

# A D A M ' S      W O R D

Vol. 1, No. 5

December, 1989

Monthly newsletter of The Adam Society, a non-profit support group for female-to-male crossdressers, transsexuals and their significant others (partners, family).  
Greetings Brothers,

Ever wonder what you'd do if you were in trouble and had no one to talk to about your gender identity, no one who you felt you could confide into who might tolerate or accept you for the person you really are? This issue of Adam's Word is dedicated to: all the support groups in the world; the courageous persons who take their gender issues public; each one of you for having the courage and self-esteem to reach out to other people (in spite of 'second thoughts'); to supportive friends-family-counselors and doctors; and to Billy Tipton who would have been 75 this month but died rather than take his identity public. Dan [REDACTED], Co-Founder

## \*\*\* MEETING NEWS \*\*\*

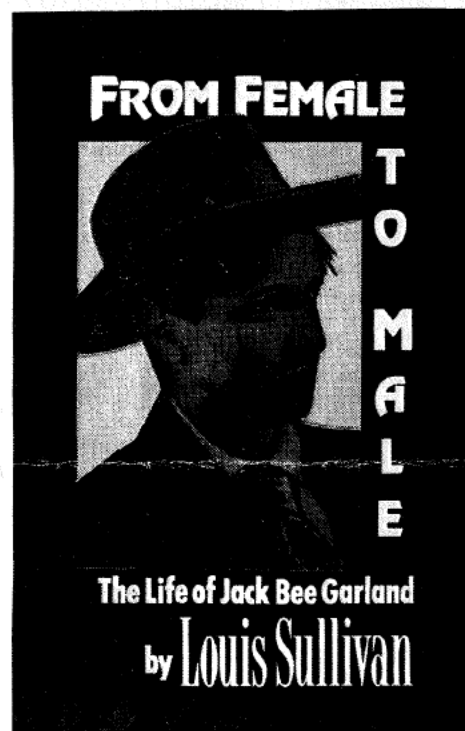
The Adam Society holds monthly meetings in a safe supportive atmosphere for the purpose of providing peer support, friendship and opportunities for networking. Nov. Mtg News: We welcomed a new member, Steve. Steve is an enthusiastic guy who will soon be changing his legal identity and start his life-test. Dec. Mtg. News: A Holiday Party was held Dec. 19. There were several guests that evening which helped to make the evening a joyous one.

UPCOMING MEETINGS: TUESDAY 7PM  
JAN 16 Business Mtg./Planning  
FEB 20 "Relationships"; spkr.

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Treasury Report, Nov 10, 1989:

BALANCE (in Nov.)	\$28.00
Expenses	
Postage	\$10.00
Meeting Rm Rental	\$ 3.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$13.00
Income	
Newsletter Subscript.	\$26.00
Donations	\$ 1.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$26.00
BALANCE to-date	\$41.00



Above, the cover of Lou Sullivan's latest book, published by Alyson Publications, Inc. It is available through IFGE, PO Box 367, Wayland, MA 01778 (\$8.95 + \$1.50 S&H); at many bookstores, or through the publisher (40 Plympton St, Boston, MA 02118).

Book review is forthcoming.

# Musician's Death at 74 Reveals He Was a Woman

SPOKANE, Wash., Feb. 1 (AP) — Billy Tipton, a jazz musician, lived life as a man, appearing to have a wife and adopting three sons. But a secret was disclosed when he died: he was a woman.

One of the musician's sons, Jon Clark, said he had not learned the truth until Jan. 25, four days after Billy Tipton died at the age of 74 years.

Donald Ball, director of Ball & Dodd Funeral Home, said Tuesday that he had informed Mr. Clark so he would not have to learn it from the death certificate. "I was just trying to break it to him gently," Mr. Ball said. "I just didn't want him to find out in a public office. It's been a very difficult thing to handle."

"I'm just lost," Mr. Clark told The

Spokane Spokesman-Review.

"He'll always be Dad," Mr. Clark said. "But I think that he should have left something behind for us, something that would have explained the truth."

"No one knew," said Kitty Oakes, the woman Billy Tipton had said she married in 1960. Ms. Oakes, who separated from the musician 10 years ago, refused to talk about their life together, saying Billy Tipton died with the secret and that should be respected.

Ms. Oakes told funeral directors that the musician was born Dec. 29, 1914, in Oklahoma City and was reared in Kansas City, Mo. The newspaper said Billy Tipton apparently began appearing as a man to improve her chances of success as a jazz musician.

"He gave up everything," Ms. Oakes said. "There were certain rules and regulations in those days if you were going to be a musician."

Billy Tipton, a saxophone and piano player, performed with the Jack Teagarden, Russ Carlyle and Scott Cameron bands, then formed the Billy Tipton Trio in the 1950's and played nightclubs throughout the West.

Dick O'Neil, who played drums with the trio for 10 years, recalled that some listeners would joke that Billy Tipton, with a baby face and a high singing voice, looked too feminine to be a man.

## 'I Never Suspected'

"But I would almost fight anybody who said that," Mr. O'Neil said. "I never suspected a thing."

Scott Miller, 27, Billy Tipton's oldest adopted son, said the musician died tired and without any money.

"Now I know why I couldn't get him to a doctor," Mr. Miller said. "He had so much to protect and I think he was just tired of keeping the secret."

"You can imagine the pressure he lived with," Mr. Clark said. "Who knows? Maybe that's what gave him the ulcer that ended up killing him."

## A Few Thoughts Regarding Billy Tipton

1989, the story of Billy Tipton -- a female successfully living full-time in a male identity-- caught the attention of the media when it was discovered after his death that Mr. Tipton was, biologically speaking, Ms. Tipton. Billy Tipton left behind 3 adopted sons and an ex-wife when he died, and a host of friends and associates, including fellow musicians -- all who claimed not to have known of his true biological identity prior to his death.

If we can get beyond the controversy surrounding the details of Billy's life (who knew and who didn't know), what is left?

Just from having personally talked with Billy's ex-wife and one of his sons, and also from having read some of the articles that hit the press after Billy's death, it seems to me that Billy must have been one fine person as well as a good musician. It is equally apparent that Billy had the desire and determination to live his life fully as a man--with style and enthusiasm.

*Continued*



The Associated Press

Billy Tipton

## A Few Thoughts - Continued

✓ Tipton apparently decided to transform his sexual identity in order to have a career as a musician during an era when performing in a swing band was strictly for men, the Spokesman-Review newspaper reported Tuesday. "

( This quote is reprinted from the Anchorage Daily News, 2-3-89.

It reflects, in part, society's limited understanding of transsexualism, )

— Editor's  
Comment.

It is very likely that Billy did not share his personal history with many persons. It can almost be assumed fact that Billy feared public disclosure of his "secret". Why else would he refuse to seek treatment for his medical problems?

It is also quite possible he knew of other female-to-male transsexuals. Did he ever take anyone into his confidence? I doubt we will ever know.

We all die some day. And in the end, the odds are Billy's identity as a female would have been disclosed, as indeed it was, regardless of how Billy died. However, it is sad to think that Billy physically suffered needlessly his last few months (years?) not to mention any mental or emotional anguish. Because he feared public disclosure more than death, he chose not to seek medical treatment despite his suffering. Surely with all the gender clinics and support groups we have available today, a connection could have been made somewhere so that Billy could have had medical treatment in a safe supportive environment.

And what about leaving the "moment of truth" for the survivors to discover (if that is the case)? What was Billy's thinking on that one? Simply guessing, it seems to me that he tried to protect his family and friends, as well as his "secret" and lifestyle. What man doesn't try to protect those persons he loves? We still live in a society where people are punished for being different, and so are their friends and family.

Let's give Billy a Birthday gift - every day of our life. Let's strive to make positive, constructive, joyful choices. Let's make choices which enable us to better our quality of life. Let's make choices that affirm who we are with dignity and with clarity. Let's make choices which help us deal with today, each day as it comes. Let's decide to "be there" for other "Billy's". Let's choose to be loving individuals.

Happy Birthday, Billy!

Dan

(POETRY)

In Memory of Billy Tipton -  
and "Billys" everywhere

Well, Billy - musically speaking -  
"The song is ended,  
But the melody lingers on -"

Now, I'm sure I do remember  
When my kid sister used to say:  
"Won't you let me join you, brother -  
Can't I come along and play?"

"Girls," I'd say, "don't play with boys -  
Our games are much too rough,  
Besides, you're soft and kind of weak,  
Whereas we boys are tough!"

Billy, does this sound at all  
Like what you may have heard?  
And knowing that you were a girl  
Did it sound - even then - absurd?

You must have felt while growing up  
That speaking musically,  
You could play as hard and just as well  
If not better than any 'he'?

And then you said - sometime - somewhere -  
Why fight? I'll damn well join them,  
And donning pants and shorning locks  
You passed as 'man' and ceased being woman.

Well, you proved for certain through your playing,  
That you were among the very best -  
And when it came to living life  
More importantly - you met its every test.

So, finally, I'd like to say  
To "Billys" everywhere -  
Don't feel unkind toward your brothers  
For the simple truth is this -  
Many of us would have loved to play your games,  
And - truthfully - we were just plain - envious!

- Louise [REDACTED] (CAN-1787)

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Alter Ego

I want to write but I read instead  
I can't arrange the thoughts in my head  
Try as I may, try as I might  
I am losing the battle, losing the fight  
I wrestle and grapple with the other me,  
but she fights dirty and fiendishly  
She jumbles my thoughts, tears them apart,  
crushes and mashes - she has no heart  
She won't let me write, she steals  
every word,  
So I must fight so that I may be heard

I'd stab her and squash her, grind  
her to dust;  
but her death would make my death  
a definite must

For she is I  
And I am she  
Together  
We make what I call me

B.W.

1981-82 Sr. Year H.S.