

# GENDER IN FORMATION

Newsletter of the East Coast Female-to-Male Group - P.O. Box 38-3303, Cambridge, MA 02238

Vol.1, No.1

Co-Editors: Bet Power & Lonnie

April 1992 ©

## NEW FEMALE TO MALE GROUP FORMS ON THE EAST COAST

The East Coast Female-to Male Group (ECFTMG) has begun! We are a support, networking and resource group for Female-to-Male Transsexuals, Transvestites, Transgenderists and their partners.

The first meeting of ECFTMG was held on Sunday, March 8, 1992 at 2 P.M. at Lonnie's house in Watertown, Massachusetts (near Boston). Four FTMs (three TSs, and one TV) and one partner attended. Over potluck lunch, we got to know each other and discussed where each of us are at in our lives as FTMs. We also discussed a name for the group and what needs we'd like our meetings and group to satisfy. Those who attended live in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. It was a very successful, very friendly first meeting and we're looking forward to meeting more guys and their partners at our next meeting on Sunday, May 17, 1992, at 2 P.M.. This will also be a potluck lunch and discussion meeting to be held at Bet's house in Northampton, Massachusetts. Please call one of the numbers below for directions to the May meeting.

Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter, *Gender In Formation*. We plan to publish the newsletter three to four times during the year and it will bring you reports of the group's meetings and activities, reviews of events, books and articles of interest to the FTM community and listings of resources, products, services, counselors, physicians, and support groups available. We'll also include an "FTM Network" section with letters from FTMs who wish to correspond with or call other FTMs. Another feature will be "Forefathers", a brief introduction to FTMs in history. Each issue will present one Female-to-Male who came before us and made an impact on the world.

We'd like to invite you to join us, whether you live on the East Coast, West Coast, North, South or anywhere in between, or whether you live in a country overseas, far away from ours! This newsletter is FREE, just send us your mailing address to receive it.

SASEs are always appreciated and donations are very much needed. Endorse your check or money order to: ECFTMG.

But more than financial support, we need to hear from you. We're looking for FTMs or partners to write articles for this newsletter. We're looking for ideas on who to present in "Forefathers." We're looking to you to tell us about new services, products, resources and professionals of interest to FTMs. And

we'd like to receive your letters, whether to network with others, to discuss a current issue/idea/event, or to comment on the contents of *Gender In Formation*.

We see the group and this newsletter as a way of creating much needed FTM community. We think it's time for all quiet men to find our voice and shout for joy! We hope you have as much fun with ECFTMG and *Gender In Formation* as we've already been having!

Your Co-Editors,  
Bet Power

and

Lonnie

## "THE OPPOSITE SEX...IS NEITHER!" KATE BORNSTEIN PERFORMS IN NORTHAMPTON AND HARTFORD

Kate Bornstein, Transsexual Lesbian performance artist, gave a moving and funny performance of "The Opposite Sex...Is NEITHER!" to a diverse and enthusiastic audience in Northampton, Massachusetts on Thursday, March 5, 1992 at the Northampton Center for the Arts. Her risky and fascinating one-person show explored an array of transgendered characters, including Female-to-Male and Male-to-Female Transsexuals, a She-Male and a woman passing as a man.

Kate's Female-to-Male characters were especially strong and believable and she has an uncanny talent for acting out FTM mannerisms, voices and emotions. She does so with the utmost respect and care and it is a huge contribution to us all to make us visible as FTMs before audiences nationwide. Kate's demonstration of the FTM who met the Tall Man Circus Freak when he was a child was one of the most moving portrayals of FTM reality I can imagine will ever be presented.

After the show, I had the pleasure and privilege of meeting Ms. Bornstein backstage. She is simply beautiful, both inside and out, and she glows with the importance and urgency of her creative work.

Once again, on Saturday, March 7, I went to see "The Opposite Sex...Is NEITHER!" This time with my wife, Lonnie. Kate appeared at the Bronson & Hutensky Theater in Hartford, Connecticut.

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Although this theater was able to provide Kate's show with more special lighting effects than the theater in Northampton, the audience in Hartford seemed more reserved and less responsive than Northampton's had. Kate's performance was wonderful once again, and I begin to appreciate Kate's experience as neither a man nor a woman but as neither...more like a third reality and that is, Transsexual.

After this performance, I went backstage to introduce Lonnie to Kate. We had a good chat and Kate introduced me to an FTM and his partner who will join us in ECFTMG! Others from the XX (Twenty) Club were in attendance that night and we regretted not being able to join the MTFs and FTMs there for a midnight supper after the show. If Kate Bornstein performs in your area, DON'T MISS a wonderful time!

Bet Power

### THE GENDER BENDER BALL

Real Art Ways (R.A.W.), a non-profit innovative art gallery in Hartford, Connecticut, presented the "Gender Bender Ball" on Saturday evening, April 4, 1992. It was an evening of cabaret-style performances including Sara Cytron (NYC lesbian comic), a group of drag queens, a punk dance band, etc. and disco and house music. The event, along with Kate Bornstein's East Coast performances, was part of "Genderama" month, a series of gender-bending art shows, performances, and events. The "Gender Bender Ball" was well attended and actually over-crowded the warehouse space where it was held. More than half of the people attending were crossdressed but it seemed that real MTFs and FTMs numbered very few. It felt more like the arts community in Hartford dressing up (or down) and being "avant-garde." After all, the dance was a R.A.W. benefit.

The event was noisy, rowdy, smoky and often the comedy was hilarious. And it was fun to "see and be seen," to be continuously photographed, to watch the the FTM and MTF drag and to watch the voyeurs there who were watching.

We wished there were more FTMs to connect with but we did have a good time talking with Storm and his partner and went home exhausted after some non-stop dancing. But all in all, for the \$15 admission price, instead of the "Gender Bender Ball" the event should have been called the "Gender Bender Screw."

Bet Power & Lonnie

**Next Meeting of the East Coast Female to Male Group: Sunday, May 17, 1992 at Bet's. Call [REDACTED] for information and directions. Bring something to share (potluck).**

### FTM NETWORK

Dear ECFTMG:

I am interested in knowing more about your organization. I noticed in *First Link* that Shelix is presenting a Female-to-Male TV/TS panel at NLA: New England.

This notice caught my eye because I'm a FTM transgendered person and would be interested in contacting others so inclined and in the leather community.

Would you pass my letter on to anyone who would be interested in corresponding with me?



*Editor's Note:* SHELIX is an S/M support group which includes FTMs, MTFs, Lesbians and Bisexual women. The FTM Panel at the National Leather Association/New England Chapter meeting will be held on **April 18, 6-8 P.M. at the Paradise Cafe, Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA.** Bet Power, Lonnie and Jack are presenting: **Information about FTMs in the Leather - S/M community** at this panel.

Dear ECFTMG,

I'm writing to you, so that you can spread the word among FTM transexuals that I've started the FLIKKER NETWORK for FTM/TSs who identify as Gay or Bisexual men.

I'm a pre-op FTM/TS Gay man (although I'm not closed to dating women.) From the responses I've received from my fellow FTM Gay men, it seems imperative, on my part, to spread the word.

So, I'm going for all the resources I can, to let FTM/TS Gay men know there is a sanctuary.

FLIKKER NETWORK started in December 1991 after my own experience of feeling isolated as a Gay man.

Since I didn't expect a flood of letters from the gender community, I took it as an opportunity to ask every respondent what would they like Flicker to be?

You see, I would feel comfortable with correspondence, but I knew others wouldn't. So I wanted to know what other people wanted, and so far, people like the idea of a newsletter, and a few were interested in correspondence.

Write to:

FLIKKER NETWORK  
R.K. #634, P.O. Box 410-990  
San Francisco, CA 94141-0990

Love, Rene



## FOREFATHERS

Vesta Tilley, 1864-1952

Vesta Tilley, born Matilda Powles in Worcester, England, was a celebrated FTM drag artist whose performances captivated standing-room only Music Hall audiences throughout Great Britain. Born into working-class poverty, Vesta never went to school and instead was employed in the theatre from an early age. A singer, actor, dancer and mime, Vesta's first male impersonation, at the age of 6 was known as "The Pocket Sim Reeves." Among Vesta's greatest hits was, "Following in Father's Footsteps." Throughout Vesta's career (1868-1920) s/he crossdressed on stage and in silent movies and used all the resources at his command to break through or manipulate the barriers of class and gender which were so powerfully oppressive to working-class women in Victorian and Edwardian Britain. In 1894, Vesta made a first trip to America, performing at Pastors. In 1897-8 Vesta toured his own Vaudeville Company in New York City. Both women and men loved Vesta's performances and s/he was courted as often by women as by men. Women of that period frequently named their daughters after Vesta Tilley. Eventually, Vesta married a Member of Parliament.

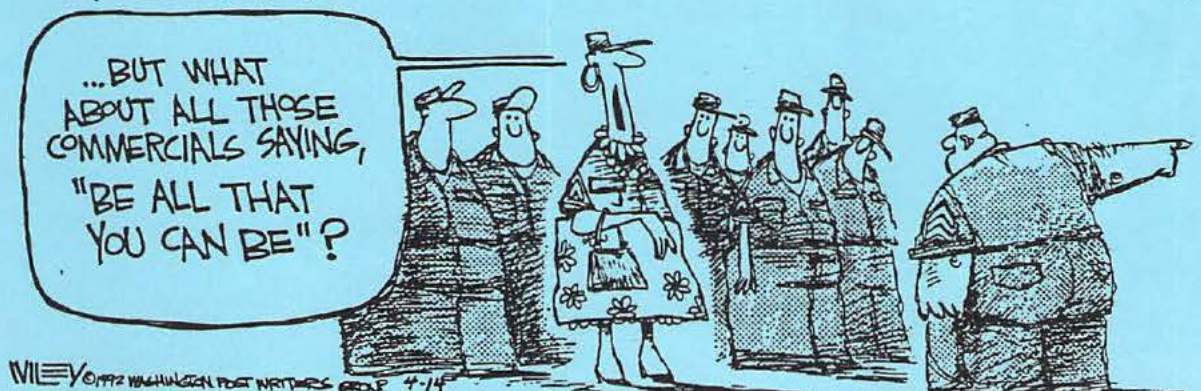
The very last song Vesta ever sang, at a farewell performance in 1920 was "Jolly Good Luck To The Girl Who Loves A Soldier." When Vesta reached the last chorus, his clear voice sang out, "Girls, if you want to love a soldier, you can all love ME." A gentleman's voice from the gallery boldly called out, "We do!"

To learn more about Vesta Tilley, read *Vesta Tilley*, by Sara Maitland, Virago Press, London, 1986. Maitland calls Tilley "The greatest of the gender-benders."

"It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances."

Oscar Wilde

NON SEQUITUR by Wiley



## TWO EVENTS OF INTEREST - AT HARVARD!

"Which Photographer/Witch? Between the Act and the Deed" is an exhibition of color photographs by Jill Casid and Maria DeGuzman. Most of the images are occult images (and pretty wild!), and most of the Models are crossdressed (FTM and MTF). Many are a short-series suggesting action. I especially liked the FTM in the tux (then, I would). Enjoy. At Lehman Hall, Dudley House, Harvard Yard, Cambridge, MA through May 1, 1992.

Lonnie

"Crossdressing" Wednesday, April 29: a lecture given by Marjorie Garber, author of the recent book *Vested Interests*. If you haven't read this book yet, save your money and see the lecture instead (it's free). The more scholars on this subject, the merrier - except when they do it so badly.

Camile Paglia, speaking at Sanders Theatre recently in a talk entitled "What's Wrong With Harvard?" said of Harvard Prof. of English, Marjorie Garber: she should "go to the libraries and put in a little effort" if she wants to write a major book.

There is usually a question period after lectures - a perfect time to "put it to her" from the floor. Call for time and building location: Harvard Gay and Lesbian Association: (617) 495-5476.

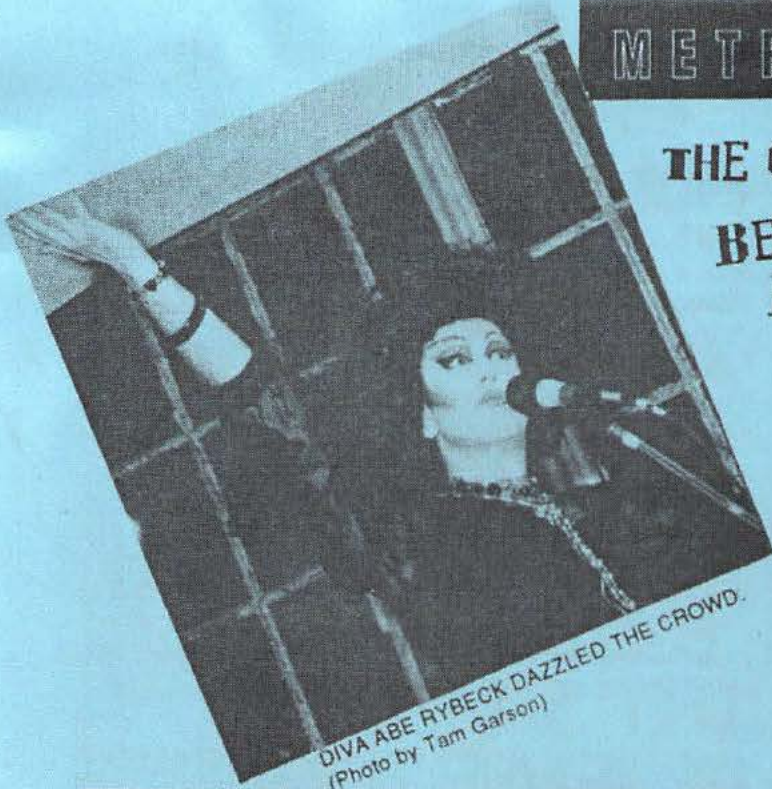
Lonnie

Three opportunities to join us in our Gender PRIDE: Northampton Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual (notice anything missing?), May 9, 1992; Boston Pride March, June 6, 1992; New York Pride March, June 28, 1992. - PHEWW!



METRO EYE

## THE GENDER BENDER BALL



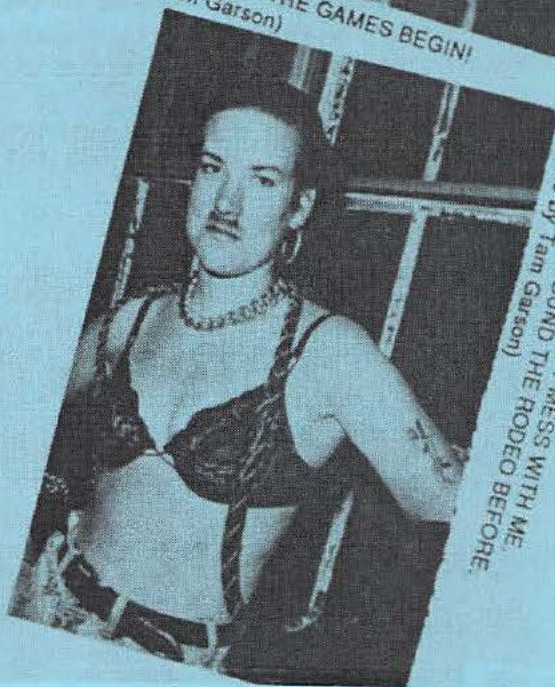
DIVA ABE RYBECK DAZZLED THE CROWD.  
(Photo by Tam Garson)



WILL WILKINS: LET THE GAMES BEGIN!  
(Photo by Tam Garson)



ONE HOT TWOSOME: LONNIE & BET POWER  
OF THE EAST COAST  
FEMALE TO MALE GROUP.  
(Photo by Tam Garson)



ANNE WEEKS—DON'T MESS WITH ME.  
I'VE BEEN AROUND THE RODEO BEFORE.  
(Photo by Tam Garson)

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*Burton Ross Pierce Lecture*

**MARJORIE GARBER**

Professor of English, Director, Center for Literary and Cultural Studies,  
Harvard University

**"ON CROSS-DRESSING"**

April 29, 8 P.M.  
Emerson 305

reception to follow