

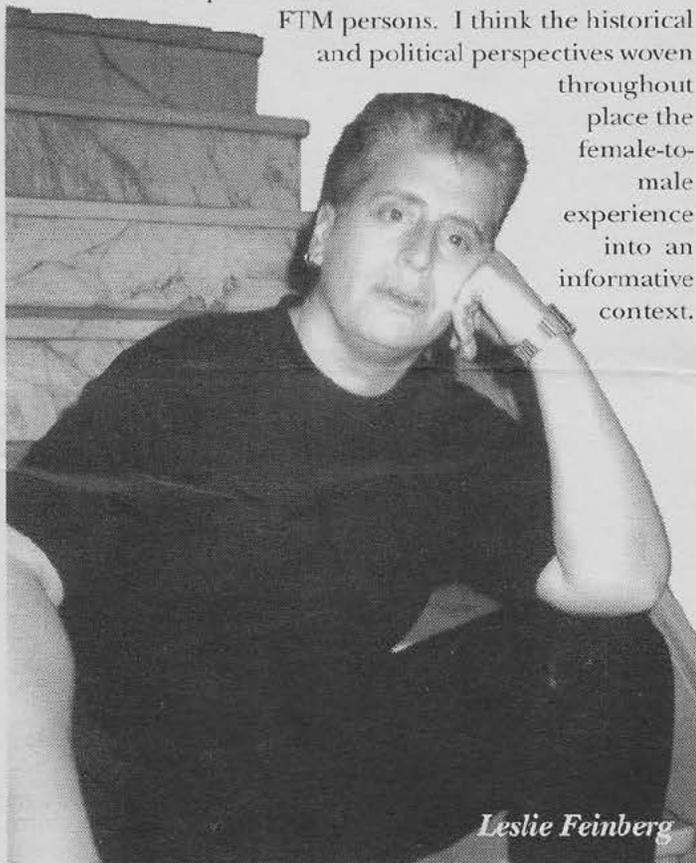
# Politics & GENDER

## An Interview with Leslie Feinberg

By Kevin Horwitz

I had the pleasure, recently, of interviewing Leslie Feinberg, a transgender activist and author of the novel *Stone Butch Blues*. The interview was conducted at Worker's World Party Headquarters, a milieu which is very comfortable for Leslie, and reflects her own particular brand of politics. I asked Leslie a series of questions which I hoped would be relevant to all derivatives of FTM persons. I think the historical and political perspectives woven

throughout place the female-to-male experience into an informative context.



Leslie Feinberg

**Kevin Horwitz:** *Tell me about yourself- why don't you just tell me about your identification with your gender and how that has taken the direction it has.*

**Leslie Feinberg:** I really think the path I've taken was shaped by the fact that from as young as I can remember, people would ask, "are you a boy or a girl?" I'm not just talking about tomboy, I mean my growing up was a constant struggle with the fact that there were only two apparent sexes to identify with, a boy or a girl, and the gender expression was so narrow in the '50's, that to be a girl meant to grow up feminine and to be a boy meant to grow up masculine.

**KH** *You grew up in the '50's in the New York area?*

**LF** I grew up in the '50's in Buffalo. I grew up in an industrial working class family.

**KH** *So that must have shaped things, too, your industrial working class family?*

**LF** My class background is very important to me. I mean, one of the things you have to know about me is that first of all, I'm a woman, and I look the way I look and that's an apparent social contradiction to a lot of people who aren't transgendered, the difference between my sex and my gender expression seems to be this big chasm, that I'm a woman but I look like a man. Well, that social contradiction between my sex and my gender is who I am. I don't consider this to be a contradiction. I think there are a lot of ways for women to be. Now, when I'm talking about that apparent contradiction between my sex and my gender expression, I'm defining myself within the transgender community- not as a transsexual, because I understand that for most transsexuals there isn't this big distance between their sex and their gender. A lot of transsexuals, for example, FTMs, are masculine men.

**KH** *Could you explain what you mean when you speak of the difference between sex and gender?*

**LF** In other words, what defines me as transgender is that I am a woman- but in society it is considered that I look like a man.

**KH** *So you are talking about body?*

**LF** That's right. I'm talking about the difference between body and spirit, or body and expression, but, for my FTM brothers, that is not how they define themselves.

## Politics and Gender, continued

So I'm making it clear for me, looking like a man socially- what people think of as looking like a man- and being a woman anatomically is what defines transgender for me, personally. But it is not how I am defining transgender as a whole.

**KH** *O.K., well, what about your body, are you at some level comfortable with being a woman, but at another level, not? Were you, when you were growing up, just a really butchy little girl?*

**LF** I was a butch kid growing up, but, I think the real crisis for me was that sex and gender seemed to go together. You had to be feminine if you were a girl.

**KH** *Is there more of that in a working class background?*

**LF** It is also the 1950's. I grew up during the McCarthy witchhunts, the anticommunism of the witch hunts, the Korean War, when being a pinko commie fag jew all went together as being subversive. It was a time of forced conformity in U.S. history.

**KH** *Did you feel, growing up like you were trapped in the wrong body?*

**LF** I think I grew up feeling trapped, period. I grew up feeling that there was something wrong with me, but I didn't know what, and I couldn't answer it as clearly as saying that I grew up feeling like a boy, because I wasn't like the boys, either.

**KH** *What was different about you from the boys?*

**LF** In other words, when I was with girls, I was different. When I was with boys, I was different. They were comfortable with being boys. They were comfortable with being girls. The very fact that I was a girl and looked the way I looked meant that I didn't fit with them either. I grew up as transgendered. I grew up neither nor, in that binary system of boy or girl. There was something that didn't fit, and it tortured me. It tortured me and it hounded me wherever I went. It became that source of social shame, humiliation, hounding, and I couldn't answer the question 'why do we have to ask if you are a boy or girl?' The very fact that we have to ask means you're a real problem, you know?

**KH** *Right.*

**LF** "And how come there's nobody else like you are?" And when I looked around I couldn't see anybody

who looked like me, so I couldn't answer.

**KH** *Well, did your family give you any space for being butch, or did they fight you on that?*

**LF** No, my family grew up, first of all, dealing with the struggle for economic survival. They grew up being Jewish in a very anti-semitic environment, felt very on the defensive about being different for being Jewish, so having a kid that was different, who was differently-gendered, was just one more shame, one more problem to deal with. And, it was alot easier to take it out on me than take on the whole world.

**KH** *So they took it out on you.*

**LF** Yeah, you know, you can yell and scream at a transgendered kid, and all you're gonna do is emotionally batter them, but you can't make them not be transgendered.

**KH** *And at a certain point did you actually decide to go through the sex change procedures- hormones and surgery?*

**I knew that I could no longer survive as being neither man nor woman. I could no longer walk the street as a he-she.**

**LF** Well, what happened is that I had worked in the factories as a 'he-she.' That was the term for stone cold butches- not just saturday nite butches who would today maybe be called soft butch or whatever. I mean, those who were seriously transgendered were called 'he-she's' in the plant. And we had a place in the plants, and we had a place in the pre-movement lesbian-gay community. And, after Stonewall, after the rise of the feminist movement, the lesbian-gay movement, during the economic crisis of the '70's, the plant shut down. It was at that time that the sex change programs came to Buffalo. Now, at that time, I believed that one of the motivations for those who were conducting experimentation with the FTM community in Buffalo was that there was so much genital damage during the war in Vietnam, and there was no field of phalloplasty at that time, no way to create erectile tissue, or to get a urethra through erectile tissue without infection. So, really, a great deal of the sex change program in Buffalo was geared at experimenting with phalloplasty on the FTM community. Alot of us went through that program and I don't think given the

definitions of transsexuals, we, ah, speaking for myself, I knew that I wasn't a transsexual. I knew that I could no longer survive as being neither man nor woman. I could no longer walk the street as a 'he-she', I had no job, the factories were closing, I had no community, I had no place in the world to go. When the sex change programs gave the opportunity for breast reduction surgery, which meant I could be more comfortable in my own body, and to have hormones, which meant that I could pass successfully, it appeared for me through the looking glass as the opportunity to live without being hounded and harassed, for the first time in my life. It appeared to me that I could get a job, that I could maybe someday find a lover, but even if I couldn't I still knew I had to pass, that I could just really walk down the street, go to a movie, buy a cup of coffee, without every moment having to fight for my life. I could be something. Even if it wasn't exactly me, it was closer to me, I could still be me. I couldn't put on a dress and high heels and go out and be what they wanted me to be, it was closer to being me, it was like preserving me, it was the only way of still being me and surviving.

And so, I took the hormones, for about 4 years, and I had the breast reduction surgery, and I began to be concerned about the long-term effects of the hormones. I was taking 1 CC every two weeks.

**KH** *Depotestosterone?*

**LF** I was increasing them slightly, the way people do when they give themselves shots and they don't know what they are doing, "please, please, get the beard in."

**KH** *Were you getting it?*

**LF** Yeah. Yeah, and passing for 4 years enabled me for the first time in my life to not be so hunted on the streets, that I was suddenly able to look around the world and see it in a different way. I never thought about the fact that racism and gender oppression were connected, you know? Divide and conquer. I never got to look at the world, I was always running thru it like a gauntlet, trying to survive it. Suddenly I had the opportunity to look at the world, see my place in it, to see what changed when I passed, and what didn't.

The other thing you need to know about me is that I am a working-class kid, and that's what stayed the same. My class didn't change, I still had to work for a living, I

still got shit on by the boss's son who ran the department. I got to see what changed and what didn't. I began to understand women's oppression better, and therefore my own oppression, because I was no longer in it. When I was living as a woman I was so oppressed, specifically for being a 'he-she', that I never got to see in what ways my oppression was like other women's, because all I ever felt was how different I was from them. When I was living as a man, I started to think, oh, you know, all those things affected me, too. Questions of rape; questions of what about a pregnancy following a rape, would I have reproductive freedom, you know? The lower pay, whatever it was, I started thinking, wait a minute, those things that women are talking about in the women's movement actually had some bearing on my life, too. I had more relative safety living as a man, but I never became a man- I passed as a man, that's very different.

**KH** *Did you have any particular things you were doing during that period that stand out in your mind? It seems like an important*

*period.*

**LF** Well, it was an important period. I'll tell you what I thought was the single most important thing that happened to me. I got a job working in the art gallery in Buffalo. Now, this was the first time I got out of the factories. You could grow up in Buffalo and never see anybody but other working class families. Maybe you run into a few middle class people and you hate their guts because their attitudes are so crummy towards you. But, when I worked at the art gallery, I suddenly got to see classes other than my own. For example, they (the bankers) would hold these black tie events in the sculpture courts in the middle of the day. Suddenly, here were this handful of ruling-class families from Buffalo pulling up in their stretch limousines in the middle of the day- I had never seen a stretch limousine in Buffalo. And then I'd see the middle-class people who I had grown up with as so resentful of, fawning over the rich families, and I suddenly got to say, "oh, look at this. There's more classes than just my own, and look at the interrelationships."

*(Ed. note: This is the first installment of three parts. The next segment will appear in issue #24.)*

**those things that women are talking about in the women's movement actually had some bearing on my life, too.**

# Stone Butch Blues

By Leslie Feinberg - Firebrand Books, New York, 1993  
ISBN 1-56341-029-x paper \$10.95 301 pages

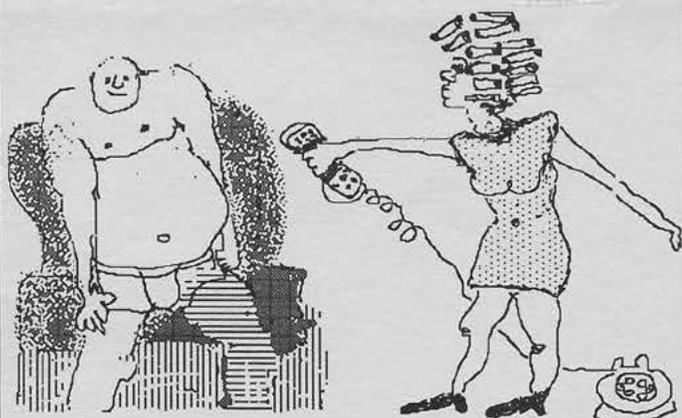
## Book Review by Butch Jamie

Reading Leslie Feinberg's autobiographical novel is like opening a wonderful time capsule: all the memories ring true and strike chords that will resonate with women who lived through the working class butch/femme world of the 50s and 60s.

In the first third of the book there's a sense of desperation to tell the story that seems larger than the story itself, that of a lonely girl struggling with her gender identity and sexual orientation as well as her physical survival. But by the time the main character, Jess, has had a few run-ins with both the guys and the butches in her working world, she's established as someone to care about, and the story overcomes its earlier limitations. As Jess comes into herself we grow along with her, following one butch path into the 70s, dragging a heart full of hope through the pain of difference, emerging strong and still willing to love.

Jess learns many of life's brutal lessons, and her path is illuminated by emotions that are very real, not contrived or polemical. What changes these blues into a meringue is Jess's unwavering sense of respect and dignity for both herself and others. Feinberg, who considers herself more of a historian than a novelist, has held up a mirror of the society she writes about; historian or novelist, she has the soul of a poet. Her story provides a glimpse into the lives of the transgendered, showing that the polarization they embody of what most people accept as inviolate, is really an opportunity for discovering truth.

It's your mother, Fred. She wants to know if she can borrow one of your old brassieres.



## From a Female-to-Male to the Girl Within

I am writing this because  
I don't think you understand  
why I left you

I left you because you could not laugh  
I left you because you could never let anyone  
see you, or penetrate you  
I left you because you only loved yourself and me

Maybe if there was some way to bring back  
that boy you once had, I could be happy  
But you and I both know, though we never spoke of it  
there is no means by which he could ever return

You told me a few times, you whispered it  
You told me how you had really loved him  
how you just loved him so much  
You never said so but you told me how you met him

And then you got this far-away look...  
the beach, the sea, the cold...  
looking in windows all the time  
his eyes were like ice, you said  
and his smile, his smile was like amazement  
I noticed the tear streaming down your cheek

That is why I am leaving you  
I could never love you

So many times I watched you  
so many times I thought  
as we walked on the cold beaches of the sea  
I am leaving you because I have finally realized  
your smile is like amazement

I am going away now  
Someday I might once again see you  
but I think, even if it were many years in the future  
You still could not laugh  
without my seeing the hope in your eyes.

— Louis Graydon Sullivan

Reprinted with permission from OF SOULS & ROLES, OF GENES & GENDER: A TREASURY OF TRANSEXUAL, TRANSGENDERIST & TRANSVESTIC VERSE, June 1992, Toronto, Canada (unpublished),  
Compiled & Edited by Rupert Raj-Gauthier.

# MALEBOX

*Dear FTM,*

Please enter my subscription to FTM newsletter. As an MTF transsexual, I would like to express my support to my bigendered brothers. Together we can make a difference.

—*Mary Anne*

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*Dear FTM,*

This letter is extremely disheartening to write! We have no complaints with FTM organization as we know it—the newsletter is sometimes the only comfort in the storm to us (and we suspect many others outside the Bay Area).

We are writing concerning the advertisements published in the newsletter, and suggest that perhaps the "organization" might want to reconsider whether items should be promoted therein without critique or evaluation by the organization itself—especially since the advertisement is free. It becomes a matter of protecting those of us who are vulnerable from others within the community (or outside of it) and are trying to make a quick buck from our predicaments.

Our experience and bad judgement created a loss of over \$800.00 to us! We not only purchased an item, but we generously donated more than the cost towards future development because we had faith and believed in the idea and the person/creator/artist. The idea, we think, is still fabulous. The person should have been screened intelligently instead of emotionally. The product has proven totally without function and not as promised in the newsletter.

We know that a "disclaimer" of sorts was published in the newsletter...that FTM takes no responsibility for persons promoting things. Well, perhaps it should! We take complete responsibility for our bad decisions and big mistakes. The money should have been donated to the "organization." Please warn your readers to accept nothing "unseen" or "unproven"...don't believe the sales pitch and excuses of why something can't be shown or proven prior to payment. Good luck in all your endeavors.

*Sincerely yours,*

*Pat and Carol Robinson*

*POB 52092, Riverside, CA 92517-3092.*

*Note from the editor:*

*This is a thorny issue. Either we publish all information we receive that seems relatively helpful, or we will have to make a policy not to publish any product information. It is impossible for us to judge what someone might find helpful, even though others might not have good luck with the same product or vendor. Therapists and other professionals pay for their ads—FTM vendors do not, as a service to our own community. Unless the public outcry demands we stop publishing information about products, we can only advocate caveat emptor, let the buyer beware. If you can't get enough information from a vendor to make you feel satisfied about the product before you pay for it, don't buy it. Most FTM*

*vendors will try hard to work with you to see that you are satisfied with their product. Often, by informing the vendor of the problem, they will fix it. There isn't enough demand or revenue in our community to make anyone rich, so FTM vendors need the goodwill of the community. We're sorry if anyone is not able to get satisfaction from a vendor, and we will continue to publish community response to products as a public service, as space permits.*

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*Dear FTM,*

This is the second time that I am trying to write to you, the first of which I understand (through the grapevine) did not reach you. I can only hope that this time I do.

The reason I am writing is to share with my brothers a product that I have been lucky enough to acquire. It is the "Herb." There is a story that goes with my acquiring it and I would like to share it with the community as I have found it very rewarding and also a learning experience. For over 7 years I have tried many products and spent many a dollar (never saving enough for the final surgery—yet, anyway). Every time a new product came out, I would send for it, kind of like a home-shopping club. I always would end up with a product that I was disappointed with and return to my friend— "the heavy-duty sponge." It looked O.K. but drove me crazy, especially while living overseas, with the thought of being found out (we all experience that true fear). At any rate, upon returning to the states, I met a young man who put me in touch with Ron Reed. I went to see him with the thought that here is another gimmick upon which I will be disappointed. I saw the Herb and Herbie and purchased both. I wore the Herbie with great ease while waiting for Ron to make my Herb, still living with the fear of being found out. Upon getting my Herb, I damaged it and felt terrible again about having bought a product which didn't work. I put it in the closet with all of my other failures. A few months later, Ron and I made a connection through another friend, and I told him of my problems with Herb. He insisted that I bring it back and he rectified the problems (even after I explained that I had destroyed it beyond repair in trying to fix it.) He then replaced it free of charge, with a much-improved Herb. Today, because of this man and his product, I not only live free of the fear of being found out, but I walk a little taller; I can stand and piss at the urinals with the rest of the guys, and I don't have that committee in my mind working over time, thinking of ways to get by. No, it's not the answer to final surgery, but it is a wonderful vehicle in which this FTM has to get there.

I publicly would like to thank Matt for putting me in touch with Ron and his product, and Ron Reed for the time, effort, and genuine concern he has given not only me, but countless others in our oftentimes painful discoveries of being the men we hope to be.

—*Tony Anderson*

## More Malebox...

Dear FTM,

I've been receiving your valuable newsletter for a few years now. The reason I read this paper, is because it's by people who share the same problems I do. Within the last year I've noticed a disturbing trend towards letters from the so-called "lesbian community" and other fringe groups, bringing with them all their "politically correct" statements and euphemisms.

These women already have an extensive network of their own, and have always been less than accepting of transsexuals of either gender, yet they want to take this opportunity to again voice their opinions in a newsletter that has nothing whatsoever to do with their experience. If I want to find out what's going on in the gay community, I'll buy a gay newspaper.

I'm not interested in reading letters from these women, and there is no place in this quarterly for their opinions. On many occasions I've found them to show a complete lack of respect for us, while at the same time demanding respect from us. This is beginning to be another platform for them to express their opinions. Remember, they aren't men, they're women, "lesbian women." Why are they interested in this particular newsletter?

There is a strong fantasy among gays and straights alike that men and women are basically the same except for a few external appendages, and that transsexualism is just an extreme form of homosexuality. If this were the case, then none of us who are transsexuals would be in the situation that we are in, now. Research is now showing that men and women are very different from each other in ways that were never realized before.

A few years ago, lesbians who dressed masculine and tried to look and act the way they thought men acted were just called dykes- now they have been promoted to "crossdresser." People like this have formed their own fringe groups and confuse any professionals who want to help genuine transsexuals.

We've all seen people like this in the groups at gender clinics, and on daytime TV, dragging their political agendas with them or taking small amounts of testosterone to play with the idea of crossgender.

-JS, Canada

**Max responds:** *As a transsexual man, I understand and sympathize with your concern that FTM retain a strong focus on issues pertinent to our transitions. As a "survivor" of the lesbian community's all too often "anti-male" attitude and stringent, confining and censorious "political correctness", I agree that those attitudes should not be given yet another forum in the pages of FTM. Lesbians do have enough of their own outlets, and do not need yet another. However, FTM is a newsletter for both transsexual men and crossdressers. Crossdressing is a legitimate form of gender expression and should be respected as such. Needless to say, some (not all) FTM crossdressers identify as lesbians, and that perspective may be brought into the articles or letters that they contribute to the newsletter. This experience is representative of our diversity, and should not be subject to intolerance or judgment. Also, many of us who*

*are now transsexual men were once part of the "lesbian community", and may continue to have connections to that world. These connections may be as significant as having a number of lesbian friends or a lesbian-identified lover, or as tenuous as owning a large number of feminist books. I, for one, am also acutely aware that if I had been born in a time before the present medical knowledge which makes our transitions possible was developed, that I would have lived as either a "passing woman" or a "stone butch dyke." Therefore, I cannot get too high and mighty about my male self, after all, "there but for the grace of technology go I". Historically speaking, then, there is a continuity of experience. I mean, the history of passing women and stone butch dykes is also a part of our history. Many of these individuals would have lived as transsexual men if that had been an option. This is a painful truth for us to remember, for it signifies the tenuousness and marginality of our lives as men. So while FTM is not and never will be a forum for lesbianism per se, we will continue to honor and discuss all aspects of the continuum of female-to-male experience.*

**Editor's note:** *Interestingly, some transsexuals start out as crossdressers (Lou Sullivan was one), and some transsexuals evolve into crossdressers after a period of cross-living. Therefore, it is of mutual benefit for crossdressers and transsexuals to communicate via the newsletter! Our group will continue to represent the spectrum of female-to-male gender expression, which includes transsexuals, crossdressers, transgenderists, and possibly some categories we don't yet know about.*

Dear FTM,

Here is a letter I sent to my family to inform them about my sex change. Maybe it will help some other FTM write to their family. This was very difficult for me, taking four months to organize and write...

...Living in Flagstaff has healed me and allowed me to come out of the hiding place I was in. I am in a place where I can be free as who I really am inside. For the last year and a half I have been on male hormones. I have been living as a male for the whole time I have been here (almost 11 mos.) and legally changed to my male name, which is Thurin M. Schminke. I finally have enough guts and courage to meet my insides with my outside. You two have always had a brother, not a sister. Yes, I am male. I am a female to male transsexual, and I am a candidate for sex reassignment surgery.

You might ask, what about marrying Mike? I had hoped that my insides would adapt to being female by marrying a man, but what really occurred was I betrayed myself and my unhappiness increased to the point of hurting myself physically. Mike knew about me and thought he could change my mind about my real gender. Didn't work. Luckily, we divorced in good spirits. Yes, I have paid a high price for denial of my true gender (male).

Mother knows. It was tough to inform her, but she took the news very well. I have changed physically quite a bit. I have grown a mustache and side burns and have short hair. I weigh

140-150 pounds. My voice has lowered quite a bit, too. I am very sincere and happy about my body changes that are developing. The best part of this process is not having to hide my sexuality anymore. I have a girlfriend named Peggy. We have been together almost 8 months. We are planning a life together. I am not crazy, and I am not dangerous— I am just your younger brother Thurin. If either of you have questions, just ask. I have nothing to hide anymore.

Love you both,

Thurin Schminke, [redacted] So. Blackbird Roost [redacted], Flagstaff, AZ 86001.

**James responds to Shadow's letter (re: Rhon Reed) in FTM issue #23:**

When I printed Rhonnie Reed's letter in the last issue I was aware that he was sticking his neck out. And I know that it is Rhonnie's most sincere wish that all people who need help on the gender front are able to find that help. I know he can speak for himself, as I'm sure he will if he feels the need, but for myself I feel compelled to say that I'm sure Rhonnie didn't intend that we should be separated forever like cattle breeds. I must also say that after giving the matter much thought I agree with Shadow that part of the journey is learning what a great gift human variety really is, including our own individual variety. If we as a group cannot set the example and demonstrate unequivocally that there is room for everyone, then I feel we have not made much progress in our quest for self-acknowledgment.

Dear FTM,

I am writing a biography of the jazz musician **Billy Tipton** (1914-1989), who began a life of successful cross-dressing in about 1934; only at the time of death was it discovered by ex-wives, adopted children and co-workers that Tipton was female. I have had extensive, sympathetic cooperation in my research, but since Tipton left no diaries and few letters, crucial information is missing about what it felt like to be Billy Tipton at certain important moments. I am hoping to be able to interview FTMs— ideally, of Tipton's generation—who would be willing to share their own histories and to engage in some speculation about what might have been Tipton's motivations and feelings at crucial turning points. I guarantee whatever confidentiality is requested, and will fully cooperate in whatever medium of interview is preferred (phone, computer network, in-person). Please write to: **Diane Middlebrook**, [redacted] **Green Street**, [redacted] **San Francisco, CA 94109**.

Dear FTM,

I've heard about the use of liposuction for the upper procedure, and I'd like to know more. I'd like to hear from others who have experienced the use of this technique. I would also like to correspond with any other FTMs as friends. All correspondence will be treated as confidential. Please write to: **Jami G.**, [redacted] **Twilley Dr., Sacramento, CA 95827**.



## TRANS-FRIENDLY FILMS IN FEST

It's time for another Lesbian & Gay Film Festival and this year the festival will feature 6 films of interest to FTM's. The festival runs from June 19th-27th at the Castro and Roxie Theaters.

• **Feed Them to The Cannibals**— This is a colorful film about a year in queer life in Sydney, Australia. It features FTM Jaspar Laybut, who starred in *F2M*, a video shown at last year's festival.

• **Vera**— A classic portrait of a young woman's struggle with gender dysphoria. This film culminates in a painfully intimate love scene.

• **East is Red**— A fantastically choreographed gender-fuck Kung Fu period piece. "Asia the Invincible", the film's heroine, is the first transsexual lesbian superhero!

• **The Plain Truth**— We're sponsoring this one, folks! This film tells the true story of an FTM, Rudi. By mixing feature and experimental film strategies, Plain Truth achieves a compelling portraiture of the transformation from female to male.

• **(Mis)leading Ladies/Self-Made Men**— What is a woman? Are male and female the only options? Writer and performance artist Kate Bornstein and gay film historian Daniel Mangin team up for an evening of clips and commentary on transgender representation throughout the century.

• **To My Woman Friends**— This film features interviews with six Russian lesbians. Of special interest to FTMs is the interview with Muchabat. In an intense dialogue, Muchabat relates her desire to be a man. Apparently, last year she visited San Francisco, sought out FTM and attended a meeting!

—Max Wolf

# FTM NETWORK

*Dear Mr. Horwitz:*

Enclosed you will find a donation for your newsletter from Recast Educational and Informational Network, Inc. We would appreciate an article in the next issue of FTM regarding the purpose of our organization.

Recast Educational and Informational Network, Inc. is a recently formed non-profit corporation designed to be of support to female-to-male transsexuals and to provide a nationwide referral network to the medical, legal and social service communities. Our goals include educating the public (including employers and law enforcement officials) and working with medical and legal professionals thereby removing some of the barriers that we may face as we go through our transition. It is also one of our goals to apply pressure to the medical community in order to provide us with updated and improved surgical techniques to meet the unique needs of FTMs. In this process, we intend to identify surgeons and health care practitioners who provide unacceptable work strictly for personal financial profit. It is important that we combine our resources and make a collective effort to accomplish these goals for the simple reason that we are more likely to be recognized as a group than as single individuals. By coming together as a group, we can also work toward changing legal aspects that apply to us. We are currently compiling a nationwide list of psychiatrists, surgeons, lawyers and others who offer superior services and are willing to work with us.

For those wishing to become members, yearly dues for active membership are \$120.00 a year or \$10.00 a month for which you will receive a newsletter, the update on legal and surgical aspects, computer BBS connections, networking with other FTMs, as well as other information. If your financial situation prevents you from becoming a full member, you may specify what area you need information in, and if you pay for the postage and copy costs (10 cents a page) we will send you the information. Your support will enable us to fulfill our common goals. For additional information write Aaron Davis, Director, at:

**Recast Educational and Informational Network, Inc., P.O. Box 224001, Dallas, TX 75222-4001; telephone: (214) 641-4842, (214) 641-1822 (BBS data- 1200-16.8 baud), or (214) 641-1978 (BBS data 1200-2400 baud).**

*Sincerely,*

*Aaron Davis, Director.*

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FTMs are welcome to attend the **Transgender support group meeting** every Tuesday night at the Tenderloin Self-Help Center, 191 Golden Gate Avenue. **For more information, contact Christine Tayleur at 415-554-0518.**

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This is a response to NV Mandac's letter, looking for resources in Hawaii. I also have some things that other readers might be interested in as well: **Hawaii Transgender Outreach, 777 Kapiolani Blvd, #314, Honolulu, HI 96813.**

FTM participation is invited in a new group: **Transgender HIV Services Coalition**, established through the Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center and dedicated to ensuring that the transgendered population receives the HIV-related services it needs. Monthly meetings. **For more information, contact Blaine at 415-441-2649.**

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I would like to correspond with other female to male cross-dressers. Please write to me at the following address: **Francis, P.O. box 8182, Berkeley, CA, 94707.**

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*Dear FTMs and Gender Community:*

Enclosed you will find information about the next meeting of the **East Coast Female-to-Male Group (ECFTMG)**. I hope all you fems (partners welcome) will join us on March 27, in the Boston area. I also want to tell you about three events of great importance to TVs and TSs.

First, go see **"Dress Codes" at the Institute of Contemporary Art, 955 Boylston Street, Boston, 617-266-5152, on view from March 10- May 30.** "Dress Codes" explores crossdressing and transsexualism in contemporary art and popular culture. It features visual art, video, film, performances and educational programs. FTMs are well represented and the exhibit fills the entire museum! It is absolutely wonderful!!! A **"Drag King Workshop"** is planned for April 10. Call the ICA for a brochure with details.

Second, the **March on Washington for Gay/Lesbian/Bi Rights** weekend includes a **Trans-gender Action National Meeting** on April 23-24 in Washington, D.C. Call 202-628-0493 for info. Also, it's widely rumored that FTMs nationwide will meet and greet each other in Washington on April 24 at the S/M Leather/Fetish Conference on the 2nd floor of the Melon Auditorium on Constitution Avenue between 12th and 14th N.W. Members of ECFTMG will be there and looking for you. Don't miss all the support and fun!!

Next, the 1993 **Northampton, Massachusetts Pride March** will be held on May 8 at 12 Noon. This year's march has been named the "1993 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride March" for the first time ever. I am the first open FTM ever to be elected to the Northampton Pride March Steering Committee. I lobbied hard for the addition of the "T" word to the March title- and won! There is a lot of support for the inclusion of Transgender organizations in the March- and for TVs/TSs as speakers and entertainers at the rally. Plan for your group to march behind your organization, sign or banner. We need to be visible this year to guarantee the inclusion of Transgender in Pride marches for years to come. And call me if you're a speaker/entertainer who wants to perform- or for more information. You can reach me at (413) 584-7616. Come out and help the Gender Community grow!

*Best Regards,*

*Bert Power, ECFTMGPO, Box 60585, Florence Station, Northampton, MA 01060.*

*Networking is Continued on Page 11*

# A Study in Cooperation

## The March Organizational Meeting

By James

The March 14th Support meeting, attended by about 20 FTMs, was spent primarily in addressing pressing administrative issues which have arisen for the FTM Group. Here are the results of that meeting:

1. The FTM Group will sponsor monthly meetings alternating between Informational and Support. The Group will no longer sponsor regular Social meetings.

2. Jamison "James" Green is the Director of and spokesman for the FTM Group. James also is responsible for managing donations to and expenses of the Group.

3. A committee of volunteers (including James) will be responsible for assisting the FTM Newsletter Editor, Kevin Horwitz, in producing the Newsletter each issue.

4. Members of the Group have volunteered to coordinate the monthly meetings so that James does not have to attend each time, freeing his schedule for writing, public speaking, and managing his personal life. James will attend whichever meetings he can, and will still be available to the community as a peer advisor, author, and lecturer.

5. A majority of members of the Group expressed concern that as the Group has grown exponentially over the past 2 years, and as new ideas form along the gender front, the Group's philosophy and policies need to be rearticulated regularly, lest we forget.

## FTM Group Charter

The FTM Group exists to provide information and networking for FTM crossdressers and transsexuals, and for female-bodied individuals who are exploring gender identity issues.

Information means sharing our experience and our knowledge of the process of relating to ourselves and the world through gender, the process of obtaining medical care, the process of finding a therapist, the process of negotiating life in gender transition.

Networking means letting people know they are not alone, that they can contact others who have had or are having some measure of a common experience.

Members of this group do not have to become best

friends, or share politics, or share sexual orientation. They only have to have a need for information or connection, and respect for others in the Group, and respect for the confidentiality of its members.

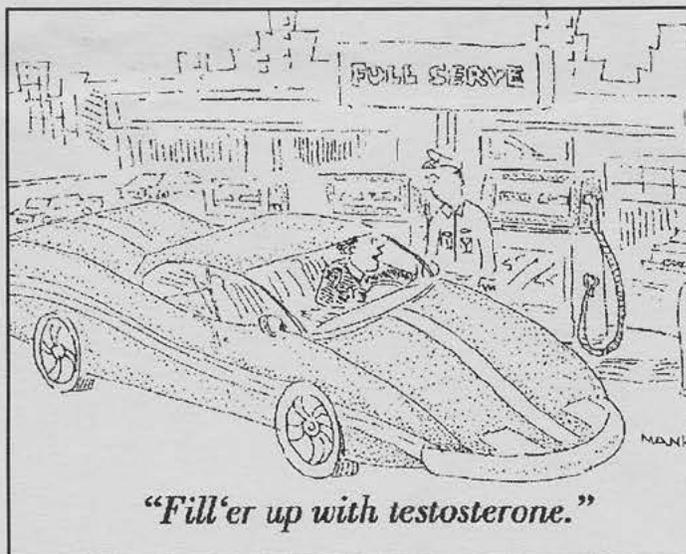
The FTM Group does not condone discrimination for the actions or opinions of its members, nor is any individual member responsible for the actions or opinions of any other member. Inconsiderate, ridiculing, or violent behavior will not be tolerated at Group meetings.

Neither the Group nor any of its members is engaged in the practice of medicine or psychotherapy.

The lives and identities of the members of this group are confidential. Personal information shared at a Group meeting is not to be discussed outside the meeting. Membership in this Group and identity as an FTM is a private matter, and no member should reveal the status of any other member without that member's express permission.

Topics of discussion at FTM Group meetings should be limited to gender and FTM issues. Members should not make assumptions about the sexual orientation, history, or interests of other members, and should use discretion in raising potentially controversial issues and topics.

I want to remind Group members that they must take responsibility for getting their own needs met: Ask questions, state what you want. Everyone stands to gain from sharing our stories and our quests. Make the Group your own, but don't expect it to be your therapy or your only family. We are all on this journey together, we all need information or support now and then, but we should all be cultivating full lives that incorporate all our varied interests. Don't try to get everything from only one source. Life is much more complicated than that, and if it isn't complicated it isn't rich, right?



# Labor Pains

## Highlights of The March Meeting

By Max Samuel Wolf

The meeting on March 14 was a crucial one. Emotions seemed close to the surface running the gamut from apprehension and tension, wistful nostalgia about Lou, and ambitious visions for the future of FTM. Called as an "organizational" meeting instead of the usual "support meeting", we all gathered to discuss the structure of the group, hash out feelings about the variety of sexual orientations in FTM, air feedback about the new and revamped newsletter and in general air grievances, make suggestions, and brainstorm. A great deal seemed to be riding on the outcome.

James opened the meeting by reading a couple of letters submitted by members. In one, James was exhorted to remain on with the newsletter as an "Editor-In-Chief," a kind of Oz behind the curtains. It was also suggested that the "socials" should be eliminated. There were some criticisms of the redesigned newsletter. Some feared that with the demise of James as Editor, that the publication had somehow lost its "editorial voice." Punctuation and spelling errors were also cited. Concern was expressed that some aspects of the new design were "agitating" and that certain news item headlines appeared to be lifted from the pages of the National Enquirer!

Titian read his own letter, waxing eloquent on a wide range of topics. He discussed the presence of crossdressers in the group, and expressed a hope that FTM would not exclude them. "Where are they?" he asked, glancing around the room. "This was no time to exclude people no matter where they were on the gender continuum," he implored. Titian invoked the memory of Lou, our founder, and praised the leadership capabilities of James—his prodigious talents as a writer and a speaker. Urgently, he called for his continued participation in FTM, and assured James that these efforts need not interfere with his other activities. Again and again, Titian stressed the need for all of us to be supportive of each other, to create a nurturing environment in the FTM group. He said that all too often we were hard on ourselves and each other and that envy maligned the group dynamic, stifling our self-expression and bringing up feelings of abandonment and isolation. Titian also expressed a dream that someday FTM would have a permanent home, a stable location for our meetings and activities.

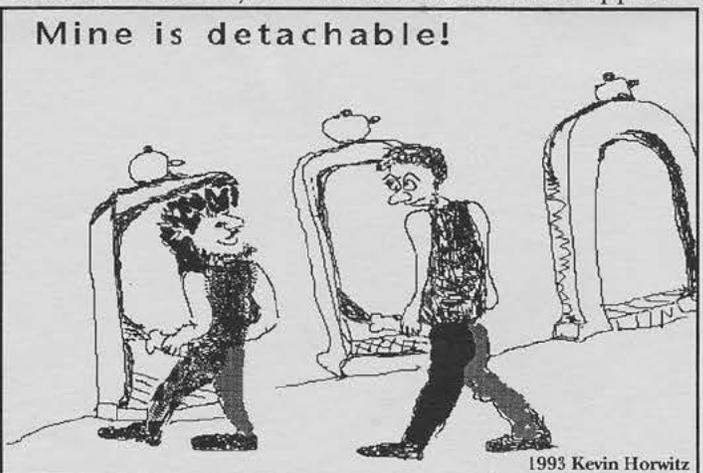
A group discussion ensued, and the room lit up with an expressive tumult of ideas and emotion. Some members expressed a delight in the fresh direction of the

newsletter's design and tone. Sky interjected that change of any kind was always a source of controversy. Chris offered his sympathies to the Editor, and stated that there should be some kind of structure to protect him from a barrage of complaints or accusations. He suggested that a group of volunteers share in leadership responsibilities and that leadership at meetings should rotate, avoiding individual burn-out and targeting. Most people opted for this informal group structure as well as a well-defined statement of group purpose and cohesiveness.

Another person shared feelings of estrangement because of their sexual orientation. It was generally agreed that all sexual orientations are welcome at FTM and that everyone should try to support and communicate with one another, regardless of differences. The crossdresser issue was finally put to rest with a general agreement that both transsexuals and crossdressers are welcome at FTM meetings.

Kevin and I spoke at intervals about our involvement with the newsletter, expressing a willingness to work with a task force to create an exciting, informative publication. I mentioned the fact that Kevin was well acquainted with the history and purpose of FTM, as he had originally founded the newsletter with Lou Sullivan, in '87. We acknowledged that the first issue had been a tad rough around the edges with us trying to learn a new software program, *Quark XPress*, and putting the whole thing together for the first time. I mentioned that the next issue, the one you are reading now, would be laid out by a professional graphic designer, and one of our own, Stafford. Things have nowhere to go but up!

In the previous article, James outlined in detail the results of this organizational meeting. Overall, it was positive and will hopefully give us new impetus to move forward as an important group for FTMs. Finally, Kevin and I would like to thank you for all of your attentive criticisms as well as your continued interest and support.



# meat market

## Networking, Continued...

The next meeting of ECFTMG is coming up soon...Saturday, March 27, 1993, 4:00 PM, 86 Riverside Street, Watertown, MA. Please call **Bet Power** (██████████) or **Lonnie** (██████████) for directions to the meeting, or to volunteer to help with their newsletter "Gender In Formation."

Dear FTM staff,

The Los Angeles Gender Center is a collaboration of mental health professionals who provide treatment for individuals and their families dealing with gender-related issues. We offer services to people who have gender identity and preference concerns. We are independent practitioners who consult with each other to provide comprehensive, quality care. Treatment is provided in a safe and supportive atmosphere. Individual, family, and group therapy is available along with testing and psychiatric evaluations and consultations, when appropriate.

For people dealing with gender dysphoria (transsexualism), we abide by the Harry Benjamin Guidelines for treatment. For individuals interested in sex reassignment surgery, we offer testing, assessment, treatment, and documentation (when indicated). We are not a fast-track program to surgery, so people who are interested only in obtaining documentation for surgery should deeply consider whether or not our services would meet their needs. We have no philosophic bias for or against sex reassignment, however, we do believe anyone considering this option should make a careful and informed decision in a therapeutic context. We believe that sex reassignment is a serious decision and that someone who undertakes it should have worked through emotional problems and conflicts which could minimize rather than maximize the benefits of this procedure. For more information, contact: Marie Keller, M.F.C.T., Maureen Morrissey, M.A., or Davis Fleming, M.A. c/o Los Angeles Gender Center, 3331 Ocean Park Blvd., Suite 100, Santa Monica, CA 90405- or contact them by phone at (310)392-1920.

The family of our founder, Lou Sullivan, has generously donated 13 copies of Lou's book; **From Female to Male, The Life of Jack Bee Garland**. It is hoped that the sale of these books will generate funds for the newsletter. If you haven't read any transgender history, this is a great introduction. One reviewer, Allan Berube, wrote: "Louis Sullivan rescues from obscurity the fascinating story of a brave and compassionate soul. Jack Garland finally gets the recognition he deserves as a pioneer explorer who ventured across gender boundaries to invent his own life. This well-researched work is an important contribution to the history of gender and sexuality in America."

Only 13 copies are available through FTM. To order, send \$12.00 check or money order (includes postage) to FTM, 5337 College Avenue, #142, Oakland, CA 94618. Please specify that you are ordering the book about Jack Bee Garland. (Lou's handbook: **Information for the Female to Male TS or CD is also available for \$10.00**).

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- Transgenderism
- Transsexualism
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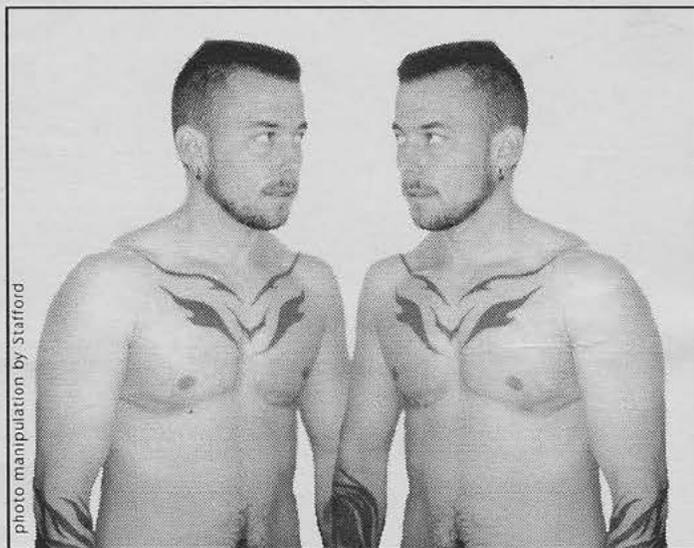
# Announcements

\*\*\* FTM will no longer be meeting at the MCC Church!! Meetings will be held monthly, on the second Sunday of each month, at the following address: **933 Harrison, San Francisco, CA (between 6th and 7th St.)**. Groups will meet from 2-5, and will alternate between support and informational. The support groups are only open to FTMs, but the informational meetings are for everybody.

\*\*\* "Female Misbehavior", a series of documentary films by Monica Treut, which includes a film about our own **Max Valerio (Max Samuel Wolf)**, will play at the **Roxie Theater in San Francisco, Friday, May 14th through Wednesday, May 19th**. It will be shown in Berkeley, at the **U.C. Theater, May 21 and 22**. Max's film is becoming an international hit, being shown both in the U.S. and abroad. It has been reported that the film was the turning point for at least one young lad-to-be in London.

\*\*\*Thanks to everybody who sent in letters, articles, and cartoons. If it wasn't in this issue, it might be in the next!!! The deadline for the next issue is June 25th.

\*\*\*Look for a very informative article by James on the **IFGE conference** in the next issue of FTM.



Loren shows off his chest during the March organizational meeting. FTM encourages you to send in photos, artwork and cartoons for possible publication in future issues. Send to FTM Design, 5337 College Avenue #142, Oakland, CA 94618. Be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want your artwork or photos returned and please specify photo credits.

## FTM Meeting Schedule 1993

Support .....May 9th  
 Informational.....June 13th  
 Support .....July 11th  
 Informational.....August 8th  
 Support .....September 12th  
 Informational.....October 10th  
 Support .....November 14th  
 Informational.....December 12th

## FTM NEWSLETTER

The world's largest circulated newsletter for the Female-to-Male crossdresser and transsexual. Published quarterly since 1987. Send Correspondence, address corrections and contributions to: FTM, 5337 College Avenue #142, Oakland, CA 94618

Editor: Kevin Horwitz

Assistant Editor: Maximilian Samuel Wolf (Max Valerio)

Design: Stafford (Service Station Design)



## "MALE'IN" IT TO YA, BOY!

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