

F. O. R. G. E.

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Hierarchy of Gender Meeting

March 17, 2001

While some of us never consider any ranking of gender - one gender being better than another, or one form of trans expression or experience as being above or below some magical hierarchy - some individuals believe there is a definite ladder. Some members of our community have very pointed views about gender and how various forms of gender expression, trans experience and/or personal choices and politics fit into a grand gender stairway.

Many who are transitioning feel that others who are "genderqueer" are less transgendered and/or are less committed to gender issues. Often times people in this camp believe they are the tip of the transgender iceberg, because they choose to legally, socially and medically transition with hormones and surgery.

Genderqueers+ often believe that they are more transgendered/transgressive because their ideas and concepts are more advanced and sophisticated - perhaps having a more postmodern framework or other ideology - that transitioning folks seem to be less aware of.

There is also a hierarchy that seems to be created between and among MTFs and FTMs. Do MTFs have it "harder" than FTMs, who seemingly pass easier? Is there a misconception and a false hierarchy in place by MTFs about the lack of complexity within the FTM community? Do people assigned a masculine gender at birth who sometimes have a feminine identification feel that FTMs are uniform, always transitioning - failing to see that the FTM+ community has as much diversity as the "MTF" community (crossdressers, transgenderists, genderqueers, transsexuals, etc. ad infinitum)?

Healthcare professionals often add to concepts about hierarchies within the trans+/SOFFA community, sometimes only validating people who transition as "real", using the Harry Benjamin Standards of Care as a ruler for how trans someone is.

Of course, there is always the hierarchy that a large percentage of the trans community enforces about SOFFAs nearly always being second class, never as much a part of the gender community as the trans person they are a SOFFA to, never having their own identity and rightful place within the community.

Please see page 7 for more meeting details.

March 17, 2001

What: Hierarchy of Gender
When: Saturday March 17, 2001
Time: 2:00 – 5:00+
Where: Horizons Community Services
 961 W. Montana (*Fullteron and Sheffield*)
 Chicago, IL
Donation: \$5.00

From the Editor: "Seriously Transgendered"

By michael munson <tgwarrior@execpc.com>

A Midwest social support group for transition-minded transfolks recently sent out a reminder of their upcoming meeting, welcoming the "seriously transgendered".

When I first read this, my blood started to boil. "Seriously transgendered"?? Was this offensive ranking aimed at keeping people **out** or inviting only a certain segment of our population **in**? Was it a joke?

Who did the author believe fell into the classification of "seriously transgendered"? My initial thoughts led to those who have invested "serious" amounts of funds, who have risked their jobs to live in ways that are meaningful to them. I think of the Winn-Dixie truck driver who crossdresses and is so "serious" about his crossdressing that he is determined to stand up for his right to do what he wishes in his private life.

When I think of "seriously transgendered", I think of MTF crossdressers who have invested thousands of dollars in wardrobes and in traveling expenses to attend conferences to be with others who enjoy dressing in "feminine" clothes part of the time.

When I think of "seriously transgendered", I think of the green-haired, multiply pierced and tattooed youth who refuse to let gender define them. These youth passionately fight to maintain a presence outside of the typical transitioning binary.

When I think of "seriously transgendered", I think of those who are working multiple jobs - often in multiple gender roles - so that they can raise their kids and hope that *someday*, maybe after saving a few dollars each month, they could afford to see a physician and *maybe* start hormones... realizing that they might never have funds for the surgery they so desire to mold their bodies in ways that would reflect their inner vision.

When I think of "seriously transgendered", I think of the surgeons [surgeons are among the "allies" in SOFFA] who travel across the country to give free lectures at conferences, often quietly helping sponsor trans conferences so that trans/SOFFA people can afford to attend. Some of these surgeons have dedicated their life-work to improving transpeoples' lives.

When I think of "seriously transgendered", I think of significant others, partners, lovers, family members and friends who struggle to integrate the knowledge of their loved one's transness, often researching and ending up with more knowledge and experience than the trans person they love.

When I think of "seriously transgendered", what does not leap to mind is the average demographics of this particular Midwest support group: white, MTF, middle-to-upper-middle class people who want to pass though altering their bodies with hormones and surgery.

Rather than constructing a hierarchy where none is necessary, the group could define itself through behavioral words (e.g. transition-minded people), **NOT** oppressively, hierarchical ones.

"Seriously transgendered" is seriously offensive.

FORGE Calendar

(All schedules are tentative and subject to change.)

March 17, 2001

Topic: Hierarchy of Gender
Location: Horizons Community Services
Chicago, IL

April 2001

Topic: Interfacing with Healthcare Professionals
Location: Milwaukee, WI
Guest Presenter: Trudy Davis

May 2001

Topic: Leather Community, SM and Dealing with "Only" Spaces
Location: Chicago, IL

June 2001

Topic: Body Image/Relationships/ Sexuality
Location: Milwaukee, WI

Submit your ideas for future meeting topics!

If you have ideas for speakers, outings that are more social than support, topics for discussion, or ways FORGE can better support you - please write or call with your ideas.

Newsletter submissions are always welcomed!

FORGE Newsletter

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FORGE Code of Conduct

Trans people and SOFFAs (significant others, friends, families and allies) are all too frequently subject to others' judgments, projections, assumptions, and worse.

FORGE therefore seeks to provide a safe haven where people's identities, needs, and beliefs are not questioned, devalued, or disrespected.

Participants in FORGE events are therefore expected to:

- Be true to themselves and their own convictions.
- Stay open-minded and flexible to allow for and honor individual difference and diversity.
- Respect and support others' identities and choices, including their decisions to express their gender in whatever ways are comfortable.
- Remember that individuals' identities and external appearances may not "match," and that at FORGE, identities and experiences are more important than appearances.
- Recognize that SOFFAs face the same sorts of prejudices, dilemmas, and challenges that their trans loved ones do, and deserve an equal measure of respect and support.
- Listen carefully to others. Questions or alternative viewpoints should be phrased carefully to acknowledge that what works for one may not work for others.
- Avoid stereotyping.
- Agree to disagree when necessary.
- Be considerate of others' privacy. Think before speaking so you don't accidentally out someone or cause an embarrassing situation.



Submit !

Contribute an article, short story, personal experience, poem, news brief, anecdote, cartoon, anything! Let others hear your voice – your story. Each issue of the FORGE newsletter focuses on the upcoming month's meeting topic. Submit articles on the following topics by the press deadline noted!

Let the FORGE newsletter be an extension of your voice, an expression of yourself.

- Interfacing with Healthcare Professionals (submission deadline March 15, 2001)
- Leather Community, SM and Dealing with "Only" Spaces (submission deadline April 15, 2001)
- Body Image/Relationships/ Sexuality (submission deadline May 15, 2001)

Ideas?

Do you have ideas of how to make FORGE a better organization that will more fully serve your needs? Do you know of others who would benefit from FORGE? Do you belong to a church or LGB(T) group or other organization that might like information about FORGE to share with their members? Does your therapist or physician want a subscription to the newsletter? Might they have other trans+/SOFFA clients who would benefit from FORGE?

I encourage everyone to spread the word about FORGE. Although numbers of attendees isn't key, it's important that we outreach to all people who would gain from attending meetings or receiving the newsletter.

Please send your ideas to tgwarrior@execpc.com or call 414.278.6031.

F.O.R.G.E.

Mission

FORGE offers social support for FTMs+/SOFFAs (Significant Others, Family, Friends and Allies); disseminates educational outreach and support through monthly newsletters, literature, and in-person venues; and provides referrals to healthcare/other professionals and community resources.

The focus of FORGE is broad, respecting the complex diversity of gender, including deference to the many ways gender can be expressed and self-defined. We also hold SOFFAs and trans+ people as equals.

Some who are involved with FORGE self-identify as (but are by no means limited to): activist, ally, ambiguously gendered, androgynous, baby butch, bearded woman, bigendered, bioboy, boi, boy-dyke, boychick, butch, changer, co-worker, crossdresser, drag kink, dyke daddy, fagdyke, employer, friend, FTM/F2M, FTN, genderbender, genderblender, gender-free, gender outlaw, gender transgressor, gender queer, healthcare professional, he-she, intersexed, lover, masculinoid, mannish woman, MTF/M2F, neuter, neutrois, new man, omnigendered, pangendered, parent, people assigned female at birth who have some level of masculine identification, pomo, polygendered, radical faery, refuse to be labeled, researcher, riot grrl, sibling, significant other, SOFFA, stone butch, stone femme, stud, T*, t-bird, teacher, therapist, third gendered, tomboy, transgendered, transman, transensual femme, transsexual, unigendered, questioning, warrior....

We meet monthly in order to form friendships, share information, compare experiences, and strengthen ourselves and each other.

© c. michael munson

Remembering to "Look Before You Leap"

By Micah Wojcik

So, there I was, sitting in a bar with a couple of other trans-identified individuals and the topic of surgery and hormones comes up. As I sat there listening to the stories of doctors, first shots, and surgery, there was a constant reminder circling around in my head of, "This might be my path." I listened with great enthusiasm to these "older" guys and took it all in as kind of like a young child listening to an elder. I found myself looking up to them in a way as they told their stories.

But as the conversation went on, the narratives about hormones and surgery became filled with a tone of exclusivity and negativity toward those who have chosen not to take T and those who are undecided.

This hostility was felt instantly as I myself fall into the last category as someone who is still yet undecided as to whether or not I am going to take hormones and if I do, what I would like to get from them.

Finally though, during a little break in the conversation, all but one of the guys got up to get another drink and the one remaining guy continued the discussion of hormones et al with me. He commented on my facial hair. I have the facial hair on my chin that one "typically" sees on individuals in the early stages of testosterone use or so I have been told.

The guy touched the hair on my chin and asked me when I had started taking T. I told him that I hadn't. He was awe-struck...amazed at the non-hormone induced hair growth I had and made a comment about how lucky I was and that I should probably get lots of facial hair once I did start on T.

I told him that I really wasn't certain yet as to whether or not I was going to ever take hormones and it was as if I told him that the moon was made of green cheese. The tone of the conversation between the two of us instantly changed and his playful nature of touching my "scruffies" was replaced with an obvious step back away from me and a rigidness in his posture. He was floored that I was undecided.

I followed up my comment with the fact that I knew I wanted top surgery, but that I had concerns about taking hormones. Well, that made it even worse...I was somehow breaking rank by wanting to do things a little bit differently from the "norm". I know full well that there is a "typical" progression for transition - doctor approval, hormones, "real life test", more doctor approval, and then surgery. I also know finding a doctor to break this regime might prove difficult, but I know it can be done. I anticipate a certain amount of difficulty in accomplishing my goals, but I never expected it coming from my own community!

I sat there completely disheartened as this transman, that just 15 minutes earlier I was looking up to, was now vehemently telling me that I was wrong to want to do things

differently and more so, that I *couldn't* do things that way. Our conversation ended. I politely told him that obviously we had a difference in opinions, that I didn't appreciate his "scolding me like a child" who insists that the Easter Bunny is real, and that it was too bad we couldn't talk more.

At home, I replayed the nights events over and over. I was angry, saddened, and confused. In my heart and mind I knew what I said - my desires - were and still are not "wrong". But at the same time, I was still in a place where I was just coming out as trans and the rejection I felt was brutal. The implementation of this kind of gender hierarchy - hormones and surgery versus non-hormones and non-surgery really caused me to take a few steps back and look at what I expected from the "trans community."

Now, granted, I know that this one guy's opinions are not necessarily universal for the views of the greater community, but as a young, newly-identified trans person looking for support and guidance within a community, these comments were harsh and devastating.

It is now something like a year later and I am a little more firmly grounded in my trans identity. I can look back now and place this guy's comments in the context of just being one opinion and not a "rule", but I worry about others. I was fortunate enough to have others around me to either tell me or show by example that what I was feeling and my desires were not wrong. I was/am lucky enough to have a support system that was/is inclusive on the basis of who I was/am and what I want to do. But I still worry about others who might not have that type of support and go looking for community only to have someone tell them harshly that what they are feeling is wrong.

I think it is great that the trans community is so full of diversity, but with this diversity comes a responsibility of acknowledging and more importantly respecting other's diversity. There are many different types of transmen, FTM's, transgendered, gender queers, butches, SOFFA's, allies, and the list goes on and on in our community. To set up the belief that one "type" of person or path of experience is "better" or "correct" has detrimental consequences not only to the individual that supposedly doesn't "fit", but also to the community as a whole. For every person that somehow gets pegged as being "less trans," that is one less voice of utmost importance in a developing movement. This is important to keep in mind when dealing with people who might be a little bit unlike yourself or even a whole lot different. In the end, it must be remembered that discounting one ends up hurting many more.

Working with a Gray Palette

*A Common Ground Column
by Loree Cook-Daniels*

Recently two well-known gender specialists took to task a therapist who had described her work with "transgendered lesbians" in *In The Family* magazine. How she saw her clients, they said, "is clearly at odds with the terminology, assessment and Standards of Care for counseling set forth by clinicians who specialize in gender conditions." "We believe the author," they continued, "has failed to appreciate that sexual identity and gender identity are discrete, largely unrelated constructs." She was, they further charged, "the postmodern equivalent of the psychoanalysts of the 1970s who took the statement 'I'm trapped in the wrong body' to be *a priori* evidence of 'severe psychopathological delusion and impairment in object relations.'"

I'm familiar with the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association Standards of Care the gender specialists use. I'm also familiar with the therapist who wrote the article (indeed, I'd repeatedly critiqued the article in question during its development). This is not someone who missed her Transsexuality 101 training and now needs to be "set straight."

This is a therapist who knows what a transsexual is and is saying that the people she's working with aren't transsexuals. Unfortunately, her critics would not acknowledge this. Instead of meeting her at the new, higher level she was opening to discussion, they took up their weapons and their positions along old battle lines, black on one side and white on the other.

This fighting of old battles is common. Reading the gender specialists' critique, I immediately flashed back to last year's furor over the advertising campaign featuring ex-Gays. Here, too, we who had been wounded in the past took up our weapons and marched into a battle formed along very old, very clear-cut lines.

Unfortunately, there are multitudes who live in the gray areas between those black and white lines, and they are these battles' principle casualties.

Let's start with the better-known controversy, the one over ex-Gays. As the Christian Coalition framed the debate, the issue is whether Gayness can be "cured." Gay groups dutifully fell into place along this battle line, arguing that since we did not "choose" to be Gay, we can't "choose" to be straight, either.

This argument may be meaningful for people who believe that sexual orientation is an all-or-nothing affair. Fortunately or unfortunately, as GenderPac Executive Director Riki Ann Wilchins says, "Real life is

more complicated than that." As Lani Ka'ahumanu, founding organizer of BiNet USA, points out: "Most of the people who 'convert' to heterosexuality through these programs admit that they still have same-sex attractions. Many of these people are undoubtedly bisexual, but have chosen opposite-sex relationships for the time being."

Who gets hurt by the erasure of bisexuality in this debate? Bisexuals, obviously, since it's hard to have pride in an identity that everyone ignores or dismisses. But "monosexuals" are hurt, too. Heterosexuals never learn that it's extremely common to have some level of attraction to your own gender, an ignorance that may well lead to gay-bashing by those caught in a so-called "Gay Panic." Gay people never admit that it's extremely common to have some level of attraction for the opposite gender, a silence that leads to debates in the Lesbian community about "what to do about" Lesbians who sleep with men. And none of us gets to move the discussion into the really juicy areas of what, exactly, are the components of sexual attraction, and how can those attractions change? These are the kinds of discussions that might, for instance, help us learn how to turn those crows-feet and gray hairs our lover is sprouting into turn-ons, or how to morph the erotically charged image of barebacking into sexual behavior that's just as hot but a whole lot safer.

Fighting black-and-white battles also keeps us from moving the political discussion to more juicy -- and potentially revolutionary -- areas. Do we really want to condone the idea that people who are different only deserve equal rights if they can prove they can't conform like everyone else?

Wouldn't it be more fruitful to argue that the list of inalienable human rights includes the right to be different, whether one "chooses" that difference or not?

Re-fighting past battles, or trying to draw people who have moved far beyond the basics back to an old black-and-white battle, can blind us to real pain.

The critics of the therapist working with "transgendered lesbians" say "female-to-male transsexuals" "transmen" would take great offense at being called "lesbian." The therapist knows that, and that's not what she's doing. Instead, she's saying now that we've recognized transmen and their difference from Lesbians, what do we do for those people who say, "I'm not a Lesbian, but I'm not a female-to-male transsexual, either." If they are living in the gray areas *between* "female" and "male," "Lesbian" and "heterosexual," then it's less than helpful to argue "which" they "really are." They deserve respect for who they are, regardless of how much their as-yet-unnamed identities mix up others' neat black-and-white dichotomies.

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Stinky (the sock puppet) Speaks: The Gender Hierarchy

By Max Spit

Who is Stinky? At the last FORGE meeting we were busy discussing various aspects of being transgendered when the idea of a sock puppet arose- as a sort of FORGE mascot and as a friend/ally to transpeople everywhere. Stinky serves as a spokespuppet for trannyfolk in need. When at the doctor, at work, at school, when asked the same questions over and over it's a good idea to bring Stinky along. He (his self-chosen pronoun) has the patience and savvy to answer all without feeling the same sense of alienation, risk or tokenization that transpeople experience every day. Plus, being born with a ruffle and a pink bow, he understands what it's like to feel restricted by the binary system of gender statement enforced in our society.

But Stinky is also highly aware of the trials and tribulations we experience both within and outside of the trans community. He has a distinctly unique perspective (with a tranny hand perpetually up his...) and every month has decided to share this perspective with the rest of us in a column entitled "Stinky Speaks," 'cause he wouldn't be able to speak at all were it not for our voices.

Stinky Speaks #1: The Gender Hierarchy

It's always disappointing to discover that even within caring communities, societal prejudices and hatreds pervade, permeating and disrupting these communities. It seems like as the transgender community grows, more and more folks are asking the question of who does or doesn't belong here. Racist, ableist, ageist, classist and other such detrimental attitudes prevail, and those whose identities aren't acknowledged and welcomed leave the community feeling the blow of being again excluded from a supposedly accepting group. One of the most pervasive and destructive attitudes that reigns supreme in the transcommunity are the assumptions about gender we make, even from within a group where gender is supposed to be something fluid, multiple, and malleable.

How are we screwing ourselves over? It seems that even in our community we're dragging in all sorts of bad stuff without even taking a minute to look at what we're doing. We don't have to, right? We're transgendered! Wrong. All of us, from those who identify as men to folks who refuse to be any gender need to take a minute and consider how we're treating each other.

One of the most obvious ways we recreate gender hierarchies can be seen in how certain transpeople are made visible in the world outside of the TG community. Images of FTMs on T who have had chest surgery are the only ones that have made it into the mainstream. The muscled, post-

op, on T transman has become an icon of our community, though it is obvious that our community is comprised of a much, much larger variety of people, and that not everyone who calls themself FTM could find themself in these images. But out of these images has grown a body fascism amongst transguys that ends up putting a lot of praise and focus on "very passable" bodies, very masculine bodies, and creates a false template that even the most self-confident transguy finds himself comparing his body to.

Language is another way in which we continue to hurt one another. Instead of the wide variety of gender expressions out there and expressed opening up the definition of "transgender," transpeople have insisted on making new and often more rigorously enforced definitions of all sorts of expressions. Now there is a distinct line between transman and genderqueer which doesn't allow for fluid and dynamic identities. Instead of using language to knock down barriers, we have created new ones with boundaries that many fiercely police. Language is a very important tool, but it should be known that not having the right words often is what makes it hardest for us to understand one another. Sometimes, if someone is speaking about you in a way that you feel is insensitive, it only takes giving this person the right words for the lines between you to disappear and a new understanding to take place. It is damaging to assume that in our community where there are so many new modes of statement and new words to express them, that others will immediately "speak the same language" as you do. Being a sockpuppet takes lots of patience (I'm kind of limited by whose arm I'm stuck on at the moment), and patience along with compassion and a willingness to learn are the best tools for destroying barriers and building communities.

Finally, when we create hierarchies and make strict definitions, we are excluding a very important part of our community- SOFFAs. We are saying that our community is made up of only a very strict idea of what it means to be transgendered. Some SOFFAs are trans-identified and some are not. Is it fair, as we move to encourage ALL forms of gender statement, to exclude non-transgendered folks? Our community would suffer immensely. SOFFA issues are not limited to SOFFAs, and it is unfair to everyone to take these issues off the agenda because they do not appear to be immediately "trans."

Our community has the potential to change the world, and we should keep this in mind. Have a good month.
Stinky

Preclusion

By Bear

The story you are about to read is true. Only the names have been changed to protect the guilty. An eternity ago, when my partner first began his genderquest, I accompanied him when he attended the monthly meetings of our local gender group. The group was comprised of primarily MTFs, CDs, and their partners (spouses). Although I didn't have much interest in wigs, make up, hair removal, or passing at the mall, I very much enjoyed the comradery and warmth of the group.

As I soon found out, the group had an interesting economic philosophy. There were two sets of admission fees. One for the transgendered members of the group, and a much lower one for spouses (to encourage their participation). I didn't have knowledge of this policy when I mentioned in some discussion or another that I had always been transgendered. At the very next meeting, our fees as a couple went up. In one fell swoop, I lost my spouse status and was plopped in with the trannies.

Please don't get me wrong, I didn't have a problem being relegated to the trannie category. I am transgendered. But when I spoke openly about my no-ho no-op desires, that for "me" the changing of my body is irrelevant...that my gender, like my sexuality, is between my ears, and not between my legs... well, I just didn't fit into their mold. And I began to feel devalued by the other trannies. It seemed as if one had to be hormone and surgery bound to truly be a card carrying member of tranniedom. It was OK to "delay" things due to lack of money, guilt about "the children", unreconcilable family or job pressures. It was OK to be "just a cross-dresser". It was NOT acceptable to say that you were transgendered, but didn't want to change your body, or your name, or what box you mark when the form asks "male or female". After a while, I stopped going to the local gender group. I didn't feel as if I belonged there.

I still attend some gender groups. Both as transgendered individual and as a SOFFA. I don't believe one should preclude the other. I find it unfortunate that such segregation exists with the tg community, and ironic that some members of the gender community are so unenlightened as to the great diversity exhibited by the gender gifted.

Reminder: The April 7, 2001 FORGE meeting will be in Milwaukee, WI. The structure for this meeting will be similar to the March meeting. We will host a discussion on *Interfacing with Healthcare Providers* from 2:00—4:00. At 4:00, we will have a guest presenter—Trudy Davis (a psychotherapist, bodyworker, and Nikken distributor) - to discuss the benefits of Nikken (magnetic) products.

FORGE Meeting Schedule

The March 17, 2001 FORGE meeting will have a format, unlike any we've had in the past.

2:00—4:00 pm Discussion on the *Hierarchy of Gender*
4:00—5:00 pm Focus Group on Domestic Violence

More on the Domestic Violence Focus Group

The goal of the focus group is to gather information and responses to gather information and marketing material to help us implement an effective domestic violence campaign. We want to bring awareness to the mainstream as well as the LBT communities about intimate partner violence. We are going to be asking people's opinions about what they see as domestic violence, domestic violence in everyday life, domestic violence and homophobia and/or transphobia. We have been going to various community groups and hope to gather as much information as we can.

The next step in this project will be to create materials that will be used to bring awareness of help available to the LBT communities who are survivors of domestic violence.

The collaborative project is funded by the Chicago Foundation for Women. The project partners are Chicago Connections Women's Program, Horizons Community Services, Howard Brown Health Center, and the YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago Women's Program. Our efforts will include an aggressive community outreach campaign, and focus groups and training for area police and LGBT friendly business owners.

For more information please contact Karen at the YWCA LGBT program at (312)372-6600 ext 287.



Working with a Gray Palette ,

(Continued from page 5)

Arguments are easier when they're conducted in black and white. But real lives are lived in the gray zones where people are rarely 100% anything.

Acknowledging that reality is messy and seldom falls into two neat discrete categories gives us room to breathe, to be human, to learn, and to change.

Let's pass on some of these invitations to Sexuality and Gender Identity 101 battles and move on to the far more interesting and rich discussions of life the way it *really* is.

Minutes from 2/3/01 Meeting

Location: Diamond Tower Condo,
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Topic: Organizational Meeting

The first meeting of 2001 was focused on determining the goals and roles that FORGE will work towards throughout the year. We had a room filled with colorful flipcharts, filled with lots of words and concepts and fresh ideas.

The following is a transcription of those flipcharts, with minimal annotation in [].

1. Why did people come to the meeting? What to folks want from FORGE? What do people feel is valuable for FORGE to do? What could FORGE offer?

- "I liked it the way it used to be" - Monthly topic-oriented meetings
- Social support
- Newsletter in written form
- Informative Topics - specific at each meeting
- Hands-on doing
- Workshops
- Speakers
- MTF/FTM dialogue (FUN)
- Outings/field trips: bar nights, bar crawls
- Educate ally/public (LGB, straight): speakers bureau, literature
- Recruitment
- Coalition-building (particularly with political groups)
- Piercings
- Surgery support
- Self-defense
- What to say at work - social issues, family issues
- Have group reps in to talk to FORGE
- Continuum (half 101/half social)
- Networking - generating friendships
- More stable venues
- Resource guide of professionals
- Health and safety manual
- Sensitivity trainings
- Be more queer-accessible - rumor/perception control
- Spirituality (more broad stuff)
- Mentors
- Clothes swap
- Media education

Suggested Topics for monthly discussion meetings

- Work
- Social
- Family
- Self-defense
- MTF/FTM dialogue
- [May 2001, Chicago] Fag leather community - how to we deal with?

- Spirituality
- Only spaces
- willy-making
- art expression - body painting, poetry
- piercings
- practical medical (shots)
- STIs and safer sex
- [April 2001—Milwaukee] Dealing with docs (e.g. \$40/shot): ER, mental health facilities, other medical issues
- Relationships: school, romantic, sexual, work, parents
- Registering for Selective Service
- Coming Out
- Strap-on workshop
- Legal (rights, name change)
- Rites of passage (collages)
- Show and tell/ Surgery
- Dealing with mental health professionals
- Jail/arrest - dealing with legal system
- Language/terms
- Hormones
- Tricks of the trade
- Pronouns
- [JUNE 2001—Milwaukee] Body image/sexuality
- Self-identity
- Expectations
- What to expect wrt transition
- How we treat each other
- *** (March 17) Gender hierarchy within the community - Deadline: Feb 23 from TransAction
- Aging
- Hair styles (balding)
- Making Porn
- Domestic Violence
- Youth
- Race
- Sexual assault
- Anti-trans violence
- Clothing - style, finding clothes that fit
- Transpride
- Gym Class 101 (what dad never told you)
- Sex - outing issues
- Switching orientations - including forced switches
- Partner issues
- Sock puppet making - collages and self-identity
- Harry Benjamin issues
- Local services - medical, psych, experiences, warnings, recommendations

Speakers who would be of interest

- Joseph Bean - leather, gay male, demos, history
- Bill Stadt - leather, gay male, demo, history
- Gretchen Fincke - therapist
- Waring Fincke - legal

(Continued on page 9)

Minutes from 2/3/01 Meeting,

(Continued from page 8)

- Max - sock puppet, Lou Sullivan, pronouns
- Tom Barrett - MD
- Fred Ettner - MD
- Randi Ettner - therapist
- Jeff Patterson - MD
- Fairy Butch - strap on
- Cooper - piercer
- Terry Tafoya - spirituality
- Mark Robers - massage for partners
- Deborah Weil - political
- Loree Cook-Daniels - SOFFA
- Old FTMs

Ideas for Social Events

- Kite flying
- Six flags
- Bar hopping
- Pool parties
- Play/dungeon parties
- Renaissance faire
- State Fair
- Gemini Gender joint event
- Shopping for dicks
- Piercing parties
- BBQ
- Dancing - tranny dance w/ Bi Definition, GGG
- Fake holidays - 8th annual transgender day (weekly) (stickers, yo-yos)
- Film/video night
- Pride Day (march)
- Tranny camping

Places to hold meetings:

Chicago

- Ann Sathers
- Horizons
- Howard Brown
- DePaul University
- University of Chicago
- Rory's Transformations
- Back of Cellblock (no parking)
- Randy's house

Milwaukee

- Si's clubhouse (Bootcamp's afterhours place)
- UU Church in Brookfield (where GGG meets)
- Plymouth Church (near Downer)
- Diamond Tower Condo's Solarium
- UWM (Micah might be able to secure room)
- Loree's house

Other places

- Club 94
- Kenosha Massage Studio (Randy's brothers business)
- Bong

Outreach and Publicity

[How can we get the word out!]

- Posters
- Queer papers (InStep, Gay Chicago, Gab, Lambda Pubs, Free Press, Bi All Means)
- T-Friendly physicians (Pathways, Ettners, Howard Brown, etc.)
- Bars
- Queer cable TV shows—possibly paid commercials
- BeSTD
- Schools/Universities
- Non-queer papers (Metro, Reader, Isthmus)
- Other trans groups (WisGen, CGS, GGG, ITI, TransAction, Indy Boyz, Prairie)
- LGBT centers
- Youth groups (punk shows, horizons, bookstores, pride youth, coffee shops, weekly T youth drop-in in chicago)
- Cable shows w/ sock puppets
- E-lists (trannyfags, local queer lists, e-buzz, project youth, rainbow alliance)
- Regular newsletters
- Queer and other bookstores
- Coffeeshops
- Queer-friendly churches, etc
- Queer film festivals
- SM-related
- Professional organizations/unions (queers in trades, WI electric, Ameritech, EAPs)

Newsletter Content Suggestions

- Max - give topic and deadline (every issue)
- Projected time/topic lines
- Don't have to stick to subjects
- Letters page
- First-person
- Cartoons
- Upcoming community activities
- Poetry
- News blips
- Section: what's going on with other T/ally meetings/groups
- FORGE meeting minutes/summaries
- Historical tidbits
- Prizes/rewards for writers
- Book reviews
- Movie reviews
- Event reviews
- Gossip column
- Rating T-friendliness of places
- "trannyman under cover"
- Adventures of Sock Puppet (max) (on theme of the month)
- Sarah on Allies
- Reviews of other T newsletters/publications
- New stuff on the web

BECAUSE 2001: A Bisexual Odyssey

May 4-6, 2001 in Milwaukee, WI at the
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee,
2200 E. Kenwood Blvd

Theme

Odyssey: After the Odyssey, a Homeric epic recounting the wanderings of Odysseus after the fall of Troy 1. An extended adventurous wandering. 2. A spiritual or intellectual quest.

Webster's dictionary defines the word odyssey as, . . . any long, adventurous journey. Back in the 20th century, Stanley Kubrick directed a very popular science fiction movie about a long, adventurous journey into the future titled 2001: A Space Odyssey.

Many bisexuals today are traveling odysseys of our own. Some of us are questioning our orientation. Some of us are first discovering dual attractions after many years of identifying as gay/lesbian or straight. Some bisexuals have been aware of our orientation since early childhood and may be considering alternative relationships. And many of us wouldn't want any orientation except our bisexuality, but would like support regarding bi-prejudice in our lives.

Your personal journey may reflect one or more of the above, or may be entirely unique. BECAUSE 2001: A Bisexual Odyssey will strive to meet your needs no matter where you are on your personal journey.

We invite you to BECAUSE 2001 as it comes to Milwaukee, Wisconsin for the first time. Come join us as your journey continues . . .

Mission Statement

BECAUSE (Bisexual Empowerment Conference: A Uniting, Supportive Experience), an annual conference held in the Midwest region of the United States, shall exist to provide opportunities of support, education, resources, entertainment and a sense of community for those who self-identify as bisexual, persons questioning their orientation, those who dislike labels, transgender persons and our allies.

FORGE+ /FTM+ /SOFFA Website

www.execpc.com/~dmmunson/forge.htm

The website is getting a "make over". Check out the new information (calls for submission, newsletter organization, calendar, and more to come) and new easier-to-navigate layout. I welcome any feedback you care to share!

Voyage(r): A Tourist Map to Japan Clarissa Sligh Exhibition

Jake in Transition from Female to Male plus
Voyage(r): A Tourist Map to Japan

Clarissa Sligh Exhibition

Artist Talk Friday, March 9, 2001 at 7:00pm
woodland pattern
720 e. locust st

"I began documenting Deborah/Jake's sex change from female to male at her/his request. I hesitated to take it on because I know (s)he wanted to be a stereotypical macho man. This did not seem to mesh with my interest in accelerating the decline of what I perceive of as sexism, racism, misogyny, and unnecessary rigid structures of male domination.

Additionally, I felt uncomfortable with the sexual aspects of it. However, I decided to try it. As a Black woman, I am acutely aware that I occupy the position of "outsider" to the experiences of my subject, who was becoming a man and who was reared as a white, middle-class, Mid-western female.

During the first few months of working, my emotions, memories and instincts were constantly restimulated. Sexuality and gender had not been issues on which I had focused. As I observed Deborah/Jake's changes, I began to try to understand the processes that create structures such as masculinity. It intrigued me that a small-boned, slim woman would want to become a stereotype of a short man. Asking a lot of questions and doing a lot of research, I interviewed Jake and the people who knew him during that first year we worked together. As I helped to hold and make real the space for Jake's changes, I began to accept the concept that he had always seen himself as a man in a woman's body. While not always agreeing with or understanding Jake's position, I grew to respect his decision to go after what he really wanted from life even though he stood the risk of losing, among other things, his veteran's benefits, job, family, and community."

March 10, 1-5 p.m.

\$40/35 Members

Class size limited to 12.

This workshop will visually explore the concept of self and "other" through ideas and issues relating to gender and race. Participants will use their bodies, gestures, and objects to create visual personae as a springboard to writings. Polaroid photographs will lead to a simple narrative or artist's book.

Participants are encouraged to bring a working kit which may include shoes, clothing, costume jewelry, make up (personal or theatrical), wigs or other false hair, and other personal items. Prewritten journal entries may also be used. Slides will be shown.

Resources : Email Lists for Non-Mainstream Transfolks/SOFFAs

Sphere (subscribe at www.queernet.org)

SPHERE is a list for non-, bi-, poly-, third-, and other-gendered people, & friends!

FemmeTransboyz (subscribe at groups.yahoo.com)

A place for anyone & EVERYONE born 'female' that IDs as or feels like a boy, guy, tranny, etc. AND who used to or is starting to or sometimes does or still does, always has, always maybe will ID as FEMME/FEM.

Gendercomplex (subscribe at groups.yahoo.com)

To educate, discuss issues, and provide support for people who 'reserve their right to be complex' about gender. Whatever your identity, butch, femme drag king or queen, transgender, transsexual, trans+, genderblender, genderbender,genderqueer crossdresser, feminine male, masculine female, or just plain gender warrior, feel very welcome and comfortable on this list.

Transensual Femme

A list for femme-Ided partners of transfolks.

TGPoly (subscribe at www.queernet.org)

A list for trans and SOFFA individuals who are polyamorous.

Do You Miss Your Snail Mail FORGE Newsletter?

It's been a long time since I've fully the FORGE database has been overhauled. This year, we are embarking on some new and exciting things. FORGE is growing and we have more to offer a wider range of people. Due to some of the new things happening with FORGE and re-initiating some of our old ways that people have requested, we are interested in hearing **how** people would like to receive the FORGE newsletter.

Some of you who were only receiving the newsletter in print format might be wondering if we stopped publication, since there have not been any paper newsletters for several months. Some of you have only been receiving email announcements that the newsletter has been updated on the web. FORGE does not want to assume what method(s) each of you prefers, so we would like to formally ask you how you would like to receive the FORGE newsletter and hear about announcements and meeting reminders.

The gap in the print/paper version of the newsletter has mainly been due to the editor's inability to fully underwrite the approximate \$150-200 per newsletter to photocopy and mail the newsletter to the over 125 people who are on the FORGE snail mail list.

Because we are committed to making FORGE's resources and discussions available to everyone who wants and needs them regardless of their access to the Internet and/or ability to pay, we are APPEALING TO YOU FOR HELP.

If you want to remain on the email distribution list and/or the snail mail list, please complete the form below and return it to FORGE. IF FORGE DOES NOT HEAR FROM YOU, YOU MAY BE REMOVED FROM THE SNAIL MAIL LIST. [If you opt to supply me with your email address (es), you will receive both notices of the newsletter being on the web, as well as announcements and reminders about meetings, and announcements of other current events and upcoming programs of interest to the trans+/SOFFA community. If you opt for snailmail newsletter only, you will only receive the monthly newsletter by US Postal Mail. Obviously, you can choose both options!]

Because of the excessive cost of reproduction and the increasing price of postage (and both are increasing as the size of the newsletter grows), please consider helping underwrite the distribution costs of the FORGE by donating one or more "subscriptions" (suggested donation for a one-year subscription is \$15-30). No one will be denied a print copy of the newsletter. DONATIONS are requested, not a subscription fee.

If you are interested in continuing to receive the FORGE newsletter, please fill out the form below, checking as many boxes as apply.

- I want to receive a printed copy of the FORGE newsletter by US Mail
- I want to be notified by email when a new FORGE newsletter is published address(es): _____
- I'd like to make a donation of \$_____ to help support distribution of FORGE's newsletter by US Mail

Name of choice _____ Preferred mailing name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Birthday (optional) _____

Phone (optional) _____

Mail to FORGE, PO Box 1272, Milwaukee, WI 53201 or email to tgwarrior@execpc.com

FORGE
PO Box 1272
Milwaukee, WI 53201

Next Event
March 17, 2001
Chicago, IL

