

Christine Jorgenson Sets the Record Straight

by Marsha Thorson

On Tuesday, October 2, Behrend College was paid a visit by a very amazing woman, Christine Jorgenson. Amazing, not because she was the first publicly known person to have undergone a sex change operation, but because of her refreshing outlook on life and acceptance of herself for what she is.

In a lecture to a very sizable audience in Erie Hall, Ms. Jorgenson told the unusual story of her life. She explained how and why she made the change from what she described as "playing the role of a man" in life, to becoming a woman. She also discussed how she felt about

being suddenly thrust into the limelight six months after the operation. Most importantly, she made clear to her audience who and what she is.

Ms. Jorgenson a person, not a circus freak; she did not come to talk about her own personal sexual habits, as many students had expected. Instead, she talked about present day attitudes on sexuality, based on what she had learned throughout the course of her life and from previous lectures at other colleges. Those who had come to get a good look at "him" or "it", came out of the hall with the knowledge that Ms. Jorgenson is now a woman, both mentally and physically. In this respect she is no different from anyone else, except that she was

born with a biochemical imbalance, which was medically cured by surgery and the use of hormones.

Some students came out of the lecture commenting on her large hands or low voice, but as Ms. Jorgenson pointed out, who is to define what is masculine and what is feminine?

Masculinity and femininity are defined by the individual society, and these ideas change with the times, as well as from one society, to another. Certainly today, with America's changing attitudes toward sexuality, ideas such as "men shouldn't cry", people of a certain sex ought to dress a certain way, or that "women were made for the sole purpose of bearing children", are being re-evaluated and replaced by a much freer philosophy.

It is with this new attitude that our generation can take a great step forward by accepting people for what they are, whether they be homosexual, heterosexual or anything else. We can all learn from people like Christine Jorgenson, and begin to understand what life is all about.



A very sizable audience turned out to hear Christine Jorgenson, first known trans-sexual, speak last week in Erie Hall. Because of her sex change, Ms. Jorgenson was the center of much controversial talk during the fifties and since then has received more newspaper space than any other person in the history of journalism. At her lecture, Ms. Jorgenson talked about politics, the media, and other topics of interest. Her main theme throughout the evening was that people should do what is important to them. The above photos were taken by Marsha Thorson.

Editorial Opinion

It's Your Life

by Jeffrey Matson
Staff Writer

I was fortunate enough to be at the Christine Jorgenson lecture given here last week. I was most impressed by what Miss Jorgenson's lecture wasn't about. It would have been easy for her to just speak about her change of sex, that was the topic everyone expected to hear about. It would have been a "safe" choice, but she did not take it.

Instead she started her lecture, after some clowning, with the words: "You have to do what is important to you." At first, this statement seemed to be said in defense of her chosen way of life, but as the lecture went on, this thought persisted and was directed towards the audience.

Miss Jorgenson summed up her personal philosophy like this: "You are born alone, meet people only briefly in your life, and finally, die alone." If this is the way life is, and you don't live for yourself, doing what you want to do, your life is worthless. And how true that is. You are essentially alone in the world. No matter how many friends you surround yourself with, they can

never know all that is happening in your mind. You live alone with your thoughts for most of your life.

So that leaves us with a couple of choices as to what to do with this lonely life. You can resign yourself to a hermit's existence, cut off from the world, or you can begin to realize how little time you have to spend with people, and begin to make the most of that time.

Christine Jorgenson could have "played it safe" with her audience here at Behrend, but instead she shared her feelings about politics, sexual freedom, the media, and other topics. How often do we choose to "play it safe" when we could be making the most of our time with people? How often on the way to classes do we see a friend and say, "How's it goin'?" when we really want to say, "Hey, you look really down, what's wrong?" Of course it works both ways too. How often have you wanted to answer a "Hi, how are you?" with a "Really bad, can I talk with you for a while?" Most of us "play it safe", right?

I don't pretend that "taking a

chance" is easier than "playing it safe", it isn't. In fact, it is much harder because it requires caring about someone, and that is always potentially dangerous. There's a saying I like to believe and I follow to some extent in my life; it goes like this: "dare to care". It's very simple, but it's also very hard, if you know what I mean.

Of course, I don't expect to see this campus turn into a mass encounter session. But one person, once a week, once a month, even once a term would be nice.

You can play it safe, it may be what you want to do, it may be right for you. Or you can take a chance, but be ready to be hurt, it's part of the game. It's your life. It's your choice.

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Sun May Be Last Answer

With all the furor surrounding the so-called energy crisis, it is somewhat peculiar that, for all our pre-occupation with gas prices and the fuel oil shortage, we have failed to simply look above our heads on a clear day. For the answer we seek lies not in drilling for more oil or damming more rivers—it is, directly or indirectly, in the source of almost all the power we use today—the sun itself.

The sun, in one day, radiates to the earth the equivalent of 173 billion million watts of power. This is 100,000 times the capacity

of all the power stations in existence. With this source of energy utilized fully, the amount of solar energy that falls on Lake Erie in one day would equal that of all the fuels burned on earth so far. And we have the technology this very day to implement a system of "solar farms"—a

group of panels which focus the sun's energy in such a way that electrical turbines can be run with the resultant heated and collected gasses—that would supply all the earth's needs for energy through the year 2000 in a site not much bigger than 100

square miles. The leftover heat from such an operation would desalinate 50 billion gallons of sea water daily. The Gulf Stream has also been suggested as a solution, using the difference in temperature between warm surface and cold underlying waters to drive turbines in a convection process.

Solar technology is in its infancy, and the possibilities are boundless. It is a question of priorities—both at governmental and industrial—and we haven't got that much time left. The road is still open for progress, but it won't stay open forever.

