

# AEGIS NEWS

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## *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!