembered for the emergence of transphobia as lesbian feminist party line.

concept of having to play roles in society at large and the strict and confining dress, hairstyling, cosmetics and demeanor society expected women to adopt.

Even our own broader concept of lesbian life and style had been challenged at our 1971 conference. For example, we assumed one of the benefits of lesbianism was freedom from having to raise children. Then lesbian mothers spoke out on their experiences and issues,

forming the Lesbian Mothers' Union in the process. Coming together and seeing all the different women lesbians were inspired us to build our new, feminist community. We wanted to build it on the concept of celebrating and finding strength in the diversity that existed among women who love women, and the premise that women loving women was a revolutionary act. Our 1973 Lesbian conference was designed to bring women with a similar vision together in order to build a lesbian feminist movement and communities.

As things turned out, what seemed the easiest and least critical decisions turned out to be of critical import. We had asked Robin Morgan to be keynote speaker because of the ground-breaking anthology she had edited, *Sisterhood is Powerful*. We featured a known preop MTF singer/songwriter as entertainment because she was good, and a sister who was a local favorite for benefits and the like. As far as we were concerned, she was part of our community. We never thought to view transsexuality as an "issue". Little did we realize Morgan had a reputation as an enforcer of a correct political line - that of herself and her cronies. They apparently feared we would be aligning ourselves with gay men rather than straight feminist women, despite our consistent movement toward placing feminism at the center of lesbian rights activism. In its own way, this was the typical East Coast routine of putting down West Coast innovations as provincial while simultaneously ripping them off.

Nor did we realize this New York cabal and a group of Berkeley lesbian separatists was setting us up by telling a group of Seattle lesbian activists we were Socialist Workers Party operatives out to coopt the movement. The Seattle women sowed an atmosphere of distrust, the separatists did their tranny-bashing, and in rides Robin Morgan like a champion to set us right, trashing nearly every lesbian on earth but for Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon. We never knew what hit us.

And so, at our conference, three things became established as part of the emerging lesbian feminist/radical canon. First was the idea that there was only one "right" or "politically correct" kind of woman eligible to be a lesbian (and by extension, a lesbian feminist). The feminist movement had met its fundamentalist faction. Second was that what constituted the "right" kind of woman would be determined by those women who, at any given lesbian conference, could prove themselves to be the most oppressed. This often meant who could foment the largest and most convincing groundswell of outrage

We never thought to view transsexuality as an "issue".

over some perceived failing on the part of the conference organizers. Anyone who has regularly read letters columns in any feminist, lesbian feminist or gay/lesbian newspaper or magazine should recognize this dynamic.

Third, this fundamentalist wing of the feminist movement got its way on gender issues. Twenty years later, what have they wrought?

For one thing, maintaining the political line they enforced in Los Angeles has led to hypocrisy and nasty bedfellows. Like well-connected academic feminist Janice Raymond taking the point for the Reagan administration in lobbying Congress to exclude sex reassignment surgery from Medicare benefits. Like the Dworkin-McKinnon "model anti-pornography ordinance" seeking to codify transsexuals as people who are neither women nor men. Thinking of these things sends chills up my spine. That many lesbians wouldn't suspect there was anything wrong with this makes me very, very nervous.

Having decreed transsexuality a matter of role rather than gender, lesbian feminism has rendered itself incapable of intelligently discussing any cross-gender phenomena. Not that this has stopped lesbians from attempting to theorize on gender issues -- with predictably vapid results that trivialize and insult the truly cross-gendered. The most-often employed context for this theorizing is a dynamic thought to have been superseded by lesbian feminism twenty years ago: butch/femme role-play.

Over the past few years, various lesbian writers have attempted to resuscitate butch/femme relationship dynamics, calling them an inherent feature of lesbian attraction suppressed by feminist political correctness. I can accept that butch/femme is meaningful and exciting to some women: gender, as one lover has shown me, can be a sex toy. Nonetheless, the backlash against the butch/femme system came from women who lived through an era, the pre-Stonewall era, in which one had to play along with the roles or be cast out of what little community there was for woman-loving women. And today, as then, what is acceptable is butch/femme - not butch-butch, not femme-femme (some excellent writing by Pat Califia on this subject notwithstanding).

Moreover, some lesbian writers have begun characterizing butch/femme identities, and the attraction between the two, as a natural manifestation of gender. Self-styled sexologist Joanne Loulan has been staging tennis tournaments in which butch/femme pairs play "mixed doubles." Syndicated columnist Lee Lynch has wondered in print whether butches and femmes can truly be friends, much as the cinematic pair of Harry and Sally wondered about men and women. It's funny how, with all the complaining butch/femme advocates do about being dismissed as heterosexual wanna-bes, there

is no room for same-"gender" relationships in their world, nor for those whose gender calls them to change their physical sex.

Even cross-dressing receives this revisionist, co-optative treatment. I can see a manifestation of gender in how transgendered lesbian Leslie Feinberg or lesbian crossdresser Sandy Bernstein live: full-time, full-scale crossdressing they feel is a natural expression of their inner selves. I cannot see it in poet/sportswriter Nancy Boutillier's claim she must wear a tie when dressing formally because women's clothes give her gender discomfort. Sorry, but I suspect this may have more to do with that peculiar internalized sexism among some lesbians in which butch is good and femme is bad, because women are losers in this society and the way to be a strong woman is to be a female "guy."

Bottom line: if you want to claim gender identity is independent of physical sex, you have to claim this is especially true for transsexuals. It's the only logically consistent position. The lesbian movement declared MTFs "unwomen" twenty years ago; lesbians have no moral claim to transgender dynamics now.

For me, whenever someone raises a hullabaloo about transsexuals in the lesbian community, it's time to grab

Bottom line: if you want to claim gender identity is independent of physical sex, you have to claim this is especially true for transsexuals.

hold of my wallet - I've yet to see such a "crisis" that wasn't a cover for somebody's power grab. Having been sexually intimate with pre-op MTFs, I can believe there are women who were born with male genitals: as Mark Twain said when asked if he believed in infant baptism, "Believe in it? Hell, I've seen it with my own eyes!"

So, while I will likely mark the anniversary of the West Coast Lesbian Conference, I'm afraid I won't be able to celebrate it. There's something about California: whenever we get a nice, hip, visionary, multicultural thing going, it gets discovered, overrun and trampled. It happened to the native/Hispanic/Yankee Californian society prior to the Gold Rush of 1849, and it happened to our fledgling, multicultural community in the Dyke Rush of the 1970s. Sigh . . .

Mustang Sally has a love-hate relationship with her lesbian feminist background. Otherwise, her post-transition life's been good.

THE CRYING GAME

Written and Directed by Neil Jordan

Reviewed by Susan Stryker

I can't remember the last time I saw a movie that stirred so many complex emotions or evoked so many contradictory thoughts as Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game*. It's a film that deserves to be ranked among the best works of recent cinema solely because of the rich, introspective response it elicits from its audience. And yet, as a male-to-female transsexual, I have to give *The Crying Game* a mixed, largely unfavorable review. While it portrays a transgendered life with a sophistication unprecedented in mainstream motion pictures, it ultimately falls back on negative stereotypes. Most disturbingly, it seems to condone transphobic violence as an acceptable expression of non-transgendered anxiety about the loss of conventional boundaries between gender and sexuality. And finally, it represents the transgendered person in the film as the willing target of this abuse. While it's true that bad politics often make compelling art, these are not image of, or attitudes toward, transgenderism that I care to celebrate.

The central topic of the film is the anxious confusion complex postmodern identities breed in us all.

By now the much bally-hooed Big Surprise, the plot secret everyone's talking about but no one's giving away, isn't much of a surprise at all: Dil, a beautiful British West Indian hair-dresser and nightclub performer, presents herself as a woman and has a penis, the dramatic and unexpected revelation of which provides the major turning point in the plot. This ban of silence around Dil's gender has in itself been a source of annoyance to me. Knowing Dil's transgender status beforehand in no way diminishes the watchability of the film; I'm beginning to feel that contemporary transgenderism, like homosexuality in the pre-Stonewall era, "dare not speak its name" in public.

The first half of *The Crying Game* deals with the botched IRA abduction of Jody, a black British soldier in Ireland. The question of Dil's gender identity, and its implications for the sexual orientation of the former IRA member who looks her up in London after Jody's death, drives the second half. The central topic of the film, which links the two halves into a coherent whole, is the anxious confusion complex postmodern identities breed in us all. Consequently, *The Crying Game* is peppered with intricately layered characters who face the difficult sometimes apparently impossible task of interacting with one another in some mutually non-destructive

manner across the barriers of race, gender, nationality, sexuality, and political ideology.

Dil makes sense as a character in this context. The fact that she's a mixed race, transgendered citizen of England makes her an ideal foil for Fergus, the IRA soldier, to play off of as he explores his own identity and calls into question his heterosexuality, his cultural and racial prejudices, and his commitment to political radicalism. If there is a redeeming core to this film, it's here in Jordan's injunction to examine ourselves deeply, to call our most cherished motives and assumptions into question and act on the implications of the answers we find. The film challenges us to accept people as they present themselves to us here and now regardless of their histories, and to embrace that exquisite variety of love, which, in Shakespeare's eloquent turn of phrase, does not "alter when it alteration finds."

While it was refreshing to see a transgendered character figuring importantly in the themes and issues addressed by a major film, my initial enthusiasm faded as I watched the plot unfold. My first response upon seeing Dil, recognizing her as transgendered, and grasping the role she would play in the film, was excitement. In a movie nominated for six Academy Awards, I was seeing an attractive, sympathetically drawn transgendered character actually being played by a male-to-female person. I thought it could raise a lot of consciousnesses and present transgender issues in a favorable light to a vast audience that might never have thought about the subject before. Here at last, perhaps, the general public could see a transgendered individual as fully human, involved in meaningful ways with others. Perhaps our differences from the non-transgendered would be investigated with some insight, rather than being simply vilified or ridiculed. And perhaps the film does work this way for many viewers. In terms of positive mass media representation, Dil seemed light years removed from *Silence of the Lambs*, where a frustrated transsexual turns serial killer, or the murderous transvestite psychiatrist of *Dressed to Kill*, or the pathetic pre-op for whose surgery Al Pacino robs a bank in *Dog Day Afternoon*. She was no Norman Bates, the deranged young man who becomes his mother to kill the women he desires in Hitchcock's classic *Psycho*. Nor was she any of *Psycho*'s derivative caricatures haunting the innumerable schlock thrillers that link crossing gender boundaries with a plunge into vicious madness.

By the time the film was over, however, I was frustratingly aware of seeing these same hackneyed stereotypes, masked and refined, being played out for a new generation of spectators. In the unmotivated disclosure of Dil's mysterious medical condition we see once again the association of transgender with disease. In her disempowering relationship with Dave, her spitefully tossing the goldfish out the window, her retreat into alcohol, her suicide attempt, and the climactic outburst of her rage in the film's denouement,

The Crying Game dresses up in '90s drag the same old ragged fears non-transgendered people have always felt about us. We frighten them, and they throw those fears against our fluid bodies.

we once again see the transgendered as violent and emotionally unstable. Most distressingly, we witness for the zillionth time the spectacle of a male-to-female figure perpetrating the brutal and deadly violation of a woman's body. We weren't so far from *Psycho* after all.

The fact that these stereotypes persist in new guises suggests that *The Crying Game* dresses up in 90s drag the same old ragged fears non-transgendered people have always felt about us. Our apparent change of gender unsettles their ideas about what gender means, and its relationship to the physical body. The flux of Being revealed in our visible presence threatens to unfix the stable grounds of gender upon which others build their own identities. We frighten them, and they throw those fears against the screen of our fluid bodies, projecting a horror show in which we star as their monsters. Transgenderism does indeed explode the dominant paradigm of the sexes, and our bodies as we choose to make them do bear witness that this abstract rupture really has the power to rend actual, living flesh. The others' dread of their own dissolution in the face of our mere existence is no doubt deeply felt, but we are not the demons they would have us be.

This is the deep failure of *The Crying Game*. The stunningly unoriginal tale it spins of a straight white man in the process of coming unglued converts his anxiety into violence directed at those who threaten positions of privilege. A brief look at the body count confirms this view: the dead consist of a possibly gay working-class man of color, political revolutionaries engaged in a fight against colonial oppression, and that

At rock bottom, *The Crying Game* is a conservative film that retreats in confusion from the multicultural, polysexual engagements it poses as its central subject.

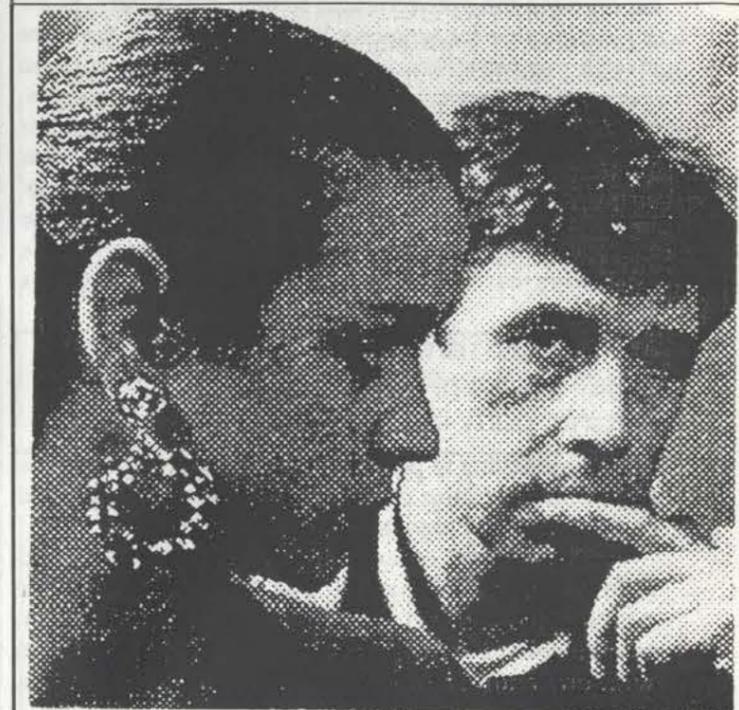
most generic of all threats to conventional masculine identity a woman. Of course, Fergus kills none of them himself, but it is nevertheless his attempt to sort out his issues that leaves their corpses littered in his wake. Appalled by the violence spawned by his struggles with identity, Fergus repeatedly tells others as well as himself that they all should've just "stayed home." At rock bottom, *The Crying Game* is a conservative film that retreats in confusion from the multicultural, polysexual engagements it poses as its central subject.

And what, at last, of Dil? She is no less the target of Fergus's fear because she survives it. Her presentation as

female is obviously an expression of her own desires, yet Fergus spends all his time following the anatomical disclosure insisting on Dil's maleness, going so far as cutting her hair to "make her a man." It's no exaggeration to call that hair cut a symbolic rape (and the scene may in fact allude to Alexander Pope's famous poem, "The Rape of the Lock"). Fergus literally takes a blade to Dil's body, taking something from her that damages her sense of self. He does her real harm, shaping her to his own needs to the point that she no longer recognizes herself. And yet, in needy love, she submits to the flailing, conflicted attention he gives her. "I fix on anyone who's nice to me," she says. "Don't kick Dil and she'll be yours forever." She suffers for Fergus; she sacrifices herself; she saves him; and, as the final song tells us as the credits role across the screen, she'll "stand by her man." This is not a transgender-positive film.

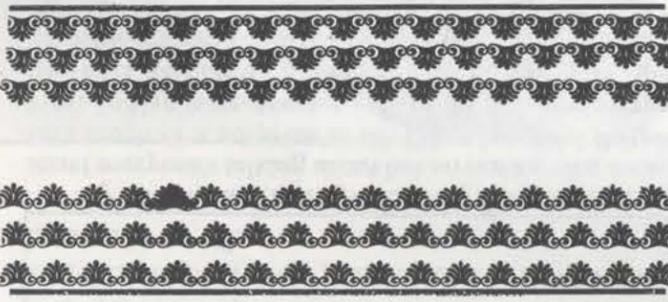
With all due respect for Dil's search for love and dignity in a difficult life, and with all due respect to Jaye Davidson for a courageous and brilliant acting debut in which we can all take pride, *The Crying Game* does a disservice to transgendered people. The strength and creativity it takes for us to live as we do merits better treatment on the screen.

Susan Stryker is a transgender activist who teaches history at University of San Francisco. She lives in Oakland, CA.



...The state is not something unconnected to society, hovering above or outside of it, a necessary and anonymous evil. The state is a product of society, an expression of it, an image of it. It is a structure that a society creates for itself as an instrument of its own self-realization. If we wish to create a good and humane society, capable of making a contribution to humanity's coming to its senses, we must create a good and humane state. That means a state that will no longer suppress, humiliate, and deny the free human being, but will serve all the dimensions of that being.

--Vaclav Havel
 (Excerpted from *Summer Dreams*, translated from the Czech by Paul Wilson)



Leslie Feinberg is an activist and author of the newly released transgender novel Stone Butch Blues, and a pamphlet "Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come". Both can be ordered from World View Forum, 46 W. 21 St., NY, NY 10010 for \$15.

The trade unions in this country were built on the truth that "An injury to one is an injury to all." Forging bonds of unity between these two embattled and mighty segments of the population can and must be built on understanding and respecting our differences. That is the same spirit in which we fight racism in this society. Our daily lives are not identical but we face a common enemy -- the sneering employer refusing our job application, the landlord slamming the door in our face, the right-wing politician filibustering against our rights, the basher wielding a baseball bat at our heads. I deeply believe that diverse peoples who are downtrodden can unite and win crucial battles together. That is the spirit of Stonewall -- a battle fought by Black, Latino and white women and men who, like myself, could not choose between their sexual preference and their gender identity.

gender. And for the first time historically the wide range of sexual preference in our transgendered community is clear. The struggle for gender freedom also enriches human consciousness with a fuller understanding of the relationship between sex, gender expression and sexual preference. I view the transgender community as a broad circle embracing a rich diversity of gender expression and sexual preference. The lesbian, gay and bi communities are another large circle which include a wide spectrum of gender variance. These two circles, in my view, partially overlap. I am one of the people who has a foot in each of those communities. I hope those of us who do can serve as a bridge because I think our communities are natural allies and that all our strength would be magnified by bonds of solidarity. In order to do so, the lesbian, gay and bi communities must be on the front lines fighting gender phobia and the transgender community needs to close ranks in the fight against homophobia. The lesbian and gay community is subject to a steady stream of transgender-baiting attacks by the establishment. For example, whenever a gay rights bill, the New York Times ran an editorial asking if the lesbian and gay community was calling for men in high heels to be firefighters. The correct answer would be that any transvestite would wear sensible shoes on such a job. Why can't transgendered people fight fires or teach school? The timid denial from a handful of prominent lesbians and gays that "We're not all like that," only serves to weaken the fight-back movement. We need to defend all of the most oppressed segments of the lesbian and gay community from attack. That will enhance our strength. I believe that the vast majority of the grassroots lesbian/gay/bi communities would agree. As a long-time lesbian activist I urge my lesbian, gay and bi sisters and brothers to take the initiative in reaching out to the transgender community to form a lasting coalition. As a transgender activist, I call on my TS/TG brothers and sisters to actively fight homophobia. I know that many straight transvestites and transsexuals have been justly angered by a life-time of accusations that their gender expression was merely a reflection of being stuck in the closet. No one wants the identity they are willing to live for or to die for to be collapsed or invalidated or misunderstood. But "differently" gendered people always face a

A new movement is rising - the movement for transgender liberation. The coalescing of this young community is enabling another previously hidden social iceberg to emerge.

NO SURGERY ON DEMAND

by Dallas Denny

Last November, Sophia Pastel, a transgendered woman from Norfolk, Virginia, came to Atlanta for treatment. The "treatment" she sought was one which fell squarely in the medical realm: introduction of a foreign substance under the skin. In fact, the Food and Drug Administration considers the procedure she was seeking so dangerous that it has outlawed its use even by physicians.

In some cookie-cutter Atlanta motel room, Sophia Pastel died moments after receiving a subcutaneous injection of liquid silicone from a "practitioner" whose only qualification was that he had a syringe and enough money to buy a tube of industrial-grade silicone in a



hardware or auto parts store. Sophia isn't around to tell us if she has any regrets, or if she had enough facts to make an informed choice about the treatment she had elected to receive. But here are a considerable number of individuals, both male and female, who are around to tell the world loudly and abrasively that they have great regrets about having had genital reassignment surgery. One of their primary gripes is that they did not realize what they were getting into. There are other sources of dissatisfaction with the surgical treatment of transsexualism. Sometimes

By following this path, it is possible for the individual, at any point up until the final surgery, to return to the gender of original assignment with the least possible disruption and the fewest possible irreversible physical changes. For instance, an individual in therapy can decide prior to initiating hormonal treatment to remain in the original gender with all physical characteristics intact. A genetic male who has taken female hormones for some time can return to the original gender role with at worst some residual breast development which can be disguised by clothing or removed surgically. Hormonal therapy causes a number of permanent physical changes in genetic females, but even so, it is generally possible to return to the female role. Until the individual is actually anaesthetized for sex reassignment surgery, it is possible to return to the original gender role. And perhaps, more importantly, it is possible to halt the process at any point before going under the knife. In other words, the Standards of Care allow a variety of alternatives short of complete sex reassignment. They allow the individual to explore these alternative methods of expression, progressing as he or she sees fit, and stopping at any point in which he or she feels uncomfortable. Most importantly, by their requirement for a period of full-time living in the opposite gender, the Standards acknowledge that it is not genitals which make men and women, but gender identity and gender role. Men and women are not created by the surgeon's lancet, but by their life circumstances as men and women. Surgery and hormonal treatment are merely options which some people choose to help them by altering their bodies to conform with their chosen gender roles. Surgery, or lack of it, does not affect the ability to perform in a gender role in any important way other than sexually. The genital area is, after all, customarily covered by clothing, and the genitalia of others are taken as a matter of faith. Unless we are intimately involved with someone, we assume they have a particular set of genitals which correspond with their gender role. It is for this reason that Donald Laub has called sex reassignment surgery gender confirmation surgery. It is a private affair that provides the individual with personal satisfaction, but has little other impact. When one has been functioning for some time as a man or as a woman, genital surgery is unlikely to lead to regrets. In other circumstances, the risks are grave. I would be the last to claim that the Standards of Care are perfect. Certainly, they are flawed. They do not, for instance, provide suggestions for an optimal level of treatment, nor do they sufficiently address the differential needs of male-to-female and female-to-male persons. Certainly, they have been abused by caregivers, who have in some circumstances withheld them from consumers and in others used them as a sword to wave over the heads of often desperate men and women.

Certainly, by the very fact that they impose requirements on the individual, they have caused some human misery. But I would argue that the misery they have caused has been offset by more than an order of magnitude by the human misery they have saved.

The fact of the matter is that the desire to change one's sex is often a transient phenomenon. It can arise secondary to transvestic fetishism or homosexuality, as a consequence of temporal lobe lesions or epilepsy, as the result of psychosis, and because of feelings of inadequacy in the original gender role. It may be present only during periods of stress. The desire for hormonal and surgical treatment can decrease in intensity or even disappear because of reductions in the level of male hormones, because of life changes, or when anticonvulsant or antipsychotic medications are

The fact of the matter is that the desire to change one's sex is often a transient phenomenon.

administered.

Significantly, most people who are transsexual opt, for a variety of reason, not to seek sex reassignment. Some feel obligations to family, friends, community and career which outstrip their felt obligations to themselves. Some cite religious reasons. Others feel that their physical characteristics would make for an uncomfortable and stigmatized life in the other gender. Yet others lack the courage or the financial ability. And of those who actually set out to seek sex reassignment, most do not make it even to a period of crossliving, no matter how transsexual they feel themselves to be. I have heard estimates from leaders of support groups, and it has been my personal experience also, that as many as 80 or 90 percent who begin the journey either abandon it completely or stop some place along the way.

Many end up exploring and settling in gender space well away from the gender box marked 'transsexualism'. And yet many of these people at some point or the other want and actively seek sex reassignment surgery. If surgery was available on demand if one could walk off the street, place one's money on the table, and check into the hospital for an immediate operation, the potential for regret would be enormous. This is exactly the situation the Standards of Care were designed to prevent. I would argue they have done a remarkably good job.

The vagaries and obstacles of sex reassignment tend to politicize transsexual people. Most are burned somewhere along the way. Few escape unscathed. I myself bear some scars, most of them from men and women who were trying to do what was in my best interest, but who got it absolutely wrong. I have a strong belief that one's body is one's own property, to do with what one will. I particularly believe that one's gender is a matter of personal choice, and not an appropriate decision for anyone else to make. And yet there is also the matter of access to medical treatment. In our society,

we are safeguarded from unscrupulous and incompetent medical practitioners, much as we are protected from bad drivers and unsuitable neighbors by traffic and zoning laws. Medical caregivers themselves are sworn to do no harm, and are in violation of their most basic professional tenets if they provide treatment which they feel is against the best interest of the patient.

Aye, there's the rub. Before giving hormonal therapy, and especially before performing genital surgery, they must be reasonably sure that they are not damaging the patient. In the case of transsexualism this puts the physician in the unenviable position of being a social worker, something he or she is not trained or emotionally equipped to do.

This is the battleground, or more politely, the negotiating table, on which the interest of the individual is balanced against the interest of society and the interest of the caregiver. It is here that compromise must be sought, so that the most people with gender dysphoria can be helped, and the least harmed. It is here that a balance must be found, here that consumers must come together with helping professionals and provide new and better guidelines to supplant or augment the Standards

The vagaries and obstacles of sex reassignment tend to politicize transsexual people. Most are burned along the way. Few escape unscathed.

of Care.

This brings me to the accompanying article by Christine Tayleur. I do not doubt that she sees a great deal of human unhappiness in the Tenderloin. It has, after all, been a center for such for more than 100 years. I'm sure she sees transgendered persons who are unable to meet even the minimal requirements of the Standards of Care, who cannot get together the funds to see a therapist for the ninety days required to obtain a letter authorizing hormonal therapy, or who, even if therapy were free of charge, could not, because of substance abuse or mental health problems, manage to show up on time for appointments. I'm sure she sees people who are caught somewhere between masculine and feminine presentations, unpassable in either gender, who are forced into prostitution or drug-dealing by an uncaring and unfeeling society that will not allow them access to legitimate work because of a gender-ambiguous appearance.

I can understand the frustration of seeing so many lives squandered, so many people lost in process, stuck in place. I see it nearly every day in my own work. Yet I would argue that the main problem of these people in the Tenderloin, or most of them, anyway, is not gender dysphoria, and that giving them free access to hormonal and surgical procedures would be harming many more than it would help. The dysfunctionality of most of

these people is not, in my opinion, due to transsexualism. After all, not all transsexual people are dysfunctional (consider how many transsexual physicians, airline pilots, computer engineers, and business owners there are.) No, the dysfunction is more often due to alcoholism, drug addiction, immature and inadequate personalities. It is here that effort should be expended to rehabilitate. Treating the transsexualism will not automatically clear up all of the other life problems, but when the individual is coping with other aspects of life, he or she will be more likely to be able to deal with gender dysphoria.

I am not in favor of waiving the counseling requirement and giving hormonal treatment to anyone who asks. Many people have little notion of how hormones will affect their bodies and their minds, of their options in life, or what transsexualism is and is not. How, then, can they give informed consent? My answer is that they can't. Giving someone treatment without informed consent would be gross malpractice on the part of any physician or of any mental health professional providing authorization for hormonal therapy. The complexities of what sex reassignment will hold in store for them cannot be communicated in one thirty-minute session; they need to explore their lives and feelings in depth with a mental health professional.

Providing someone with treatment which will ultimately make them unhappy is far more cruel and uncaring than placing minimal requirements on them on the front end. My belief is that much more damage will be done by opening the candy store than is presently being done by requiring contact with a therapist. Allowing someone under the influence of drugs or alcohol, someone who is psychotic, someone who is not thinking clearly to make life- and body-altering decisions is like giving a child a loaded gun. They cannot make informed choices or give informed consent.

The Standards of Care may have been put together by well-educated, middle-aged white males with incomes in the upper five figures, and most of whom were heterosexual, but that does not automatically mean that they are sexist, racist, classist, homophobic or transphobic. They are, when properly interpreted, not difficult to understand or comply with. Nor is there great expense involved. Like any other of life's endeavors, transsexualism requires individual initiative. Helping transsexual people should not consist of the gender dysphoric equivalent of bottle-feeding, but of providing them with opportunities to work and play in safety and dignity, without fear of physical attack or harassment, and with information which will let them make informed choices. The rest is up to the Sophia Pastels of the world.

Dallas Denny is a licensed psychological examiner and a member of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, Inc. She is a woman by choice, rather than biology.

YES - SURGERY ON DEMAND (cont. from p. 16)

therein. The Standards only provide lip-service to this. One therapist I know charges upwards of \$90 an hour. She is a charter member of HBIGDA.

Here in the San Francisco bay area, there is only one therapist who takes the state medical insurance;

In my view, the vast majority of transsexuals; know exactly what they are getting into.

(available to disabled people) and pregnant women only. However, females-to-males have huge expenses as well. While they don't have electrolysis, their surgery is often two or three times the cost of male-to-female.

The only city program in San Francisco that provides medical services requires that an individual be, first of all, a San Francisco resident. Second, its waiting list is several months long. Finally, when an individual gets in to see someone it takes six months to get on hormones. Other programs, such as gender clinics, ship their services out and require one to find a therapist after paying them a huge fee to see if you qualify. Further, the gender clinics often require that an individual's sexual orientation post-treatment be heterosexual.

The HBIGDA Standards of Care regard transsexualism as a psychosexual disorder (supplanting ego-dystonic homosexuality and homosexuality) in the Diagnostics Statistics Manual of the American Psychiatric Association. The APA is a notoriously sexist, homophobic, classist, misogynistic organization. The APA uses its massive resources to defend its members against former patients who sue their doctors for sexual abuse or psychiatric torture.

In my view, the vast majority of transsexuals know exactly what they are getting into. It is the physician's job to explain exactly what one can expect from surgery and what one cannot. This is called informed consent. If someone goes in for open-heart surgery, the physician does not require a psychiatric or psychological clearance or evaluation; they suggest a second opinion. Good idea, but that's not the same as the HBIGDA requirements of a minimum of six months to one year in therapy. Some gender clinics require two or more years!

The notion that we are somehow a class of people incapable of making a decision that has such earth-shaking consequences as gender confirmation surgery is patronizing and rooted in sexism. After all, we either once were women (ostensibly) or are confused men wanting to "chop it off."

By forcing people to get counselling, we push them towards cut-rate butchers. We thus increase the likelihood of suicide, death by sepsis, or other types of complications arising from bad surgery.

Christine Tayleur works as a counsellor at the the Tenderloin Self-Help Center.

(Mis)Leading Ladies and Self-Made Men: Film, TV and Transsexuality. Lecture with film clips by Kate Bornstein and Daniel Mangin, June 21 at Roxie Theater, 17th San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival.

I found this program, with some reservations, to be quite well-done and informative. Bornstein and Mangin have assembled a wealth of film clips illustrating how transsexuals and transgendered people are portrayed in popular culture.

Bornstein gave most of the lecture. She began with a series of definitions of sex, gender, transgendered and transsexual. Even though I didn't agree with all her definitions, she was consistent with the way she used them.

The film clips, as both Bornstein and Mangin wisely noted, were more about the conventions of being male or female rather than transgendered lives, and how transsexuals and transgendered people are seen as perversions of the natural order of things.

Almost all the films portrayed male-to-female transsexuality or any kind of femininity in men as sick, criminal or unhinged. The least harmful view of this was as a joke. In many of the films a character's transsexuality was the punchline (Soapdish), while in others it was the catalyst of the action (Personal Services, Dressed to Kill).

Bornstein gave impressive insights into Silence of the Lambs. She showed that despite having the Jodie Foster state early in the movie that the serial killer wasn't transsexual, Demme then filled almost every scene the killer was in with butterfly imagery. The butterfly, with its transformation and emergence from a chrysalis, has always had strong transsexual connotations. It was an astute expose of Demme's blatant hypocrisy. Actions (and images) speak louder than words.

Bornstein showed how another popular movie, The World According to Garp, was textbook misogyny and fantasies about transsexuals. In the film a group of radical lesbians cut off their tongues as a political gesture. Bornstein noted that a tongue is cut out, not off. Using this simple, apparently innocuous word change, she showed how the film was saying lesbians were cutting off an organ of sexual pleasure, implying castration and sexual mutilation. The transsexual was seen as the only "normal" person in the film and ultimately used to infiltrate the enemy camp of crazed, deluded women. I knew the book and film were misogynistic and transphobic, but I never realized how truly offensive both were until then.

Bornstein and Mangin touched on the representation in film of women who become men. I give them both high marks for doing that, since most people, including many MTFs, ignore the female-to-male experience. Not surprisingly, women who become men or express male traits fare no better. The portrayals range from being sad and depressed to out of control. Women are

portrayed as unable to handle being men. (It's just too much for their poor, weak systems to handle.) In the rare films where they do, it was with the tacit approval of a male authority figure. The comparative lack of films about this reflect the unwillingness of society to accept this human experience.

The lecture concluded with clips from Star Trek and the television movie Second Serve.

As much as I enjoyed this lecture, there were some problems with it. For one, Bornstein kept referring throughout the lecture how they only give us two choices of gender at birth and how they use the power of film and television images to run the gender system. References to "they" or "them" isn't analysis or explanation. Gender is a result of many things (social convention; habits; history; etc.) and there isn't any one keystone that, once pulled, will cause the whole structure to collapse, if it ever will. This was a weak point of the lecture.

Also, despite saying at the beginning she would only express her experience and opinions, Bornstein forgot about it the next moment and very quickly spoke as though everyone felt the same way she did. This led to her to make a statement I had a strong negative reaction to.

Bornstein said at one point that transsexuality is the only therapy where you are told to lie, and doctors encourage us to lie about being men or women. I was sitting with my friend, a transsexual man, and both he and I had visceral, angry reactions to this statement. The audience, however, burst into spontaneous applause. I talked with other transsexuals after the show and many had the same reaction. I can't speak for anyone else, but this is why it made me so angry.

First of all, the relationship between transsexuals, therapists and medical providers is an extremely complex and difficult issue that she made seem much more simplistic than it is. Secondly, she unwittingly encouraged the belief (held by many people) that a transsexual lies when saying he or she feels like the opposite sex.

That is not true. The internal sense and feeling of being the opposite sex is not something a transsexual makes up or lies about, but rather springs from our deepest sense of self. It is not something doctors encourage us to feel. Most of the time they encourage us to doubt it. Had Bornstein made that statement about herself - that she was encouraged to lie - instead of making a blanket statement about everyone else, it wouldn't have bothered me at all. As it was, her statement did a disservice to many people.

Despite these drawbacks, this was a show that deserves to be given again. It's a program that has needed to be done for quite some time. It was illuminating and sometimes even brilliant. I would definitely go see it if it came back. It's a rich subject to explore and there is much more that can be done. I hope Bornstein and Mangin continue that work.

- Reviwed by G.S.

Hey Writers!

We need articles, cartoons and photos for the next issue of TNT. We're be interested in articles on transsexual prostitution (both FTM and MTF); doctors who trade sex for plastic surgery; teenage transsexuals; feminism and transsexuals; transsexuals and transgendered people of color; FTM 'roid rage (is it real or not?); FTM/MTF politics; and erotica. We also need people to do reviews of movies, articles and books and someone interested in writing about community politics.

Anonymity and use of pseudonyms is acceptable. Just be sure to include your address and phone number. (Don't be so anonymous we can't call you back.)

We also need someone with graphic skills who knows how to use a Macintosh computer to help us lay out the next issue of TNT.

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WHAT IT IS

Welcome to the first issue of TNT. This is an exhilarating time for transsexuals. There is a growing awareness that, while we may be straight, gay or bi, our identity doesn't fit these categories. Transgendered people are beginning to find their own voices and self-expression.

TNT will be part of that process. We aim to be a little bit different from other gender publications. Our goal is to cover and write about the many issues that affect us besides where to buy clothes and shoes. These include transsexual prostitution and sex work (both FTM and MTF); child-rearing; coping with coming out elderly; growing older; leaving the lesbian world; abandoning the women's movement and being abandoned by the women's movement — this is only a partial list of topics we want to cover in future issues.

We want to include views and articles reflecting the experience and sensibility of FTM transsexuals. We don't have any illusions that we are all one big happy family. Our differences in acculturation and backgrounds in distinctive subcultures are real, and may be insurmountable. But, we won't know until we've tried. Only by communicating with each other is there any hope of knitting our disparate fragments into a whole.

TNT won't try to represent The One Correct Viewpoint but instead be a forum where the many opinion in the communities (surgery/no surgery, passing, being public, our relationship to the medical providers, et al.) can be aired, debated and disseminated. One issue might have three different outlooks on the same subject. No doubt we'll appear schizophrenic at times, but that's a risk we're willing to take.

We also want to promote transsexual pride. Too often transsexuals can't take any negative comments because our self-esteem is so low. This keeps us from mainstream acceptance just as much, if not more, than external prejudice. There is nothing shameful about being transsexual. It's hard to hold our heads up in this world, but it's essential that we do. It's not important what people think of us. It's more important what we think of them.

Finally, we want to publish erotica. We're tired of pretending that we're asexual, asensual beings. We know better. Transsexuals and transgendered men and women are some of the most erotic humans on the planet. We intend to show this side of ourselves — in fact, we're going to glory in it. Many people probably won't like this. Well, fuck 'em if they can't take a joke.

It's time to spread our wings and fly. There is more to

our lives besides transition and surgery. TNT is about that life. It's time to explore it together.

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Cover photo of Susan Stryker burning her surgery approval letter.

Blade Runner photo courtesy of Warner Bros. Crying Game photo courtesy of Miramax. Leslie Feinberg photo by Kevin Horowitz. All other photos by TNT staff.

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Thanks to Max for our name, Kevin, Mary, Lynn and Transgender Nation.

Blessed be those who send us stuff to print. Writing or giving us a call before you start your article is a really good idea. We can be reached at:

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Editor: Gail Sondegaard

<p>something the newspaper and television and gay press didn't—that Billy Tipton was a man.</p>	<p>The gay community was quick to proclaim Billy as a lesbian. They were wrong, too. Billy wasn't a lesbian, either.</p>	<p>him to have been a woman who had lived as a man in order to be a jazz musician. "He gave up everything," they said. They were wrong.</p>
<p>Billy was married, with three adopted sons. His family did not know of his female anatomy, but they knew</p>	<p>He didn't give up anything, for he wasn't a woman.</p>	<p>Billy Tipton was a jazz musician. When he died, in 1989, television and newspaper sources proclaimed</p>

Billy Tipton was a (choose one):
 a. woman
 b. lesbian
 c. crossdresser
 d. man
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