

The Baby Boomers Guide to Menopause **or how to have more fun than 36 hours of labor**

By Sally Franz

I must disclose that this is not a medical guide, nor is it a psychiatric thesis. The reason I mention this is that a book editor of a small town newspaper begged me to review this book. (After all, it had testimonies from Jonathan Winters and Jayne Meadows) I gladly sent it to him and he sent it back saying, "This is NOT a serious guide, it has no useful information in it!"

Ah, contraire, Pierre! This book is my real experience of life in the 'Hot Zone'. How can a body-change more drastic than puberty not be funny stuff? I guess he was looking for a permanent cure for hot flashes for the Mrs. Well, that my friend is probably only possible with a full out sex-change operation. CUZ, in my humble experience... no amount of cohash (what is that hashe you by at a food co-op?), yam cream between your thighs, tofu in your milkshake, blackberry tea in your bath tub, or jabajaba juice up your wah-zoo is gonna take the blessed ritual of 'sweating like a pig in church' away from us womenfolk.

So without further ado, may I present a portion of this book for your perusal. If you like it, you can buy the whole kit'n caboodle in the Boomer Boutique (See top menu on Home page) through Amazon.

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CHAPTER ONE

Menopause is the point in a woman's life when menstruation stops permanently, signifying the end of her ability to have children...also known as the "change of life" (Menopause Research Laboratory 8/10/99) So basically you stop having cramps just in time for the chronic diseases of old age. Swell—so to speak.

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY INSANE

If only I hadn't raised my voice. But on the bright side, the police were so understanding. I mean it was all so perfectly understandable. I was upset. I was provoked. Everything provokes me nowadays.

It took me twenty years of therapy to figure out that what I really wanted is to look young forever—okay I just wanted to look younger than my best friend. (I can tolerate looking like I've been around the block—as long as it's not the Soviet bloc.)

But at forty-eight, my upper lip has so many wrinkle lines I could set off the bar code reader at the super market. I have turkey wattle under my chin, chicken wing flaps under my arms, a pair of rhino haunches, alligator scales on my legs, duck feet—I am a 'poster child' for the Bronx Zoo. Gravity is conquering me. It's like starring in the remake of *Journey to the Center of the Earth*—one body part at a time.

At my regular check-up I reported paranoia, hot flashes and crying at Ban Roll-on commercials. Dr. Killborn sat in his brown leather chair with the sun bouncing off his bald head, looking like a bishop bored by his own sermon.

"Sally," he offered his benediction, "you're just experiencing the onset of the change of life." Tears came. THE CHANGE (not to be confused with my marriage and divorce, fifteen rotten relationships, being engaged to a mafia psycho, seventeen moves in the last fifteen years, two muggings, three friends dying, a robbery, the deaths of my parents, my last boyfriend thought he had been abducted by aliens forty times, my children live alternative lifestyles ala tattoos and body piercings and my favorite lipstick went out of stock). To me, THE CHANGE sounded permanent—like a one-way seal-skin canoe ride for and an "Inuit" grandmother across the ice flows.

"That's impossible. I can't be going through THE CHANGE." I defended myself, dabbing back tears with a Kleenex that looked like a piece of old gray gum. "I can rollerblade," I protested. "I can ski. I can windsurf!" (Okay, actually, I only tried windsurfing once. I was in Mombasa, Africa and there hundreds of stubborn German tourists bobbing in the water. I unintentionally mowed down everyone of them like a Sherman tank. I was halfway to Tanzania before they found me.)

I left the doctor's office badly shaken. The committee in my head decided to get together while I was driving. "I don't want to be old and ugly! Wasn't I supposed to be rich by the time my looks went? Life stinks. Just when I become orgasmic I couldn't get rolled in the hay by Trigger even if my pockets were stuffed with sugar cubes."

On the way home from the doctor's I stopped by the drug store to buy some feminine protection—which when you are low on estrogen is a 44 magnum.

Looking back, I think I was too tired to go shopping.

All the feminine products, which had been kept at waist level, had been moved to a shelf near the ceiling. "Okay," I whined, "who put the tampons on the top shelf in this drug store?" A large blonde woman selecting fruited douches said, "You go girl!" Several women smiled. A girl with green hair and a pierced nose gave me a high five. I was on a roll, the crowd was with me.

I was feeling in control for the first time in weeks. "Is this some kind of sexist joke here? I'm 5'2", 4 feet when I'm cramping. Is there a playoff in town of the WNBA?" I got louder. "Is there an all female stilt-walking convention in town?"

I looked down the aisle to get approval from my sisters. They had vanished.

Spotting a surveillance camera, I shouted up. "Does it amuse you to see me winging my pocketbook at the top shelf, getting pelted with sprays and creams? Why are the tampons out of reach? Do guys in orange ski masks ignore the open cash registers, walk right past the stereos and cameras, and dart down aisle twelve to steal a box of Regulars and run like a flash flood out the back door?"

I took a short shallow breath. Too much oxygen would only clear my head.

"I'm climbing the metal racks doing my 'KING KONG up the Empire State Building imitation' here, and nobody cares. You idiots! What could you be thinking? I am being poisoned by my own hormones and I am powerless to stop it and I am angry and I DON'T WANT ANYT MORE CHANGE!"

Feeling faint, I leaned against the brightly colored hygiene sprays. Daises, roses, and gardenias rolled toward the cash register past the antihistamines and lodged themselves under the wire rack of bunion and corn plasters.

A young freckled high school boy who had the misfortune of stocking the shelves that afternoon peered around the corner to see if I was finished. Having never seen a hot flash or a woman in touch with her inner princess, he surmised that my red face and dampened shirt were the symptoms of a massive heart attack. He immediately shouted Code Blue on the intercom.

By the time the police arrived I had calmed down, cooled off and made my way to the checkout line, which was surprisingly empty. The girl at the register, who usually asks me if I found everything that I needed, didn't ask. I was embarrassed and weak, but I knew I was right about the tampons being too high. The stock boy agreed with me by nodding like a bobble-head in the rear window of a car. The manager never came out of his office.

One of the cops, who looked like Mel Gibson, escorted me home to make sure I was all right. I gave him my number. In my journal I wrote, CHANGE-schmange, the world is plotting against older women and I am just smart enough to have figured it out.