

Hearts on a Wire

Issue 10

Fall 2013



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* support incarcerated and detained trans and gender variant people *

* build community through bars *

* organize for justice *

Hearts On A Wire

We are trans and gender variant people building a movement for gender self-determination, racial and economic justice, and an end to policing and imprisoning our communities.

We meet in Philly at:
William Way Center
1315 Spruce Street

Tuesdays at 5:30pm

tokens provided
heartsonawire@gmail.com

Letter from the Outside Collective

Dear Inside Collective,

As we said in our last letter, we had a busy June. We tabled at the Trans Health Conference, speaking to hundreds of attendees about trans incarceration issues generally, and Hearts on a Wire specifically. We raised money for printing and postage. Most of us attended sessions too: highlights included workshops on trans encounters with cops, condoms as evidence, trans parenting, sex worker issues, addiction recovery, and a prison issues workshop where our report was used by the presenters and we were given a few minutes to speak about our organizing.

We rolled deep to the Prison Health & Reentry Summit, where we went to a panel on HIV criminalization, participated in the discussion after a screening of the film *Cruel and Unusual* (a documentary about the experience of transgender women in US prisons), and asked challenging questions in a workshop about Dawn Court (a prostitution alternative sentencing court in Philadelphia which is limited to non-trans women).

In July we were hit hard by the murder of Miss Diamond. Several Hearts on a Wire outside members were personal friends of Diamond, and her loss has been devastating. The dehumanizing and sensationalist news coverage was painful even for those of us who did not have the pleasure of a personal relationship with Diamond.

This fall many of us have plans to participate in the Recovery Walk and the Philadelphia AIDS Walk. We plan to bring our banner and be a visible presence at the 3rd annual Philly Trans* March.

As a reminder, we have begun to send out materials for the commissary campaign for inside collective members and allies to collect signatures. If you are interested in assisting with this, please write to Hearts on a Wire and let us know!

In loving solidarity,

Hearts on a Wire Outside Collective



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RIP Miss Diamond

by Katrina Delancey

Diamond Williams, 31, was murdered on the weekend of July 11th, 2013. She was picked up by someone on the long stretch of Old York Road. The person that picked her up took her back to his Strawberry Mansion home, killed her, dismembered her with an ax and scattered the pieces of her body in a vacant, weeded lot about a mile from the house.

Diamond was very well known to the community. Her death rocked the transgender community by rehashing previous murders of Nizah Morris, Kyra Cordova, and Stacy Blanhik. Members of the community held a vigil July 23 in LOVE park. Jaci Adams, activist and friend to Diamond says, "Diamond was just like any other African-American trans woman that didn't find much opportunity, that wasn't graciously accepted in many areas in life." Diamond struggled with substance abuse issues and not too long before her death Diamond was trying to find a way out from those demons. She was a resident of Morris Home for a short period of time. Morris Home is the nation's first residential treatment program for Trans and Gender Variant individuals.



Personally, Diamond was a good friend of mine. Over the years I got the privilege of getting to know her, the good, the bad, and the indifferent.

Diamond did not deserve to die the way she did. As I even write this article, it still is such an emotional journey for me to read, hear, and even write about the way she passed away.

I saw Diamond not too long before hearing the news of her death; she was having someone assist her in getting a resume put together.

I know in my heart she's in a better place, and I would hope that she's looking and smiling down on us.

To My Mother & Friend: RIP Face *Juicy Woods*

You showed me love from
day one

It was yesterday

When we were walking track
like mother and daughter
Now you're gone away

It was yesterday when you

Accepted me as I am

Never judging me or

Discouraging me from being
who I be

It was yesterday we would

laugh at each other

Playing in each other hair

Having a good time

Now you're gone

And I am all alone with no
one to talk to

Who can share what we
shared

Keeping it real like family
should

I never thought you would

leave just like that

Now you taught me one thing

Enjoy life for all love has to
give

Cause it can be over

Just like that

Moma, I love you

Love your daughter

Forever and Ever

Unequal Treatment because of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

by Miley Selena Grow

Equal Protection

The Equal Protection Clause prohibits the government from treating similarly situated classes of people differently unless there is a sufficiently legitimate purpose for doing so. *US Constitutional Am. 14*. If you believe that benefits are being withheld from you and that they are not being withheld from heterosexual and/or non-trans prisoners, you may bring a Section 1983 claim against the prison or prison officials for violation of your equal protection rights. To do this successfully, you must convince the court that (1) “similarly situated” prisoners are treated differently by the prison; and (2) the difference between their treatment and your treatment is not justified by being somehow rationally related to a legitimate penological (prison related) interest. In other words, the prison rule or policy that results in your being treated differently must have a common-sense connection to a valid goal or concern of the prison. For a more thorough discussion of equal protection claims research your law library using *42 USC 1983* and *28 USC 1331* to obtain relief from violations of federal law.

When faced with claims by LGBT prisoners that they are being treated differently than other prisoners, prisons have often tried to justify their action by claiming that different treatment is necessary to protect LGBT prisoners, who are often more vulnerable to attack than other prisoners. For instance, two cases in the Sixth Circuit involved LGBT prisoners who, having been denied the opportunity to participate in religious services while in prison, brought suit under Section 1983 for a violation of their First Amendment rights. In both cases, the prison argued that because the LGBT prisoner was vulnerable to attack, his participation in the services posed a security risk. The restriction of the prisoner's First Amendment rights, the prison argued, served the valid penological interest of prison security and so was justified. *Brown v. Johnson*, 743 F.2d. 408 (6th Cir. 1984); *Phelps v. Dunn*, 965 F.2d. 93 (6th Cir. 1989).

Several LGBT prisoners have, with some success, sued prison officials, claiming they were terminated from their prison jobs because they are LGBT. For instance, in *Holmes v. Artuz*, a federal court in New York noted that a gay prisoner who alleged he was removed from his food service job may have stated a claim under Section 1983 for violation of his equal protection rights. No. 95 Civ. 2309 (SS), 1995 US Dist. LEXIS 15926 (S.D.N.Y. Oct. 26, 1995) (*unpublished*). The court did not decide whether the Equal Protection guarantee of the constitution had been violated because the plaintiff, appearing without counsel, had not presented enough information on which to base that decision. The plaintiff was granted leave to replead (plead again). However the Court was clearly sympathetic to the prisoner's claim, and the opinion contains strong language that the state would have to show, rather than merely assert, that its decision was rationally related to the State's interest in maintaining security.

Sex Discrimination

Although your chances of prevailing on an Equal Protection claim may have increased substantially after *Lawrence v. Texas*, 539 US 558 (2003), and *Romer v. Evans*, 517 US 620 (1996), you might also have a chance of prevailing if you state your grievance in terms of sex discrimination as opposed to sexual orientation discrimination. There is only one case I could find that has used a sex discrimination theory in the prison context. *Schwenk v. Hartford*, 204 F.3d. 1187 (9th Cir. 2000) (discussing that attack against a transgender inmate by a prison guard was at least in part due to sex discrimination, as guard was not interested in her sexually until his discovery of her transgender status). Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 creates a federal cause of action for discrimination because of sex. Numerous state statutes also prohibit sex discrimination: some apply the same standard as Title VII while others define discrimination more broadly.

Sex discrimination is discrimination that occurs based on whether you are a man or a woman, and does not cover directly sexual orientation or gender identity. But LGBT persons are sometimes able to use a theory of “sex stereotyping” to argue that they have suffered from sex discrimination. This is useful because courts subject laws and policies that treat people differently according to their sex to “intermediate scrutiny.” Intermediate scrutiny is a higher level of scrutiny than “rational basis scrutiny,” which is the test applied to claims of discrimination for sexual orientation. Intermediate scrutiny requires the prison to show a substantial relationship between the prison rule being challenged and a legitimate goal of the prison to justify a sex based classification.

Sex stereotyping claims cover claims of discrimination against people for not conforming to the expected behavior of their sex. The Supreme Court recognized this cause of action in *Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins*, finding sex discrimination when an accounting firm told an employee she had to “walk, talk, and dress more femininely, style her hair and wear make up and jewelry” to get a promotion. 490 US 228 (1989). This case is particularly useful for transgender prisoners who suffer from discrimination in prison. For many years, courts have been unsympathetic to transgender plaintiffs, particularly in prison. But several cases have held that *Price Waterhouse* protects transgender people and overrules previous decisions like *Ulane v. Eastern Airlines*, which denied transgender people protection under Title VII and similar sex discrimination laws. 742 F.2d 1081 (7th Cir. 1984).

Sex stereotyping can also be used by lesbian, gay, and bisexual people in making discrimination claims. For example if you are a gay man who was fired from your prison job because you are gay, you could argue that you are a man who desires male sexual partners and you therefore were fired, where a female prisoner who desired male sexual partners (and is thus similarly situated to you) would not have been fired. See *Rosa v. Park West Bank & Trust Co.*, 214 F. 3d 213 (1st Cir. 2000) (a bank which refused a loan application to a transgender woman wearing a dress had engaged in sex discrimination because it likely would not have refused a loan application to a non-trans woman wearing a dress); *Baehr v. Lewin*, 852 P.2d 44 (HAW. 1993) (state statute restricting marital relationship to one man and one woman should be subjected to strict scrutiny under equal protection because it made a sex-based classification). By framing the argument in this way, you can perhaps get the court to be more rigorous in its review of the prison officials' actions.

Where My Girls At? by Twanna @ Fayette

Greetings to all the fam on lock. I want to first say keep your head up and remember, until you truly love yourself, you cannot love someone else. With that being said, I take issue with girls that are disloyal to their sisters all for the sake of a man or the pursuit of a man. It's hard enough dealing with the hate and discrimination from others. But compounded with the backbiting and backstabbing from those you've tried to embrace as a sister makes one want to close up completely and never let anyone in. It is difficult and often heartbreaking being locked away from family and those that truly love and care for us. We as humans long for affection and the comfort of true bonding. But, my question is, Where my real bitches at? These are the people value true friendship and not risk it all for a man or not even a whole man, but his sex.

Let's all dig ourselves and strive to be real with ourselves first and then with those around us.

Home by Tyree @ Fayette

Home - many of us pray for the chance to walk the street again, embrace our family without hearing "visit over," talk all night without being interrupted by "60 seconds on the call." Home - no more counts, or orders to do things you don't want to do, no more stripped of our identity and dignity. I learned of my mother's fight with AIDS at 15 years old behind these walls, for 18 years her goal has been to live to see me come home and I won't fail her, I refuse to. I left a kid, thrown in this place called hell, the bars was closed behind me and all i remember is being ask where you want your body shipped. Home - I now can see for there's a light at the end of the tunnel, and that door is slowly opening, and the boy that enter this place is not the man that's leaving out of here. Home - I'm taking with me the person I'm in love with, my heart, my life and soul and already I fight for us to be accepted by some people on the outside, but honestly it don't matter cause we accept us and that's all that matters. Home - surrounded by the people that means something to you, a place we all should want. ((Rosie, I love you carebear, and you are forever my everything.))

Survival by Bam Bam

What I miss about home is my family, my children. I just turned 50 & I have 25 years in now. All of my children were little when I came upstate. Only one of my children knows about my life of being Gay. But my family is going to know who I am when I get out. What I do is me, 100%, I'm real and I respect myself. There's so much about home I miss. But in the end they love me, thats all. They love me.

6

Love is Still Free *Grizz AKA Lil Rob G*

To you I'm lost
To other I'm a lost cause

But here I set asking how can
you judge me

For Being Free. Isn't free what
we all want to be.

So will you tell me while you sit
and judge me

I love Free to Be Free and so I
am Free all the time

But I'm only lost in onlooker's
minds

Loving free is the key to Being
Free.

So Show your love to one
another's and to those

Who are still judging
Let love be.

It's the only thing
That's still Free.

Name Change

Jordan Gwendolyn Davis

One of the big highlights in gender transition is the name change. However, for many transgender people, Pennsylvania's process is horrendous, redundant, and expensive, which, considering the economic condition of the transgender community as a whole, is a legitimate barrier. I have been working with the office of Senator Farnese, who represents Center City Philadelphia and surrounding areas to put out legislation that would help overhaul the name change law. The result is SB 1064, which will be referred to judiciary.

The legislation amends 54 Pa.C.S. Section 701 to move name changes to Orphan's Court rather than the main Common Pleas in order to save time, and to satiate some of the concerns about the expense of publication. However, publication

The text of the proposed legislation can be found here:

<http://tinyurl.com/kg55w73>

note: added text appears
underlined, deleted text is
[in brackets]

requirements for name changes are a holdover from a time when one could cross the Schuylkill or Delaware Rivers on a boat, or Vine or South streets on a horse and never be heard from again. Everything is linked up and it is much easier to find people evading civil or criminal judgments. This is why over a dozen states have no publication requirement.

Furthermore, the way that Pennsylvania asks you to do judgment searches is tedious, especially since court records are easy to find. Pennsylvania is the only state that requires those petitioning for a name change to get judgment searches from every county they have lived in.

But most relevant to the needs of the inside collective is 54 PA C.S. Section 702, which stipulates that convicted felons may never change their name if they were convicted of certain enumerated crimes. For other convicted felons, they may change their name if they have been pardoned or if two years have elapsed since the completion of their sentence (this includes parole or probation).

I think I speak for those who are in the outside collective when I say that there is **ABSOLUTELY NO PENOLOGICAL OR SECURITY PURPOSE FOR DENYING THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN DOWN THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THEIR NAME.** Most states either do not mention anything about felons changing their name or only require that the prosecuting authority be notified of the change of name. An example of this is Florida Statute 68.07(6).

I have tried to bring my concerns to Senator Farnese about this issue, however, it was explained to me that there is no political will to address this issue. Needless to say, I will be fighting on, and I would urge those who will not have the opportunity to change their name to contact Senator Farnese about this issue.

Senator Lawrence Farnese Jr.
1802 S. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19145

Here I Am Sittin'

Miss Juicy

Here I am once again sittin
in my room
Thinking about all the ones
I left behind
cause of my mistakes
Here I am once again sittin
in my room
being judge because of
who I am
and what I believe in
Here I am once again sittin
in my room
wishing I never took a plea
now I'm suffering abuse
by those who suppose to
watch over me
and protect me
Here I am once again
sittin in my room
thinking about all
my love ones
suffering 'cause of me.

Falling Soul

Pablo aka P.Raw

@SCI Smithfield

I toss, turn, wake up sweating
from a nightmare in the night
Laying there eyes wide with
pain, struggling to hold back
tears with all my might

Your scent engulfs me, but
for some reason you are
staying out of sight
I lay there for a minute,
thinking, this just doesn't feel
right

So, i jump on, rush to the
door, and turn on the light
and this is what i saw.....

You, sharing laughter with
someone trying
to take my place

Not really enjoying the
company,

I see it all in your face

Looking at myself,

I'm still laying in bed

Reaching to feel for a pulse,
to make sure I am not dead
You ask, how could this be?

And I am telling you now

I mean every word

I said in my vow

This love is all for you, and
cherish it you will

My loyalty and my heart is
priceless, so don't worry
about a bill

I saw my soul falling
from far above the sky
So I am asking you AH
Catch me one last time

Recipe for Lip Gloss

by Mx. Nipha AKA Snow Bunny

@Fayette



I developed this in
the RHU, and also,
not every jail has the
same products in the
kitchen. So, you
might have to
experiment a little
bit with different
ingredients.

First, you obviously need to pick a color
(Experiment! I mixed coffee and the
state "orange" mix and came up with a
badass autumn rust color that is sexy as
hell against my freckles). I like the gothic
thing, as I lean towards purple and
grape. You will also need Triple
antibiotic ointment and the syrup they
give out with waffles, etc.

The first step is to take an ink tube out
of a pen, or a sewing needle to mix with,
and a toothpaste cap and butter cup to
mix in (it has to have a smooth inside).
Put a drop of syrup in the cup and
sprinkle a little bit of your chosen drink
mix into it. Mix it in until the color
comes out and the powder is dissolved.
Continue adding powder until the syrup
becomes grainy. Then, add more syrup
and continue. The goal is to get as much
powder dissolved (more pigment) in as
little syrup as you can without it being
grainy. Then you pour it into another cap
that has the Triple Anti-biotic ointment
in it. Mix it up. Keep adding colored
syrup until the color is DARKER than
you want it to look on your lips. The last
step is spread it out in the cup and let it
dry.

The syrup is necessary because ointment
has no water content, so the drink mix
will not dissolve in it. The last step is so
this water can evaporate and leave you
with the colored ointment.

Resources

Hearts on a Wire's Outside Collective gets a certain amount of requests for penpal services from folks on the inside around the country. Unfortunately it is not something we have the capacity for, and it is not our focus. At the same time, we know that having contact with people can make a big difference. To that end we respond to these letters with a form letter containing a resources we hope might be helpful. Here they are:

Pen Pal Projects

Reaching Beyond the Walls

P.O. Box 6905
Rutland, VT 05702-6905

Black and Pink

(LGBT prisoners only)
614 Columbia Rd.
Dorchester, MA 02125

Fedup!

(PA prisoners)
5129 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Sylvia Rivera Law Project

(NY state trans* prisoners)
147 W. 24th St., 5th floor
New York, NY 10001

Transgender, Gender Variant & Intersex Justice Project

(CA only)
1201 46th Avenue
Oakland, CA 94601

Write to Win

(IL trans* prisoners)
2040 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, IL 60647

Montreal Prisoner Correspondence Project

(LGBT prisoners only)
C/O Concordia Univ.
1455 de Maisonneuve O,
Montreal, QC, CANADA

Newsletters & Magazines

Transgender in Prison

Attn: TIP editor
T.I.P. Journal
1151 S Huron St
Denver CO 80223

The Movement

attn: Newsletter
Human Rights Coalition
4134 Lancaster Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Prison Legal News

2400 NW 80th St. #148
Seattle, WA 98117

Critical Resistance

1904 Franklin St., #504
Oakland, CA 94612

Prison Health News

c/o Philadelphia FIGHT
1233 Locust St., 5th fl.
Philadelphia PA 19107

Brothers Behind Bars

c/o Radical Faerie Digest
P.O. Box 68
Liberty, TN 37095

POZ

(about living with HIV)
500 Fifth Ave, # 320
NY, NY 10110-0303

POZ en español

Little W. 12th St. 6th fl.
NY, NY 10014

Southland Prison News

(East Coast Regional)
PMB 339
955 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Justice Denied

(magazine for the wrongly convicted)
P.O. Box 68911
Seattle, WA 98168

Books to Prisons Projects

Books Through Bars

4722 Baltimore Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Prison Book Program

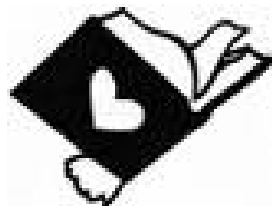
c/o Lucy Parsons
Bookstore
1306 Hancock St, # 100
Quincy, MA 02169

Books to Prisoners

c/o Left Bank Books
92 Pike Street, Box A
Seattle, WA 98101

Book 'Em

(PA prisoners only)
5129 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15224



30,000 People Go on Hunger Strike in California Prisons by Pascal Emmer

On July 8th, 2013, thirty thousand prisoners inside of California's massive prison system declared a hunger strike to demand humane treatment and to stop the practice of indefinite solitary confinement. The hunger strikers announced their 5 core demands:

- * End long-term solitary confinement
- * Provide educational, vocational, and self-help programs
- * End group punishment and administrative abuse
- * Abolish the debriefing policy; change gang validation criteria
- * Provide adequate nutritious food

These core demands seek to change prison conditions for all CA prisoners, especially those in the Secure Housing Unit (SHU), otherwise known as "the hole." The hunger strike was started by prisoners at Pelican Bay State Prison who spend 22-hours a day locked in solitary confinement, many for unlimited periods of time. Over 1,100 prisoners are currently in the SHU. Often prisoners are placed in the SHU simply for being perceived as part of a gang. Currently, the only way a prisoner can leave indefinite solitary confinement is through "debriefing," or giving up information about fellow prisoners. This process leads to much false evidence of gang affiliation and endangers the informant, who is viewed as a snitch. Withholding adequate food is one form of group punishment in the SHU, as is denying prisoners access to social programs.

Trans women of color have played a major role in leading actions in support of the hunger strike. One of the most visible organizations present at the rallies and marches has been the Trans, Gender Variant, Intersex Justice Project (TGIJP), based in Oakland. TGIJP coordinators Janetta Johnson and Miss Major, a veteran of the Stonewall riot, explained the connections between supporting the hunger strikers and attaining justice for trans and gender variant people to a large crowd at Oscar Grant/Frank Ogawa Plaza. TGIJP issued this statement of solidarity with all of the prisoners on hunger strike. (sidebox).

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) so far has refused to respond to the hunger strikers' demands. Instead, the CDCR has decided to punish the organizers of the hunger strike through further isolation, denial of mail, and blasting frigid cold air into their cells. In the media, the CDCR has falsely portrayed strike organizers as "gang leaders" who have forced other prisoners to join in the strike.

TGIJP statement of solidarity with all of the prisoners on hunger strike:

As an organization of trans, gender non-conforming, and intersex people (TGI)—both inside and out of prisons and jails—we support the strikers' demands. There are women locked up in many of California's men's prisons, and men locked up in many women's prisons, along with gender non-conforming folks and intersex people, caught in the bind of binary administrative violence. TGI people are in the dehumanizing facilities alongside strikers, participating in the strike, experiencing the firm foot of increased CDCR repression along with everybody else inside. Additionally, as TGI people we are all too familiar with the common practice here in CA, and across the country, to put TGI people into Ad Seg (Administrative Segregation), SHU or solitary confinement units under the logic of "protection from the general population." **In our hearts we know that true justice and actual safety come from accountable and strong communities.** For this reason, too, we know that working in coalition with non-TGI and straight, gay, or lesbian people to improve the conditions of and to end the existence of these torture units is in our own personal best interest as well as our broadest collective best interest. Whether it's being punished for being yourself or for asking to be treated humanely, isolation is a repressive tool of the prison industrial complex. Ultimately, we know that justice will require a fundamental shift in the distribution of power in society even if these demands are met. We applaud the audacity of the strikers, wish the CDCR and Governor Brown to quickly meet the demands, and raise our fist in unity with all our folks, TGI and non-TGI, who are working for self-determination, freedom of expression, and racial, gender and economic justice.



California judge ruled that hunger strikers could be forced fed by the CDCR. Human rights advocates denounce force-feeding as a form of torture that is already being inflicted upon prisoners in Guantanamo Bay. September 5, 2013, the hunger strikers announced that they are suspending the strike after going without food for 60 days.

Fortunately, persistent pressure from activists both inside and outside of CA prisons is starting to have an effect. California state senator Loni Hancock and Assembly member Tom Ammiano issued a statement on August 30th vowing to hold hearings in response to the hunger strike. Despite temporarily ending the strike, the prisoners are still trying to get the CDCR to meet their 5 core demands. It is therefore more crucial now than ever for allies to write to Jerry Brown to pressure him to meet the 5 demands.

More than 120 prisoners have been hospitalized due to serious health issues. A

Write to CA Governor Jerry Brown and tell him to meet the 5 core demands:

Governor Jerry Brown
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

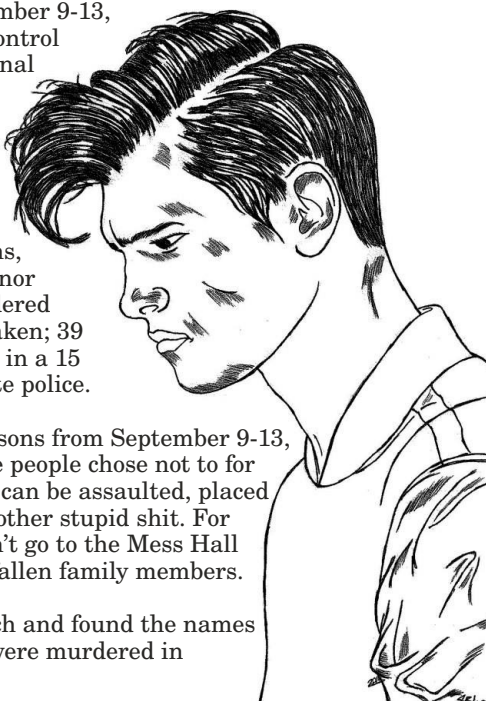
ongoing updates on the CA prison hunger strike:
<http://prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com/>

Remember Attica by shaylanna Luvme

42 years ago on September 9-13, 1971, prisoners took control of the Attica Correctional Facility for a good cause. They made a series of demands to prison administrators and held about 40 hostages. After 4 days of fruitless negotiations, New York State Governor Nelson Rockefeller ordered that the prison be retaken; 39 people were murdered in a 15 minute assault by state police.

In New York State prisons from September 9-13, we all strike, but some people chose not to for fear of retaliation. We can be assaulted, placed in the SHU (box) and other stupid shit. For those few days, we don't go to the Mess Hall out of respect for our fallen family members.

I've done some research and found the names of the prisoners that were murdered in that uprising.



William Allen
Elliot Barkley
John B. Barnes
Bernard Davis
Allen Durham
Willie Fuller
Melvin D. Gray
Robert J. Henigan
Kenneth E. Hess
Thomas B. Hicks
Emanuel Johnson
Charles Lundy
Kenneth B. Malloy
Gidell Martin
William B. McKinney
Lorenzo McNeil
Samuel Melville
Edward R. Menefee
Jose Mentijo
Milton Meriweather
Richard Moore
Carlos Prescott
Michael Privitera
Raymond Rivera
James B. Robinson
Santiago Santos
Barry Schwartz
Harold Thomas
Rafael Vasquez
Melvin Ware
Willie West
Alfred Williams

artwork by Shaylanna

I Believe *Juicy*

I believe I can make it
I believe I can
do all things that strengthen
me
no matter what
people may think about me

I believe I can
overcome every one of my
situations
with the strength
God has given me
I believe I can
make it through
lives ups and downs
without one tear

I believe I Am somebody
who shouldn't be judged
because of my past
The only person
That can Judge me
is him up above
for no one is perfect

I believe that one day
all the hate will be over
and prisons will be shut down
I believe change is gonna
come
Sooner or later
I believe I Am
a person of change
and should have
A Second Chance

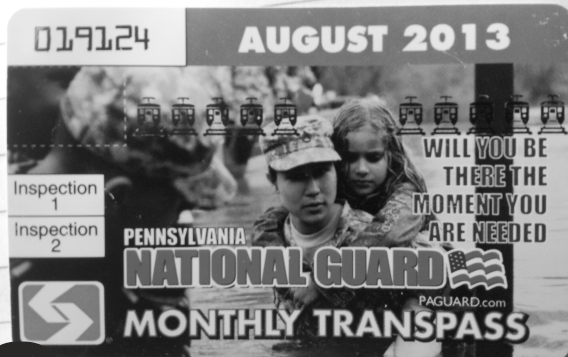
SEPTA has eliminated the Gender Stickers, with a "BUT"

by Jordan Gwendolyn Davis

Good news for all those from the Philadelphia area who may see a release date in the near future. SEPTA has finally removed the gender stickers as of July 1 from monthly and weekly passes. This was a long campaign led by Riders Against Gender Exclusion (RAGE), and this was covered in Issue 2 of the Hearts On A Wire newsletter. The decision was made in late March of 2012 after much agitation from RAGE as well as a UNANIMOUS city council resolution against the stickers that, I must disclose, I helped push for.

However, there is a catch. Fares have gone up from \$2 to \$2.25, and will be increasing to \$2.50 sometime in 2014, as part of some newfangled classist smart card system. Also relevant to many people who are in Graterford and have visitors in Philadelphia is the fact that the Norristown High Speed Line, which goes from Upper Darby near West Philadelphia to Norristown (where riders transfer to Bus Rt. 91), now costs \$2.75 to ride. Also, speaking of bus 91, service is still only on Saturdays and only 2

early morning busses to and 2 early morning buses and one afternoon bus from the prison, but that's for another issue. But for now, here is a picture of a gender free transpass.



From the Mail:

Disclaimer:

We get a lot of mail, and cannot publish every letter we get. If you write to us responding to something you read, please let us know (1) if we can print an excerpt from your letter, and (2) how you would like to be credited.

I am so very grateful and appreciative for Hearts on a Wire, you guys/girls are amazing and have inspired me and where my life is presently, you make it easier to endure, thank you.

-Mrs. Janel

Thoughts on Pride (Issue 9)

Since becoming a subscriber to Hearts on a Wire, it has lifted me up in so many ways and I thank everyone involved.

Miss Juicy Woods, thank you especially, you've been an inspiration to me and others. We definitely need more open and bold individuals to be who they are and not be concerned about what others think about us. I love you all. Keep inspiring all, Ms. Juicy.

-Markita @ SCI Fayette

When I read the story from Jimmy it's really what my story was. The last 5 years I've not had any family to write because of me being Gay, but even being lonely, I'm still happy. I might be all alone now, but when I leave prison I know that I have the support of the gay community. I tell everyone to be proud of who you are regardless.

-JW @ SCI Forest

I hope one day to stand beside GLBT brothers & sisters with pride in my heart as we Stand and Show we're here to get what's ours rightfully. I need help finding my way around the community. See around my way there's not too many GLBT and I really want to help and take a stand with brothers and sisters who are willing to take a stand. So if you got anything on supporter LGBT movements to know where I'm needed to stand up.

Live Free, Love Free, Stay Free <3

-Grizz AKA Lil Rob G

Issue 9 made me think about a lot of things in my life... Way Way too many people on the DL here, you don't know who's who until they get the balls to ask you cuz they like you. It's not cool.

-Bam Bam

Just because I'm not LGBT doesn't make me the hater of anyone for what they stand for. Miss Juicy keep fighting back against the Hate.

Hearts on a Wire's structure is very admirable, this way of sticking together in Real Solidarity and opening up a Throughway of communication with prisoners and advocates. In my eyes this is impressive.

-Dwayne Rieco

Thoughts on Pride (Issue 9)

I truly believe you cannot control who you fall in love with or what you are attracted to. It's just part of the script of life you can't edit.

-Angel

Hey sisters, I just wanted to let you know I really thank for all support from Hearts on a Wire. I been openly myself for 10 years and I got a lot of pride in myself and for all my sisters. Don't let no man take your pride, be yourself, no matter where you are or go! I can't wait to come out in the world and help support incarcerated LGBT. I have been in this state prison for 9 months and have dealt with some disrespect, but that will never stop me from being proud of who I am. I got a very sweet loving man and he gives me all the love I could ever ask for. For all my sisters out there in the world and incarcerated, keep your head high and your pride as well! I love you all!

-Lady Mariah @SCI Forest

Creating Opportunities (Issue 9)

This article was the truth because this is the time to sit back brainstorming about things I am going to do when I go home. Time is going by fast and my day will be here before I know it.

I got a lot of plans. One is to volunteer, whether it be at hospitals, shelters, or missions encouraging people to be strong and never give up. I want to help people on the edge that just need someone to talk too, giving them advice.

-Miss Juicy Woods

Yesterday is behind us, we can only learn from the past, today is our present so change the things we need to in ourselves, and tomorrow is the future, so prepare for it. I plan to marry Rosie legally so why should we settle for less. So as we kick open the door to this hell called prison, slam it behind you and never look back for freedom is always greater than prison bars.

-Tyree Sanders @ SCI Fayette

Hormone Access (Issue 9)

I have been going up against the system for nearly 3 years trying to get on hormones. I went through the doctors asking me questions about my childhood and the outcome was always the same. I'd be told they'd get back to me when they could. After being denied for 10 months, I finally thought it would be wise to retain a lawyer, a FTM transsexual so he understood me. The process was intense and at times, very stressful, but hey, I've survived a hell of a lot worse.

After 3 years, what I have to say is no matter how rough the road to success is, stay on it and don't get off until you've succeed at whatever it was that you came to get. Don't give in, put in. So, like my father always told me; put up or shut up! So, let's put up a fight that we know we can win.

-S. Luvme

Pride Is...

Pablo

Pride is a feeling within one's self, which, never settles for being less than perfect; Recognizing and accepting who you are as a person, and, being comfortable with the person you truly are; Inner strength to disregard what other may think of you for you being who you really are as a person; Demonstrating your passion to live the life as the person that you are, and are most comfortable with; Excusing the ignorance from those people who choose to look down upon you because of the life you have elected to live, and the person you genuinely are;

Indicating that despite what other people may think of you, you will continue to be the person that you choose to be; Staying true to yourself no matter what the cost.

From the Mail (Issue 9) (responding to Miley's response to Z-Code (Issue 7))
I liked what Miss Miley had to say about Z-Code, they use that for Stereotyping /Discrimination and that is exactly why they have rapes in prisons. A CO at SCI Pittsburgh was raping inmates and got arrested and convicted. They judge for what they try to hide in their own closets.

-Dwayne Rieco

Commissary Campaign (Issue 4)

Everything I order from Commissary is still an unauthorized item. I would like to collect signature sheets for the Hearts on a Wire campaign. It is so great to have support outside the fences.

-Susie Moon

Partner Violence: My Experience (Issue 4)

Greetings Fam. I have read several writings submitted to Hearts On A Wire that have left me feeling somewhat disturbed. Stories of abuse within relationships in particular. Speaking from experience, I can honestly say that a love for one's self is absolutely paramount in rising above and realizing that in no way is abuse ever love. "He loves me, that's why he beats me" is a foolish thought. And like I said, I was a victim of my foolish thinking.

Most of us have been beat down so much by society that we've come to believe we are unworthy of anything better than what we are given. And dealing with the same time and time again can lead you to believe that this is just what's expected within a relationship. It has taken me many ass whoopings and lifelong scars to make me pause and finally realize I am greater than the trash society has told me I am and the bruises men have put on my body and soul.

I am a magnificent child of God and I deserve so much more. You deserve more. My thoughts and prayers are with you all. So stay beautiful and let that beauty in you command your respect.

-Twanna @ Fayette

trans/gender variant imprisonment in PA

Many of us participated in Hearts on a Wire's survey a few years ago. The report of the results is available!

Hearts on a Wire has **free** paper copies of the report available for people who are currently locked up in Pennsylvania.

Fair warning: we have had some trouble with censorship in some institutions. Please let us know if you want us to try to get you a copy!!!

The report is also available online, along with back issues of all our newsletters, at:
www.scribd.com/heartsonawire



Experiences of Trans and Gender Variant People in Pennsylvania's Prison Systems

A Report by the Hearts on a Wire Collective

We want to hear from you!

We welcome your:

- * Responses to this edition
- * Artwork (black and white)
- * Commissary recipes
- * Contribuciones en español son muy muy bienvenidos!
- * We are looking for additional help translating articles into Spanish. If you are bilingual and would like to help, please write to us!
- * Poetry
- * Articles

Next Issue:

Our next issue we hope to focus on **mentors and heroes**. (Special thanks to Miss Juicy Woods for the theme suggestion). Here are some questions to get you started thinking about this: Who do you look up to? What are the qualities that you admire about them? What did they teach you? What role does mentorship play in trans* communities? Have you had mentors as a transgender or gender variant person? Have you mentored others?

Hearts on a Wire frequently gets mail from people who are interested in dating a trans or gender variant (T/GV) person, or from people who exclusively date T/GV people. Sometimes these letters are sweet and endearing, but sometimes people say the wrong things or don't understand the experiences of T/GV people. We are looking for an article on what to do or what NOT to do if you want to impress/date/love a T/GV person. Are there ways you do/don't like to be talked about? How do you like to be approached by someone? Write us an article about all the best ways someone can be fabulous to you and we'll print it in an upcoming issue of the newsletter!

If you contribute something, make sure you tell us:

1. **Exactly** how you want to be credited [anonymous, legal name & ID number, the name you use, a nickname, etc.]
2. Whether it's OK to say the facility you are/were in

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artwork by Shaylanna

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