

# AEGIS NEWS

QUARTERLY 11 / 95 #5 ISSN 1077-162X

## *FTM Conference Huge Success!*

Mayor Frank Jordan proclaimed August 18-20, 1995 "FTM Conference Weekend in San Francisco" as over 360 female-to-male (FTM) transgendered people, transexual men, their families and friends, medical practitioners, and psychologists convened there for the first International all-FTM gender conference ever held in North America. The overwhelmingly successful conference drew participants from all over the U.S., Canada, Japan, Australia, and Germany. The conference theme, "A vision of Community," was chosen to help focus participants' awareness that they are not alone in dealing with their gender issues and that unity is necessary to make improvements in the lives of FTMs.

The conference was hosted by FTM International. Sponsors were FTM International, AEGIS, the International Foundation for Gender Education, and San Francisco's Educational TransVestite Channel. There were numerous individual contributions from members of the above organizations, Transexual Menace NYC, FTM International, and supportive friends.

FTM International's press release stated "The conference is an important historical milestone in the development of the transgender movement. It signals the rising awareness that people who identify

as FTM will not be confined to prescribed behavior roles outlined in theoretical papers published by prejudiced researchers and based upon extremely limited studies. FTMs and their issues are usually overlooked at gender conferences, where, as in the larger society, the commonly-held view of transgendered people is that they are predominantly male-to-female (MTF), or transexual women. According to members of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association (HBIGDA), a professional organization for medical and psychological caregivers who specialize in gender and sex transitions, most clinics where sex reassignment is performed in North America today have acknowledged that the applicants for the procedure are 50% male-identified."

Featured speakers included James Green, Director of FTM International; Robert Bray of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force; author and activist Leslie Feinberg; art photographer Loren Cameron; San Francisco Police Sgt. Stephan Thorne; organizer Sky Renfro, educators Dr. Steve Dain, Jason Cromwell, Ph.D.(c), Susan Stryker, Ph.D., and Jude Patton, MFCT; surgeons Donald R. Laub, M.D. and Michael Brownstein, M.D.; and San Francisco Human Rights Commission staff member Larry Brinkin.

### *AEGIS Plays Pivotal Role in FTM Conference*

AEGIS noticed long ago that the needs of female-to-males are often ignored or overlooked in a transgender community that is geared primarily to meet the needs of male-to-females. We grew increasingly convinced that for FTMs to take their rightful place in the community, they needed their own space in which to come together and grow strong.

AEGIS has a very limited budget, but we earmarked \$500 for a special fund, and in mid-1994, we issued a press release, stating that we would award the money to any group which would match the amount for purposes of putting on a national conference for FTMs. FTM International took the challenge, and in early 1995, we presented the funds to James Green, FTM's Director.

The conference succeeded beyond everyone's wildest expectations. Conference promoters had expected about 125 attendees. We had promised to donate a free copy of the special FTM copy of *Chrysalis* for each attendee, expecting that number. We really had to scramble to assemble the extra two hundred.

We ended up sending 320 copies. Jeremiah and Karen Gold-Hopton, members of Atlanta Gender Explorations support group, who attended the conference, kindly volunteered to carry the copies as part of their luggage. Little did they realize how voluminous it would be—there were three big heavy boxes to carry!

## Why Membership?

### What are the advantages of your membership for AEGIS?

- **We get a stronger voice.**  
Because we have a membership base, our voices are raised in unison with yours and will be more easily heard when we protest against discrimination, when we fight against unjust laws, and when we claim our rights.
- **We get feedback from you.**  
Via voting and membership meetings, we learn more about your concerns and interests, both in regard to the operation of AEGIS and in regard to your personal needs.
- **We can work together toward effective solutions.**  
Many heads are better than one. You may have the perfect solution to a problem which has been plaguing us, and if you do, we want to hear it.
- **We get your help.**  
With membership comes pride. With pride, comes willingness to work within the framework of an organization to help others, and to financially support the organization.
- **We get "consumers" and "caregivers" talking to one another.**  
Excuse the medical model terms, but we needed them to make our point that AEGIS is the perfect forum for helping professionals and transgendered persons to meet on equal footing and discuss complicated issues regarding access to medical treatments.

### What do you get from Membership?

- **You get our publications.**  
You get two copies of our outstanding journal, *Chrysalis*, and 4 copies of our newsletter, *AEGIS News*. You also get medical advisories and special bulletins throughout the year.
- **You get an ID card.**  
In mid-year, AEGIS will issue identification cards to all members. The card will carry a strong statement about your rights, and may come in handy sometimes when you need the authority of a membership organization behind you.
- **You get discounts on our products.**  
We sell lots of interesting things. You'll find out about our new products before anyone else, and you'll get them for less than others will pay. You'll also get a discount on membership in the Transgender Historical Society.
- **You get a vote.**  
You have a say-so in the way AEGIS is run.
- **You get the satisfaction of helping others.**  
We mail dozens of information packets each week. Those packets change lives, and money from your subscription will be paying the duplication costs and mailing fees.
- **You get to change the world.**  
Ideas about transgendered and transsexual people are changing. AEGIS has played a considerable part in making that change happen. And things are going to change even more. We're going to make the world a better place. Together.

### A note to helping professionals:

AEGIS has a professional division which is concerned with issues of treatment and with education of caregivers. Our professional division will take a leading role in redefining the relationship between transgendered persons and the professional community (and consider, these are not mutually exclusive categories; there are hundreds of transsexual and transgendered physicians, psychologists, researchers, ministers, electrologists, counselors, therapists, and social workers). Please join so we can work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect to solve our considerable problems.

## AEGIS Membership

### Categories & Benefits

#### General (\$36/year) includes

Subscription to *Chrysalis* (2 issues)  
Subscription to *AEGIS News* (4 issues)  
Membership/Identity Card  
Free access to Library & Archive  
10% discount on all merchandise

**Professional (\$60/year)**  
includes benefits above plus  
*Transgender Treatment Bulletin* and  
*Sbbb! The Bulletin of the National  
Transgender Library & Archive*  
15% discount on all merchandise

**Supporting (\$100/year)**  
includes benefits above plus  
20% discount on all merchandise  
\$40 tax deduction

**Sponsoring (\$250/year)**  
includes benefits above plus  
Listing in *AEGIS News*  
1st class mailing of materials  
25% discount on all merchandise  
\$190 tax deduction

**Benefactor (\$500/year)**  
include benefits above plus  
Note of appreciation in *Chrysalis*  
\$440 tax deduction  
30% discount on all merchandise

**Student (\$24/year)**  
includes General Membership benefits  
(Subject to verification)

**Minor (\$24/year)**  
includes General Membership benefits  
Must be under 18  
(Subject to verification)

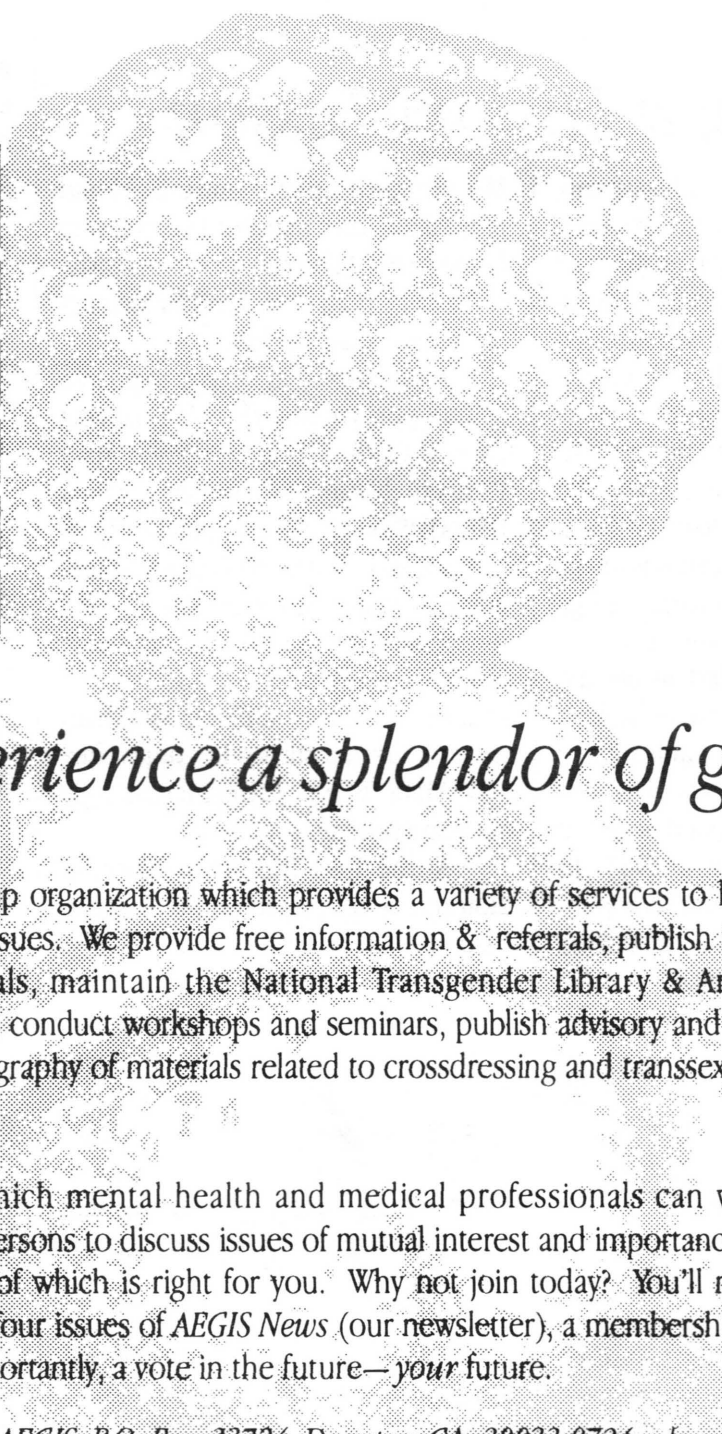
**Incarcerated & Transgendered?**  
You can receive *AEGIS News* free

Memberships are for the calendar year

**Please add \$10 if you are  
outside the U.S. & Canada**

Join us...

**AEGIS**  
**American**  
**Educational**  
**Gender**  
**Information**  
**Service**



... and experience a splendor of gender!

AEGIS is a 501(c)(3) membership organization which provides a variety of services to helping professionals and to individuals with gender issues. We provide free information & referrals, publish the journal *Chrysalis* and a variety of other materials, maintain the National Transgender Library & Archive, assist in the establishment of support groups, conduct workshops and seminars, publish advisory and position statements, and maintain an extensive bibliography of materials related to crossdressing and transsexualism (published in 1994 by Garland Press).

AEGIS provides a forum in which mental health and medical professionals can work together with transgendered and transsexual persons to discuss issues of mutual interest and importance. We have a variety of membership categories, one of which is right for you. Why not join today? You'll receive two issues of *Chrysalis* (our great magazine), four issues of *AEGIS News* (our newsletter), a membership card, discounts on all of our products, and most importantly, a vote in the future— *your* future.

Please send the form below to AEGIS, P.O. Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724 [or call 770-939-2128]

Yes! I'm ready to join AEGIS & experience a Splendor of Gender!  
I'm sending a check for a one-year membership which will include two issues of *Chrysalis* and other great stuff!

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The American Educational Gender  
Information Service, Inc.  
A 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Office ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Home ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
(We will send you a longer membership data form)

General Membership (\$36/year)\*  
 Professional Membership (\$60/year)\*  
 Supporting Membership (\$100/year)  
 Sponsoring Membership (\$250/year)  
 Benefactor (\$500/year)  
 Student/Minor (requires documentation) (\$24/yr)  
\*Please add \$10 outside North America!

Please charge my: \_\_\_\_\_ Mastercard \_\_\_\_\_ Visa No. \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_



# Abem, a History Lesson

As the result of the publicity surrounding Christine Jorgensen's sex reassignment in 1952, increasing numbers of men and women came forward, asking for sex reassignment. For more than a decade, there was very little support—only individual caregivers like Dr. Harry Benjamin in New York city and Dr. Georges Burou in Casablanca. It was due to the effort of one man—Reed Erickson, a female-to-male transsexual who happened to be wealthy—that things changed. He founded the Erickson Educational Foundation, which funded the first international conference on gender dysphoria, and provided grant money which led to the establishment of the first gender program in the United States, at Johns Hopkins University, in 1967. In addition, the Erickson Foundation published a newsletter, a number of booklets about transsexualism, and a guidebook for transsexual people. Zelda Supplee, the Foundation's director, answered phone calls and replied to letters from hundreds of often frantic transsexual people, and provided them with the referrals and information they needed to make important decisions about their lives.

Eventually, Reed Erickson's interest turned to other areas (he was a major contributor to the One Institute of Homophile Studies), and he and Supplee closed down the Foundation's office and (unfortunately) destroyed all the records.

The important responsibility of providing information to transsexual people was given to a hand-picked successor, Dr. Paul Walker, a psychologist, whose Janus Information Facility at the University of Texas at Galveston functioned through the mid-1970's, carrying on the Erickson Foundation's work.

In the late '70's, Walker came out as a gay man and moved to San Francisco. He passed on the responsibility to Sister

Mary Elizabeth (then Joanna Clark) and Jude Patton, both transsexual people, who formed J2CP Information Services. The name came from Clark's and Patton's initials—two J's, a C., and a P.

Patton moved to Oregon to go into private practice as a therapist, leaving J2CP to Clark. Clark, now Sister Mary Elizabeth, became increasingly active in HIV/AIDS work after making a trip to Arkansas to view a herd of cattle and seeing how rural people were able to communicate with others via computer modem. She founded the AEGIS (no relation to us; it's a different acronym) network, creating the world's largest free HIV/AIDS BBS. J2CP increasingly became a sideline.

At the 1991 IFGE convention in Houston, Sister passed on the Erickson responsibility to AEGIS, which by that time had been in operation for the better part of a year as the Atlanta Educational Gender Information Service. She had hand-picked us, based on our work.

We celebrated our first anniversary in September, 1991, at the first Southern Comfort convention, by announcing that our focus would be national and our new name would be the American Educational Gender Information Service. AEGIS has since carried on a 30-year history of providing quality information about transsexualism.

We did not accept this responsibility without a great deal of self-examination. Those who contacted the Erickson Foundation, Janus, J2CP, and who would now be calling AEGIS were often in conflict, often exasperated, at a point in their lives in which timely and accurate information would make a major impact on them. A misplaced letter, a request mishandled, a phone call not answered might make a life-or-death difference. Acceptance of Sister's offer would be a

responsibility and a burden, one which could not be simply dropped, but which could only be passed on, like a baton in a relay race.

We have done this important work to the best of our ability, but with a difference: first, we believe it is too important to rest on the shoulders of any single individual, but should be a group responsibility, funded by and provided by transgender and transsexual people; our director, Dallas Denny, has worked diligently to build AEGIS into an organization which will outlast her. Second, we realized that the category of transsexualism is to a large degree artificial, and has needlessly differentiated what was until 1952 a single people. Consequently, we have expanded the scope of our focus and services to include transgender as well as transsexual issues. After all, if one is in need of a referral for a physician, counselor, or support group, or if one has been discriminated against, it makes little difference whether one's final goal is genital surgery, or what one's self-definition may be.

AEGIS, then, is not a transsexual organization, but a *transgender* organization. While our focus is on things that are of *extreme* importance to transsexual people—medical and psychological issues, self-empowerment, education about transgenderism and transsexualism, fighting discrimination in social, political, and vocational arenas, pushing to reform the professional literature to more accurately reflect our characteristics—no one need claim any particular label to benefit from this focus, or from our work. We welcome as members anyone who will support us in and who may benefit from our work: crossdresser, transgenderist, MTF or FTM transsexual person, helping professional, or John Q. Public—we welcome your participation and support and your dollars. It's important work. We feel honored to be the ones chosen to uphold such a long and proud tradition. We hope you will become part of this tradition, too.



*Keynote Address for the FTM  
Conference, 18 August, 1995  
Delivered by James Green*

Look around. Tonight you see over 300 of us gathered for the first time. Tomorrow you'll see even more of us. Over 350 people are attending this conference. 90% of you are FTM-identified. An event of this kind has never taken place before, anywhere in the world. I don't know about you, but I find this exhilarating and frightening at the same time. Of course, my fear is about disappointing people, letting you down somehow. But I know there are some of you tonight who have other kinds of fear and/or excitement. Some of you may be seeing other female-to-male transsexuals for the first time in your life. For some of you, the reality of transition is hitting home. Or you may be trying to take the measure of everyone around you and worrying that you don't fit in somehow. Some of you may be finally grasping the fact that you are not alone, and the sheer power of that one enormous truth may be enough to carry your spirit for the rest of your life.

Don't worry. It will all be over on Sunday. This fantasy or nightmare will end. And you'll be left with yourself again, left to try to make sense out of all the feelings, to assimilate all the information, left with decisions to make about your life that may change everything in it. These are awesome prospects. I know each and every one of you is up to the challenge. Because it takes remarkably strong individuals to undertake an examination of their gender. Your courage is phenomenal and rare. That so many courageous people are gathered here tonight is worthy of acknowledgment. **HERE WE ARE, TOGETHER!!**

The theme of this conference is *A Vision of Community*. This is an important concept, one that deserves examination. We hear a lot these days

about the Gender community or the FTM community. But unlike the Gay or Lesbian communities, there really is no community of transgendered or transsexual people. There are no neighborhoods where you'll find restaurants and shops and bookstores that are staffed by and/or which cater to transpeople. Granted, there seem to be little beehives of trans-ness here in San Francisco, in the Boston area, in Atlanta, in Seattle, in New York, London, Paris, and Amsterdam; and of course there are pro-active individuals

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in many other cities who are publishing newsletters, running support groups, talking to others on the phone or the internet. But the majority of the activism and visibility is carried by male-to-female transgendered and transsexual people. FTMs as a group don't seem to be as active or as visible. We are scattered around the world, well-assimilated in big cities and small towns, or ensconced in gay and lesbian communities, but we have no real community of our own.

What we DO have is a network of communication. Through the *FTM Newsletter*, over the telephone, and using e-mail and snail mail, we have been able to meet each other, get to know each other, help each other through hard times, share the most unique experiences of our lives.

I'm going to digress a bit here to talk about the origin of the *FTM Newsletter* and FTM International. Some of you may be familiar with this history, but I hope that hearing it again will be a source of inspiration. FTM began because Louis Graydon Sullivan was frustrated with how difficult it was for him to find out information about female-to-male transsexualism. He knew it was not psychologically or emotionally or physically economical for each and every one of us to be forced to reinvent the wheel, to re-unearth the lore, to rediscover the facts that we needed to enable us to proceed on our life courses. He was also frustrated that according to the literature, he didn't even exist because he was sexually attracted to men, and according to the literature at the time, female-bodied transsexuals were always sexually attracted to women, the theory being that they were really lesbians who couldn't handle being different from the norm.

There was no differentiation between sexual orientation and gender identity at that time, which was about 10 years ago. So Lou compiled his research and put together a little pamphlet called *Information for the Female-To-Male Cross Dresser and Transsexual*. He had a few hundred copies printed up, and started advertising them in gender world publications like *The Transsexual Voice* out of Georgia, and IFGE's *TV/TS Tapestry*. He also worked as a peer counselor with Paul Walker at the Janus Information Facility. Every time he contacted an FTM, regardless of their sexual orientation, he would invite them to engage in correspondence and to exchange information. By the time he had gathered four or five local guys who agreed to try to meet every three months, he had already amassed a tidy little mailing list. He started holding regular support group meetings in pri-

vate homes in San Francisco in 1986, and shortly afterward, in 1987, the *FTM Newsletter* was born, a single 8-1/2 x 11 sheet of paper that recapped one quarterly meeting and announced the next, plus included little tidbits about historical FTMs or techniques to help female-bodied people to pass as men. Lou's friend Kevin Horwitz helped him create the newsletter, and has been a frequent contributor over the years.

This isn't the only way to build a community, but it is one way that works. Lou used to send out a local mailing a few weeks prior to each quarterly meeting, announcing what was on the agenda and promising that the next issue of the newsletter would be available. Then he would hand-address the envelopes and mail copies of the newsletter to everyone on his list who lived outside the area and to the local guys who hadn't shown up at the meeting. He really took genuine interest in the people who reached out to him, and it mattered deeply to him that those people were listened to and helped as much as possible. In this modest way, he started building up a network of resources throughout the world.

At the same time, Lou was aggressively taking on the psychological and medical establishment. He corresponded and arranged meetings with some of the leading researchers and practitioners in the country, and slowly began to chip away at the prevailing paradigm of gender and sexual orientation. I would go so far as to say that he was single-handedly responsible for the professional community's current acknowledgment that there is a difference between sexual orientation and gender identity, and I predict that this view of gender and sex will ultimately have a profound effect on mainstream social thought in the

twenty-first century. The ramifications of this new paradigm are already evident in the burgeoning transgender political movement, in the alliances between trans-people and lesbian, gay and bisexual activists, in the explorations of gender role and sexual behavior that are occurring in academic circles, therapeutic circles, and social circles.

Unfortunately, Lou contracted HIV, which later developed into AIDS. He was ill for several years, and he devoted the last three years of his life to his work with transsexual men and gender-questioning women. He was in a unique position. He didn't have to worry about losing his job—that had already happened. He didn't have to worry about coming out of any closet—he had made his peace with his family and friends, and he had nothing to lose: he was dying, and he wanted to make a contribution of his life so that others would not have so difficult a time. Every one of us in this room tonight, every one of us who walks a path into genderland, owes a debt of gratitude to Lou Sullivan. He was a

know Lou all that well. We had talked on the phone a few times, and I had been to a few of the quarterly meetings. He knew I was a writer, and that I worked at that time as the publications manager for a mid-sized high-technology development and manufacturing company. At his request, I had submitted a couple of pieces for publication in the newsletter, and at his request, I had chaired one meeting while he was hospitalized. My friend Denis lived near him and spent many hours each week helping him take care of his basic needs, and he used to keep me apprised of Lou's condition. I hardly ever spoke to him. So I was fairly surprised when Denis called to tell me Lou was asking for me and wanted me to come over so we could talk.

Lou was sitting up in bed when I arrived. Denis had just finished bathing him and rubbing some kind of ointment on the sores on his back. Lou was pale and bone skinny; he was extremely weak, and could not get himself into or out of bed, but he was in good spirits, and his mind was very

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man who asked only to be recognized for who he was and treated with respect, and he freely gave of himself to help others, knowing that his only reward would be his own knowledge that he had helped someone.

To be perfectly honest, I didn't

sharp. He didn't seem to be experiencing the dementia that affects many AIDS sufferers. He came directly to the point, telling me he was very concerned about the newsletter and the group, and he asked if I would be willing to make sure that the newsletter

continued, at least for a while. He also asked Denis and me to coordinate the group together and make sure it didn't die out with him. I was surprised and honored by his request; it didn't even occur to me to refuse. Denis also agreed, and Lou seemed very happy.

A week later, on March 2, 1991, I was attending the OUT-Write conference here in San Francisco, the conference for gay and lesbian writers. I was wandering around, trying to figure how I—once an innocent lesbian, now a dreaded white, heterosexual man—could continue to fit into the world of queer politics and expression, and I wandered into a session where two of the speakers were to be Lou Sullivan and Kate Bornstein. People were still getting settled in, and Lou wasn't there. I watched as someone came up to Kate and whispered something to her, and Kate's face went white and tense with shock. She stared for a moment, then she motioned for me to come forward. Lou passed away this morning, she told me. I said, Oh, my God, and retreated to my seat, terrified, concerned much more for myself than for Lou, I admit. My partner, Marcy, cautioned me to remember that leadership is not self-aggrandizing or self-serving. She reminded me that if I was concerned about people loving me, a leadership role was not the way to universal appreciation. So be it. I know I have not always endeared myself to each and every one of you, while Saint Lou rests peacefully on his laurels, incapable of making any mistakes. But I have tried to hold to two guiding principles with respect to the group: inclusion and diversity; and I have two guiding practices that I try to adhere to, and those are patience and acceptance. These are my ideals, and, like anyone else, I struggle to achieve them, to find a balance between those ideals and the very real and often con-

flicting demands of daily life. I am also very clear that leaders serve at the pleasure of their constituencies, and I thank all of you for the confidence you have placed in me.

Which brings me back (in one of my frequent logical leaps) to the formation of community. Something that I found out really fast, in fact, I found it out at the first FTM group meeting that took place after Lou died, is that one of the bonds between us as transgendered or transsexual individuals is fear. And that fear does a lot of the driving for many of us. That first meeting without Lou in April, 1991, there were 60 people present, three times the typical attendance. Right away, people wanted to increase the frequency of the meetings from quarterly to monthly. I thought that was fine as long as I didn't have to coordinate everything by myself. So people like Sky and Mike and Shadow came forward to help out as Denis pulled back for personal reasons. Fear of change (how ironic in this population) drove some people away. Fear of isolation propelled more people into participation. Collapsing gender boundaries encouraging more exploration brought more people out of closets all over the world, and the *FTM Newsletter* mailing list grew from roughly 250 to nearly 750, another three-fold increase. Stafford and Jordy Jones came aboard to help with the newsletter. Stephan and Chris have been helping to coordinate the monthly meetings. Demands for public speaking and television appearances increased. FTMs as a class were starting to get some notice, some attention. And that was frightening, too. What do we do with it? For so long, the goal of transition has been to disappear, and suddenly it's okay, maybe even preferable for the avant garde, to declare one's self transgressive and gender categories mutable. It

is my personal belief that we who do transition completely from female to male, and who feel perfectly comfortable and have no difficulty functioning socially as men, no matter how well we pass as men or how thoroughly male we know ourselves to be, we must nevertheless acknowledge that we have NOT led typical male lives, and we know things that typical males do not know. I personally believe that if we do not acknowledge this we are deceiving ourselves, and cheating the world of our unique perspectives. This is not to say that I think each of us must come out to our families or friends or employers or whatever. Each person's history is no one's business but his or her own, and no one should be obligated to reveal their personal business. Each of us must handle this in her or his own way. As a community, we are constrained by the ethics of confidentiality, by the economics of transition, by the fear of loss and change that often accompanies journeys like ours. It is also important to recognize that in many ways we are a transitional community. Many of you are here because you are just starting out and you are gathering information; many of you are here because you have been through the mill and you want to share yourself and your knowledge with others, just as Lou Sullivan did. Five years from now, will you early experimenters need any more questions answered? Will you long-time pioneers have grown weary of answering the same questions over and over? Will you activists have grown jaded from the spotlight or weary of the fight? Will you networkers be tired of talking to each other, will you all have new hobbies as you become bored with gender issues?

The transsexual transition period is characterized by profound physical change and tremendous social stress.



And for transgendered people who choose not to undergo a physical transition, though you are spared the economic pressure and risks of physical change, life is no less stressful socially. There is no hierarchy implied here; I'm simply talking the realities of daily life in genderland. It is very easy to become self-absorbed and preoccupied with one's gender; unfortunately this can quickly become tedious for those whose all-consuming passions lie in other realms.

Communities are built on continuity, on traditions, on recurring events, on legends re-enacted in ritual ways, on shared values, on agreement. Who is driving? Are we there yet? Here in San Francisco, a handful of transpeople, supported in the clinch by about sixty people who were willing to testify at public hearings and several local psychotherapists, worked for about 18 months to educate public officials as to the nature of transgender and transsexual experience and the extent of discrimination, especially institutionalized discrimination against us. We were resoundingly successful because our efforts led to the passage of protective legislation so that all of you visiting this weekend, and all of you who live or work in this City and county, have recourse through the San Francisco Human Rights Commission should you suffer adverse treatment because of your transgender condition, or in the event someone identifies you as transsexual. This is a great achievement, but let me tell you something about what it's like to work on projects like this as a transsexual man. First of all, at every meeting, everyone asks you where are the other guys? Well, they're busy, they can't get away from their jobs, they don't care about civil rights, they're afraid of coming out. I don't know what the answers are, and I'm not asking for a response. I'm ask-

ing for you to think about what I'm saying, that's all. Don't react, don't defend, just think about it. Then, of course, there is always the embarrassing moment when, in a roomful of activist male-to-females and Human Rights Commission staffers, someone says, We can't make a decision on this without involving the FTMs, why aren't there any FTMs here? Where are the FTMs? And I'm sitting right there, been there all the time, participated in every meeting... This is sort of a backhanded compliment, I know, but it makes me wonder what they think I'm doing there, and how seriously they take my remarks. Furthermore, when the City let it be known that they would hire a contractor to write the report on discrimination against transgendered people, and I bid on it, I heard through the grapevine that there was some resistance to giving me the contract because I am a white male. Could this be construed as discrimination against me as a transsexual? That's a rhetorical question that bears some consideration. Well, I did get the contract, and Supervisor Hallinan did propose the legislation, and we did win the issue, but after that the press was all about men in dresses. Mention of FTM presence or issues was absolutely minuscule. Several times at the courthouse, when the press was doing interviews, I stood by and listened as reporters inquired who wrote the report, and when I was pointed out to them as the author I could see them looking right through me, looking past me to find the man in a dress who must have written the report and whom they would want to interview. More than once a reporter asked me incredulously, You wrote this report? They assumed because of my normal appearance that I wouldn't be newsworthy. Yet I did do several interviews with reporters who were very appre-

ciative and highly impressed with my ability to articulate the issues. Did any of my remarks make it into print? No. The stories were all about men in dresses! Does it matter that the world doesn't know we exist, or doesn't take us seriously? You bet it does. The issue of whether or not we get surgery, especially good surgery, is based upon how seriously we are taken. The issue of whether or not we can transition openly on the job without fear of reprisal or repercussion is based upon how seriously we are taken. Issues of safety when passing for crossdressing women are based upon how seriously we are taken. Invisibility does not equate with acceptance. Invisibility can breed contempt because invisibility is one of the conditions that contributes to ignorance. Ignorance hurts us. It keeps us in closets that are too small for us to be healthy. It keeps us contained by our own fears. And we SHOULD be afraid. We should be afraid of losing our lovers, our families, our jobs, our freedom, our civil rights. We should be so terrified that we can find a way to stand up and say NO MORE! Maybe that way is to write letters to people who CAN do something publicly. Write a letter of support, write a letter of complaint, write a letter advising someone. When you see something written in a magazine or newspaper that is ill-informed or inaccurate or insulting to transgendered or transsexual people, write a letter. Don't use your own name if you don't want to. Or when you hear about trans-people protesting something and you agree with the action, go on down there and help them out. You don't have to say you are transsexual or transgendered, you only have to say that you support the rights of transsexual or transgendered people. Think about it. Who's driving? Are we there yet?

Does everybody understand the term transgender? I know that many transsexual men and women object to the term because they feel that having gone through transition their body and their gender are in alignment and so they are not transgendered. Here is an excerpt from a letter I wrote to the *San Francisco Bay Times*, published October 20, 1994:

*having changed the sex of my body, but not my gender. Because I am transsexual, I sought to align my body and my spirit, psyche, soul, gender expression, so I changed my body to manifest that. Not all transgendered people do this. Transgender does not mean changing gender. It means going across gender. Now, if gender is both expressed and interpreted, then it may be said of my*

*even though I can "pass," I will never be "normal;" I have a unique history of which I am not ashamed. It gives me a perspective which I feel privileged to have, and it does not make me any less a man. I am willing to take on the label of transgender because I believe it will ultimately help bring about greater understanding between people so the world can be a safer place for all of us. I hope that other people will look inside themselves and recognize their own transgendered qualities, stop being afraid of being associated with other queer people, and own their own humanity. I believe this is evolution of consciousness, and it starts with each of us. So where is our community? Are we just too diverse to ever form community?*

*I am NOT the FTM community. There is no FTM community. We are trying to create one just by naming it. It may exist someday; it does not exist now. And it won't exist until we have a chance to come together and learn to get beyond our personal issues.*

*Many transsexuals and transvestites are heterosexual, which is one reason why the gay and lesbian community does not want to have anything to do with them. (And some of the transpeople don't want to be associated with homosexuals, either. Too bad.) With regard to the social construction of gender, sexual orientation is a moot point. Most people have not learned how to separate sex from gender, and the sloppy use of language in our society doesn't help matters. The middle of the road American sees a masculine woman or a feminine man, and he doesn't care who they actually sleep with. He's already figured out they're queer. Because of that, he assumes who they sleep with, and he's ready to kill to protect mom and apple pie. In other words, it's not about sexual orientation—it's about gender expression and interpretation. Likewise, it's not about whether as a transsexual you have changed your sex or your gender—it's still about gender expression and interpretation in real-time, in the physical world. If one is to be honest about it, it's queer, whether anyone likes it or not. As a transsexual man, I describe myself as*

*experience in both a female and a male form that I was transgendered when I expressed my male gender through my female body, but in my male body I am no longer transgendered because my expression and your interpretation of my gender will not conflict. The fact that I am no longer physically transgendered does not erase my experience of that state, or my empathy for the people who are consciously or unconsciously living in that state and enduring the prejudice and abuse of people whose own identities are severely threatened by transgendered people, whom they interpret as embodying the dissolution of order in the very cosmos because gender boundaries have been crossed.*

*I am willing to take on the label of transgender as an "out" transsexual man because I believe it is the broadest possible category under which transpeople can unite. I don't care who other people sleep with. I do care that people have little tolerance for difference, for diversity in race, religion, physical bodies, sexual orientation, or gender identity. I care that people are murdered for expressing themselves, or for being different. As a transsexual man,*

Last June I was honored to accept a Transgender Pioneer Award from the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy. During my little speech at the awards presentation dinner, I asked (another rhetorical question): Who is the FTM Community? And a very enthusiastic and well-meaning Phyllis Frye called out, "You are!" And I said, "NO! I am NOT the FTM community. There is no FTM community. We are trying to create one just by naming it. It may exist someday; it does not exist now. And it won't exist until we have a chance to come together and learn to get beyond our personal issues."

This conference is an open door to that community. If you want it. If you build it, they will come. If there is to BE such a thing as the FTM community, YOU are its architects. What we accomplish here this weekend, what we each come away with, will be a part of the foundation on which our community is built. Can you envision it? Do you want it? Take responsibility. Make it happen. Prepare for community... make it so.

## Human Rights Campaign (Fund) Capitulates!

In the face of pressure from the transgender community and dissension within its own ranks, the Human Rights Campaign (formerly Human Rights Campaign Fund) met with transgender community leaders Sharon Stuart, Karen Kerin, Jessica Xavier, Gary Bowen, Kitt Kling, Riki Wilchins, Sarah DePalma, Tere Frederickson, and Phyllis Frye on 17 September. On 18 September, HRC announced that it would no longer work to keep transgender inclusive language out of the Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA).

As was reported in the Antidiscrimination Rag (*AEGIS News*, V. 1, No. 4), HRC had actively worked to exclude transgender language from ENDA after transgender activists had managed to get it added. In an unprecedented effort, the transgender community protested at various Pride events around the U.S., and wherever HRC had information booths, and at HRC fundraisers. At an HRC fundraiser in New Orleans, keynote speaker Dee Mosbacher, MD, Ph.D., co-producer of the films "Straight From the Heart" and "All God's Children" asked the over 500 members and politicians in the audience, "Who do we think we are, as we go about obtaining our (Gay) rights, to exclude others from obtaining those same basic rights?"

Please congratulate HRC by sending them e-mail from their new web page at <http://www.hrcusa.org>, write them at HRC, 1012 14th St., NW, Ste. 607, Washington, DC 20005, call them at (202) 628-4160, or FAX 'em at (202) 347-5323.

### HRC Changes its Tune

#### June, 1995 Press Release

The Human Rights Campaign Fund supports Federal protection against discrimination for all Americans, including transgendered people.

We have offered to work with the transgendered community to explore different strategies for achieving this goal. We do not believe that changing the language of ENDA in its current form is the best way of accomplishing this goal. Nevertheless, we have offered to discuss possible options including amending the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, other relevant legislation, or pursuing case-law solutions.

*(i.e., we'll pass ENDA and then come back for you. We promise. Really we do.)*

#### September, 1995 Release

HRCF has made a commitment to work with representatives of a spectrum of the transgendered community with a specific focus on hate crimes.

HRCF has also committed to assist transgender representatives with an amendment strategy in the context of ENDA. The strategy does not include reintroduction of the current ENDA; the language of the current bill remains as is.

Both groups will work in good faith to continue dialogue and to build coalition of ending violence and discrimination against this community.

*(i.e., you know and we know ENDA won't pass this year, but when it's introduced next year, you'll be in it.)*

### Transgendered Teen Shot

ATLANTA. The body of a 16-year old was found about 12:45 a.m., 10 October, behind the A&P Supermarket at 2275 Marietta Blvd., by two people who said they saw a taxicab speeding away from the scene, according to police spokesperson Lt. R.G. Christian. The youth, Quincy Favors Taylor, aka Quincy Lee Favors, had been shot once in the chest. At press time, police had no motive or suspect but were investigating a lead that Taylor was a crossdresser who frequented Loretta's at 708 Spring St. and claimed to work as a drag entertainer at the club. Management of Loretta's said they had no knowledge of the victim. Relatives said Taylor was leaving Atlanta the next morning to enter the Job Corps in Kentucky. Police would not comment on whether the murder was related to the string of transvestite murders in the city over the last six years.

— *Etcetera*, V. 11, No. 42, 20 Oct., 1995.

*This is the eighth murder of a transgendered person in Atlanta in the 1990's. All eight died from gunshot wounds. All eight were Black. All eight frequented Loretta's, a well-known trans-bar. Six were prostitutes who frequented Ashby Street in the south part of town. None of the murders has been solved. Atlanta police spokespeople have consistently stated that they do not feel that the murders are related.*

*Please express your concern about issues of transgender safety by writing Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell, 55 Trinity Place, Atlanta, GA 30335. Please by nice; His Honor is a good guy.*





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I would like to work more with transgendered people. I really enjoyed meeting many of you at the International Congress in L.A. in February, 1995. I am a clinical social worker-psychotherapist in private practice. I have taught sexuality to the health professions for years and am still an Adjunct Professor, University of Miami School of Medicine. I am AAECT-certified sex therapist and sex educator; a member of SSSS, Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, and newly joined AEGIS also.

I have worked with many transgendered people throughout the 25 years that I have worked in this sexuality field, but I would like to increase this aspect of my work. Please give my name to any persons in South Florida who might need my services.

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AEGIS News is published four times a year by the American Educational Gender Information Service, Inc., P.O. Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724. Our telephone help line is (770) 939-0244; our business line is (770) 939-2128; our FAX is (770) 939-1770. Our e-mail address is aegis@mindspring.com. Our FTP site is at mindspring.com/users/aegis. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership-based corporation.



## *Transgender Booth at Atlanta Pride '95*

*Pictured above: Erin Swenson, Ph.D. (Standing, in the fear-provoking, sends-kids-screaming Transsexual Menace t-shirt); and Carla Pridgen, seated. Both are Presbyterian Ministers, and both are therapists. Both are AEGIS staffers. At right: an unidentified genderbender at Atlanta Pride '95. Below: a few of the more than 150,000 attendees of Atlanta Pride '95.*

*Gone are the days when we hid in our closets. Gone are the days when we distanced ourselves from each other, and from the gay, lesbian, bisexual community. Gone are the days when we could be stereotyped and placed into convenient boxes. Gone are the days when we kept our mouths shut because we were afraid we would be denied hormonal therapy and surgery. Gone are the days when we stood silently by while our rights were trampled by others. Gone are the days when we were silenced by our shame.*

*Now is our time.*

