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*The Newsletter of the National Transgender Library & Archive  
A Publication for the Transgender Historical Society (a division of AEGIS)*

## The National Transgender Library & Archive Is Open For Business!

We are pleased to announce that the National Transgender Library & Archive (NTL&A) is now open and ready to receive visitors on a regular basis. Since the beginning of the year, we have been organizing, cataloging, expanding and readying the NTL&A to receive guests. While this is an ongoing process, we are now ready with regular visiting hours of 6 PM till 9 PM on the first and third Tuesday of each month. Appointments for visits at other times can be arranged by simply calling us to schedule a convenient time and date. We are currently housed at the headquarters of *AEGIS* in metro Atlanta, Georgia.

What you will find in the NTL&A is one of the most extensive, if not the most extensive, collection of transgender related materials put together in one place. Books of all descriptions abound: biographies, self help books, pictorials, historical reviews, psychological studies, fiction - both by and about transgendered persons - medical reference books, bibliographies. Of course, we also have our fair share of rare books available for review. A video library of movies with transgender themes, tapes of television shows, performances by transgendered artists, instructional tapes, educational tapes, conference proceedings, and tapes about transgender community events are also available for viewing. Additionally, we have an extensive collection of audio tapes of speeches delivered through the years.

Then there are the periodicals. A virtually com-

plete collection of *Transvestia*. Nearly complete sets of all periodical publications by the national transgendered organizations. Newsletters from virtually all local transgendered support organizations throughout the country and the world. These alone fill two 4 drawer vertical filing cabinets; the magazines occupy multiple bookcases.

News articles from around the globe. Proceedings from various conferences held. Memorabilia from famous transgendered people and performers. The list goes on and on. And the volume of our holdings keeps on expanding. Odds are, if you can think of it and it's transgendered related, we have it in the library.

All of this information in one place. What better research facility could there be for transgendered topics? Frankly, we can't think of one.

We rest assured that you will find the time valuably spent and will be most impressed with the collection. Of course we are there help you locate materials that may interest you, or you can simply just browse through at your leisure to see what is available. Disseminating information and making it available is a large part of our mission. We can even check out items locally, and on-site photocopying is available (please see the back page for our policies).

We'd be most happy to see you, so drop by for a visit and avail yourself of this fine resource.

# The History and Significance of *FEMALE MIMICS* Magazine 1963 - 1979

by

Bob Davis and Carol Kleinmaier

## INTRODUCTION

This article has two purposes. The title states the first. The second is more ambitious. Through the creation of the Archive and articles like this, the National Transgender Library and Archive dedicates itself "above all, to keeping our history in our own hands".<sup>1</sup> The Library is very new and, indeed, a Transgender Library, separate from a Medical, Law, Anthropology or Lesbian and Gay Library, could only happen in the 90s. In this decade transgendered people are OUT as never before. We now have eloquent writers, scholars and activists who demand and lead the way toward cultural self-definition. "Self-identification has become an important personal right, for if we do not assert who we are, then the power to self-define may be usurped by someone else, who usually screws it up".<sup>2</sup>

Transgendered people often feel isolated and alone. We try to see our image reflected in the culture only to find that Kate Bornstein's observation about transsexuals is true for us all: "Since transsexuals in this culture are neither fairly nor accurately represented in the media, nor championed by a community, we develop our world views in solitude."<sup>3</sup> Now, however, there is a newly established dialogue among transgendered people and a growing body of transgender writing is beginning to articulate the existence of a history, a community and the possibility for positive self-identification for the transgendered in contemporary culture. The Transgender Library & Archive furthers this process. Through our existence and publications we support the establishment of a credible transgender voice. We will take an active role in this new discourse.

## BACKGROUND

This article is a preliminary history of *Female Mimics* (FM), published 1963-1979. Even though it was not always produced by members of our community, it contains information about the transgender community and supplies a view of us to the world. Any researcher would be justified in saying that our community supported this publication and, therefore, it reflects much about us.

We believe that the vast majority of men examining their feminine selves in this era encountered *FM* very early in their explorations. Many of us knew that transgender behavior, such

as crossdressing, had something to do with sex, and our libidos took us to the porn shops. There, *FM* was prominent, if not unique. Lee G. Brewster, who has been selling and publishing transvestite related material at Lee's Mardi Gras Boutique in New York and by mail since the early 1970s, says that *FM* was always a "consistent best seller".<sup>4</sup> This applies to its successor, *Female Mimics International (FMI)*, too. "They have such a long, loyal following." Lee Brewster tells us.

Even among those who set out seeking information rather than titillation, it was harder in the 1970s to find more serious publications. The books we coveted had been stolen from the library. And magazines, such as Virginia Prince's *Transvestia*, started in 1960, were much harder to find. Their distribution network was small and concentrated in heterosexual transvestite clubs. So, it didn't reach those just beginning their process of gender exploration.

In spite of the professional distribution afforded authors like Leslie Feinberg or Kate Bornstein, television talk shows and online services, many still have their first exposure to gender publications in sex shops. That this is the case for those who don't frequent book stores or those who cannot afford to go online is obvious, but, if one is in any way embarrassed about their transgender interests the sex shops will exploit those feelings. They draw the novice in before books of more substance can be found, certainly before there's the courage to seek out others in the gender community.

There are a number of other reasons for selecting *FM* for in-depth examination. It was the first glossy-cover, crossdressing photography periodical in standard size magazine format (approx. 8 1/2" by 11"). Prior to this, all publications, both photo and fiction, were digest size (about half standard size or approx. 5 1/2" by 8 1/2"). The standard size magazine pioneered by *FM*, with its largely pictorial content, is now a staple of the industry. There are perhaps a dozen publications of this size and format such as *Lady Like*, *Crossdresser's Quarterly* and *Transformation*. In transvestite publications, the digest size now seems exclusively the format of fantasy fiction, such as the hundreds of stories published by Empathy Press, Lee's Mardi Gras Entertainment, Sandy Thomas Publications, Reluctant Press and others.

Also of importance is *FM*'s 16 year publication history, which allows us to view significant editorial trends. The contents of *FM*

and similar magazines are our history, if only by reflection. This history is not what we wrote about ourselves, but what publishers found was of interest to us. These images and articles sold the magazines, or they wouldn't have been included issue after issue. Members of our community must have enjoyed them, even if we blushed.

We assume that the vast majority of *FM* readers were men who cross-dressed or fantasized about it. To go one step further out on a limb, since a majority of male crossdressers are probably heterosexual, we believe that the majority of *FM* readers were too. So one question this article asks is, "Where's the hetero-tv in all this?"

There are also archival questions to be answered. How many issues were published? What was their order? Attached to this article is a "complete" list of all the issues of *FM* we've been able to find. We have also postulated an order of publication and explained our criteria.

## METHODS

This article is not an insider's view. It is written from the perspective of the consumer, vendor or collector. At this time, we are less interested in the editors and publishers than the documents they created. Therefore, this article is an attempt to see ourselves as others examining *FM* will see us in its pages.

*FM* actually provided transgendered folk with two views of ourselves. The first is through the eyes of the editors and publishers. They tried to sell us many different things during these 16 years. What sold? What didn't? And can we determine what forces made some things more popular than others? The second is the view of the social historians. Many academic social sciences programs, and not only those with a feminist perspective, are beginning serious study of the transgendered. Shouldn't we examine this material also? Aren't we better qualified, at the very least entitled, to our view of what this material means, why it is significant?

With this in mind, two authorities were interviewed in preparation of this article: Lee G. Brewster and Joseph Vasta. Lee has been prominent in the transgender and gay communities since 1969, when he founded Queen's Liberation Front. He has been selling magazines and clothes to the community through Lee's Marti Gras Boutique for over 25 years, which gives him a

unique firsthand perspective which few others enjoy.<sup>5</sup>

Our other authority is the internationally known erotica collector and dealer, Joseph Vasta. His larger view of the field, not limited to crossdressing publications, has provided many valuable insights and confirmed observations about parallel developments in other areas of pornographic publishing.<sup>6</sup>

Research beyond the scope of the present article would include contacting people who were involved in the publishing of *FM* at all levels. The drag artist's perspective could be provided by Pudgy Roberts, among others, whose comic striptease was an early feature (1.3). Though he was never on the staff of *FM*, he was always very aware of female impersonator publications and was on the staff of several. *FM* staff members to be contacted include Stanton, the famous cartoonist, Jenifer Jordan, publisher of *FM* 1973-1978, and Kim Christy, editor of the last three issues of *FM* in 1979.

## EARLY YEARS

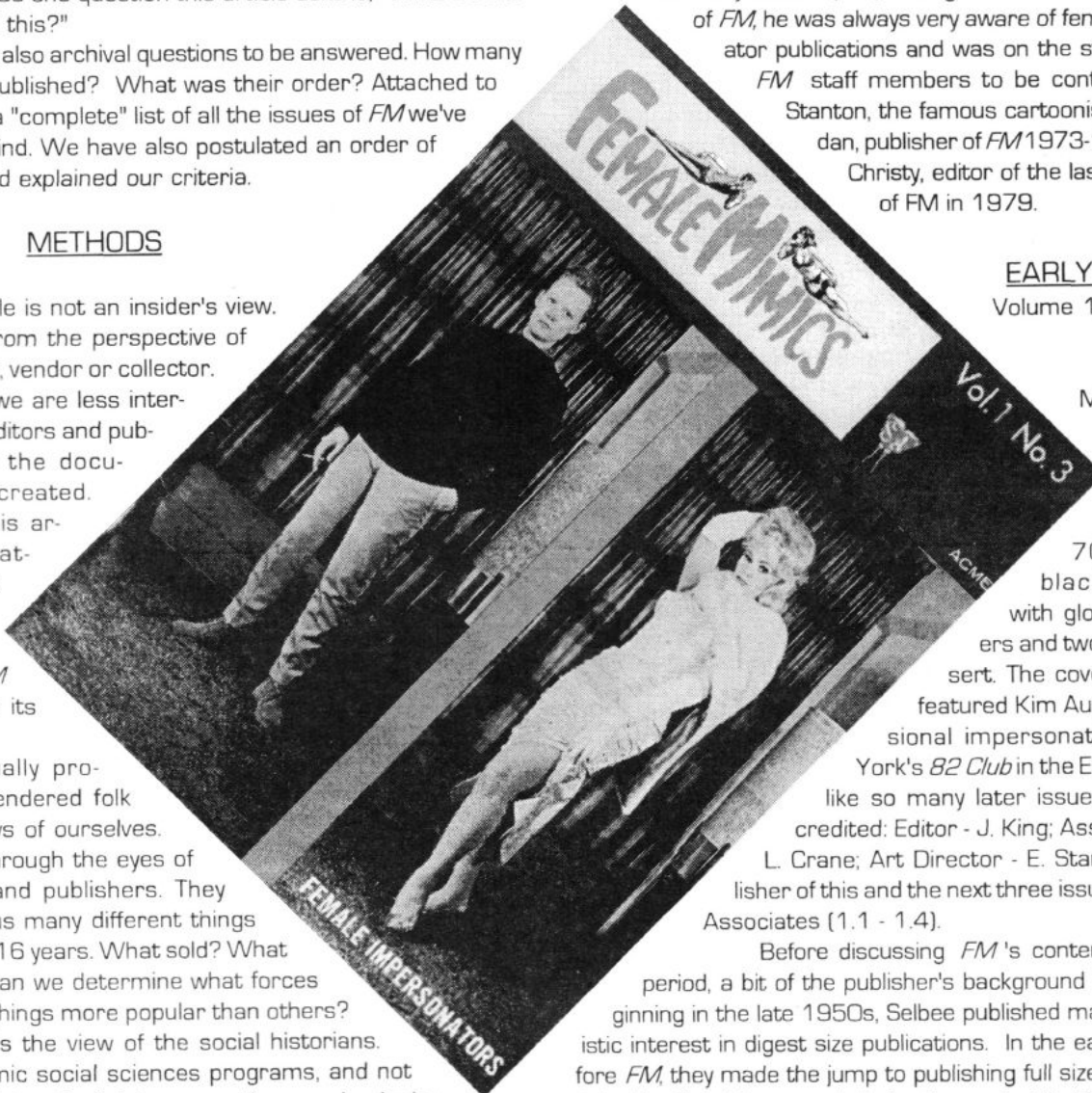
Volume 1, 1963-1968

The "PREMIERE ISSUE" of *FM* (1.1) appeared in early 1963. It was 70 pages of black and white with glossy color covers and two-page color insert. The covers and insert featured Kim August, a professional impersonator from New York's *82 Club* in the East Village. Unlike so many later issues, a staff was credited: Editor - J. King; Associate Editor - L. Crane; Art Director - E. Stanton. The publisher of this and the next three issues was Selbee Associates (1.1 - 1.4).

Before discussing *FM*'s contents during this period, a bit of the publisher's background is in order. Beginning in the late 1950s, Selbee published material of fetishistic interest in digest size publications. In the early 1960s, before *FM*, they made the jump to publishing full size magazines fetish titles like *Masquerade in Leather* and girlie high heel/garter belt titles like *Paris Taboo*. They did not publish transgender material exclusively.

All of Selbee's publications are like *FM* in that they all have the same editorial voice and same graphic style, down to the same typefaces and fonts for the titles on the covers. This gives the impression of a small operation with many deadlines to meet. By sticking to formulae, the editorial/design team could work fast and keep quality consistent, perhaps too consistent to allow much innovation.

As a producer of fetish material, Selbee's style seems in-



debted to John Willie's magazine *Bizarre*, which first appeared in 1946. "John Alexander Scott Coultts - the man known as John Willie, stands atop the highest pedestal in the history of bondage illustration. He set the standard for all who would follow after him. He was a consummate professional and a master technician. But he was even more than this - he was an artist."<sup>7</sup> Many who do not know his name will recognize Willie's creations; "Sweet" Gwendoline, the ultimate submissive cartoon heroine, and her foes, the Mysterious Countess and Sir d'Arcy d'Arcy (the foul fiend), who bears more than a passing resemblance to Willie himself.

Transitional between *Bizarre* and Selbee was another fetish magazine, *Exotique*, by Burmel Publications, is important to us for several reasons. Publishers of erotic material during this period found it convenient to change names and addresses at various times, for whatever reason. Often only the name would change and the content would stay the same, as we'll see in *FM*'s history. Joseph Vasta feels that it is possible that Burmel Publications became Selbee Associates in this way.<sup>8</sup>

It can be stated with greater certainty that such a publisher's shuffle happened to *FM* after the fourth issue. The next eight in the series were published by Health Knowledge (1.5 - 1.12). This change wasn't unique to *FM* either. All the Selbee publications changed publishers at this time, most to Health Knowledge. So, in this era there are several publisher names (Selbee, Health Knowledge, S-K and Marquis among others) who may be, in fact, all the same.

Let's compare elements from Selbee's *FM* with Health Knowledge's. First, there's absolutely no change in the editorial or graphic style. Second, Health Knowledge freely reprints Selbee material,<sup>9</sup> as it does features from S-K Books and Marquis.<sup>10</sup> Health Knowledge's first issue (1.5) reprints the Statement of Purpose editorial and its provocative graphics by Stanton from the Premiere Issue (1.1), which was a good way to tell readers that nothing had changed. Also, Health Knowledge used the Selbee cover logo for their first two issues (1.5 & 1.6).

## STARS OF THE EARLY YEARS

During *FM*'s first five years, the majority of its pages were devoted to professional impersonators and nightclubs that featured these performers. Many of these names are still familiar. A non-inclusive list includes Americans T. C. Jones (1.1), Ricky Rene (1.3, 1.8 & 1.10), Pudgy Roberts (1.8), La Rey (1.7), Minette (1.4), Baby Martell (1.4), Randy Taylor (1.6 & 1.9), "Kicks" Wilde (1.10), twins Hilmar & Christian Dubois (1.11), as well as Emilo Tellez (1.5) and Hans Crystal (1.2, 1.7 & 1.10) from Puerto Rico. There is also a pictorial of International Chrysis<sup>11</sup> and Kim Christy (1.12). American nightclubs include 82 Club (NYC, 1.6), Beige Room (San Francisco, 1.2), Crazy Horse Cafe (NYC, 1.5 & 1.9), Nite Life Club (Chicago, 1.8) and the touring Jewel Box Review (Miami, FL based, 1.2 & 1.5).

The international scene is covered, too. France is represented with features about Bambi (1.1 & 5), Capucine (1.6), Coccinelle (1.2), the famous clubs *le Carrousel* (1.1 & 1.8) and *Madame Arthur's* in Paris (1.2). There's Holli White (UK, performing in NY, 1.4), *Shalimar* (Juarez, Mexico, 1.1), two German

clubs, *Frau Helen's* (Frankfurt, 1.3) and *Cabaret "Pointe"* (Hamburg, 1.6) the touring company *Cherchez La Femme* (Canada, 1.4). There are also drag kings from *Elle et Lui* and Paris clubs *Le Monocle*, *Chez Moune*, and *Frede's Cabaret* "where Women do the Man bit"<sup>12</sup> (1.3, 1.8 & 1.11). This emphasis on the theatrical side of travesti would never be seen in *FM* again. Let's examine why, before going on to subjects that received lesser coverage.

Were there more professional impersonators then than now? If so, it's partially because there were more places to perform and be paid for it in the '60s and earlier. It was much easier to run a nightclub than it is today. Inflation, regulation and legislation have all taken their toll on profitability. Impersonator clubs of this era enjoyed a large crossover audience of straight tourists, fans, curiosity seekers and hetero tv's, closeted or not. This audience hasn't entirely vanished. Today, they venture out to the old school venues like *Finocchio's* in San Francisco, *Darcelle XV* in Portland or Uncle Milton Berle's string of *La Cage* lip-synch shows.

It seems *FM*'s publishers were trying to tap this audience. Certainly the editors wanted straight and closeted people to feel as safe reading the magazine as they were at these shows. The audience had to feel secure in their heterosexuality and protected from the "freaks and queers" on the other side of the footlights or in the photos. Thus in these early issues, there is no sex mentioned, not even implicitly.

Lee Brewster feels that this heterosexual, crossover market was primarily aware of professional impersonators at this time. If a non-transgendered editor, deciding how to put together a crossdressing magazine, looked around New York, where *FM* was published, he'd see plenty of performers. There were venues featuring impersonators nightly, and the Jewel Box Review came to town, annually, performing to sellout crowds at Harlem's *Apollo Theater*. The run was a month long and was often extended. Lee Brewster claims that the profits from this run kept the theater open the rest of the year.

And remember the editor's busy offices with its many deadlines and small staff? This, too, worked in favor of featuring performers. Performers were accessible, easy to contact, interested in the exposure, and might even provide their own photos. If not, it was no problem to send a photographer to the club to shoot the show or make friends with the girls and arrange for private sittings later. This informality is evident in the many pictorials obviously shot in apartments, not photography studios.

After professional performers, the next largest coverage is of drag balls, followed by anonymous transvestites called "amateur impersonators" in the earliest issues. Drag balls, like impersonator shows, were easy to photograph. These events were held in public places, such as hotel ballrooms, so it was not necessary to have the subject sign a release in order to print the photos. This is confirmed by the lack of names in so many of the ball photos. There's the feeling that the ball queens are a commodity to be captured on film. The photo captions that were written are not informative, and make the ball queens creatures of fantasy, not real people. This lack of recognition, which is still common in many magazines, definitely seems exploitative and dehumanizing.

What about the rest of the magazine? Well, often there's precious little text and even less information contained therein. Lee Brewster is adamant that the information was all fabricated, "even the letters." When discussing performers, *FM* seemed to present facts, but inflated. For example, if *FM* said a performer lived in a glamorous modern penthouse, it should be read as a six-story walk-up on the Lower East Side. A kinder view than Lee Brewster's would be to see *FM*'s style aligned to that of Hollywood biographies where everyone is fabulous, everything is wonderful and we call each other "dahling" because we mean it.

If the writing about the performers is exaggerated, facts about the non-performers are non-existent. What abounds are fabulous vagaries, unfounded claims of glamour with so few specifics that further research is impossible. Though performances and huge wardrobes may be claimed in the photo captions, there are no club shots and sometimes only one outfit.

Who were these people? Maybe they're friends of the performers. Perhaps they were "discovered" at gay bars or drag balls. They're young, pretty, and if they're gay, which is likely, it's never discussed. This would violate *FM*'s policy of keeping the world safe for heterosexuality. The editors go out of their way to establish a solid heterosexual identity for these models. In fact it might be said that they often go too far.

An example of protesting too much is the profile of Joi Fulnesee of Detroit (1.12). "Recently his wife gave him a Dior gown for a birthday gift!... Joi spends his evenings gloriously gowned in female attire - can you imagine how surprised his co-workers at the auto plant would be?" Well, maybe they wouldn't be too surprised since *FM* also claims that Joi never goes without a manicure and wears shimmery shades of enamel." Doesn't it chip off working on the assembly line?

Most of the writing isn't credited, but, there are a few articles by known authors, which are a cut above the average *FM* fare. The two more familiar names are frequent writers about transvestism, Avery Willard (1.5) and Carlson Wade (1.4, 1.9, 1.10 & 1.11).<sup>13</sup>

There is little coverage of transsexuals. Beside the Premiere Issue's obligatory Christine Jorgenson profile (1.1), there are only three other pieces: the autobiographical "How I Changed My Sex" by Patricia Ann Morgan (1.3), "Abby Sinclair . . . Ex-G.I.

Now Bride-to-Be" (1.6), and the pictorial "82 Club Star Hans Crystal Sails Away for a Permanent Change" (1.7). It is also noteworthy that very few of the people pictured in *FM* evidence breast augmentation. Many of those who do are French.

## INTERLUDE

1969 - 1972

*FM*'s publishing was disrupted for over two years between Summer 1968 and Winter 1970-71. In the Winter of 1969, Health Knowledge issued a new publication: *FEMALE IMPERSONATORS* (FI): "We are happy to announce that we are wiping out the old *FEMALE MIMIC* format and starting anew with a new title *FEMALE IMPERSONATORS*. . . A new art staff and picture editor . . . but most important, a new EDITOR who has knowledge of the field.<sup>14A</sup> Let us introduce PUDGY ROBERTS, who as well as heading up his own female impersonator revue is probably the top writer in the field." We believe this is the first time a magazine not published by someone within the transgendered community advertised adding a member of the community to their staff.

We know of fifteen issues of *FI*, though most are undated.

The first three were published by Health Knowledge, the remainder by Neptune Productions of Belmar, NJ. *FI*'s history is outside the scope of this article, but, in the beginning it was true to its title and emphasized professional impersonators with lesser coverage given to drag balls. They also featured Letters to the Editor and transition sequences. In many ways it was much like early *FM*, so their claim of "wiping out the old" seems to have more to do with the staff than the contents.

In the Winter of 1970, a new publisher, Eros Goldstripe, introduced *NEW FEMALE MIMICS* #1. They dropped the "New" after the first issue. The magazine was expanded to as many as 98 pages. Was this a real change of publishers? Probably not. Joseph Vasta says that a similar change happened to all Health Knowledge titles. Don't be fooled by Eros' Wilmington, Delaware address either. Health Knowledge's address had been New York when it published *FM*. But Health Knowledge continued publishing other titles in 1969 after *FM* was discontinued, and these later magazines have a Wilmington address. Delaware's laws governing corporations make it a very desirable state to be li-



censed in, regardless of where the business is actually located.

But, even if the publisher was constant, *NEW FEMALE MIMICS* #1 bore all the marks of a major editorial change. The cover logo was new. The layout was very different, and there was almost no reprinting of articles or features from the Selbee Health Knowledge days, though old photos did pop up here and there.<sup>12</sup> This confirms Lee Brewster's statement that Eros Goldstripe publications contained new material.

The cover of #1 featured England's most famous female impersonator, Danny La Rue. So, there was continued coverage of performers, shows and also ball pictorials, the typical photos without captions. But, there was something new - sexual fantasy.

There were fictional stories in each issue which included sex as a major element. Although it always took place "off stage," this was a big change from earlier issues where sex was never present. The captions and fictional accounts of the girls in the photos had more fantasy appeal and were often loaded with innuendo: "Carol works all over the USA where she commands top \$ for her talents."<sup>15</sup>

Most important was a new photo feature with very few words. It was the longest piece in each issue, 32 pages in #3. Each portrayed a fictional story. All had the same plot: someone, who appears to be a pre-op male-to-female transsexual on hormones, picks-up or is picked-up. There was kissing, cuddling and plenty of frontal nudity, but no erections, no genital contact and no actual sex shown. The models for these features were attractive and in all ways well endowed. Twice the encounters were with unknowing heterosexual men (#1 & #3), and once an unknowing lesbian (#2).

This theme of discovery, a lover being fooled by a transgendered heroine, was a major plot element in four out of five stories published in these issues. In every case the dupe is a heterosexual male. In two stories from #3, "Frank's Leather Fetish" and "Marital Mix-up," the impersonator offers mutual oral satisfaction when discovered. In one story the proposal includes a line which seems designed to reassure nervous hetero-tv readers, "I'm a female impersonator. Only I'm not gay, honey. I happen to like girls an awful lot. I just dress gay. Especially when I boff . . . Now when I was in High School . . ."<sup>16</sup>

But none of these characters wanted a transgendered lover. Sometimes there was rejection: " 'Oh no, don't tell me you're going - not so soon - here I thought I had at last met someone' . . . and her voice was aggrieved."<sup>17</sup> There was always shock. The shock proved too great for one unsuspecting suitor, who died of a heart attack. "You - oh God - you!"<sup>18</sup> Throughout there's the degrading implication that no one would knowingly have sex with cross-gendered people.

The decision to include frontal nudity was a major departure. Why did it happen at this time? Joseph Vasta says there was an on-going judicial review of the obscenity laws in this country during the early 1970s. Eventually, sanity prevailed and virtually everything would be allowed. So, if the law allowed frontal nudity, why did Eros Goldstripe Publications discontinue it in *FM* after only three issues? Why would it never return?

There are several theories. One is that the change was market driven, a very 90s interpretation. Lee Brewster has said

that magazines without nudity have always sold better. We have posited that the readers of early issues of *FM* wanted to feel safe - secure that they really know who's male and who's female. Transsexual nudity doesn't do that. It isn't reassuring to see both female and male sexual characteristics on the same individual. The publisher didn't understand this yet. They didn't know that the regular readers attracted by the performer on the cover<sup>19</sup> were very different from the new readers attracted by the nude photo spreads.

Another theory is Joseph Vasta's. He believes that the order to stop the nudity came from above. Growing up in a lower middle class Italian ghetto, Joseph remembers that the toughest guys in the neighborhood, the guys who might kill people, had a double standard of morality. They wanted everyone to stay away from their sisters, for example. Joseph can easily imagine these toughs guys saying "Look, I don't want those girl-boys showing their tushes and their things in my magazine. It offends me."

There were no issues during 1972. As *FM* lay fallow, performer/author Pudgy Roberts fulfilled a lifelong dream. "At last! My own magazine!"<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, like so many dreams, it quickly vanished. *Pudgy Roberts Presents The Great FEMALE MIMICS* enjoyed only one issue. Though the similar title is confusing, Pudgy's magazine seems completely independent of *FM*. In fact it was the editorial opposite of Eros' *FM*. The first issue covered only theatrical female impersonation. There's the impression that the impersonators were trying to use the media to present a picture of themselves as professional performers.

It seems that many professionals had similar hopes for the original *FM*. In a 1965 letter to the editor "The Cast of Finocchio Club" asked for "a magazine which would help us in our building a better image of the 'Art of Female Impersonation'."<sup>21</sup> To these letter writers, building a "better image" meant distancing the magazine from what the cast called "freaks, perverts, deviates, transvestites, lesbians, etc.", anything in fact which has absolutely no bearing on the professional art of female impersonation. This attitude was completely contrary to the post-Stonewall cry for pride and identity. Perhaps ignoring this change is part of the reason that *Pudgy Roberts Presents The Great FEMALE MIMICS* had such a short run in 1972. When *FM* reappears the next year in 1973, it has a very different policy on such "deviance".

## MIDDLE YEARS

Volumes 5-7 and 4.5, 1973-1978

The next issue of *FM* featured National Cotillion 1973 and marked the beginning of a new era. Eros Goldstripe was still on the cover, but the vast majority of issues said "published by Jenifer Jordan" on the inside front cover. Though these issues were not as long as the earlier Eros issues - down to 62 pages from a high of 98 - they had a classier look. They were printed entirely on glossy paper and had double the number of color pages. In short, they looked slick.

The photos of sexual encounters are gone. Only one of Jenifer Jordan's 12 issues contains transgender frontal nudity (6.3), and in this pictorial the model is alone, not posing with a naked lover, as before. Two issues contain no nudity at all, nine feature

only bare, presumably enhanced, breasts. Indeed, from this issue on, silicone or hormones were prominent in the vast majority of models. There was also more approving mention of the model's transsexuality or transgendered lifestyle and it was less sensationalized.

This era was *FM*'s most regular period of publication, four issues annually, like clockwork. Previously, the schedule had been more erratic. This, coupled with the higher publication values, implies that the publisher felt there was more money to be made by adhering to professional standards. Though it's not labeled as such in the magazine, this regularity has led us to call the *National Cotillion 1973* issue Vol. 5, #1. We find confirmation in the numbering of the first known issue of 1974, Vol. 5, #2.<sup>23</sup>

Though Eros' address was still Wilmington, Jenifer Jordan's was in Hollywood, and the majority of clubs, balls and featured models were based in Southern California. More balls were featured, and fewer clubs. These clubs were not the traditional showrooms, nightclubs or theatrical venues of the 1960s, but gay bars with drag shows, much like today.

The most striking editorial difference between these issues and previous ones is the theme of Gay Pride, the legacy of the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion. Though there was never an explicit editorial statement, there's ample evidence. Earlier, when it came to the issue of homosexuality *FM*

"dared not speak its name." During these Jenifer Jordan post-Stonewall years, *FM* started printing descriptions of models like "Sandy is in great demand at all of the big Los Angeles Gay functions" (5.2). The gay orientation of the balls was never alluded to previously, but now it's a selling point, "The gay community of Long Beach, California, recently held the event of the year . . ." (5.3).

Though clubs were described in very different terms, the heterosexual members of the audience were not forgotten, "A gay nightclub called Oil Can Harry's? you ask. True. You see, it's a most unusual club, and thus the unusual name. The name of this club also suggests what it truly is - a Mecca of entertainment that caters to both the straight and gay males as well as men and women of cosmopolitan taste"(6.3). "Cosmopolitan" sounds so much better than "sick and perverted."

One of the most strikingly gay-positive statements is an endorsement of gay marriage in the story "Cross-Dressing-Upstairs,

Downstairs" (6.4). The author is not credited and the accompanying photos are irrelevant. The story reads as if it was originally published in England, as much tv fiction is still. In the tale young, sickly Master Thomas Redfern is raised as a girl by his governess after his parents are lost at sea. As the girl Aileen, Thomas marries a rich man who prefers boys to girls. No problem there! Years later, when Aileen dies the loving husband erects a white marble stone in the cemetery "In Loving Memory of Sir Thomas Redfern. Born 1867, Died 1930. 'Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust her . . .' (Proverbs 31, 10,11).

This monument was raised at the posthumous instruction of Mr. Percy Ailsford, of Albany, New York in memory of a loving and ever faithful friend."

Pride was also evidenced in captions accompanying the ball photos.

Names of the contestants pictured began to be listed and sensationalized statements which play on

the reader's fantasies were all but eliminated. Some things didn't change, however. True, the

"facts" presented about local scene superstars seem less fictionalized,

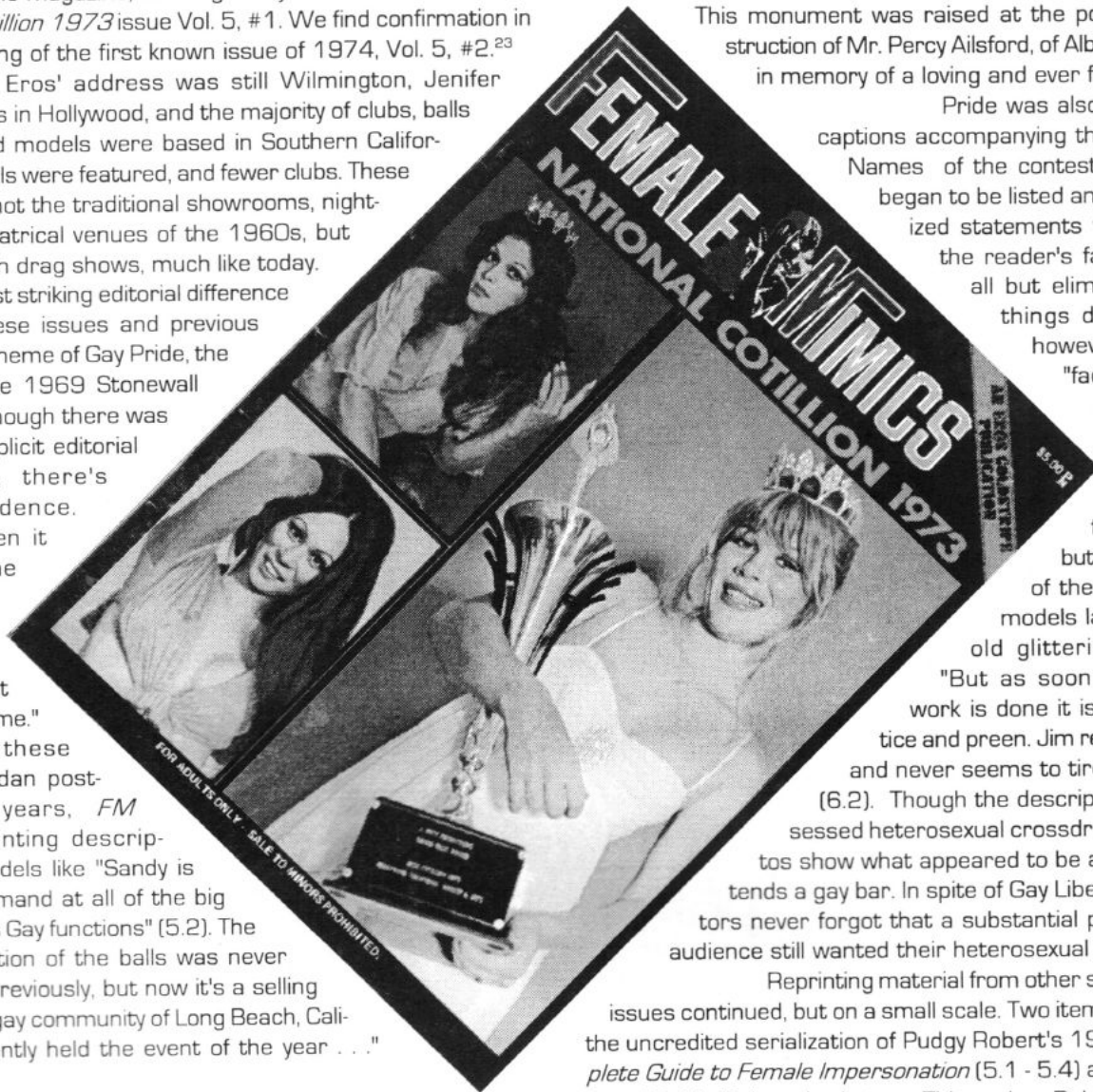
but the life stories of the lesser known models lapsed into the old glittering fantasies.

"But as soon as the day's work is done it is time to practice and preen. Jim relaxes this way, and never seems to tire of his hobby"

(6.2). Though the description fits an obsessed heterosexual crossdresser, the photos show what appeared to be a gay man who tends a gay bar. In spite of Gay Liberation, the editors never forgot that a substantial portion of their audience still wanted their heterosexual fantasies.

Reprinting material from other sources or past issues continued, but on a small scale. Two items of note were the uncredited serialization of Pudgy Robert's 1967 book *Complete Guide to Female Impersonation* (5.1 - 5.4) and the reprinting of Robin Roberts' photos. This makes Robin Roberts the only model featured in four different issues of *FM* (1.7, 1.10, #2 & 5.3). All the photos were still from the undated Marquis digest, *Presenting: Robin Roberts, America's Most Beautiful Boy!*, which Lee Brewster described as one of his best all-time sellers. Most surprising is that except for these photos, which appear to have been shot in one session, virtually nothing else is known about Robin Roberts.

But perhaps the most important change editorially was the inclusion of an openly transgendered columnist/reporter, Kim



## THE LAST YEAR

Volume 5 (sic), 1979

Christy. At this time Kim was out, about, proud and quite the ball queen. In her first column, while discussing the difference between European and American audiences, she attacked one of the prime tenets of earlier *FM* editorial policy, the heterosexuality of impersonators. "I recall when ONE Institute<sup>24</sup>, on a tour of gay bars, stopped at the Queen Mary show bar in Los Angeles, and several female impersonators there made a special point to the group that, just because they are female impersonators, they are not necessarily homosexuals, and, indeed, 60% of the professional female impersonators are heterosexual. I've worked in the business before and, believe me, that isn't necessarily true. I have no idea where that figure came from" (5.2). The performers Kim mentions were promoting the same party line that the Finocchio's cast spouted in their 1965 letter. Kim's attitude is decidedly more contemporary and post-Stonewall. (See illustration preceding page; Christy is in the large photo on the right.)

However important to the community a transgendered *FM* staff member was, Kim Christy wasn't there long. At first she was very present; appearing in photos, writing and covering the balls (5.1, 5.2, 5.3, & 6.1), but, by 1975, she vanished and was absent for the remainder of the Jenifer Jordan years.

After 7.4, Fall, 1976, *FM* seems to have gone into suspended animation. *Female Mimics Special* appeared over a year later, Winter, 1977-78.

This is the last issue published by Jenifer Jordan, curiously labeled volume 4.5. If it had been numbered in sequence, it would have been 8.1. If they had continued publishing during the remainder of 1976 and 1977, it would have been 9.1. But, why 4.5? Ever since Jenifer Jordan became publisher, *FM* had been a quarterly publication. How could this have been the fifth issue? At this point, our chronology is based on the date of publication, not the volume numbers.

*Special* was the only all-color, all-photo issue of *FM*. Although all the photos were from previous issues, so the models' names were available, the editors took the easy way out and printed no captions. The lone paragraph of text welcomes the reader to a rare treat . . . men who dress as women, who act as women and who pass as women. Some, in fact, call themselves women . . . they are not afraid to show this what they believe is their rightful role in life.<sup>25</sup> Even with accurate information at hand, the publisher opted for vague titillation.

It seems there were no more issues for over a year. The next issue is dated Spring, 1979, the first of *FM*'s three final issues - 5.1, 5.2 & 5.3. Presumably the numbering of these issues followed the sequence begun by the obscure 4.5. But, what about the 5.2 and 5.3 of five years earlier? It is tempting to resolve the incongruity by saying that this was a new magazine, but unfortunately all were published by Eros Publications or one of its manifestations.<sup>26</sup> Once again, the publication dates, instead of volume numbers, were used for our chronology.

These last three issues were precursors to *Female Mimics International* (*FMI*), which would publish its first issue in Winter, 1980. Graphically the connection is very strong. Many visual elements, such as the new typeface and borders, the cover logo and cover layout of 5.2 and 5.3, became signature design elements of the early *FMI*.

The first column by Linda Lee,

*FMI*'s most articulate and thoughtful writer, appears in

5.2. Earlier she had been West Coast Correspondent for Lee G.

Brewster's magazine *Drag*. Her column here would run until *FMI* issue #37 in 1987. Also, some of the models featured in these three issues became familiar faces in *FMI*, such as Shalei Lutrelle (cover girl for both 5.1 and *FMI* #1) and Sulka (profiled in 5.3, cover girl *FMI* #7). (See illustration this page.)

But the strongest connection to *FMI* is the return of Kim Christy, this time as editor, a title she holds to this day. With Kim's return comes a brief era of excellent ball coverage. Never before were photo credits this detailed and inclusive. Issue 5.2 lists all the contestants and their sponsors, a total of 50 names, even if all their photos did not appear.

This does not mean, however, that accurate representation of the gay or transgendered lifestyle had won out over the readers' desire for fantasy. As with the Jenifer Jordan issues, performer profiles have some ring of truth to them, but facts about the unknown queens remain vague. These profiles feel fictionalized with fetishistic interests in mind. "Jennifer prefers to dress a little kinky for her dates. She feels more sensual in a garter belt, stockings and an alluring dress."<sup>27</sup>





## CONCLUSION

Did *FM* make a positive contribution to the transgender community? Yes, at times, though that was never its principle goal. This is the history of an evolving editorial position which reflects its times. *FM* began with an emphasis on professional female impersonator shows, material that would be considered non-threatening to mainstream heterosexual audiences. The early 1970s was a period of blatant exploitation, portraying the models as anonymous objects of fantasy. Finally, a post-Stonewall consciousness did emerge and, while it did not fully satisfy our desire for positive self-identification, it provided the transgendered community with some degree of affirmation. However, this was always tempered by the necessity of including material which used transgendered people as objects of exploitative fantasies.

This is one of the negative aspects. Were there others? Again, yes. People attending balls or other public events suddenly found their photographs published without either identification.

The models, even the highly praised "stars", fared little better. If they were stars they often lost their identity after the first printing in later issues' uncredited reprints.

But because of its evolving editorial position, reflective of the times, *Female Mimics* has served members of the transgender community in a variety of ways. Among its accomplishments, *Female Mimics* has provided an introduction to the novice, publicity to clubs and entertainers, pride to homosexuals, flattery to the vanity of its models, fantasy and at times even reassurance to heterosexual crossdressers.

### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Shhhh! *The Newsletter of the National Transgender Library & Archive*, II, #0, March, 1995, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Xavier, Jessica "Choosing Terms of Empowerment", *TV/TS Tapestry* #71, Spring, 1995, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Bornstein, Kate, *Gender Outlaw*, Routledge Press (New York & London, 1994), p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> All Lee G. Brewster's quotes and information are from a telephone interview conducted Dec. 10, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> For more information see Saypen, Abby "A Little Bit of Our History, an interview

with Lee G. Brewster", *TV/TS Tapestry* #70, (I. F. G. E., Wayland, MA), Winter, 1995, p. 56.

<sup>6</sup> All Joseph Vasta's quotes and information are from a telephone interview conducted Dec. 18, 1995. Selections from Vasta's collection of vintage erotica are available on the CD-ROM *The Vasta Collection*, published by Body Cello.

<sup>7</sup> Stevenson, Peter, *The Works of John Willie*, as quoted in Piselli, Stefano and Morricchi, Riccardo, *The Art of John Willie*, Glittering Images (Florence, Italy, 1989), p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> With all such erotica/pornographica there is general assumption that organized crime is heavily involved in the publication and distribution, especially for anything sold in porn shops. The editors, photographers and artists have the talent to produce publications that reflect the fantasies of transvestites, voyeurs or bondage aficionados. But behind the scenes there are "Distributors" who provide a continuity in management and sometimes policy as well. The editorial staff which creates the magazines receives only a flat fee for each issue.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, the pictorial "Mimics Cocktail Party" in Vol. 1 #5, (Health Knowledge, NY), 1965. It appeared as a Selbee digest in 1964 called *Lavender & Lace - Female Impersonators at Play*.

<sup>10</sup> For example see two Health Knowledge FM pictorials, "Windy Starr California Glamour Guy", Vol. 1 #7 (Health Knowledge, NY), 1965, p. 55-62, and "Robin Roberts 'Miami Peach'", Vol. 1 #10 (Health Knowledge, NY), 1967, p. 32-35, both are reprints from the Marquis digest, *Presenting: Robin Roberts, America's Most Beautiful Boy!*, no date. Different photos are used in each issue.

<sup>11</sup> International Chrysis was the subject of the recent independently produced film *Split - Portrait of a Drag Queen*, written by Dan Chayefsky, directed by Ellen Fisher Turk and Andres Weeks.

<sup>12</sup> "Torrid Three from Gay Paree", *Female Mimics*, 1.3 (Selbee Associates, NY), 1963, p.54.

<sup>13</sup> Avery Willard wrote *Female Impersonation* (Regiment Publications, New York), 1971, about theatrical impersonators. Carlson Wade is the credited author of the Coccinelle biography *She-Male* (Eros Goldstripe, Wilmington, DE) no date, and two works coauthored with Edward Podolsky, M.D. *Transvestism Today* (Epic Publishing Co., Inc., New York), 1960 and

the pamphlet *Transvestism - Males in Female Dress* (Epic Publishing Co., Inc., New York), 1962.

<sup>14</sup> As did some of Stanton's drawings, notably the full-page cartoon "The Girls" in *New Female Mimics* #1 (Eros Publishing, Wilmington, DE), Winter, 1970-1971, p. 70, which appeared in the Premiere Issue almost ten years before in *Female Mimics*, 1.1 (Selbee Associates, NY), 1963, p.42.

<sup>14A</sup> *Female Impersonators* #1 (Health Knowledge Inc. NY, NY), Winter, 1969, p.3.

<sup>15</sup> "Ebony Temptress", *Female Mimics* #2 (Eros Publishing, Wilmington, DE), Spring, 1971, p. 31.

<sup>16</sup> "Marital Mix-up", *Female Mimics* #3 (Eros Publishing, Wilmington, DE), Winter, 1971-1972, p. 70.

<sup>17</sup> "Frank's Leather Fetish", *Female Mimics* #3 (Eros Publishing, Wilmington,



# FEMALE MIMICS CHECKLIST

To the best of our knowledge this is a complete list of all the issues of FEMALE MIMICS. We hope that, by printing our list, others will come forward with information and help us fill-in these gaps.

## EARLY YEARS 1963-1968

<u>Vol. No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Cover Logo</u>
1 1	FEMALE MIMICS	Premiere Issue, 1963	Selbee Associates (NY)	Premiere Logo
1 2	FEMALE MIMICS	1963	Selbee Associates (NY)	Selbee Logo
1 3	FEMALE MIMICS	1963	Selbee Associates (NY)	Selbee Logo
1 4	FEMALE MIMICS	Fall, 1964	Selbee Associates (NY)	Selbee Logo
1 5	FEMALE MIMICS	1965	Health Knowledge (NY)	Selbee Logo
1 6	FEMALE MIMICS	August, 1965	Health Knowledge (NY)	Selbee Logo
1 7	FEMALE MIMICS	1965	Health Knowledge (NY)	HK Logo.1
1 8	FEMALE MIMICS	Summer, 1966	Health Knowledge (NY)	HK Logo.1
1 9	FEMALE MIMICS	Spring, 1967	Health Knowledge (NY)	HK Logo.1
1 10	FEMALE MIMICS	Summer, 1967	Health Knowledge (NY)	HK Logo.1
1 11	FEMALE MIMICS	Winter, 1968	Health Knowledge (NY)	HK Logo.2
1 12	FEMALE MIMICS	Summer, 1968	Health Knowledge (NY)	HK Logo.2

## INTERLUDE 1970-1972

<u>Vol. No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Cover Logo</u>
1	NEW FEMALE MIMICS	Winter, 1970-71	Eros Publishing (Wilmington, DE)	Bow Logo
2	FEMALE MIMICS	Spring, 1971	Eros Publishing (Wilmington, DE)	Bow Logo
3	FEMALE MIMICS	Winter, 1971-72	Eros Publishing (Wilmington, DE)	Bow Logo
1 1	Pudgy Roberts Presents THE GREAT FEMALE MIMICS	1972	Mark Lithographers (NYC)	Pudgy Logo

## MIDDLE YEARS 1973-1977

<u>Vol. No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Cover Logo</u>
5 1	FEMALE MIMICS National Cotillion 1973	1973	Jenifer Jordan (Hollywood, CA) Eros Goldstripe on cover <sup>2</sup>	Ricky Logo
5 2	FEMALE MIMICS	1974	Jenifer Jordan/Eros Goldstripe	Ricky Logo
5 3	FEMALE MIMICS	Fall, 1974 <sup>3</sup>	Eros Publishing (Wilmington, DE)	Ricky Logo
5 4	FEMALE MIMICS	Fall, 1974	Jenifer Jordan/Eros Goldstripe	Ricky Logo
6 1	FEMALE MIMICS	Winter, 1974-75	Jenifer Jordan/Eros Goldstripe	Ricky Logo
6 2	FEMALE MIMICS	Spring, 1975	Jenifer Jordan/Eros Goldstripe	Ricky Logo
6 3	FEMALE MIMICS	Summer, 1975	Jenifer Jordan/Eros Goldstripe	Ricky Logo
6 4	FEMALE MIMICS	Fall, 1975	Jenifer Jordan/Eros Goldstripe	Ricky Logo
7 1	FEMALE MIMICS	Winter, 1975-76	Jenifer Jordan/Eros Goldstripe	Ricky Logo
7 2	FEMALE MIMICS	Spring, 1976	Jenifer Jordan/Eros Goldstripe	Ricky Logo
7 3	FEMALE MIMICS	Summer, 1976	Jenifer Jordan/Eros Goldstripe	Ricky Logo
7 4	FEMALE MIMICS	Fall, 1976	Jenifer Jordan/Eros Goldstripe	Ricky Logo
4 5	FEMALE MIMICS SPECIAL	Winter, 1977-78	Jenifer Jordan (Hollywood, CA)	Special Logo

## LAST YEAR 1979

<u>Vol. No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Cover Logo</u>
5 1	FEMALE MIMICS	Spring, 1979	Satellite Enterprises (Wilmington, DE)	FMI Logo
5 2	FEMALE MIMICS	Summer, 1979	Eros Publishing (Wilmington, DE)	FMI Logo
5 3	NEW FEMALE MIMICS	Fall, 1979	Eros Publishing (Wilmington, DE)	FMI Logo

<sup>1</sup> Most issues in this period have Eros Goldstripe on the cover and Jenifer Jordan in the publisher's statement on the inside front cover. A few have one without the other as noted.

<sup>2</sup> Judging from the volume number this should probably be Summer, 1974.

<sup>3</sup> There is no volume or issues number on this magazine; 5.1 is an interpolation.

DE), Winter, 1971-1972, p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> "Japanese Love Doll", *Female Mimics* #3 (Eros Publishing, Wilmington, DE), Winter, 1971-1972, p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> Appearing on the cover of #1 was England's most famous female impersonator identified as Danny La Rue. The cover of #2 featured a very famous split-faced, male/female image of Ricky Renee who was not identified. The image appears to be from the same session as his feature in Vol. 1 #10 (Health Knowledge, NY), 1967, p. 50-51. (See p. 5 of this newsletter for cover)

<sup>20</sup> "A letter from Pudgy Roberts", *Pudgy Roberts Presents The Great FEMALE MIMICS*, Vol. 1, #1 (Mark Lithographers, Inc., NY), 1972, p.5.

<sup>21</sup> "From Our Mail Box", *Female Mimics*, 1.6 (Health Knowledge, NY), Aug. 1965, p.67.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Why they started with Volume 5 is a mystery. Counting backward, this would place volume 1 in 1969, but there were no known issues of *FM* published in 1969.

<sup>24</sup> ONE was founded in 1952 and based in Los Angeles. It was "a non-profit corporation . . . dealing primarily with homosexuality from the scientific, historical and critical point of view . . ." quoted from *ONE Magazine*, XII, #9, September, 1964.

<sup>25</sup> *Female Mimics Special*, 4.5 (Jennifer Jordan, Hollywood, CA), Winter, 1977-1978, inside front cover.

<sup>26</sup> Volume 5.1, 1979, is the only issue published by Satellite Enterprise, Wilmington, DE. Joseph Vasta says that Satellite and Eros are the same company, as we've seen before.

<sup>27</sup> "Jennifer", *Female Mimics*, 5.2 (Eros Publishing, Wilmington, DE), Summer, 1979, p. 28.

#### FM LOGOS

<b>Premiere Logo</b>	Probably drawn by Stanton, flowers in center of capital letters, a man and woman reclining on either side of the "M" in "Mimics," man facing forward, woman slightly profiled.
<b>Selbee Logo</b>	Probably drawn by Stanton, similar to Premiere Logo, man and woman facing each other.
<b>HK Logo.1</b>	Block lettering without any illustration, letters have a line inside each.
<b>HK Logo.2</b>	Same block letters as HK Logo.1, but without extra line inside the letters
<b>Bow Logo</b>	Sissy bow around "F" in female, "Mimics" in italic
<b>Pudgy Logo</b>	Type only, used for one issue only
<b>Ricky Logo</b>	Between the words there's an illustration, a head and shoulders half in drag and half not, which is taken from a photo of Ricky Renee from Vol.1, #10, p. 50.
<b>Special Logo</b>	Block type, used for one issue only
<b>FMI Logo</b>	New curvaceous type face, identical in style to the first logo for Female Mimics International.



*Female Mimics International*, the successor to *Female Mimics*, is still being produced and can be ordered from Editor Kim Christy at Leoram, Inc., P.O. Box 1722, Studio City, CA 91614 (818-837-3469 Voice/818-898-1591 FAX)

## Library Policy

The National Transgender Library & Archive is located at AEGIS headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia.

The *NTL&A* is open for visits on the first and third Tuesday of each month from 6 PM until 9 PM or via an appointment. To arrange for a visit at other times, call 404-939-2128 or 770-469-1643.

Books and videos may be checked out in the local Atlanta area for a period of two weeks with a two week renewal possible upon notification of the library. Drop off of materials can be accomplished by return during library hours or by placing them in the exterior drop off box.

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