

harness itself is similar in design to a jock strap, just not as much of it, that's all. He also assures me that it does hold everything in place with no slipping around.

The one thing that Rhonnie did apologise about was the price. Although he has tried to make his products as cheaply as possible, he cannot see any way around the exchange rate. I checked the price of the S.P.Herb in Aust dollars and there is quite a difference. \$US300 works out to \$US430 and that was yesterday. Rhonnie has set up a layby system because he has this problem with other overseas orders he has taken. Even to send US\$50 at a time works out to A\$70. Bloody hell! A bloke would have to give up beer and fags just to pay for this.

Sheryl and I both read the info pack and I felt that the S.P.Herb was probably more suited to our particular needs. One of the things we took into consideration was of all the tranny boys I know of and those I have met, Sheryl and I are best placed to 'lose' \$400. Everyone else is on some kind of welfare or have jobs that don't pay a great deal. Sheryl and I, because of my money skills, have the extra cash to play with. If the S.P.Herb is everything that Rhonnie says, then I've gained my freedom and we have one in the country to get some decent pics of. If not, well we have the knowledge that Rhonnie and his devices are not to be trusted. So I haven't really lost anything either way, have? The bottom line is that one of us is going to have to trust him and take the plunge if we are to find out for sure if Rhonnie is for real and it may as well be me.  
*In brotherhood, Jamie.*

## LETTERS

This is an excerpt from one of Sam's recent letters:

Dear Jasper,

Thankyou for the latest newsletter. I read with much interest the feelings of Julian. It is absurd to think that the medical profession in one sector will, without any hassle, give the go ahead for surgery when we have undergone the required time of hormone treatment, and then in another sector they seem to be oblivious to the mental anguish of having to be told no when we have done our time, so to speak, how to take away someone's dignity. For crying out loud, isn't it obvious the trauma we have to go through if we have facial and chest hair, look and sound like a man and yet have to wear breasts 24 hours a day, trying to hide them so we don't betray ourselves and thus becoming the focal point of entertainment for some uneducated and ignorant people. Sure I may sound bias being a fellow transgenderist, but even before I accepted who I was, there was no question in my mind that this process of operations is an obvious and natural step and nobody has the right to be telling us what we should be doing. I have had no hormone treatment or surgery but the confidence I feel when I am relatively flat chested when strapped down is bliss and in my own small way gives me a bit of dignity. So I can well believe Julian when he says that the most important move in his life was the removal of his breasts, giving back freedom and dignity. Yes, we have every right to demand, not ask, but demand the right to surgery and the control over our own lives and bodies. So I wish you all the success Jasper and to any other brothers out there.

Yours in brotherhood,  
*Sam. Darwin*

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# BOYS WILL BE BOYS

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER #10 DECEMBER 1992

## INTRO

In this issue of our newsletter, I have included a questionnaire that Max and I nutted out together. Max and I are due for surgery sometime next year but the both of us are not in a financial position to undertake our respective mastectomies. Unlike our tranny sisters, a significant portion of our surgical process is not covered medically or our costs reduced to a reasonable level because of supply and demand. Therefore we decided to embark upon a campaign to get Medicare to change its policy on our situation.

But we have to start small. The government is certainly not willing to foot the bill for complete genital surgery, however, it may be persuaded to cover a significant amount of our breast surgery if they were to be convinced that it was "life threatening" for us to do without it. Now, the angle we can all take is to prove that it is indeed life threatening but not in a physical sense but rather in an emotional and psychological one. As we all know, this is the truth of the matter anyway.

The questionnaire is designed to make the government aware of our position as FTM transgenderists - a group that is virtually invisible in society's eyes and even less so to Govt departmental bodies. And as

no-one else around us (ie the gay and lesbian community, the medical profession, Social Security, MTF groups etc) is doing anything about our situation then I guess we have to haul on our armour and wage our own battle.

It is my opinion that our situation as FTM is a women's issue as we are genetically female, and as such, like

Thanks to Jamie for donating \$50 to the BWBB newsletter and its running costs

## SNAPSHOT



photo: Jamie

any women's issue, the government is ignoring it. We suffer from patriarchy despite our male identification. So it is up to we brothers to make ourselves heard and our right to human dignity felt. Therefore I urge all of you to fill in the questionnaire as truthfully as you can and to return it to BWBB as fast as you can. Even those of you who are fortunate to already have surgery, please fill it out as breast surgery is only the first step in getting government assistance. Other surgeries may follow. Once received, the questionnaires will be converted to statistics which, along with other research into the private health system and extent of MTF medical coverage, will then be presented to Medicare. In order to give these statistics validation and to make them LEGAL we need you to give your name in this instance. We are all on record somewhere anyway (ie Social Security, Births registrar, Medical records etc) so don't inhibit yourself in the name of privacy..

Max and I are doing it for all of us. We hope to set a precedent that can follow in each State. If we can get some financial coverage, if not all, for our surgeries then we can all hope to gain peace of mind more quickly and less stressfully than we had previously expected.

\* \* \*

I wish all of our brothers a Happy Christmas and may you all find what you desire under your Xmas tree. Jasper

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## STATE BWBB REPS

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Dale has recently offered to become the Victorian representative for BWBB. This means, that when tranny men who contact Jasper and are from Melbourne or beyond, they will be referred on to Dale. Not only does this mean that Dale receives more local support but also the workload of Jasper's is lessened. Of course, the new men will naturally benefit from Dale's wealth of experience. Other branches of BWBB can be set up in other states if any of you brothers feel confident about your skills and experience. Just let me know

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## FTM PROFILE IN GRAY MAG

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The November edition of Campaign magazine (a gay men's publication readily available at most Newsagents) featured an article on transgender issues, profiling two MTF and our very own Max. Max's article is succinct and articulate and he shares his feelings on being an FTM. Featured along side his interview is a lovely photo of both he and his partner, Judy. It's good having more coverage of us boys and to see new faces in the press. Thanks Max. If interested, you can try writing away for a copy (\$5.50) from Campaign at P.O.Box A228 Sydney South 2000

Our newsletter always needs new info, tidbits and articles. Please consider contributing

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## NEWS

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### TRANNNIES ARE QUEER TOO

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Recently, a Gay, Lesbian and HIV people Anti-Violence rally was held in Sydney. Though an important event and well organised, it is unfortunate that in all speeches given, slogans and publicity used, transgendered people were not represented or included. Standing in the crowd I was most upset at speech after speech being directed toward dykes and poofs and people with HIV but not myself or other trannies who were present. How many years have we fought alongside the gay community for their rights and dignity? Where's the thanks? Trannies are victims of violence too and certainly have even fewer rights than gays. It was quite ironic that the entertainment for the day included three 'drag' shows and was hosted by two men in frocks! I am pleased to say that local drag superstar, Cindy Pastel, took to the stage with a placard declaring "Trannies and Bisexuals are Queer too!". Good on her. *Jasper.*

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### LAST-STEP SURGERY

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It was with great surprise and pleasure that BWBB received a phone call from the partner of a tranny boy who is currently undergoing his final surgery, even as this goes to print. It's obvious that he and his partner will need

much support during his convalescence. It is a pity we could recommend no-one to him that had undergone similar surgery. However, for the rest of us brothers, his experiences will be of great importance and help to us all.

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### CONGRATULATIONS!

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Congratulations go to Max from Sydney who this month received the go ahead for his first surgery - mastectomy. Max will undertake his breast surgery when it becomes financially viable for him and when a suitable surgeon is found. We wish Max luck in his surgical process.

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### WELCOME

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We welcome a new recipient of the BWBB newsletter; Johnny from Melbourne and look forward to his possible participation.

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### SYDNEY VISIT

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Recently, Jamie and his partner, Cheryl, from Qld visited Sydney for a much deserved holiday. Whilst in the Big Smoke, they took the opportunity to meet with Jasper and Max and their respective partners. For all three boys, it meant being able to see the past, present and future of all their processes and as such the visit was priceless. Hopefully, many more of us can meet and share our experiences.

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## FEATURE

### Jamie's Qld News

teeth and waiting some more. A feeling we all know far too well. I'll say goodbye and hope by this time next month I will have started my shots.

Aside, I've included some more info about the HERB...

I managed to speak to Rhonnie in

"Nov 17 saw me take yet another step into my manhood..."

Hi to all the other BWBBers. Summer has arrived early this year and I sit writing these words to you stripped down as far as self-image will allow me. It's at this time of year that I wonder why I live in Qld at all. Anyway...

A couple of weeks ago my partner and I spent part of our holiday in Sydney being complete tourists and seeing a few of the sights. We also met up with Jasper, Max and their partners for the first time. And wonderful meetings they were too. I'd like to thank Jasper, Max and their partners for the friendliness and hospitality they showed Sheryl and I during our short stay in Sydney. They helped to make our trip unforgettable and gave us a face to my future.

Nov 17 saw me take yet another step into my manhood with my appointment to the Endo. After a brief physical (height, weight, heart, lungs, blood pressure, body hair and clit) he okayed my beginning on hormones. He said he would write to my shrink just to check that everything was alright there and then he would write to my G.P. and let her know to start. Now, for what I didn't get told. It can take up to a week for a letter (any letter to get out of his office and in many cases longer than that. So, instead of it being a week or so until I start (as he told me) it could now be up to a month or more. When I heard all this, despair almost overwhelmed me. For the last week or so I have been withdrawn and grumpy which is very hard on Sheryl because I can't explain the in-between feeling I am experiencing right now. For now, it's a matter of gritting my

the U.S. and he was very glad to hear from me and managed to clarify some aspects of his product. Firstly, his 'magic powder' is nothing more exciting than baking soda and corn starch (corn flour to us). He called it that because of how it feels! It is supposed to give everything that 'real life' feeling and help stop any excessive sweating. He believes this will prolong the life of the "Herb". It appears that Herb has only been on the market for about 6-8 months, so he was unable to give any real idea as to how long it would last but he's quite willing to repair/replace as needed. He didn't give any costing on this but I got the impression that it would be free of charge. To use his own words, he is willing to stand behind his products and do whatever is necessary to ensure we are happy. Why would a brother rip us off? I must admit I couldn't answer the

question and he did sound very sincere about everything he said.

We also discussed the cleaning solution he includes. It sounds very much like our denture cleaning tablets, although he was unfamiliar with any of the brand names I mentioned. He also said his stuff had been cleared by the doctors over there. We discussed the problem of distance and he is willing to send us a four week supply to start with and arrange for a case to be sent later, perhaps through one of us. The cleaning kit itself is a little bath for the Herb and the tablets. Just fill with water and drop in a tablet. It takes about ten minutes he said.

The Urinary Device itself, to quote directly from the info pack, is a medically approved unit. The break in period he mentions is not really to 'break' it in, more like getting used to wearing dentures. After talking with him I feel it is easier to get used to than wearing 'dinosaur gel' in our jocks. (a soft, gooey substance that isn't wet). He did stress, several times, that it must be taken off once a day for cleaning and any of us that didn't do this probably deserve to get an infection. It gets to be part of the morning routine for him. Have a shower, brush the teeth, clean the dick...you know what I mean.

Rhonnie has come up with a new harness that is made of a clear elastic about 1/4" wide. I described the sort of temperature we get here (esp in Qld) and he recommended that some of his 'magic powder' would be the best solution. The

*continued over...*