

Hearts on A Wire



Issue 9

Summer 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



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Letter from the Outside Collective

Dear Inside Collective,

First off we want to tell you that we got ALL our mail after the shitstorm with the post office. Someone in the USPS did us a favor and forwarded all our mail to the new address, even the stuff that arrived before the forward was in place. We were so delighted to get 40+ letters all at once. We have so much content we are already working on Issue 10!

The outside collective has been very busy! Hearts on a Wire is one of the sponsoring organizations of Decarcerate PA, and mid-May had us at a sendoff rally for a week-long march from Philadelphia to Harrisburg to demand an end to new prison construction and prison expansion in PA. The state budget cuts have hit Philadelphia schools hard, and it was exciting to see young people leading the march with an "Education Not Incarceration" message.

Some of us went to the Philadelphia LGBT Pride Parade together last week. It was both powerful and problematic.

We are sending this newsletter right after the Philadelphia Trans Health Conference. We are sharing a table at this conference with folks from the Montreal Prisoner Correspondence Project for the second year in a row.

Many of us are going to be at the Beyond the Walls Prison Health and Reentry Summit later in June.

As a reminder, we have begun to send out materials for the commissary campaign. We are looking for additional inside collective members and allies to work as contact people to collect signatures in support of the campaign. We would send you signature sheets and ask that you send these sheets back to us once they are signed. If you are interested in assisting us with this, please write to Hearts on a Wire and let us know!

In solidarity,
Hearts on a Wire Outside Collective,

Cover photograph by Leonard Fink
The Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries at the
Christopher Street Liberation Day Gay Pride Parade, NYC
(1973) (Sylvia Rivera [right] and Marsha P. Johnson [left])

Creating Opportunities

by Miley Selena Grow

For many people behind the wire, one day soon, or years in the future, we have the prospect of one day being released. We need to think ahead and make some type of plan to have the doors of opportunities open up to us. If the truth be told, it is difficult enough for a law abiding citizen to find a decent paying job once he or she is laid off.

However, if your background is similar to mine: very little formal education; little or no work experience; decades in the penal system; extensive criminal record; and mid-40s, the odds of a successful re-entry are very slim. So I decided to get some type of game plan to beat the odds. I want to be one of those success stories you read about and you can do the same.

Myself, I plan to go to the local temples, churches, synagogues, mosques, community centers, homeless shelters etc. where I can do volunteer work. I want those in the community to know that I am worth giving a second chance. Hard work comes before success. Years of working out, being aware of my environment, attending the law library and library have enabled me to pass those skills on to others behind the wire. All of us can learn skills while here that one day we can share with those in the free world. Skills that will enable us to pay our bills and stay free.

If we reflect long enough on some useful skills that we can share with others, they will come to mind. Hopefully in helping others someone might open a door of opportunity for us. And in the process, we will find peace of mind, redemption, joy, or some type of satisfaction in doing no harm.



artwork by Rieco

Forever Lost

*Pablo AKA P.Raw
@SCI Smithfield*

You can't imagine the stress and pain that comes through these doors

People hang their heads so low, their faces could mop up the floors

I can't believe I'm once again stuck inside this cell, being far from here, no friends, no family, this feels like hell

I have been off my square and just can't seem to find any balance

Being so hypnotized by her, I couldn't see her deadly talents

You did things to my heart only I thought a surgeon could do

Cut it out, shocked it, then realized it was too big for you

I'm lying here on life support waiting for you to revive me

Lost hearts, Lost Minds, Lost Souls

Please don't let it be

Thoughts on PRIDE

In Issue 8, we asked you for articles focusing on Pride in the hopes of showing a number of perspectives to coincide with June's Pride Month events. Thanks for all your submissions! We are still receiving submissions as we are finalizing this edition, so expect to see more perspectives on Pride in the fall issue.

Miss Juicy Woods

First I would like to say anything is possible if you put your mind to it and believe that it will happen. But we LGBT got to come together as a family and stick together.

This topic means a lot to me because I have a lot of pride and wish there was more among the LGBTQ community on the inside. And the only way we on the inside are going to get that is sticking together and standing up for what's right; we have to be happy for what we stand for, and who we are. Not putting each other down cause we want to upgrade ourselves or think we're better than one another when we are all in the same fight to end discrimination. We have to be willing to stand together and have unity, without that, we have nothing. My jail does not have an LGBT organization because nobody cares or is willing to fight to get an organization. Or they are worried about pleasing the trade.

Pride plays a role in my life because I can stand and say I am proud of who I am and where I come from. Being out is showing people you know who you are and aren't ashamed of it. I am a 26 year old African American Queen who is happy and proud of what I am and what I stand for, and I'm not ashamed to say I'm gay because I am happy. June is Pride Month, but we should have it all year round because we came a long way and we are not finished yet.

I think Pride could discuss more prison issues, but we as prisoners need to stand for something. Some people dislike me because I keep it real but my motto is, if you can't speak the truth, don't open your mouth. I know I'm happy to be gay. To all my brothers and sisters you should be proud of who you are.

Pride Can Be An Anchor - Angel Serrano @ SCI Graterford

When I first found myself attracted to a fem-queen, my pride was getting the best of me and not allowing me to love or receive love fully. I cared more about what everyone around me thought instead of what my heart wanted and needed most.

Funny how pride can cause so much misery in a man's life. When I let my pride go and proceeded though life I found my soulmate and now I am proud that I opened the door for a lot of prideful men to come out of the closet. I no longer have pride issues. I found love and wouldn't remix who I fell in love with.

"Gay Pride" has Lost Sight of History - Anonymous

This summer, communities all over the world will celebrate Pride Festivals commemorating the beginning of the Trans and Gay



Liberation Movements. Despite the social change these movements have effected since the first high-heels were thrown at cops at the Stonewall Inn, it is obvious that the struggle for trans, gender-variant and queer liberation is far from over.

The progress made so-far by the established LGBT Rights movement has been uneven, excluding trans women, homeless youth and elders, incarcerated people, people of color, low-income communities, immigrants, gender variant people, people with disabilities, and sex workers — the very communities whose resistance to police brutality began the Trans and Gay Liberation movements. Now, the life-or-death needs of the marginalized members of our communities are largely ignored by the mainstream LGBT Rights movement in favor of symbolic victories for relatively-privileged members of our communities. Pride Festivals have been depoliticized and removed from their true history.

Lifetime - Jimmie (excerpt)

I share the things that are no longer locked within, remembering all the lies I said to cover up what I know I am. Caught up in lies, hiding behind a woman, sleeping with her and not feeling right, sneaking away to be comforted by a he. Some 40 years I lived in fear of being found out. Catching the virus and Hep C was another painful part of my secret life. Then the day finally arrived when I was forced to stop my demise, what a sigh of relief, I was arrested, no, I was recused from the painful lies.

Alive today, now I accept and can be who I am. I felt the pain and got through it with the help of my GLBT brother and sisters, and I do my best to be there for others. No matter what I am called, I can say it first with no fear or pain, like Eminem said: "I know what I am, tell me something I am not." I am a homo, a faggot, a cocksucker and at the end of the day I love who I am. I am out with my family and friends and most of them know and accept me as who I am. In here I am not so flamboyant, but I have a him and we do what we do - safely of course because I have the virus and I can share that without shame because its part of who I be.

My life isn't always good, especially where I am, in prison, but it's all good, because here I've grown and this was needed to discover I had to be free within and step out of what I pretended to be. I awake each day and look in the mirror and see a beautiful me, and I ask for strength and peace to go on helping another, giving back what was freely given to me, making amends to those I hurt where I can.

Real Talk - Tyree Sanders

Real Talk! I been down since a kid behind these prison walls, Accepted my lifestyle 10 year ago, And don't regret it at all. I really never experienced the verbal abuse of being called out

Pride

Miss Juicy Woods

When you can stand up
And be true
To yourself no matter
What people say
That's pride.

When you can
Say I'm happy
For who I am
And will forever be
That's pride

my name, For my character speaks for itself, Plus such foolishness I'll never entertain. There's a difference between Gay on the street, And behind these prison walls, But I can only speak on the drama I see, While reading about so many beautiful stars falling. Falling in the sense of being murdered, or death in itself. No matter how you see yourself we're all the same, So why don't we realize we're to blame. How can people respect us when we lack it ourselves. Some Rob, Cheat, and Lie to men, Just to please their selves. How about those who claim to be Muslim, Blood and Crip, disrespecting those organization being on the Downlow sneaking around, Afraid to talk to a queen without getting caught. Then we got those that feels sex is just a sport, Suck and Fuck for anything, and wonder why people look at us as scum. Some of us fail to tell others "I'm Sick," But spread sexual transmittable diseases with no regret at all. We're called Faggots, Whores, Freaks & Fuckboys, And alot of people look at us as if we the symbol of AIDS, But yet we push blame. We seek a change, Well change starts with us, Stop seeking a fight if you're not willing to put on the gloves. Lets first start by respecting ourselves, Loving ourselves, And caring for ourselves. Stop letting your disrespectful action continue to be shown on all of us. I'm tired of reading of us being killed, Beaten and abused everyday, Or a victim in our minds 'cause of our ways today. Some of us carry our selves with very high respect, But the ways of others cover us as darkness over our head. Then many of us speak & write words of no meaning just to belong, Open your eyes for we all are the shadow of each other, People don't just see you but also your sisters & lovers. Stop continuing selfish ways lets get our selves, Cause every time one of us killed on the street or suffer behind these prison walls, We fall numb & weak together. So Downlow guys stop faking your selves out, selling yourselves short, Accept your identity and be

who you are. You sisters that are transgender or Femqueens, Hold your head up high, Don't settle for less if you reach for the stars. You don't need to endanger yourselves to feel wanted or love from someone else, For you already got your haters, But not being real will bury us all. And of for the Gay males and Gays on the whole, Stop with this image of prison life, Cause you may be on the street tomorrow. We are not prostitutes, Cum catchers, or a disease with a living soul. We are people of Intelligence, love and meaning in itself. So come on Gay Community lets start to respect ourselves, Real Talk! (PS Rosie I Love You Carebear).



uncredited artwork from the cover of
"Imprisoned Pride" 'zine by the Montreal
Prisoner Correspondence Project

Hormone Access

Hearts on a Wire received a letter asking for the DOC's official policy on inmate hormone access. The short answer is that as far as we can tell, there is not one. The majority of Pennsylvania prisons lack a specific policy or protocol for administering hormones to Transgender and Gender Variant people, and there is a lot of inconsistency between various institutions.

The issue of whether a trans* person is entitled to hormone therapy while in prison has been litigated extensively, based on the established constitutional principle that it is a violation of the Eighth Amendment prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment for prison officials to exhibit "deliberate indifference" to a prisoner's "serious medical needs." There are two cases on this issue from Pennsylvania.

In *Madera v. Correctional Medical Systems*, a trans woman sued because her hormones had been terminated by the prison. In an unpublished opinion, the court held that while "there is no absolute constitutional right to hormonal treatments for a transsexual, any more than there is for any other specific therapy requested by a prisoner... there is a clear right to *some* medical attention." The court left the question of what treatment was appropriate to the discretion of the prison medical staff. 1990 WL 132382 (E.D. Pa. 1990) (*unpublished*).

In *Wolfe v. Horn*, a federal district court in Pennsylvania held that abrupt termination of prescribed hormonal treatment by a prison official with no understanding of the plaintiff's condition, and failure to treat her severe withdrawal symptoms or after-effects, constitutes "deliberate indifference." 130 F. Supp. 2d 648 (E.D. Pa. 2001). After this suit, Ms. Wolfe informed Hearts on a Wire, she was able to continue her hormone therapy.

The DOC's Access to Health Care Policy now states that "if an inmate has commenced a course of treatment for [gender] reassignment prior to incarceration, a contracted Health Care Provider will evaluate him/her and limited medically necessary treatment may be administered to prevent complications." DOC 13.2.1 §1(c)3 (2012).

These cases and the DOC policy mean that PA prisons are required to offer **some** treatment for incarcerated transgender people **if** they can document treatments prior to being locked up. What that treatment consists of is up to the discretion of the medical providers, and when they do prescribe hormones they often prescribe only a level that causes the patient not to medically de-transition, but not enough to continue medical transition.

Despite this, when Hearts on a Wire surveyed trans and gender variant inmates, we found that even among those with a prescription prior to getting locked up, 40% were still denied hormones, 36% received hormones off and on, and only 24% were able to continuously take hormones while incarcerated.

read more about Hearts on a Wire's findings in our report, *This is a Prison; Glitter is Not Allowed*, available free to people incarcerated in Pennsylvania (page 15 for more info).

Gurlz Can Be Gemz

Mx. Nipha
AKA Snoe Bunny
@SCI Fayette

I'm so strong
The weak that can't hold on
Fall to the wayside
I can only provide
Protection for that don't fold up
When the pressures on them
Cause pressure makes a gem
Like a crystallized star, and in
the dark
A gurl can't just shine, but be
hard
And hold up, resist the foldup

Bullies and oppressors seek
the weak
To cheat and beat, and are
often themselves
Deposed with a single slap to
the cheek
So, often I look them dead in
the eyes
And off they creep, suddenly
meek and
Seeking another, perhaps
easily won prize.

Every sista has a place in my
heart, my star
But the pain of watching them
fold, the pain
Of being told they'd rather give
in
than dig in and hold.
It threatens to liquefy my gem
and douse the flames of my
star.

Sanando Después de un Asalto Sexual

Miley Selena Grow translated by César Mantilla

This is a translation of an article "Healing from Sexual Assault," originally published in issue 6. If you missed the English original article and would like a copy, let us know and we would be happy to mail you a back issue.

Este documento no es solamente para personas transgénero, pero para todos los sobrevivientes de violaciones y asaltos sexuales, encarcelados y aquellos fuera, de cualquier género.

El proceso de recuperación personal tras una violación es una experiencia muy personal. Sin embargo, el crimen ocurre dentro de un amplio contexto cultural el cual acepta violencia contra ciertos grupos de personas. Todas las partes de tu identidad como la raza,

etnia, orientación sexual, edad, y especialmente el género, afectarán tu experiencia de recuperación como sobreviviente de un asalto sexual. La violación es un crimen extremadamente personal en el cual uno se siente como si no importara. Es una experiencia profundamente dolorosa y deshumanizante para cualquiera. Los sentimientos de desgracia y vergüenza son profundos. Después de un asalto, sobrevivientes de todo género, raza y cultura tienden a cuestionar quienes son, lo que quieren, e incluso como reorganizar su propio ser. Sobrevivientes casi siempre logran esto con éxito. ¡Recuperación es posible! Lo siguiente fue diseñado para ayudarte a pensar sobre cómo tu experiencia como sobreviviente ha impactado tu entendimiento del rol del género y tu identidad de género.

para mas informacion:

Just Detention
3325 Wilshire Blvd.
Suite 340
LA, CA 90010

Personas transgénero: prisioneros transgénero corren un riesgo especialmente alto de asalto sexual. Las personas transgénero tienen la propensidad de pensar, y hasta es posible que les hayan dicho, que la violación paso a raíz de quienes son. Este mensaje frecuentemente hace que los sobrevivientes se sientan como malas personas que merecen ese tipo de tratamiento. También es probable que personas transgénero sean objetos de asalto sexual en sus comunidades. Múltiples experiencias traumáticas se agravan en sí mismas y complican el proceso de recuperación personal. Ya es suficientemente difícil sobrevivir la opresión que sufren las personas transgénero sin contar traumas adicionales.

Por favor recuerda que el asalto no ocurrió a raíz de quien eres. Ocurrió porque otra persona decidió cometer un crimen violento. Parte del proceso de recuperación personal será honrar tu fortaleza y reconocer lo fuerte que serás cuando pase el trastorno.

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) and Trans* Prisoner Rights

Milo Ehrenberg

The Prison Rape Elimination Act was passed in 2003 and, after a review of risk factors in prison rape, a number of recommendations were implemented in 2012 on the federal level and in 2013 on the state level. While this legislation is designed to protect the general prison population, many of these recommendations apply specifically to transgender prisoners. While PREA is, for the most part, implemented in federal prisons, state and private prisons could lose their federal funding if they do not follow these guidelines.

Here are the highlights of PREA that apply to trans* prisoners specifically: (from the National Center for Transgender Equality, *LGBT People and the Prison Rape Elimination Act*, July 2012).

- * Facilities must screen individuals to assess their risk for experiencing or perpetuating abuse, with special consideration given to transgender status, gender non-conformity, intersex condition, sexual orientation, and personal perceived threat level.
- * Facilities cannot penalize individuals for not disclosing their transgender status, gender non conformity, intersex condition, sexual orientation, disability, or prior victimization.
- * Genital sex may not be the only factor in deciding where an inmate is housed. Each transgender inmate is to be assessed on a case-by-case basis, with reassessments conducted at least twice a year.
- * All transgender people and people with intersex conditions must be given the right to shower separately from other inmates.
- * PREA recommends that protective custody (solitary confinement) be a “last resort” when protecting an inmate from violence. In cases where individuals are placed in protective custody, access to programs and education must continue as much as possible. In addition, these cases of protective custody are to last no longer than 30 days.
- * “Cross-gender” strip searches are prohibited, but the standards do not specify how this might apply to transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex individuals.
- * In order to avoid retaliation, PREA calls for individuals to have multiple ways to report abuse internally and at least one way to report abuse externally. Individuals are also given the opportunity to report abuse anonymously.
- * No disciplinary action can be taken against the person reporting unless it can be demonstrated that the report was made in “bad faith”.
- * Sexual abuse between inmates defined as “sexual contact made without consent, through threat or coercion, or when a person is unable to consent.” Facilities are allowed to ban all sexual contact.
- * All sexual contact between inmates and staff is considered sexual abuse. The inmate cannot be penalized unless the staff demonstrates through an investigation that they did not consent.
- * PREA calls for grievance procedures to be shortened, but is unclear on the logistics of such a change.
- * Prisons are to receive regular audits to insure compliance with PREA regulations.

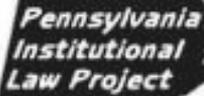
What does this mean?

Many of the above changes are already being made at the federal level. However, change will come more slowly at the state and local level, especially because much less of their funding is at stake. Moreover, a lot of what PREA calls for is incredibly vague and difficult to enforce. In short, while PREA is a great start, it lacks “teeth.” Advocacy and activism is still necessary at the local level to fully integrate these important changes.

Discrimination & Harrassment: Getting Legal Help

We received several letters from folks who are having a particularly hard time in their insitutions, seeking legal resources. We thought we would share the information with all our people in PA institutions who may be looking for legal help with a shitty situation. All of these organizations provide free services.

What you should do: Write to them, explain what is happening to you with as much specific information as you can. Who is harrassing you? What are they doing? How long has this been going on? Who have you told about what is happening? What have you tried already to make it stop? If you decide to write to any of these groups, include a sentence like this: "If your organization can't help me, please send me a referral to someone who might. I have already contacted [list who you already wrote to]."



Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project provides assistance to incarcerated or institutionalized people whose constitutional rights have been violated within the institution. Their main address:

PA Institutional Law Project
The Cast Iron Building
718 Arch Street, Suite 304 South
Philadelphia, PA 19106



If the harassment and discrimination you are experiencing is specifically related to your sexual orientation and/or gender identity, you might try Mazzoni Center, which has legal services for LGBT people in Pennsylvania, including discrimination cases:

Legal Services - Mazzoni Center
21 South 12th Street, 12th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107



If the discrimination and harassment you are experiencing is related to your HIV status, you might try the AIDS Law Project of PA, who fight for the rights of people with HIV/AIDS:

Law Project of PA
1221 Chestnut Ave, Suite 600
Philadelphia PA 19107



Another option is to contact the local branch of the ACLU. The ACLU sometimes takes prison conditions cases, but they are selective in which cases they take because they do "impact litigation." (Impact litigation is strategic cases that have the potential to change the situation for other people in similar situations to the plaintiff.

ACLU - Pittsburgh Office ACLU - Philadelphia Office
313 Atwood St. PO Box 40008
Pittsburgh, PA 15213 Philadelphia, PA 19106

Legislative Update from Philadelphia

Jordan Gwendolyn Davis

I am pleased to announce that this spring, a major LGBT rights bill was passed here in Philadelphia. Although it started off as an overhaul of the city code focusing mostly on life partnership issues (as the LGBT community sometimes sadly privileges over other pressing issues), I worked hard with another trans activist Kathy Padilla to include a “bucket list” of transgender issues, including:

- * Lifting the ban on transition related healthcare for city employees.
- * An equality tax credit that would REWARD companies which has trans inclusive healthcare.
- * Gender neutral bathrooms in all city buildings.
- * Codifying the rights to dress consistently with one’s gender identity on the job, to change records on the job, and for anyone to use the restroom consistent with their gender identity.
- * Adding the term “gender identity” to protected categories in terms of delivery of services at City Health Centers
- * Gender neutral city forms, unless proscribed by law or it makes sense to collect gender data.

This legislation received a lot of support, and very little opposition, save for one unhinged public testifier and three council members who questioned the equality tax credit. In fact, I publicly testified about discrimination in gender segregated spaces before the vote, and I was at least glad that those three city council members did not use incendiary bathroom rhetoric when opposing this bill.

This bill addresses many issues, but it is NOT perfect. I am planning to discuss with stakeholders how we can better address issues with the transgender community. However, the price of freedom and human rights is eternal vigilance and laws are only as good as they are enforced.



artwork by Dwayne Rieco

I'm Sorry I Ever Met You

Pretty Boy

You came into my life when I
thought life was through
But now boo
I'm sorry I ever met you
I lost my other half
and you told me
you wanted to be that too
But now boo
I'm sorry I ever met you
I let you see a different side
of me and turned your gray
skies blue
But now boo
I'm sorry I ever met you
I defended you, protected
you, and took care of you
But now boo
I'm sorry I ever met you
You swore you would never
leave me, you would help me
see this thing through
But now boo
I'm sorry I ever met you
They say in order to
experience joy you have to
go through pain and I've had
my share times two
So now boo
I'm sorry I ever met you
If this was about
a dollar or two
Then you're sorry boo and
I wish I never met you
I would say your name but
that would give you fame
And I ain't out to give you
what you don't have
So I'ma sit back and relax
'Cause you make me laugh
If you think you won,
think again boo
'Cause you're probably
sorry you met you

Hearts on a Wire staffed a table at an event in Philadelphia put on by the **genderEDGE Collective** called **Solidarity/Immediacy/Urgency** which featured a screening of the documentary **Make It Happen**, about the 2007 **Transforming Justice Conference** (a one-time conference focused on creating a national conversation about transgender imprisonment issues). After the film, there was a facilitated discussion, then some performances by queer and trans* artists. We had a table next to folks from the **Transgender Oral History Project**. One thing led to another, and our new friends are now using our newsletter to reach out to those of you on the inside, both to participate in their project and to make their resources available to you:

Transgender Oral History Project

The Trans Oral History Project is a collaboration based resource. Our mission is to promote a diversity of stories from transgender and gender variant communities by helping community members to share their stories. We accomplish this by promoting grassroots media projects, documenting people's experiences, and teaching media production skills.



In 2012, we launched the Trans Oral History Zine Distro which collects and distributes zines by trans* authors, zine compilations that include trans* authors, and zine compilations about LGBT history that are trans* inclusive.

Currently we have about 45 titles by about and for trans folks, which we are now able to offer to folks on the inside at no cost, for up to 2 zines per request.

Zines:

Comic:

Twinks for Sale
Mental Illness
Tranzilla #1

Children/Youth:

Carly: She's still my Daddy
Out of Order

Erotic:

Bound to Struggle: Vol. 1
Bound to Struggle: Vol. 2
Bound To Struggle Vol. 3
Bound To Struggle: Vol. 4
Bound To Struggle: Vol. 5
DUDE Transmasculinity
Issue #1
Full Metal Faggot #4
Tracing the Body

Genderqueer:

Boy Girl #2
Genderfailz #1
Genderfailz #2
Gender Matters
aFemme a Barbe vol. 2
Femme a Barbe vol. 3
Every body is a
modified body

Historical:

Militant Flamboyance
Out of the Closets and Into the
Libraries
Transgender Liberation
Community in Transition
Bet Power Interview
Sex Testing and the Olympics
Queers Read This
Vanguard Revisited February
2011

Justice:

Hidden Expressions
Dykes and Fags Want
to Know

Trans Feminine:

aFemme a Barbe vol. 2
Excerpts from the Journal of a Trans Girl
Femme a Barbe vol. 3
Gender Anarky
Just so You Know #2
"Let the Trans Women Speak!"
Short and Queer #8
Trannydykewhore: an autobiography in parts
Transgender Herb Garden
Tranzilla #1
Unapologetic Vol 1
Unapologetic Vol 3

Trans Masculine:

aFemme a Barbe vol. 2
Dress to Kill, Fight to Win
DUDE Transmasculinity
Issue #1
Femme a Barbe vol. 3
Full Metal Faggot #4
Hey Lady #4
Tintum
Twinks for Sale

Write to:

Trans Oral History Project
Care of the Civil Rights
Agenda
2129 N. Western Ave
Chicago, IL 60647

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.

Dear Hearts on a Wire Community:

To those who seek love, you can't love nobody until you love yourself. Furthermore you can't go into a relationship saying you love someone when you don't even know them. I don't want nobody to think I'm coming at them [with this letter], I'm just keeping it real ... I'm tired of hearing people say "this person played me" when you should have known what you was getting into. Before you can love you've got to be willing to start on a clean slate and state what you want and don't want in your relationship. Forget about your past; don't let that stop you from finding that True Love. You can't say you want this but not be willing to give in return. Sometimes you don't know what you had until it's gone and you're hurting because you messed up. It takes a real man or woman to say I messed up. Now I need to go fix my problem relationship. LOL.

- Juicy

Commissary Campaign (Issue 4)

A CO gave me an order to cut my hair, I refused. I did proper procedures to get a hair length exemption. I will not cut my hair. SO now I'll receive a misconduct, and that will stop me from being released to the community and I might go to the Hole. What can I do besides cut my hair?

-Peaches

I would love to be able to order the same things as any other female. They made a mistake and gave us a new commissary list that had lipstick, shower cap, eye liner and satin skin lotion. But when I ordered these items it comes back as unrecognized material. I still order them all every week hoping they will make a mistake. All inmates should be able to order the same Commissary, transgender or female or male.

-Suzie Moon

Real Talk (Issue 6)

Lexi-nonymous, you remind me of myself: Looking to be loved. That's all we ever want. To feel special, to be cared for, and be treated like a Queen.

-Peaches

Z-Code (Issue 7)

Miss Juicy raised a lot of good points on the Z-code issue.

-Shaylanna

Every time I read Miss Juicy's articles I smile because I can hear her voice in my mind. The policy on Z-codes is a joke. I found out at SCI Fayette that all Queens, homosexuals, etc. are classified as a "sexual predator." They told me if I start acting "like a man" and cut my hair then maybe in 10 years I could have a cellmate.

-Miley Selena Grow

We want to acknowledge that several other people wrote to Hearts on a Wire to alert us of this issue with the Commissary list, with similar experiences to Ms. Suzie.

From the Mail (Issue 7)

I have enclosed a drawing [and poem] based on Jessica Rabbit's, Shane's and Juicy's responses [to Lexi-nonymous' article Real Talk in Issue 6].



-Shaylanna

**Don't judge me...
From the waist up
Don't judge me...
By my looks
Don't judge me...
If you don't know me
Don't judge me...
It's not your right
But if you want to judge me
Remember
Only GOD can judge me,
So don't judge me**

General Response to Issue 8:

I love all of you in Hearts on a Wire, blessings to you all and thank you for your newsletter it keeps me so connected and close to my brothers and sisters, pride all day.

-Jimmie

A response to mail we recieved (Issue 8)

Jordan: thanks for speaking up and setting things straight.

- Miley Selena Grow

Ms. Jordan, don't let one person's issues and disrespect bring you down and stop you from doing what you believe in. I know you are hurting, because it brought back some pain from your past; ... Know you've got family out here praying for you to get through it and continue to do what makes you happy, fighting for change.

And to the individual who wrote the letter in question, though you made a mistake and made another person's life a nightmare, I urge you to seek forgiveness, stand strong, and know that I still love you as family, but disagree with your actions... your actions might make bigger problems for our community, people already look at us as a bad person who should die. We're discriminated against and hated... I pray that you find it in your heart to ask for forgiveness and seek help, and don't do it again.

I agree that there are individuals on the sex offender registry that shouldn't be there, but there's also some that should, and I pray for you Ms. Jordan that you don't allow this to stop you from fighting for a good cause.

Princesa (Issue 8)

It's crazy when I read this because I am still in love with my queen, Boo-Boo, and the stuff I read gave me the strength I needed to hold on tighter and not let go of the true love that the DOC stole from me. I love you angel. My angel didn't push me out of her life, not at all, the people that don't understand the laws of love did it to us. We can't control who or how we fall in love and I wouldn't trade my Boo-Boo, my angel, my love, for no one or no popularity contest. My angel is more a woman than any female I ever been with. Boo-Boo, your words have always been music to my ears and the melody that makes my heart beat fast. If you really love the person you wrote about, stay strong and focused because I am confident you and him will be together soon.

-Fly @ SCI Graterford

Miss Ebony (Issue 8)

That was a very nice memorial for Miss Ebony. I'm just so sorry to hear about her passing.

- Miley Selena Grow

We lost a lot of sisters, mothers, fathers, brothers over the past couple years and you know what? They were happy about who they were. I know a lot of them personally and the one thing that would make them mad is not living life the way you want to. All you got to do is keep it real.

-Juicy

trans/gender variant imprisonment in PA



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

A Report by the Hearts on a Wire
Collective

Many of us participated in a survey 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 at:
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/56677078/This-is-a-Prison-Glitter-is-Not-Allowed>

We want to hear from you!

This newsletter depends on your submissions for content.

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
- * Ideas
- * Articles

Next Issue: HOME

As we come into fall and winter, many of our thoughts turn to home. We are looking for **articles from you** addressing your thoughts on **home**. Here are some questions to get you started thinking about this:

What is home for you? What does it look like on the outside, on the inside? What strategies do you use to create a 'home' for yourself on the inside? How do you deal with homesickness? How has being trans* affected your ideas and feelings about home?

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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