

A FINAL TRIBUTE TO BILLY TIPTON

The story of Billy Lee Tipton, who died in his mobile home in Spokane, Washington, on January 21, 1989 of a bleeding ulcer at age 74, appeared in numerous publications this past February. Billy was an FTM who passed as a man for over 50 years.

Tipton began cross-living in the 1930's while in his 20's, working as a jazz saxophone and piano player with noted Big Bands before forming the Billy Tipton Trio in 1954. Dick O'Neil, who played drums with the trio for 10 years, recalled how some people joked about Tipton's baby face, petite 5'4" stature and high singing voice. "But I would almost fight anybody who said that," O'Neil said. "I never suspected a thing."

Tipton courted Kitty Oakes, who had undergone uterine cancer surgery which left her with no sex drive. "I told Billy I wasn't capable of being a real woman and I felt more like an 'it' than a 'she.' Billy then confided that he had been in a terrible car crash which crushed him from the ribs down to his genitals and that he had to wear an elastic surgical truss underneath his bulky boxer undershorts. He wore both of those garments until the day he died. He ordered them from surgical supply houses. He always wore baggy clothes. I never saw Billy naked in all our years together."

continued



Billy Tipton (center) in the 1950's



Though Tipton had been married as a man twice before, he married Kitty in 1960. They adopted three sons and Tipton was described as a "near-perfect father." "Dad always wore a T-shirt and a belt with an [athletic] cup on the outside of his underwear," said one son. "Now I know why I couldn't get him to a doctor. I think he probably never told us because he was afraid we might have rejected him. I could have accepted it. He did a helluva good job with us. That's what mattered. He was my dad."

Billy and Kitty separated in 1979. Kitty tried to rationalize Tipton's motives by claiming that he lived as a man in order to boost his chances to join a jazz band. But colleagues such as Red Kelly, a member of the Woody Herman band, say that explanation doesn't wash. "I don't think there was that kind of prejudice back then. There weren't a lot of women, but there were plenty who were good and highly respected."

Tipton never gave his Social Security number to his booking agent, Dave Sobol, who described Tipton as "a perfect gentleman." "I couldn't sleep for two days," said Sobol, after learning Tipton's secret. "For 40 years I knew Billy as a man, and now he's a woman."

* * * * *

Days after reading the Billy Tipton story, I remained charmed and delighted. Why?

Sometimes we neglect to remember the many FTM's who have done, or are doing it on their own. Tipton lived in a time when there were no gender counselors, no doctors to prescribe hormones, no surgeons to perform chest or genital surgery. If you wanted to live as a man, you just had to make due with what you had... bind down, wear men's clothes, go to the barber, keep your voice low and tell everyone you're a man. Billy took some ribbing for his "baby face" and high voice, but he passed for some 50 years. We of the privileged generations, spoiled by the advances of science and medicine, and the relative ease with which the FTM can change, owe our respect and appreciation to the Billy Tiptons of our time.

Tipton did it on his own. At age 74, he died as one of our grandfathers. We owe a tribute of thanks to him for living the way he felt most comfortable, having the wisdom to understand what he had to do, and doing it. Men like Billy prove that we, as FTM's, are not a bizarre recent phenomenon - that throughout history there have been females who knew deep down that they were men, and did whatever they had to do to live their lives honestly.

Our hats off to Billy Tipton!

FTM "MALE" BOX

Dear FTM,

I have a fairly new private practice. A large portion of my work is with male-to-female TS/TV's and I am interested in learning more about female-to-male TS's/crossdressers, as well as possibly providing some counseling and support services to this population in the future.

Sincerely,
Luanna L. Rodgers, MFCC
4148 - 24th Street
San Francisco CA 94114
(415) 641-8890

Dear FTM,

Mucho gratias for your letter and the latest issue of FTM Newsletter. It looks better and better all the time (really professional-appearing) and is filled with gems of information and news of interest to F-M TS's. It is, without a doubt, a communications resource that - together with "Rites of Passage, the F2M Newsletter" - will help to fill the gap left when I stopped publishing "Metamorphosis" in late 1987.

I wish you continuing success in your worthy endeavors to help the F-M TS community, and I do hope that your "brothers" are grateful for the invaluable efforts both you and Johnny (founder of F2M in New Jersey and publisher of "Rites of Passage") are devoting to their cause. Other than David Maxwell (President of the Chicago Gender Society), Dr. Martin Malin (a psychotherapist with Sexology Associates and head of a support group for F-M's, "ANDROS"), and myself (Director of GENDER WORKER), you two are the only resource workers who cater exclusively or primarily to the pre-op F-M TS and the "new man" (post-op). Furthermore, you and Johnny are the sole publishers of a current newsletter for "the guys." I am gratified that I have been able to help make known, to professional providers and TS consumers, both your and Johnny's rare resources. Keep up the great work!

In brotherhood,
Rupert Raj, Director
GENDER WORKER

* * *

Dear FTM,

If you have not heard, Zelda Suplee passed away in January. I'm not sure of all the details, but apparently it was a heart attack. Her life was one of service to the gender-conflicted and I'm sure your readers would like to know about her life in a future issue of FTM. Paul Walker was very close to her, as was Reed Erickson. Perhaps that can give you background material for a tribute to her life.

I've enclosed an article I've written of possible interest to your readers, entitled "The Church and the Transsexual: Can the Church Change?"

May the Lord Jesus hold you in the palm of His hand, and give you the grace to be faithful, joyful and at peace.

In His loving kindness,
Sr. Mary Elizabeth, n/SSE
J2CP Information Services

NOTE to our readers: Please send a self-addressed stamped long envelope to FTM and we will forward a copy of Sr. Mary Elizabeth's article to you.

FTM NEWSLETTER
The only newsletter exclusively for the female-to-male transvestite and transsexual; published quarterly by FTM, 1827 Haight St. #164, San Francisco, California 94117
Editor: Lou Sullivan

WHAT IS "FTM" ?

We are an informal group of female-to-males in varying stages of the female-to-male continuum, from those who just like to crossdress once in a while, to those who have lived as men for over a decade. The *FTM* mailing list has reached over 100 names, with the majority in California, but also reaching *FTM*'s across the U.S., as well as England, New Zealand and Canada.

FTM hosts Get-Togethers every three months for female-to-males and their guests only, in order that we might exchange information and socialize with others who understand what we are going through.

For more information on *FTM* Newsletter and our Get-Togethers, contact Lou, 1827 Haight Street #164, San Francisco CA 94117.

SPRING '89 FTM GET-TOGETHER

Our next Get-Together will be held Sunday, April 9, at the usual location, the Chez Mollet Restaurant in San Francisco. Our program features three speakers.

Walter Bockting, a psychologist/sexologist from Amsterdam, in association with the University of Minnesota's Program in Human Sexuality, will tell us about his research on bisexual and gay-male identified female-to-males. The Executive Director of The Human Outreach and Achievement Institute in Boston, Massachusetts, Ari Kane, will address our group on the future of the transgender community. In addition, recognized filmmaker Midi Onodera, whose home base is Toronto, Ontario, Canada, will seek input from our group on her upcoming video documentary about female-to-males.

We expect to attract a diversified attendance for this Get-Together, including female-to-males from across the country who may be in the City for the International Foundation for Gender Education Convention.

WINTER '88 GET-TOGETHER: A PANEL OF WIVES/GIRLFRIENDS OF FTM'S

Seventeen female-to-males, five wives/girlfriends, and two guests attended *FTM* Get-Together #8 on January 8, 1989 in San Francisco, forming an eager audience for our Panel of Wives and Girlfriends of Female-to-Males. There were several appreciative comments on the very appropriate sketch which illustrated the invitation to the Get-Together, and we've reproduced it here for those of you who missed it.

One wife and two girlfriends agreed to sit on the panel to talk about their experiences in relationships with female-to-male partners. Some of the topics discussed were the adjustment needed to ease from a "lesbian" relationship into a "straight" relationship with their new

men; the sense of "loss" felt when a partner decides to leave the female world to become a man; and the issue of whether a woman who has identified as a lesbian can relate to *FTM*'s at all. There was much discussion about "control" in a relationship, and it became evident that partners of *FTM*'s are strong women who know what they want.

Questions from the audience included: How do female partners of *FTM*'s deal with the adolescent boy phase of the change? What role does fantasy play in their relationships? Do they see their partner as female or male? (The answer to this last question was, "Neither, and both.")

One girlfriend of an *FTM*, who identifies as bisexual, said she has always felt drawn to androgyny in both men and women, and that she likes the extra sensitivity and awareness of females that *FTM*'s have. Interestingly enough, as her *FTM* partner's change progresses, her attraction to men seems to be increasing. She also felt unsettled as to whether her relationship was "gay" or "straight."

In regard to sexual activity, one panel member was delightfully candid and graphic, and expressed pleasure in the increased sex drive her partner gained from testosterone. As for her partner's contemplation of phalloplasty or genitoplasty, she said, "Do what you need to do, and I'll adjust to it."

However, all was not roses, according to the panel. One female partner said she calls her *FTM* lover "Testy Testosterone," in having to deal with the mood changes spurred on by the male hormone.

The panel of female partners put forth some excellent advice to *FTM*'s. When asked the most important thing they had to say to *FTM*'s, this is what they replied: Be who you are, not some macho stereotype. Keep communicating and be honest with your partner; don't withdraw or hold your feelings in. Trust what you are becoming; trust that it will draw people to you, not repel them; and trust that it will bring to you what you need.

FTM would like to thank Susan, Isabella and Dee for sitting on our Wives/Girlfriends Panel and sharing so much with us. We hope the panel will be a springboard in extending peer support to all female partners of *FTM*'s.



ANDROS: FTM's IN MARYLAND

Dr. Martin Malin, a psychotherapist who heads a support group for F-M's called "ANDROS," can be contacted at Sexology Associates, 4835 Del Ray Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland 20814; phone (301) 652-6448.

RESEARCH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Participants wanted for a project about women who have lived as or become men.

The Questions: Where does it all begin? How does the decision to change get made? How is a change accomplished?

The Participants: Persons who were born to the female sex and who have, at some point during their lives, lived as men with or without the aid of hormones and/or surgery. Female-to-male transsexuals. Lesbian or heterosexual women who have lived as men for a period of time and who have or have not returned to living as women at a later date.

The Researcher: Holly Devor. Feminist activist turned academic. Author of *Gender Blending: When Two is Not Enough*. Women's Studies instructor at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Ph.D. candidate at the University of Washington in Seattle WA.

The Project: Each participant will be asked to complete two interview sessions of 1 - 1.5 hours each and two short paper and pencil tests. Interviews will be tape recorded but strictest confidentiality will be observed. No one's identity will be revealed without their permission. Participants will be asked to describe their experiences of their sex/gender of origin and compare them with their experiences of their sex/gender of choice. Participants will be asked to describe how they accomplished their passing for men or their sex/gender change for themselves, with family, friends, loved ones, co-workers, and in the public generally. Participants will also be asked to answer questions about what sex/gender means to them and to complete two short pencil and paper tests about sex/gender roles.

The End Products: (1) A Ph.D. dissertation for the researcher. (2) A book about female-to-male sex/gender changers, passing women, and the social construction of gender.

Write: Holly Devor, Women's Studies Department, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. Canada V5A 1S6, or phone Holly at (604) 874-1387.

PARIVARTO'S "WILLIES"

by Jeff S.

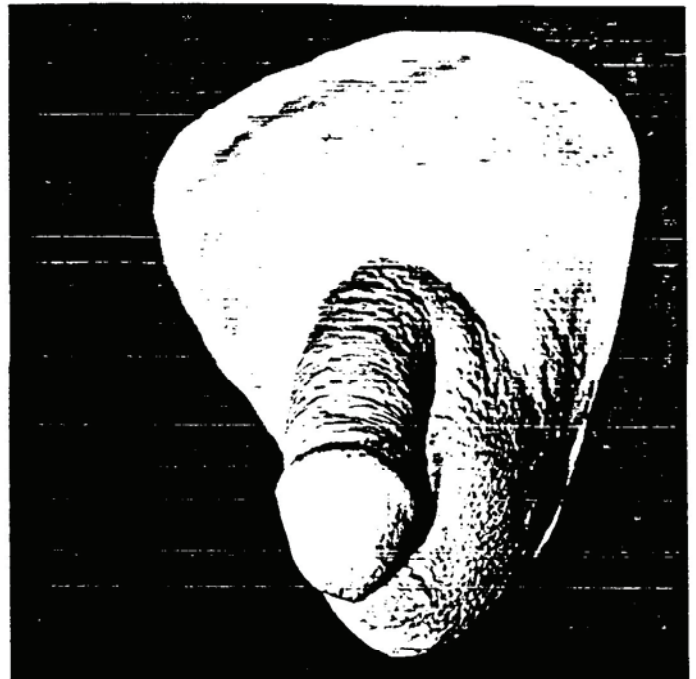
There are two things of great interest to the FTM who is just beginning to make his transition into the male world. The first is how to minimize the appearance of the breasts.

The second, with as many variations as the men who attempt it, is how to give the appearance of a phallus. Some of the tried and true methods include a rolled-up sock (see the booklet "Information for the Female-to-Male"), a small rolled towel, and a piece of foam cut to size and shape. All of the methods work, to varying degrees. One of the major drawbacks to all the methods mentioned above is not being able to get wet. This translates into "No Swimming" (and probably "no going to the beach"). However, there is hope on the fake-phallus horizon.

Parivarto, a woman with a great deal of sympathy and sensitivity for the transsexual community, has been able to make the lives of the FTM a little bit easier (and more realistic). She has fashioned what she euphemistically refers to as "Willies" specifically for us. They are soft latex-covered foam, made from a mold of an actual phallus so the look is exactly what it should be (it's even circumcised). Getting wet is no longer a problem, and the look and feel is so natural that even if you are with someone who does not know about your particular situation and is a little more aggressive than you're ready for and cops a feel, they will not know the difference. (Trust me on this last claim. It's happened to me on a couple of occasions.)

"Willy" can be used in (1) a jockstrap. They have a pouch all ready for the athletic protector. Put "Willy" in there instead. He's not going anywhere. Regular briefs then hold everything in place. (2) Fruit of the Loom (or Hanes) briefs. There are two layers of cotton which create a perfect place for "Willy." Unless you're wearing real baggy pants, the pants will keep it in place. "Willy" is very easy to place and remove, but if you're going to be around those who don't know, don't strip. "Willy" is visible and liable to fall out. (3) Speedo-type swim trunks. A layer of cotton or nylon forms a pouch. Place "Willy" in there, between the nylon and the outer layer of the swimsuit. It looks very natural (like you've got a big basket). You can easily go swimming, and "Willy" is packed tight so, once again, it isn't going anywhere.

The cost is about \$90 each, but with care "Willy" should last for several years. Parivarto can be reached at [redacted] Burbank CA 91505.



GENDER NETWORKER

Introducing a new bimonthly newsletter for helping professionals resource workers and others interested in Gender Dysphoria Syndrome Edited by Rupert Raj. \$20 for six issues. Make payable to: "Gender NetWorker PO Box 1224, Station A, Toronto Ontario, Canada M5W 1G7.

MTF PROM GOERS SEEK FTM ESCORTS

Ever wanted an excuse to rent a tuxedo, or to wear those fancy duds you've had in the back of your closet? Want to meet a pretty male-to-female? ETVC, the Bay Area's male-to-female group, has invited *FTM* members to join them on their Prom Night, Thursday, June 29, at the Chez Mollet Restaurant in San Francisco. The gals will be in their finest and, after all, what prom would be complete without a spin across the dance floor with a handsome young man? For more information, call Kim at [REDACTED]

SHARE YOUR RESOURCES WITH THE FTM VIDEO/CLIPPING FILE

Have you videotaped a program on female-to-males? Or saved an article on the subject from a newspaper or magazine? *FTM* has been collecting such documentation for years, creating a video and clipping library which benefits all of our members. If you have a video that you think should be included in our library, please contact *FTM*. We have the facilities to copy your tape and return it to you promptly. Original copies of articles (or photocopies) are also greatly appreciated.

FTM VIDEO NOW AVAILABLE

FTM is now able to offer a VHS videotape of some of the best video programs on the female-to-male. The tape contains the following:

- *What Sex Am I? (1984 HBO documentary)
- *Larry King Live (1988 with FTM Steve Roczey and surgeon Dr. David Gilbert)
- *A.M. San Francisco (1982 with FTM Steve Dain and Dr. Paul Walker)
- *Sally Jessy Raphael (1988 with FTM's Steve, Nick, John and wife Sue, and Dr. Terrence Malloy)
- *Lou Sullivan, interviewed by Dr. Ira Pauly (1988)
- *Second Serve (1986, story of a male-to-female, with an amazing performance by an actress portraying a male)

Because the tape is a several-generation copy, the quality in parts may be diminished, but using your VCR's "tracking" button will help a lot.

To order the FTM Video, please send \$8.00 to Lou Sullivan, 1827 Haight St. #164, San Francisco CA 94117.

BUY GENERIC!

Do you know that Depo-Testosterone can be purchased in generic form for a much reduced price? One FTM informs us that he had been purchasing a 10 ml vial (200 mg/ml) of Depo-Testosterone for \$60, but now obtains the hormone in generic form for \$22! Both prescriptions are "Testosterone Cypionate Injection" in cottonseed oil.

We also understand that Delatestryl comes in generic form as "Testosterone Enanthate Injection."

Check it out with your pharmacist and save yourself some bucks!

INFORMATION FOR THE FEMALE-TO-MALE

Crossdresser and Transsexual

The first handbook to address the needs of the female-to-male

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ZOU ZOU

The Castro Theater, Market at Castro Streets in San Francisco, will present the premiere revival in a new 35mm print of *Zou Zou* (1934), a French film about a Creole



laundress who romances a sailor, takes the place of the lead in a music hall on opening night and saves the show. The infamous Josephine Baker stars, shocking audiences of her day by appearing in the movie in male drag. Showtimes are Friday, April 21 through Thursday, April 27 at 3:10 and 7:00 p.m.

INVICTUS -- AN FTM PLAY

This past January, the Walnut Street Theater in Philadelphia presented a play written by Laurie Hutzler entitled *Invictus*, based on the female-to-male pope of the 9th century named Johannus, also known as "Pope Joan." The play deals with the difficult concepts of gender identity/confusion and sexual orientation. One of the principal characters is the priest Nickolas who falls in love with Johannus, believing her to be a man, and then discovering the truth. "In a way it's gay, and in a way it's not," says director Charles Hensley. "In a way it's beyond either straight or gay love, because Nickolas presumably is in love with Johannus irregardless of whether Johannus is a man or a woman. And ideally, I think, that's how love should be."

FUN WITH A SAUSAGE

The silent comic video short entitled "Fun With a Sausage," about a female-to-male seeking love in the big city, is available for rental at Superstar Video on 17th Street in San Francisco. But don't ask for it by name: it is tacked onto the end of an X-rated lesbian video entitled "Private Pleasures." If you are unable to rent from Superstar, inquire about purchasing "Fun With a Sausage" (\$50) from A Different Light, 489 Castro St., San Francisco CA 94114; 414-431-0891 or 1-800-343-4002.

"SAINT JOAN"

Reviewed by Lou Sullivan

From February 22 to April 7, San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre presented "Saint Joan," the story of Joan of Arc, a medieval French farm girl who at age 17 rose to glory in battle led by "heavenly voices." Joan was made a saint in 1920, and this play, written by George Bernard Shaw in 1923, was heralded as one of his greatest works.

A female-to-male over 550 years ago, Joan proclaimed that God instructed her to wear men's clothes and to clip her hair in the fashion of a man. But the church charged her with rebelling against nature and called her crossdressing "blasphemous" and "an abomination," arguing that "women who discard their dress for men's clothes are followed by women who discard clothing altogether."

In 1431, Joan was put on trial for heresy. Though commanded to do so by the court, Joan refused to wear women's clothes, or to be treated as one. "I am a soldier and nothing else," she said. Condemned to die, Joan was burned at the stake; but legend has it that her heart would not burn.

This reviewer was rather disappointed in this production of "Saint Joan" and would be hesitant to recommend the play. Joan was portrayed as silly and flighty, certainly not "soldierly"; the seriousness of her calling did not come through. I was especially curious to see how they would burn her at the stake. But they didn't. Everything occurred off-stage. No battle scenes, no stake burnings. Unfortunately, this play was all talk and no action.



Andrea Marcovicci plays the peasant girl turned warrior in ACT's production of the George Bernard Shaw classic *Saint Joan*.

FTM NETWORKING

My name is Erik T.

I am a 36-year-old FTM who is physically disabled who would like to correspond with any FTM's who would want to. Particularly I would like to know if there are other FTM's with physical disabilities who would also like to correspond with me.

*

Pre-op FTM would like to correspond and write to all FTM's and others. Will answer all. For networking and penpals: M.E.M.

*

I am putting together a "Products/Resource" list for female-to-males. My end product will be a little booklet or list containing various companies which make products which will be useful for FTM's. It might also perhaps contain a list of books, movies, etc. that are of interest. It will not be a newsletter, but rather a booklet which is put out periodically as enough new information is added to it. I welcome letters from anyone who may have information which they would like included in the booklet. Or, if anyone would like to write a review of a movie, book or product that they used, I will gladly include that. Finally, anyone who wishes a copy of this booklet when it is completed may write to me. Thanks! Kris

*

Recently received my first copy of *FTM* and devoured it eagerly. Anyone in the Seattle area, I would like to meet you informally and perhaps eventually evolve a sort of "Gentleman's Club" which meets every month or so. I lived in London for many years and once was refused entrance to the Garrick Club where I most emphatically deserved to be! So now I wish to rectify that by creating such a Club with the help of a few FTM Gents. Right? *Right!* Please write - any and all - cute hetero gals welcome to correspond too, of course! Pre-ops and No-ops, please reply too. Love, Louis (P.S. Are there any FTM's in Charlotte, N.C.?) F. L. H

*

I would like to know where they have the best-shaped "weenies." I hear Europe does the best because they have done "so many" - in spite of what others say in the U.S. My mother heard so and she wants me to have mine done in Denmark. Also wondering if anyone out there was into writing about the Mexican Smilax, and if any gay/bi/lesbian/straight FTM's or partners are interested in the East Coast. E. Ryan E

*

I spoke to a Naturopath about "Smilax Officinalis" or "Sarsaparilla." It's a natural source hormone precursor; it lays down a base to stabilize the hormones. Effective for P.M.S. I would like to correspond with other FTM's in Great Britain--your impression of treatment and clinics there, etc. Please write Lesley

*

Kevin H would like to hear from other F-M's, TV's, or anybody who is sensitive to these issues. I live in the Los Angeles area and would especially like to meet people who live nearby.

*

Jeff S

Hormones since 1982; mastectomy in '84; hysterectomy in '86. Photographer, actor, small business owner.

*

I would be interested in hearing from anyone who has had phallus construction surgery, especially the urinary connections, how it was done and was it successful. I had construction done May '87 and am having difficulties with leaks that are blamed on fistulars. I wish I had someone to talk to prior to my decision to proceed with the urinary part. Damien N

*

I am a lesbian, late 40's, who wants to meet with FTM's or crossdressers to explore my own interest in this lifestyle. I am not a transsexual, am comfortable being a woman, but I am attracted to FTM's and need to define my place. my self-discoveries and open a path to a wonderful future in the FTM world. I would like to meet people in my area, but will correspond with anyone, including partners of FTM's, since that is where I believe I belong. Judy A

*

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WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE FUTURE ISSUES OF "FTM" ?

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TWO NEW FTM BIOGRAPHIES PUBLISHED

Isabelle Eberhardt roamed the desert of North Africa in the late 19th century disguised as an Arab man named Si Mahmoud. A convert to Islam, she was initiated into several male orders and was accepted by the Arabs. A street in Algiers is named after her, and Si Mahmoud is the name on her tombstone. *Isabelle: The Life of Isabelle Eberhardt*, by Annette Kobak, was just published this year by Alfred A. Knopf, New York, \$22.95.

Michael Dillon, a "blue-blooded" ship doctor, was the first female known to have a penis surgically created in 1948. He later became a Buddhist monk and died of malnutrition in a Tibetan lamasery in 1962. His story is told in *Michael, Nee Laura: The Story of Dr. Michael Dillon. The World's First Female-to-Male Transsexual*, by Liz Hodgkinson (London, U.K.: Columbus Books, Ltd., 1989).

PASSING WOMEN: A SCHOLARLY ANALYSIS

All of you academic types will want to read the chapter entitled, "'Passing Women' - A Study of Gender Boundaries in the Eighteenth Century," by Lynne Friedli, in *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment*, edited by G.S. Rousseau and Roy Porter (University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

FTM GROUP IN THE NETHERLANDS

Mannengroep Nederland, a female-to-male self-help group, boasts a membership of 140. The group meets every 3 months at the home of one of its members, with some 40 - 70 attending each session. Mannengroep can be reached c/o Jean Van Aerie, [REDACTED], The Netherlands; telephone 31-4923-65336.

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PREMIER ISSUE OF "F2M" NEWSLETTER

The premier issue of "Rites of Passage," the newsletter of "F2M," was published in March 1989 with sixteen pages of interest to the female-to-male. Published at irregular intervals, a subscription costs \$20 for 8 issues; \$3.50 per issue individually. Write to S.G., P O Box 615, Tenafly NJ 07670 (don't put "F2M" on envelope), or call John A. at (201) 224-7843 any time.

MALE IMPERSONATOR ENTERTAINS

AT ETV COTILLION

In a rare performance by a male impersonator, more than 200 people were entertained by "Sharona," who lip-synched several songs while impersonating rock star Billy Idol at the Miss ETV Cotillion in San Francisco on January 14, 1989. Said show organizer Diane, "Backstage things went well. Sharona, who was going to do the male impersonation of Billy Idol, was back there trying to hide her breasts while all the men were asking for help putting on their bras. It was quite an interesting contrast."

MICHAEL L. BROWNSTEIN, M.D., F.A.C.S.
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