

# images of aging

Men who are unwilling to accept middle age are feminine. Women who easily accept middle age are masculine. Such was the contention of that student of such matters, Theodor Reik.

Lou Boyd  
From "The Idaho Statesman"  
December 30, 1983

by Rosanne King

He's 50, slightly paunchy, with thinning hair and the appearance of carefully groomed and cultivated affluence. The straight observer would certainly place him in the exclusive club of the older, still attractive, successful businessman, complete with security and respect from his community. If the man is gay, however, the reaction of his community to his age, success notwithstanding, seems almost destined to be a negative one.

The male gay community, obsessed with youth and beauty, has given us "wrinkle rooms," "trols," and "twinkies." The funeral

for the passage of youthful charm begins long before the gay man dies. Combined with all the other problems inherent in advancing age, many gay men are caught in a situation which leaves them feeling "useless, worthless and ignored," according to one 45-year-old.

Differences between the Lesbian and gay male cultures comes into sharp focus in the study of the communities' reactions to age. That, according to a young gay male, is due to a primary difference between the men and women.

