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Queer Ramblings

for QUEER WOMEN & their many admirers

promoting awareness
encouraging creativity
instilling pride

He She

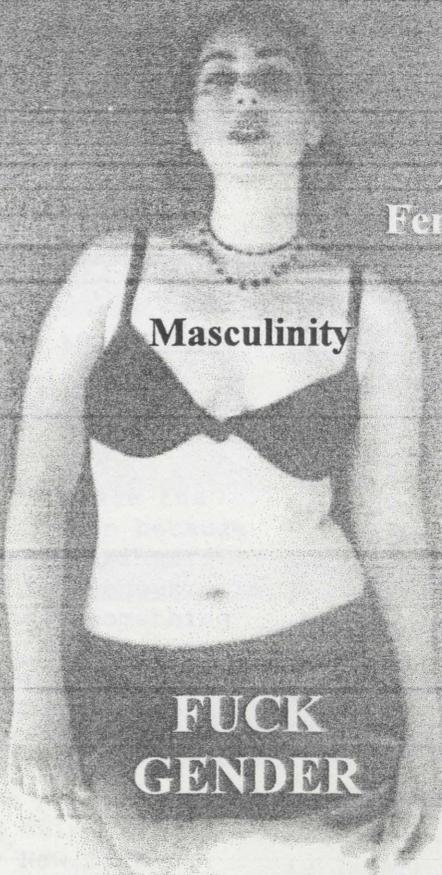
Butch Femme

Trans Sexual

Trans Gender

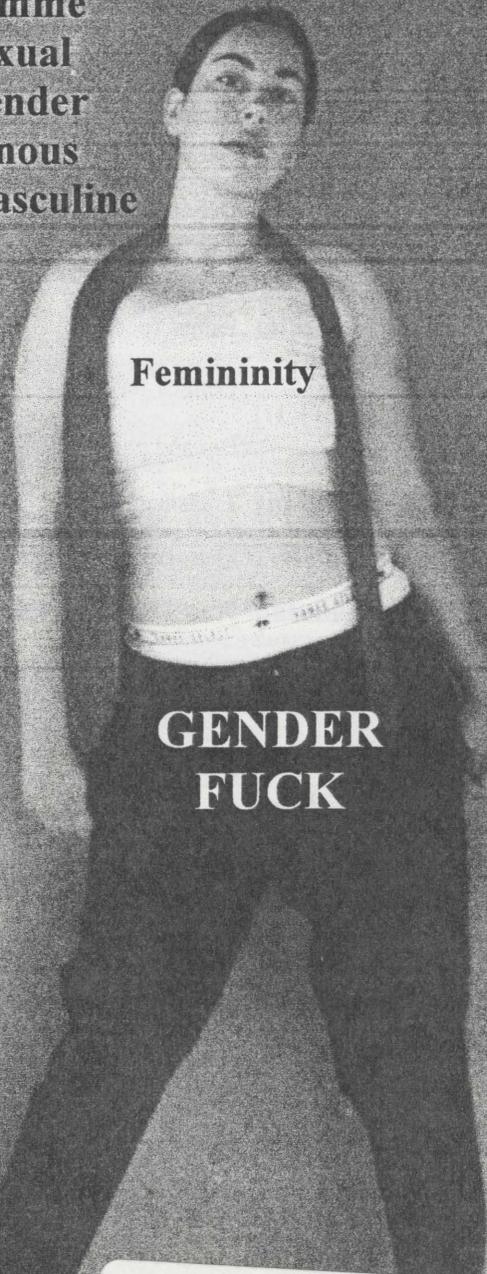
Andro gynous

Feminine Masculine



Masculinity

FUCK
GENDER



Femininity

GENDER
FUCK

Who you calling Queer?

Lesbian, bisexual, deaf,
trans-gendered, fat,
questioning, tall, slim, short,
differently-able, multi-
colored, multi-cultural and
poly-lingual women we are.

Hello world.

complimentary copy

Sandy's Ramblings...

Welcome to the thirtieth issue of *QueerRamblings*, a fabulous monthly publication featuring the creativity of queer women. I started this magazine because of the abundant talent in our queer community that often goes unrecognized due to limited amounts of publications that will feature queer-themed creativity.

While I do encourage coming out, being visible and feeling proud to be queer, I also respect that many of the readers and contributors are not out of the closet for a variety of reasons. *QueerRamblings* is a safe space, with the option of sharing your talents and still remain anonymous should you choose.

I look forward to a lifetime of issues filled with the creativity of the fabulous queer women who have the courage to share their work, and a little bit of themselves.

Written experience is especially significant to me because it allows the space for the reader and writer to have their own

reality under a common idea. The writer pours in to words her experience and the reader absorbs it within a different perspective.

Two minds, two worlds, same words. Cada cabeza es un mundo.

Please do send me your work. If I include your work, I'll send you a free copy. Don't forget that your work inspires many.

You may snail mail or email to the address below. I encourage material of any kind and subject, but don't bother sending violence-themed material.

This month's cover: Me and Me

Much love to all.

Sandra R. Garcia

QueerRamblings Publication

Blythe, CA 92225

www.QueerRamblings.com

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What's Wrong With You?... *The Insiders Report* by Christy M. Ikner



What's Wrong With You?... *The Insiders Report*

Christy M. Ikner

"Vagina Monotony"

I didn't go see the local production because it had country singers doing the monologues. There is just something about talk of the twat done with a twang that turns my stomach. I'm sure the New York production was great, but boarding a plane, hailing a cab and being yelled at by grumpy New Yorkers just to get a peek at the pink, wasn't very appealing either.

So when my eye spied the HBO Special with Eve Ensler on the New Release shelf, I had to take it home. Eve Ensler is the writer and original performer of *The Vagina Monologues*. I was excited to finally see why there was so much fuss over a lady talking about puss. I mean this was a woman who had committed

her life, which I admire, to studying the beautiful pinkness of the voluptuous, succulent, hoo-ha! Hell, I popped a bag of popcorn, cozied up on the couch with Jenn and waited to be both emotionally and physically moved to a great plane of better understanding not to mention scholarly thinking of the female genitalia. Ladies and Lesbos, I'm still waiting.

Now, before you dismiss me as being uneducated and apparently ignorant of good theatre and the art of live production, you should know that every year I make it a point to see all of the Oscar nominated movies.

This way I can disagree loudly when some hopped-up Indie film actor walks away with three golden trophies leaving the real actors and actresses feeling like fresh grads from The Sally Struthers Home School acting course. So, a thespian I'm not, but I do know a couple of things:

First, when an actor is impersonating different people within the same setting, each of the characters should sound differently. Eve Ensler did a monologue of an elderly Jewish woman that sounded exactly the same as the monologue of a raped, Bosnian girl that she performed later in the show. In the middle of one of the monologues, my A.D.D. kicked in and I was confused as to how the old Jewish woman ended up in a Bosnian

rape camp in the early 90's. I had to pause the video for Jenn to explain. Not only did Ensler cause a small argument between my lady love and myself, she made fools of us as Jenn and I ended up sounding like some bad Abbott and Costello schtick.

ME: "How did the woman get to Bosnia?"

JENN: "What Woman".

ME: "The Jewish Woman."

JENN: "I don't know if there are Jews in Bosnia. I thought it was primarily a Muslim country."

You get the picture?

Second, it wasn't enough that all the characters ran together, but we also had to suffer through the many annoying faces of Ensler as she did this ridiculous monologue about the word "cunt". She said it a thousand times each time making a different face that forced me to turn away from the screen. Another thing I know about a performance is that the audience should be able to look the performer in the face. I'm telling you, the hair on the back of my neck stood up and my teeth itched just like when somebody drags their fingers across a chalkboard watching Ensler distort her face and bare her teeth with great pronunciation. By the time that sketch was over I was wishing for a chalkboard, I was begging for the ending, I was sweating and tearing at my clothes in search of the

(The insiders report continued on page 4)

What's Wrong With You?... *The Insiders Report* by Christy M. Ikner

(The insiders report continued from page 3) ending?

"Please God, let this end soon!!"

I forced myself to sit through it. After all, I'm a proud lesbian and in favor of anyone who brings women's issues to the public's attention.

So for that I give Enslar credit, but sweet Mother of God, was it necessary to watch and listen to her in her dressing room between every sketch talking about herself as an authority figure on the vagina and how she had helped millions of women

around the world get to know their own vagina. Is this really a problem? Women are afraid of their own vagina? In the dialect of Enslar's elderly, Jewish character, "Who knew?"

So ladies and lesbos, I close with this. If you've had enough rest and you are feeling strong, rent the video and watch it for yourself. I don't know everything. I didn't like CATS either. If however, you aren't feeling up to par, just rent the video, find a chalkboard to run your fingernails

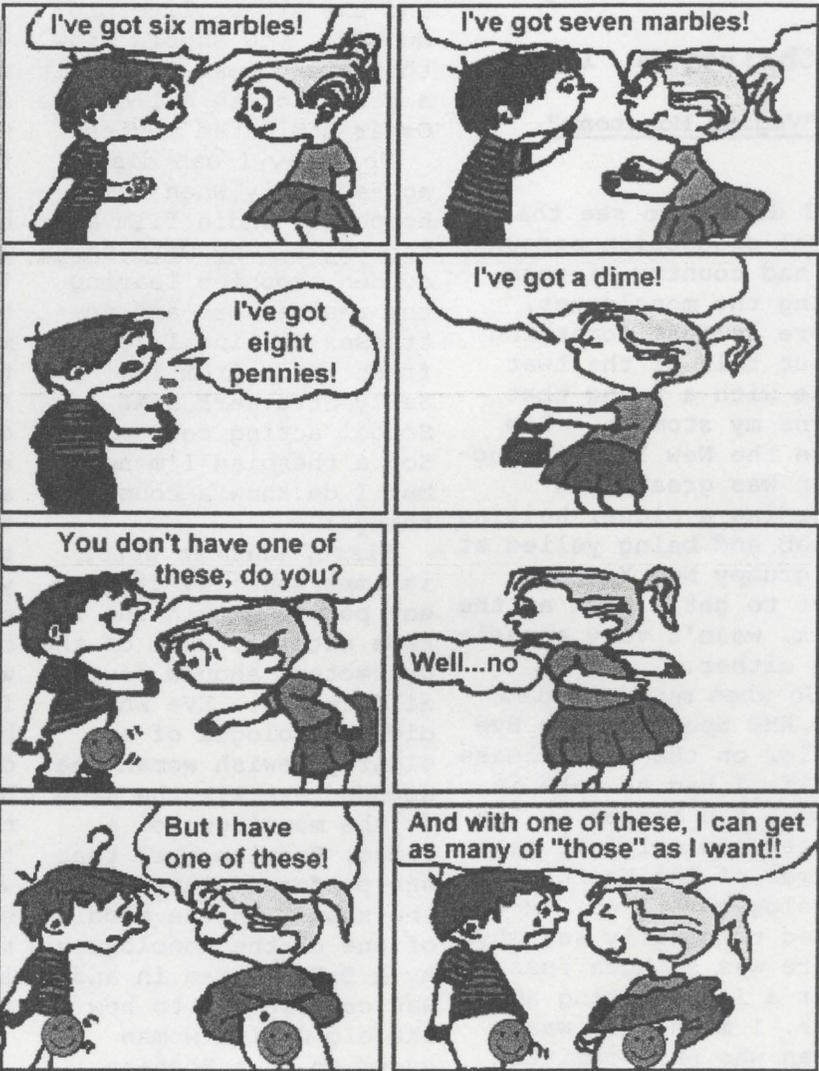
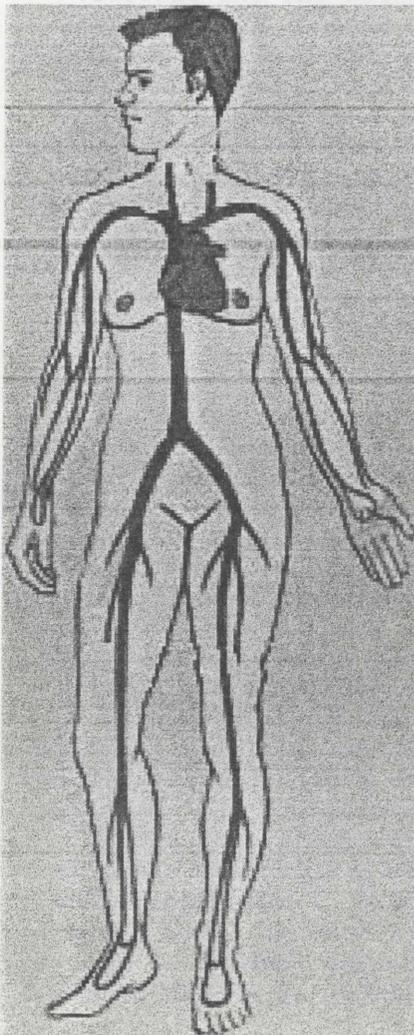
across, find some glass to chew and say that you watched it.

Either way, your dollars will be going to the support of women's issues, all of your friends will think your hip and you are still doing your part.

Whatever you decide to do, just be sure that you don't miss the point.

Which is, straddle a mirror, take a peek, name your vagina, ask it if it needs anything and then carry on with your life, for God Sakes!

****The End****





Editor's Note

Rant

My decision to do this gender issue of QR was based on my ongoing fascination with the fluidity of gender and sexuality. Gender is such a large topic. The more I tried to research and clarify what "gender" was, the more confused I got. There is no clarifying what gender is and isn't that great?

I actually wondered if I could gather enough material and submissions on gender! Now I'm faced with having to exclude some material even though I've made this month's issue 15 pages longer than normal. No fear. I will certainly include everything in future issues. Rest assured that if your material didn't make it into this issue it has nothing to do with it not being good enough or anything. And for everyone else, as always, I encourage you to send me your material. For your submission to be published you need to have been published 8 times previously, have published at least one book and be able to send it to me in 3.5 JPEG format. NOT!!!!!!!!!!!!!! You losers, I can't believe you fell for that crap. Just send it in. Who cares if you've been published before? I don't. Some of my favorite submissions have been journal entries and artwork that the creator never considered to be "good enough."

By no means is this issue a comprehensive look at gender as is related to queer women. It is more of a collage of ideas surrounding gender. I tried to include as many different perspectives as I could. I do not agree with all of it, but to be aware of all sides is always good. For instance, I include on p. 59 a pro-lesbian separatist article. I encourage everyone to attempt to understand where the author is coming from regardless of where you stand on the issue.

The notion of being either straight or gay, male or female, seems too restrictive somehow. Although the use of labels is seen as oppressive by some, I think they are a necessary evil. Labels are useful. Labels and categories assist our learning and understanding. I do not dispute that labels can be used in a harmful way, but pretending we are a homogeneous society is even more harmful.

It isn't not our differences that divide us. It is a combination of disrespecting and ignoring these difference within our queer community that causes unhappiness. I'm all for celebrating our difference. By all means is a bit of exclusion necessary in some instances, like say, a women's rape support group that only allows women to join for the comfort of the members. But where does this line get shifted into hatred?

Here is a thought: men are not the enemy. Agree, disagree, but think about it. When did it become acceptable to hate all men just because they have a penis? Tell you what. You can list all of the evils men have done against women and I still won't tolerate any disrespect toward my father or brothers or male friends. I've had men treat me far better than a long-term female lover. And what of transgendered people? Gasp at the thought that a woman would want to transition over to dark side of the force: maleness. So, is this women, now a transman, part of this evil male oppressiveness? What if she still had a vagina, or if she reconstructed to have a penis but still has breasts? Suddenly this lesbian is excluded from the dykedom.

I will absolutely not tolerate any discrimination against non-traditional queer women. And really, what is traditional, hu? I've been contacted by organizations that want to join forces with QR, but don't let any bisexuals or trans folk to join their group. Well, flattered, really, and you have your groups and good for you, but fuck off. I don't know how much clearer I can be that I will not accept, condone or ignore discrimination. And really, discrimination is such a big topic, dealing with age, race, educational status, sexuality, etc...

Should you choose to live on a women-only farm where all male animals are slaughtered, well, damn, what can I say? Your choice. I throw my hand in the air and walk away.

And again, where do transgender people fit? Too male to be female and too female to be male. Lets go back the good old days, shall we? We'll have separate drinking fountains for all: white, black, man, woman. Should you not fit in to one of these categories well, too bad.

Ok, well, I think I've said my peace. I usually am not so vociferous, but I felt compelled to rant a bit. Although this issue of QR is politically oriented, I don't want to get into discussion of queer politics. I say that because there are several great queer publications that cover politics. QR focuses on queer women's creativity, which I suppose is intermingled with politics, but you know what I mean. Oh, one more thing. Should you chose to send me hate mail about my evil perpetuation of labels or why you think that trannies should be excluded from you womyn's group, just save yourself the time and my aggravation at your "issues."

Ok, really, I'm done. For now. Smiles to all. A very special thank you and pat on the back to all of great people (male, female and in-between) that have made and will make past, present and future issues of QueerRamblings possible. And of course, thanks to you, the reader, to whom all of this is dedicated. Sandra R. Garcia

Below I've included some definitions I gathered from various places to help clarify the lingo used in this issue. There are a lot of new terms that you may not be familiar with. I implore you refer back to this page to clarify any confusion. kisses, sandy

Dictionary of Gender Terms

Androgyne— 1. A person whose biological sex is not readily apparent, whether owing to chance or choice 2. A person who is intermediate between the two traditional genders. 3. A person who rejects gender roles entirely.

Bio-female - a person born female.

Bio-male - a person born male.

Butch - a person born female whose manner, dress, body language, and essential personality echo to one degree or another the societal definition of "masculine"

Chest compression vest - vest used after chest reconstruction surgery. Also sometimes used by pre-op FTMs and Butches to "bind" or minimize the size/appearance of breasts.

Chest reconstruction surgery - surgical procedure during which the breasts are removed using one of two different techniques along with surgical sculpting of the chest to give a masculine appearance.

Drag king - a female performer who impersonates men onstage.

Drag queen - a male performer who impersonates women onstage.

FTM - female to male transsexual; a person born female who feels that male gender more closely reflects his feelings about himself and his self-concept

Feminist - women-affirming women; women who believe that women are as valuable as men.

Femme - a person born female whose manner, dress, body language, and essential personality echo to one degree or another the societal definition of "feminine".

Genderqueer - a person who rejects the binary gender system with male and female polarities. May present as androgynous or anywhere along the femininity-

masculinity continuum.

LGBT - lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered.

Lesbian - a person who identifies as female who is primarily attracted to other persons who identify as female.

MTF - male to female transsexual; a person born female who feels that female gender more closely reflects her feelings about herself and her self-concept.

Misandrist - a person who hates men.

Misogynist - a person who hates women.

Partner - usually indicates a primary relationship...not a business partnership.

Radical feminist - term coined and used in the Second Wave of Feminism in North America connoting womyn-affirming womyn in staunch defiance of patriarchy in all its' forms.

SO - significant other; the partner or loved one of a transsexual

SOFFA - significant others, friends, family, and allies of transsexuals

Stealth - trans community's term for transfolks who pass as their chosen gender 24/7 and who generally have no contact with other transfolks.

Stonebutch - a male-identified female whose persona is extremely masculine. Can also connote an extremely masculine butch who is sexually untouchable.

Testosterone - male sex hormone.

TransFemme - a femme who is primarily attracted to FTM(s).

Transensual - attracted to transsexual persons.

Transsexual - a person who identifies as a member of the "opposite" sex.

Transition - the process by which a person of a given sex is transformed into a person of the "opposite" sex.

Womyn - female persons who resent the implication of male superiority inherent in the "woman" spelling

Beth and Sam: **A partner's** **perspective of the FTM** **transition**

Elizabeth Maples-Bays -
daughter of Marian
www.fortunecity.com/village/mau/pin/133/id22.htm

Editor's Note: When Beth contacted me as I was preparing to do this issue of QueerRamblings, I was pleasantly surprised to find out she herself was not a FTM (female to male), rather the long-term partner of one. I was very much interested in her perspective. I will let her writing speak for itself. I had to edit it for length, so please, please visit her website for the whole story.

About Beth:

I was a very outspoken female from the very start, I suppose. From the day I was born, then, I guess I've always spoken my mind...sometimes that works well for me...sometimes it doesn't, but at least I've always had a certain inner peace because of it. Get ready, I'm about to do it again. <smile>

When I came out at the ripe old age of 26 years, I found myself in the Pacific Northwest in what some have called the "liberal mecca of Montana," a moderate sized town in Western Montana - Missoula. The site of the University of Montana, it had much more to offer than the population of 30,000 would imply. It was the service hub for five valleys, and as a result, there were lots of things there that one might not expect in such a small place. There were good restaurants, decent shopping, live music from the West Coast...and...several gay and lesbian organizations including some specifically for lesbians including a

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majority with a radical feminist bent. Now, remember...this is the late 70s.

Having come from a background that included being the daughter of a battering victim fatally injured in the final episode of what I still consider a 13 year hate crime, the feminist path was one I adopted easily. I absolutely inhaled the writings of the day from Susan Brownmiller to Sheri Hite to Mary Daly. I had truly come home in the sense that I was able to garner a lot of strength from these women and their view of a world that had been none too kind to a little girl from East Tennessee. I grew stronger in body and spirit as a result of my interactions with them, both in print and in real time. There was bustling activity within the women's movement, and I very much wanted to be a part of that in any way I could...and I was.

But...and this is a big "but"... having emerged from a heterosexual marriage, I found that I was suspect from day one. While it is somewhat understandable seeing things as I do now from a totally different perspective, it was very difficult to "prove myself" as a lesbian in the beginning. Having never been much of an athlete, more inclined to music and the textile arts, I found myself the object of doubt by both friends and lovers. They were just sure I was going back to the "straight life" at any time... and so...with great determination, I set out to prove them wrong.

I took a good look in the mirror and asked myself what I saw. I did indeed see a traditionally feminine biologically female person.

Apparently, this was *not* the sort of person who in their opinion was a lesbian...so...I looked at those I had



met in the community...and it didn't take me long to see the differences...and there were many.

Gradually, my wardrobe became the androgynous attire that was the order of the day...jeans, flannel shirts, down jackets, hiking boots. All makeup was discarded, and my long, curly hair was shorn to a fashionable politically-correct length of about 1". Dyke Beth was born! There was an immediate reaction to the change in my appearance...suddenly I was visible! Suddenly, I didn't have to make long explanations about who my last lover was or where I came out...I was simply accepted as a dyke! I was in heaven!

Of course, they *still* liked my skills in the kitchen... that was one traditional activity I was encouraged to continue. <smile> Yes, I'll never forget it...I snagged my first lover with homemade egg rolls!

Then after two years of settling into a new lifestyle, disaster struck.

(Beth and Sam continued on page 8)

Beth and Sam: A partner's perspective of the FTM transition

(Beth and Sam continued from page 7)

My ex-husband abducted my two young children and ran to Florida from Montana leaving me distraught and terrified. But, after many frantic phone calls, he was finally convinced to meet here in Knoxville to live at opposite ends of the same apartment complex so that we could co-parent the kids...and so...I packed up all my things in a U-Haul, towed by a Subaru Brat occupied by two lesbians and two dogs...and we made our way to the Tennessee Valley, my homeland.

We arrived on December 15, 1980. Not too long after that, we went to a party in West Knoxville. It was certainly different from the politically charged climate in the Missoula community. But, I was in for a real surprise the first time we went to the bar...one of two in town at the time - The Carousel. (By the way, I forgot to mention, that in Missoula the nearest gay bar was six HOURS away over a terrible mountain pass in Spokane, Washington.) So, I was hardly prepared for the scenario that greeted me the first New Year's Eve I spent in Knoxville at the Carousel, what with only having seen a couple of drag queens in my entire life and *never* having seen the penultimate

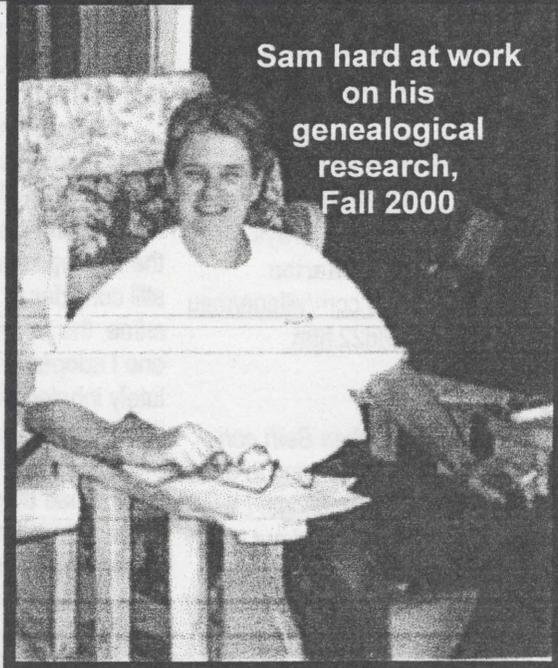
sight for sore eyes...their counterparts...the drag kings!

Well, after swooning a while, I began to notice that these drag kings went 'round with girls...girls in dresses, girls in high heels... girls like the girl I had been all my life until the PC police of the Missoula community had gotten hold of me.

I was enthralled...I was relieved...I was looking at women who *looked like ME*!!!! I was simply amazed... and slowly as the full realization of what I was seeing dawned on me...something happened...something for which I am now very grateful...from that first night when I saw the Volunteer Kings, four good-lookin' butches onstage in their tuxedos...I was determined that from that day forward I was going to be true to myself...in every way possible. The closet door was flung wide open for this femme girl!

And I'll tell you what...I never looked back. My lover was absolutely appalled, of course. I swear, I think she thought there was something sacred and holy about flannel shirts and sandals. Not that there's anything wrong with flannel shirts...my sweetheart wears them all the time...OR sandals...why, honey, I must have fifteen pairs! But, in all seriousness, it was a fork in the road for

Sam hard at work on his genealogical research, Fall 2000



me. Thank goodness Knoxville was twenty years behind Missoula...let's see...that put us right at circa 1960 when all this happened in December of '80.

Well, a few years passed, and I was really tired of waiting for the next lesbian event. People were still talking about the Meg Christian concert that had happened five years before!

Never being one to wait for something to be handed to me, I got to work at something that the feminists in Missoula had taught me quite a bit about - community organizing. First, we had to have something to draw the women...I was a student at the time at UT and used to spend part of my day hanging out at the Women's Center on the second floor of the Carolyn P. Brown Student Center. I was loudly complaining about the lack of lesbian cultural events in this area one day, when the director politely handed me a flier announcing the availability of a comic...a lesbian comic named Kate Clinton! Well, to make a long story short, we produced Kate Clinton in the Turnkey Center on Summitt Dr. not too aw-

(Beth and Sam continued on page 9)

From the movie: If these walls could talk 2
That is Chloe Severnsomething(sorry) and the whats
her name from Dawson's Creek



Beth and Sam: A partner's perspective of the FTM transition

(Beth and Sam continued from page 8)

fully long after that. We had a great turnout with about 300 women packed into that building. It was wonderful!

Fast forward through the years...past the sad story of the Europa closed by the World's Fair and a criminal tragedy...past the Factory with its' elevated dance floor and uncomfortable high stools...on to the Point, that bastion of local lesbian herstory, the only all women's bar in Knoxville other than it's illustrious predecessor, the Huddle, which was before my time, I'm afraid. It was here that I really experienced the butch-femme bar culture so vividly described in the classic "Stonebutch Blues" by Leslie Feinberg and in "Restricted Country" by Joan Nestle. It was here that I truly came home.

While the particulars will remain somewhat under wraps due to the fact that many of my cohorts are still alive and well here in River City, and not everyone is "out" due to legitimate job, housing, and child custody considerations. Let's just say that when my first relationship ended after nearly nine years, I was at last free to pursue and be pursued by someone who appreciated a "girlie".

Believe me, they weren't hard to find. While I'll spare you the details, it was fun to be young, know who you are and where you're going while having the time of your life getting there.

In the meantime, (I really don't want to leave the impression that my life was spent in the bars, because it most decidedly wasn't) I was busy raising two children, completing my degree in nursing at the University of Tennessee, then launching a new career in that field. It was an exciting busy time in my life. As the years crept by, I found myself withdrawing more and more from the community, first for reasons that had to do with work and family, then later because I fell ill with an auto-immune disease that most people have never heard of: Wegener's Granulomatosis. The most difficult part of the disease progression involved a radical loss of vision necessitating 14 eye surgeries, numerous hospitalizations, and treatment with immunosuppressant drugs normally used in organ transplant or cancer treatment. From the depths of severe illness, I made my way back aided by the right combination of medications, medical support, and the kind, gentle person who has

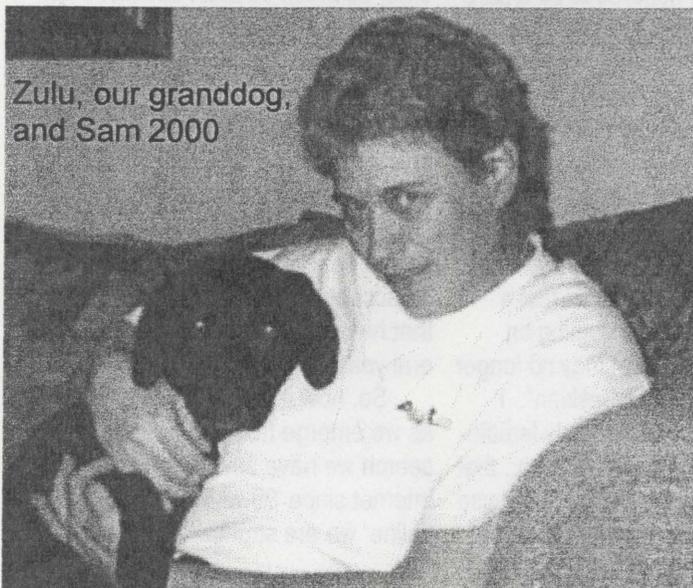
now been a part of my life for ten years - LB (or Sam as he is now known.) But, after years in near total isolation, my social skills were a bit rusty, my courage and self-



confidence almost nonexistent, and what with my vision and hearing impairments, I just could not bring myself to venture out into the community. Then I got my first Personal Computer. Then...I learned to use it to get on the Internet. Then...I found the wide world of cyberspace, and I found out that there were queers like me out there! Waddaya know!! I didn't have to leave the house after all to start participating in that world again. I could do it from the privacy and comfort of my own home!

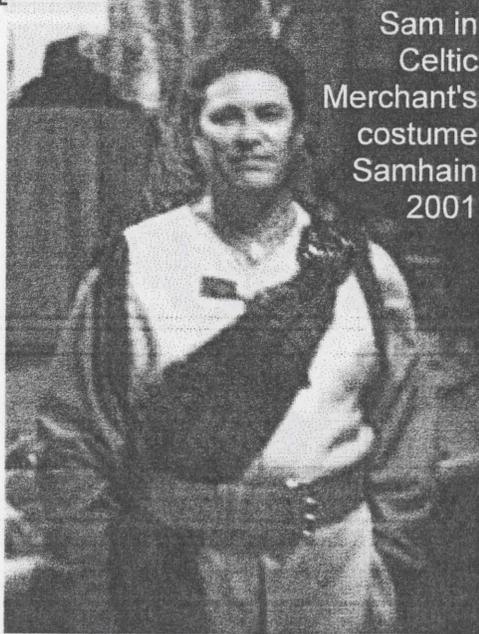
So in the fall of '99, I went online and found a community that is not local, but in my case was regional...a community of folks more nearly like me than even my lesbian sisters were. I discovered the online butch-femme community. Boy, talk about feelin' like you just went home! After a couple of false starts having a LOT to do with regional prejudices...I finally found some folks that were butch and femme SOUTHERNERS!!! Imagine that! Some of my closest and best friends came from that source, but once again...the Goddess of Community Organizing beck-

(Beth and Sam continued on page 10)



Zulu, our granddog, and Sam 2000

Beth and Sam: A partner's perspective of the FTM transition



Sam in Celtic Merchant's costume Samhain 2001

Bethie - Samhain 2001

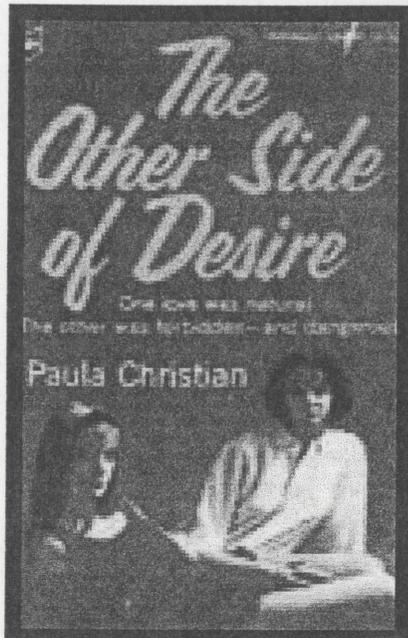


better understand after some online study...the transgender community in particular. Even as this community is becoming

(Beth and Sam continued from page 9)

oned me...with the help of Her Daughter, Hope McCubbin, I've been at it again. This time with older women in my age group...and hopefully in the near future there will be a local butch-femme group for those of us who live that dynamic. We have already begun a mailing list that will hopefully soon translate into a real time community.

There are other communities I



in some ways my own even more than the butch-femme community is, I am learning and growing in ways that I never thought possible. As the partner to a transitioning FTM, I am now moving forward and becoming an integral part of a community that I barely knew existed just a few years ago. It is an exciting time of change and challenges, but on the arm of my loving partner of ten years, I feel hopeful and encouraged that next year will be even better than those that I have lived before. The knowledge that I am honored to be a part of such a wonderful person's life never ceases to amaze me. I am grateful in many ways for the beautiful unconditional love that I receive every day from Sam, the love of my life.

23 years after that first introduction to the lesbian community, I think I can legitimately say that I feel a case of culture shock coming on whenever I think that I may no longer be seen by others as "lesbian". I was told by my one and only female-identified lover that I wasn't a lesbian...that really, really hurt at the time because I was trying desperately to hone out an identity for myself...and at the

time, I thought my only choices were lesbian, straight, or bisexual. So of those three, I chose lesbian because I was not and am still not open to relationships with bi-males.

While the significant others in my life have been decidedly masculine for the last 19 years, the reality of dealing with transgendered issues only really emerged in my current relationship. I had been warned about LB (Sam) by others for many years. I was told he was "crazy"... why...they said he believed he was

a man!!! (Said in horror-stricken hushed tones by some...with sly grins by others.) For some reason, I just didn't *think* about what they meant when they said that. I just shrugged it off because I was involved with someone else at the time...a drag king stonebutch who was really nothing more than a butch gigolo. But the very *real* nature of what they said did come back to me many years later...when Sam handed me literature from the Southern Comfort Conference in Atlanta...although we had no money to go, he was saying that this is something he was interested in attending.

In spite of being very sick at the time, so much so that I couldn't even walk across the room without assistance...blind and gasping for air...I remembered him telling me about the conference...and the implication was crystal clear to me. So clear that it gave me shivers even as I said, "Honey, I'm sorry, but I'm just too sick to deal with this right now." And he accepted that, poor patient guy that he is. He accepted that for several years.

So, now it is his turn...and even as we emerge from the intense research we have been doing on the Internet since '99 when we first went online, we are stronger as a couple

(Beth and Sam continued on page 11)

Beth and Sam: A partner's perspective of the FTM transition

(Beth and Sam continued from page 10)

for it. He was able to put his needs second for several years as he helped me gradually struggle back to a level of health that could support the dramatic changes that transition will create in our life together. I am now and will always be grateful to him for being so patient, for not giving up on me, for knowing that when I was *able* I would give to him...or at least try to give to him a fraction of what he gave to me - support, love, and guidance in making life altering choices. He is the great love of my life, and I am so very fortunate to get to spend my life with him.

I don't know exactly where my journey will lead...no one truly knows that, but as I go into the future with only a dim view of what may lie ahead, I am reassured that I have a rich heritage here in Knoxville...richer than I realized for a very long time.

Top Surgery- A partner's Perspective

[Editor's note: I've included only excerpts from this section in her webpage. I did not include, though it should

be noted, that Beth does a great job of talking about financial costs, insurance issues and travel logistics.]

We've spent a lot of time talking about the surgery, making concrete preparations, and just mulling it over in our minds. Sam is anxious to get it done, and so am I...well...most of the time I am. I am more than a little bit apprehensive about how we are going to manage things post-op.

The whole thing is weighing rather heavily on me now that I feel as if we have the financial aspects squared away. I guess I just had to have that resolved in my own mind before I would even allow myself to believe this is really going to happen.

I really don't have all these inner conflicts about the surgery itself that I have heard expressed by some other SO's [significant other's.] After many years of living with and loving male-identified bio-females, I am full of joy for Sam who desperately wants his outer package to reflect his inner man. To know that others will understand more readily what he already feels inside, and what I can see so clearly will be a big relief for both of us. I will be glad to be the only one in this marriage with breasts. Suits me just fine.

It isn't that I am minimizing the struggles of lesbians who after much effort "come out" with great risk to jobs, child custody, housing, and other considerations essential to so many of our lives...to find a much beloved partner to share



Beth 2001 - ready for an evening out with Mr. Sam

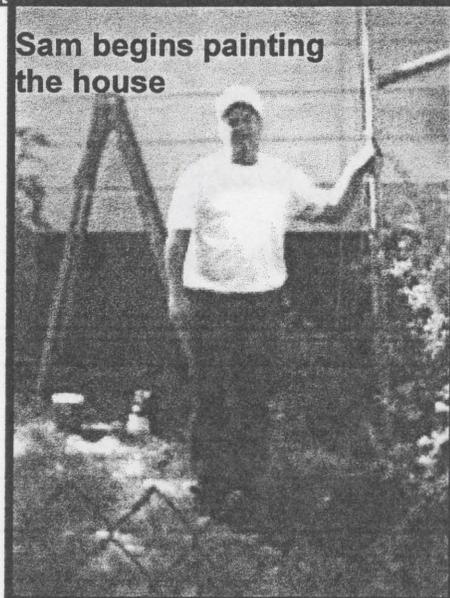
the life with...to walk hand in hand finally with the woman of their dreams... only to find that that woman is not a woman at all, but a man who was somehow born into a female body. If I had not had so many years of "lesbian life" under my belt...if I had not wrestled with the monster of identity crisis more than two decades ago, this might be a struggle for me as well. But with so many years in the LGBT community, I do not feel as if I have to prove myself to anyone. I am confident in my identity as a transsexual femme...confident and proud.

I am watching Sam distance himself from the current events in a way that is not the norm for him. I wonder if the testosterone is affecting his ability to empathize or if he is just protecting himself...guarding against the pit of depression that has threatened to swallow me whole. I don't think he has changed in any appreciable way emotionally since starting the hormones other than perhaps to be a little more assertive than he used to be, so I am can only assume that he is doing what he must do to

(Beth and Sam continued on page 12)

Beth and Sam: A partner's perspective of the FTM transition

Sam begins painting the house



(Beth and Sam continued from page 11)

prepare psychologically for the first surgery he has ever had in his entire life.

Sam's Mom is incredibly supportive for a lady from the Kentucky "hollers." She has known that Sam was transsexual since he was 15 years old - 30 years now. So, this journey we have undertaken was no real surprise to her. I think in some ways she is relieved that we are doing this, because now we won't be "gay" in her eyes. One just wonders how she will explain the sudden disappearance of her daughter and the appearance of a new male relative. Ah, well, I'm sure she will handle it with grace.

I had a bad day yesterday...in a confrontational mode online. I am fed up with the misogyny that is so rampant in the FTM community, and I am tired of saying nothing about it...so I said something. I got attacked repeatedly. Apparently I am not the first womyn this has happened to nor will I be the last. It is very sad for both of us that I am not valued in the trans community as much as Sam is. It is disheartening and not a little bit infuriating as well.

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I was able to post about these feelings to a list run by one who has walked this path before. Her remarks were very comforting, especially in light of the vitriol I found myself surrounded by on the FTM list. <sigh>

Well, the attacks keep coming online. Honestly these guys must have **nothing** to do with their time except attack and alienate other people. In the meantime, I have reevaluated my position with regard to the trans community, and I think I have decided to limit my involvement to those groups and organizations that proactively include SOFFAs

[Significant Others/Friends, Family, and Allies] Anything else would be a waste of my time, energies, and money.

I tossed and turned for a while before finally settling down to sleep.

This was my partner, my loved one of ten years who was going to have surgery for the first time in his life.

The nurse in me was having an anxiety attack, hoping against hope that he would tolerate the anesthesia well. The lover in me mourned the

loss of the touch of his desire that would have to be patient and wait as he healed. The wife in me was quiet, hoping that if I just didn't say anything, he wouldn't notice that I was terrified.

Sam has been by my side throughout the entire ordeal [Editor's note: Beth's battle with Wegner's Granulomatosis. Please see the website for information on this disorder]...never complaining, never faltering. He's my rock...my shelter in the storm. I love him with all my heart. So, remember his devotion to me as I tell you how I cared for him during his post-op convalescence. He deserves the best.

[editor's note skipping to morning of surgery]

The alarm goes off, and I awake instantly...quite out of character for this sleepy head whose circadian rhythms are more attuned to the PM side of life. But today is different.

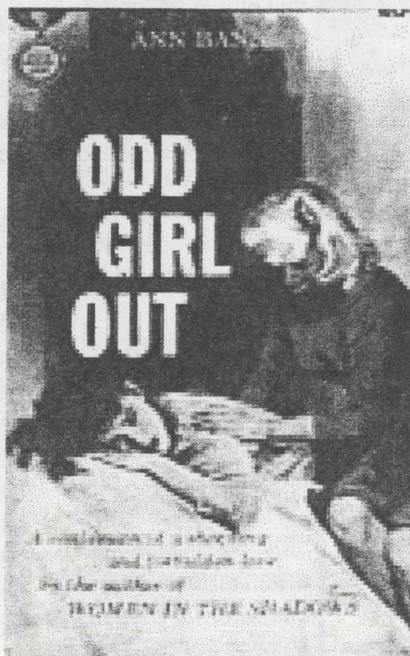
Today...well, today is Sam's SURGERY! I look over at him as he awakens, and he immediately curses our early bedtime as he is very thirsty and wants his normal morning soda.

But today is different...it's the day Sam will have the surgery he has waited 30 years to get. From the time he was 15, when he first told his Mother that he felt as if he were transsexual...when he first wrote to Louisiana for the precious if limited information on how one could actually change from female to male.

Today, he would wake up with breasts, and tonight he would no longer have them. And...more than that...he would have the male chest that proclaims to the world...I am a male. The chest that would virtually guarantee that Sam would always pass...as he does most of the time now. The chest that would allow him the freedom to wear the clothes of his choosing in sizes that fit.

[Editor's note: skipping to surgery...]

(Beth and Sam continued on page 13)



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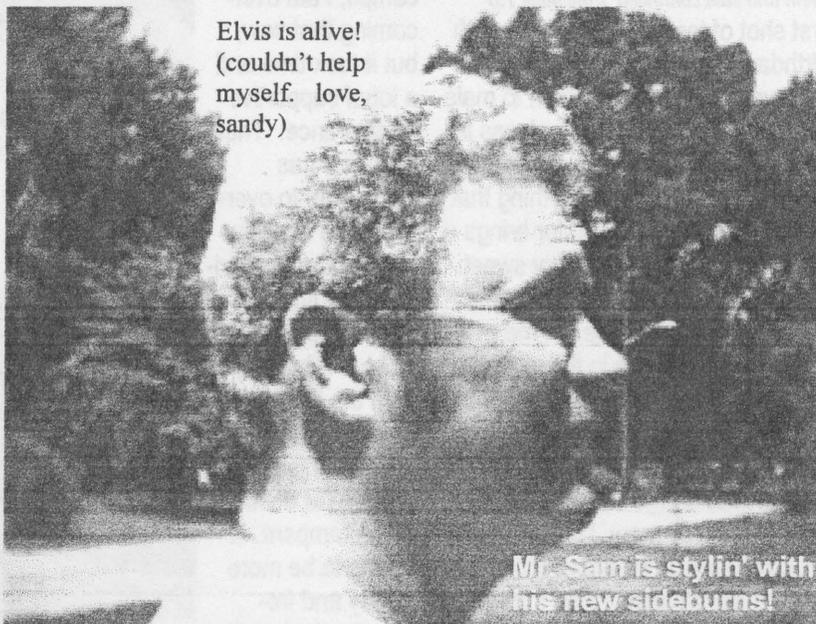
Beth and Sam: A partner's perspective of the FTM transition

(Beth and Sam continued from page 12)

The minutes became hours. I never even got up to go to the bathroom. Patients came and went as did myriad deliverymen. I had brought a thermos of coffee, but it only gave me terrible heartburn. I waited. Finally after four hours, Jayne [the nurse] came to the waiting room door to tell me I could go back to the recovery area to see Sam. He looked fine, but was obviously still drugged...giving us all a laugh with his whisperings about "military espionage" in hushed tones as if it were a big secret. I got a big kick out of it. I haven't seen Sam drunk in quite a while.

Soon Sam was coherent enough...even though he still muttered occasionally about "covert operations"...to start thinking about leaving and going back to the room. He was very cooperative as I dressed him in his charcoal grey fleece pants with pockets (apparently this is very important...it's a "guy thing"), royal blue cotton short-sleeved front button, collared shirt, black cotton socks, and his prized grey suede slip-ons.

He would have looked dapper if



Mr. Sam is stylin' with his new sideburns!

he hadn't been so pale. Even the healthiest person who tolerates the anesthesia beautifully doesn't look their best immediately post-op. We got his jacket on him and helped him into the wheelchair.

It was unseasonably hot for October in Maryland, and we had to keep the drapes closed all the time to keep out the heat and help our air conditioner. Vestiges of my old nemesis, depression, were creeping up on me despite my medication...

mostly, I think, because of the lack of exposure to sunlight resulting from this. So, I went outside... just walked around the perimeter of the parking lot... anything to be out in the sunlight. It helped a bit.

Meanwhile... I'm struggling with my anger at the trans community... the FTMs who while they may be the minority who are so vocally misogynist in online venues. Hearing of others experiences and feelings that are similar to mine is giving me mega-motivation to activate and do something to reach

out to the other SOs who are in the position I find myself in...to help in some way to illuminate a dark corner in which, once again, women's lives are trivialized and negated. That entire quagmire is part of why I am writing this journal and will publish it far and wide to the best of my ability and opportunity...if for no other reason but to say that this is my experience **every bit as much as it is Sam's**. This is my experience, my feelings, my perceptions, my trip, my caring, my love, my life. No amount of naysaying by those who do not like women can invalidate that. The more I hear, the madder I get...and anger is a great motivator...if used wisely. I hope I can do that.

Miles from Home:

Journeying as a Couple

As I look back on the last year, I suddenly realize just how far we have come, my sweet love and I. We have traveled many miles, both figuratively and literally, in the process of fulfilling his lifelong dream. He started his Hormone Replacement Therapy in May and had his Chest Reconstruction surgery in October. Being able to transition, taking his

(Beth and Sam continued on page 14)

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SANFORIZED BROADCLOTH SHORTS, sizes 24-34 (Ages 8-16).....	50c
"BIG ROCKY" FOR MEN	
BRIEFS, sizes 30-42.....	59c
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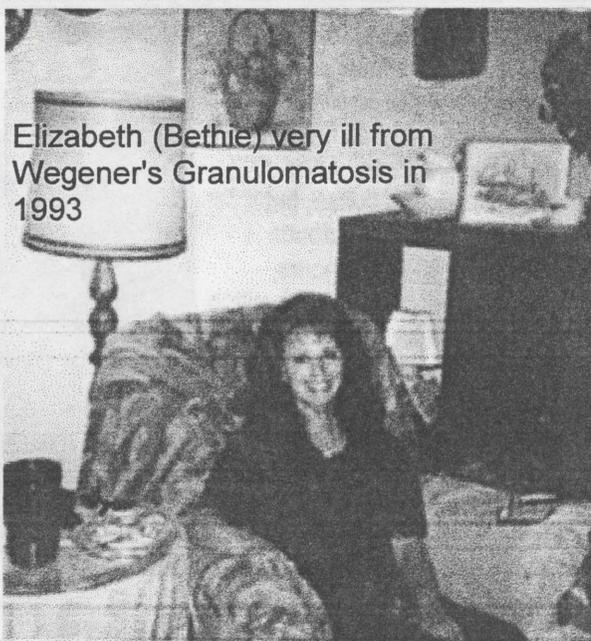
Beth and Sam: A partner's perspective of the FTM transition

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first shot of testosterone on his 45th birthday was the final culmination of a 30-year desire to transition to male. I can only say that his happiness is immeasurably "worth it." To enable a loved one to access to anything that they have always longed for brings a satisfaction that is very, very sweet.

While my meanderings in the "trans" community have led me over a lot of varied terrain in these past couple of years, I think that now I am finally coming home to an area of comfort that I never have really had before...not really. Despite reassurances to the contrary, I have felt very uncomfortable in both the lesbian and the trans communities throughout the transition process. Just as many husbands get "sympathy pains" during their wives' labor and delivery, I have felt that in many ways I was *right there" with Sam in feeling like I didn't know quite where I fit into these various communities. With the help of friends in both

camps, I am overcoming that now, but it took time and a lot of supportive reassurance. Their kindness has helped me to overcome the hostility and venom I experienced at times in both camps, but most vociferously from the FTMs themselves.

The misogyny in the FTM community is rampant. It seems to be more openly and frequently displayed than in any heterosexual milieu I have ever experienced. It is pure hate...and has been exhibited in many forms...some of which I have personally experienced...others I have only been told about...but I believe the womyn who tell me these things. They have no reason to lie at this point. From mockery to death threats, the hatred for womyn cannot be easily explained away or excused on the pretext that these guys are overcompensating for having been born to a female body when that is not what fits them best. No...this kind of hatred is usually reserved for the "other"... the hatred exhibited by KKK members for African-Americans...the hatred shown to transsexuals by ignorant bigots...the murderous rage that all too often is in the news as a homicide case. That is the quality of hostility that is apparent in many of the posts to the mailing lists frequented by FTMs online. At first, it really upset me. I could not understand how people who have been and are the victims of such terrible dis-



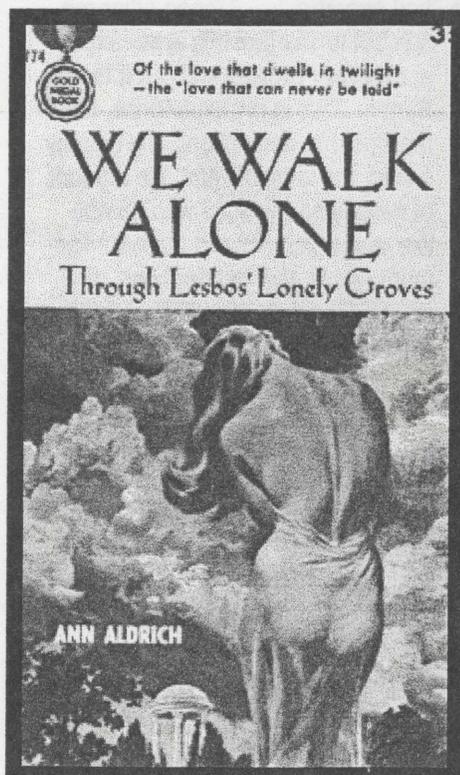
Elizabeth (Bethie) very ill from Wegener's Granulomatosis in 1993

crimination and bigotry can themselves fall into the very practices that often make their lives less than pleasant. Then I realized that this situation was not unlike many other situations in which victims of violence see only two choices: victim or perpetrator. These folks have chosen the latter.

At this juncture, I have to say that I have met very few FTMs in real time...probably seven real FTMs all told. I hesitate to pass judgment on other human beings individually, so I won't, but I do think it is fair to generally characterize groups, so I will. I do not hesitate to say that the hostility I have witnessed online does indeed translate to real time in some instances, though admittedly not in all. I am a strong woman. I have opinions and verbalize them. Many men cannot tolerate that...the same goes for FTMs. After all, they are just men. Period. They just happened to have been born to a female body.

Despite having been acculturated into the female role to one degree or another, every FTM is differ-

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Beth and Sam: A partner's perspective of the FTM transition

(Beth and Sam continued from page 14)
ent from every other FTMs. Yes, folks...here comes the cute little snowflake analogy. But it is true - regardless of what population subset any of us may belong to, we exhibit our own unique personality traits within that context. FTMs are no exception to this rule. Some absorbed societal conditioning that is deemed appropriate behavior for women: sensitivity, empathy, communication skills, nurturing behaviors. Some did not. To find some that are not very nice people is, then, not surprising. Just don't ever say that in the company of an FTM or SO [significant other] in an online context...if you do you are risking the ire of the lunatic fringe who, unfortunately, tends to dominate the Internet trans community.

I fully believe that most folks who transition go on with their lives... quietly living in whatever milieu they find comfortable whether that is an LGBT framework or as in a "stealth" existence. In any case, I think the majority of trans-couples have normal lives like the rest of the human beings on earth. There are, of course, those who feel that they have been called to activism and advocacy on the part of the trans community, and in many cases that is a noble calling. However there are those

who fall prey to egotistical, star-tripping behavior as a result of being in the spotlight...something that they have, perhaps, never experienced before. This is a frequently observed phenomenon on the local level as well.

All of this came together to place me in a very uncomfortable position with regard to my beloved Sam. I wanted very much to be as supportive as possible throughout transition and beyond, but at the same time, I was struggling...no...drowning in a sea of online and real-time misogyny. I was tolerating a lot of insulting, arrogant, condescending behavior from FTMs [female to male] that I would never have tolerated from bio-males. I was in a real dilemma regarding how I could remain supportive to Sam and keep my boundaries and self-respect concerning these folks with whom interacting was far less than pleasant. I tried. Goddess knows I tried. I put up with misogyny in my presence that I have not tolerated in 23 years. Then I could just tolerate no more.

I think the final straw came when

we traveled to a little city not too awfully far away for an overnight stay and get-together with the local group the following day. The drive there was not too bad, but we are both "allergic" to traffic jams, and apparently this little town has a terrible problem with updating

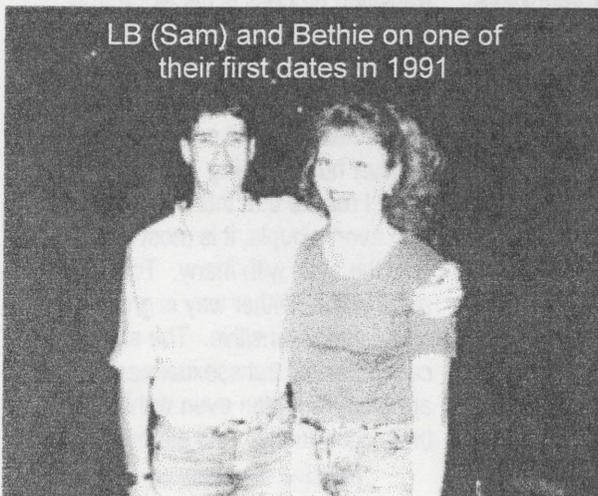
their roads. At any rate, we spent some trying times creeping along just to get to their house. When we finally arrived, we were both exhausted and, shall we say, less than happy campers. But we got there, unloaded the car...and started to settle in to the greeting routine, both couples catching up on the other's lives. This couple had just

come back from a wedding, and the FTM was busily telling Sam all about their trip. I busied myself in the bedroom, unpacking a few things...trying to make some sense of our few belongings. I was terribly tired of traveling at this point. This was our sixth trip in nine months - mostly trans-related trips, and I am not overly fond of travel in my middle age. I spent many years traveling in my late teens and early to mid-twenties. Let's just say I got the travel bug out of my system then...and no longer enjoy road trips as I once did.

When I finished and freshened up a bit, I went to the kitchen to get a glass of iced tea and see what the guys were doing. In the course of telling the tale of the wedding, I noticed the other fellow made several denigrating references with regard to the women that had been there.

From the bride's mother to the maid of honor to the bridesmaids and friends, he had something negative to say about almost every woman that had been there. I let it pass. He then began reiterating a supposed soliloquy given at some point by the bride herself about how spoiled and self-centered many online FTMSOs

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LB (Sam) and Bethie on one of their first dates in 1991

Beth and Sam: A partner's perspective of the FTM transition

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 (partners of FTMs) are...how they "whine" and "complain" about their partner's transition...and how they try to hog the spotlight, making false claims that the transition is "theirs too." I had had my fill.

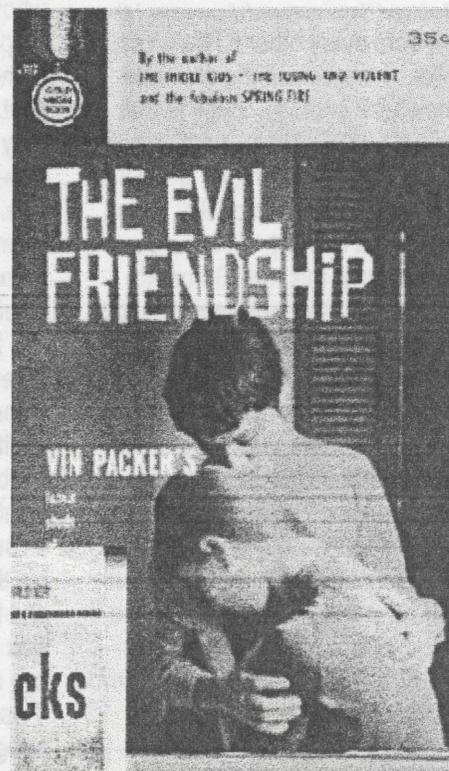
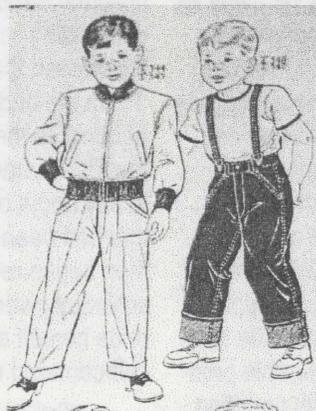
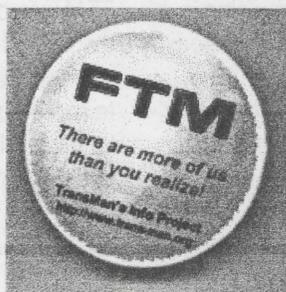
I have high blood pressure, and I began to see stars right about that time. I took a deep breath...I counted to ten. I tried to breathe evenly. I really didn't want to alienate this fellow. I wanted Sam to be able to participate in this group if that's what he chose to do. I knew that if this guy did not stop pretty soon, I was going to say things that would make him angry. So, I drew in my breath and let him know that I would prefer to change the subject. He insisted he was just "telling you what she said." I asked him to find something else to talk about... and he blew up and ran out of the room. I was shaking visibly by this time. The next 24 hours were spent in a very uncomfortable situation in which I literally went from room to room trying to avoid this guy. The big dinner that was planned for the next day had been spoiled...and although I met some very nice people the next day, I was so tense I could not enjoy their company.

When his SO [significant other] and I discussed the issues, she said she could see my point, but she never admitted that to him in my presence. Because of that, I felt no support whatsoever from her. The physical aspects of transition are indeed Sam's and his alone, but the rest of the process is something that is so intimately inter-

twined in both of our lives that it is absolutely insensitive to say or imply that it is basically none of my business - which is definitely the message I received that day.

Let me ask you something... when a married woman is pregnant, does it affect her husband? Is there any way in the world she could possibly justify saying that it's *her* pregnancy and for him to mind his own business? If it's not my transition, then why do I take care of Sam when he is sick from surgery? Why do I have to help pay the bills for doctor's visits, medications, surgery, travel expenses, etc., etc.? If it's not my transition, then I should be able to just la-la through all of this without having any additional responsibilities... nothing could be further from the truth. I have received nothing but gratitude from

Sam...from a kind heart and a willing spirit...a better guy doesn't exist on the face of this earth. We had been together *eight years* before Sam even started talking about transitioning. We are going on eleven years together now...and *everything* we do, we do together. For nearly five years in the early part of our relationship, I was blind. I had to learn to travel with a white cane. I was deathly ill and was repeatedly hospitalized numerous times with respiratory complications of my autoimmune disease. I nearly died over and over again. The bills



were horrendous...the stress was nearly unbearable...did it affect Sam? Yes! Was he a part of my disease process (in terms of family dynamics)? Yes! If anyone had said to him that it was none of his business, I would seriously have considered calling the Department of Human Services Mental Health Division to get him committed. It affected him deeply in many, many ways.

For *anyone* to say that Sam's transition process is his alone truly fails to understand *anything* about our relationship or our lives together... and I have serious doubts about their ability to empathize with another human being - period. And while I realize that this is not the case with every couple, it is most assuredly the case with many. To make assumptions either way is grossly unfair and insensitive. The significant others of transsexual persons are often forgotten even within the trans community. And although

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Beth and Sam: A partner's perspective of the FTM transition



(Beth and Sam continued from page 16)

some efforts are being made on the part of community leaders to be more inclusive with regard to SO/FFAs (Significant Others/Friends, Family, and Allies), much remains to be done to help those who are supportive and to educate those who are not. This support and education can only be done in an atmosphere of kindness and intelligent discourse, not from a defensive position of justification for attitudes that promote divisiveness and misunderstanding. It is my fervent hope that by writing this I can in some small way help those who read this to remember to pause and think about their own relationships, families, and communities - online or real time - and endeavor to increase communication and support among all facets of the trans community

Introspection

Recently I have found that I simply want to sit back and savor the life Sam and I have built together. Just

squeezing the pleasure out of not having to be a voice in the crowd...or even a part of the crowd at all...but to simply live the life we have worked so hard to have...and to enjoy it. In the

previous weeks I have found a certain sense of relief at being able to do that without feeling pressured to defend my position on anything.

Sam knows how I feel about nearly everything in this life...and certainly about those topics we have addressed in the last few years.

I see so much turmoil online *and* in the real time community. Actually most of the ruckus is online...in real time I see mostly sad folks who wish they had more in common with each other than their/their partner's trans status, but who, in actuality, do not.

Although their intentions may be the best...we all seem to be missing the mark when it comes to building community - for ourselves or others.

We all have inner struggles at times in our lives. I know I certainly have. In the last 24 years, I have tried to externalize those energies in a positive way by filling the role of activist and advocate in several arenas. I would like to think that I can continue to do that via this medium at

this point in my life. The energies needed to organize and motivate people are difficult for me to tap these days. As I enter the second half-century on our beloved Terra Firma, I have to acknowledge the limitations of my physical body...and hope to maximize what I can give to all my "communities" by sim-

ply reflecting on what I see/have seen around me and committing it to paper/cyberspace.

Knowing these things, you might understand why we don't wish to move. We both value stability and continuity in our lives. So, then comes the great question of what to tell the neighbors. On one side of us is a fellow we called simply "Enjoy" for many years. He is a Harley fanatic and seems to *enjoy* mood alteration via herbal substances. He and his wife could best be described as blue collar with an intellectual twist. I have known them since they purchased the home twenty years ago. After the death of our beloved dilute calico, Miss Betty Woo Boop, we had quite a bit of cat food, treats, and other cat-specific paraphernalia that Sam decided to give to the woman next door for her two kitties.

Since Betty Woo was primarily Sam's pet, I felt it was altogether appropriate that he be the one to take these things to our neighbor. Of course, he felt obliged to explain who he was since they had known him pre-transition as female. He briefly and rapidly explained what was going on in that regard and offered them the things for their cats. As he spoke they just stared incredulously at him. The woman said that she thought a fellow had come to live with us...or something to that effect.

The guy just kept staring...and finally said that Sam's "face had filled out quite a bit". Um...that's the understatement of the year. Never mentioned the sideburns or moustache, the man's haircut, or any of the other more obvious changes. They were cordial and accepting on the face of it.

So at this point, it seems that if we here in East Tennessee can make this transition and remain stable in our home, it certainly calls to

(Beth and Sam continued on page 18)



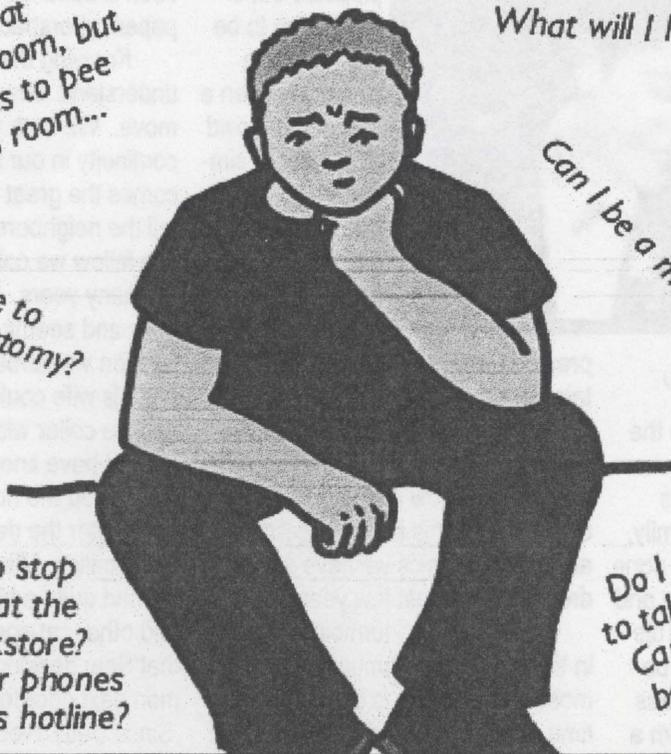
Now, having considered the assorted implications
of this FTM thing, both philosophical

I get glared at
in the women's room, but
I'm too nervous to pee
in the men's room...

Do I have to
get a hysterectomy?

How do I talk
to my family?

Will I have to stop
volunteering at the
women's bookstore?
Can I still answer phones
for the rape crisis hotline?



What will I look like in a year?

Can I find a doctor
who will treat me
like a person?

Can I be a man and still be a feminist?

Do I really want
to take hormones?
Can I live this in-
between for the
rest of my life?

www.coyotecomics.com/passing2.html

(Beth and Sam continued from page 17)

question the supposed logic of moving just to allay some sort of fear that may be unfounded. I mean if moving is your thing...then by all means, have at it. But if you like where you live and wish to remain there, I would like to encourage you to do just that. You just never know...you may be surrounded by folks who are more accepting than you think.

Hysterectomy, Salpingo-Oophorectomy and Associated Risks Or Why You May or May Not Want/Need a "Hysto"

[Editor's note: Again I interject to say that on the website Beth has many links and detailed, understandable explanations about these procedures. Although I had to edit them out due to space, I urge you to visit her site to learn more about it. Even if you are not thinking of transitioning, it is downright interesting.]

Most of the FTM's and SO's [significant other's] don't seem to have a clue about the negative possible after-effects of total or sub-total hys-

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terectomy...and the doctors gloss over them quickly, preferring instead to focus on the preventative aspects of this surgical procedure. I'll grant you that any organ that is surgically removed will no longer be a source of potential problems, but they fail to mention the problems that can come as a result of surgical intervention.

I fully acknowledge the fact that many FTMs want a hysterectomy for psychological reasons. I recognize that mental health needs are often as or more pressing than physical health concerns. It should be the right of every FTM to have a hysterectomy with salpingo-oophorectomy if they so desire. I fervently believe that. I am just concerned at the flippant attitude with which the risks of this procedure are dismissed and the assumption that every FTM wants/needs this done. Nothing is further from the truth. Most of the FTMs I have known online and in real time who did not want the procedure done for one reason or another are afraid to voice their

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concerns with their "brothers" because of possible ridicule, misunderstanding, or doubt as to the veracity of their status as FTMs. Thus as a nurse I chose to articulate these concerns even though I am not an FTM, but am an SO of many years standing who shares hope, life, and dreams with my beloved Sam who is finally coming into his rightful place in the world after a successful transition with me by his side every step of the way.

Finally, let me just say that I am not in any way attempting to speak for any FTMs, but rather I speak as a health caregiver who is concerned for the safety of those from within my community who choose this procedure as a part of their transition process. I wish them success and a trouble-free transition unencumbered by any major problems. Transition is difficult enough even when you are armed with good information and plentiful resources. I hope I have contributed in some way to that by providing this

(Beth and Sam continued on page 19)

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Beth and Sam: A partner's perspective of the FTM transition

(Beth and Sam continued from page 18)
information.

*[Editor's Note: Beth is not only the loving and supportive partner of Sam (and vice versa) but she is also a nurse. On the website you will find extensive, clear and easy to understand explanations about the procedures available to FTMs. I thank her for the opportunity to use her material and send a **big hug** to Sam whom I've grown to adore even though I've never met him.*

I thank Beth for being open about her positive and negative experiences in the online community.

Let me go on record stating the obvious. No, not all FTMs are misogynists, just like not all bio males are sexist pigs. Beth does a great job expressing just that.

Now, being a little spit fire like I am, I'm furious that anyone, regardless of gender, would be so bigoted.

So, what can little ol me do about it? What could Beth do about it? Well, speak out! I implore each and everyone of you to speak out against discrimination in any form. If someone is telling a sexist/racist/bigoted joke, say something!

A friend asked me if I was afraid of attacks from the FTM community. The answer is yes, sure, but truth be told, I am a bit afraid of attacks in general seeing as a run a queer publication. But being a woman (and here is where I generalize) involves living with a bit of fear. Not immobilized by fear, quite the contrary. A state of alertness is motivating and empowering.

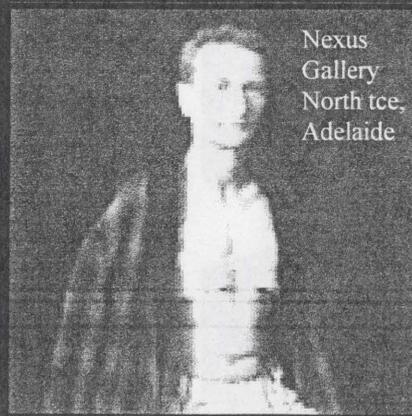
I feel the need to say, again, that the misogyny in the FTM community is perpetrated by a vociferous few, but those few are enough to make me fighting mad. I don't think that very many misogynistic FTMs will read QueerRamblings, but if by chance they do, allow me to say a few words.

*We are not putting up with your shit, so back the f*** off!! Oh, and have a nice day.*

*****The End*****

P.S. You knew I had something else to say! I HIGHLY, HIGHLY recommend the book, "Stone Butch Blues" by Leslie Feinberg. Oh, and buy from an independent bookstore!

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Nexus
Gallery
North tce,
Adelaide

Transman

Ella Dreyfus

"I am what I always was... I am not a woman who has become a man – I never was a woman. I am a transgender person – I cross gender confines, I do not have to experience your restrictions – I surpass them."

Quote is by the subject of Transman.

Over twenty years, Sydney based artist, Ella Dreyfus has established an impressive career in black and white studio photography that ex-

plores with extraordinary intimacy, the human body in all its manifestations, depicting and empowering those who do not conform to dominant aesthetic standards.

Transman is a compelling portrait series by Ella Dreyfus. This exhibition is a liberating experience for the artist, audience and subject alike. Transman tells of a journey to true identity. The exhibition is about a person who, after years as a lesbian, began a process of gender transition at the age of 49. Dreyfus has collaborated with her friend (the subject of the images) to document his gender realignment.

This exhibition makes visible the virtually invisible female to male transgender, marginalized even in the lesbian and gay communities. One person's transition can challenge orthodox concepts of gender identity.

Here are a few resources (many more listed on Beth's site):
<http://www.fortunecity.com/village/maupin/133/id19.htm>

Therapists Experienced in the treatment of transgendered persons -

State by state listings of trans therapists with some Canadian listings. <http://www.drbecky.com/theraprint.html>

So What? - List with a relatively narrow scope: women/men of any orientation (queer/het/etc.) who are partnered long term with guys who happened to have been born female but who are now living in the correct bodies through hormones and surgery. http://www.smartgroups.com/groups/So_What

The American Boyz: Significant Others, Friends, Family Members and Allies - Amboyz statement regarding SOFFAS and a link to e-mail list for SOFFA activists. <http://www.amboyz.org/soffayes.html>

The SOFFA Page - Page of great links from the Tarheels Transmen's website <http://www.geocities.com/tarheeltransmen/soffa.html>

Transensual Femme - This is a place for Femmes who are primarily attracted to transgendered butches and other guys on the transgender spectrum. <http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Cafe/6603/home2.html>

Young FTMSOs - for young ftmsos to gain support from one another. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/youthftmsos/>

COLAGE (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere) - the only national and international organization in the world specifically supporting young people with gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender parents. <http://www.colage.org/>

butch-femme.com <http://www.butch-femme.com>

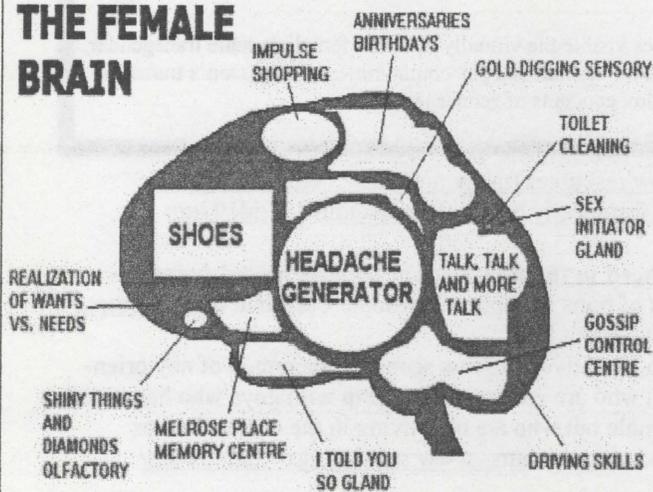
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Gladys Bentley; the Bulldagger who sang the Blues!
 Where does one start with Jazz but in Harlem. Harlem was transformed by a large migration of southern African Americans (Queer and not) in the opening decades of the twentieth century. The neighborhood north of Manhattan's Central Park became the most popular African Americans community in the United States.

THE FEMALE BRAIN



FOOTNOTE: The "Put Oil into the Car" and "Be Quiet during the Game" glands are active only when the "SHINY THINGS AND DIAMONDS" OLFACTORY has been satisfied or when there is a shoe sale.

TRANNIE chaser

Shunned

~ Elizabeth, daughter of Marian

The hair trails down her back;
 Her coat is nubby brown tweed,
 Her scent reminiscent of spices of the East.

Hir hair is shorn, thick, curly, graying...
 Denim crowns hir shoulders,
 Hir gait is brisk and decisive.

Walnut curls tickle her waist,
 Skirt swishing in the breeze,
 Leather squeaks as she moves
 In her own rhythm.

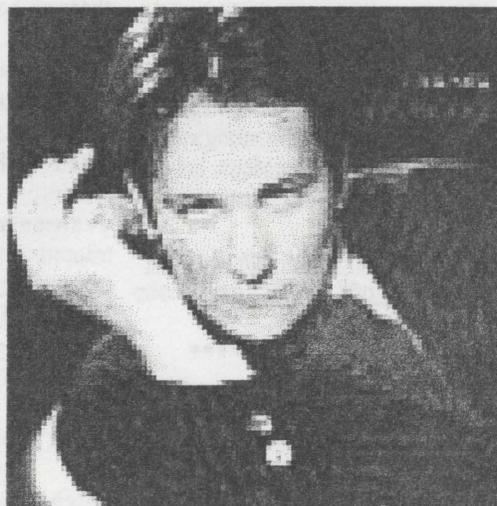
Wisps of iced champagne graze her collar,
 She joins the others,
 Gathering her poncho
 Knitted by her own hand.

Silky black strands fly in the wind,
 Askew as usual despite all attempts to tame.
 Limping slightly, she hurries to catch up
 To the group that is ahead of her.

Reddish dreads lie against an ebony background,
 Touching her jacket and bobbing as s/he walks.
 Strength in motion, s/he emanates a
 Confidence coming from deep within.

Dwarfing those nearby, she casts an imposing shadow.
 Loved by all, she creates warmth in her presence.
 Weighed down by her backpack,
 She does not look back.

I see them all...wish them well...
 Comforted by my sense of wholeness.



Gender Interview with Cid

TRANSMAN/DYKE/
FAG/STRAIGHT-MAN

What is your gender?

Taking deep breath and shaking out my hands. Gender is in your head. It is the way that a person relates to their own body and its assigned sex. It is characteristics that convey to society how you want to be related to. It's how you relate to the act of sex. I was thinking about whether or not gender could exist if we were asexual beings. I don't think so. It's so tightly wrapped in all things that have to do with sex. Gender has nothing to do with an individual's sexual orientation but will operate in other's interactions with the individual. The act of gender is learned and will differ from culture to culture. Gender is a continuum and not a point on a plane. Gender is a three dimensional space. We can exist anywhere at once or all over at many times. I work hard to expand my own beliefs around and understanding of gender all the time.

What gender do you think people perceive you as?

On the street, dressed for work in my khaki chinos and my button down shirt I am seen as a straight white man. Dressed to go out on the town in my black leather pants with flame-motif, motorcycle boots and matching shirt I am strutting and seen as a big ol'fag or a pimp-wanna-be. I also wear large gage earrings to denote that I am not just some average guy when I am seen on the street.

Why is it important to wear the big earrings as a

distinction from men?

It lets people know that there is more to me than what they might see on the surface. They might look at me and think that I am an "alternative" type and that would be correct! It may not convey the fact that I am trans, but it gives a clue that I am certainly not conservative.

What has been harder to deal with: your own perception of your gender/sexuality or other people's perception?

My own perception gender/sexuality has

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and is changing day to day. Before I transitioned I was a butch dyke. I didn't like men in a sexual sense. I was actually disgusted with the thought of sex with a man. As I transitioned, I found myself feeling attracted to men. This was very disturbing. After much thought and analysis it was the thought of having sex with a man AS A WOMAN that was disgusting. Having sex with a man as a man was intriguing. Now, I will never have the same type of emotional connection with a man as I have with a woman, unless of course it might be a transman. Whoever the person is, they have to understand and have had the experience of being raised a girl/woman. My sexuality is very much oriented towards femme women. I should be more specific and say femme lesbian women. I am very attracted to smart, self-assured, independent, fierce high femmes. Lately I have developed an interest in Jayne Mansfield. Did you know that she had a genius IQ? So, there is a bit about my sexuality, now in terms of my gender, after being raised a woman and having experienced what it

(Interview with Cid continued on page 22)

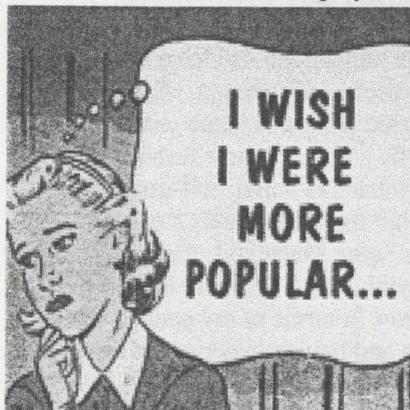
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(Interview with Cid continued from page 21)

is to be a man, I now realize that I am neither. I am not sure what that means yet. What I do know is that I don't fit in either mold. Ok, so to answer your question, others perceptions are harder because I don't have a chance to explain who I am. All they have to go on is their first impression or visual queues. I often hang in lesbian spaces and the women who are there don't even see me as being apart of them. They usually look at me as if I were some lecherous straight boy who fetishizes lesbians - ala chasing amy. Blah.

Describe an ideal partner/lover, both physically and emotionally.

Ok, I said a little about this above. I need a partner who is smart. Who is confident. Who can stand up to me because I am opinionated and stubborn. Who is femme and loves it. Who isn't afraid that femme means subservient. Who is articulate. Who has a pussy and loves it. Who is slim and firm and sexy. Who will walk around the house naked. Who will ask me to do strip-tease for her and love it. Who will wear something slutty out cause its fun. Who can handle being serious. Who doesn't expect me to be stoic and "manly" all the time. Who can role play



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with me. Who can strap on a big ol' dick and wield it (there are few things, for me, that will rival a femme in a big strap on!). Someone who is not stuck inside a box. Most likely a woman. I have no preference in terms of ethnicity. I do like women who are athletic or on the thin side. I have no preference about breast size. I love them all! I do like little tight asses.



Your partner would understand that femme meant subservient.

I'm interested in this statement. Is this a role-playing idea, an S&M

lifestyle or an old-school way of thinking? Have you been able to find partners that are both assertive and subservient? Does such a combination even exist?

Alas this issue is due to my inability to communicate clearly. What I meant was that many women associate being femme with being subservient or having less power. I like to play with power dynamics. I am a switch in terms of role playing/BDSM [Bondage Dominance/Discipline Submission/Sadism Masochism]

What is important for me to state is that I think that playing with power dynamics should be done with care and in a structured "scene" type environment. For me, it needs to be compartmentalized. In everyday life, I want an equal partner.



Do you feel you have enough of a support group?

Nope! Where are all the FTMs??? Where are the queer trans-masculine guys? Where are

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the butches and why don't they even say hi to me anymore. Boo hoo. No kidding. Even in NYC, there isn't much of a support group especially for us middle aged people.

Finding and keeping a partner is hard for all of us. Do you think it's any harder or easier for you?

Harder! What do I know about being a straight man? What do I know about interacting with straight women? I will tell you - nothing! I am an old school butch. I am attracted to femme lesbians. Now, how often will a lesbian look at what she thinks is a guy. Not often or not at all. I need a space where I can talk and define myself. I am actually going on a bisexual dating night thing. You go and meet a bunch of people. You get to sit with each person for 10 minutes and then you write down the ones that you liked. If they liked you too, the organizer will send you their contact info. I figure that maybe bisexual people will have less of a hard time with my mix and match-ness.

What kind of a role, if any, does your family play in your life? Do you have children or do you want children?

The older I get, the more I think about children. I fell deeply in love with a woman a couple of years ago and wanted us to have a child together. I would sit and daydream about our child. It kinda weird-ed me out. Now I realize that I could never raise a child

(Interview with Cid continued on page 23)

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(Interview with Cid continued from page 22)

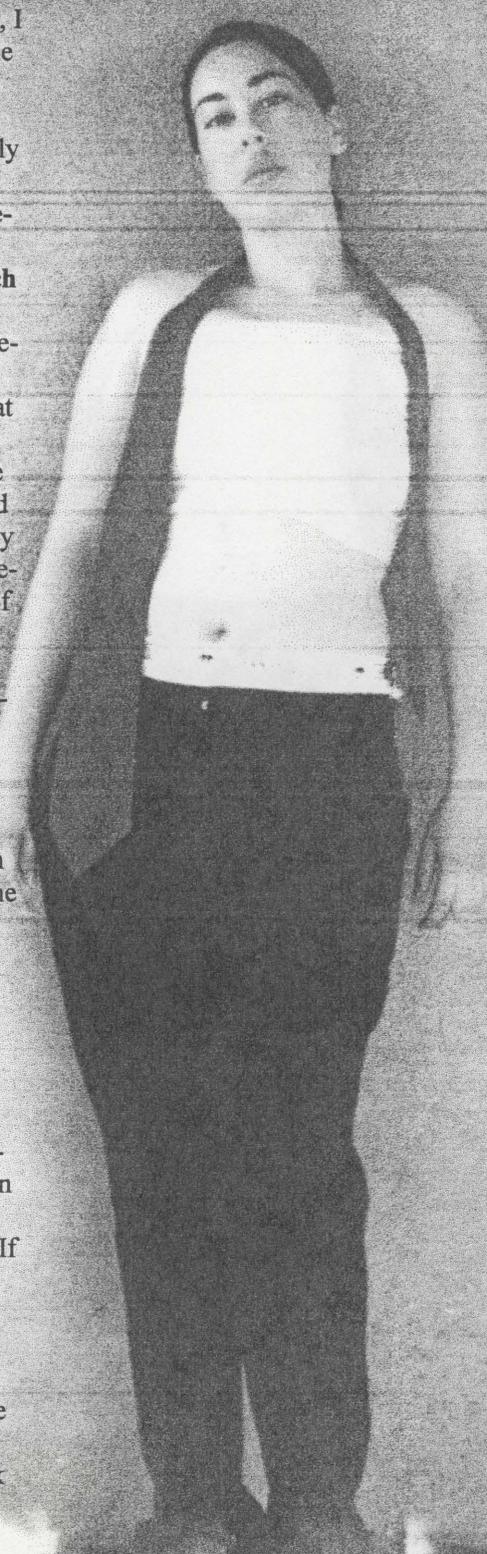
alone. I would need a partner. So, if that happens, then great. If not, I don't think that I will be lesser off. My parents would love grand-kids. At the moment they only have grand-doggies.

Cid, thanks for responding to my questions with such sincerity

Thanks for the appreciating my openness. I am also glad to hear that you have opened yourself to people who have all sorts of exteriors and presentations. It's really hard not to look at someone and have all sorts of presuppositions about who they are. It takes work to try and look beyond the exterior but if you can get there, its so worth it. I feel such praise and respect for femmes. You deal with so much crap all the time and do it so beautifully.

When I say penis=man or vagina=woman, what is your immediate thought?

First off, Man/Woman are culturally defined terms and in my mind don't refer to anatomy but behavior. If you were to say penis=male or vagina=female, then I would say, well yes but would want to challenge the misconception that everyone's genitals look the same. Is a penis still a penis even if its only an inch long? What



about a clitoris that is an inch long?

How do you feel the label

"bisexual" relates to you, if at all?

I am bisexual. I am attracted to men, women, and other. My primary attraction is to women, but I am certainly open to all sorts of other encounters. I don't care about the stigma that is associated with this label. I have a T-Shirt that says: Dyke, Fag, Straight-man. It just covers the bases. Oh, and fag porn is awesome! I love it because the guys look like they are having a good time.

I look across the room and see a man.

You look across the room and see a femme. We may never connect because I assume that you are a man and you may assume I'm a straight woman, so unless we got to talking, I wouldn't approach you. Now, where am I going with this? How are we to connect?

Ahhh, such a great question. I often think about this issue. I wear T-Shirts that I hope will convey the fact that I am trans or FTM. I recently made a shirt that says "Trans-Dyke". How else can I convey to you that I am not a man! I could shave off my facial hair and thus look a bit more andro. Every 3rd day, I like this idea. Most days I don't. I guess that I would encourage lesbian women to keep an open mind if they see a "guy" in lesbian space. I NEVER assume that a woman is straight just because she is femme! I know better after learning that lesson the hard way!

A lesbian friend of mine recently announced that she was beginning the transition to being male. I was supportive because whatever makes her happy is truly what I want for her, yet part of me mourned for that sexy butch lesbian that would soon be a man. What do you think of that?

This is yet another interesting issue. I really don't see myself as being that different from who I was before I "transitioned". I am physically more masculine, but who I am in my head is

(Interview with Cid continued on page 24)



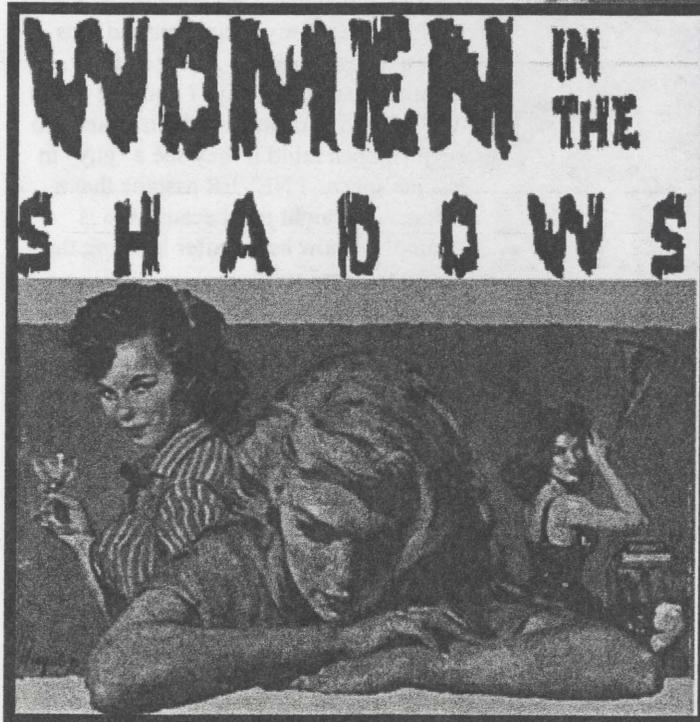
(Interview with Cid continued from page 23)

the same. I am more comfortable with sex as I like my body a lot more. I never liked my breasts. I understand that alot of the attraction to a butch woman is the irony of her female body and her/his masculine gender. I have simply taken my masculinity to another place. If I had been able to pass without hormones and/or surgery, I probably would not have transitioned. The thing is that we aren't really given many choices. What if I want to have surgery and have my breasts removed but I don't want to "transition". That becomes a difficult goal due to the Harry Benjimen Standards of Care which dictate that you need to have a letter from a therapist in order to have surgery. It seems amazing to me that a biological man can go and get breast implants on a dare, but a biological woman cannot take them off without professional intervention.

Is there anything else you'd like to say that I haven't asked?

Wow, there is so much that I would like to say. It has been an incredible journey the last couple of years. I didnt have all of the repercussions of my transition worked out before hand. It seems like common sense now, but there was so much to deal with! Somehow I didnt realize that I would become invisible to the lesbian/dyke community. Well Duh! OK, so now I am struggling to regain visibility and acknowledgement. I am not a straight person. I am not a fag really because I don't really relate to their culture. I am a dyke and always will be.

Thanks for your time and openness.



M. Manners' Guide

to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior toward (and by) Androgynes

(Or, Brothersister Raphael Explains it All to You)

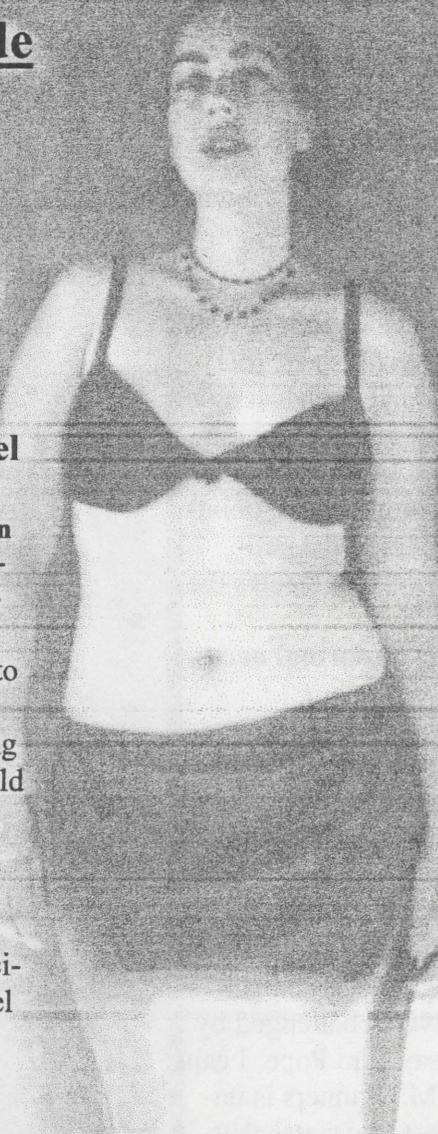
What pronoun does one use for an androgyne, intersexual, epicene, gender outlaw, or transgendered person?

Obviously, it is polite to accede to people's preferences, if you know what those preferences are. Guessing wrong is a trivial faux pas that should be fully atoned for by a quick apology. However, referring to a person by a pronoun against that person's stated wish is churlish.

M. Manners' own preference, incidentally, is 'whatever makes you feel comfortable.' Some friends refer to zir as 'he,' some as 'she,' and that's perfectly fine by zir. A few go so far as to switch occasionally (which M. Manners calls, with apologies to Janet Kagan, 'hellsparking the pronoun'); others use a nongendered pronoun like 'sie' or 'zie.'

What do I do if I can't tell what sex someone is?

Most of the time, you go through a peculiar dance in trying to find out, as chronicled ad nauseam on the Saturday Night Live 'Pat' skits. M. Manners has been asked by an insurance agent, 'Of course, you know, men pay more for life insurance than

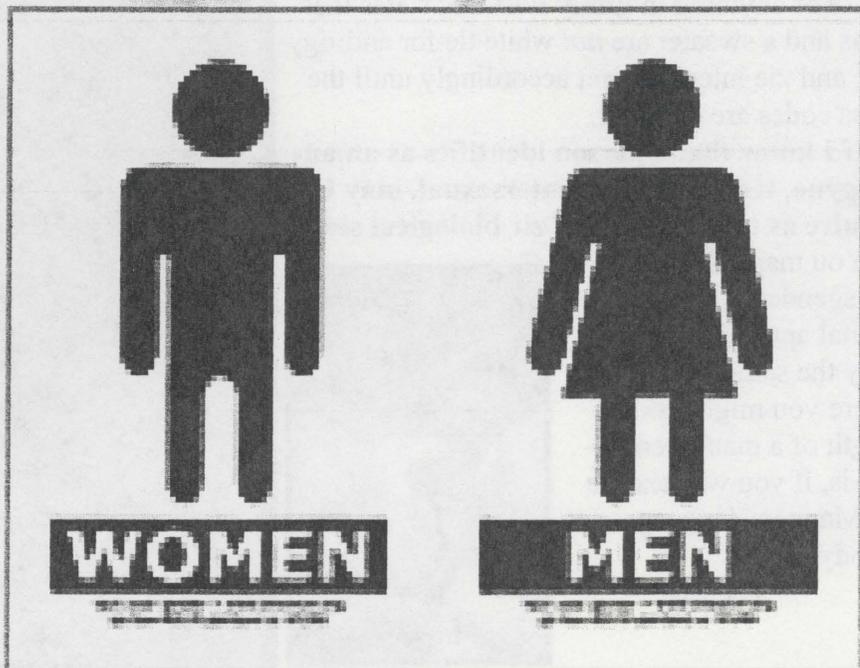


women. So, ah, would that be a good thing or a bad thing?'

Other times, you stutter out 'sir, er, ma'am, um, whatever you are.' This is known as "radaring", after the way Radar O'Reilly addressed Major Hoolihan.

Sometimes, too, you respond to ambiguous sex with paralysis, refusing to use any pronoun at all, and becoming more and more nervous and uncomfortable as a result.

Occasionally you even see fit to *tell* an androgyne what sex zie is. M. Manners zirselt was once informed 'you're just a woman with very short hair -- I didn't realize from the back.' That, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, is what you do. If you meant to ask what you



(Continued from page 25)

should do, the answer is: ask politely what pronoun the person would prefer. The other solutions are patronizing, inept, pathetic, and boorish, in that order.

What is the job description of a Gender Oracle?

A Gender Oracle is a person whom others approach to ask about an androgyne's sex. It is well if the Oracle can be persuaded to relish zir role as an ongoing joke; more often, zie dreads it as a sticky social situation, and may transfer this discomfort to zir androgyne client. In such cases the androgyne is well advised to commiserate, pointing out that it is the poor manners of the petitioner, not the client's androgyny, that creates the awkward situation.

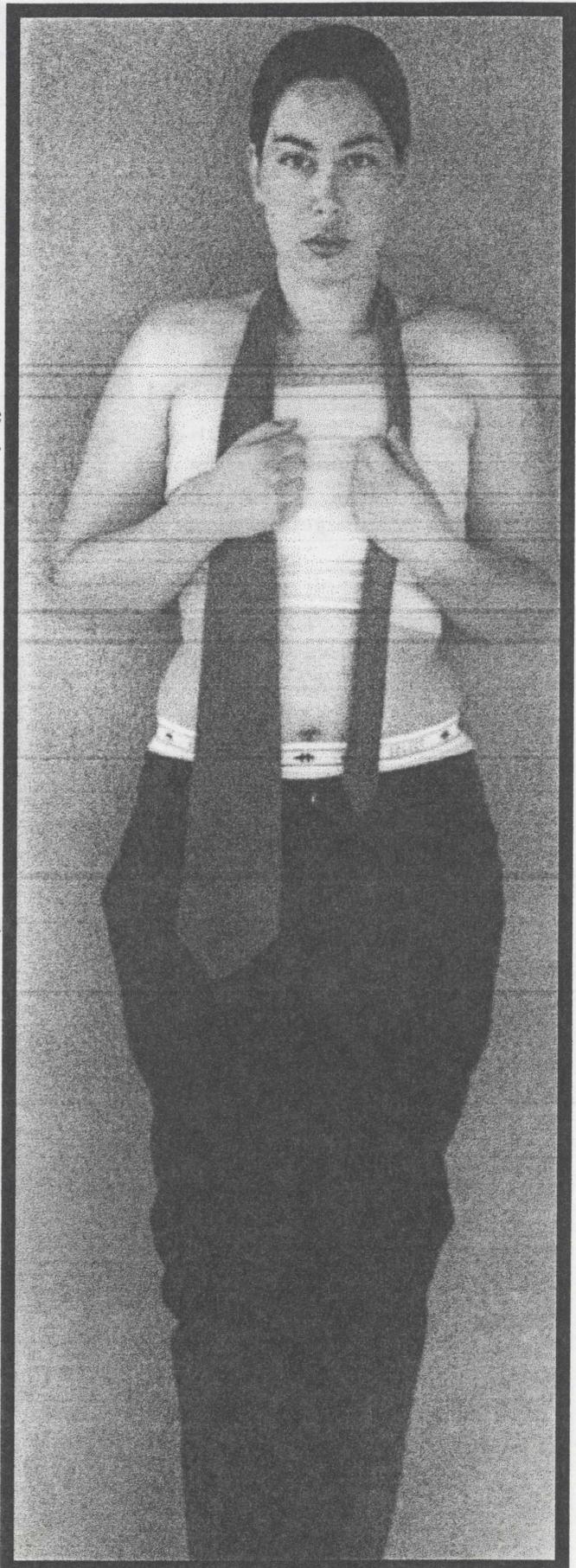
What do androgynes wear on formal occasions?

Obviously, if a restaurant's dress code states that men must wear ties and women must wear skirts or dresses, androgynes are not covered and can wear anything they want. M. Manners is reminded of Father Guido Sarducci's appearance on Saturday Night Live to hawk the 'Be Pope Kit.' Persons wishing to be Pope could purchase appropriate clothing, including a Pope Pantsuit for women; if a female Pope were challenged by a maitre d', she could simply say, 'I'm Pope. I can wear what I want.' Similarly, M. Manners is unaware of anything in Emily Post that states that jeans and a sweater are *not* white tie for androgynes, and zie intends to act accordingly until the dress codes are clarified.

If I know that a person identifies as an androgyne, transsexual, or intersexual, may I inquire as to the details of zir biological sex?

You may ask after a transgendered person's genital appearance in exactly the same situations where you might ask the length of a man's penis -- that is, if you will excuse M. Manners' language, not bloody often.

The End



Gender Interview with Teresa Eves

SOFT BUTCH

What is your gender? I am totally female. I love that fact that I am a womyn that loves womyn. Very sexy. Quite a turn on.

What gender do you think people perceive you as?

I think people see me as boi/not male....boi because I am short, especially kids. However my friends see me as female for sure.

Define boi.

boi means to me kind of the same as soft butch. I am a female, never have nor do I want to be a male in anyway. All I want to do is love womyn. I don't want any thing hanging between my legs. However I do tend to look a little boi ish. Wear men's clothes (not always) do not wear cologne.

What has been harder to deal with: your own perception of your

gender/sexuality or other people's perception?

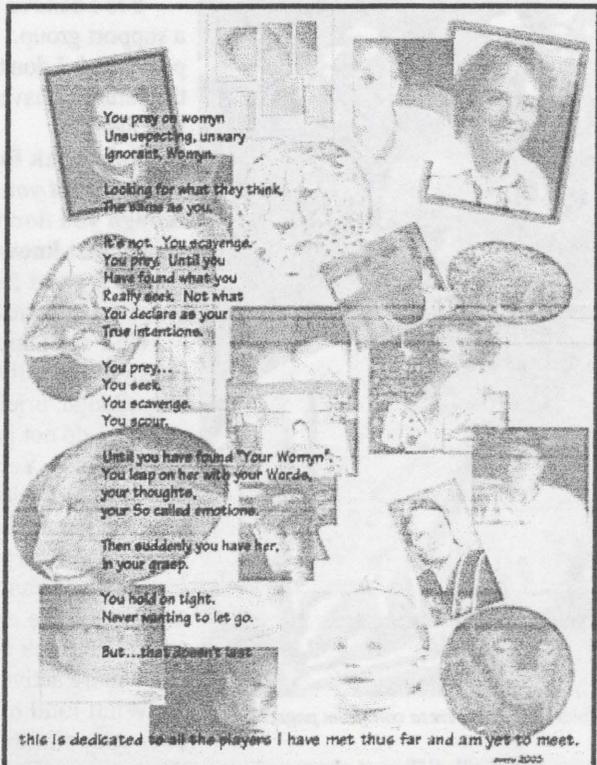
Hmmm...when I was younger it was gawd tough question. I would have to say the harder would be other people's perception. As I got older it was my own (older as in 21-mid 30's). I was born and raised in a strict catholic home. I was outed when I was 16 and my mother went into a deep depression. My fault? I don't think so today but I thought so then. Today at the age of 41 I am getting better everyday, but I am mostly happy with me.

Could you talk about your experience of being outed?

Both my sister and I lived at home, we both had girlfriends. My girlfriend and my sister's girlfriend took off together, and my mother figured it out from how devastated both of us were. She (mother) asked us and we both said yes we are lesbian. My mother blamed my sister for me being lesbian and my mother was convinced it was just a phase for me.

Describe an ideal partner/lover, both physically and emotionally.

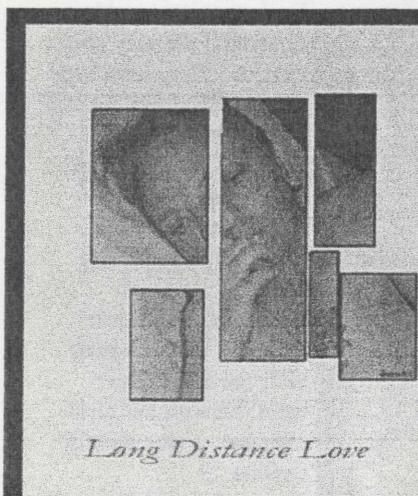
Gawd another tough one! An ideal partner would have to be just that, a partner. Someone who loves me, supports me, a womyn who is honest and not afraid to hurt my fragile feelings. A womyn with a sense of humour, and compassion. A womyn with goals in her life. One who is willing to learn and understand my illnesses as long as I con-



Teresa Eves

You Prey on Womyn

This piece is dedicated to all the womyn that I have met on the internet. The womyn that find it necessary to hide behind other faces, other identities. The womyn that tell you what they think you want to hear so they can grasp you in their clutches and hold on only to let you go when they find another victim



Long Distance Love - means that I am not whole without the one I love from afar. Although I don't have anyone at this time. I did at one time.

Teresa Eves

(Interview with Teresa continued on page 28)

Teresa Eves



(Interview with Teresa cont from page 27)

have dated all different shapes sizes and looks in my day (laughing). However I have never been with a femme. My choice hmmm not sure. Someday maybe. If I was to partner up with a femme I would treat her accordingly. Well I think I answered that a long time ago.

Do you feel you have enough of a support group?

Yes I believe I do have enough of a support group. I have lots of support which I don't utilize. I may in the future. I have in the past, and I will again.

You speak for many of us when you say that you have support, though you don't use it. And that is ok. Just knowing we have support is a great feeling. I guess that wasn't a question, hu?

No I don't think that was really a question. lol silly I will tell you why though, briefly At this time in my life I do not go out any where. I do not work. Yes I have a job. I communicate with very few people but I am getting better everyday and have come a very long way in the last 2 years. I am going out a bit more and more every month lets say, when I am back together I will become more active in the community.

What kind of a role, if any, does your family play in your life?

Well my mother passed away a few years ago. She knew I was lesbian, but I am sure she was not really accepting of it until shortly before she died. It took many, many years for her to come around. Almost 15. Oh she loved me and let me bring my girlfriends home, I also have a sister who is lesbian, that helped, but I am sure she (mom) just put up with it

because she loved me. When I was first outed at 16 or 21 I don't remember anymore, my parents saw how bad I hurt and wanted to protect me from that pain. As for my dad...he is still alive in a different city a few hours away. He too is very supportive but he also puts up with it I think. He

just wants his daughters to be happy and he supports most decisions I make. Both of my sisters are very supportive, one of which is a lesbian and the other has been married and divorced and has a boyfriend now.

Both my sister and her boyfriend are very supportive. They both love me for who I am not who I sleep with.

So... did your lesbian sister and you ever fight over the same woman? I'm mostly teasing.

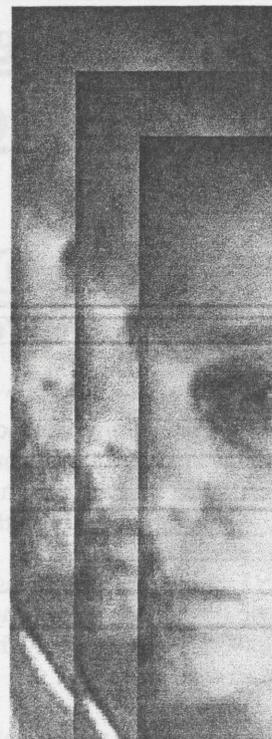
No never. She never went out with my girls after me and I never went out with her girls after her. I was mostly serious. ;)

Do you have children or do you want children?

I do not have any chil-

(Teresa cont on page 29)

Teresa Eves



Look Inside My Soul - stands for yesterday, today and tomorrow.



Gender Interview with and artwork by Teresa Eves **SOFT BUTCH**

(Teresa cont from page 28)

dren nor do I want any. I am to old for that and I am to selfish as well. I am better than I have been in the past as in selfish but I still don't think I would be good for a child full time. There have been a few in and out of my life and sometimes it didn't work out to well. I can love them, I just can't handle them too well.

You don't have children and you don't want them. Thank you for saying it. I am the same way. When I say that though, I feel guilt, like that makes me a bad person. The classic scenario is someone asking if I'm married, NO, and if I have children, NO. They look at me with pity and reassure me that I'll find the right man and that I'm still young enough to have children. Sometimes I just smile and nod and sometimes I explain that I'm a lesbian and don't want kids. Telling people I'm a lesbian seems to make them feel better, as if my lesbianism was a sufficient reason for being childless. Also, not wanting children does not mean we are anti-children!

Very true. Being brought up in the family I was not the only one that did not want to have children. Even my straight sis doesn't have them, nor does she want them. (see how I extracted that question?) LOL

When I say penis=man or vagina=woman, what is your immediate thought? Interesting question. When you say penis my immediate thought is yuck, get away from me. Gross even. Man-I don't want one never did, never will. Vagina=woman, I think sexy, sensual, wet, hot, explore. I think I will stop there.

What of penis envy? Was Freud right? I don't know what you mean here. I don't have a penis and I don't want one. I enjoy making love with what I was given.

This whole interview is centered around gender, which to

QueerRamblings issue 30, p. 29



Time Slips Away - My mother passed away in 1997, a turning point in my life.

some degree deals with anatomy (to boob or not to boob, that is the question.) When I ask the whole penis/vagina question I've been pleased to receive a wide variety of answers. Women's responses ranged from really wanting a penis to gagging at the thought of one. We are diverse in our tastes and that is wonderful! Back in the day (exactly what that means is subjective) the idea of penetration, even by fingers, was thought to be very un-politically correct. **What do you think of that?**

I have nothing against penetration of a finger, tongue or even a strap on. I just don't want the male body attached to it. Personally I find a strap on very enjoyable from time to time. What one does in their own bedroom is there very own business who am I to say if it is right or wrong?

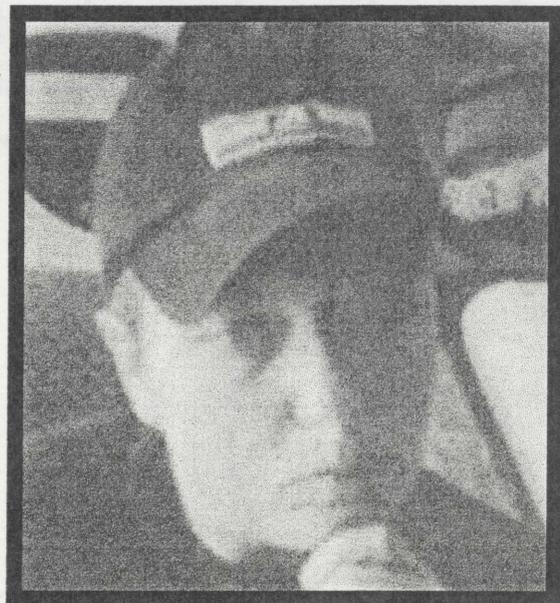
How have you incorporated religion into your life after your catholic upbringing (if at all)? Well my religion has

really fallen by the way side. I will not even spell God "God," I will spell it Gawd though. I stay as far away from religion as I can, but I do have spirituality. The Gawd of my understanding will love and accept me as long as I have faith and believe in them.

In your art as well as what you've told me about you, there is a sense of, shall I say, resentment toward sex. The feeling that giving yourself to a person sexually has resulted in a loss of control and feeling of abandonment. How do your personal experiences, religion and health factor into this?

I love sex, I enjoy sex very much. I just don't like it with men. The thought of it makes me sick. I had a tendency to believe that I needed to have sex with the people I wanted to befriend, sort of like I had nothing else to offer. I have a very bad habit of becoming attracted to womyn who are married or out of reach. I am thinking (actually I was thinking about this the other day) I want to show them the true pleasure they are missing out on. Am or do I think I am a goddess of love? No, just very tender.

Thanks for your time



Teresa Eves

www.QueerRamblings.com

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Gender Interview with Hestia Femme Lesbian

What is your gender?

I'm a woman. *shrug* A friend of mine believes we should have more options for gender. More labels. But I fit pretty well under the 'female' label.

Do you consider yourself butch, femme, both, neither?

I think of myself as a femme dyke. I'm pretty feminine, yes, but I'm not the stereotypical lipstick lesbian with the makeup and dresses and painted nails. I'm a lot more low maintenance, but I'm definitely not butch or androgynous.

What type of woman are you interested in?

I'm very attracted to butch women. I love the strong, sexy, big, butch dykes that all seem to date each other around here.

Why do you think that is?

I think all the butches and andros here date each other because there seems to be this idea going around of what a "real" lesbian is/looks like. Every once in a blue moon, I do attract a butch



Matthew 5: 30

And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.



<http://venusenvy.keenspace.com/>

here in my city and they ALWAYS ask "are you sure you're gay?" because I "don't look gay". It's a group of about fifty women who just seem to rotate girlfriends because that's the way it's always been done, I guess.

What do you think about Penis Envy?

I have insane penis envy. The easiest way for me to get off is to think of myself with a penis, fucking my woman...but I don't believe that makes me any less of a woman. I don't think I need a separate label for my gender because of that.

I've been having dreams about being a woman with a penis fucking another woman for as long as

(Interview with Hestia cont. on page 31)

Gender Interview with Hestia Femme Lesbian

(Interview with Hestia continued from page 30)

I can remember. They started turning me on when I was about 10 or so. When I was 18, I had my first wet dream. In that dream, I was watching a man talk with two prostitutes. He told them that he had to go home and have dinner with his family, but he'd meet them later. When the man came back later...I was in his body. There were two big, busty, blonde chicks crawling all over me and I had the most intense orgasm. I woke up thinking "what the hell just happened". Before then, I had no idea women had wet dreams.

The whole penis envy thing started carrying over into my relationships when I was 23. My gf at the time bought a strap on. She was SO excited to pound away at my vagina with that damned thing. But the only way I could enjoy it was to think of myself with a dick fucking HER.

I've actually been having issues lately with the whole penis thing. I'm a dyke. 100%. I don't date men and I admit to being a close-minded, prejudiced idiot when it comes to bisexuals. I don't agree with that way of life...but to each his own. At the same time though, bisexuality is certainly unacceptable when it comes to MY life. But as I get older, I find myself more and more attracted to men. It isn't the whole man, though. I'm not at all interested in what a man has to say, his goals, dreams, etc. I just want to play with his penis. Why? Cuz I want one.

I've been over this again and again in my head and that's all it is. Me wanting to play with something I can't have...but it still bothers me a bit.

What do you think of the whole concept of Butch/Femme?

I love dating butch women. I love the butch/femme dynamic. I think it's amazing. I loved how proud and beautiful and special I felt with my last butch girlfriend.

I like butch women because they're sexy.



There's nothing better than a confident, good looking butch.

I also like them because they are low maintenance and practical. Kinda like my Neon. No waiting two hours for a butch to get dressed. No whining



"do I look good today", etc. I'm a low maintenance 15-minutes-to-get-ready-jeans-and-t-shirt femme dyke and I like my women like that.

My only problem with the Butch/Femme thing is all the wannabes. I'm femme, I like to cook, I like cleaning, crocheting, sewing, etc. But I don't do those things because I'm femme and I'm trying to fit into some mold. It's just part of who I am.

Lately, I've been meeting so many younger butch dykes that do certain things simply because they think it makes them more butch. Like fixing cars, playing pool, etc. They go out of their way to dress a certain way, walk a certain way, etc. and it's irritating. They try SO hard and it just looks pathetic. What happened to all the genuine butch dykes who are the way they are simply because it's right for them? All the younger dykes are just trying to fit into some mold of what they think they should be and it's so stupid to me.

So now when I meet someone new, I can't help but wonder if the whole butch thing is for real...or if they are just trying to have a cooler lesbian image.

Thanks for your time and openness.

Pierced

by D.W.

"Leave it to Michelle to completely set a sista up..."

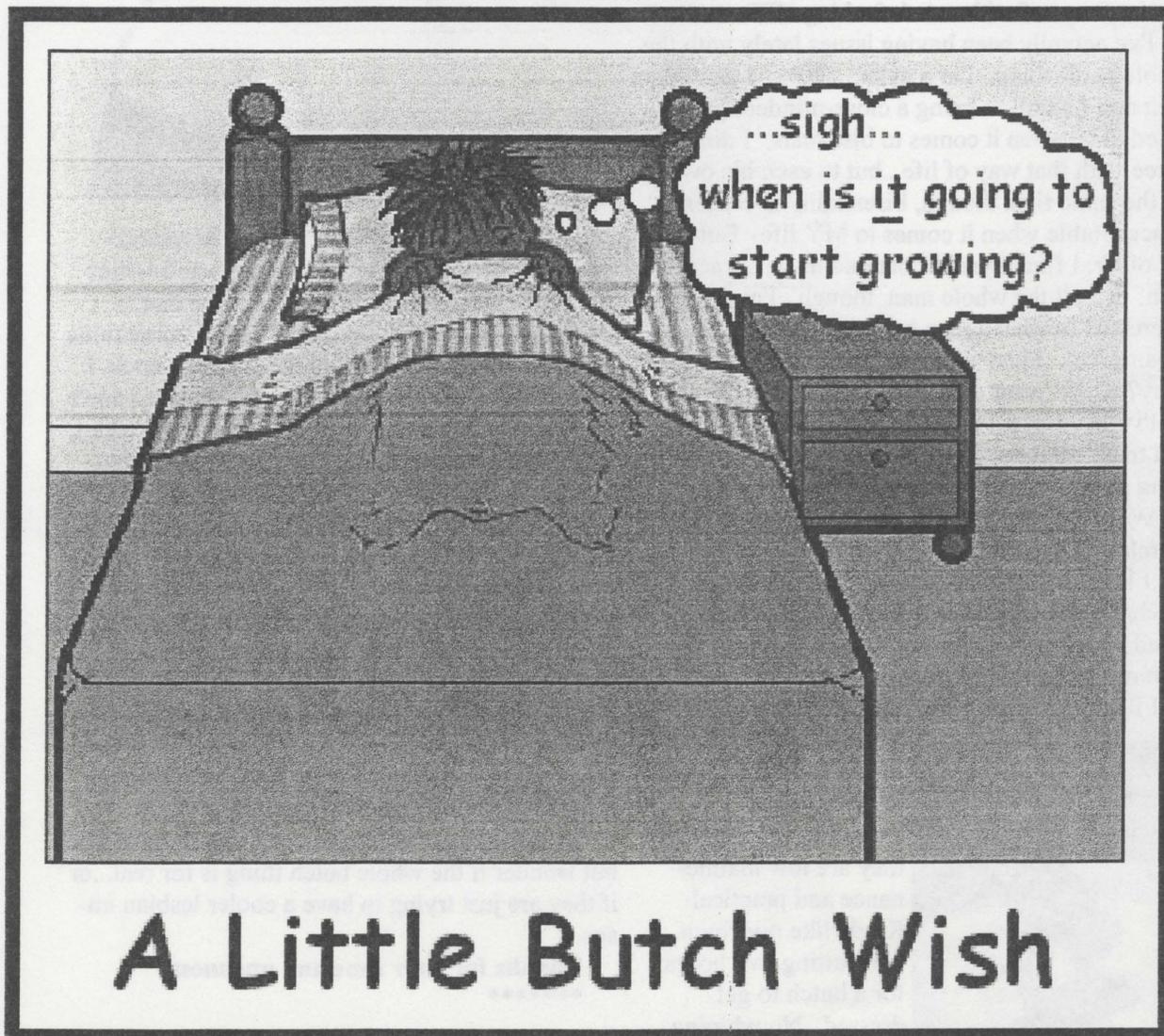
Maybe I should start from the beginning. I'm Quette, a Philly-born womyn-luvn-womyn of the stud persuasion. Living this thing we call "the life" and loving all 27 years of it. An IT professional by trade, I still like to carry it just a little thugged out on the streets. Twenty pairs of Timbs, baggy b-boy jeans, the whole nine. As looks go, I'm modest but I gets mine. I keep my shoulder-length hair in cornrows, by all accounts

the best way to frame my features: semi-thick brows, chubby dimpled cheeks and brown eyes the femmes tell me have a glint of gold in them from time to time. Brown skin (the type India sings about) and a thin athletic frame distinguishable only by my unfortunately large breasts (a 34 D the last time I wore a 'girl' bra). That last feature is what led to my current predicament.

As you can imagine, being both thin and "buxom" doesn't exactly work with the whole stud image. But always being one for uniqueness, I decided to use this prevalent feature to my advantage. The result was a large rosary tattoo trailing around my neck and fal-

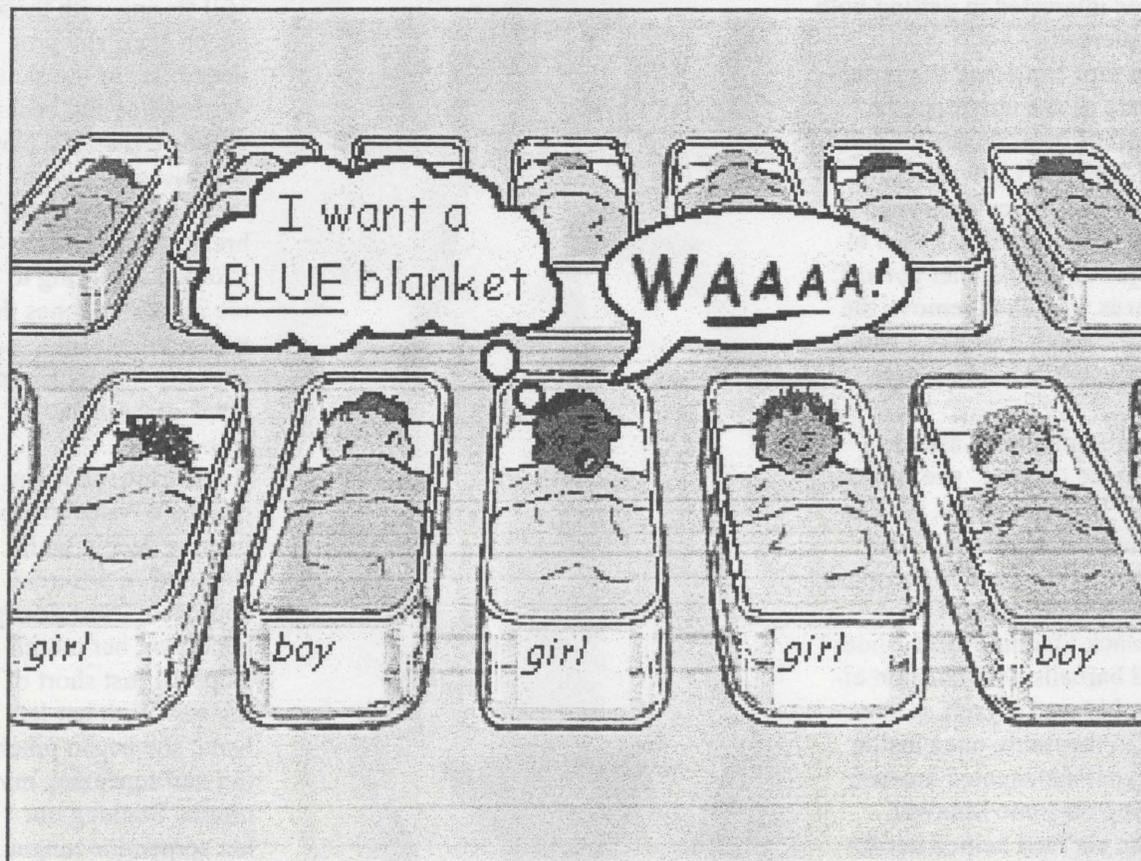
ling right between ole lefty and righty. Surefire attention grabbers in the wife beater, please believe. The next idea I had been reluctantly considering was a nipple piercing. Radical? Yes. But two silvery mysteries poking out from the wife-beater PLUS the tattoo would draw the femmes in like bees to a hive. So, after 2 months of thinking it over, I finally gathered the balls to go into a tattoo parlor and check out their piercing artists. That lasted all of 5 minutes. Let's just say a big fat White guy named Lou ain't palming my tit, piercing or not. I decided the

(Pierced continued on page 33)



By Karen David (KD to my friends), destined to live a butch life from day one.

A Little Butch Wish



Birth of a Butch

(Pierced continued from page 32)

best thing to do would be to ask around, beginning with my dawg (and piercing freak) Michelle Rogers.

Having known me for 10 years, Michelle could easily guess who my ideal piercer would be. Preferably gay, but female regardless of orientation. Michelle produced a calling card for a South Street parlor called "Penetration". From the rainbow graphics, I knew it was gay friendly and from Michelle I knew to ask for Nadia, her cousin. And that's when I was set up.

That very Friday, I decided to check the joint out. "Penetration"...just the name

made me shudder. Still, I made the trek in my Expedition and was pleasantly surprised. The place was definitely off-the-wall but with a cool "Jill Scott" sort of aura to it. EVERYBODY in there was clearly gay, so no chance of another "Lou" incident. After checking out some of the cases of body jewelry, I asked a thin White guy with 4-colored hair if someone named Nadia worked there. He directed me down a short hallway towards an open door covered in rainbows and Black power symbols. "I like this chick already," I thought to myself. Inside, Nadia stood with her back to us. As she turned, our eyes locked and I exhaled. Before

me was about 5 feet of caramel-complected femme sweet treat. Her big soulful eyes, full lips and cropped natural hair reminded me of a mini Erykah Badu. I couldn't EVEN believe Michelle referred me to this fine-ass woman! How was I supposed to act right with her staring at my bare tits? I must have looked like a deer caught in headlights because Nadia quickly extended her warmest hospitalities my way. Her warm hand. Her warm smile. Her warm honey voice inviting me to sit down and tell her just what I wanted. Quelling the desire to tell her what I really wanted, I shyly explained to her

(Pierced continued on page 34)

(Pierced continued from page 33)

that I was interested in getting both nipples pierced.

Nadia in turn explained the procedure to me as she unwrapped a velvet roll of several needles and clamps. "Basically, I will clamp the nipple and pierce it through with one of the needles. I then insert the jewelry and clean you off. Afterwards, you can't remove the jewelry for about 2 weeks," Nadia said, all the while holding my gaze.

"Can you numb me," I asked.

"I can put ice on you," she smiled. I smiled. "If you're ready, we can go pick out some jewelry," she said, ushering me back to the glass case. I picked out a set of 16 gauge, black titanium "horseshoes" – curved barbells with balls on either end. I braced myself as she lead me to the room, once inside lighting coconut-scented incense and putting on some Maxwell which she claimed helped her focus. Uh huh, helped me focus too... After cleaning and warming both her hands and instruments came the moment of truth, time for the sports bra to come off. As long as I've been in this life, showing my body to a woman for the first time has never been easy. The reaction is usually a Grinch-like grin that leaves me feeling like a piece of sirloin. Regardless, I sucked up my pride and whipped'em out.

She bit her lip and blushed a little before smiling and telling me to relax and breath deeply. I tried to keep from fucking up my boxers as this woman rubbed ice on my nipple before placing it in a small clamp. She held my eyes with hers and spoke to me the entire time, revealing her stats: 21, college student, new to the area, single and 110% lesbian. When the ice melted, she began to knead my left breast, gently working her way up to the nipple. Gripping it between



her soft fingers, and still staring with those cocoa eyes, she produced one of the slender needles and began to pierce me. The pain was intense. Too intense. I sucked in my breath as she slowly inserted it, talking to me in hushed tones the whole time. Still I couldn't "take it like a man" and she had to stop.

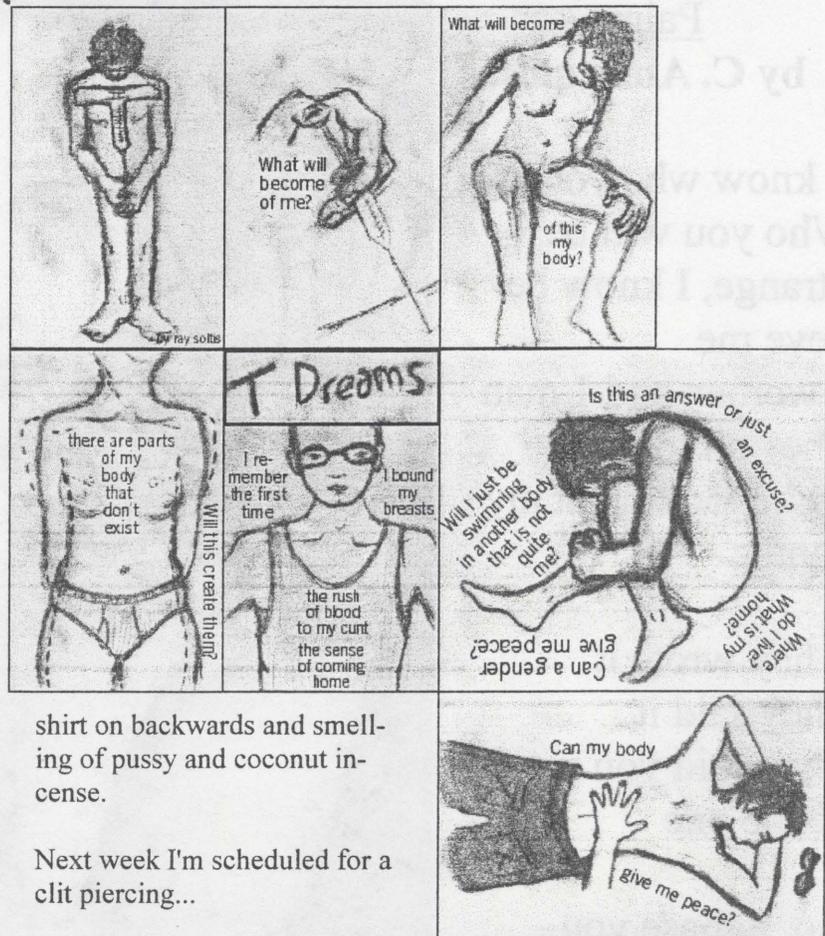
Reassuring me it was ok, she advised me to breathe deeply while she tried "a different approach." She slowly bent over, her mouth stopping just short of my ear. With her left hand, she began pinching and squeezing my nipple. Sticking out her serpentine tongue, she traced a path around my ear before whispering "Pain is pleasure ... it hurts like heaven ... let me take you there. Let me pierce your flesh and sear your soul."

I gagged at this bizarre development but couldn't fight the facts: she was turning me the fuck on. I lost myself in her as she sucked and nibbled my earlobes, then trailed her tongue down my neck. Just as I felt her plump lips biting my neck, I felt the sharp piercing sensation again in my left nipple. I flinched, but Nadia held me steady, her knee sliding squarely into my

(Pierced continued on page 35)

(Continued from page 34)

crotch. As she ran the entire needle through my nipple, I felt the pain, but embraced the pleasure. She twisted the needle and I twisted my hands around her full ass, palming and squeezing as she slowly rocked her hips. Just when the pain brought me to the brink, it was over and the horseshoe was in. I barely caught my breath before Nadia's hot tongue glided over my chest, swirling up and around my right breast. This time, rather than using the clamp to keep my nipple steady, Nadia simply caught it in between her teeth. I let out a small sigh as she pulled it outward with her teeth and pierced it through. Slowly she twirled and twisted the needle, her tongue all the while teasing the tip of my nipple with a soft flickering motion. The pain was excruciating yet satisfying, heightened by the fact that this tiny woman was in control of the situation. As my hands slid under her skirt and teased her moistened g-string, I felt myself on the verge. My clit throbbed as she slowly ground her knee into my jeans. With my heart racing and sweat beading on my forehead, I slid my hand into her panties and began to insert my long middle finger into her dripping pussy. Then, blackness. I'm still unsure if it was a stone cold blackout, an asthma attack or if I just busted the biggest nut in lesbian history. Maybe even a combination of all three. When I came to however, I was where I am now: in my truck, my

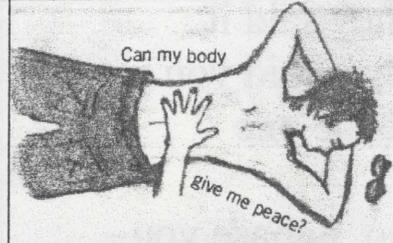


shirt on backwards and smelling of pussy and coconut incense.

Next week I'm scheduled for a clit piercing...

THE END

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http://www.coyotecomics.com/inbetween1.html



kd lang

She's Terrific!
 America's greatest solo piano artist
Gladys Bentley
 own bomber of sophisticated songs
 with the same type of gay entertainment
 that has made the 442 Club famous
MONA'S CLUB 440
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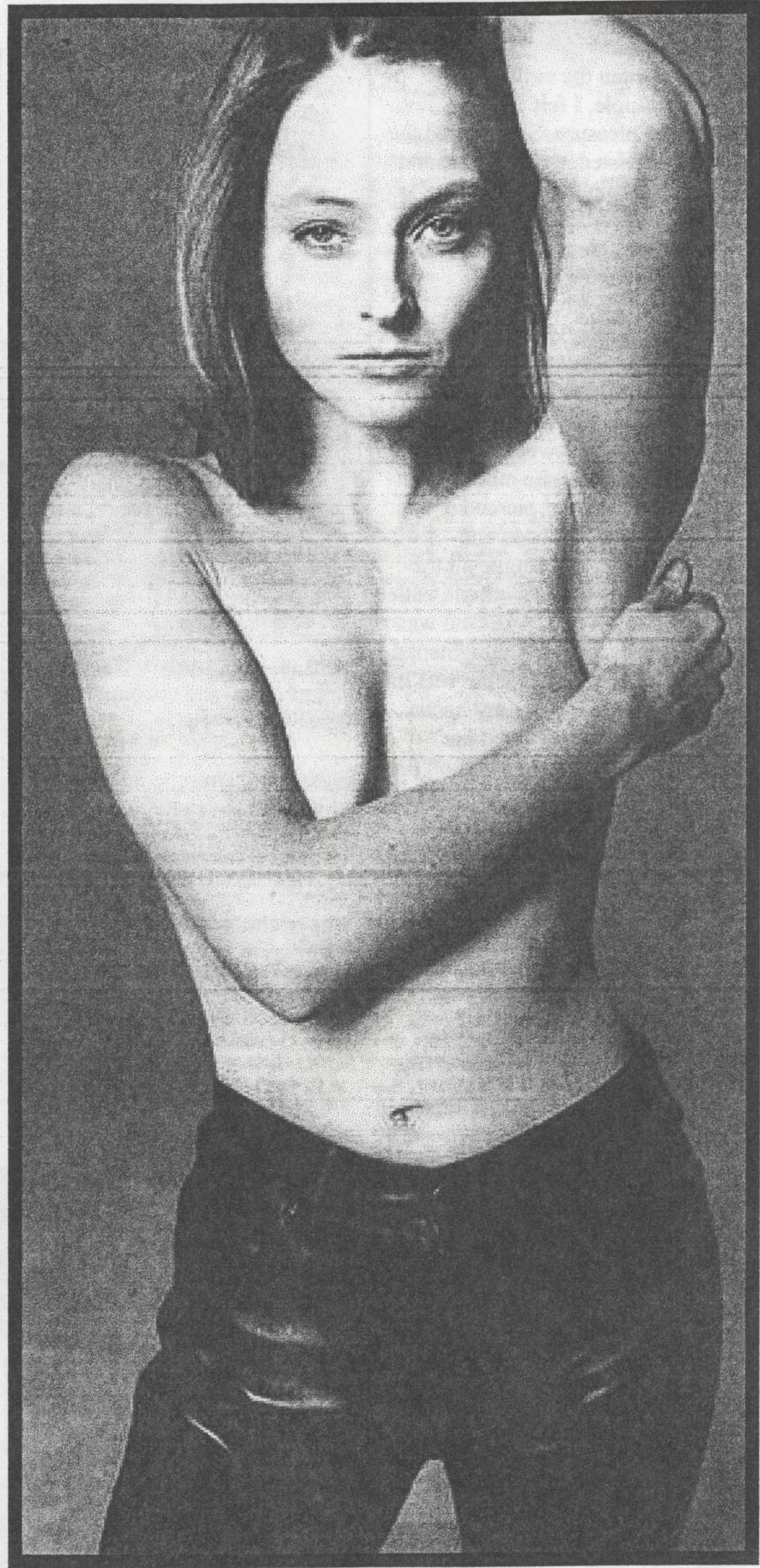
Palms
by C. Amezquita

I know who you are
Who you will be
Strange, I know believe me
3 women and 1 man
They all told me
while looking at my
hand

They wrote it
They said it
They said you would
be the one

So, I chase you
I wanted it to be true
Its seems so far away
I'm praying I'll live if
only for that day

I remember you from
my dream
Romantic to you it
must seem
And I met you before
When another my
heart tore
I lost the pieces
But this time I know
what I am looking for





Baby Butch Choices

the straight butch

By Ish Vanden

I finally realized it this year: I'm butch.

Not classic butch: too sissy for a motorcycle; too shy for a tux (although I do have a natty grey suit that makes me look like an Edwardian schoolboy). Way too fond of being penetrated to be stone. But nerdy academic butch, computer geek butch with an armful of books and a headful of dirty

thoughts, a startling number of which involve my chances of getting to fuck other people up the ass.

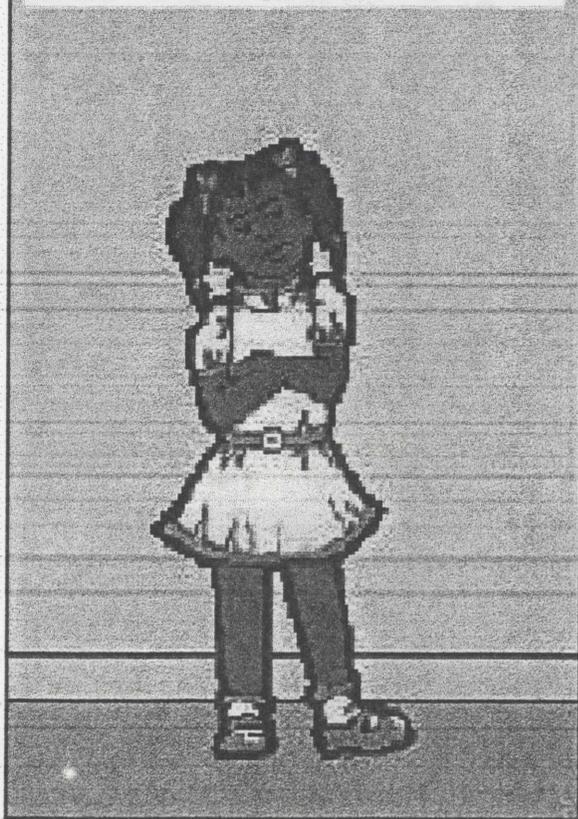
All things considered, it might seem amazing that it took me so long to realize this. As a very small child, I hanged my dolls and demanded an Action Man (with "eagle swivel eyes", no less) instead. As soon as my parents let me, I cropped my hair short. When I started buying my own clothes, I dressed in jeans and flannel shirts and Doc Martens (even before I had the faintest inkling that this was baby dyke uni-

form). I dreamed of owning a leather jacket and a welding torch. Given my first bra at puberty, I wore it for about a week then discarded it forever. I probably don't need to add that I never wore skirts or heels or make-up. In short, I was a cliché.

I'm not transexual; I'm inordinately pleased with my androgynous nontrans-female body, small tits and greedy powerful cunt, and I have no impulse to alter them. I'm not even transgendered, I think: although I happily aspire to be-

(straight butch continued on page 38)

Before playtime...



...5 minutes later



Easter Sunday Butch

(straight butch continued from page 37)

ing "transgressively" gendered, I'm not interested in "cross"-dressing. My clothes are usually unisex, but I don't bind my breasts, pack in everyday life (although I do own a nice purple-and-white swirly strap-on), or otherwise try to "pass" as male-bodied. But I get "sir"-ed some of the time anyway, which entertains me. I've never had a strong sense of myself as gendered at all, but yeah: I guess you could say I'm probably on the butch side. Oh, I can occasionally play with and enjoy femininity - as drag (and on me, it looks

like drag, believe me). What it will never be is remotely natural for me.

And I open doors for everybody.

Growing up, I was so blatantly dykey, so incapable of acting like your average straight girl, that for part of my teens I assumed, as many people around me did, that I must be a lesbian. I actually tentatively came out to my parents (who were wholly un-surprised) before I came to terms with the one big obstacle:

I don't want to have sex with girls. I want to have sex with boys.

OK, I may not be a perfect Kinsey 0 (hell, who is?); I've experienced the odd flicker of attraction for other women (invariably also butch, just to complicate things even further) here and there. But the overwhelming majority of the people I find myself wanting to fuck are male, to the extent that I feel even calling myself bisexual would misrepresent my sexual orientation. Grudgingly, I have had to admit to myself: I'm heterosexual.

There seem to be no social models for what I am. After scouring the entire net, I could

(straight butch continued on page 39)

(Continued from page 38)

only come up with 4 or 5 references to the mere existence of butch heterosexual women.

I've wondered if I am appropriating an identity and a culture I have no claim to, by dressing in a way which many people would see as "queer": trendy straight girl going for a walk on the wild side before scuttling back to the safety of heterosexual privilege again.

But to assume that gender transgression is somehow the exclusive property of LGBT folks is to accept that heterosexual gender roles are fixed and unchanging, that the institutional version of heterosexuality is the only possible way for women and men to "exchange erotic energy", in Carol Queen's phrase. I have to believe that it isn't.

I can't and won't play by the rules of institutional heterosexuality (and believe me, I've tried - briefly and disastrously - having figured that I might improve my chances of getting laid if people didn't automatically assume I was queer). I'm not attracted to generic straight boys; that kind of uncomplicated masculinity seems very dull and restricted to me, and the men who turn me on typically bend and blend gender in some pretty interesting ways themselves. My identity is a work in progress, but one thing I know for sure is that straight culture offers no home for my identity or desires.

While lesbian, bi and trans women have been exploring and articulating the complexities of butch, femme and a thousand other possibilities for gender expression and erotic play, there seems to have been



a deafening silence from heterosexual women. Mainstream discussion of het women's sexuality is currently limited to the "Sex and the City", Wonderbra-and-Blahniks model: apparently frank but utterly conventional when it comes to gender expression. Post-feminists proclaim that we are now free to be "feminine" again, "for ourselves", but I haven't come across het women proclaiming their joy at being free to dress butchly, "for ourselves" (funny, that). We're free - as long as we "freely" make the conventional choice, as long as we don't leave anyone in any doubt about our gender or sexual orientation. And women like me continue to be invisible.

*****The End*****

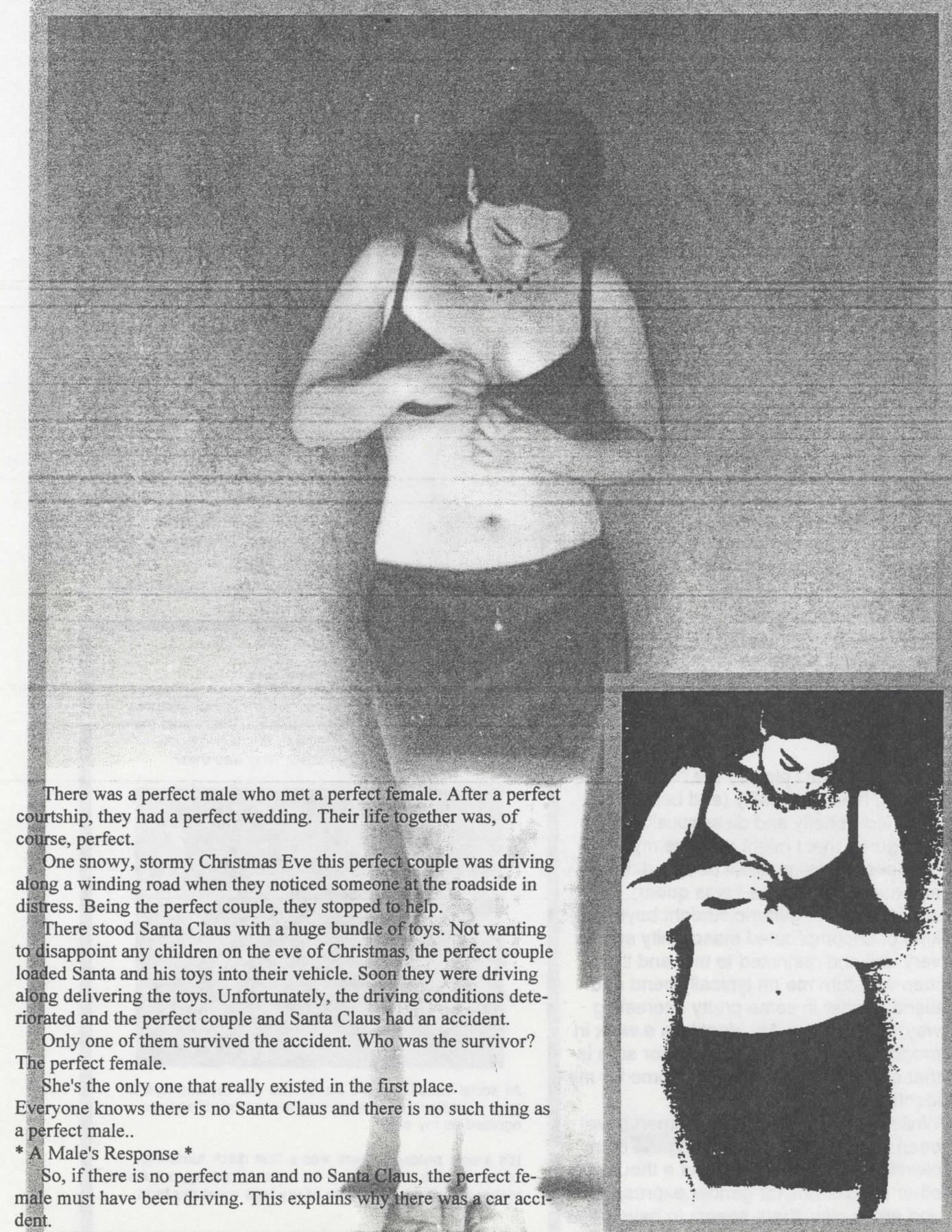
In Between

When I was in college, a girlfriend and I took pictures of each other naked. I looked strange. There was me - there was my head - but what was this weird body attached to it? Whose was that? Who was that?



All social considerations aside, this was my impetus to take testosterone: I wanted to see a body that I recognized as my own.

It's a slow process. There was a first quick tumbling: some muscles in my arms, my voice dropping, a subtle reshaping where the fronts of my legs meet my hips.



There was a perfect male who met a perfect female. After a perfect courtship, they had a perfect wedding. Their life together was, of course, perfect.

One snowy, stormy Christmas Eve this perfect couple was driving along a winding road when they noticed someone at the roadside in distress. Being the perfect couple, they stopped to help.

There stood Santa Claus with a huge bundle of toys. Not wanting to disappoint any children on the eve of Christmas, the perfect couple loaded Santa and his toys into their vehicle. Soon they were driving along delivering the toys. Unfortunately, the driving conditions deteriorated and the perfect couple and Santa Claus had an accident.

Only one of them survived the accident. Who was the survivor? The perfect female.

She's the only one that really existed in the first place. Everyone knows there is no Santa Claus and there is no such thing as a perfect male..

*** A Male's Response ***

So, if there is no perfect man and no Santa Claus, the perfect female must have been driving. This explains why there was a car accident.



The following is from an actual 1950s Home Economics textbook intended for High School girls, teaching how to prepare for married life.

1. Have dinner ready: Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal - on time. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him, and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospects of a good meal are part of the warm welcome needed.

2. Prepare yourself: Take 15 minutes to rest so you will be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people. Be a little gay and a little more interesting. His boring day may need a lift.

3. Clear away the clutter. Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives, gathering up school books, toys, paper, etc. Then run a dust cloth over the tables. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too.

4. Prepare the children: Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces if they are small, comb their hair, and if necessary, change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part.

5. Minimize the noise: At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of washer, dryer, dishwasher, or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet. Be happy to see him. Greet him with a warm smile.

6. Some DON'TS: Don't greet him with problems or complaints. Don't complain if he's late for dinner. Count this as minor compared with what he might have gone through that day.

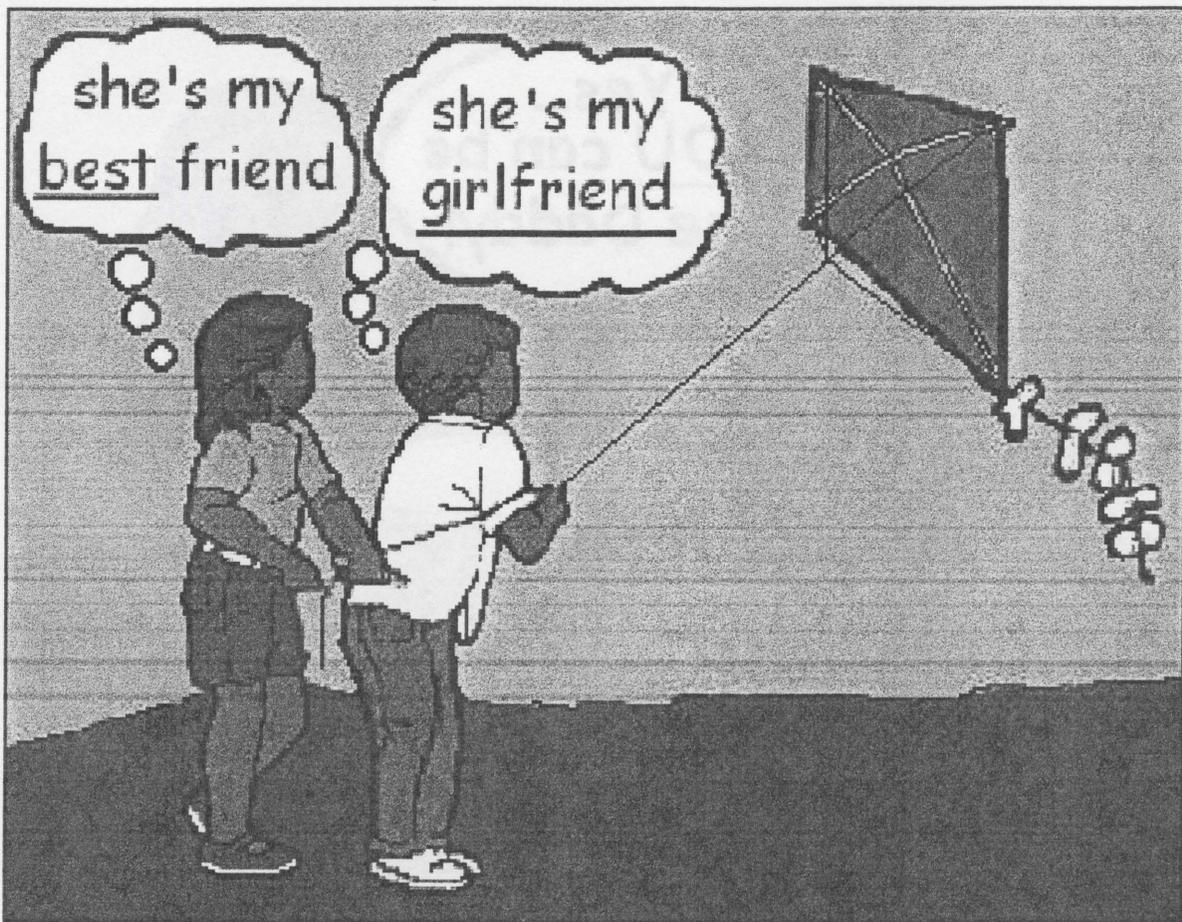
7. Make him comfortable: Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or suggest he lie down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him. Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soft, soothing and pleasant voice. Allow him to relax and unwind.

8. Listen to him: You may have a dozen things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first.

9. Make the evening his: Never complain if he does not take you out to dinner or to other places of entertainment; instead try to understand his world of strain and pressure and his need to be home and relax.

10. The Goal: try to make your home a place of peace and order where your husband can relax.





Butch Thoughts

Being Stone- Butch

<http://kpscares.tripod.com/bf.html>

When I tell people that I am a stonebutch I usually end up being asked a lot of questions. It seems like most people don't really understand what it means to identify as butch or femme, and it's not all that easy to explain. I know that it
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is something very central to who I am and that it affects everything I do. There aren't many places online that deal with butch and femme identities, which is why I think it is important for me to have this included on my page. I hope that other butches and femmes will feel at home here and maybe this will help give other people a better understanding of what all this really means. I'm not trying to speak for the entire butch/femme community, but instead I'm going to speak from my own experiences and feelings around be-

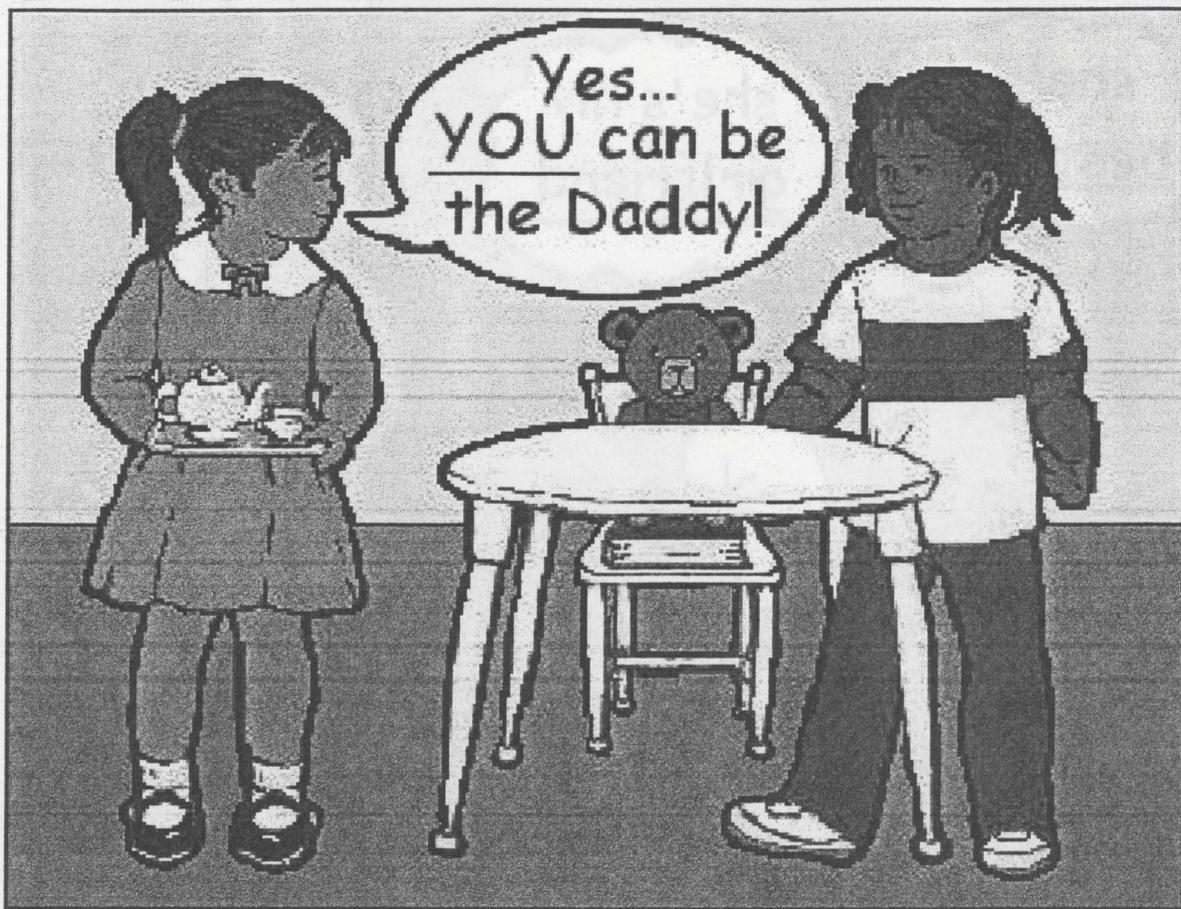
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ing a butch.

The titles "butch" and "femme" are most commonly assumed to be labels used in the lesbian community to distinguish the more masculine partner in a relationship from the more feminine partner. In reality, there is a lot more to it than that. To me, being a butch doesn't only mean that I am tough or strong, and it definitely doesn't mean that I am in control in relationships. Being a femme also doesn't mean that you need to be feminine

(being stone butch cont. on page 44)

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Let's Play "House"

(being stone butch contfrom page 43)
all the time and it definitely doesn't mean that you are powerless. It's not about power, it's not about one partner being the "man" and one being the "woman" in the stereotypical heterosexual sense. To me, it's an amazing dynamic where two people who are at opposite ends of the spectrum balance each other out perfectly.

I never made a decision to be a butch, it's just who I am. For a long time I didn't have any language to use for it, but I've always been the one holding

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open doors for my girlfriends (even in elementary school, before they were really my girlfriends) and all that kind of stuff. I've always wanted to be able to protect them and keep them safe and happy. Being a butch has a lot to do with chivalry. It feels so great to me to be able to walk down the street with a femme on my arm or to help her put her coat on or pull out a chair for her. I want to be able to take the best care of her in every possible way. But wanting to do those kinds of things for a femme doesn't mean that she isn't capable of

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doing them for herself. More on that later...

So then what does it mean to be a stonebutch? It's as if I have this wall around me that separates what you see on the outside from what's really going on on the inside. I don't know how or why it's there, or what it's meant to protect me from, but it creates this space between me and the people I am close to and stops me from really letting them in. Sometimes it makes it hard for me to even feel things for myself. With my partners, it goes be-

(being stone butch conton page 45)

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(being stone butch cont from page 44)

yond an emotional level to a physical one. I am so focused on (and satisfied by) making my partner feel good physically that I don't need or want that in return. At a time when butch/femme identities are often dismissed as outdated "roles" and old-school butches and femmes are few and far between, it's very hard to find a place where I feel at home as a stonebutch. As a butch, it's not easy to find other people who really understand and can support me. I have several butch "brothers" who I really connect with and we share a common understanding. But butches aren't exactly known for being the best communicators in the world so it doesn't always work out too well when we have real issues to talk about (you know, like emotions... ew). Just about the only place I've ever been able to really open up and feel understood has been with a femme. For some reason, they just get it and know how to draw me out. A good femme can make me feel comfortable and safe even when I am putting myself out on the line for her and bearing it all. I could probably talk forever about all the reasons I love femmes and how perfect I think they are. I love how brave and strong and proud they are. I love that they probably could (and often do) pass as "straight" to most of the world but that they have so much pride about being queer. I always feel so honored when a femme lets me do the things I want to do for



her... things that we both know she could do on her own if she wanted to. Femmes seem to know how to make their butches feel strong and important all the time. They also know how to get what they want, so it always makes me laugh when people assume that the butch is "in charge" in a butch/femme relationship. I don't want to let out trade secrets here or anything, but just about any butch would tell you who really wears the pants.

None of this is written in stone (no pun intended). I'm just speaking from what I know and feel. Of course, not all butches are attracted to femmes, and vice versa. Some people might have totally different definitions and feelings about what is butch and what is femme because it is a very personal subject. I would love to hear from other butches and femmes and everyone in between about what they think about it because it's one of my favorite things to talk about. So feel free to email me and let me know what's on your mind. Also, check out my butch/femme resources and reading list if you still haven't had enough.



*****The End*****

[more of the]
What's Wrong With You?...
The Insider's Report
by: Christy M. Ikner



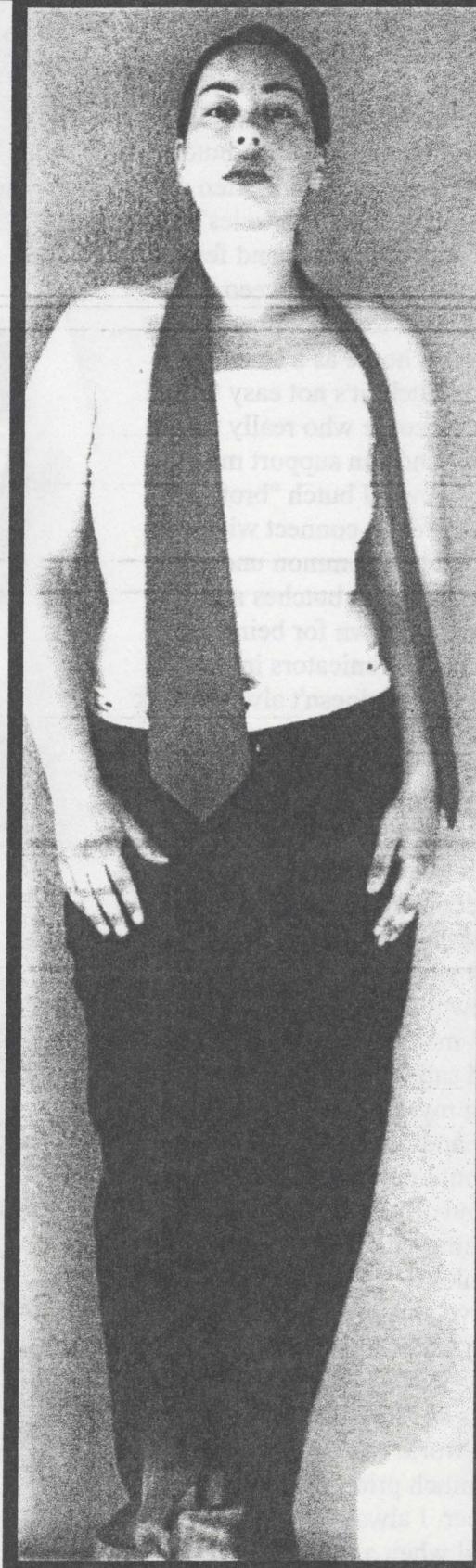
“Gay Heaven”

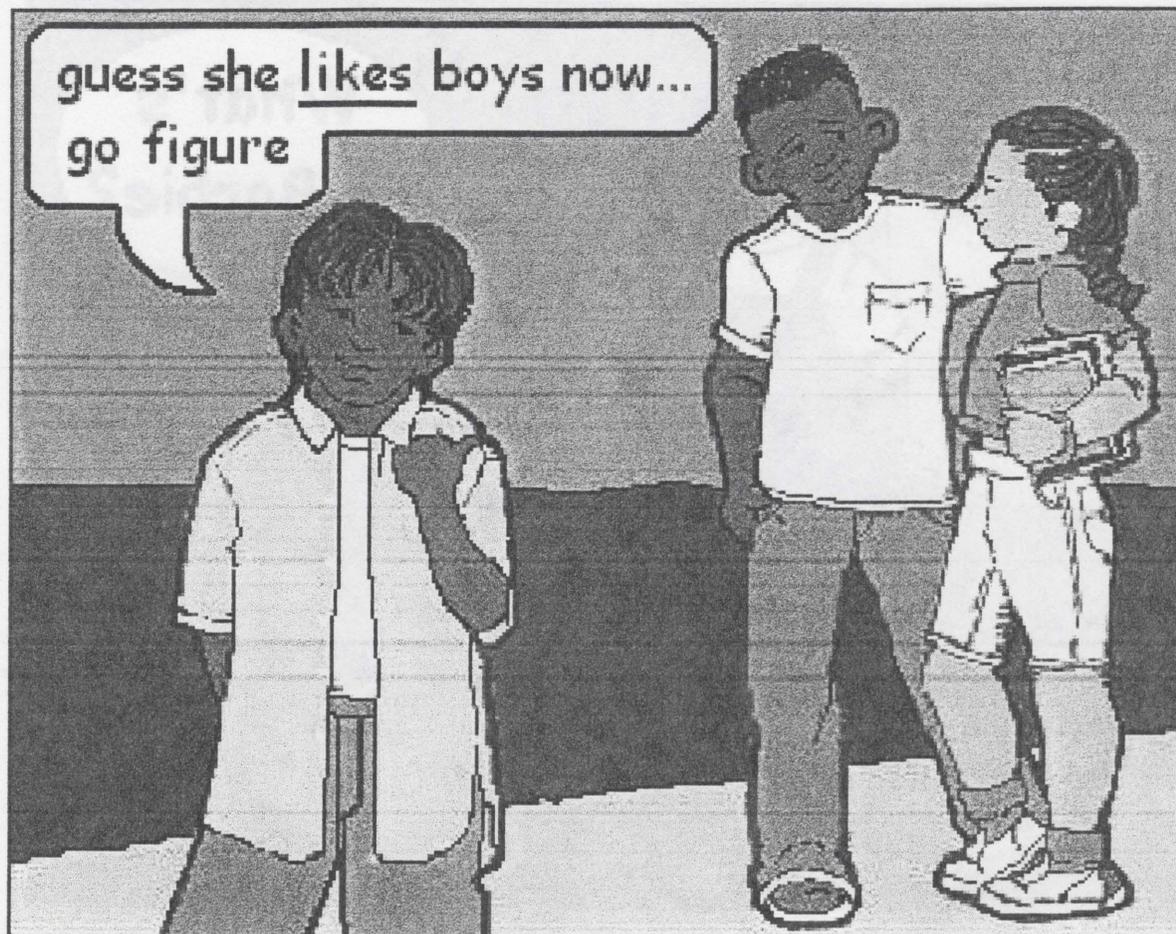
I remember watching the Matthew Shepard story on HBO, and I can still feel the knot that I was left holding in the pit of my stomach. While there were many

things to be outraged and offended by, the thing that stuck with me most was the group of loud mouth “Christians” who came out to protest in front of the courthouse where the trial was being held for the murderers of Matthew Shepard. I couldn’t fathom the hatred that these people were spewing in defense of the ignorance that had brought about the death of a young man. The most offensive part is that the terrible things that were being said were being said in the name of God. Part of me thought that surely the display that I was viewing on the screen had been amplified for television, but I was wrong.

Four years later, I’m shaking in my boots, my gloves feel thread barren, I’m holding a candle in a Dixie cup, I’m freezing my ass off, and I’m pissed off. Not because I’m cold or uncomfortable, but because in 2003 I can’t believe that it is necessary to hold a vigil or a protest for equal rights. Not more rights, not special consideration, not to leave less for someone else, but *equal* rights. The protest was a rally to support a proposed revision of a fair employment and housing ordinance to now include the words sexual orientation to the protected classes. While

(Insiders Report continued on page 47)





Butch Bewilderment

(Insiders Report continued from page 46)

this is a major issue, and is a heated topic in the Nashville area, it is still not the focus of my anger. The focus of my anger is this same crotchety old man, wearing a ridiculous cowboy hat and holding a sign that reads, "God Hates Fags." This old man that has flown all the way from Kansas is the same misguided man that protested at the murder trial of Matthew Sheppard. Here

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he was in my home state protesting an ordinance that had absolutely nothing to do with him, his church, his fat daughter or his sad little granddaughter that he brought with him to hold other signs, "Thank God for 9/11" and "2 Rights for Gays. Aids and Hell."

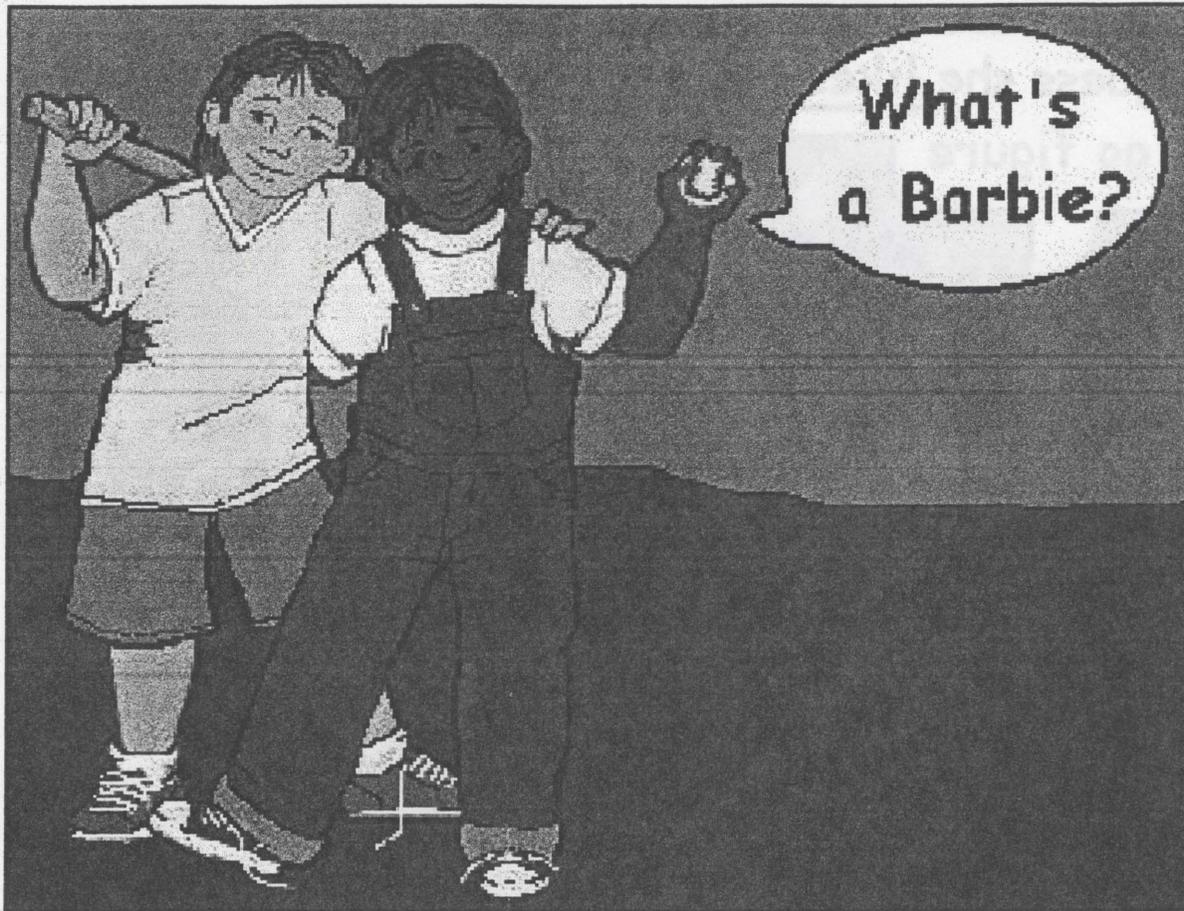
As I was trying to grapple with my anger, I tried figure out a way to put into perspective the fact that I had to actually

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share oxygen with ridiculous, hate-filled, ignorant people such as Pastor Phelps and his flock of misguided sheep. That's when it dawned on me. Life here on earth is very short, but eternity is forever. I decided that I could allow myself to know that Fred Phelps existed on this earth, spewing his thoughts and his misguided understanding of who

(Insiders Report continued on page 48)

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Butch Buds

(Insiders Report continued from page 47)

God is and how He loves. I could live with this knowing the truth...the eternal truth. I believe that heaven will be the place that we answer for our egotistical claims that God speaks directly to us and that we are commissioned in his name to claim whatever we want based on our own fear bred hatred.

For example, in heaven

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Ku Klux Klan members will find themselves working for African American angels. They will be forced to learn the speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and recite a speech each morning before they are allowed to partake of the great morning feast consisting of the very crops that they had to harvest and gather in the fields of heaven.

Hitler and the Nazi army

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and modern day followers will have to shave their heads. They will have to report to the Jewish saints and ask for permission to eat, pee or nap using the Hebrew language. They will be forced to recite the Torah three times each day. And, on their eighth day in heaven, they shall be circumcised

Following that same line of thought, Mr. Fred Phelps, his

(Insiders Report continued on page 49)

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(Insiders Report continued from page 48)

followers and every other person who claims to know the truth about homosexuality will find themselves in Gay Heaven.

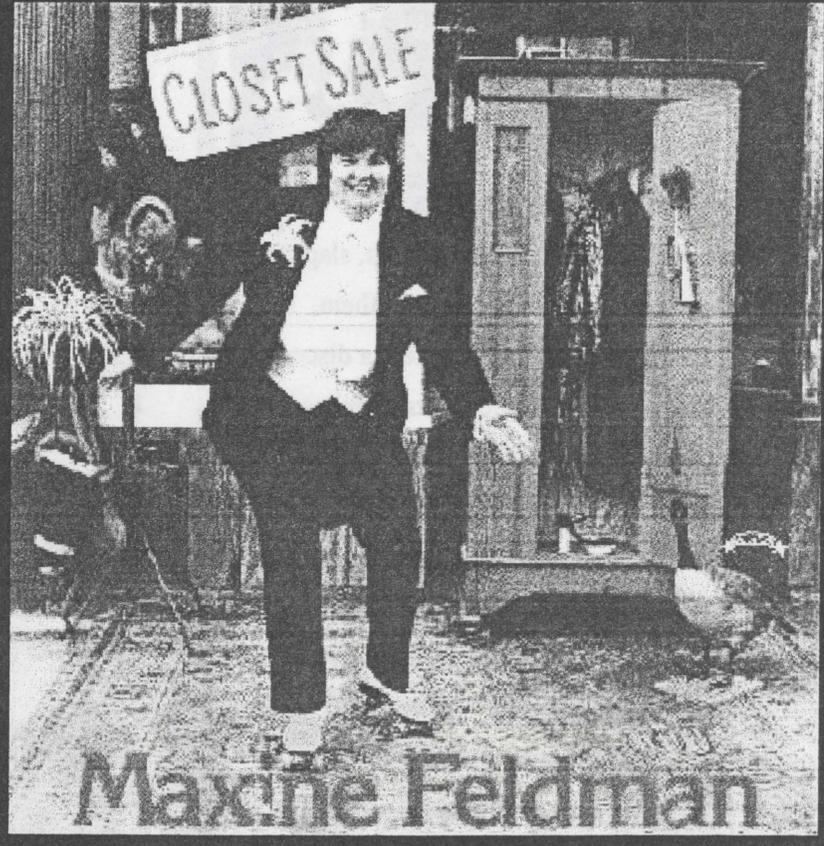
When they arrive to the pearly gates, St. Peter, will kiss them on the mouth, slap them on the ass and wrap a rainbow flag around them. He will then direct them to a dark room where a disco ball swings and techno and rave music blasts at unbearable decibels, except on Tuesday night, which is lesbian night. Mr. Phelps and his crew will be serenaded with renditions of the classics of Joan Baez, Melissa Etheridge, Tracy Chapman and the crooning tunes of Ms. k.d. lang. All of which will be performed, of course, by the Gay Men's chorus. They will be made to go to aerobics classes to keep their flabby souls buff and then sit in hot tubs with men who may, or may not, be gay. The wondering will be pure eternal torture. They will attend speech classes to learn the proper way to say, "You go girl" and "Oh no you didn't Miss Thang." Actually, they will address all superior, drag queen saints as Miss Thang. They will have to answer the fad and worn out question each day, W.W.J.D.? And if their answer is wrong, Jesus will send Matthew Shepard in to correct them.

So, I say to you Mr. Fred Phelps, you can wave your signs for now, but you are wrong. You can teach your ignorant teachings, but you are wrong. You can make it your mission to keep our rights from us, but you are wrong. And know this too, Mr. Phelps. One day, when you find your crotchety ass trying to get into Heaven, it will be Gay Heaven, where you may or may not be asked to bend over.

*****The End*****



Los Angeles, 1969, a couple of months before the Stonewall riots were to ignite in New York, another flame was being sparked at a lesbian bar called the Corkroom. Maxine Feldman stepped out on the stage that night and sang a song explicitly about lesbians to a lesbian audience. The song was entitled "Angry At this" and it spoke about the rage that grows with having to hide, to fear for yourself and your lover when all you want to do is hold her hand. According to Maida Tilchen, Feldman's performance of the song was so unexpected that "The audience was stunned. Their Jaws dropped." (1984: 289). As it turned out Feldman's song became the first 'openly lesbian' record to be released, heralding in a new kind of music. It was the beginning of "women's music" which would be performed, produced and recorded by "out lesbians."



From
Maxine to
Max:
A Transgendered
Butch's Journey

My own confusing
childhood...

Hanging out in butch/femme bar in New York City, the Sea Colony in 1958 at age fourteen (with false id of course)...i watched the butches very carefully...as to how they walked, how they talked...how they dressed.... how they acted with "their femmes" or "the femmes" who made me weak in the knees...and fueled my teenage

masturbatory fantasies. I tried to emulate them. I wore a mans white shirt, men's black pants...a garrison belt.... white socks...loafers with shiny pennies...my hair in a D.A. with a pompadour.... a cigarette hanging from my lips and one carefully placed by the side of my ear. I thought i looked so damn tough. I loved that image. Bulldagger with swagger...but that's all it was...an image...suspension of belief in a dimly lit bar where the electricity of the butch/femme dance riveted me... and there I was...hanging tough against the wall posing...and reality was that I was praying like hell the blood from my period wouldn't soak through the tampon. I had been trying on my dad's shirts and ties

(Max Feldman cont on page 51)

From Maxine to Max: A Transgendered Butch's Journey

(Max Feldman cont. from page 50)

and sports jackets since Hector was a pup. I spent hours in front of the full length mirror...grinning at the "little Max" I saw, but only when my parents went out and i was left to my own devices. This felt all so real and right to me. I played "house" with neighbor hood girls...yep, always the daddy... always the husband. My role models for that were Roy Rogers...Father Knows Best...any hero on the silver screen. Yep, that was me 'til I had to wear a skirt to school the following day. Played sports with the boys in my polo shirt and dungarees. I was better than them and felt like i was one of them. That is until they would go off for a show and tell time by themselves. I even put a big thick crayon in my underpants as a kid so I had a penis. Oy, .the dysphoria was there even then. One day I went into the bathroom, lifted the lid, and stood in front of the bowl holding "my penis", and peed...all down my legs. I cried with rage as reality soaked my socks and shoes. I cleaned it up the best I could. My mother never asked, and I never told.

Young adult...confusion

The older butches called me baby butch. I hated that, but it was true. I rolled up my Camels in the sleeve of my white tee shirt.... bought my first sports jacket and tie...was told that "real butches" were stone sexually... and the worst thing that could happen to you was to be flipped. I followed the lead of my older bros.... drank way too much, and fought over who knows what...some supposed insult or that their femme had looked at

some other butch. I didn't communicate, just answered mostly yes or no. I acted moody and took it as a compliment when I was told I thought like a man. I even spent one night in jail for not having on the three articles of female clothing when a bar raid happened. Guess what! I didn't have on women's socks. I almost soaked those socks again when i was thrown into the paddy wagon. I had a few "rabbit" experiences with older femmes. Then i met the love of my life, .the femme of my dreams. We set up house. I was the husband, and she was my wife. I wanted



so badly to marry her. I looked into changing my sex so we could be legal and adopt kids. But I didn't have the money to go the Christine Jorgenson route. I could be locked in the loony bin for just being an invert as we were called then (but this part is another story for another time). One night in bed she touched me and confused the hell out of me because i loved it. Shit. I was flipped. I withdrew into myself. My wife called one of our older butch friends and said, "will ya talk to him? He wont listen or talk to me." I stammered; I felt like I was no longer a butch. I didn't know who the hell I was. I feared I would be drummed out of the corps. As Sandy

dragged my ass to the bar and got me loose enough to talk with much booze, I spilled my guts. I was told not to worry...that many, many "stones have been melted". Some butches will always be sexually stone, but being a butch or being stone was more about your insides, your core, which you are. It was not how many ties you own, not the clothing you put on. Talk about myths exploding. It felt like the fourth of July to me.

Young to Middle Years...different times...learning

BANG!!!!!!!!!! Christopher Street. Stonewall Bar, 1969...what a time. I found myself in the thick of it, living in L.A., going to meetings about Gay Liberation. looking like a hippie, smoking a hell of a lot of dope, wearing overalls and work shirts and work boots, protesting the war in Nam, beginning my own career in this new movement, embracing new words that didn't roll easily off my tongue: Lesbian...Gay... Dyke. They had and still have power. They "scared the horses". And then the word Feminist... words, words, words. New ways to think... words that were not embraced then. - Queer, Butch, Femme. It wasn't that we fell out of "favor" as butches. and femmes. We were never "in favor". We do have our corner of the world though, and it seems more acceptance, too. As the movement progressed acceptability in the 'straight world' was wanted. Diversity wasn't the goal back then. Homogenized was the look ...the party line, and, yes, many of us were given very

(Max Feldman cont. on page 52)

From Maxine to Max: A Transgendered Butch's Journey

(Max Feldman cont. from page 51)

stern warnings - the butches for looking and acting like men and the femmes for looking like women. Huh? The drag queens were not acceptable just for being their outrageous selves. It was quickly forgotten just who fought the police that night in June on Christopher Street. A new myth was born. For myself, I took the stance - "hell no i won't go", and so did my friend, Joan Nestle. I first began performing in overalls, but i grew tired of that and found what suited me best - White Tie and Tails. So no matter where I was, the audience knew there was "a butch" up on that stage. It surely didn't make me the most popular performer

being butch, but neither did my being BIG, and (oy) being Jewish too. I knew all that from the "get go". I did what i wanted to do anyway even when asked to 'tone it down". I have always been proud of all three and loud. Feminism, which seems to always be a dirty word in many venues, was entering my life. The more i read, the more I looked into myself and my attitudes towards women...I went to CR groups, and nobody asked me to leave. Nobody gave me a dirty look. I was changing - not my clothing or my essence. I realized how much self-hatred I had living in me. Shoot, nothing in the society that i grew up praised women. I was raised to get mar-

ried and breed, be taken care of, and not to have a thought in my head. I don't think so. And, boy, was that a myth about who women are! My thinking was very patronizing, and I was a misogynist. I learned to love myself, to really love women in all their styles and guises. Women *are* smarter than men. Women *are* stronger than men. *Women Rock!* It's only *Femme* women that rock my world. Did feminism put me in conflict with being a butch? *No.*

Today/Now

So what kind of butch am I? I pack 24/7. Reality is I have this cyberskin dick held by a harness. I still have to sit down to pee.

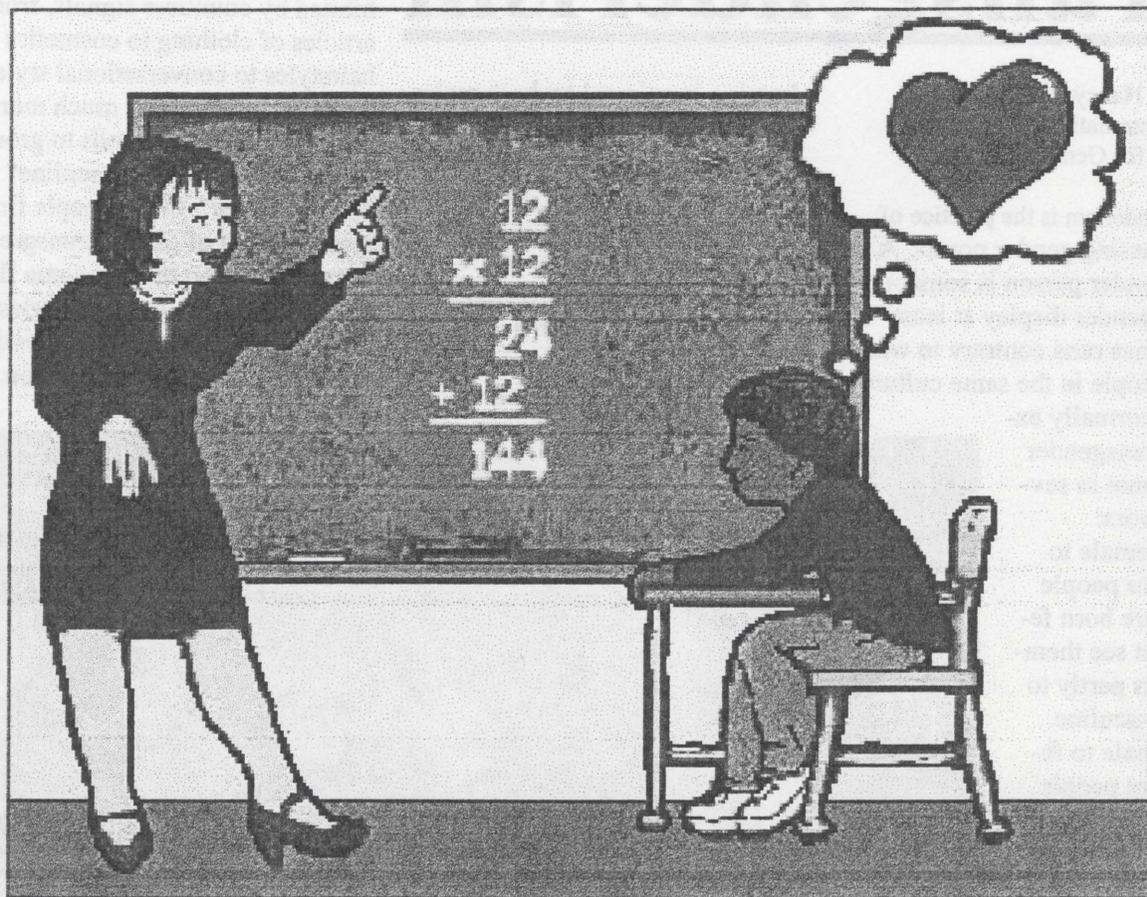
(Continued on page 53)

By Karen David (KD to my friends), destined to live a butch life from day one.



Dad's Christmas "Gotcha"

From Maxine to Max: A Transgendered Butch's Journey



The Crush

By Karen David (KD to my friends), destined to live a butch life from day one.

(Continued from page 52)

It's my cock - period. Well, one of them. It feels right to me, and makes me feel right. And the femmes I date love it. I pass 95% of the time. I don't bind. I use the men's room only. I only have/wear men's clothing. I am a Daddy. I am kinky. When I take off my clothes and look in a mirror, I don't run screaming from the room. I live comfortably in my skin, and even in that skin I am called by masculine pronouns. Only I love being touched in ways that would make some of my brothers recoil and make some femmes recoil too. I love sex. I am multi-orgasmic. I ejaculate. I am old enough not to be embarrassed by what I write, though a femme can always make me blush. I have great humor and compassion. I cry. I don't suffer fools gladly. My

skin is thick, but my heart is tender. I adore femmes. I love the butch /femme dance. It electrifies me. I am Stone. I am transgendered. I am a Feminist. I am Queer. I am not a myth. I am one of many kinds of Butches.

(c) M. Feldman, January, 2001; Introduction from a work in progress, a biography titled From Maxine to Max: A Transgendered Butch's Journey
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Editor's Note: Please look for more about Max in future issues. I'm quite honored that hy has shared hys work with me. I look forward to including more about hydr (including photos!) when hy sends it to me to share with all of you.

Transgenderism

Nancy R. Nangeroni,
International Foundation
for Gender Education

Transgenderism is the practice of transgressing gender norms. A Transgender person is someone whose gender display at least sometimes runs contrary to what other people in the same culture would normally expect.

Transgender folks come in several flavors:

FTM (female to male) are people who were born female but see themselves as partly to fully masculine.

MTF (male to female) are people who were born male but see themselves as partly to fully feminine.

Intersexed are those born with some combination of male and female physiology [similar to hermaphrodite], who may accept as natural their mixed gender.

Gender variations are more common than most people suspect, because many people hide their true nature out of fear for their safety and security. Many people explore transgender behavior without identifying themselves as transgendered. Women wearing pants may not seem transgender today, but fifty years ago it would have been. Boys wearing "girl's clothes" might not see themselves as inherently feminine, yet enjoy playing in this way. While cross-

dresser is enjoyed by both males and females, it appears to be more pronounced in males because of an imbalance in norms of attire and attitude (we see less transgression when a woman wears a suit).

In order to understand the difference between someone who is gay, lesbian, or bisexual, and someone who is transgender, you need to be

actively female.

Likewise, gender is not a simple case of "either/or." Gender is exhibited by countless signals, from articles of clothing to cosmetics to hairstyles to conversational styles to body language and much more. Though our culture tends to group characteristics into "masculine" and "feminine", many people find some amount of gender transgression exciting, so there is some fluidity between the two categories. Ultimately, gender is a "mix and match" mode of self-expression,



From the movie: Better than chocolate

clear on the distinction between sex and gender. Simplistically, sex is polarity of anatomy, gender is polarity of appearance and behavior. As one becomes more closely involved with transgenderism, these definitions quickly break down, but they serve as a good starting point.

BIPOLARITY

Most people think there are just two sexes, male and female. Such is not the case. People who are intersexed and people who are transsexual constitute sexes which are neither exactly male nor ex-

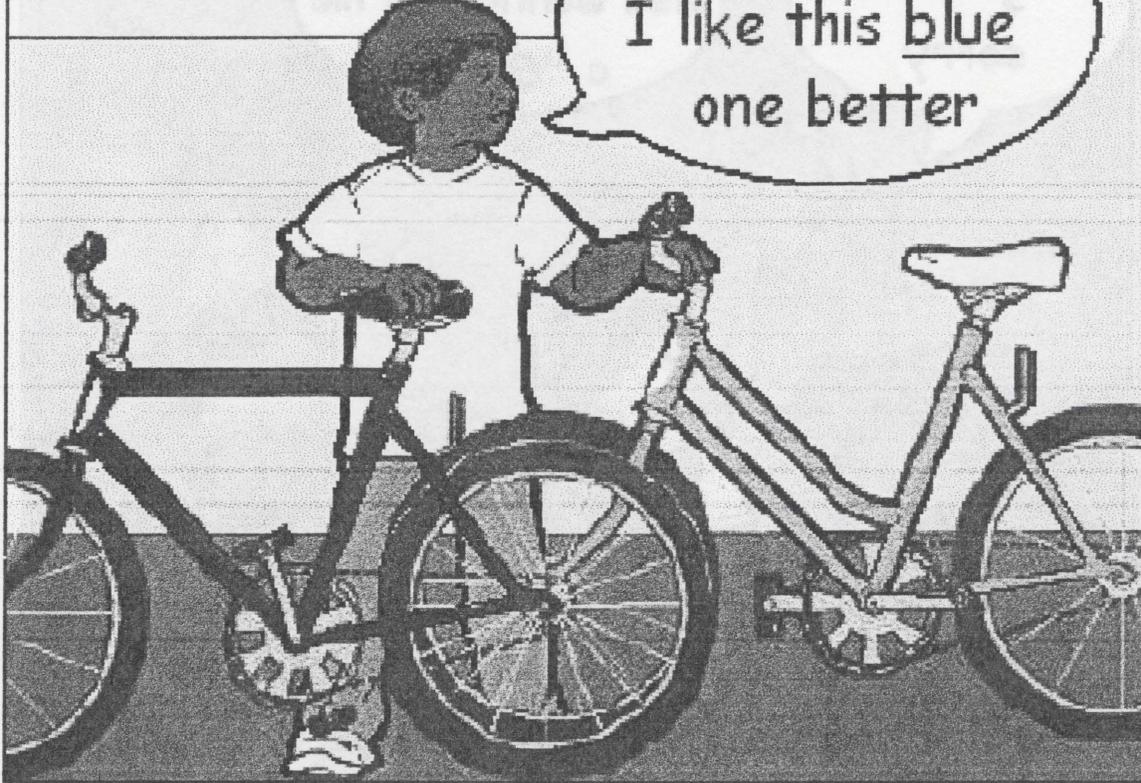
and people within our culture are ever finding new ways to express their gender, with exciting subtleties and intriguing implications. In general, it works best to think of all effects - sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual identity, and any others - as varying along a continuous spectrum of self-expression, rather than in just one of two or three ways.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION vs. GENDER IDENTITY vs. SEXUAL IDENTITY

Sexual orientation, gender identity,

(Transgenderism cont. on page 55)

KE SALE



Little Butch Choices

By Karen David (KD to my friends), destined to live a butch life from day one.

(Transgenderism cont from page 54)
and sexual identity are independent of each other. A person may express any variation of each of these in any combination. To discourage the free expression of identity and orientation by an individual is to impose a damaging burden of conformity. Sexual Orientation is which sex you find erotically attractive: other (hetero), same (homo), or both (bi). Sexual Identity is how you see yourself physically: male, female, or in between. If someone is born female, but wishes to see their body as male in all respects, their sexual iden-

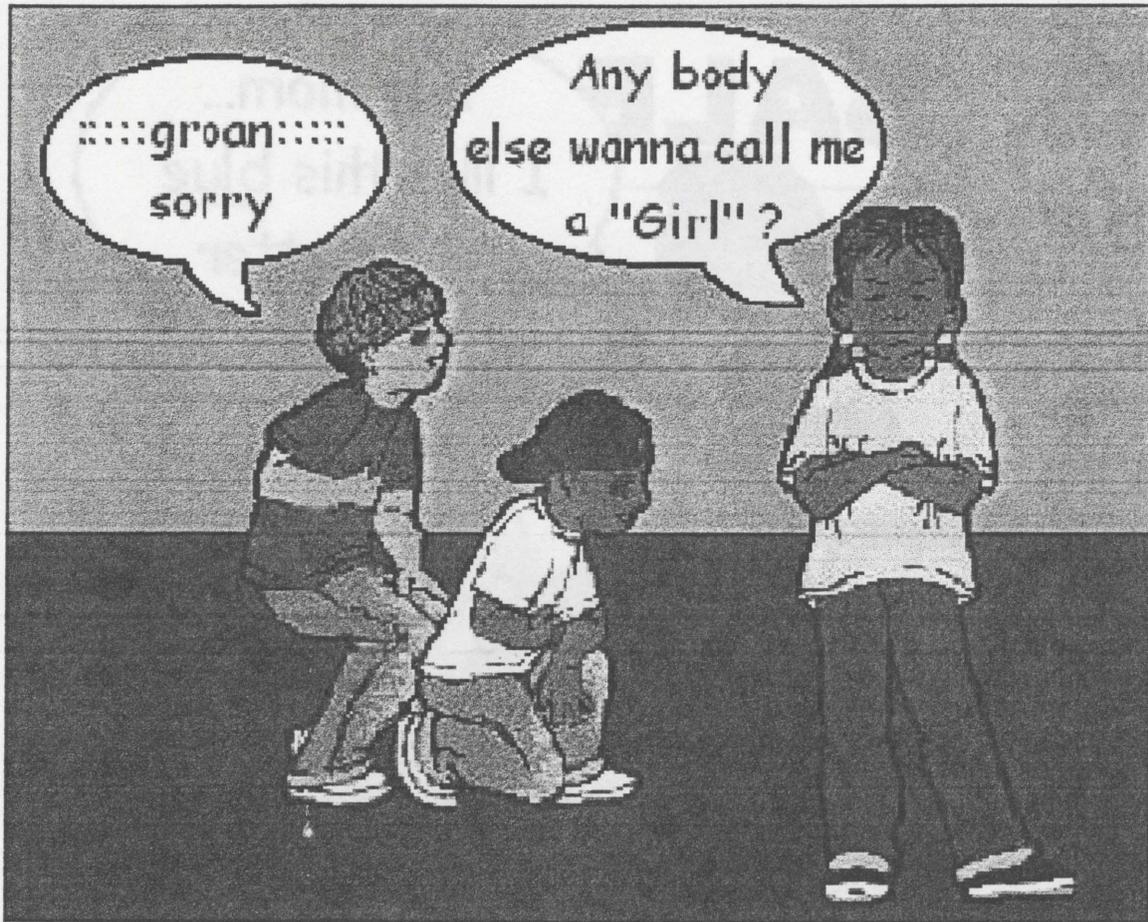
tity is male. It is generally rude to speak of such a person as female, since it denies that person their right to inhabit the social and physical role of their choosing. We refer to such a person as a transsexual, whether or not they have had any surgery. Many FTM transsexuals do not undergo genital surgery, as the results so far are relatively crude and the procedure terribly expensive. As surgical technique improves, such people will be able to achieve more satisfying realizations of their dreams. However, since it is healthier for these people to live in accord with their wishes and

heartfelt need, we call them men, though they may have a vagina where one would expect to find a penis.

The situation for MTF transsexuals is equivalent, except that the surgery produces a much more satisfying result, both cosmetically and functionally.

Nonetheless, many transgender people who look like transsexuals in every other regard elect to not have the surgery. Those who retain male sexual functioning tend to refer to themselves as transgenderists, since it is only their gender which is changed. Those

(Transgenderism cont. on page 56)



Notta Punk Butch

(Transgenderism continued from page 55)
that give up (or wish to give up) all male sexual function tend to think of themselves as transsexuals, since they change their sexual function, and therefore their sexual identity. Again, not all transsexuals undergo genital surgery. Some enjoy the atrophy of penis and testicles induced by taking female hormones, and others choose less radical surgical options such as castration (orchietomy).

Gender Identity is how you see yourself socially: man, woman, or a combination of both. One may have a penis but prefer to

relate socially as a woman, or one may have a vagina but prefer to relate as a man. One might prefer to be fluid, relating sometimes as a man and sometimes as a woman. Or one might not identify as either one, relating androgynously.

DEFINITIONS/TERMS

People tend to categorize themselves. This identification can be helpful in finding like-minded others with whom to make friends, but it can be hurtful if imposed on an individual by others, well-intentioned or not. In relating to transgender folk, it is

best to avoid pushing an individual to choose a category for themselves (tell you what they are). Some folks prefer to explore the fringes of category, and such push for identification work against personal exploration and fulfillment.

Not all TS folk undergo 'sex reassignment surgery' (SRS), for various reasons, including personal preference. Sexual orientation varies.

Transgender Community:

A loose association of people who transgress gender norms in a wide variety of ways. Celebrating

(Transgenderism continued on page 57)



jected - usually by their families - to the emotional trauma and physical suffering of barbaric "therapeutic" practices such as imprisonment and shock "therapy". While these are generally done for the

workplace by gender transgression. In fact, there are and have always been cultures where gender transgression is accepted as a natural part of the life of the culture.



"welfare" of the individual, they are too often done to

The only harm visited by transgenderism is the same harm that is still too often visited on others by the forces of racism. In the case of transgender folk, the words for the feelings that cause people to oppress us are fear of difference and transphobia. The words for the

feelings that bring about an end to the suffering and a healing of this aspect of our society are compassion and tolerance. For more information on gender issues, please contact:

(Trans cont. from 56)

a recently born self-awareness, this community is growing fast across all lines, including social, economic, political, and philosophical divisions. The central ethic of this community is unconditional acceptance of individual exercise of freedoms including gender and sexual, identity and orientation.

PREJUDICE and DISCRIMINATION

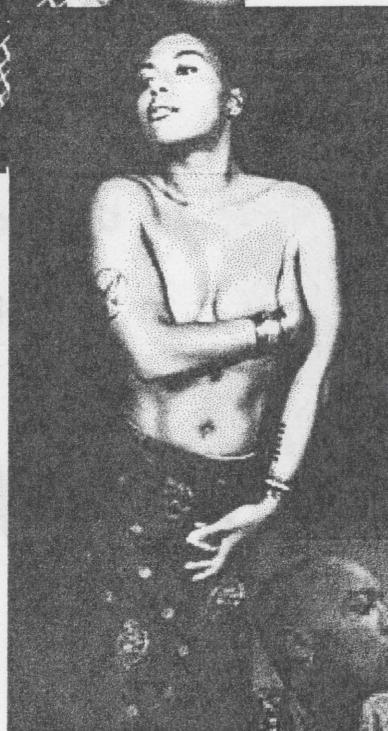
Unfortunately, the transgender community suffers from severe victimization. Society often reacts to gender transgression by trying to discourage the behavior, punishing the individual. Transgender folk are much more likely than others to commit suicide, to be murdered, to be fired from their job, to be beaten up, and to be hurt in many more ways, some as blatant as open ridicule, some as insidious as non-hiring. There are places where people, simply because their gender expression runs contrary to the norm, are sub-



THE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR GENDER EDUCATION
www.transgender.org/tg/ifge/

comfort the individual's family, with little regard for the suffering of the individual. The level of trauma suffered by transgender folk is much higher than the norm, and is reflected in more difficult lives and greater incidence of depression and despair.

All of this is beginning to change, as people learn that there is no harm visited on either the individuals or their families or



All pictures on this page are of Bassist/vocalist Me'Shell Ndegeocello. Gender identity is fluid.



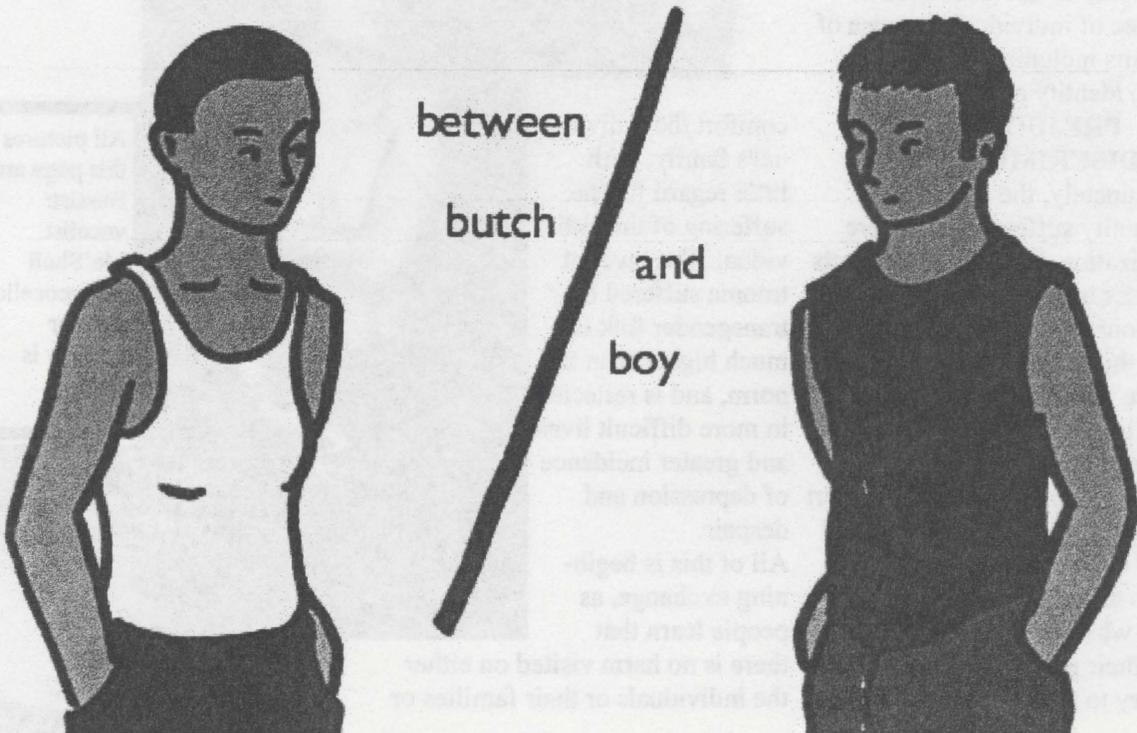
It has come down to this--most important--
most gratifying--part of being a young transman:

Getting called "sir"
by clerks
in stores!

Sir?...
um, sir,
it's still
\$11.73...



Now, the great difficulty in passing
is crossing the line



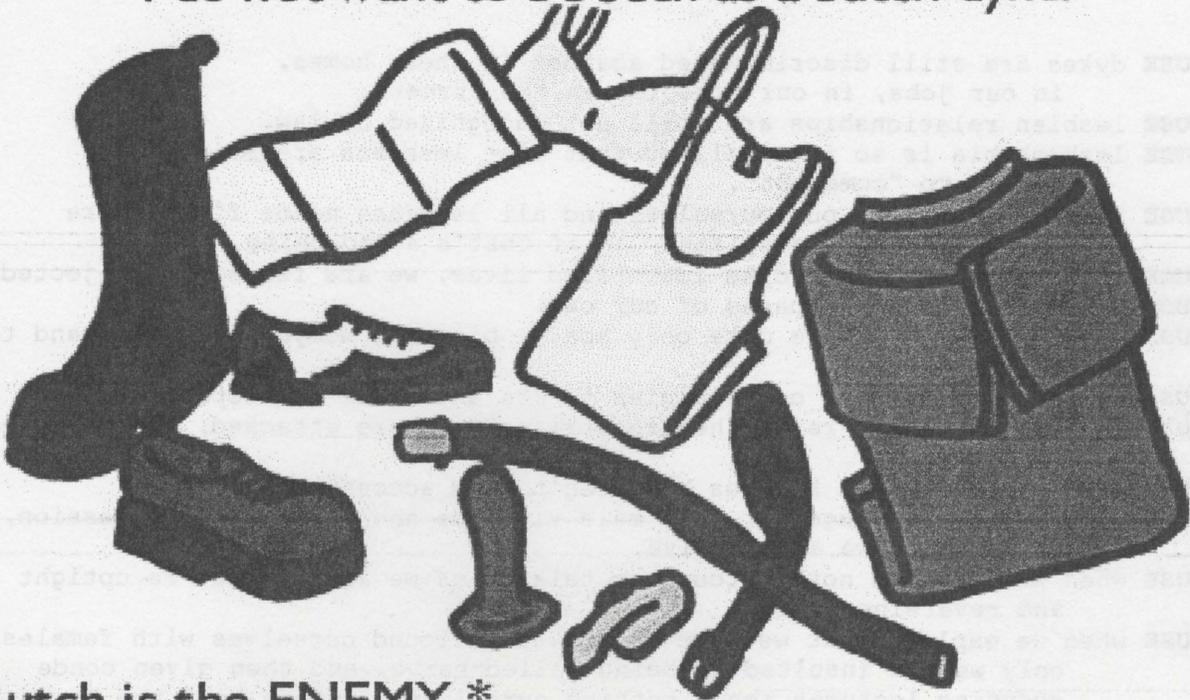
BECAUSE -
Lesbian Separatist
no author was listed
please see Editor's rant on p. 5

- BECAUSE** dykes are still discriminated against in their homes,
in our jobs, in our schools, in the streets.
- BECAUSE** lesbian relationships are still not recognized by law.
- BECAUSE** lesbophobia is so internalized that most lesbians are still
afraid to "come out".
- BECAUSE** when we choose to put ourselves and all lesbians needs first we're
told we are being selfish, as if that's a bad thing.
- BECAUSE** when we try to build dyke-identified lives, we are feared and rejected.
- BECAUSE** we have no lesbian spaces of our own.
- BECAUSE** when we try to create dyke only space, bisexual womyn and men demand to
be included.
- BECAUSE** we are told to give our energies to men and their heteropatriarchy.
- BECAUSE** when we choose to reject heteropatriarchy we are attacked, insulted and
rejected.
- BECAUSE** men still rape and kill us and aren't held accountable.
- BECAUSE** when we express anger at this male violence and misogynist oppression,
we are told we are abusive.
- BECAUSE** when we tell men not to touch or talk to us we are told we're uptight
and reversing sexism.
- BECAUSE** when we explain that we have chosen to surround ourselves with females
only we are insulted by being called naive, and then given conde
scending lectures about cutting ourselves off from half the human
race.
- BECAUSE** dykes who have sold out, laugh at us and say: "i used to hate men too,
but i got over it, You will too".
- BECAUSE** even in our own community, butches are feared and accused of being like
men.
- BECAUSE** liberal "do whatever you "feel" politics have encouraged violence and
abuse to be acted out sexually.
- BECAUSE** partner abuse in lesbian relationships is silenced or assumed to be
mutual.
- BECAUSE** its long overdue to challenge, unlearn and reject the racism,
anti-semitism, ethnicism, classism, imperialism, ableism, fat
oppression, lookism and ageism world has divided our communities for
so long.
- BECAUSE** the womyn`s movement, and het feminists are still asking us to shut up
and hide after we worked so hard to build rape crisis centres and
shelters.
- BECAUSE** even when we do try to assert and fight for our rights, were told we are
silencing hets, and taking up too much space.
- BECAUSE** there isn't enough room to list all the reasons.
- BECAUSE** lesbian separatists are scapegoated for all problems in our communities
- BECAUSE** together we have the strength and courage to take the risks and make the
choices.

BECAUSE THE MISOGYNIST WORLD WE LIVE IN WANTS US SILENT AND DEAD.
BECAUSE OUR SILENCE WILL NOT PROTECT US.
WE ARE OUT AND PROUD SISTERS
IN THE LESBIAN SEPARATIST MOVEMENT

<http://www.ncf.carleton.ca/freenet/rootdir/menus/sigs/life/gay/lez/because>

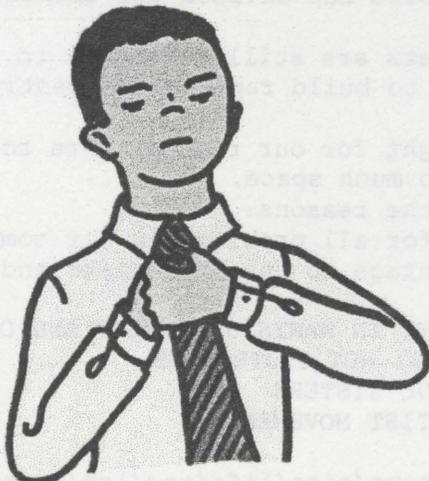
When choosing how to present, repeat this mantra:
I am not a butch dyke.
I do not want to be seen as a butch dyke.



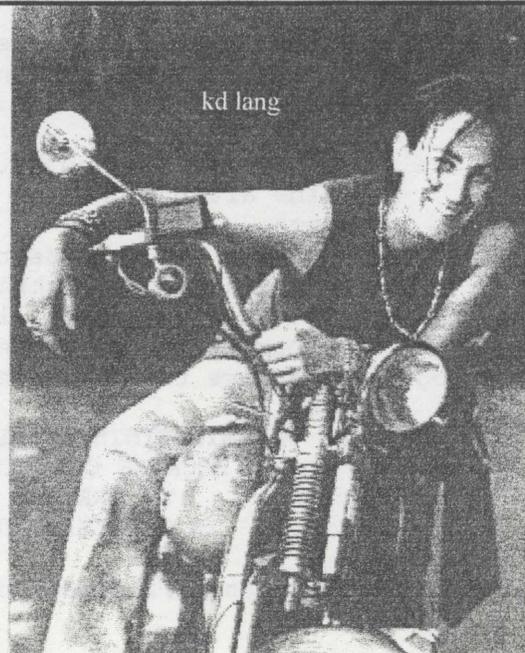
Butch is the ENEMY.*

*(unlike, say, transphobia, homophobia, violence, sexism, racism, rampant consumerism, class race and gender privilege, environmental degradation, factory farming, worker exploitation, unemployment, loss of employment, housing discrimination, homelessness, loss of family...)

That said--listen up, boy-- there are seven main elements to passing:



hair, clothing, binding, packing,
voice, scent, and attitude



Maria Sokec, who runs FMS Enterprises is a good friend of mine.

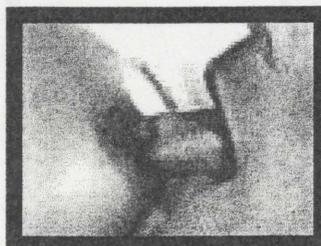
She does so many women-positive events, including the Goddess Night.

I would say that she is an example of someone who wants to empower women without discrimination toward men or maleness.

"If you are womyn identified, you belong here"

That's beautiful.

much love, Sandra R. Garcia



Goddess Night™

If you are
Womyn
identified,
you belong
at this
event

~~Womyn Only Sacred Space~~

Celebrate the Goddess in You

Second Sundays
7pm - 11pm

Bring your drum or other percussion instrument

Womyn's Drumming Circle 7pm - 8pm

Global, tribal, trance dance music -
spoken word & performance artists

8pm - 11pm

Mehndi Tattoos-Oracle Readers

Visual Artists all night long

Building Womyn's Community through the Arts

Hostsite: 601 Western Avenue North

Lucy's St. Paul, MN

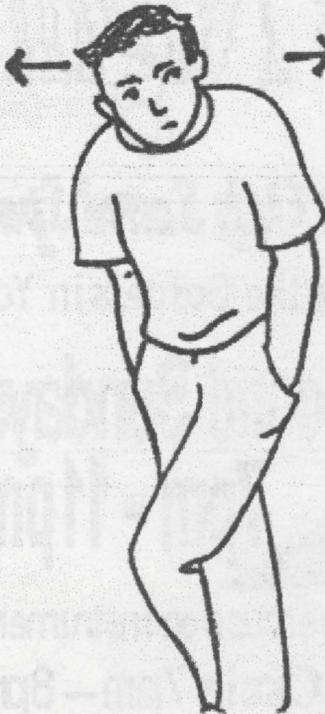
651 - 228 - 9959

Goddess Night is the property of FMS Enterprises.
Minneapolis, MN fmsenterprises@hotmail.com

We've all had those moments in our lives when we just couldn't figure out which bathroom to use.

ADAMS A

ADAMS A



Excuse me, sir, you're in the wrong bathroom

There's a man in the ladies' room!

SECURITY!

ADAMS A

Please don't beat me up

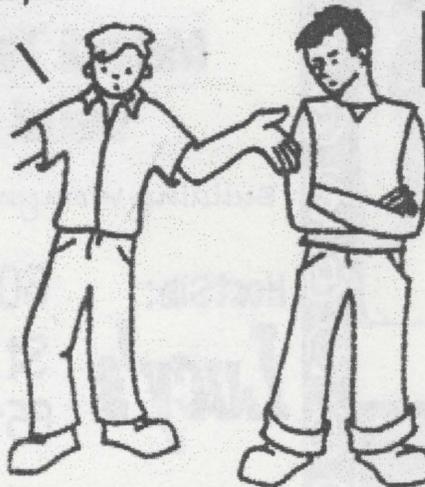


is it a boy or a girl? I dunno--what do you think?

Still, you eventually muddle through

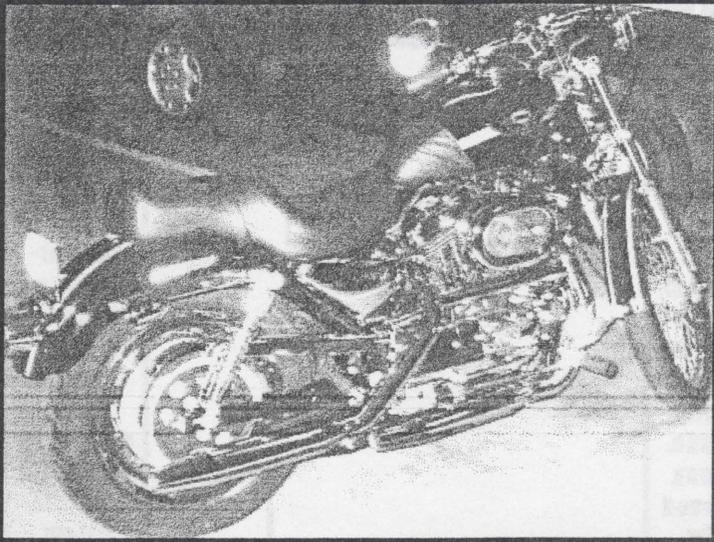
My ID still says F...

Nobody pays attention in the men's room



and figure that, your personal conflicts overcome, you can pee in peace.

Not so fast...



This is Miss Betty. She is a Harley-Davidson 2003 Black Sportster 1200 Custom. I'm dressing her up little by little with chrome goodies. I guess you might call it a "make over". Even though she doesn't really need one, I just love chrome.

KD

By Karen David (KD to my friends),
destined to live a butch life from day one.

Well, I was born in Houston Texas and raised in shake and bake country....that would be Los Angeles, California. Growing up, I knew I wasn't like the other little girls, no matter how much my mother tried to fit me into that cookie cutter mold. I never fit in anywhere and I realized later in life why. I was raised with 3 brothers and when they got cap guns and holsters for Christmas, I cried cause I got girly toys, until my dad finally surrendered and got me the road race set I'd always wanted. I've been into art my whole and can't remember a time when it wasn't. I majored in art in high school, then went to college, but flunked out cause I was told, way back then, that I

could not take any of my major courses for 2 years. This was back in 1971. I hope things have changed by now. I then got the bright idea to go to trade school and major in Architectural Drafting. I thought I become an Architect, so I then enrolled at Cal Poly, Pomona. Their program was totally full so I went by to art. Poly is not known for it's art dept., but I was creating stuff and I was happy. I prefer sculpting and I've been told that I draw like a sculptor. At the time I didn't realize what that meant, but I do now. When people see my work, they tell me how much money I SHOULD be making from it, but I can't do the starving artist thing. I work a regular job that pays the mortgage and lets me have a few toys.

<http://hometown.aol.com/butchlife/index.html>



http://www.coyotecomics.com/pictures/bathrooms.jpg

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

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

DANGER 



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

SUSPECT 



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

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