

## Who's Afraid of MAXIMILIAN WOLF?

Each and every cell in my body has been altered in a male direction. Testosterone has increased my muscle mass, stopped my menstrual cycle, deepened my voice some three octaves and thickened my skin. I have grown an Adam's apple. My weight has been redistributed so that my hips are narrow and my ass is smaller. I've got hair on my body in places I never dreamed I would have it. My clitoris has thickened and lengthened and now resembles a tiny cock. All of this and more in just four short years! And the physical changes continue. I become leaner, I feel the hardness of my body more acutely, my beard continues to come in.

Transsexuality is a crime of passion. Because of a passionate and unyielding conviction that I was actually more of a man than a woman, I undertook this powerful transformative process. I surrendered my physical form in order to actualize my inner self, my secret interior life as male. When I did this I stepped from denial and subterfuge to honesty, joy and hope. I accepted the challenge that fate had indelibly inscribed on my nature.

My earliest memories are of playing with guns and trucks, of jumping off roofs, searching for bird's nests, building forts and wrestling with "other" boys. My mother had to chase me around the house to get me to wear a dress to church and a lace doily on my head (in the fashion of the Catholic Church at the time). I remember hiding from my male peers on the way to the car, hoping that they wouldn't see me. I couldn't stand the thought of them seeing me dressed like a girl. This battle with femaleness continued my whole life. Alternately, I would reconcile myself to life as a girl and then a woman, and eventually feel a deep alienation from it. As I say in *Female Misbehavior*, I never had an image of myself as a grownup woman. It never seemed real to me.

When I became a lesbian and a feminist, I believed for a long time that female oppression and male domination were at the root of these early childhood feelings. It didn't pan out. Although I knew a woman could be any way that she wished to be, I still could not completely drive out my feelings of inexplicable and inherent "maleness". I was attracted to heterosexual women, I identified with male heroes, even Jake LaMota in *Raging Bull*. I remember thinking, "Yes, I know how he feels!"

It's important for non-transsexual people to understand that this is not about self-loathing and self-hatred; there was quite simply, not enough of a female self to hate.

Taking testosterone has caused me to reevaluate the root causes of many of the behaviors and attitudes that I previously believed were solely caused by societal conditioning. This has been a profound discovery. I am the same person, but there has been a shifting of my emotional moorings, the tonality of my subjectivity has changed.

Estrogen felt more dreamy, relaxed. I was more easily moved to tears and have gone from crying, say, two or three times a month for at least twenty minutes, to three times a year for three minutes. It's just a lot harder to cry now, almost a physical effort. Testosterone has made me feel more energized, quicker to anger and arousal. I crave physical activity more and my sex drive has increased exponentially. Conversely, my friends report that my energy seems more focused, that I am calmer. Upon initially taking testosterone I noticed that things seemed slightly more three-dimensional, the line separating one surface from another was more defined. Reds stood out, were more vivid. My sense of smell diminished. This journey has provided a portal of revelation. It is not a tragedy but a privilege to have the experience in one life time of



Maximilian Samuel Wolf

—photo by Stafford

both male and female lives.

I've gone through a number of rites of passage and some have taken me by surprise. Although not subject to sexual harassment on the street, I have been threatened with physical violence more times as a guy than I was before. Now that I am seen as an equal, a peer, other men will not hesitate to start a



# More Max...

me to disagree with a guy about household chores or accidentally spill coffee on him while walking down the street.

Also, being a man I'm more apt to be seen as the bad guy, a stalker, a rapist, a thief or a child molester. One woman I know told me she thought I was just giving "lip service" to feminism so that I could get in her pants. I'm aware that women are afraid of men and my girlfriends seem to take any expression of anger on my part more seriously than before. I am always surprised by this and though it does mean that I am seen as more powerful, it is not the kind of power that I want.

Overall, I feel more more complete. I love having a deeper voice, muscles corded in my forearms, thicker eyebrows and straight, narrow hips. I enjoy the new contrast between my body and women's bodies. I am more easily aroused by visual cues and enjoy the sight of women's bodies, in a way that I never did before. I find women prettier, their grace is sharpened. Their skin seems softer, they are more alluring, nearly exotic in their delicacy of comportment. Heterosexuality is the kinkiest form of sex. It is absolutely incorrect politically, cannot be justified in any way, shape or form except for procreation, and involves the shameless coupling of two distinct and nearly antagonistic species. It is hot, pure animal lust.

Max S. Wolf is a poet, writer, actor, and musician. He is the subject of the film, *Max*, part of the *Female Misbehavior* series of film by Monika Treut. When he was still in high school, he published an essay in *This Bridge Called My Back*, the feminist bible of the '80's, and a volume of poems, *Animal Magnetism* (e.g. Press). Max has another volume of poetry



called *The Criminal* soon to be published by Vortex Press. He is currently working on "a series of testosterone fueled short stories, saturated with sexual aggression and body fluids."

This article is reprinted, with permission, from *Visions Magazine*, Summer '93. *Visions* is an internationally distributed cinema/television arts magazine devoted to the use of these media for social change. It is part of a larger series of articles in that issue about Monika Treut's *Female Misbehavior* and the film *Orlando* by Sally Potter. Max would like to give special thanks and a "hello" to Marie-France Alderman, *Visions*'s Editor/Publisher.

## 1993 IFGE Convention in Philadelphia

By Jason Information Redacted

Eighteen FTMs and four partners attended this year's International Foundation for Gender Education Convention (IFGE) in Philadelphia. Coordinators for the two-day FTM workshops were Jason Cromwell, James Green, and Taylor Montgomery. Men came from Seattle, SF, Texas, Michigan, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Montreal, Quebec. Jason, James, and Taylor had been nominated to run for election to the IFGE Board of Directors, and though they didn't win, they are all alternates to the Board, so that if someone currently on the Board resigns, one of the alternates takes the seat. Taylor is "first alternate." IFGE also has a number of operating committees, and we volunteered to serve on each of them, increasing our presence in the organization.

The FTM workshops covered such topics as: Transition Issues, Socialization, Hormones, Voice, Attire and Behavior, Surgeries and Other Options, Sexuality, Love & Sex, and Transgenderism Cross-culturally. The men attending really appreciated the sexuality panel, the diversity of all the panels, and the flexibility of the presenters and coordinators in dealing with all issues and ideas raised by the attendees. We had a great time getting acquainted, meeting guys from other parts of the country, and mingling with the MTFs at the convention. It was interesting watching the other guests at the

Philadelphia Hilton Towers trying to figure out how to relate to all the extraordinarily tall women and short men!

Many of us believe that FTM participation in an organization like IFGE is an input adjunct to our own self-help efforts because IFGE has an infrastructure in place already working to educate the public about gender issues, to secure civil rights for transgendered and transsexual people, and to improve access to quality medical care. IFGE membership is mostly MTFs, but they know they need us guys to complete the gender picture. We have a lot of hard work ahead, both within IFGE and outside of it, but we have a lot of strong allies on the Board and throughout the IFGE membership. I want to encourage anyone who is interested in getting involved in any of the committees (which are: Educational Resources, Finance, Programs, Legal & By-Laws, Publications, Nominations, Marketing, and Fund Raising) to contact me (James) through FTM for more information.

One advantage of the IFGE conventions is that they're held in different cities every year, giving guys from other parts of the country a concentrated dose of FTM fellowship that we in SF may take for granted. Next year's convention will be in Portland, Oregon. With its proximity to both Seattle and SF, I expect to see a record turnout. Jason Information Redacted and I will be coordinating the program again, and we hope to get Dr. Metzger from the U of Oregon Health Sciences Gender Program to give a presentation. So start saving and plan to meet your fellow men in Portland next spring!



# APA CONVENTION IN SAN FRANCISCO

## *New Visibility for Transsexuals*

by James ~~Green~~

The Annual Convention of the American Psychiatric Association is a magnet for controversy. Psychiatrists seem to hold multi-edged swords over our heads, and many people wouldn't go near one for fear of being sedated, electroshocked, or locked away. Yet we were going to spend four solid days with them!

As I walked into Moscone Center, SF's premier conference and exhibit hall, I saw the signs of controversy spray-painted on the sidewalk and on the walls of the building: "APA Go Away," "Transgender Liberation," and "TS Rights" were stenciled every few feet. I knew I was in for an "interesting time."

"We're not here for a personal growth experience," said Yvonne Cook, booth captain extraordinaire, "we're here to pass out information packets!" (Yvonne, Dan Riley, Sheila Kirk, Laura Caldwell, Melissa Foster, and Roxanne de Lyon had set up IFGE's 20-foot booth the day before). Our packets consisted of a copy of *Tapestry* and a couple of information sheets targeted toward APA attendees, all packaged in 9x12 white catalog envelopes and imprinted in big black letters with the words "SEX" and "GENDER." I felt awkward standing in front of the booth, all dressed-up for corporate America, and offering passers-by packages of sex and gender. It took me just a few seconds to rationalize that it wasn't the sex we were selling, it was the gender. Sex was just one of the attention-getters. The other attraction was us! And even though we were hidden away in the most remote corner of the exhibit hall floor, we still managed to attract attention.

"May I offer you a packet, Doctor?"

"Are you interested in information on the transgendered community, Doctor?"

"Do you have patients with gender identity issues, Doctor?"

"Do any of your patients have a gender?"

We did brisk business on the first day. Dan told me the story of one doctor who visited IFGE's booth last year, at the first APA convention we attended: this man sat down at our booth and wept because he had not known about IFGE and the resources it provides. He felt that if he had known, perhaps his patient might not have committed suicide. In spite of his grief, he was grateful that IFGE was letting TVTs and TSs know they are not alone, and letting the medical and legal communities know of resources they can use to educate themselves and their clients with respect to gender.

No such dramatic scene was to unfold in our booth this year, but we did have some memorable moments: One doctor

asked us, "What's gender education?" We responded by explaining that the Foundation works with transsexuals and transvestites, and he replied, "Oh, I think I'm well-enough informed," and he walked away with a smirk and without our packet. Another doctor refused my offer of information, saying, "I don't believe God makes mistakes." I said to him, "neither do I." He smiled and said, "good," as he walked off, but I don't think he knew who he was talking to.

One woman came up to me and asked me, "where's your dress?" I told her I didn't wear those anymore. She looked confused, saying, "why are you here?" I told her, "because I used to have a female body." She gasped, looked me up and down, and praised my appearance, saying she never would have known.

"I know, thank you," I said.

Usually there was no reason to come out as an FTM, but occasionally I couldn't resist... like the time a doctor said, "I didn't think anyone was still doing the operations; after all, with a post-operative suicide rate of 30%, it seems that not many people are satisfied with the results." I responded, telling him, "It worked for me!"

"You mean, you...?" he sputtered.

"Yes. I used to have a female body. It's true that there are fewer gender clinics providing surgery today than there were in the past, but many private practitioners now take up the slack between supply and demand."

"Amazing," he said, "perhaps I'll take one of these packets after all."

What really amazed me were the doctors who said, "we



don't have this problem in our city, or town, or even country. Imagine Italy without transvestites! One Italian national psychiatrist believes they don't exist. Other European doctors told us their societies had "integrated" the TV/TS populations more successfully than we have in the U.S. I wonder what "integration" means. I hope it's true, but I have my doubts.



Several times each day we were asked if we were affiliated with the protesters demonstrating outside the convention center. We responded, saying that we knew some of them, and that they were raising valid issues. We also said that while we did not condone the vandalism, we were grateful for the protest because it gave us an opportunity to talk to people who otherwise wouldn't have been aware of our presence and our concerns. Many people asked us, "Why are they protesting? What do they want?"

"We want control of our own lives," I said, "we want the stigma of mental illness removed from our foreheads, and we want respect as human beings. We want humane, responsible, and reasonably-priced medical care, and we want our civil rights. We don't want to live in fear and shame and poverty."

"Oh," the psychiatrists said, or, "well, it's a lot easier for me to understand your message here in the booth than it is when I feel bombarded by demonstrators."

"But if there hadn't been demonstrators," I asked, "would you have bothered to think about us at all?" We found out later that three demonstrators had been arrested: Transgender Nation activist Anne Ogborn, who spent the night in the women's lock-up, and two pre-op MTF's who spent the night in the men's lock-up and endured some harassment.

On the third day, Dr. Richard Green introduced a history-making panel presentation at one of the morning conference sessions. The topic "Gender Conflicted Health Care Providers" was attended by only 18 APA members, but those 18 were mightily affected. Sheila Kirk, M.D., Jane Thomas, Ph.D., Steve Dain, D.C., and Shoshanna Gillick, M.D., each in turn told about their gender conflict and how it had affected their professional lives. From some of the personal experiences related, it was clear to me that some psychiatrists are learning to deal with gender issues as human rather than clinical. One man said that he realized from the presentation that if he separated a client's gender issues from their other issues, and did not assume that the gender issues were an outcome, then he would be better able to serve his clients.

Dr. George Brown, another psychiatrist who is very friendly with the TV/TS community in his state of Texas, pointed out to his colleagues that they didn't have to come to the APA to hear the kinds of inspiring life stories the panelists had told. He said, "there are support groups in nearly every major city in this country where you can meet a broad spectrum of individuals whom you may never see in a clinical setting."

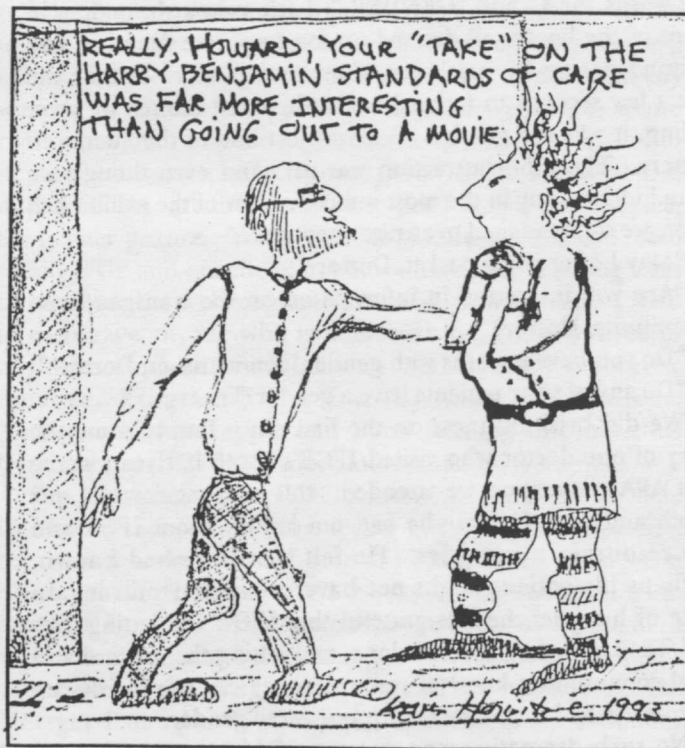
"It's true," said another doctor, "people only come to us when they are in serious trouble. And we've judged a lot of people we haven't seen by judging those we've seen."

As an FTM, I was not surprised by my invisibility. Most people don't think of female-to-male as a possibility, either for cross-dressers or transsexuals. One woman told Dan that he

was not cross-dressed. For all of his insistence that he was a cross-dresser, the woman denied his existence because she was wearing slacks, too. Another woman who was talking to Yvonne at one point confessed that she had never heard of FTMs, so Yvonne called me over as an exhibit. "James is a female-to-male," Yvonne volunteered. The woman looked me up and down very critically, saying, "very good, that's very good," as if I were a piece of sculpture, an imitation of life. I squirmed under her objectification, and she said, "oh, I'm sorry, was that politically incorrect?" I was so astounded that I couldn't think of it at the time, but I wish now that I had said, "it's morally incorrect."

Dr. Green reported that a longitudinal study of "tomboy girls" was denied funding by the National Institute of Health (which funded Green's famous longitudinal study of "sissy boys") when a woman on the funding review committee objected to the project on feminist principles, saying, "calling a girl a tomboy is like calling a black a nigger." It's no wonder that the literature on which professionals rely denies the existence of FTM cross dressers, and gives no validation to the FTM childhood experience.

According to a report in the SF Chronicle of May 28, 1993, "The APA proposed that well-adjusted transsexuals (should) not automatically be considered to have a mental disorder." This is real progress, and I'm glad of it, but please forgive my cynicism in wondering where I have to line up to get my 'well-adjusted post-op' stamp, and how much will it cost?





# What's In the News?

## Portuguese 'General' Wasn't A Military Man

*Associated Press, Lisbon, Portugal*—A crossdressing woman who took a bride and received loans by masquerading as a highly decorated general was convicted of fraud yesterday and given a three-year suspended sentence. Teresinha Gomes, known since 1975 as the distinguished war veteran General Tito Anibal de Paixao Gomes, also was ordered to repay the money she borrowed. Gomes, dressed in a conservative tie and a double-breasted pin-striped suit, had one comment for a crowd gathered at the courtroom door: "Clothes don't make the man."

Gomes, a 52-year old former secretary, said during the trial that she left her home on the Portuguese island of Madeira in 1974 and resurfaced a year later in Lisbon dressed as an army captain. Gomes' true gender and identity were revealed in February 1992 when she was arrested for failing to repay loans made by her neighbors. Neighbors had long believed Gomes was an officer who seemed to have enjoyed a meteoric rise through the ranks. She left each morning in a chauffeured car for a fictitious job in the U.S. Embassy.

Gomes' charade was so complete she managed to keep her secret during 5 years of marriage to Joaquina Costa by proposing a chaste union. Costa, a retired nurse, 54, described Gomes as a "kind and gallant general." Costa said she learned the truth after surprising her "husband" in the bathroom.

—Oakland Tribune April 30, 1993

## Hermaphrodites

The scientific, cultural, and legal assumption that only two sexes exist is wrong, says Anne Fausto-Sterling, a professor of medical science at Brown University. Writing in the March/April issue of *The Sciences*, Ms. Fausto-Sterling reviews studies of those who are born with a mixture of male and female genitalia and gonads. She argues that the current approach of treating such "intersexual" children with hormones and surgery to make them either male or female has no scientific basis. No evidence exists, she says, that such individuals have severe medical problems or that they would not be happy as they are, even if society is disturbed by their existence. In addition to men and women, she argues that there are at least three other sexes: "herms, merms, and ferms." Herms are true hermaphrodites with one testis and one ovary; merms have testes, no ovaries, and some parts of the female genitalia; ferms have ovaries, no testes, and some parts of the male genitalia. Scientists can't accurately estimate how often such individuals are born, Ms. Fausto-Sterling says,

because "it is not the sort of information one volunteers on a job application."—*The Chronicle of Higher Education*

## "How Was Your Vacation?"

### "I'm A Changed Man"

The man showed up in the Mayo Clinic with enlarged, tender breasts and nipples—a condition called gynecomastia. He had just returned from a week in the Virgin Islands where he lived on grilled chicken, beer, vodka and bourbon. Diagnosis? "Holiday Gynecomastia," say the clinic doctors. As they explain in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, alcohol impairs production of testosterone, and chicken in some foreign ports is shot full of female sex hormone to stimulate growth. Combine these effects for a week on your next island vacation and you could end up looking like a hen yourself!

## Penis Envy

**Q** In one of your columns you or someone mentioned a funnel used to go to the bathroom. I am interested in obtaining one. I often go hiking and would like to be able to "just whip it out" like my husband does and relieve myself without peeing on my shoes.

**A** I've heard of other types of feminine funnels and "urinary directors," but the one I was able to track down is called a *Freshette*. It sells for about \$13 at REI stores (1-800-426-4840) and some other major suppliers of outdoor equipment. From Ask Isadora as published in the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*.

## Hung up on size?

After suffering decades of potentially dangerous penis enlargement gimmicks, dissatisfied men can finally do something about their shortcomings, thanks to a revolutionary lipotransplant procedure that can instantly double the girth of the male member. Miami cosmetic surgeon Ricardo Samitier developed the technique, called "circumferential autologous penile engorgement." He says he's performed more than 80 of the 30-minute outpatient operations since 1982 without a complaint. The procedure involves removing about 100 cubic centimeters of subcutaneous fat from the patient's abdomen and injecting it beneath the skin around the penis. The surgeon molds the fat into a uniform shape. Intercourse can resume in about two weeks, and complete healing takes two months. "Some patients have requested ridges and valleys," Samitier adds. "Just about any shape they want, I can give them."—Don Information



# Marketplace



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# Networking

I would like to correspond with any Asian FTMs out there to exchange experiences, thoughts, and perspective. I am a 21-year-old Indonesian, very concerned about family, and now having a problem deciding whether to be myself, or to forget it and make my family happy. This is very hard for me, so I would really appreciate it if anyone can give me some advice or anything that might help me decide.

*Thanks a lot,*

**Louis** Identifying Information Redacted, CA  
Phone # Identifying Information Redacted

I am interested in meeting an FTM who is bisexual or gay, cuddly, hairy, and romantic. I'm a genetic male who is outdoorsy, physically-active, professional, and bisexual. I am HIV- and would ideally like a monogamous relationship, but am open to whatever develops. If interested, please contact me at: Identifying Information Redacted, CA

I need information from FTMs that have an inner ear problem and are on testosterone and have been told that the testosterone is affecting the inner ear in some way. I would appreciate if this would run in your next issue. Write to

**Vincent** Identifying Information Redacted, NY  
Identifying Information Redacted

I have been on your mailing list since 1991 and have gotten some very helpful information from your newsletter. Anyway, the reason I am writing is that I have a great many questions and no real forum in which to broach them. I am hoping that you will publish this letter along with my name and address so that other FTMs may be able to help me out. I have been crossdressing to some extent since age 12 ( I am now 34). I also came out as a lesbian around the same time. Most of the lesbians I met at that time told me not to play the "male" role even though I felt more comfortable that way. They told me that roles weren't necessary anymore and I could just be myself. The problem was (is) that I did (do) not know what that meant. I guess what I'm asking is how did any of you decide that your gender identity was male rather than female? And why did you not decide that you were lesbian? Also, how did some of you come to the conclusion that you were gay men rather than straight men or straight women? I have so many questions and I don't really know how to ask them or who to ask. I have never felt comfortable with my female body but I am not sure that having a male body is the answer. How do I know? Thanks for all your help,

**Derek, c/o Leslie** Identifying Information Redacted

Identifying Information Redacted, NY

Hi! I wanted to write you a letter to be included in the networking section of your Newsletter which by the way has come a long way since its first issue. Congratulations! I was an old friend of Lou Sullivan's just before he started up the FTM group, before he wrote his book, and before he contracted AIDS. As both of us became very busy we fell out of communication for a time, but periodically we saw each other at one group meeting or another in the city. Anyway, I am so proud of him for establishing FTM and seeing its growth over the last few years, as well as the publication of his book. Since I am now a resident of Oakland and have made more time for myself and cut down on my work schedule I have decided to invest some time and energy into people and specific groups like FTM. I have enclosed a \$25.00 check for you to continue publication of the Newsletter which I wholeheartedly support. I am a GWM, 42 y.o., considered very attractive, a musician/singer plus AIDS caregiver for an AIDS organization in SF. I would like to correspond or meet FTM's who are interested in becoming friends or possibly more if the chemistry works. You may contact me by mail at: Identifying Information Redacted, CA or call and leave message at Identifying Information Redacted, CA. Let's talk, laugh, communicate...life's too short not to share what we have with one another!

*Sincerely,* **Joseph** Identifying Information Redacted

Transgender HIV Services Coalition meets 2nd Tuesday of every month from 1-3 pm at Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center. **Contact Kiki** Identifying Information Redacted for further information.



Thought you might like a copy of an 8x10 I have on my wall at work— I carry a small one in my wallet along with the letter from my therapist.  
—from a brother in Maryland.



# MALEBOX

Dear FTM,

January 27, 1993

I'm Les Information a postop FTM since July 3, 1989. I was on the daily sublingual tabs called Android-10, by Ciba. I made the educated commitment to take this hormone for the rest of my life. The reason my late Dr. Kasdon Obgyn of Boston, Mass., prescribed Android-10 was because it did not have the side effects that all other male hormones (such as oreton-testerol, depotestosterone, and testosterone cystine and methyl testosterone swallow tablets and intra-muscular injections) have: namely the side effect of male pattern baldness and possible calcium tetany. Now Ciba went out of business and for 3 months I swallowed the tabs, and in less time than others in the F2M group here in Manhattan, I've changed to an unrecognizable person. I look nothing like my pictures and I never expected any of this to happen. Consequently, I want to change back into a female again, and I get no help from fellow F2M organizers, who are in total disagreement with my decision to revert back to my original gender. I changed to get male privilege, and 50% of the reason was because of 3 gay bashing assaults, and just going with the flow. Yes, the difference in respect was worth it, no, I never liked men until I was forcefully integrated, and made sensitive to their lifestyles, and re-educated to the male world. Now that I'm rehabilitated, I want to change back and proceed no more. I've been a post-op for a term of about 4-5 years and that's enough. After all, I was raised a woman and I'm a genetically normal female, and I would only suffer emotionally to have to live with such an aesthetic loss as my hair. I have no further coping skills for being abandoned to unwanted negative side effects and physical damage. You might as well have kidnapped me for harm by giving me a drug that would cause folliculitis and drying and falling hair and baldness. I never hated my body, and not even now, but its enough to face a lifetime as an android, with no female or male tissue left in my body- sexually sterilized and totally dependent on hormones for any sexual feeling. I'll take the pain of loss of rights, daily, or normal respect, and civil rights. Loss of being born with the heritage of second place to males. I'll forget the degrees to which its considered normal that women were and can still be slaves. I'll ignore the privilege of being born lucky male in most respects, and I take my place as woman again...now android without regrets- but to stay male under these ill considered and negative results due to inadequately developed male hormones- I say no thank you, I've had enough. It's too much to stay male to get normal human rights.

Respectfully Submitted, Mr. Lesley Information  
Identifying Information Redacted NY, NY Information R

**James Responds:** I'm glad someone has finally given us a graphic example of the seriousness of this path, the dangers of hormones, and the necessity of knowing your motivation before you embark. The

attainment of social privilege is not reason enough to change your body; you must be confirming yourself in this journey, and willing to live with the risks in exchange for the joy of finding yourself whole, of finding your spirit alive in your flesh. Les's journey back to a female body will be painful, too. I am sorry she has had to experience this, but Les's story is like a wake-up call for many just starting out. For those of you who are unsure, do not rush. Thanks, Les, for sharing your story; best of luck to you.—James

**Editor's Note :** Thanks, Les, for taking a big risk in sharing where you are now, even though you're not getting a lot of support from the F2M community. I know sometimes, for whatever reasons, people change their minds about doing a sex change. It's certainly not something to be ashamed of, and, it would be good if you could find support—possibly other ftm's who are in a similar situation, or a seasoned therapist with some expertise in gender nuance. FTMs have a tendency to disappear from the gender community after deciding against re-assignment, so we don't often hear their stories. Male privilege is a reality in our culture but so is female privilege. The rigors of the male role must be weighed against the male privilege you mention in your letter. Whatever you do about your gender, I hope you won't undertake any further surgeries until you have lived with things awhile.—Ed

Dear FTM,

In the last issue of the Newsletter, you published my letter and your responses about what I see as too much input from and regarding the lesbian community. I was surprised to see that my original letter was heavily edited. Punctuation and actual words were changed, short forms were used and in one instance an entire sentence was deleted! Since I had spent a lot of time composing this letter to convey MY opinions, I think it would be more appropriate to print the letter the way it was originally written.

Thank you- JS Canada

**Ed. response:** Sorry about that, J.S., but if you'll notice in issue #23, we say that all work submitted may be edited for brevity. We try very hard to preserve the writer's original meaning.

**To the Editor;**

I am a new subscriber to your Newsletter, but I'm not a stranger to your paper. I have a couple of friends who have possessed your Newsletter for years, but I just never had the finances to afford it until now. I just want to say that I am excited and impressed with the new "facelift." It looks very professional and well-organized.

Your interview with Leslie Feinberg was refreshing and educational for me. It gave me a new perspective on the many gender expressions there are in this world. I learned that we are very original and unique people, which I find very interesting. This very issue expands my mind on how important it is to learn to accept the differences we all possess since none of us are the same. We all have different



experiences and environments which therefore make us unique individuals. My wife bought the book *Stone Butch Blues*, for me to read. It is a very emotional and a heartfelt book, and a lot of it reminds me of myself and I can relate to some of the problems that Jess had. Although I did not live in that era, I can see the hardships that happened and am glad my life has not been so severe.

Max Samuel Wolf's highlights of the March meeting were excellent. It gave me a perspective I've never read before of a proceeding. There were feelings and emotions, and I could feel the pain and exhilaration, the hope and dreams, and the genuine feelings of really caring about this Newsletter and how it affects the readers who subscribe to it.

I pray that you will continue the hard work that this paper possesses. It is important to us and the only source that I have with the outside world, other than my BBS (Transitions BBS- (702)366-9663- with TS/Partners message areas). This allows an opportunity to communicate with other F2M's and their partners.

I have also set up a support group for M2F and F2M's here in Las Vegas, and it is going well, and we are meeting many new people monthly. I just wish more F2M's would participate in our meetings. I know that they are out there and prefer not to get involved, even though I have clearly expressed in our local gay paper that they are welcome, but they still want to stay anonymous. Thanks for your newspaper and the new outlook it gives me.

*Sincerely, Marty* Information

*Dear Kevin,*

Just wanted to let you, Max, and Stafford know that I think the Newsletter looks great! You guys are doing a fine job, and I know it can only get better as you get more experience. There are just two mistakes that occurred that I want to bring up publicly. I'm not blaming anyone, because these things happen in the course of creating a publication, but I do want to let our readers know about the information they missed:

In Issue #22, the Financial Report omitted the expense figure

for postage, which is our largest line item expense. Our contributors should know that our 1992 postage expense was \$756.00. In Issue #23, two paragraphs of the FTM Group Charter were run together, and the resulting single paragraph should read:

1) The FTM Group does not condone discrimination or prejudice against anyone, and FTMs from all walks of life are welcome to attend our meetings.

2) The Group is not responsible 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 in Group meetings.

Thanks for your fine efforts to keep the FTM Newsletter on the front line of service to the international FTM community.

*All the Best, James* Information  
*Director, FTM Group; Publisher, FTM Newsletter*

*Dear FTM,*

I want to thank you at FTM for running the letter from Michael Information last issue, #23. Hopefully (and I'm sure it will happen now) I can begin the process of reassignment. Till your Newsletter came out, I hadn't been able to find a solid source to begin with. Michael, who is a psychotherapist (striving to reach out to others like myself), has been working with me now for almost 3 months and has been a viable source of information I can actually use. In the past I kept running into walls, feeling pretty much like I just had to learn to live with my problem. Thanks to him and FTM for running the letter he sent I am now on the road to recovering my pride, dignity and true self. Michael works in Van Nuys which is considerably easier for me to get to than the other side of the world. If anyone needs assistance, input, and a general good guy ear to bend, this is your dude. In case someone out there misplaced FTM #23, the name was Michael Identifying Information Redacted

g Information Van Nuys, CA Identifying Information Redacted

*Sincerely, Ben* Information

*Before*



*After*





# Leslie Feinberg— Gender Outlaw

*Leslie Feinberg, transgender activist and author of Transgender Liberation and Stone Butch Blues, has recently been interviewed in Tapestry, and writes articles for numerous publications, notably the Worker's World Party Newspaper. Feinberg's voice is one of the strongest I have heard in a long while, and I hope you'll enjoy part two of the interview which began in FTM issue #23—Kevin Horwitz.*

**Leslie Feinberg:** 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. The *New York Times* came to the art gallery. It didn't take me long to hear about the bloody coup in Chile. The people in Chile had elected Allende president, and ITT and Anaconda and all the American corporations and the CIA organized this bloody counter-revolution in Chile. Once I got to read about it, and hear the CIA deny it, I started thinking, wait a minute, this is clear what the role of the U.S. is in this. This is like U.S. in Vietnam. They have no right overthrowing that government in Chile. It's obvious. But, it wasn't clear to me when I worked in the factories, because no one gave me the information to look at. All of a sudden, the whole world of classes, my relationship to the ruling classes in this city and in this country, and what the rulers of this country were doing in my name, or in our name around the world began to become clear to me...this was a period of tremendous revolutionary upheaval.

**Kevin Horwitz:** *Were you more or less comfortable or uncomfortable during this period, in your body?*

**LF** First of all, passing gave me a relative respite from the oppression I faced as a 'he-she'. But what was hard was never getting to know anybody very well, always having to be so superficial with people, it was a very lonely existence. I was a gender outlaw in exile. I was hiding.

**KH** *And this was before the upper surgery?*

**LF** No, that was even after. The other main thing besides working at the art gallery was, I never would've known how much I liked guys, until I passed. All my life my experience with men was head-on collision. It wasn't even that I was angry with men, it was that I had warning signals that went off if a guy came, like within like ten feet of me, "bamp, bamp, I'm in trouble, you know, towards the left, over here, you know, go that way." But, when I started working with men as a man, when they were not aware that there was a woman present, or a butch present, I began to appreciate that masculinity was not the enemy. Nor were the guys I worked with. That many of the attitudes they had toward women were really backward, but that didn't mean that they were bad people. It was the

way I had been raised to be racist, and had to really overcome that thinking, and really fight it, and I saw that guys really had to overcome their training, too. But, I began to see that the ways guys play with each other was rougher than women play sometimes, but it was very sweet, too. That there was a lot of tenderness between men, that there was a lot about guys that I really enjoyed. And I enjoyed being with them on that basis, when they weren't relating to me as a woman or as a 'he-she'. So, I think one of the other things I really found out is, I really liked a lot of guys. Not all guys, but I don't like all women, either. I began to be more comfortable with my own masculinity as I began to be more comfortable with men's masculinity, and to see that masculinity really isn't the problem. Nor is femininity. That's not what we're up against. We're up against institutionalized sexism, institutionalized gender oppression. The way people express their gender is not the problem in this world. It's the lack of gender freedom that's the problem.

**KH** *It sounds like you got in touch with all these things by doing this, and then you decided that you had enough?*

**LF** I felt that I was a gender outlaw who was underground, you know, who was hiding out. Like many of the people who were draft resisters in the '60's who had to hide and who had to live that kind of existence where you never make very good friends, and somebody asks you where you went to school, and you lie, and it was a kind of loneliness that comes from being in exile, and you can never have a friend, you can never confide, because if you do and you get betrayed somehow, then you have to up and move to yet another place and begin all over again as a stranger.

It began to take its toll on me and I also began to be much more politically-conscious, and feel that I had no impact in the world, anymore, because I could never say who I was, or what I felt about anything, I could never take a very strong stand about anything, because I was trying not to call any attention to myself. So, at that time, that's when I met the World Workers Party- before that, I was so upset about the role of the U.S., and you have to remember at this time- it was one of the bloodiest periods towards the Vietnamese, millions of people were protesting in the streets and the government wouldn't do anything about it. The attacks, the murders of the Black Panther leaders, Wounded Knee, I mean, it was a period of such upheaval, and I felt that there was no way I could take a stand, there was no way I could fight back. I was working as a dishwasher in a restaurant. One of the cooks told me that if you became a merchant seaman, you meet a lot of communists in these port cities when you travel, and they're always having revolutions and stuff, and I heard about what was going on in Latin America and Chile, and I heard about the mass torture and the mass executions and felt that if I couldn't live my life by taking a stand, maybe there was something I could die for.



In other words, maybe I could go fight and die in a revolution that I believed in, like in Latin America, and it would give my life some meaning. I applied for my merchant seaman card, and little did I know that you needed a physical. I just figured, well, look, I've been navigating all this stuff in men's rooms, and the locker rooms.

**KH** *It sounds like you were especially susceptible to suggestion.*

**LF** I had felt that I could navigate whatever I needed to. If I had convictions about things, nothing was going to be that much of an obstacle. When I saw that I was gonna need a physical, and the close quarters of the ship, I thought, boy, maybe I can't pull it off. I couldn't get a passport any longer. I couldn't even go to Canada.

**KH** *So you became a complete gender outlaw.*

**LF** Literally. In Buffalo, you go to Canada constantly. But now, as a man, I needed to show a draft card, because no man could leave the country without showing a draft card, and I didn't have one. I began to see that I wasn't going to be able to get out. At that point, I met a waitress who was in WWP and I met the party. I didn't tell them that I was a passing woman. I had a full beard, and I joined the party as a man. I realized there were people who were fighting for change here. I found other waitresses and factory workers like myself who were opposed to racism, who fought anti-semitism, who supported gay people. I couldn't believe it, it was everything I was looking for. All these people shared convictions like mine. But I wasn't stupid, I mean, I wasn't gonna come out as a woman, right, or as being transgendered. I didn't have any language for it. And there was no language for it.

I had been in the party for 6 months to 1 year, and it was on International Women's Day. I had never heard of International Women's Day, and all the men in the party were on organizational tasks. The women were giving political reports or whatever. And, you know, there is a way that women relate with each other, whether transgendered or not, that's very different from women and men, and I was watching the women together, and it just became this enormous crisis for me, that I was never able to be me with women or men, or anyone anymore. And I was afraid to lose the party, because I felt like, if I lose the party now, I've lost everything. I've finally found out what its like to win battles and to feel like my struggling means something, and have other people share my convictions. Now to have known that and lose that, would be

to lose everything. I had this terrible dream that I was in this grey room, and behind one of the walls was a dam. There was this crack in the dam, and you could feel this enormous pressure, and when I woke up, I didn't need a dream horoscope to tell me what that meant. So, I actually sat down with some of the people in the party in Buffalo, and tried to explain my life to them. And they heard me. They said, we



don't exactly understand what it means, or what you want to do, but, A., we know it has to do with oppression, and B., we support you in whatever you want to do. And that was 20 years ago. And for 20 years, through difficult periods when I might not have been able to be part of the women's movement or the lesbian-gay movement, and when there wasn't a transgendered movement, I have been able to be part of a socialist party where I have gotten to work with other generations, people from all different races, people from different countries. That's very much shaped my adult life, that I haven't lived in isolation. I've been able to try to develop a language of persuasion to bring to the movement, of why gender oppression is just as important to fight as any other form of oppression. It's why I've been able to

personally get through what has been a very difficult period, socially.

**KH** *Sounds like a really horrible situation, and then really turning that around.*

**LF** I think it's horrible for all transgendered people. We all understand what that's like- What a beautiful baby. Is it a boy or a girl? You know? Pink or blue. If you can't answer those simply, your life is gonna be—

**KH** *Hell.*

**LF** *Hell.* That's right. It's a nightmare that I think each of us has lived through. Each of us has done something different with it, and arrived where we are now. We have the potential for a community. We get to develop our own language, our own individual identities, our group identity, so now kids coming up will know there's a place to go, they'll have a word for themselves, or ten words for themselves. But it'll be our own words, not the words that were always used to make us ashamed of ourselves. We can come up with our own language, we can reach out to a whole new generation that's growing up and say, "if you can't answer the question boy or girl very easily, come talk to us."

*In the next issue: Part Three— Stone Butch Blues.*



# Announcements

## FTM Resource Guide Now Available

The FTM Group has pooled its resource lists and is now pleased to make available a 24 page guide to Gender Self-Help and Rap Groups, Gender Information and Education Groups, Gender Programs, Medical Service Providers, Professional Societies, Public Speakers on Gender Issues, Publications and Newsletters, and Vendors of Prosthetic Devices. The guide also includes a suggested reading list of books about transsexualism, crossdressing, medical and legal aspects of transsexualism, and biographies of FTMs. The Guide is available for \$3.00, postage paid. Any profits from the sale of the Guide support the FTM Newsletter. Periodic additions or corrections to the Guide will be published in the FTM Newsletter, and the FTM Resource Guide will be re-issued each June. **To order your copy, send \$3.00 check or money order (payable FTM) to FTM Resource Guide, 5337 College Ave. #142, Oakland, CA 94618.**

## Ask Marie...

Marie Keller, a Los Angeles-based therapist and director of the Los Angeles Gender Center, will offer a question and answer column covering a wide range of gender-related issues. If you have some burning questions, send them in for the *Ask Marie Column* in the next issue!



"Enough yin. More yang."

## FTM Meeting Schedule 1993

Informational .....August 8th

Old-Timer's Panel

If you want to participate, please call Kevin

at ng Information R

Support .....September 12th

Informational .....October 10th

Support .....November 14th

Informational .....December 12th

Special guest Kim Stuart, author of *The Uninvited Dilemma*, will speak

## FTM NEWSLETTER

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Special thanks to Bart Nagel at Mondo 2000 Magazine for use of his equipment! and special thanks to Kim Stuart and James Green for proofreading.

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

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