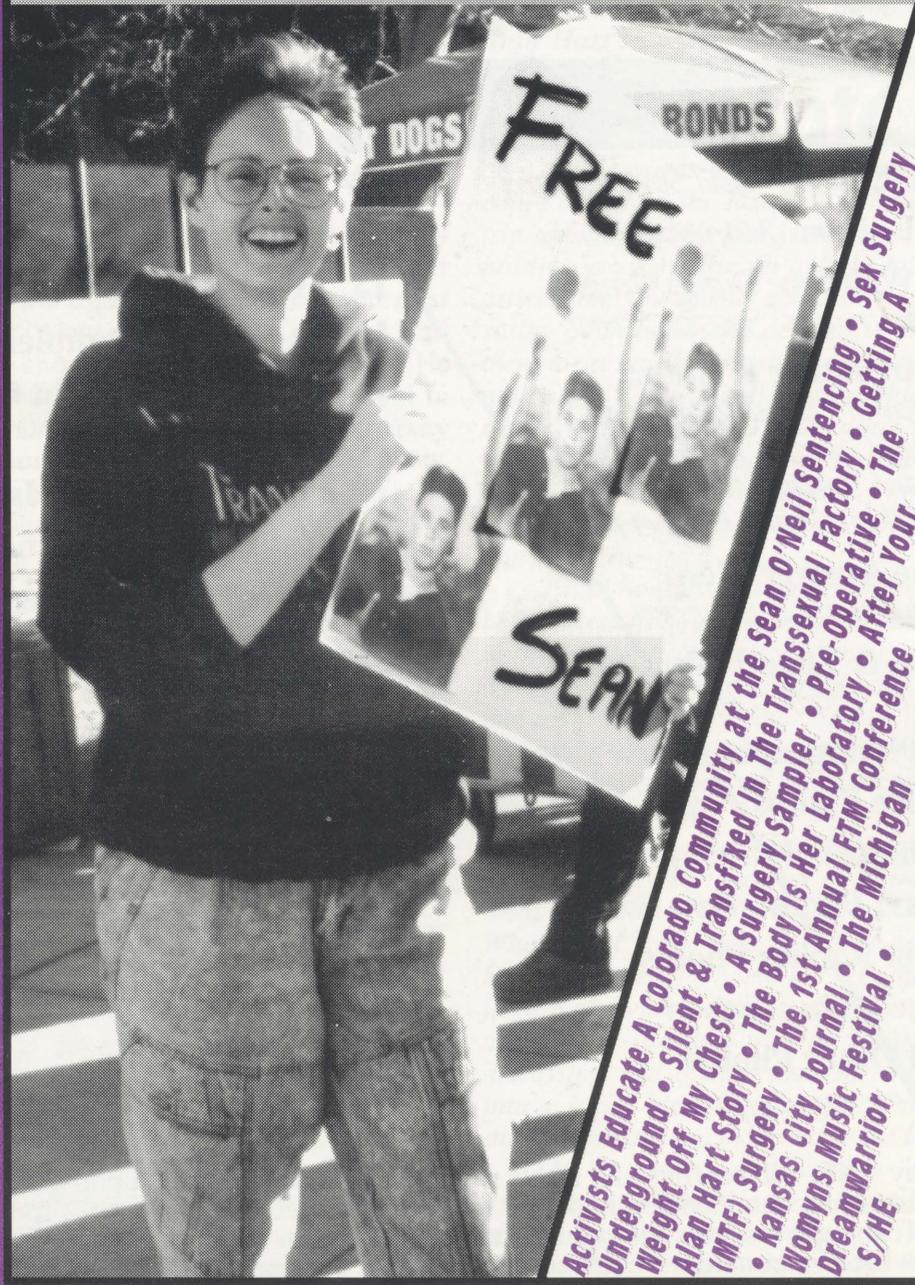


# The Transsexual News Telegraph

Spring  
1996

*The magazine of transsexual culture*



*Activists Educate A Colorado Community at the Sean O'Neil Sentencing • Sex Surgery  
Underground • Silent & Transfixed In The Transsexual Factory • Getting A  
Weight Off My Chest • A Surgery Sampler • Pre-Operative • The  
Alan Hart Story • The Body Is Her Laboratory • After Your  
(MTF) Surgery • The 1st Annual FTM Conference • The Michigan  
• Kansas City Journal • The Michigan  
Womyns Music Festival • After Your  
Dreamwarrior • S/HE*

*A Special Issue on*

## **Body Image and Surgery**

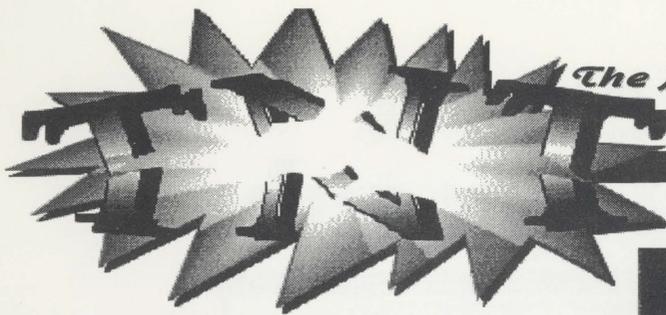
*plus: The Michigan Womyns Music Festival*

*The Sean O'Neil Sentencing*

*Jordy Jones on S/HE*

*& much more!*

#6  
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# I Contents

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3	Your Letters
6	The Sentencing of Sean O'Neil
10	Poem: Dreamwarrior
11	Community News
13	The Alan Hart Story
15	A Surgery Sampler
18	Getting A Weight Off My Chest
20	Pre-Operative
23	Poem: The Body Is Her Laboratory
24	1st FTM Conference
26	Silent & Transfixed in the Transsexual Factory
30	KC Journal - Part 2
34	After Your (MTF) Surgery
36	Davina Gabriel on the Michigan Womyns Music Festival
38	Sex Surgery Underground
40	S/He Review
45	Community Notices
46	Personals
47	The Last Page

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*your*  
**LETTERS**

**Dear Gail:**

I have enjoyed reading your journal, borrowed from friends, over the past year. However, in the Summer-Autumn issue there was an

unpleasant barb in it. Over the years I have been saddened when transsexuals were referred to by the wrong pronoun and name. I usually write to the editor of gay and lesbian papers explaining that it is not proper to do this, even for pre-ops or when referring to pre-transition history. I would not have thought that this would be needed for a transsexual paper...But... **HIS NAME WAS ALAN!!!**

There, I feel better.

Seriously, Susan Stryker incorrectly referred to one of Oregon's historic transsexual heroes in the wrong gender pronoun, the wrong name, even got his chosen post transition name wrong (Alan, not Albert). Dr. Alan Lucill Hart was the earliest known 'modern' transsexual. He transitioned and had surgery while in medical school in 1916, at what is now Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU) where transsexual surgery is still performed today. Alan Hart was transsexual, not a transgenderist. Also, he went to Stanford only one year in 1911, not from 1911-14 as Stryker wrote. While at Stanford, he travelled to San Francisco's Tenderloin District on weekends to 'live part-time'. Certainly San Francisco Bay Area can share this "Local Hero" with Oregon, but in Oregon his memory is especially important. The transsexual community here is working hard to get the gay community to stop misrepresenting him as "lesbian". We should not refer to any transsexual using any but the personal gender identity. I also trust that future writing in TNT will not have such upsettingly wrong pronouns.

**Sincerely,**

**Candace Hellen Brown  
Portland, Oregon**

**Dear Gail:**

I can't believe I can be the only person to perceive the particularly virulent strain of internalized transphobia to emanate from Susan Stryker's writing. Nowhere is Stryker's prejudice more evident than in her consistent use of female pronouns and the name "Lucille" for Alan Hart. Contrary to Stryker's claim, Mr. Hart was not "the butch half of a butch/femme relationship", as his 45+ years living as a man illustrates; 1911-1914 was a period of transition for Mr. Hart, the initial realization for him of what we now know to be a transsexual or transgender life.

I find it ironic that Stryker can admit to "the ways that lesbian/gay and straight society often collude with each other about proper and improper ways to enact gender identities and act in concert to keep us marginalized" and then participate in the very same invalidation of Mr. Hart's life currently being perpetrated by Oregon's gay and lesbian political action committee, Right to Privacy, through its insistence upon calling its primary fund-raising event of the

year "The Lucille S. Hart Dinner."

Ironic or no, I request that in the future Stryker honor Mr. Hart's life-long act of self-definition.

**Sincerely,**

**Margaret Deirdre O'Hartigan**

*Susan Stryker replies:*

*First, let me say that I in no way want to disparage Alan Hart's credentials as a transgendered person, or invalidate his accomplishments as a man. I am somewhat taken aback by the controversy my few lines about Hart generated in some parts of the transgender community.*

*A few words of explanation are in order about that entire article in the last TNT. I returned from an extended trip one day before that issue went to press, and Gail was holding a space for an article by me. I had a stack of articles and documents about Bay Area transgender history sitting on my desk and decided to cull interesting bits from them for a hastily composed article. The piece was riddled with small factual and typographical errors (like Albert rather than Alan Hart, and calling Lou Sullivan a male to female transsexual) and because I did not proofread or fact-check the information gleaned from secondary sources. I apologize for the errors and will stand corrected where appropriate.*

*I had honestly not remembered hearing of Alan Hart before I read about him in an article by Gerard Koscovich in the Stanford University Alumni magazine. The article by Koscovich referred to Hart as Lucille. From the picture of him published in that same article, however, and what little it mentioned of his subsequent career in the Northwest, it seemed clear to me that Hart was probably what we would call an FTM today.*

*The problem in writing the article was that I didn't know for sure Hart was an FTM transsexual, or what this word would mean in the time period he made his transition. What I did know was that this person was enrolled at Stanford under the name Lucille (the dates given are those from Koscovich's article) and was living publically as a masculine-looking woman at the time period I was discussing. I also knew that Hart subsequently transitioned into a social identity as a man. This is all I wrote in that article, and it is not incorrect to the best of my knowledge.*

*As an historian favoring "social construction" approaches to questions of identity, I have reservations about using the word "transsexual" to refer to people before the mid-20th century who identify in a profound, on-going manner with a gender they were not assigned to at birth. It seems clear to me that some people have always "changed sex" in cultures throughout time and around the world, but for me transsexuality is a very specific way of dealing with that desire. Maybe that's picky of me, but that's how I see it.*

*I find it ironic that in an attempt to celebrate the life of a person who dealt with gender in a very creative and courageous manner, I should be taken to task for saying this person was "transgendered" rather than "transsexual" or for acknowledging that in an earlier period in life the*

person who became Alan Hart was once a woman named Lucille. I do not see that as disrespectful to Hart's memory. I see it as honoring his decision to make the transition. I'm perfectly aware that other people understand the transgenering process differently, but none of us have the "one true version" of the transnie faith.

I was also unaware until the mini-flame war broke out on the TS Menace internet mailing list that Hart's life was being used by lesbian and gay activists in the Northwest to raise money for causes that advanced a lesbian and gay agenda at the expense of transgendered people, or in a way that many of us find disrespectful. I think that's despicable. It always pains me when nontransgendered lesbians and gays have the gall to think that we'd be like them if only we had the chance or weren't so "confused." I say that as a transsexual woman who identifies as lesbian and is active in a variety of lesbian and gay causes and organizations. I have tried for years to combat transphobia in the nontransgendered parts of the queer community.

Finally, I would like to say that I am disappointed at the level of venom expressed within this community when we have differences of opinion. There is no need to resort to name-calling and character attacks. It does a disservice to all of us who give freely of our time to work on transgender causes in our own particular ways to risk being labeled "transphobic" merely for disagreeing with some self-appointed arbiter of community standards.

I welcome further communications with anyone who cares to discuss this further. I can be reached in care of TNT or e-mailed at [REDACTED]@aol.com.

**Dear Gail:**

All the TS publications I've read so far (and activism) have more to do with White culture than anything. "TS Community" means "Whites only," as far as I can see. When 3rd World genderfolk come along and want to write, to organize, to work together, the White TS's (MTF and FTM) show their selfishness and arrogance, their racism and elitism. They are White supremacists, and they don't need to wear swastikas to be that. In these lands, White supremacists drape themselves in the colonial (American) flag.

I no longer think the "TS community" is capable of working with 3rd World genderfolk on a gut level, on an organizational level, on any significant level. Where it is willing to receive us it is so that we may assimilate into the White culture. If we won't assimilate (act White, think White, speak White) then we don't belong. The "TS community", the "TS movement", as they stand today, are a White thing. I'm not accusing; I'm pointing out facts.

I've done a re-evaluation since approaching the White TS community. I don't think it's capable or ready for serious, meaningful organization and movement, whether with 3rd World folk or itself.

Sincerely,  
Lofofora Contreras

**Dear Gail:**

Hi, dear sister! Hope this letter finds you in the very best of health and happiness these days. I'm doin' pretty good, I guess, considerin' where I'm at at this point in my life.

I swear, Gail, I think TNT is one of the best forums of information relevant to serious and for-real, socio-political issues within our community that I've ever had the privilege of reading. I only wish that I was more able to financially contribute in sustaining that privilege for myself and the rest of my blessed sisters and brothers.

I applaud your efforts to remain strong and committed in your message of activism and solidarity amongst our family -- especially amongst us women. Some of our sisters think that maybe if we're real "sweet" and "ladylike" in our struggle that it will get us a lot further. No girls, I'm afraid not, cuz sometimes we are gonna have to scream, slap, kick, pull hair and scratch some eyes in order to survive!

Superficially responding to Riki Ann and Philippa Garner (Guest Editorial and Letters sections of TNT #5 respectively), I ask that the next time you women get nostalgic about "Stonewall" and the progress those courageous sisters' actions brought about -- Please remember not to be so self righteously critical of another sister's effort in her fight for our collective survival. We all have different life experiences, and I don't think it is fair to dictate to another person how they should or should not react if it doesn't conform to their expectations.

I do not mean any disrespect to any of my sisters, as I truly love and respect them all, but I think they should be less judgmental of one another and focus that passionate energy into directly challenging the real problems in our community -- not each other!

Also, I have a pen pal who does really sexy drawings (erotic and pornographic) of "post-op" transgendered male to females. If anyone is interested in seeing any of his work, then send him an SASE to: D.B. [REDACTED], c/o Jim, P.O. Box 281 Astor Station, Boston, MA 02123-0281.

Thanks again for all your love and support. Take care and Goddess bless!

Love and sisterhood,  
Joni Salyers

**Dear Gail:**

I thought readers of TNT would be interested to hear my perspective of the transsexual take-over of the "Transgender Health Symposium" at the 17th National Lesbian & Gay Health Conference in Minneapolis this past June. I attended the conference in my professional capacity as Clinical Director for Phoenix Rising Foundation.

It was I who first informed Rachel Koteles and Margaret O'Hartigan of the symposium to be held at the conference -- and it was I who first suggested some sort of action.

Your account of events in Minneapolis states that anywhere from a quarter to half of the professionals left in response to the take-over. However, from my seat near the

back of the room I saw only 4 or 5 people leave the room -- out of well over a hundred. The only other time during the symposium people left other than the normal trickle was during Armand Hotimsky's presentation.

I found the presentations by several of the originally scheduled panelists to be the least interesting, and am grateful for having the opportunity to hear those speakers added to the panel through the efforts of Koteles, O'Hartigan and Christine Tayleur.

Sincerely,

**Jim Everett, L.C.S.W.**

*(The figure of 25 to 50% of conference attendees leaving was supplied by several sources, including one of the ushers. --Editor)*

**Dear Gail:**

I particularly appreciated the critical review of Martine Rothblatt's demented little book [by Max Wolf Valerio in Tnt #5]. Martine is one of the most clueless, irresponsible people I have ever encountered. She is the Timothy Leary or Al Sharpton of gender. My many TS friends and clients who have been sexually assaulted are particularly appalled by her strange ideology. Like a Marx or Engels, she has constructed a purely intellectual theory completely uninformed by real life experience. She is delusional enough to lead the naive into monumental folly.

Sincerely,

**Dr Joy Shaffer**

**Dear Gail:**

I am Kory, TS, and I want to get a special message to any lawyer of our community that can help me with my paperwork before the USA government, for the transfer to my country. I am in Federal Medical Center of Fort Worth in Texas, TS, indigent, and abandoned for the Peruvian embassy and my family can't help me from Peru.

I thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,

David [REDACTED]

**Dear Gail:**

I recently saw an advertisement which I felt warranted a thrashing. I am sure that other of our transsexual/transgendered brothers and sisters have seen it as well but the ad necessitates some public, multiple outcry. The ad to which I refer ran in the August 1995 issue of *Allure*.

The ad is comprised of two double-sided pages with color glossy photos of a woman approaching the camera/viewer. The model is transsexual super-model Tula but somehow this makes it all the more painful. I

would like to know if her image was used without her consent. In the ad she is presented as attractive, in the conventional sense -- that is, she is white, blond, skinny and wearing a bikini top and sarong-like skirt. The text states (each photo has her becoming closer to the viewer):

Photo 1: "She's blonde."

Photo 2: "She's beautiful."

Photo 3: "She's headed your way."

Photo 4: (Now all we see is an extreme close-up of her torso) "She's a he."

Then the ad's kicker, which is the company's slogan: "Life is harsh. Your tequila shouldn't be."

The transphobia here is entirely too clear. The last close-up invites the viewer to look for a dick, look for signs of maleness, so the joke can be complete. The threat of the transsexual woman is also clear here -- she can fool you and you might never know unless a caption were present to tell you the different. Of course, once fooled you need a drink to deal with the enormity of the situation; i.e., "I checked out a GUY! What does that make me?" How anyone can call the woman in the ad (assuming she is transsexual) a "he" is completely misguided, ignorant, and disrespectful. And we all know what usually happens when a man is "fooled." The ad, therefore, can be seen as inviting violence.

I have sent a letter to *Allure* expressing my outrage and others should do the same. Letters should be sent to Sauza Tequila as well. Sauza also advertises in *The Advocate*. *The Advocate* should be made aware of the company's transphobic attitude. *Allure* can be reached at: *Allure*, 360 Madison Avenue, NY, NY, 10017, email: alluremag@aol.com, and the importers of Sauza can be reached at: Domceq Importers, Inc., Old Greenwich, CT.

Please respond and get your supportive friends to write as well.

Thanks,

Dexter [REDACTED]

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# *Activists Educate a Colorado Community at the Sentencing of Sean O'Neil*



by Gail Sondegaard

On February 16 in Colorado Springs, genderqueers scored a better than nothing victory when Sean O'Neil was sentenced to 90 days in the local jail and 6 years probation for pleading guilty to one count of 2nd degree sexual assault.

A brief background of the case: in 1993 and 1994 Sean O'Neil met four girls aged 13 to 15. He presented himself as a 17 year old boy. The parents of each of the girl allowed them to go out with him. According to court testimony, O'Neil and the girls had mutual sexual contact. When the families discovered that Sean was born female and actually 19, he was charged with four counts of 2nd degree sexual assault, three counts of sexual assault on a child, and four counts criminal impersonation. In Colorado, 2nd degree sexual assault occurs when the victim submits to sex by any other means than violence or threats. In Sean's case, that was "deception", as argued by the prosecution. Rather than face trial, Sean pled guilty to one count of 2nd degree sexual assault. Sean made what is called an "Alfred" plea, after Alfred v. North Carolina. With an Alfred plea, a defendant says, 'I'm not guilty of all these charges, but I could be convicted because of the evidence against me. Instead, I'll plead guilty to a lesser charge, even though I'm not guilty.' On February 16, 1996, Sean was to be sentenced for one count of 2nd degree sexual assault. He could have been sentenced to 8

*"What we have here is people criminalizing us based on what they think should be in our pants."*

years in prison.

I flew to Colorado Springs, a town that is home of numerous religious groups, Christian colleges and military installation, to take part in a demonstration of support for Sean organized by the Transexual Menace. I was encouraged by my girlfriend who said, "This isn't just about transgenderism. To those families, this is about their daughters having lesbian sex. It's a lesbian issue too."

At 7:15 t-people began gathering in the hotel lobby to go to the Antlers Hotel near the courthouse. James Green of FTM International and Tony Barreto-Neto of TOPS (Transgendered Officers Protect and Serve) were to meet with Sean's defense attorneys, Bill Martinez and Elizabeth Bonnet. They were to review the testimony each would give on Sean's behalf at the sentencing hearing. The defense was going to base their argument on Sean's transgendered status, an untried and shaky tactic.

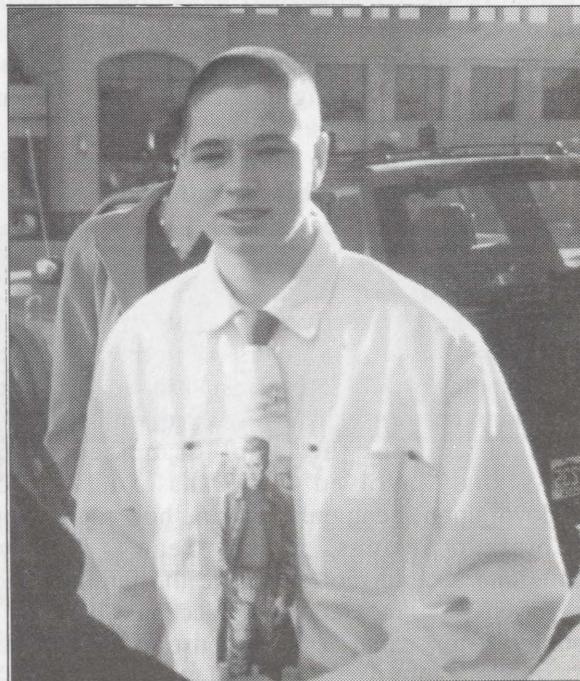
There were no raised eyebrows from the staff when we showed up at the hotel, even though a number of people proudly wore Transexual Menace t-shirts. Riki Ann Wilchins, James Green, Tony Barreto-Neto, defense attorneys Bill Martinez and Elizabeth Bonnet sat at one table reviewing their testimony and possible cross-

examination questions and ploys. The rest of us, including Shadow Morton and Aaron Davis of Menace Men, spilled over into two tables.

Riki had tracked down a 24 hour copy shop and made a dozen copies of Sean's picture from OUT magazine. After breakfast, she and Nancy Nangeroni began making posters. Others joined in. "Remember, we don't want to say anything hostile," Riki told us while we worked. "But if we do get shit, we'll make a sign that says 'Transphobes suck green donkey dick.'"

At 8:30, we left for the courthouse. Waiting for us outside the hotel was Sean O'Neil, his mom, his girlfriend, and a friend. He wore baggy jeans, a white western-style shirt, and a tie with a picture of James Dean on it. He was 21 but looked no older than 16 or 17. He was understandably nervous, and seemed pleasantly taken aback by the sight of a dozen or so transfolk. I don't think he realized until then he had so many people on his side.

The sentencing hearing was scheduled for 10 a.m. During the 75 minutes until then, we passed out flyers and spoke with any passersby who were willing to listen. There were about 30 supporters, including some Lesbian Avengers. The local police didn't bother us because Riki



Sean O'Neil on the day of his sentencing

and James had visited police headquarters the night before and informed them of the demonstration to take place the next day. "The police always appreciate that we tell them ahead of time what's going down,," Riki explained to me later. "It must work, because we've *never* been hassled."

By 10:10 the hallway outside the courtroom was jammed with reporters, and supporters of both Sean, and Andrea Jordan and Michelle DeLuca, two of the girls Sean had been involved with.

Mike Jordan, Andrea's father, stood next to me. He

was of medium height, had light brown hair thinned to a widow's peak, glasses and a thick mustache.

"This is not a gay issue," he kept saying. "It's an issue of child molestation, pure and simple."

"You have strong feelings about this," I said.

"Yes, I do," he began calmly. "Sean is a predator. This was not consensual sex. This was sex with inexperienced children. The law has to apply to everyone. They keep saying it's about gender dysphoria — well, that's irrelevant if gender dysphoria leads to crimes against children. Even now, Sean prowls the malls, looking for children to molest. I'm surprised the transgender community hasn't rallied against child molesters as the gay community has. As I'm sure you know, the gay community in west Hollywood policed the chicken hawks right out of that area."

This was news to me, but I nodded.

"And you are?"

"Gail Sondegaard. I write for the *Transsexual News Telegraph*." I gave him a copy of the magazine.

He smiled and shook my hand. "I'm sure you understand what I'm talking about. I'll look forward to seeing what you write about this."

I found myself leaning against the wall next to Eileen Bonnet, one of Sean's two defense attorneys.

"That dad is pretty upset," I said.

"Hey, I'd be upset too if my 15 year old was that sexually precocious," she said.

She had nailed exactly one of the emotions driving the case against Sean. The others were the parents' fears that their daughters were lesbians, and the mortification of having a trans person sexually involved with one of their children. Even in the San Francisco bubble, nontranssexuals involved with transsexuals are often looked down upon. I can only imagine how much worse it is in Colorado Springs. Saying Sean O'Neil was a pedophile and a child molester gave the families and the girls a way to save face and to be accepted back by their community. It just came at the expense of another human being's freedom.

I asked her why Sean had pled guilty to one count of 2nd degree sexual assault.

"We had to. If we hadn't, the district attorney was going to try Sean on statutory rape and the law is real clear in stat rape cases. It would all come down to how old was Sean and how old were the girls at the time of the incidents. We would have lost *bad*."

A television crew was interviewing Michelle DeLuca, who would later testify against Sean. Choking back tears, she said that now, when she walks down the street, she wonders if the person she sees is a boy or a girl. She wonders if the next person she dates will be a boy or a

girl. She worries about gender deception.

Inside the courtroom, I watched Andrea Jordan while her father testified. She began crying, and alternately seemed angry at Sean, still in love with Sean, resented her father, adored him, was sorry for the embarrassment of her parents and uncaring of what anyone thought. She didn't seem to realize that she had contradictory emotions but she was, after all, a 15 year old girl. But any compassion I felt for her vanished when I thought about the agony she was causing Sean, his family and friends.

During the hearing, Mariette Allen began a conversation with a teenaged girl who knew everyone involved. Mariette asked her point blank if Sean's girlfriends knew his birth gender. The girl said that they not only knew, but

that everyone at school knew, too. It was no secret.

After the lunch recess, James Green testified about how having been born into an accepting, upper-middle class family had given him advantages and knowledge about appropriate behavior that simply weren't available to Sean. James also testified that he was aware of the discrepancy between his sense of self and his body fairly early on.

The testimony of Tony Barreto-Neto was next. Tony supported James' testimony regarding the discrepancy between identity and body. He also inadvertently showed the difficulties of conveying transsexual experience to non-transsexuals. Tony explained how, as a teenager, he didn't exactly identify as lesbian or gay but as Tony, and what it was like when other women came on to him.

"You mean your lovers knew you were a woman," the district attorney said.

"They knew I was Tony."

"But you were a woman."

"I wasn't a woman, I was myself."

"But you had a woman's body."

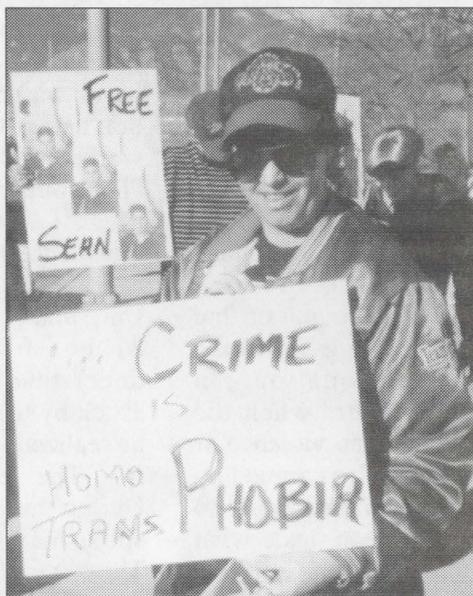
"It wasn't a woman's body."

But you were a woman!"

"I was Tony."

Finally the district attorney, exasperated, dropped that line of questioning. No doubt these responses seemed like a word game to him, but to the transpeople sitting in the courtroom, they made perfect sense. Tony's sense of himself as Tony, as a man, had nothing to do with his body.

Closing arguments were given. The prosecution asked for the full penalty, while the defense asked for probation. The judge said he would announce his decision after a brief 15 minute recess and that it would not please



everyone. He also said that he would lock the courtroom while he read his verdict.

I went over to where Sean, his mother and friends were sitting. I shook his hand. It was trembling.

At 4:00 p.m. the judge returned. He made some brief opening remarks and announced his decision: Ninety days

*The day after the sentencing, Sean received a number of phone calls from one of the girls who testified against him. She pledged her undying love.*

in the local jail and 6 years probation. Visible relief swept over the defense side of the courtroom. Disagreeing with both the prosecution and defense characterization, the judge said this was a case of deception. Then he did something no one had heard of before: he said he would make sure that the local jail make accommodations for Sean's transgendered status.

It was over. We had won. 90 days wasn't great, but it was a lot better than 2 to 8 years in state prison. Sean's friends and supporters gathered around him to offer congratulations. Sean's mother was overjoyed. Some of us walked to a nearby bar to celebrate.

Afterwards, as we walked back to the hotel, my elation and euphoria evaporated. What victory? I asked myself. 90 days in jail? 6 years probation? For having consensual teenage sex? *That's* what we're celebrating? If Sean had been a 19 year old boy, this would have been a misdemeanor. I voiced my frustrations to Riki Ann Wilchins.

"I understand what you're saying," she said. "This case was ludicrous from the beginning. What we're dealing with here is criminalizing people for not disclosing what's in their pants. Let's say you and I go out and you think I've had the surgery when I haven't. That could be a felony. Or I tell you I'm a woman, you find out I'm a transsexual woman, and you consider me not a woman. Again, that could be a felony. Or, as they're construing it here in Colorado, it could be sexual assault. It's putting transpeople on the hook legally for other peoples' expectations for what is or should be in our pants.

"Which is a real weird turn of events. It means that if I don't have what *you* expect in my pants from my display of gender, then you can charge me with sexual assault and seek remedy. It would make more sense, if this was a sane society, that if someone cared that violently about genitals, it would be incumbent upon *them* to make *damn* sure they know what was in a person's pants. If they didn't, then I could charge *them* with assault, because I thought you were normal and cool about gender, and I was

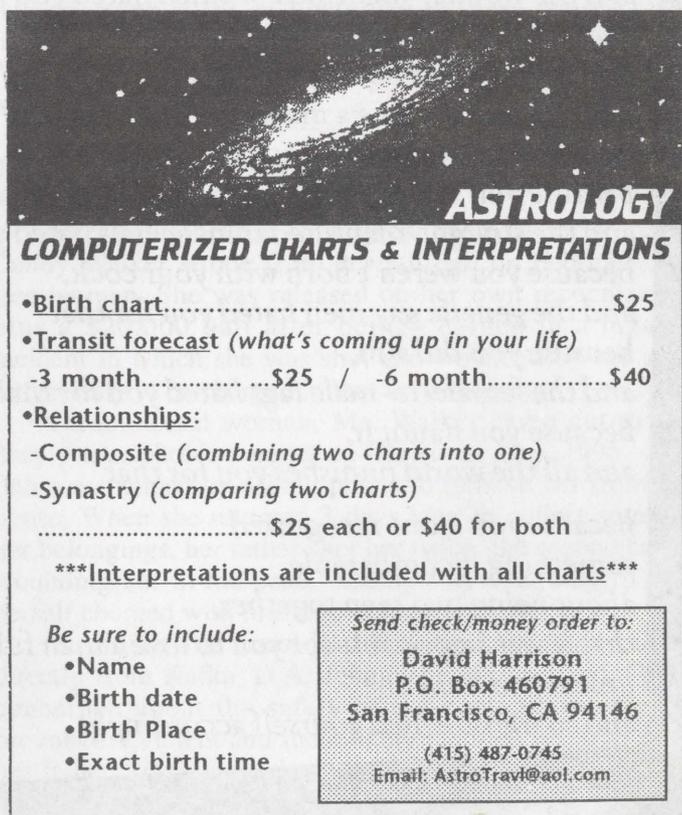
very disturbed to find out that you weren't.

"The word 'deception' was used a lot in court today. Deception assumes an intent. Whereas if you just don't understand what's going on, it's not deception. The prosecution was saying the girls involved with Sean didn't understand what was between Sean's legs, so we have deception, when that's clearly not the case. The girls knew who Sean was; Sean was just being Sean. As Tony said when he testified, he was just being Tony. If Tony presented himself as a woman, *that* would be deception. It's making it a crime for nontranssexuals to not understand what our bodies are about. Unfortunately, we're the ones being charged with the crime.

"But even with all that, today was still a victory. Six years probation is shitty, but think how much worse it would have been if all of us hadn't shown up here. The judge ordered special accommodations for Sean in the local jail. That's never happened before. You heard what Bill Martinez said: without James' and Tony's testimony, his asking for probation would have lacked force. He doubts the judge would have understood what it's like to be transgendered like Sean.

"We did accomplish something here, even if it was just to show that transsexuals would come from thousands of miles away to show support to one of their own, someone they had never met. That's something to be proud of."

One final note: the day after the sentencing hearing, Sean received a phone call from one of the girls who testified against him. She pledged her undying love.



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# Dreamwarrior

let me heal your wounds

-- I know they are many

you who are at once  
primeval and starfaring  
never of this world  
and with us every day

come, lay your head in my lap  
let me stroke your rough cheek,  
wrap my arms about you  
and soothe you with sweet cliches  
about how you're the toughest biker dude  
who's ever taken me for a ride  
until we both burst out laughing

--I know they are many  
because you were a woman,  
and all the world punished you for that  
because you were a butch,  
and the women-identified-women hated you for that  
because you were queer,  
and the breeders hated you for that  
because you became a man,  
and the lesbians hated you for that  
because you still preferred men,  
and the straight-identified transsexuals hated you for that  
because you weren't born with your cock,  
and the genetic gay men hated you for that  
because you did s/m,  
and the female-to-male fags hated you for that  
because you flaunt it,  
and all the world punishes you for that  
because you alone recognized  
something incomparable  
about being two men together,  
that it was impossible for you to love a man fully  
unless you were one,  
and so transformed yourself accordingly

As a self-made cocksucking top with a strap-on dick  
you're more man than they'll ever be...

because of all this,  
I love you, dreamwarrior  
(as only one misfit can love another)

--Let me heal your wounds, you  
who have so afflicted  
me

-- B. Bogomil



# COMMUNITY

## NEWS AND NOTES

### **TYRA HUNTER CASE REOPENED BY DC FIRE DEPT.**

Following meetings with the queer community, DC Fire Chief Otis Latin announced that he is reopening the investigation surrounding the death of Tyra Hunter. (On August 7, 1995, Tyra Hunter was the victim of a hit-and-run driver. Emergency paramedics arrived, began treating her and discovered she had male genitalia. At that point, all treatment stopped for 3 to 5 minutes while the technicians stood around and laughed. Two hours later, she died.)

The announcement caps months of escalating pressure by queer activists, including ongoing work by GLOV (Gay Men & Lesbians Opposing Violence). They were even helped by the ever-transphobic Washington *Blade*, which was instrumental in obtaining information. Said Tracy Conaty of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, "Just as we suspected, DCFD's own documents proved that there was never an honest investigation into the treatment of Tyra Hunter." In October 1995, 45 transgendered activists from around the country, including members of the direct action group, The Transexual Menace, demonstrated outside Mayor Marion Barry's office to demand justice for Tyra and a full investigation. In addition, uniformed members of the national organization for transgendered peace officers, TOPS (Transgender Officers Protect & Serve) met with both the Mayor and Chief Latin to vigorously press their concerns over what was widely perceived as the FD's continued stonewalling of the Hunter incident.

Chief Latin had originally maintained the identity of the EMS technician who stopped treating Ms. Hunter and made taunting remarks as she lay dying was unknown. Then he maintained that the Fire Department knew who had interrupted treatment, but could not ascertain who had made the taunts, and stated that in no case would the Fire Dept. release the individuals' name. Chief Latin also previously asserted the Fire Dept. had fully deposed all witnesses, when in fact there were 8 civilian witnesses documented by GLOV who stated they could clearly identify the technician in question. Documents were only released following a Freedom of Information Act proceeding by GLOV and the *Blade* disclosed the DCFD never took interviews from the EMS technician in question, or from 6 others who arrived at the scene at the time. Following statements from DCFD sources the *Blade* has identified the firefighter as Adrian C. Williams. Contacted by the *Blade*, Mr. Williams had no comment.

### **ABC's 20/20 RIDICULES TRANSGENDER ACTIVISM**

On January 19, 1996, ABC's 20/20 news show aired a segment on transgender activism. Prefaced by such comments as "a window into a strange world" and "the people you are about to meet are beyond most of our experience" the segment focused on the growing influence of transgender activism. John Stoessel, who narrated the piece, often pronounced the word 'transgender' as though he was describing a hairball someone had forgotten to clean up. The ABC piece also made it clear how fortunate we are to be living in the Bay Area. In New York, for example, radio disk jockeys openly ridiculed Lt. Janet Aiello of the Hoboken Police Dept. for her transsexualism. The end of the show featured Barbara, Hugh and John clucking over the Strangeness Of It All (sample comments: "That has got to be the most complicated and confusing piece I've seen." "Aren't these people gay?")

But what could you expect from a show given to cheap sensationalism (remember the 20/20 report on the Florida dentist who allegedly gave his patients AIDS?) As our friend Media Medea pointed out, most network news will not even HINT at liberalism in these conservative times. Our feeling, though, is that whenever shows like ABC's 20/20 start paying attention, it's a good sign that we're having an effect.

### **TRANSEXUAL WOMAN FREED AFTER ARREST FOR BEING SHOT**

After being held in solitary confinement for 40 days, Candy Walker strode from her jail cell on February 8 a free woman. She was released on her own recognizance plus a \$20,000 bail after being charged in a bizarre incident in which she was shot and wounded by her own father, only to be charged in that very shooting.

A transsexual woman, Ms. Walker came out to her deeply transphobic parents on Christmas Day, 1995. Her father responded by asking police to remove her from the house. When she returned 3 days later to collect some of her belongings, her father shot her twice, the second bullet wounding her in the head. Candy survived, only to find herself charged with first degree burglary.

Justifying her arrest in a statement apparently lifted directly from Kafka, D.A. John Varanelli declared, "I am concerned about the safety of the community. Candy provoked a violent and most likely justified reaction from her father, whose gun shots caused extreme risk of injury or death to people in community."

When Ms. Walker's cane was discovered to contain a

small blade, carrying a concealed weapon (CCW) was added to her charges. Bail was set at \$250,000, a figure more associated with first-degree murder than transsexuality.

Although all complaints were subsequently dropped, Varanelli continued to press the weapons charge. Her defense attorney unsuccessfully petitioned for bail reduction to a more reasonable amount. After rebuffing this effort, Varanelli was overheard to say: "At least that will keep him [sic] off the streets in a dress for while."

Local activists created more pressure by citing the probability of public demonstrations in Ms. Walker's support if her case did not receive just and prompt resolution. The next court hearing is scheduled for Feb. 12, 1996.

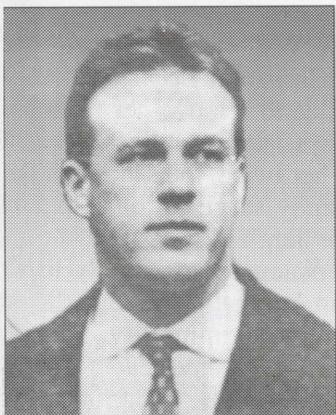
## SECOND TRANSEXUAL MURDERED IN MASSACHUSETTS

On approximately November 20, 1995, Chanel Pickett, a pre-op transsexual, was murdered. The accused murderer, William Palmer, a computer engineer, met Chanel at Playland, a gay/trans bar on the edge of the Combat Zone in Boston. According to newspaper reports, the autopsy indicated Chanel died of "manual strangulation".

This is the second transperson murdered in Massachusetts. Earlier last year, Debroah Forte of Haverhill was stabbed to death, allegedly by Michael Thompson. Thompson allegedly confessed to a coworker that he killed Ms. Forte after they went to her residence, began "messing around," and he discovered that she had a penis. Thompson has pleaded not guilty in Haverhill District Court to the charge of murder. He was ordered held without bail.



*Chanel Pickett*



*William Palmer*

Both Palmer and Thompson are using the same "Eek! A penis!" defense (perhaps they had never seen on before?) but in the case of Chanel Pickett, several witnesses confirm that Palmer was a frequent visitor to Playland and say that Palmer knew that Chanel was trans. No trial date has been set and Palmer is currently free on bail.

*Media note:* Boston *Globe* columnist Patricia Smith wrote a trans-positive

account of Chanel and the world of the Playland bar, no small bit of courage in Boston, home of the "No-Queers-In-OUR-St-Patrick's-Day-Parade" viewpoint.

## BRANDON TEENA MOVIE

Diane Keaton is said to be planning to direct a movie about the life of the late Brandon Teena. The movie will supposedly be based on Aphrodite Jones' not yet published book on Brandon entitled 'All She Ever Wanted.' The fear is that Brandon will be portrayed in the movie as a girl who liked to dress up as a boy, nothing more. Letters expressing concern that Brandon's life will be misrepresented can be written to Ms. Keaton c/o James Green at FTM International, 5337 College Ave., #142, Oakland, CA 94618 and Riki Ann Wilchins at [REDACTED] NYC, 10014, who will forward them to her.

## THE 2ND ANNUAL FTM CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS

will take place in Seattle, Washington Friday August 9, though Sunday, August 11th. Workshops, panels, and presentations of interest to transsexual and transgendered men, FTM crossdressers, their families and significant others will be presented. Special evening events and activities are also planned. For more info write; FTM Conference, 1202 E. Pike #1070, Seattle, Washington 98122 or email: [ftmconfer@aol.com](mailto:ftmconfer@aol.com).

## NATIONAL GENDER LOBBYING DAY TAKES OFF

Over 100 transgender/transsexual activists and friends took to the national capital in the first National Gender Lobbying Day on October 2-3, 1995, dramatically exceeding the organizers' most optimistic predictions. For many this unprecedented and historic event marked the coming-of-age of the transgender movement, as for the first time activists from across the US worked openly and in unison for national political change. It also seemed to signal a definitive step past the "conference culture" which has so long been the main feature of the gender community. More than 500 Senate and House

*continued on page 43*

## NEXT ISSUE

*The Varieties of Transsexual Experience*

*Should Transsexualism  
Remain in the DSM?*

*European FTM Chest Surgery*

*A Review of Lesbians Talk Transgender*

*plus letters, cartoon,  
politics, and more*

# The Alan Lucill Hart Story

by Ken Morris and Candace Hellen Brown

The Right to Privacy PAC (political action committee) in Oregon has a big fund raiser every year called the Lucille Hart Memorial Dinner. The transsexual community of Oregon finds this objectionable.

RTP is usurping a historic transsexual hero and ignoring the fact that he was transsexual by using his birth name and referring to him with the improper feminine pronoun. This maintains the invisibility and disregard of transsexuals and our issues by the greater Queer community.

Dr. Alan L. Hart was born Oct. 4, 1890 in Hall's Summit, Kansas and moved to Oregon two years later, where he was raised, unhappily, as a girl child. Upon reaching mature, educated adult-hood, he took steps, including psychiatric counselling and surgery -- as transsexuals do today -- to live his life as a man. Dr. Joshua Gilbert, who assisted Hart with his transition, published Hart's case in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disorders* in 1920, but kept his patient's identity a secret.

The fact that Dr. Gilbert's "H" and Dr. Alan Hart were one and the same was first publicized by Jonathan Ned Katz in his *Gay American History* (1976). Katz portrayed Hart as a victim of internalized homophobia, who assumed a false identity as a man to love whom "she" chose and who even had surgery to lessen her "guilt" about her lesbianism. Katz says of Hart, "The story of [Hart] illustrates only too well one extreme to which an intelligent, aspiring Lesbian in early twentieth-century America might be driven by her own and her doctor's acceptance of society's condemnation of women-loving women." But the facts of Hart's life clearly show that he was not a victim, but rather a transsexual man who had the courage to be true to himself, who sought help to live in his gender of self-identity.

Deeply unhappy, and having considered suicide, Hart sought counselling in 1917 while attending the University of Oregon Medical College. At first he said his reason for seeking help was to cure a fear of loud noises. However, it soon became clear to Gilbert that Hart's troubles were "connected in some way with sex." Hart described

identifying as a boy from earliest memory and, according to Gilbert, often spoke of himself in male terms, saying "the other fellows and I" or "what could a fellow do?" He also visualized himself as male in sexual fantasies.

In a physical examination, Hart claimed that his "breast are undergoing atrophy" and that his menstrual periods were painful and becoming shorter in duration. Since there was little evidence of abnormality, these statements could signal a wish to be rid of female sexual characteristics, one of the hallmarks of transsexualism.

Hart loved women and seemed to have little difficulty attracting or being physically intimate with them. He claimed that some of his lovers saw him as male. One woman told him that being with him was "exactly like going with a man." But although he easily attracted women, he had difficulty maintaining long-term relationships with them, due in part to his situation. This was a source of pain to him.

Gilbert reported that "after long consideration, [Hart] came to the office with her mind made up to adopt male attire in conformity with her true nature . . ."

Gilbert, though clearly a product of his time, was open-minded enough to believe Hart's self-reporting and help him achieve what he wanted so badly. Together with Dr. Gilbert, Hart charted the course of his own treatment, surgery, and entry into society as a man.

Hart proposed hysterectomy to eliminate menstruation and the possibility of ever becoming pregnant. This was in 1917 or early 1918, decades before male hormones became available. Dr. Gilbert was at first reluctant to comply with Hart's request, but finally concede that his prejudice was all that objected, not his medical knowledge. This marks a milestone in transsexual history: the first time a psychiatrist recommended the removal of a healthy organ based solely on an individual's gender identification.

Gilbert considered Hart extremely intelligent and not mentally ill but afflicted with a mysterious disorder for



Dr. Alan S. Hart, circa February, 1922

which he had no explanation. He had never seen such in his practice before, in spite of having counselled gay and lesbian patients. It is to Gilbert's credit that he recognized the true nature of Hart's problem and what his patient really needed, decades before Gender Dysphoria was described by Dr. Harry Benjamin.

Although Dr. Gilbert continued to refer to Hart as "she" (because of earlier acquaintance), he wrote, ". . .from a sociological and psychological standpoint she is a man" and that living as one was Hart's only chance for a happy existence, "the best that can be done." He adds, "Let him who finds in himself a tendency to criticize offer some constructive method of dealing with the problem on hand. He will not want for difficulties. The patient and I have done our best with it."

Hart had his surgery in 1918 and made arrangements to change his name. Soon after, he married Inez Stark (who was fully aware that he had been born female) and started a medical practice in Gardiner, Oregon. But only months after his arrival in Gardiner, he was outed by a former medical school classmate and forced to move. His early career was marked by such discoveries and transphobic treatment. No doubt because of this, Inez divorced him in 1923. In spite of this he never wavered from his identity as a man.

Despite Hart's early difficulties, this earliest known attempt at modern sex reassignment was successful when judged by the remainder of Hart's life. His second marriage, to Edna Ruddick in 1925, lasted until the end of his life--over 37 years. Hart published five books, including four novels and a text on his medical specialty (roentgenology). He had successful medical practices in Tacoma, Washington and Hartford, Connecticut, where he died on July 1, 1962, of heart failure. As with transsexuals today, living in his gender of self-identity had profound psychological benefits for Dr. Alan L. Hart.

Hart's novels are particularly interesting for the insight they provide into his thinking. *The Undaunted* (1936) contains two semi-autobiographical characters which seem to express two sides of Hart's own personality and life experiences. The main character, Richard Cameron, a doctor and medical researcher, becomes a "cripple" (his words) when his foot has to be amputated due to a persistent bone infection. He worries that this physical defect will drive women away, but ends up marrying his sweetheart.

The other character, a radiologist named Sandy Farquhar, is a gay man who has been harassed and tormented, driven from job to job because of what he is. Farquhar resembled Hart physically--short and thin, wearing glasses. Small and frail from childhood, Farquhar

considers himself to be "the possessor of a defective body" from which he wishes to escape--a typical transsexual sentiment. Another novel, *In the Lives of Men*, contains a gay male character with a missing arm. Could Hart's feelings about his own body be encoded in these characters?

Some people dispute applying the term "transsexual" to Hart since he himself did not use the term. But why should he? The term was not coined until 1949 and not widely used until the 1960s, around the time of Hart's death. Although, according to Dr. Gilbert, Hart "accepted [his] condition as one of abnormal inversion," it must be recognized that in the early 1900's the concept of sexual inversion blended aspects of what today are considered entirely separate issues of gender identity and sexual orientation. After his transition, Hart had no desire to identify himself as anything other than what everyone accepted him to be: a man. Thus he was a transsexual -- a true pioneer -- one that is seen as a hero by today's transsexual community.

Oregon Right to Privacy's use of Alan Hart's old name as if it were a badge of honor is at best unthinking, at worst insulting. Yes, his parents may have named him Alberta Lucille Hart, but he named himself Alan!

**This was the first time a psychiatrist recommended the removal of a healthy organ based solely on gender identification.**

#### ***Al Hart Update:***

On February 10, Candice Brown and Ken Morris met with the full board of Right to Privacy to discuss the continued use of Alan Hart's birth name for their annual fundraising dinner. The board said they will be changing the name of the "Lucille" Hart Dinner to something else in the near future.

Besides discussing Al Hart and the politics which led to him being represented as a lesbian, they also did basic education about the trans community, what is meant by transsexual and transgendered, issues of gender identity and gender expression. They pointed out that it is not surgery which defines a transsexual, but the internal visualization and experience of the body as being of the opposite sex, which creates the desire to bring the body into conformity with the internal image. Thus, transsexuals existed long before the advent of modern surgical techniques. Many members of the Board were also surprised to find out that many FTMs identify as gay or bisexual, and MTFs as lesbian or bi.

# A SURGERY SAMPLER

BY  
MARGARET  
O'HARTIGAN

Too many transsexuals choose a surgeon to provide them sex-reassignment based on little more than hope of a successful outcome. Second- and third-hand recommendations are all-too-often the only criteria for picking one surgeon over another.

While "a friend of a friend says..." might be adequate research for choosing a toaster or washing machine, few people would consider purchasing a car without a test-drive — or at least kicking a few tires. So why are so many of us willing to trust our bodies, our hopes and dreams to a stranger wielding a knife?

Part of the answer lies in the desperate desire to escape life in an alienating body which epitomizes the transsexual experience, coupled with the historic difficulty transsexuals have faced in finding a surgeon willing to operate on them. Twenty years ago less than a handful of private practitioners offered SRS; the bulk of providers were affiliated with university medical school programs, which were notorious for selecting candidates primarily for research purposes.

The situation today is markedly different in at least one sense: the majority of surgeons offering SRS are in private practice; only a few medical school programs remain. As with any service offered within a capitalist economy, increased availability reduces price through the market device of supply and demand. Male-to-Female surgery which routinely cost \$9,000-\$10,000 twenty years ago remains commonly available for approximately the same price despite the effects of inflation. Had all medical procedures remained as inexpensive as this there would be no need to consider national health care reform.

The relatively low-cost of MTF sex-reassignment surgery today compared to several decades ago, however, has had little impact upon transsexual decision-making for the simple reason that we remain extremely vulnerable to discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations. And that's the second factor contributing to the transsexual tendency to choose a surgeon on the basis of hearsay and hope.

Since the 1970s organ transplants have become so

commonplace as to be routinely included in health insurance coverage, while SRS remains an excluded benefit. While those individuals seeking a change of sex who possess extensive personal histories as men may benefit from the financial rewards of traditionally higher-paying male occupations, far too many male-to-female transsexuals struggle to survive — and save for surgery — through prostitution or low-paying jobs in such traditionally female fields as hair-dressing and office work.

Not surprisingly, when choosing a surgeon, many transsexuals base their choice on two factors: the willingness of a surgeon to accept them, and cost. Little wonder that so many transsexuals choose Belgium's Michel Seghers (\$4,500) rather than Toby Meltzer (\$10,650), Stanley Biber (\$10,575) or Eugene Schrang (\$10,480) — let alone Edward Falces, who charges \$37,000. Even the extra six thousand dollars necessary to go to the least expensive of the American surgeons is a lot of additional money to earn, whether by whoring or typing.

Nevertheless, these are our bodies, our hopes and our dreams which we entrust to the hands of another human being — and we owe it to ourselves to have the greatest

amount of information possible on which to make a decision as to who we trust to give us the best chance of future happiness and fulfillment.

In the course of selecting a surgeon to perform her sex-reassignment surgery last summer, Rachel Koteles of Portland, Oregon

sent a letter of inquiry to 18 providers. "I would like to inquire regarding the male-to-female sex-reassignment surgery you perform," Koteles wrote. "I'm particularly interested in knowing about the surgical procedure you utilize — both techniques and outcome — and what your fee and associated costs are, as well as specific criteria you require of applicants." Included with Koteles' letter was a photocopy of the recommendation for surgery she received from her psychiatrist of 10 years. The table accompanying this article summarizes the responses Koteles received.

It should be noted that the order in which surgeons appear in the table is in no way to be construed an endorsement of one provider over another; the ranking merely reflects the amount of information each surgeon provided over and above that which Koteles requested. Schrang and Menard each provided 15 to 20 pages of material ranging from local hotel accommodations to specific instructions to be followed both prior to and after undergoing surgery. Menard even included illustrations of his surgical technique. No other surgeons provided anywhere near the amount of information these two candidates offered.

It should be noted that only seven respondents provided answers to Koteles' simple questions. The

## Too many transsexuals choose a surgeon based on second- and third-hand recommendations.

*continued on page 17*

Surgeon	Cost*	Technique	Requirements	Days in Hospital	Benjamin Standards**
Stanley Biber Colorado	\$10,575	Penile Inversion (Graft Optional)	Pre-pay, two psychiatric evaluations	9	
James Dalrymple Great Britain	£6,950	Skin Flap	Pre-pay	10	
Edward Falces San Francisco	\$37,000	Flap/Graft		5-7	X
J. William Futrell	"Recognizing the distance, travel expenses, etc., I suggest that you may wish to consult with Dr. Michael Wheatley in..."				
Ted Huang	\$15,000- 20,000	Skin Flap			
W. Earle Matory Univ. of Mass.	\$10,000- 12,000				
Toby Meltzer Oregon	\$10,650	Penile Inversion	Pre-pay	2-3	X
Yvon Menard Canada	\$7,285 Canadian	Penile Inversion	Pre-pay, two letters of recommendation		
Michael Royle Great Britain	£6,250	Penile Inversion; Colon Resection Available			
Eugene Schrang Wisconsin	\$10,480 (Graft add'l cost)	W/ or W/O Skin Graft	Pre-pay, weigh less than 200 pounds, two letters of recommendation	7	X
Michel Seghers Belgium	\$4,500	Penile Inversion	One letter, weigh less than 200 pounds, medical examination if over 35 years of age		
Neal Wilson		Flap/Graft	"If you need any further information, you will need to come to Detroit to see me. You may call the office anytime to get details on arranging a consultation."		

\* Prices are from summer 1994 and subject to change.

\*\* Failure to indicate adherence to Benjamin Standards does not imply anything more than that the Standards were not specifically cited.

importance of adequate information in making a wise choice of surgeon to perform sex-reassignment surgery cannot be over-emphasized — and the willingness to be forthcoming with that information should be a consideration in choosing a surgeon. For example, Dr. Matory provided only the cost of surgery, while Dr. Wilson essentially told Koteles that if she wanted to know anything she would have to pay to consult with him. Not surprisingly, Koteles immediately rejected these two surgery candidates.

Legitimate questions to put to prospective surgeons which Koteles did not include in her letter pertain to where and from whom the surgeon learned to perform SRS, and to which professional organizations he belongs. No respectable surgeon will resent such inquiries. On the other hand, some questions are almost certain to cause a surgeon to shy away from accepting any transsexual so bold to inquire --such as asking what the percentage of post-operative patients to retain orgasmic response is. None of the surgeons surveyed offered anything of substance regarding the topic of orgasm: responses such as “a sensitive clitoris”; “a small surviving glandular neurovascular island flap which carries erotic sensation”; and “the results are very good both cosmetically and functionally” don’t say or mean much.

There is another source for information regarding surgeons providing sex-reassignment surgery, of course, and that is post-operative transsexuals themselves. I cannot over-emphasize the importance in speaking to as many of us as possible to evaluate any surgeon being seriously considered. And consider the source: word-of-mouth is only as good as the word of the person making the recommendation.

As rude as it may seem, ask people to show you their surgery, and ask whether or not they are orgasmic. Post-operative transsexuals are in a position to spare their little sisters and daughters untold grief and regret. Don’t just accept a surgeon’s assurances that his surgery results in a vagina which is “adequate,” or that a clitoris is “functional.” Results described as “very good both cosmetically and functionally” could be interpreted to mean the resulting vagina is large enough to accept the average penis or sensitive enough to bring you to orgasm — or both. A “functional” clitoris could mean capable of erection, orgasm or both. Different surgeries result in women capable of vaginal or clitoral orgasm — or both. Or neither. Only a post-operative transsexual can clarify what are, essentially, meaningless buzz words.

Keep in mind, however, the enormous sacrifice of privacy you are asking a post-operative transsexual to make. Don’t ask out of idle curiosity — wait until you are actually in the process of selecting a surgeon. And don’t take offense or feel rejected should an individual refuse your request. Some transsexuals are reluctant to share such intimate information regarding their bodies from a sense of inadequacy, a fear of appearing abnormal or simply personal modesty. Accept “no” for an answer — but continue to seek out individuals who are willing to share their experience. And remember that non-transsexual women are often sensitive regarding their own perceived shortcomings as sexual beings. A post-operative transsexual unwilling to exhibit her body is not necessarily the recipient of a botched surgery.

Above all, be gentle with one another — and that statement cuts both ways. What all of us share is dissatisfaction with our native genitals sufficient to undertake life-threatening surgery. A careless comment, mocking glance or gossip can threaten even the strongest of us with ghosts from the past. We are all of us, after all, haunted.

As much as I might want to simply state that “this surgeon is good” or indulge my inclination to warn people away from “that butcher”, the fact is that to do so would surely cause a plague of attorneys to descend upon any magazine foolhardy enough to print such comments. What can’t be written, however, can be said — and I have no hesitation to tell any who ask me: “I wouldn’t go to *him* unless my life depended on it.”

Ultimately, the question of whether *your* life depends upon one or another surgeon is a question only *you* can answer. You owe it to yourself to learn as much as possible about the stranger you are willing to entrust with your body, your future, your hopes, dreams — and yes, your life. Sex-reassignment surgery provides transsexuals the opportunity for something few other people in life ever experience — a second chance.

Don’t second guess it.

*Margaret O’Hartigan is a longtime transsexual activist currently living in Portland, Oregon.*

*None of the surgeons offered anything of substance regarding orgasm: “a sensitive clitoris”; “a small surviving flap carries erotic sensation”; and “the results are very good both cosmetically and functionally” don’t say much.*

# Getting a Weight Off my Chest

by David Harrison

It's been almost a year since I had chest surgery. That morning I arrived at the Sutter Street Medical Center around 6:00 a.m., knowing that in a couple of hours my life would be changed forever.

The nurse led me back to a changing room where I stripped down to my underwear and put on a gown. A little while later Dr. Michael Brownstein drew guidelines with a purple marker on my chest. This would include getting rid of a horizontal lumpectomy scar (from having had breast cancer) which ran from under my arm to the nipple. I met with the anesthesiologist and asked him to please give me something to prevent me from getting sick afterwards. Everyone was very warm and had a good sense of humour. As I started to go under the anesthesia, I felt I was in good hands.

The surgery, which is comprised of taking out the breast tissue and creating nipple grafts from the areola and nipple, took about three hours. It was done by 11 a.m. I awoke at 12 and went home an hour later -- groggy, but feeling pretty good. My friend who brought me home stayed with me for awhile and then another friend came over and spent the night. I was feeling very chipper and chatty that evening when I called my father.

He said: "So, you're going in for your surgery tomorrow."

"No, I just came back from it."

He was stunned.

Although this is extensive surgery, it's outpatient. It worked fine for me. That seems to be the case for others, too. I went back a couple of days later

to have my dressing changed. In the meantime I emptied the drains of fluid once or twice a day. The drains hang out from underneath the binder which one wears for at least two weeks to keep everything in place and for protection. I had two or three more visits to the doctor the next

*Scars or no scars,  
I finally really  
like my chest.*

week, during which time the drains and later the stitches, were removed. The healing process had begun. After three weeks I was exercising (carefully) and after a month I was doing bench-presses. The incision sites turned into scars, which went through various stages, especially in the first few months. After that they faded over time.

I prepared as much as I could before surgery. I cleaned up my diet and lost weight, which is helpful to the surgeon when figuring out how much fat to take out. Too much or too little affects the overall look of the end result. I exercised to increase blood circulation and muscle-tone (particularly in my chest). I took supplements -- the basic multi-vitamin/minerals and other things I'd researched. Most of all, I started taking the following a couple of weeks before the surgery: shark liver oil, Bromelain, Vitamin C, Vitamin E with Selenium, Potassium, Beta Carotene, Zinc. These supplements are particularly good for healing wounds and specifically for surgery. I've read that one should not overdo it on Vitamin E beforehand, and use

only natural E, because the synthetic type has been known to thin the blood, which is not what you want while you're under the knife. I increased my E intake after surgery. Other supplements I took afterwards to accelerate healing were Aloe Vera (internally), and Acidophilus. I chose to not do oral antibiotics, but they are given during the surgery, and any time there are antibiotics it's good to do Acidophilus to restore intestinal flora.

Some people heal well regardless of whether they take any of the above, but I figure it can't hurt to optimize one's immune system under the circumstances. There are some good books out there on the subject such as "Healthy Healing" by Linda Rector-Page and "Prescription for Nutritional Healing" by James F. and Phyllis A. Balch. Do the research and find out what works for you.

Whether or not to have surgery and choosing a surgeon are very personal decisions. When I was shopping for a surgeon, I looked for experience, consistency and good results. I have seen a fair number of chest surgeries. Some are better looking than others. I heard one man talk about having had his surgery done by someone who had never before performed that type of operation, but he believed in the doctor because he was a "nice" man. The guy says he's happy with the outcome, but I certainly wouldn't want to be someone's guinea pig!

There are a number of different techniques out there and your choice of a doctor is going to depend on a number of factors, including how you feel about having scars, and how important nipple sensation is to you. In the case of my surgery, I do not have nipple sensation, and I do have thin scars contoured under the pecs. I am very pleased with the look of the nipple/areola grafts, but it's a

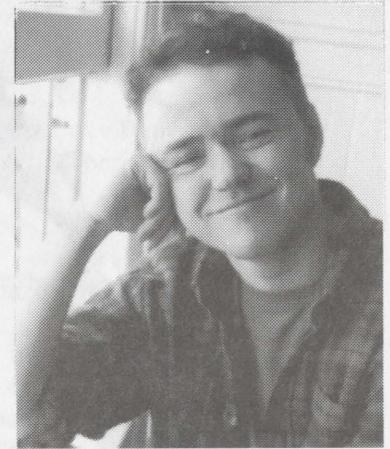
different feeling than before, and that is something important to consider. I knew all this beforehand and thought about it for a long time, because my nipples were erogenous to me. Even with the loss of that sensation, I feel I made the right decision. I might have opted for a different type of surgery had I not had a lumpectomy scar. There is now no sign of it. I also liked the look of Brownstein's work on most of the other people I've seen. He is consistent, and has been doing this type of surgery for a long time

Had I not had a lumpectomy scar, I would have checked out a doctor in Belgium who is doing what seems to me to be the best technique I have encountered. Armand Hotimsky, the director of C.A.R.I.T.I.G (a transsexual organization in Paris), showed me his chest. Amazing! No signs of scars anywhere. With this surgical method, breast tissue is removed through a small "half-moon" incision along the areola edge. The remaining excess folds of skin are re-

absorbed by the body over time. Areola size can be reduced by superficial incisions, and nipple sensation is not compromised. For those with large nipples, there is also a technique to reduce the size. This is a slower process in some ways than the one I went through, but in the long run it's probably worth it. I believe this technique can be used with any size breast. Another advantage of this kind of surgery is that costs around \$3,000 as opposed to \$6,500, which is what I paid for mine. [Editor's Note: due to the French general strike, an article by Armand Hotimsky on this type of surgery was unable to appear in this issue. It will appear in the following issue of TNT.]

If top surgery is the way you want to go, shop around for a surgeon and ask a lot of questions. Find out who's consistently good and who isn't. Look at photos of surgeries and get other FTMs to take off their shirts and show you their chests. Give yourself

the time to really weigh out the realities of the different types of surgeries and what will work best for you. I'm glad I did because I have peace of mind knowing I considered all the options available to me. I feel I made the right choice, and scars or no scars, I finally really like my chest.



David Harrison is a playwright and performance artist living in San Francisco. His most recent work is the performance piece FTM.

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# Pre-Operative



by Susan Stryker

1

I'd rather lift my hips to meet His knife as it enters me than lie there unconscious with my legs apart. I'd rather Him see in my open eyes that nothing other than my desire brings Him here. I know it will not be that way, and it scares me to have a need so fierce that I will let myself become completely powerless in the hands of someone I do not completely trust.

2

I can do nothing about the fact that He is a man, and that I must deal with Him. There are no women who do sex-reassignment surgery, not one in all the world. There are no transsexuals who do it, either.

3

Every now and then I slip off into the fantasy of some pussy-loving amazon of a surgeon, a bulldyke doctor who'll turn me outside-in with a welcoming smile.

"It won't be long now, dear," she'll say to me as she drops my balls into the biohazard bin. "Next, let's flay that awkward little dick of yours, and whittle the erectile tissue down to a reasonable size. We'll tuck it neatly into this new crevice here and dress it in this darling little hood. Your scrotal skin folds up quite delicately, and I've arranged it into such exquisite labia that I'm almost tempted to go down on you myself."

But this woman doesn't exist anywhere other than in my mind--and He is all too real. I know His name, where He works. And I know, too, that He thinks more about how deep and fuckable He can make my cunt than He does about whether I'll be able to feel anything when I rub myself against a slick, wet thigh.

4

This small dark woman's vagina fits around my fist almost as tightly as the latex glove that comes between her flesh and mine. We've drawn a circle of admirers around the waterbed at the party, who watch her writhe gracefully at the end of my dancing forearm. It's the first day of her period and she's bleeding so dramatically. Her blood runs down my forearm and drips onto the plastic sheet; I should have worn latex up to my elbow, and not just to my wrist.

The thought occurs to me that I'll bleed just once--for Him-- and then no more. Will He squander the sight of it?

5

The coals in the fireplace at the end of my lover's bed glow red in the warm darkness. Before we lie naked together for the rest of the night, I pause for a moment in shy self-consciousness to push my genitals away behind me, back between my legs. When I wrap my arms around her and snuggle close I want the curve of her ass to caresses my bush--and nothing else.

The deep purple cane marks across her butt cheeks seem to radiate as much heat to the surface of my skin as the fireplace across the room does. My tits are still so tender from her clamps that it's almost too much sensation to bear when the tiniest rotation of shoulders or hips drags my nipple against the edge of a whip-welt on her back.

Her breathing is regular and relaxed now. I open my eyes and look past her to see Him watching us through the window. He scribbles His observations in a notebook, then looks in the mirror behind me to see my penis lying soft and warm against the back of my thigh. I smile at Him and He smiles back. We both know I'll give my penis to no one else but Him.

## 6

I listen to the click of my heels on the sidewalk, feel the hem of the short tight dress and the stockings on my freshly shaved legs, smell the delicate scent of my perfume. I usually wear jeans and T-shirts, but today I'm dressing for Him. On the way to His office I stop and look at my reflection in a store window. I look at the make-up. I look at the hair. No, I confess, this isn't all for Him. Femme can be fun when you feel like it, sexy when it catches a woman's attention, subversive when it turns back the straight gaze, powerful when it gets you what you want.

I sit in the chair in front of His desk and pretend to listen as He moves His lips. I cross and uncross my legs. I smile at Him. If He thinks I'm the girl He wants me to be, I'm sure I'll get what I want. He tells me once more how much it will cost, and I give Him the cashiers' check. We make a date.

"Just remember," He says with a wink, "I get to use it first."

I laugh politely before I leave. How come I feel like I just turned a trick when He's the one who kept the money?

## 7

I'm alone in the bathtub, fucking my asshole with the two middle fingers of my left hand. My left thumb circles the spot I think of as my clit. While I work that bit of gristle against my pubic bone, my breasts sway gently in water set in motion by the movement of my hand.

For the first time since becoming a woman I feel the stirrings of an erection. The hormones make this almost impossible, but here alone, where my body does not have to be a social body, I coax the sensation along. It feels uncanny, deeply familiar and utterly strange all at the same time. I'd like to be able to touch myself anywhere and find a special pleasure there, but that ability eludes me here at this conflicted site. I don't know what to do with this thing that rises up to vex me. How can I love that which defies my ability to define myself?

I take the matter firmly in hand and struggle with it, vainly invoking different names to change its shape, but it resists all transformation. Materiality always resists the symbolic frame. I beg it, then, to throw all language off and become ungendered flesh, but language clenches this meat between its teeth in a death-grip. Words and things together taunt me. Though each downward stroke of my right hand tries to push them apart, they refuse to be unjoined. I know that I will find my pleasure in the pursuit of their estrangement, or I will not find it anywhere at all.

Finally, in my need, I call out for Him to help me. The bolted bathroom door slams open and He looks down upon me.

"You shouldn't have to think so much," He says. There is more cruelty in His voice than I have noticed before; there is a trace of threatened malice when He says "Just lie there with your legs apart and I'll straighten out this mess."

He scares me, but I'm ready. I've been waiting for Him so long now. As He falls upon me I see the knife glinting in His hand, and I know this water will soon be turning red. When I lift my hips to meet Him as He enters me, He will surely see that nothing other than my desire brings Him here.

*This piece was originally performed at "The Illustrated Woman: The Second Annual Conference on Feminist Activism in the Arts," Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, California, February, 1994.*

# *The Body Is Her Laboratory*

*The body is her instrument, her art  
She plays upon its shape  
Improvises desire  
On the textures of her skin*

*The body is her library  
Collecting discoveries  
Over thousands of years  
Mistakes and revelations  
Of dead and living explorers*

*The body is her laboratory  
The site of her experiments  
An infinite series  
Shared in secret*

*The body is her geography  
The desert that becomes an ocean  
The small lakes  
Dotted and stained  
With islands and caves*

*The body is her miracle  
Trans-substantiated  
Trance-mutated  
Form to form  
Softly, violently  
Shifting shape and presence*

*The body is her prison  
Stubborn, resistant  
It locks her away  
Seemingly forever  
Until suddenly (and  
Slowly)  
She escapes*

*The body is her mystery  
Her secret  
Wrapped in frauds  
And plausible histories  
The body is her swindle*

*The body is her river  
Her flow of dreams  
Sometimes stagnant  
Sometimes a flood  
Breaking its banks  
Of mud and sand*

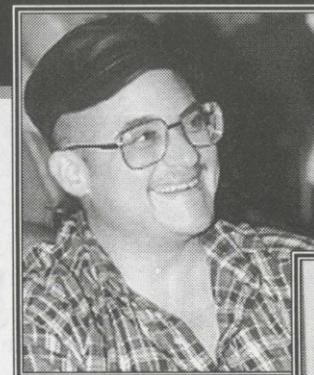
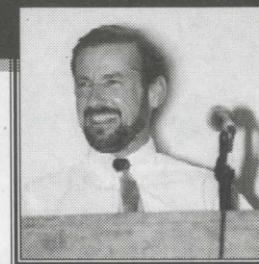
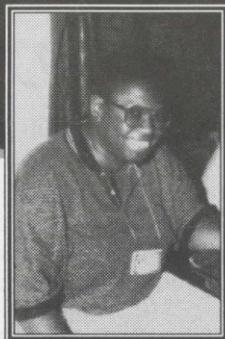
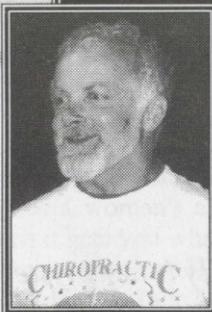
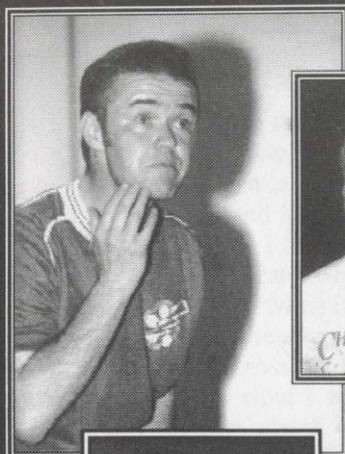
*The body is her sky  
Open and light  
As far as she can see  
Diffuse and empty  
And subject to storms*

*The body is her laboratory  
An endless testing  
Successes and failures  
Pouring together*

*Rachel Pollack*

# The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual FTM Conference of the Americas

Reported by James Green



## FTM Conference A Stunning Success

Mayor Frank Jordan proclaimed the weekend of August 18-20, 1995 "FTM Conference Weekend in San Francisco" as over 350 FTMs, their partners, and friends convened for an historic event that set precedents on many fronts. In recent years, conferences sponsored by IFGE and SCC and others have tried to do outreach to include FTMs, but (as far as I am aware) the largest men's turnout at any of these regional events has been around 35. Jason Cromwell of Seattle, a longtime FTM advocate at IFGE, reported once being told, "If more guys would come, we'd have more programs for them." Jason responded, "No, it's the other way around: If you had more programs for them, more guys would come." Finally,

Dallas Denny and the board of directors at AEGIS decided to try to inspire the men to do it for themselves by kicking \$500.00 into the air and asking FTM groups around the country to jump for it in a challenge grant.

We are spoiled here in the City-by-the-Bay because we have such a large FTM group with attendance averaging around 50 every month. Many of us here don't often think about the cities where only a few guys gather now and then,

or the men who are out there all alone who think they are the only one. But the members of FTM International decided we could rise to the challenge and invite the world to our door.

Sky Renfro served as Conference Coordinator. He worked day and night securing the conference sites and arranging details from food, to badges, to the conference program. He was also responsible for getting the Mayor's Office to issue the official proclamation. And when men from other cities, men who live in fear of being discovered, witnessed the presentation of the Mayor's proclamation, they were blown away. It was being recognized; it was being acknowledged and respected for who we are, as opposed to being pointed at and ridiculed -- or worse. Never before in the history of the world have so many men who once had female bodies been gathered in one place. And the feedback I've received has been uniformly exhilarated, inspired, amazed.

We did several things differently from other conferences: first, we kept the registration fee well under \$100.00 because we didn't use a hotel as the meeting site. Of course this presented certain logistical problems, but we figured it was more important for people to be able to get here at all than to have everybody under one roof all the time. Second, we helped people secure free or inexpensive housing in local homes. Third, we provided food -- modest food, but food people could eat throughout the conference. And fourth, to make sure everybody had a chance to get their medical questions answered, we presented six doctors on stage at the same time (Sunday) to take questions from audience: three surgeons--Michael Brownstein,

Donald Laub, and Gail Lebovic; an endocrinologist--Richard Cherlin; an internist (who treats many TS people via hormones)--Ken Peters; and a family practitioner who concerns herself with us as whole human beings--Roxanne Fiscella.

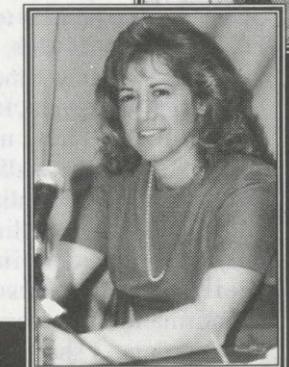
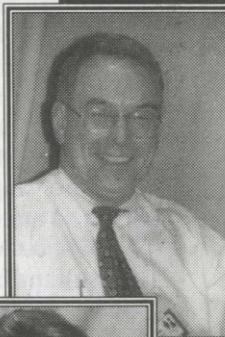
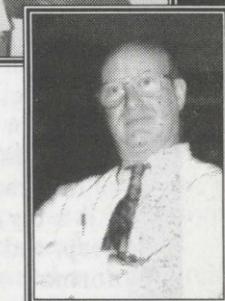
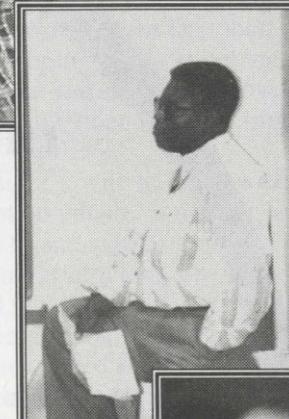
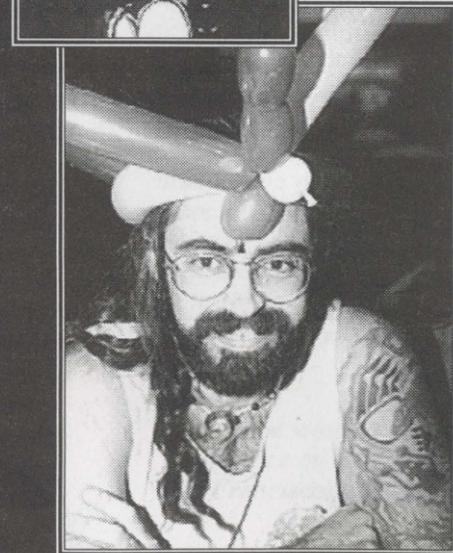
The most popular workshops (Saturday) were "Living Long Term in Transsexual Bodies" with Jason Cromwell, Steve Dain, John Garrigues, and Jude Patton, the two "Partners' Issues" sessions with Michiko Bailey and Marcy Sheiner, "FTM Sexuality" with Sky Renfro, and "Spirituality and Male Consciousness Raising" with John Gunty, Shadow Morton, Chris Smith, and myself. Other sessions that received very favorable comments were "The No Hormone/Non-Operative Option" and "Racism and Transsexuality" both led by Yolanda Lewis, and "Families and Children" with Chris Smith and Tony M. The remaining workshop/seminar sessions were jam-packed, too, and included such topics as "Relationships" and "Coming Out" led by Stephan Thorne, "Political and Legal Issues for FTMs" with Larry Brinkin, Kiki Whitlock, and myself, "Therapists" with Dr. Lin Fraser, Dr. William Henkin, Dr. Kit Rachlin, Luanna Rodgers, MFCC, and Dr. Anne Vitale, "Queer/Straight Issues" with Shadow Morton, Marcus Arana and Jeff Shevlowitz, "Academic Perspectives" with Jason Cromwell, Henry Rubin, and Susan Stryker, and "MTF/FTM Issues" with Anne Vitale, Susan Stryker, Shadow Morton, and myself.

All weekend the energy was high, and many people commented on the feeling of acceptance and support, and the acknowledg-

ment of diversity that the FTM Conference exuded. Personally, I was thrilled that so many people came and that our hard-working conference team and volunteers made it truly a weekend to remember.

But the moment that stands out in my memory was at the close of the final session when I was to make my "farewell address" and I stepped up to the microphone and looked out at all those people who had come here for education and networking and ended up with that and more. I was surprised by the tears that welled up in me. I was so moved by who we are. In my keynote address on Friday night I spoke about FTM invisibility and about how, as transsexuals and transgendered people, we often make others responsible for our lives -- I used the refrain "Who's driving; are we there yet?" On Sunday, when I finally choked back the tears and could speak, I asked, "Who's driving?", the collective voice of a newly forming FTM community responded as one being: "WE ARE!"

*Audio tapes of many of the conference sessions are available through FTM International for \$10.00/cassette, or \$100.00 for the entire set of 14 tapes. Shipping outside the U.S. is extra. Write or phone FTM to request pricing details and an order form at: FTM, 5337 College Ave., #142, Oakland, CA 94618. Voicemail 510-287-2646.*



# Silent and Transfixed

IN THE TRANSEXUAL FACTORY

By Katherine Collins

**J**uly 31, 1994

I am staying at a hotel, waiting for the magic, three days from now.

I am barely living in the real world at all. Minimal survival tasks are about all the practical matters I can handle — it is a big deal to remember to eat and sleep, and as to doing any of that at a normal time, forget it. The immeasurably enormous fact of my surgery looms. Adrenaline is racing through me, causing me to be extra wide-awake and in a state of heightened sensitivity to whatever I see or do. It is a selective sensitivity — my attention is concentrated so that everything and anything that comes along is seen only in relationship to that enormity.

I am on the brink of the unknown. I cannot know, but only guess, at what this surgery and the resultant body I will have will mean to me, or what it will be like to have that body. It seems necessary to do this; I know I have understood that fact clearly time and time again, but as I approach the event I am so dazzled by it that I forget all that I have understood.

Now I am walking toward it, silent and transfixed, as if walking toward a brilliantly-lit altar, with the swelling voices of a choir filling my ears and echoing upward to the vaulted ceiling. It feels like a communion or confirmation or marriage, or even the taking of holy orders. I shall be lifted up, from my place in this life, and set down elsewhere, on the other side of a mysterious divide and it will be different there.

**Now  
I am  
walking  
toward it,  
silent and  
transfixed.  
It feels like a  
communion  
or the taking  
of holy  
orders.**

Now I am close to the centre of the gravitational pull which has been impelling me for all these years. I will be entering the heart of it, and the dream I have held the longest, but which always seemed the most impossible, will become reality. I am going to be a woman in this world, not only in my mind, but in physical reality. I will have the physical form of a woman, and I will be so for the rest of my life now.

I have no fear or doubt, but I have great wonderment — I wonder what I have gotten myself into. But I am in it now, taking the last few steps on the journey. I am as ready for it as a person can be, which isn't very ready. All my preparation has led to this point: where I am prepared to accept the unknown. That is all I can ask of myself.

I can't be ready for that which I can't imagine — that is, what it will be like or what it will mean. I only know that I am hanging around this town, desperately eager to hurl myself, body and soul, into the greatest unknown of my life. Not tomorrow, nor the next day, but the day after that. It seems like eternity. Two more long days will pass, slowly. And then —

**A**ugust 2, 1994

I'm sitting in my hospital room the night before my surgery. In the room's other bed is a young, blonde, beautiful, drugged-out, barely sensate transsexual woman who my surgeon operated on today. Apparently he did two today. That makes four this week that I know about

(including me), and I don't know what he's up to on Thursday and Friday.

This evening has been very busy. I had to shower and be "prepped" (painted with antiseptic), and I had to drink a gallon of cherry-flavoured laxative, plus several other cups of another hideous purgative, the bitterest flavour I have ever had to swallow. I was talked to about tomorrow's procedures; I swallowed antibiotic pills; and I made countless trips to the bathroom. Two transsexuals, whom I know only from on-line, arrived for a brief visit, and sister-patient J'Noel phoned for a conversation from here within the hospital.

Then I phoned Lizzie, and we chatted and joked and at the end she tried to think of the right good wish, or phrase — and finally told me she would be holding my hand tomorrow. I feel very well spiritually protected. I have a lot of people looking out for me.

Now it is nearing midnight. The bustling nursing staff has quieted down, and I am sitting in bed with my darling doll, Madeleine, lying by my side. I am supposed to be going to sleep, but I am determined to write something — anything. After all, isn't this supposed to be a significant moment? Had I not better have some significant thoughts?

The woman in the other bed, behind a curtain, has not wakened once since she was wheeled in about six hours ago. She is hooked up to all manner of machines, all clicking and whirring and gurgling. All of this is a preview of what will be my situation tomorrow. It does not make me feel entirely comfortable, even though I have never before been afraid of the physical traumas of surgery. To take this perfectly healthy body and reduce it to crippled dependency seems perverse and drastic. But I have doggedly, determinedly, desperately led myself to this place, this day, this night before the morning after, and now I am all but irrevocably caught up in it. It does seem strange, and mostly it seems enormous.

What seems enormous is not the decision to be female rather than male. That seems to be a given; comparing the choices makes it unquestionable. But taking one's life and identity and body and fate and future in one's own hands — the gravity and boldness of this decision, this action — is too much to comprehend all at once. I have done it. I have come this far. I have made these decisions and taken these actions, and brought myself, on the physical level, to the extraordinary place which matches the clarity of my spiritual reality.

I am frightened — of what? The pain of some of the morning's preliminary procedures? Discomfort and

incapacity afterward? The unknown? Dealing with being physically female for the rest of my life? I suppose I would be nuts if I were not frightened. I will be physically helpless for over a week. But it is more than that. It is . . . my mind trails off. The sleeping pill is knocking me out. I must go to sleep. I will be wakened tomorrow, given a few minutes to prepare myself, then will be drugged up, and it all begins.

Tonight is the last night I will lie here with a male body. This is the last night on which I will have to pray to the fairies to make me whole, make me a girl. It is the last night of a long line of nights and days in which I am still at least to some degree as God made me, and as my parents raised me to be. I have been looking at my penis and scrotum, for the last few times. I feel more disloyal than sad. They are nothing much to see — not even familiar any more, since they are shrunken and reduced from the hormones. Like them, so my maleness, my male self — whatever I may supposedly be saying goodbye to — is almost entirely gone already.

I suppose I am not more amazed and frightened because I have come to this point gradually. What seems, to most people, utterly bizarre, is the stuff of every day life for me. By the time I have ended up here in a ward full of transsexuals, with more transsexual visitors, all blithely discussing the details of their surgery and transition, it has become normal for me; gratifying but not surprising. The instant warmth and welcome of transsexual sisterhood is overwhelmingly positive and uplifting — we all sincerely feel, and say, we are sisters, out on this far limb. The gradual exposure to, and acceptance of, the highly unusual renders it more usual in one's eyes, and the eyes get used to that unexpected light.

I am nodding off. I am frightened -- of the unknown, I guess. But here I go, to sleep once more in this intact old body, with Madeleine by my side, and with dear friend David's love all around me, as well as Mom's, and Lizzie's, and that of many others.

My eyes are closing. Time to drop it. No more words to fend off or organise reality. Hard to let go of words, hard to let go of control. 'Night readers, whoever you are. G'night from Katherine in a male body. Get ready to say hello to Katherine — period

**A**ugust 10, 1994

It is the evening before I will be discharged from the hospital. The entire ward sleeps. I am dosed with pain-killers, barely able to stand up, plagued by an on-again

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are sisters, out on this  
far limb.**

off-again urinary infection, and, of course, cut and reformed and stitched and bandaged as I have never been before in my life. But, insistently, I put pen to paper — finally.

I had hoped to write a blow-by-blow account, in the hospital, of my first days post-operative — both the physical realities and the Stunning Psychological Impact of having finally converted my body to a female one. But in fact, I spent almost all of this week on a sub-literate level, in a wash of vague consciousness, certainly unable to put together sentences or paragraphs. More importantly, I did not even begin to notice the Stunning Psychological Impact or my new female body, until today, when they disconnected me from the intravenous Demoral.

The entire experience of the last week has been a medical one — all of my attention, what there has been of it in the drugged fog, has been on the physical realities of pain control, and changing dressings, and being washed while in bed, and somehow trying to stay comfortable while never getting out of bed for a week. Hospital routine, hospital food, hospital staff, swim in and out of view in my memory, and my largest acts have been to push the button to summon the nurse, and to somehow sound coherent on the telephone with friends and family, in conversations I can only barely remember.

I did notice one thing: that I had almost no emotions. The highs and lows of the usual range of feeling have been sheared off, leaving me with this survival mode of consciousness, and giving me almost no appreciation of the meaning or impact of what had just occurred. The physical facts of dealing with the newly-altered body were possible to absorb, but the feeling that it gives me, of being a female person in a female body has, in fact, even yet to hit me very hard. Just before beginning this writing, I was looking at my new, round breasts, and feeling them with my hands, and it was the first time that the fact and idea and tactile feeling and the sight all came together, for a moment, to bring it home to me: there are breasts on my body. I have breasts! My hospital roommate commented earlier on my “voluptuous” figure, and referred to me several times as a “hot babe”. It is a reality others have begun to take note of before I do.

I think until this new femaleness stops being a medical condition, complete with multiple treatments and round-the-clock care, and starts being a living reality, it

cannot have much emotional impact. The first time, whether it is tomorrow or many weeks from now, when I look at myself in the mirror, dressed or undressed, and see the physical reality of the woman I have become, and am one with that image — that is when the long-awaited impact of SRS will finally arrive. The unity and wholeness that others have spoken of as their post-operative sensation certainly has not come to me, while parts of me are visibly sewn together with thread, and other parts are red and swollen — and I have not yet experienced at all that I have a vagina, since until tomorrow it is stuffed full of something — cotton? — and I have no sense of this new space in my body, the centrepiece of all the rest of the fuss and feathers of this process.

After finally being allowed out of bed yesterday, it has been odd to sit on the toilet and urinate without a penis there — to feel the urine emanating from somewhere behind, where I cannot see, and to hear it trickle into the water without my knowing quite what is going on. But even that has not made the impact that I guess I was somehow expecting. That was just a slightly curious experience, after all these years of the same old urination. I think I wanted trumpets and archangels and my miraculous emergence from a seashell or down a golden ladder: a woman, at last! It seems that the unity of mind and body — or is it spirit and body? — is to be achieved slowly, just as before the SRS, through my own belief in myself and my day-by-day experiences in this body. There will be sexual experience, I hope, but also quotidian experience, of work and drudgery, and sickness and health.

Despite the kindness and patience of this hospital staff, this medical unit is well characterised as a transsexual factory. There is nothing personal or lingering in the surgeons handling of patients. He is only as warm as necessary, and he is as efficient in his examinations and surgery as he would be in any meat-packing plant. We are all basically interchangeable units. In the time I was here, he operated on nine transsexuals that I know of. Including time off for the weekend, that is nine in seven working days.

This is a strictly physical, functional bit of business for him— I imagine he would argue that that is his role, and that the spiritual and psychological are not his province in the transsexual process. As it stands, that is

**This medical unit is well characterised as a transsexual factory. The surgeon is as efficient in his examinations as in a meat-packing plant.**

**The unity and wholeness others have spoken of have not come to me**

correct. We arrive at his office, already certified on paper as psychologically toned up, and his job is to provide the slicing, dicing and stitching. This he does most admirably — and so then it is, indeed, up to us to live out the life he has helped make possible for us. It is up to us to infuse the new flesh with whatever spirit we can muster.

But the result of this assembly-line process is that the initial spiritual impact of the event is completely nullified. One arrives here with a certain defensiveness, bearing her letters, hard-won from a suspicious and begrudging world, and one almost expects to be turned away at the last minute on some technicality. One is accepted at the doctor's office with neutrality, and then, at the hospital, treated with an efficient and bland joviality in all preparations and post-operative care.

I realise that the spirit and the flesh are separated almost by fiat in our society, more fundamentally than church and state. But what might it be like, how much better for all concerned — for all society — if SRS and all medical procedures were accompanied by an air of spirituality? There are no SRS surgeons who are themselves transsexuals, or even women. There are no SRS centres or after-care facilities which surround one with the aura of the magic of the transition. I don't know exactly what I am envisioning — soft lyre music and friezes of cherubs might be a bit much — but at present the clinical atmosphere one is in during the first days after surgery is augmented only by whatever luck one has in the assignment of roommates.

For the SRS procedure and its after-care to have any spiritual aura, the same would have to be so of all the steps before it. To take the transsexual process out of the realm of strictly medical, and into the spiritual realm, would be to entirely eliminate the adversarial obstacle-course that many transsexuals encounter. To make it a question not of who is crazy and who is not, and instead to invest it with a series of spiritual counselings, investigations, and ceremonies, would lead the final SRS initiate to the moment of the ritual "blood sacrifice" with a sense of deep awe and wonder and privilege and responsibility. The surgery could still be just as modern — I doubt there is any need to emulate Druidic surgery techniques. But the entire journey, and especially the moment of surgery, could be understood on a deep level, at every stage, so that there would be no instance of struggling for a week after the surgery to discern if it had any meaning at all, and having to hunt, and wait, alone, for the revelations which

will eventually come if one is lucky.

We are spiritually prepared for marriage, for priesthood, for the cloister. There is a certain stately quasi-religious nature in the induction of soldiers into armed services. Graduates from college, into the worlds of business, science, or academia, are garlanded with banners and exhorted with perorations. Even joining the Freemasons includes some secret tomfoolery.

But the magical voyage across the gender boundaries is girded with scientific caution and hurdles, rather than being given an air of invitation to holy mystery. To have the change of procedure and aura that I envision means changing society's vision of transsexualism from the perverse to the sacred. I'm not sure if stranger things have happened or not.

The transsexual community is beginning to lay the foundations for such a view of transsexualism, at least for its own members, if not for society at large. This is one of the several most important movements in the current transsexual world — along with reclaiming our history, fostering transsexual pride, and demanding a transsexual political voice, fighting for our rights. Whether the scattered, fragmented, fractious, and often stunningly ignorant transsexual "community" can ever gather enough momentum to get any of these movements rolling is, however, a large question.

In the meantime I am sitting in the hospital room, having just spent \$15,000 for the technologically perfect exchange of one physical gender for another, hoping in the quiet darkness for the key, or the moment, or the revelation, or the happenstance, or the lover, which will bring it alive for me so that I can say, "Yes, I am a woman in a woman's body, and I feel it all the way through myself." I feel my large round breasts. My vagina is tucked behind gauze and pads, and packed full. Somewhere inside all this is the woman, Katherine. I think she will be emerging, all alive, soon. But though I bless the technological perfection found within these concrete and glass walls, no peace or vision are found here. Instead, it is still within our skins and under the endless sky that we find love and God, and male and female, and wholeness.

But I'm ready now. Turn me loose tomorrow and I'll find out how a woman can live.

*Katherine Collins is quite satisfied with her surgery. Her motto is 'Cut me again.'*

**What if  
SRS were accompanied by  
an air of spirituality, invested with  
ceremonies, and a sense of deep  
awe, wonder and  
responsibility?**

# KC JOURNAL -- PART TWO

## A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF THE BRANDON TEENA VIGIL

by Robin Goldstein

*Part One of KC Journal told of the author's arrival in Kansas to attend the trial vigil of the murderer of Brandon Teena, an FTM, in Falls City, Nebraska. Part Two begins with everyone leaving for the courthouse.*

Now I suppose it's the oldest cliché, but dawn comes early to the plains of Nebraska. Which is to say at 5am, which if it wasn't the crack of dawn was at least the time when Riki decided our group should gather and leave for Falls City. So transsexuals and transgenders and lesbians and vegetarians and a maybe even a straight person (though by that point I had come to believe that, like the unicorn, straight people never really existed) pulled themselves out of bed, washed, dressed and got ready to drive from Kansas City to Falls City. A smaller group decided to leave a bit later on and skip breakfast on the road, but I was a part of the first wave and loaded my car with Fran and Minnie Bruce and Leslie and we headed off, one car after the other.

We talked a bit and shared some more and discussed the events at the church the day before, but I think we were all, each of us, a bit nervous. Frightened of the unknown. Frightened of the known. We were going to a place to be a physical presence in memory of a man who was murdered. For being what we were. Honest. Truthful. Open about our lives. I don't think the moment was lost on anyone. So we talked and we laughed and we looked out as the sun rose over the wheat fields of Kansas, the sun and the mist rising together, in harmony, in a joyous celebration of the beginning of the day, and we were in awe and hopeful. But we were not just a little bit frightened.

Well time and tide wait for no man and we had to get our priorities straight and, well, it was after 7am and we had been driving since 5am without stopping and we were hungry, dammit! For breakfast. So we pulled off the road and traveled in a block to a diner, or the Kansas equivalent of a diner. I could see the headlines, "Circus People Killed in Freak Farming Accident!" I would guess that people in that part of the country hadn't ever seen a transsexual or lesbian before. Well, you know what they say....you seen one, you seen 'em all and the way we walked into the place, I guess that after we left they *had* seen them all.

But they were very nice to us and took our orders and I *think* the coffee was suppose to taste that way. I can't imagine what the other folks in the restaurant thought of the collection of noisy, happy, groggy people who had descended into their sleepy little town to order eggs and toast and chicken fried steak. I guess they thought we looked hungry and took our orders.

But Kansas isn't New York or California and that morning it wasn't even Kansas, and the cooking was just like Mama used to make....kinda dry and kinda slow. Some



of us were getting nervous about the time but we were gathering energy for the coming storm. And then something funny happened. Davina and Hannah and Kate and the others with them who had left an hour after us came in. We hadn't told them where we were planning to stop and they couldn't see our cars from the highway since the restaurant was a long block away from the highway. But Fran said that she had a thought that Davina would find us and with that their car pulled in and in walked the rest of our group. Never underestimate the power of a Wiccan.

The delay turned from comical to difficult and it occurred to us that we might spend the day in this coffee shop instead of in Nebraska and our course of action seemed pretty obvious, so we took the orders to go. A lot of cash was tossed to Davina who had volunteered to settle up the bill and the rest of us got back into our cars, our wagon trains blazing the new frontier, and rolled on. The landscape continued to change for the next forty miles as we passed through small towns and smaller farms and before we knew it we were in Falls City, Nebraska.

God's Country Land of the Free Home of the Brave

## The Scene of the Crime.

The Lions greeted us, and so did the Elks. And the Moose. And the Rotary. The highway became the main street and it was pretty in an way that resonates within our genetic memory. The back lot at Universal: Midwestern Farming Town through at least one Boom and Bust Cycle. A set designer's wet dream for the "baked in the sun too long" look. Small white buildings and a gas station or two and Gus' Family Eats and the tallest building in town, set up on a hill of land, in the middle of the downtown square. The courthouse. What I would come to understand as the 'other' scene of the crime.

We parked on a street behind the courthouse and Fran took off to join the rest of the family and Leslie took off to find a bathroom and Minnie Bruce said she wanted to get a pair of sunglasses. So we walked into the downtown hotel to buy some sunglasses in the hotel pharmacy. The hotel was packed with police and sheriffs and deputies. They were protecting the jury who were staying at the hotel and you could see the calculus they went through each time an unfamiliar face walked by. Is THAT one of THEM? Is THAT a BOY? Is THAT a GIRL? I was in a public place and I felt fear. Not a lot, but after the warmth and love of the first day together, the contrast was as bright as the sun which sent us looking for sunglasses.

We walked into the pharmacy and the owner/pharmacist was at the register, talking with a friend and looking out the window. "Lookit them freaks. Why'd they come here? What'd they expect to accomplish? Well, that one in the culottes looked cute." Easy Rider 1995. I wondered what would happen when we walked up to the counter. Minnie Bruce found a pair of glasses and we went to purchase them and the owner turned around and looked at us and said, "Can I help you, ladies?"

He didn't know that "we" were "them". He didn't know that this was not a mother/daughter team. He didn't know that two of us shared a certain kind of genetic material, and it wasn't Minnie Bruce and I. He didn't know what he was afraid of. And he didn't know that he was staring into the smiling eyes of his great fear.

So we smiled and laughed and made smalltalk with him and bought the sunglasses and left and I HOPE I made it to the local nightly news and the pharmacist recognized me (though with my hair it's hard to imagine that he would forget me). I hope he thinks about how he didn't know "we" were "them" for the rest of his life. I hope he's never completely sure again and I hope that eventually he gets tired of trying to figure it out. Because it's just not that interesting a question. Who's an 'us' and who's a 'them'. It was a gender intervention. A twelve-step program to heal the mind.

We made our way around to the front of the courthouse to join the others. We had arrived after the initial wave, and after groups of people who had not traveled with us. They were already in front of the courthouse, on the lawn, on the stairs, on the sidewalk, talking and laughing and being present. God, there sure

were a lot of them. Of us. It looked like 30 people or so were already milling around, talking with each other, talking with the police and the sheriff's deputies, talking with the media. The newspaper and television reporters who had come to see a triple murder trial in Nebraska were being treated to The Transsexual Menace.

The Transsexual Menace people were mostly from the East Coast and New York City and mostly in-your-face because even the acknowledgment of binary nature of

*I was frightened that here in Nebraska, someone thought it WAS ok to kill someone like me. So I had to let this place and this hateful energy see what I looked like.*

gender was repressive. Saying male implied not-male, implied something missing from being male, implied not quite as good. The shirts and the jackets of the Transsexual Menace: a black shirt with the word 'Transsexual' written in clear large white letters and the word 'Menace' written in blood red horror-type lettering. A motorcycle gang gone bad. I had bought a shirt from Riki, but I was a tourist. It was like buying a 'Letterman' shirt. But I didn't have the balls to wear it. Not in public. And besides, I told myself, I was there to play 'lawyer' in my lawyer drag, my 'If it please the Court' belted black dress. I might need to bail someone out if there was a conflict. I couldn't wear my shirt in public, I told myself.

So I stood off to the side and watched Riki and Tony and Leslie and Kate and others talk with reporters on print and on camera. They were each holding tutorials about gender and oppression and hatred. I heard someone say, "Did anyone come here from California?" Ahh... they were looking for the true freak. The Californian. I said that, yes, I had come from California and the reporter said he was from the AP and could he ask my name and could he use my name and what did I do and why was I here. And I told him my name and said that if he didn't use it how would I be able to make sure that the hate mail reached it's proper destination and I told him that I was an attorney. His eyes went wide. The lawyer drag had worked its charm once again, your honor. Yes, again someone's expectations of what a transsexual, a transgender, a lesbian, a gay, a bisexual, a gender outlaw had been laid to waste. The outsider didn't fit the profile.

I told him the reason I had come was that I was living in warm, bright, sunny California, where my friends loved me and my family loved me. Maybe some of them didn't love me or understand me or respect me for what I had done, for the choice I had made to live my life the way that I had chosen. But none of them would have thought it would have been alright to kill me for being me. It was 1995 and I never imagined on my worst day that anyone would think it was alright to kill me for the choices I had made. But I read about Brandon Teena and I was frightened. Frightened that here in Nebraska, in the wrong

place, at the wrong time, someone... maybe more than one... thought it WAS ok to kill me. So I had to go see what this place looked like. And to let this place and this hateful energy see what I looked like. Get a real, clear picture. Make sure you don't leave out the hair. So that this place and I would remember each other forever. And so that I would remember Brandon Teena forever. I came to remember. I came to prevent others from ever forgetting.

The reporter, Chris Burbach, said, "But do you think that Teena Brandon..."

I froze. I had seen the same words in the newspaper that morning at the breakfast place in Kansas under an AP byline. And I said to the reporter, "It's Brandon Teena". The reporter said, "Well, yes, I guess, but in the courthouse they're saying Teena Brandon". I asked if he was the same person who had written the AP dispatch and he said yes. I asked why he said Teena Brandon and he said that it was an editorial decision. I said that was the same as saying the murder was an editorial decision. A decision to alter reality. A decision to dishonor the person they were writing about in death for the same reason they had been murdered in life.

The reporter looked pained and a bit confused. He didn't understand why it mattered and his editor didn't understand why we were here. I pleaded with him to honor Brandon. To honor each of our right to be who we wanted to be. To call ourselves what we wanted to call ourselves. Kate Bornstein says in her book *Gender Outlaw* that the process of naming yourself is a birthing process. It's about the process of acquiring power. Of creating who we are.

I said to him that if he wouldn't say Brandon Teena would he at least please say that the reason I had traveled half way across the country, had moved myself from my safe warm bed, had driven an additional 100 miles, was so that I could remind him, could teach him, could implore him, to honor the choice of Brandon Teena, a human being who had died just for being Brandon Teena.

There were plenty of other folks ready to take up the discussion with the reporter, and I walked away from the crowd and into the courthouse and through the metal detectors and officers and into the courtroom. I wanted to see the trial. I wanted to see the murderer. And I wanted the murderer to see me.

There was a bit of pre-trial scrapping and eventually the jury was brought in, 10 women and 2 men. One woman of color. They didn't look like they were from New York or California. A thought flashed through my mind that a few of the women weren't passing. I giggled.

In the first hour and a half they moved through the opening statements from both sides, and the first four witnesses. This was not going to be a long trial. The first three witnesses were the mothers of the three dead people. Three children, dead. The pain was so heavy that at one point I thought I would have to leave the courtroom. But I didn't. Because the prosecutor was referring to Brandon as Teena and the defense was referring to Brandon as Teena and she. Brandon's mother was referring to Brandon as her

"mixed up daughter with an identity problem".

Now I really had something to cry about. Because as an attorney I understand that the prosecutor wants a win and in Nebraska the rape and subsequent murder of a woman makes more sense than the rape of a man? By a man? I think the DA thought it was just too complicated to explain and it wasn't really important to the case.

It is important. There was no Brandon Teena in the courtroom that day. Not as far as the prosecution and

*Calling him 'Teena Brandon' dishonored him in death for the same reason he had been murdered in life.*

defense were concerned. And not as far as his mother was concerned. At that point I had a second inkling of why we had come. We had come, to sit outside the courtroom. To sit inside the courtroom. To be visible. To be present. To be the living embodiment and memory of Brandon Teena and god rest his soul, never ever again Teena Brandon. It was no longer a question.

At around noon the Judge broke for lunch and I walked outside, back into the sun. But I did not feel warm. I felt cold and alone and frightened and angry. They were going to 'get' this guy, this murderer and his partner, but they were going to avoid avenging the memory of Brandon. I walked over to my car and opened the trunk and took out my Transsexual Menace Shirt and put it on. Over my lawyer drag dress it wasn't much of a fashion statement. I walked back over to the front of the courthouse.

I told my new/old family of what had happened inside and we tried to take comfort from each other. Those of us who had been inside shared with those who had been standing in the sun. Those who had been taunted by passing cars felt better when they remembered that we loved them and would taunt them even worse. And we talked to some locals who wanted us to go back to where we came from. And we explained that we came from here. That one of us had lived in this town. And had been killed here.

It started to get late. People had planes to catch and jobs to return to. We said goodbye and we hugged each other and we held hands, about 40 of us, in front of the courthouse, in Falls City Nebraska, and we spoke what was in our hearts and we spoke what we had learned. We spoke that we now knew, with crystal clarity, why we were here.

As we walked back to the car, Leslie said to me, how long have we been here? I said that we had been in Kansas City and Nebraska for 48 hours. Leslie said to me, "I feel like I've known you for years." I understood that she had and that she would and that each of us who had been touched and each of us who had been moved and each of us who had come not knowing why now knew why. Knowledge is power. And strength. Each of us who had

come now had the knowledge that we were known, would always be known, and that we would never be without our family again. Amen.



# After Your (MTF) Surgery...

The following surgery advice and tips originally appeared on the Internet. TNT thanks Cybergirl1, Time2Delta and EmmaPL for their comments.

## From: CyberGirl1

Why don't I start out talking about the stuff that comes right away with the surgery? Looking back, I didn't know a lot of the questions to ask before the surgery.

When you're in the hospital, and look at your revised privates for the first time, don't get your expectations up too high. It's going to be really swollen. When you get out of the hospital, you're going to be weak --really weak. I was shocked. When you get home, plan on resting for a couple of weeks. Like *totally* resting.

You're also going to be a slave to your dilator. My surgeon's recommendation is 6 to 8 times a day, for 30 to 45 minutes each time. If you figure 8 times a day at 45 mins/per and sleeping just 8 hours, you're looking at dilating for 45 mins, then not dilating for just 1 hr 15 mins before dilating again. It's very much worthwhile to do it often, as the longer you wait in between, the more difficult and uncomfortable it will be. My personal theory is that the more diligent you are initially, the sooner you will be able to reduce the frequency. Right now, a little over four months since the first surgery, I dilate usually once a day, often once every other day, and it's not difficult or uncomfortable at all.

I never had any sort of plastic or cosmetic surgery before, so I wasn't prepared for some standard normal side effects. One was numbness. When you first get home, the whole area will be mostly numb. This is actually good, since anything that isn't numb, *hurts*. Ration those Vicodins, you may need all of them.

As sensation starts to return, you will get "wake up pains". These are really strange. They're not really painful, more like a really sharp itch under the skin. They only last from just a moment to a few seconds.

The biggest surprise though, was how much I changed after the surgery, both physically and emotionally. The physical changes are partly dependent on your hormone dose after surgery. My original endo prescribed .05 Estinyl after surgery, and this at least got my moods under control, but I didn't really think that it was the right dose so I went to another endo who prescribed 5mg Premarin along with Provera and when I started that, Wow! things really started to change. The physical changes are like when I first started hormones, but lots bigger and faster. I've gained a lot of weight (15 pounds in a few weeks, on a slender 5'6" frame). The emotional changes have been profound. I would have thought that after being on a real high dose of hormones for a number of years, my testosterone level would have been pretty low. But I find that I've become far less competitive, a lot calmer, all of those characteristics

associated with testosterone have been greatly reduced.

## From: Time2Delta

There is not much talk about the dilation process or the pain involved with the SRS process. The best thing I can say is exactly what my mother used to say: "It's the kind of pain you forget". So, for those of you who have not gone through the SRS process I will try and remember the kind of pain you forget. For those of you that have gone through it....laugh a little and enjoy....we deserve it.

In no particular order of pain level, here they are:

1) The stent being held in place by 1 or 2 stitches close to your anus and the stent pushing against those stitches like hell....just trying to get out....and pulling the skin. You can't find a comfortable position (well, standing on your head in a pool of vodka did work for a while). So there you

*Ration those Vicodins. You may need all of them.*

are, stitches in your anus, a stent up you new vagina, and sweat pouring down from your forehead from the pain of it all. All set? Stay that way for about 5 days or so. By the way, it was at this point that I started seeing my life pass between my legs....er, eyes. The good news is it only lasts about 5 days. The bad news is it only lasts about 5 days.

2) Dilation for the second through about 60th time. Why not the first? It was exciting and the stent paved the way for the dilators. After the first time we are talking serious work, concentration, diligence, and a "this-is-screwing-up-my-life" dilation schedule. The pain comes from a place you never thought could have pain. Getting the dilator past that first barrier (the muscles that were split and cut to make room for your new vagina) is a REAL FUN thing to do. Then, after you have made it through that part, you need to forget about that pain, because you need to worry about the NEW pain you are going to inflict upon yourself. PUSH, girl!....PUSH! You need to keep that depth that the good doctor gave you so grab that dilator (you WILL learn to hate that thing) and push till it stops.

"WHAT'S THAT?"

That, my dear, is the new pain. It's also from a place you never knew existed and from an area inside you that is brand new. It's the end of your new vagina (it's actually the end of your old penis sewn together on the inside) and you are pushing against the stitches. Let's see....pain from the muscles....pain from the pushing against the stitches...Yep, all the pain is present and accounted for. Now, hold what you got for about 30 to 45 minutes. Now, do that cycle about 10 times a day. Now sing "I am woman here me scream..could someone get me some Jim Beam....."

3) Wiping you new vagina after you tinkle. Yep, good

old fashion toilet paper, and brands DO matter. The softer the better.

**From: EmmaPL**

First is the information gathering. Who performs sex-reassignment surgery, and where? What are the techniques? How happy are their respective patients? WHAT DOES IT COST?

I found information from many sources, including gender magazines, gender programs, therapists, other girlfriends. I became aware of when surgeons were having seminars, and were close enough so that I could economically attend. I

*Rightly  
or wrongly, every doctor  
will make mistakes.*

called the various surgeons and most were able to send a packet of information describing what they did and what was required. Computer on-line services from AOL to CompuServe provided much data, from techniques to experiences. Totally invaluable where my girlfriends and others who had surgery and gave me first hand information on what to expect, and how happy they were with the results.

The techniques, from penile inversion, to using a section of the bowels, breast augmentation, and/or creating a clitoris were important to consider since they all had ramifications as far as after care was considered. Furthermore, "what I desired as a woman" was equally important. How important is orgasm? I'd heard that if I was a lesbian vaginal depth probably wouldn't be that important. I consider myself bisexual - though leaning heavily towards heterosexuality. My only experience has been with men. With this in mind, and knowing that orgasm is enjoyable - though not the "be all end all" of life - I knew that vaginal depth and creation of a clitoris were important to me.

Breast augmentation was a little more complex. On the one hand it is a very visible sign of femininity, and I do want to be as attractive as I can be. On the other hand, would I be caving in to what male society has deemed important? There can be breast growth past surgery - how much is dependent on each individual. My final decision on this wasn't made until after my final choice of surgeon was made.

Price was important. It seemed to range from approximately \$5,500 up to 11,500+, depending on surgeon, hospital and location.

Finally I reduced the playing field down to six surgeons. I ruled one out primarily because I didn't want to go overseas and I appreciate visits and calls, as family and friends are important to me. I didn't know if one doctor created a clitoris or not. Over a period of 2 months I called and faxed him several times with a variety of questions which I didn't get answers to, so I ruled him out. One

doctor I never contacted because my girlfriend had to have hers redone. She liked him very much and has told me frequently that complications can occur at any time and have nothing to do with the surgeon himself. Rightly or wrongly - every doctor will make mistakes.

Buy "quality", since it will last a long time. This was for life - do it right the first time.

After I had decided on my surgeon I made the surgical appointment, aware that a deposit would be required to hold the date. I knew my responsibilities regarding the proper recommendations and hormonal treatment data required before surgery would be done. I knew my fiscal responsibilities and made plans to have all surgical/hospital bills paid for ahead of time. Within a few days I received more information from his office, including slips with my surgery date and pre-physical appointment. I had to read, sign and have witnessed, a three page document listing all the potential problems inherent in this kind of surgery.

Two days before my surgery I met with the surgeon. He explained what it was he could do, emphasizing that there were no guarantees. No person or surgery is the same.

The surgeon, the techniques used, my age, body type and overall health all play significant parts in the outcome.

*Not only do I  
feel normal, I can't  
recall what it was like  
before surgery. This is  
the way my body was  
meant to be.*

On day 7, using a mirror I looked at me for the first time. I cried I was so happy. It looked right for the first time. I also was able to slowly move around and by nightfall able to go to the bathroom. I took my first shower that night. Just thinking back on that night and how I felt I find it hard to locate the right words. I looked better than I ever have -- not beautiful, but right -- normal.

On my last day the doctor removed the packing in my vagina and instructed me in how to maintain its shape ( dilating ). He took the time to answer any questions I had, since after care is my responsibility.

I spent the next few days in a nearby hotel, relaxing and recovering, and dilating. The surgeon took "great pains" explaining how important it was for me to take care of what he was able to do for me. Any questions I had I called and had them answered by nurses at the hospital.

As time has progressed the dilating has become a chance to relax. Enjoyable. Sensitivity is returning with its various nervous twinges. Almost immediately I found my new genitals are capable of arousal, and sensitive to stimulus.

What I really find wonderful is that not only do I feel normal, but that I find it difficult to recall what it was like before surgery. I feel this is the way my body was always meant to be.

## Davina Anne Gabriel responds to Lofofora Contreras on the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival



I would really like to know exactly where Lofofora Contreras obtained her information about the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (MWMF) for her article "Inclusion and Limitation of Inclusion" in issue #5 of TNT. Lofofora's description of the MWMF, as well as of the ongoing protest against that event's "womyn-born womyn" only policy, is replete with a plethora of factual errors and bears virtually no resemblance to reality whatsoever. And since I have attended the festival for the past four consecutive years, as well as have been actively involved in my local lesbian/feminist community for the past sixteen years, I think that I am in a considerably better position to know what goes on at MWMF than does Lofofora.

Contrary to Lofofora's claim (as well as that of the Transsexual Menace, which she cites), the festival is not "a hothouse of separatism." Lesbian separatists exist throughout the entire lesbian community, including at MWMF. While it is probably true that separatists are disproportionately represented among the organizers than in the community, the women who attend MWMF are fairly representative of the lesbian community as a whole. Lesbian separatists are in fact a relatively small minority of the women at MWMF, just as they are in the rest of the lesbian community. The overwhelmingly vast majority of women who attend MWMF are clearly in favor of allowing at least

postoperative transsexual women to attend the festival. The actions performed by separatists described by Lofofora, such as hostility toward women with male infants, are isolated incidents, and not in any way condoned by the vast majority of women who attend the festival or by its organizers. MWMF policy is to allow male infants up to age three to attend the festival with their mothers. MWMF also provides a separate camp for boys age 3-10. This policy seems eminently fair and reasonable to me.

Lofofora also states that "the ritual castration of dildos" is a part of the festival. The incident that Lofofora is referring to is actually part of the stage act of a San Francisco lesbian band called Tribe 8 that played at the festival in 1994, and is not an integral part of the festival, as Lofofora implies. There was in fact a great deal of controversy about this particular incident at the festival that year, and persons who attended that performance were forewarned that it might contain material that could be offensive to some persons. No one was forced to attend that performance, and in no way can it be accurately be characterized as an integral part of the festival itself. It is interesting to note, however, that it was the separatist women whom Lofofora complains about who were most opposed to that particular performance.

Lofofora's claim that the festival is "a counterculture manifestation of whites, specifically of white lesbian women," and "does not challenge

racial and class forms of oppression," is likewise totally without any basis in fact. In my experience, I have found that the proportion of minority women who attend MWMF to be greater than that of the number of minority women who participate in my local lesbian community. MWMF also offers numerous workshops on the various issues that Lofofora ignorantly claims go unaddressed there. Amoja Three Rivers, who has probably done more to address the issues of racism and race and class privilege than anyone else in the entire lesbian community, participates in the festival every year and offers a number of workshops on these issues, as well as was instrumental in the creation of the Womyn of Color tent. But racism and

To think there is something wrong with women getting away from men and openly expressing sexual attraction toward each other is itself indicative of very patriarchal attitudes.

classism are only two of the numerous issues that are addressed at the literally hundreds of workshops addressing all kinds of issues that are offered at the festival every year.

Lofofora's claim that MWMF "poses no challenge to the patriarchal power structure" because it "rebel[s] away from those structures," also reveals profound ignorance regarding the nature of the festival. The very act of creating and claiming a space which women can go to be away from the patriarchal power structure is in itself an act of confronting that structure. The very act of drawing a boundary and saying "this is ours, and

not yours" is a direct confrontation to the patriarchy and most certainly does threaten it, as patriarchy has always demanded unfettered access to women's lives. The creation of women-only space is a way of

never seen anyone openly consuming drugs or alcohol at the festival; nor have I ever seen even one single individual at the festival visibly intoxicated. Aside from that I find Lofofora's objection to "festival and



enabling women to be away from the patriarchy and to empower themselves to go back into it and more effectively challenge it. Anyone who claims that what happens at MWMF does not directly challenge or threaten the patriarchy simply does not know what the hell she is talking about. I know that I have always felt very empowered after attending this festival, and that I am a whole lot less willing to be closeted about being a lesbian (or a transsexual) or having to put up with all the other manifestations of patriarchal bullshit in the outside world after having to return to it, and I know that this is a feeling that is shared by virtually every woman who attends this festival. MWMF is, of course -- like everywhere else in the world -- not totally free of patriarchal influences or practices. However, I know of nowhere else where these things are being as actively challenged than at MWMF.

Lofofora's most ridiculous claim is that "their rebellion reveals itself in alcohol, drugs, festival and passion, not in confrontation with the oppressor." While there is undoubtedly drug and alcohol usage at the festival -- just as there is everywhere else -- it is in fact, quite miniscule and much less than on the outside of the festival. In fact, I have

often passionate -- displays of affection between and among women at the festival, but very few instances of actual sex, and these only in the very remote camping areas. But in no way can MWMF be accurately characterized as anything even remotely resembling the kind of drug-crazed orgy that Lofofora seems to be attempting to characterize it as.

And what is it about "festival and passion" that Lofofora finds so objectionably anyway? To think that there is something wrong with women getting away from men, having a great time with each other and being able to openly express affection and sexual attraction toward each other is itself indicative of very patriarchal attitudes. Perhaps Lofofora thinks that adopting some kind of puritanical ethic towards fun and sex is more liberating than women getting together and having a great time with each other and being able to openly and proudly display their lesbianism. If that is the case, then she's certainly entitled to her rather bizarre opinion, but she certainly has no right to put herself above and to pass judgement -- in a manner all too reminiscent of the very patriarchal practices that she claims to oppose -- on those who think and act otherwise.

Lofofora also misrepresents the

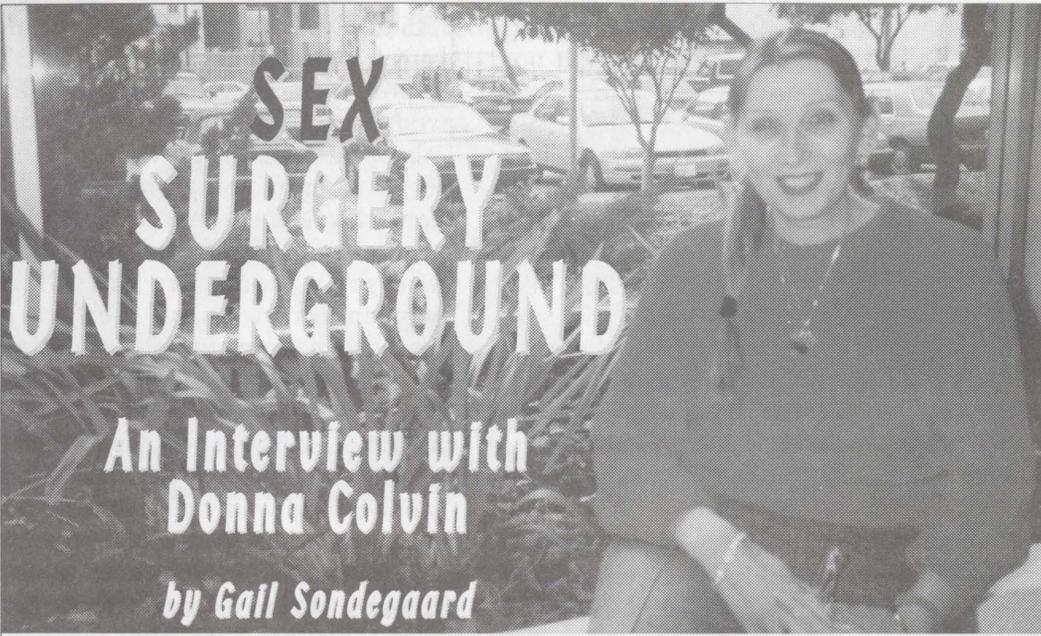
decision of several transsexual women to enter the festival in 1994 in response to a statement by the producers that it was up to each individual to interpret the womyn-born womyn only policy for themselves. Deciding to enter the festival did not mean that one necessarily considers oneself a "woman-born woman." In fact, I clearly stated in my article about this event, which was published in issue #7 of *TransSisters*, and which I know that Lofofora has likewise read, that I do not consider myself to be a "womyn-born womyn," though I do know that some transsexual women consider them-selves to be such. However, since I do not believe that there is such a thing as a "womyn-born womyn," and since other festival participants were not quizzed as to whether they considered themselves to be "womyn-born womyn," I felt that entering the festival was consistent with my interpretation of the policy. I have never considered the category "womyn-born womyn" to include transsexual womyn as Lofofora claims.

I find it interesting that Lofofora states in an article published in *Gay Community News* (16-22 April 1991, p. 5) that there is no such thing as a transsexual lesbian.

It's pretty obvious that she didn't know what she was talking about then and she still doesn't know what she is talking about now.



*Davina Ann Gabriel lives in Kansas City, Missouri and is the editor of TransSisters magazine.*



Donna Colvin is a transsexual woman who came out and was politically active in the early 1970s. During that time she worked with Dr. John Ronald Brown who did SRS in San Francisco and Los Angeles. The following interview concerns/focuses on that time and is excerpted from a much longer interview covering her political activity, coming out immediately after Stonewall, and transsexual life in San Francisco in the 1970s.

**TNT:** How did you first get involved with Dr. Brown?

**DC:** *It happened in 1972 when I moved into Triple GLH -- the Golden Gate Gay Liberation House, which was located near Page and Divisadero. I was the first non-gay allowed into the house. At that time transsexuals were on the fringe of the gay community. Since I certainly didn't fit into the straight world, they let me stay. I became Miss Secretary for them, doing letters and office chores. I also answered their hotline phones. Well, one day a transsexual called up and wanted information on hormones and where and how to get started. I told her I would check and call her back. So I started looking and found some information on this Dr. Brown person.*

**TNT:** Is that when you met him?

**DC:** *No. I met Dr. Brown through Shannon O'Hara. It was at a party held at the Golden Gate Gay Liberation House. At that time I was famous for being the transsexual who lived at Triple GLH. Shannon came because she wanted to meet me. She said, 'You don't have to be here with all these gay men. I'm opening a halfway house for transsexuals. You should come and check it out.' Well, I went and Dr. Brown was there. He was the sponsor of the house.*

**TNT:** Was this house for people just coming off the surgery?

**DC:** *It was a transition house. It was called 'Sutter House' and was located on Sutter Street near Mt. Zion*

*Hospital. The halfway house was run by Shannon O'Hara for Dr. Brown. Everyone there was called 'the Brown girls'. This was before Dr. Brown got in trouble.*

*Sutter House was like a finishing school for transsexuals. Shannon O'Hara pictured herself as the ultimate transsexual. She was the headmistress going to teach us poor little things who didn't know how to dress the proper way to be a transsexual.*

*Shannon and I had many clashes over this and I was thrown out of the house many times. Finally I said, 'The hell with you people, I don't need your halfway house,' and went back to Triple GLH.*

*But Shannon and I stayed friends. When she went through her surgery she needed someone to help her, and I said, 'I will help you.' I did housework while she was recuperating. Then Shannon decided we needed to go to Hollywood because that was the center of the world as far as she was concerned. She packed us all up and off we went to Hollywood.*

*This was in 1974 or 1975. Dr. Brown had already moved his main practice to the LA area because he had quite a few accidents here in San Francisco and was asked not to perform any more surgeries for awhile.*

**TNT:** What sort of accidents?

**DC:** *One problem happened when he was doing surgeries in the kitchen of a house on Lombard Street. I wasn't present for this particular one but several people told me this happened. A black woman named Veronica was having breast implants done when the table she was*

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**The kitchen table she was on collapsed. If the people who were helping hadn't held it up, she would have slid right out the window.**

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*on collapsed. If the people who were there helping hadn't held the table up, she would have slid right out the window. Dr. Brown quickly sutured her together and got her off the table. What had happened was the table leg had broken. This was a kitchen table; it wasn't even a surgery table.*

**TNT:** Was this in his home?

**DC:** *No. A lot of old homes back then were turned into offices and that's what this was. None of the hospitals would take any of his patients because he had no contract*

with any of them.

**TNT:** Why not?

**DC:** *Malpractice. At the time he was doing a lot of experimental surgery on people, trying to figure out the best way to perform SRS. When he first started doing the operation, they were multi-step. He did the orchiectomy and the penectomy. He did the lips and the clitoris first. Then you went back and he did the vaginal canal with skin grafts.*

**TNT:** How did he come up with this?

**DC:** *Dr. Brown developed this technique himself. As far as I know, he obtained information on how to do this surgery and then devised his own plan from that point on.*

*I don't think he couldn't do a technique that was approved, but I think he got it into his mind that he could make it better. And he would experiment on that. He was always trying to improve on his techniques.*

**TNT:** Was he medically trained?

**DC:** *Yes. He went to school as a surgeon, but I'm not sure what type of surgeon. As for the school, I believe it was one in Mexico. I do know he had a certificate that said he was a surgeon. I think he went from being a surgeon to being a plastic surgeon, though I don't think he was professionally trained as a plastic surgeon.*

*Another 'accident' involved a friend of mine, Anita. She had to have a revision. Well, Dr. Brown got mad at her over something. I heard him say afterwards -- because I was in the office -- 'I nicked that bitch. That'll teach her.' He cut her because he was mad at her. She formed a fistula, which is an opening between the intestines and the vaginal wall. Later Anita and Dr. Brown made up, so he did go back in and repair it. That's when I decided I did not want someone like this working on me.*

*There was also the drug use. Once, when I saw him draw up valium before surgery, I asked, "Isn't that too much? We've already given the person valium." I didn't work in the operating room but I was outside of it when they gave shots to the girls prior to surgery. He had already knocked her out; why give her more? The nurse said, "That's for Dr. Brown." I thought: Uh-oh, if he's gotta shoot up valium to get steady enough to perform surgery, then this is really bad. I knew from going to parties and social engagements with Dr. Brown that he drank an awful lot. I think he had been to a party the night before and had to calm himself down. He had the afterward shakes.*

**TNT:** How did Dr. Brown get interested in doing SRS?

**DC:** *Money. It was very profitable. Not only on the surgeries themselves, but everything else -- the breast augmentation, nose jobs, face lifts, you name it.*

**TNT:** When did he start doing surgery?

**DC:** *I think in the 1960s. By 1973, he had been doing*

*them for some time.*

**TNT:** If Brown was so bad, why did so many people go to him?

**DC:** *Because he was a lot cheaper than anyone else and it was easier to get surgery through him than through one of the medical clinics. That's why. Also, he wasn't always bad. When he started out he was quite good. However, over the years, his problems began to overwhelm him.*

*It depended on what was going on in his life. If he was angry at somebody or had a fight the night before, he brought that right into the operating room. He didn't separate his emotional and professional life.*

**TNT:** I know two transsexual women who went to Brown and say they are orgasmic.

**DC:** *I'm sure they are. There are times when even a bad doctor can do good work. But when you're hitting on target only about 30-40% of the time, that's pretty bad. Even my friend, whom he nicked, liked the original surgery. She went*

*back because she wanted more depth, but as far as feeling and sensation went, she had clitoris action.*

*Once Dr. Brown got past his experimental stage, he actually did do some very good jobs. But then he did some very bad jobs. Like this one friend of mine -- it never looked right. One side always sagged, she had to keep going back for 'tune-ups' as she called them, and it never functioned properly. She always had to have the stints in and he did something to her muscles so she had an uncontrollable bladder. That was one of many that I know that he did.*

*There was also the hygiene. Or should I say the lack of hygiene? There were a lot of staph infections going around. Dr. Brown's idea of sterilizing after touching one patient to another patient was sometimes just to pour alcohol on it.*

*Dr. Brown was using drugs at this point and his sense of what was going on and what was real was not always intact.*

**TNT:** Did he make up surgery procedures on the spot?

**DC:** *No. He planned them. Which is even worse. It was like, OK, we'll talk to this person, decide what they want, and the formulate how he was going to do it. I do think that sometimes he would decide if something wasn't working to improvise something else.*

**TNT:** He'd wing it.

**DC:** *Yes. That's a good way to put it. A wing and a prayer. There was a lot of emergency repair work, with people having to go to the hospital and have things redone. And you had to constantly wear the stint or it would just close up.*

*One of the things I didn't like about his technique is*

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## **Transsexuals went to Brown because he was cheaper and it was easier to get surgery through him than the medical clinics.**

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*continued on page 42*



Minnie Bruce Pratt is a Southern Femme Lesbian poet, the author of *We Say We Love Each Other, Rebellion: Essays 1980-1991*, and *Crime Against Nature* (1990 American Library Association Gay/Lesbian Book Award and the 1989 Lamont Poetry Selection of the Academy of American Poets). Her most recent book is *S/HE*, a collection of short, mainly autobiographical, poetic snippets of gender musings. She is also, not incidentally, the long-time partner of Leslie Feinberg, transgender activist, passing woman, and author of *Stone Butch Blues*.

Normally it would be peculiar and perhaps even offensive to mention a writer's lover as being somehow a qualification for interest in her work. Given the venue for this quasi-review, however, and given Pratt's main thesis, Pratt's relationship with her butch/transgendered lover is not only pertinent but central. In *S/HE*, Pratt comes close to claiming a (trans) gendered position for her femme lesbian identity. Playing perhaps off of Monique Wittig's statement that "a lesbian is not a woman," Pratt says:

"She has said to me, 'A butch is not a man.' Now I say,  
'A femme is not a woman, at least not the woman  
people think. It's a case of mistaken identity.'"

The relationship between "butch" and "man" is not, however, equivalent to that between "femme" and "woman." Whereas butches are conventionally assumed to be women who play at being men, or who want to be men, there is no such assumption of artificiality in the gender presentation of femmes. Whereas femme presentation may in fact be just as "artificial," just as performed as that of butch, straight society's problem with the lesbian femme is not with her presentation, but with her affectional choice. It is only in lesbian society that a femme's gender presentation becomes suspect. The academic feminist world of the seventies into which Pratt came out was very clear on this. Butch/femme relationships were considered intrinsically oppressive, an unconscious imitation of (intrinsically oppressive) heterosexual relations. Pratt's concerns with being read accurately as a lesbian suppressed her presentation of herself as a femme:

"I wanted others to see me as a dyke, a real lesbian,  
wearing pants to deny men access to my body, ready to  
run for safety if I needed."

The queerness of Pratt's desire is finally pointed out to her by a bisexual friend:

"She, who has told me her own stories as the lover of  
women and of men, though not both in one, understands  
ambiguity. She is exasperated that I miss the obvious:  
'You are not only a lesbian, but very, very queer. You  
love a woman who is manly, and yet do not want her to  
be completely man. In fact, you desire her *because* she  
is both. And how often has she found someone who  
really wants to touch, hold, lie down with both at  
once?'"

In her attempts to disrupt categories (man/woman, butch/femme, white/black, etc.) and make the spaces between polarities habitable, Pratt sometimes reinvents categories which have no need to be reinvented:

"Maybe I can drive into a third space that is *lesbian*, not  
woman or *man*." I'm ready to live outside of  
femaleness, the hedge of roses, thorny and beautiful,  
that has encircled me wherever I've sat waiting."

Flower metaphors abound. "...vulva petals turn into blade-sharp teeth." S/HE uses a stereotypically feminine metaphor to attempt to dislodge stereotypically feminine notions about femaleness. If a "lesbian" is a "woman" who is attracted to "women," shifting the category "woman" also disrupts that of "lesbian."

*S/HE* is a book about, among other things, desire, bodies and "the many categories of difference." The book itself, the way it is built, is a body, and that body is gendered. HE is literally in *S/HE*. Seven subsections, further divided into one and two-page vignettes, suggest the non-localized desire popularly theorized as both modernist and as typically feminine. This is not pointed prose. It reads both ways. It combines categories. It is a diffuse work, and this is both its main strength and its prime weakness. It knows what it is, and it knows what it wants, but it wants to be told, too. Decentralized in its own desire, it desires a penetrating, insistent presence:

"You are a woman who has been accused of betraying womanhood. In my groans of pleasure from your cock, perhaps some would say I have betrayed womanhood with you, that we are traitors to our sex. You refusing to allow the gestures of what is called masculinity to be pre-empted by men. Me refusing to relinquish the ecstasies of surrender to women who can only call it subservience. Traitors to our sex, or spies and explorers across the boundaries of what is man, what is woman?"

The linkage of categorization to desire is one of the ironies of any polemic which seeks to free the subject. As if such a thing were possible or even...desirable. Desire demands categories. What am I to you? Let me slip my text into yours; read between the lines.

(The following is a play on the many titles of Pratt's multiple text. Pratt's titles, all nouns, are in bold type. The plain text, a noun-free zone, is mine)

#### I

S/HE wore a **Pink Dress** to a **Women's Dance** while HE/R **Sister**, wearing **White Camellias** wrapped a **Pocket Watch** in **Barbed Wire**. **Steam Heat** warmed the **Rock** in HE/R **Cornfield**.

#### II

**Roses** in HE/R **Fist**, S/HE pounded on the **Closed Door**. **Mama** gave HE/R **Green Scarf** to **Vera**.

#### III

In the **Old Days** in the **Drag Bar**, SH/E wore a **Camisole** and SH/E wore **Boots**. SH/E made **Marks** on HE/R **Sugar Tit** and SH/E pulled HE/R **Beard**. SH/E ate the **Ashes** of HE/R **Pa**. SH/E accepted the **Marriage Proposal** and SH/E wore HE/R **Engagement Ring** proudly to a **New Year's Eve Lunch**. SH/E put **Paint** in HE/R **Cookpot** and SH/E became HE/R **Husband**.

#### IV

S/HE wore **Lipstick** to the **River Bend Cafe**. S/HE enrolled in the **Paradiso School**. S/HE held a **Folding Fan**. S/HE had no **Penis**, so SH/E **Fucked** HE/R with HE/R **Cock**. Afterwards, S/HE sipped HE/R **Mimosa**.

#### V

SH/E wore **Perfume** beneath HE/R **Handcuffs**. SH/E wore **Camouflage** to **The Ritz**. SH/E whispered **Pillow Talk** to HE/R to transform HE/R **Frostbite** into **Lust**. SH/E could only regard **Jellyfish** with **Fear**. SH/E checked HE/R **ID**. SH/E tried to Thaw HE/R **Greed** with HE/R **Kisses**. SH/E thought of taking up **Martial Arts**.

#### VI

HE/R **Bare Feet** were decorated with **Tattoos**. SH/E went to a **Drag Show** instead of doing HE/R **Housework**. SH/E gave HE/R **Earbobs** to HE/R **Boy**. SH/E slipped HE/R **Blade** into HE/R **Palace**.

#### VII

**Stripped** of HE/R **Sunglasses** in the **Art Gallery**, SH/E bolted for the **Bathroom**. SH/E makes a run for the **Border**. SH/E hides HE/R **Profits** beneath a **Stone**, and returns to HE/R **Home**.

In the end, the categories that Pratt seeks to disrupt (destroy, disturb, deny, escape from, play with?) survive. They've been interrogated but not annihilated. Information seeks structure. The details of that structure are variable almost to the point of being incidental. It has been suggested to me that this reading is "a butch/boy response to unbounded femininity." It may have been "a match made in hell"—to have sent what amounts to a teen-age faggot (M/E) to write up a lesbian femme poet's love song (S/HE)—but if there is a disagreement, it is more of style than intent. Pratt has attempted and succeeded in going beyond the well-defined borders of a binary gender system:

“...I say there is no gender boundary that can make us into one or the other. There is no method, including violence, that can enforce complete conformity to “man” to “woman.”

### *Surgery Underground* cont. from p. 39

that you had to wear what was called a stint to keep the vagina open. When you weren't active, you wore a stint. So if you had sex once a day, you would pull it out, have sex, then put it back in.

It wasn't like you could dilate once a week and it'd be fine, whether through sex or a dilator. This was every day. When you were gonna have sex, you ran into the bathroom to take it out, have sex, then ran back into the bathroom to put it back in.

**TNT:** I know someone who had Brown's surgery, didn't use the stint, and closed up. She can pee, but she's no wider than a pencil.

**DC:** I know 3 people that happened to. The only way to reverse it is to go in and have the colon technique done.

Once Shannon O'Hara and I were in the Gay Community Center in Los Angeles. She went to the bathroom and discovered her stint had come out. She became hysterical. There we were, in the middle of the day, trying to keep other women out of the bathroom while I'm shoving this stint back up Shannon while she's screaming at me. I had bruises on my shoulder from her clamping down so hard. I couldn't get the stint back in. We had to call Dr. Brown up and go see him. He told her, 'I told you, don't take the stint out. Ever.' Because it closed up that fast -- at least on her. I thought, 'Do I really want this? Do I want to walk around with this thing shoved up inside me all the time?'

**TNT:** Did he do any FTM surgeries?

**DC:** Dr. Brown did one that I know of. He did an experimental chest reduction surgery. He took the fatty tissue out, folded the skin over it and sewed it down. So the skin was actually in there underneath. He wanted to make it look like a pectoral muscle. Needless to say, the skin became infected because of the inturned hair. So Brown did a revision. He opened it up to where it was an inch and a half wide on each side where the breast used to be, so there was about 7 - 7 1/2 inches in each side left and right. So it was 1 1/2 wide and 7 - 7 1/2 long on each side and just left open. It wasn't even scarred, just raw tissue, no skin over the top of it. A friend and I took turns taking care of him. We had to take Bentadyne solution and rinse it out 3 or 4 times a day and irrigate it. This was when Dr.

Brown was having all these problems and left the country. So Peter had to go to another doctor to repair his surgery so it would be more normal. It was just absolutely awful.

**TNT:** When did you leave Dr. Brown?

**DC:** About 1976 or 1977. Dr. Brown was back in San Francisco at that time, doing surgeries in the Jack Tar Hotel [now Cathedral Hill] on Post and Van Ness. I was still working there on and off on the stipulation that at some point he would pay me back by doing my surgery. That was when he nicked my friend Anita. At that point, I decided to write it off as a loss. He was involved in a lot of lawsuits and soon after this his license was revoked. He could no longer perform surgery in California.

**TNT:** So Dr. Brown never did your surgery.

**DC:** No. That's a whole different story entirely.



The **FILISA VISTIMA FOUNDATION**, named for a 22 year old transsexual woman who committed suicide, is dedicated to increasing accessibility to medical treatment and providing legal services for FTM and MTF transsexuals in Washington and Oregon. The Foundation offers assistance in fighting transsexual exclusion from state health programs and insurance companies. Write:

The Filisa Vistima Foundation  
PO Box 82447  
Portland, OR 97282  
Tel: 503/231-9554

## COMMUNITY NEWS AND NOTES *continued*

officeholders, Phyllis Frye of the Transgender Law Conference and Karen Kerin of It's Time America coordinated a largely successful effort to have each lobbied by a transgender activist. Issues raised included employment discrimination, medical care, bias-related hate crimes and prison conditions for transgendered inmates.

A brief photo-op of all attendees on the south steps of the Capitol Building was followed by a national news conference attended by ABC, Fox, CNN and Reuters. The OJ verdict, however, pushed this right off the tube.

### TRANSFAGRAG IS COMING!

*TransFagRag*, the first international newsletter for transgender gay and bi men is in the works. Its purpose is to disseminate information of interest to us all, to spark discussion of issues that concern us, to raise our visibility in the gay community, and to enable networking with our gay/bi peers in our geographical areas and/or in similar areas of interest.

The newsletter will consist both of short feature articles and of regular departments. There will also be networking of member-contributed listings in specific areas of interest or communication from others in similar occupations or avocations, as well as classifieds. Submissions may be sent electronically to [Transfags@aol.com](mailto:Transfags@aol.com), or by snail mail to the address below. Subscription is by donation, minimum \$5. Checks/money orders should be made out to C. [REDACTED] and sent to Elessar Press, 1259 El Camino Real Suite 151, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Trans/FAGs, the first book for, by, and about gay and bi FTMs, is also in the works and needs your submissions. For a complete prospectus, email [Transfags@aol.com](mailto:Transfags@aol.com) or write to the above address.

### SEX BRAIN DIFFERENCES

As almost everyone knows by now, four scientists from the Netherlands appear to have located brain differences in MTF transsexuals that seem to indicate that yes, MTFs *do* have female brains (and, no doubt, FTMs have male brains). We are not optimistic, however, that this will result in increased acceptance or tolerance for us or transfolk in general. Rather, our pessimism makes us wonder that if this *does* turn out to be true, will drugs and/or surgical procedures attempting to suppress or even eradicate this characteristic be developed? Or that at some moment in the future, will genetic engineering be used to ensure that only nontranssexual children are born?

### UPDATE ON CARMEN MONTOYA MURDER

Oakland police have arrested Tharon Roberts of Oakland California and charged him with the murder of Carmen Montoya, a 23 year old transsexual woman, last July 10, 1995. Tharon was the boyfriend of Ms. Montoya. He is currently out on bail while awaiting trial.

### CHRISTINE JORGENSEN HISTORY RESEARCH

I am researching a history of Christine Jorgensen and transsexuality covering the years 1945-1970, I would appreciate hearing from anyone with letters, diaries, reminiscences, or memorabilia of her or from that time. Please contact: Joanne Meyerowitz, Department of History, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0373.

### IFGE AND THE GENDERS THAT BE

Minneapolis will see a plethora of trans activities in March. The IFGE will hold its 10th anniversary celebration from March 24-31, 1996 at the Marriot Center Hotel. Programs include History, Heros, Heroines, Religion and Spirituality, TG and AIDS, among others. Scheduled speakers include Riki Ann Wilchins and Leslie Feinberg. For more information on the conference, please contact the Internal Foundation for Gender Education at 617/788-2212.

Also occurring from March 7-31 is *The Genders That Be*, a series of visual and performance artworks by transgender and transsexual artists. Featured artists include Loren Cameron, Diane Torr, and Steve Grandell. The series takes place at Intermedia Arts at 2822 Lyndale Avenue South, Minneapolis. Call 612/871-4444 for tickets or more information. The local chapter of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association will also present an evening of screenings and a discussion around the issues of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender TV documentary.

### FULL CIRCLE OF WOMEN

is a radically different, politically incorrect exploration of what it means to be a woman. It will occur from April 12-14, 1996 in Essex, Massachusetts. Full Circle of Women is for all woman-identified individuals living their lives as women, whether as transwomen, non-trans women and intersexed people living as women. Women of all colors, shapes and sizes are welcome. The cost is \$265, which includes double or triple accommodations, all meals, the use of hot tub and sauna, and all workshops. Space is limited to 30. Registration by March 1 is encouraged. For more information, please contact Janis Walworth at the Center for Gender Sanity, PO Box 11, Ashby, MA 01431 or call 508/386-7737.

### PORTLAND TRANSEXUALS TRYING FOR CIVIL RIGHTS PROTECTION

Transfolk in Portland, Oregon, are pushing the Portland City Council to include them in that city's civil rights ordinance. Portland's Metropolitan Human Rights Commission will hold a hearing on the issue of trans inclusion sometime in March.

In a bizarre turn of events, opposition to trans inclusion is being led by Andrea Abernathy, a transsexual, who stoutly denies that transsexuals are being discriminated against in Portland. "There are people that look at us kind of funny, but to be discriminated against...? No," Ms. Abernathy is reported as saying in the

*continued on next page*

Willamette Week. "You can only push social change so fast."

### ACADEMIC FRAUD CHARGES FILED AGAINST JANICE RAYMOND

Transsexual activist Margaret O'Hartigan has filed a formal charge of academic fraud against Janice Raymond over the republication of the transphobe's bible, *The Transsexual Empire*. O'Hartigan is charging Professor Raymond with deliberately lying and attempting to mislead the public because of Raymond's claim that the 1994 edition is a reprint of the 1979 edition. O'Hartigan cites in her charge Raymond's deletion of the Preface to the 1979 edition. The University of Massachusetts has begun investigating the charges but is several months away from reaching a decision. In a related action, O'Hartigan has also raised the issue with Teacher's College/Columbia University of a possible conflict of interest over Professor Raymond's position as a General Editor of the Athene Series, published by Columbia University/Teachers College. TNT will follow this story as it develops.

### MARYLAND INTRODUCES GENDER IDENTITY EMPLOYMENT ANTI-DISCRIMINATION BILL

The first statewide employment anti-discrimination bill specifically based on gender identity has been introduced into Maryland's House of Delegates this January. HB 325 is sponsored by It's Time, Maryland!, a state chapter of It's Time, America! and has been endorsed by numerous other groups.

The bill currently has two co-sponsors and forbids employment discrimination based on gender identity as defined as "having or being perceived as having a self-image, expression or identity not traditionally associated with one's sex at birth." The bill allows for compensatory damages should a case be won. Open hearings for the bill will be expected in February, and It's Time, Maryland! is assembling a panel to testify on its behalf. ITM also has a second bill which allows for the issuance of new, unadulterated birth certificates to post-operative transsexual men and women born in the state of Maryland, along with the permanent sealing of their original birth certificates.

### TRANSEXUAL WOMAN SUES FEDERAL EXPRESS IN \$5 MM HARASSMENT SUIT

Diane Rousseau filed a groundbreaking \$5,000,000 lawsuit against Federal Express, alleging that on-the-job harassment by staff and employees forced her to leave an 8-year position as a computer technician. Rousseau's suit alleges that, after a sex change operation in 1993, coworkers "routinely ridiculed, harassed and abused" her, including one supervisor who called her "an abomination to God." Federal Express allegedly

responded an increasingly hostile work environment by threatening Rousseau with dismissal if she appeared at work as a woman, eventually placing her under a gag order which promised "serious consequences" if she spoke out about her abuse. Rousseau finally quit in November 1994. Declared New York attorney Hal Weiner, who filed the suit: "It is not a legal option open to Federal Express to mandate the sex of its employees, or to create a hostile work environment for Diane merely because she isn't the type of stereotypic female it thinks she should be. Employees with gender dysphoria owe no more apologies to an employer than those with a heart ailment."

### IN MEMORIAM: SHERRI WEBB

Sherri Webb, a longtime community worker, passed on on December 22, 1995. She worked at Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center for 4 years and was instrumental in helping transgendered people be accepted into homeless shelters. She also led workshops, trainings, support groups, and spoke before the Human Rights Commission and the Transgendered Task Force. A memorial for her was held on January 17, 1996 at Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center. She will be missed.



Gee!!  
I Used to  
Wish I  
were  
a Woman!

But  
I didn't  
Think  
It was  
Possible!

### And Then I Joined AEGIS!

The good folks there gave me the help I needed!

To join and receive *Chrysalis*, our magazine, *AEGIS News*, our newsletter, & other good stuff, send \$36 to AEGIS, P.O. Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724 — Or Call our Help Line (770) 939-0244 / FAX (770) 939-1770 [aegis@mindspring.com](mailto:aegis@mindspring.com)

# Community Listings



Listing of a business or service in the Community Listings is **free!** The only requirement for businesses is that the business **must** be owned or offered by transgendered people. To list your business or service, please send the information to: Community Notices, c/o TNT Magazine, 41 Sutter Street, #1124, San Francisco, California, 94104-4903.

## SAN FRANCISCO/BAY AREA

### PARTNERS SUPPORT GROUP FORMING

Lesbian and gay partners of transsexual, transgendered, and intersexed folk are forming a peer support/education group in the San Francisco Bay Area. The group is open to current and former partners who are concerned about issues such as: transphobia in the lesbian and gay communities, meeting the needs of partners in transition, sexuality, and isolation. For more information call: ( 510) 655-4273.

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**HOW THEY WORK:** Answering a Personals Ad is easy. All you do is write to the person of your dreams in a sealed envelope marked with the number code at the end of the ad. Put your private response and \$5 per response in an envelope and mail it to: TNT, 41 Sutter Street, #1124, San Francisco, CA, 94104-4903.  
**NEXT DEADLINE: MAY 30, 1996**

## San Francisco/Bay Area

Middle-aged woman wants to try roller-blading. Do you? Write: TNT c/o Personals #SA-3, 41 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94104-4903.

I am in late forties, 5'6 1/2" tall, weigh 155 lbs, keep trim with exercise and diet, love classical music, read classics and history, dining out, dining in with friends. I am a lawyer in San Francisco and do go out occasionally with friends or alone while in dresses. Sometimes I am passable, sometimes not, depending mostly on how much effort I put into it. Write: TNT c/o Personals #SA-6, 41 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94104-4903.

## Portland, Oregon

Cute/handsome, educated, longish-haired, athletic, professional yet very progressive Hispanic/Indian male, 37, seeking interesting, intelligent, TS for special friendship/romance/rude and intense relationship. Prefer pre-op, very femme, wide-hipped and passable; but if wishes were horses...let's meet for dinner/hard liquor/canapes. Age, financial situation not important. I am serious, NOT curious. Visit S.F. and Arizona often, but prefer local contacts. Photo optional. Write: TNT c/o Personals Box #SA-1, 41 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94104-4903.

## Minnesota

MN, S/W/M, 25, Blonde, Dark blue eyes, Im dominant but not violent, Straight but not narrow. Looking for Pre-op, passable TS. Race open, Prefer 18-30. Asian TS's and Redheads +. Im sane and mature, expect same. If interested E-Mail at [redacted]@AOL.COM

## Los Angeles

Just your basic boy next door looking for a girl who's not. I live in L.A. and I'm pretty sure that I've never met any special women, but that doesn't mean I haven't wanted to. And because you might like to know, I'm 24yo 6'1" 195lb w/brn hair and brn2grn eyes. Write: TNT c/o Personals Box #SA-4, 41 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94104-4903.

I am a 35 year old male looking to have first time experience with a TV/TS/CD. I am 6 ft, 175 lbs., blonde and good looking. Write: TNT c/o Personals #SA-2, 41 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94104-4903.

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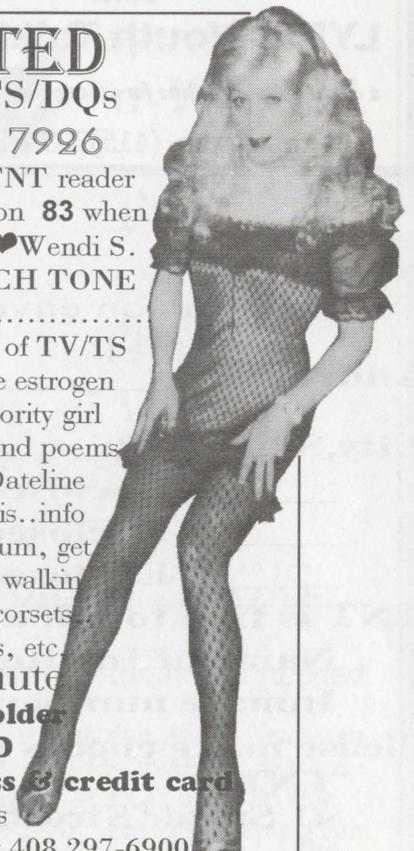
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♪ they're transsexual mice... ♪  
 their hypothalmi have been diced...  
 they're **PINKETTE and LA BRAINNE!**  
 (no relation to any other characters!)

WHAT SHALL WE DO TONIGHT, La BRAINNE, DAHLING?  
 SAME THING WE DO EVERY NIGHT, PINKETTE - TRY TO MAKE EVERYONE TRANSEXUAL!

Press-on NAILS

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THIS IS IT, PINKETTE! CONCENTRATED HYPOTHALMUS MUTAGEN! 83 MILLION DOLLARS AND 61¢ WORTH! ARE YOU PONDERING THE SAME THING AS MOI?

Doi, I THINK SO, La BRAINNE, DEARIE, BUT IF O'UR NOSES WERE ON UPSIDE DOWN, WE'D DROWN WHEN IT RAINED!

PROOT! WHEE!

NO, NO, PINKETTE! I PLAN TO DISPENSE THE CONTENTS OF THAT VIAL THROUGH THE CARBONATED BEVERAGE DISPENSERS OF ALL McCLOWN RESTAURANTS! EVERYONE WILL BE TRANSGENDER! WHAT DO YOU THINK?!!

I THINK THE NEXT BATCH NEEDS MORE FIZZ, La BRAINNE, DEARIE. OTHERWISE, FABOO! PROOT! SQUEAT!

WONK

DOOOH... SOAN CRAWFORD'S SPIRIT IS ABUSING ME.

I'VE SCHEDULED STEVIE WONDER TO DO YOUR MAKEUP, PINKETTE, WHY, WHAT AFTER TOMORROW NIGHT! ARE WE DOING TOMORROW NIGHT, La BRAINNE, M'DEAR?

SAME THING WE DO EVERY NIGHT, PINKETTE - TRY TO MAKE EVERYONE TRANSEXUAL!!!

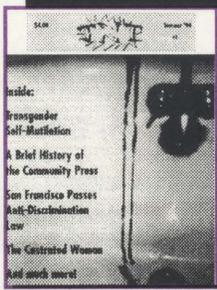
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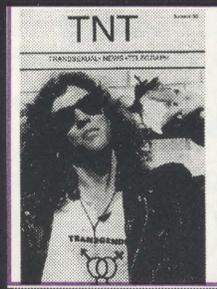
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