

Hearts on a Wire

Issue # 32 - spring 2022

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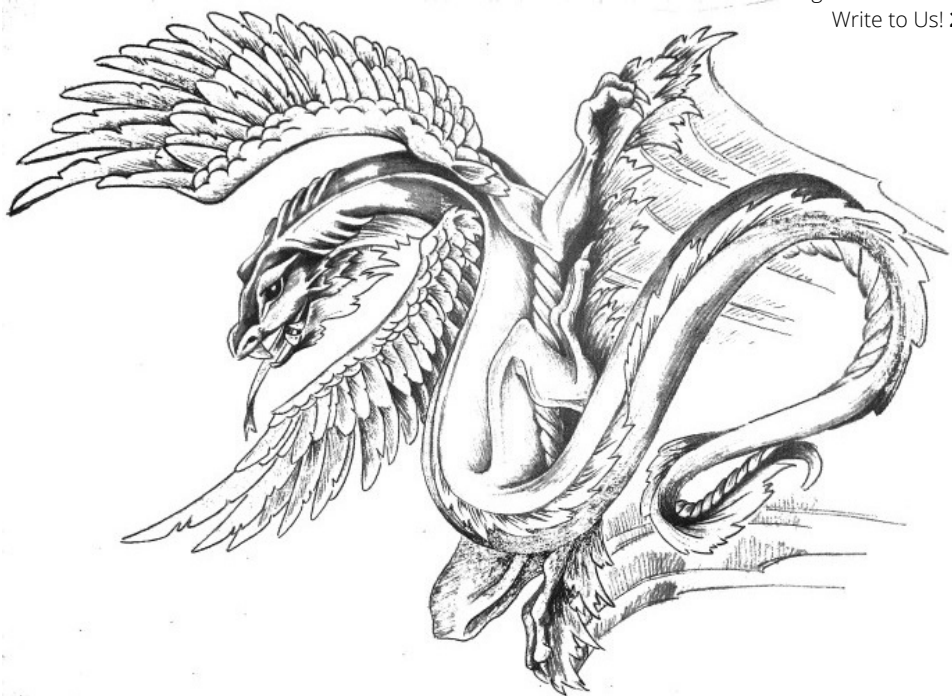
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affix PA DOC sticker here

♥ support incarcerated and detained trans and nonbinary people ♥

♥ build community through bars ♥

♥ organize for justice ♥

We are Pennsylvania-based trans and nonbinary people, and allies, building a movement for gender self-determination, racial and economic justice, and an end to the policing and imprisoning of our communities.

Contact us for the virtual meeting information.

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LETTER FROM THE OUTSIDE COLLECTIVE

Dear beloveds,

We are excited to share this newest issue with you! While the pandemic continues, the world tries to move on. We in the outside collective worked on putting this newsletter together as hateful attacks on trans families and trans youth continue in state governments across the country. Meanwhile, in this newsletter we see the Hearts collective-- trans people living, fighting for change and building loving communities despite so many obstacles.

Here in Pennsylvania, some previously incarcerated trans women have successfully challenged laws that prevented felons from changing legal names. This is an exciting victory with the potential to help all felons, and it happened through the work, leadership, and experience of incarcerated trans women.

These past months, Hearts on a Wire has received financial support from Trans Lifeline. Trans Lifeline is a trans-led group that offers direct support for trans people in crisis. We've also continued with video visits, connecting more inside and outside members. We see all the interest in the video visits and hope to keep expanding our capacity to offer more.

In these times with so many challenges, we in the outside collective are grateful to learn from inside collective members and support your voices. Thank you for making another amazing issue!

In loving solidarity,

~ The Outside Collective

THOUGHTS ON ABOLITION, PART 2

In Issue 30, we asked for your thoughts and feelings after reading the article on prison abolition. We asked if there was anything you felt excited about, anything that scared you, and what questions came up for you.

In Issue 31, we decided to continue this important conversation.

Michelle: On the HOAW issue #31 was very compelling and Thoughts on Abolition gave me some reflections to meditate on a greater reality for us.

Working towards abolition will be the hardest work. Today's politics condemn people just for thinking on the "wrong" side of prison issues. Not that we should back down from the good fight. The corrupt people need to be put out of Office.

Prisons have used recidivism for their profit to keep prisoners in their facilities, rather than actually correct harmful behavior. Prisons need to close down, and we need restorative programs.

Anistasia "Lady She Wolf" McKinney: I am absolutely all for abolition of the prison industrial complex. Our human lives have been viewed and treated by state & federal lawmakers & prison authorities as nothing more than dollar signs. They make money each year, paid by the county & state for each individual person in jail. And too many prison guards & other officials who have no real say, power, control of anything in society are infatuated with coming into work going the extra mile to try to act like top dogs, trying their best to oppress, limit, control & reduce prisoners, especially those of us who are transgender or otherwise in the LGBTQI+ community.

My only concern would be about whether or not abolition of prisons would be viewed & treated by many in society as a license for vigilantism/personal eye for an eye/tooth for a tooth vengeance.

But in all actuality, for abolition to become reality, it would most likely require modern day revolution & civil war. Because state/federal politicians make the laws & punishments & state/federal courts make many rulings & orders in support of them. They never give up any of it on their own, especially when so much financial profits are involved in warehousing human lives. But all of this stems from many decades ago when Americans decided & acted to give most all power & control, decision making, to state/federal lawmakers & courts to do most everything only get worse & more oppressive/insane, even court orders laws/punishments that get repealed- lawmakers and courts always make sure there's "plenty of gray area" & block channels to continue oppressing & profiting just under the guise & title of /as something else.

Continued on Next Page...

THOUGHTS ON ABOLITION, PART 2

Jennifer Rose: This community dialogue y'all are having "Thoughts on Abolition" is great. People have made some very good points and have addressed the many intersectional issues of race/gender/class-based social divisions of the people. I'd like to contribute!

Anonymous - "I have to say yes and no about prison abolition...people who do real morbid evil things should be locked up." People must be temporarily restrained, educated, given some type of rehabilitative, restorative, or transformative justice method of mental health recovery or socialization before being released. "Abolition" means abolishing prisons. We don't make exceptions for people who may be deemed "evil" or "morbid." This is similar to how some religious fundamentalists view queer and trans people! And how we once used to be criminalized by anti-sodomy or cross-dressing/gender binary laws that made queer/trans self-expression/self-identifying a criminal act! We were viewed as "obscene" or "abominations."

Didi@SCIForest: "Let's reform society and prisons all together." Abolitionists are revolutionary, not reformists. The U.S. prison system of mass incarceration has been "reformed" several times throughout American history as have the state prisons. We no longer seek to "reform" this broken system but to abolish it! Deconstruct! Defund! Demilitarize! Disarm! Decarcerate! Decolonize! Debunk! Disband! Dismantle! Demolish! Decriminalize! We want social revolution! We want autonomy! We want self-determination! We want to live! We want justice! We want peace! We want answers! We want solutions!

Lexi Love: "I believe that combining restorative justice with PIC abolition in practice, not just in theory." I agree that abolition requires action!

Michelle: "Putting people in prisons is not the answer...Restore real peoples lives." YES! We must begin learning about restorative/transformative justice concepts. We must have a paradigm shift and abolish the penal system of punishment and prisons. We must replace that with a revolutionary system rebuilding and restoring real peoples lives! Restoring rights and transforming victims and offenders rebuilding amending them into a community! We must put #PeopleOverProfits by providing #SchoolsNotPrisons! #JobsNotJails!

Twinky Bear: "Demand the dismantlement of America's corrupt police and legal system. I think we could replace them with trusted people from the community elected by the community." Right on! Revolutionary justice, community justice! #NoJusticeUnderCapitalism! Let's have each community have autonomy to become self-organized, self-contained as a direct democracy at the grassroots level, but we'll have inter-communal solidarity and voluntary cooperation/mutual aid as the main conceptual thesis and principal mode of social organizing in the wider human populace!

ABOLITION, CONTINUED

Miley S. Fletcher: Hope sends us dancing around dark corners trusting in a tomorrow we cannot see. A world without prisons? Have you ever seen the movie *Birds of Prey* featuring Harley Quinn? Or *Joker*? That's what I believe a world without prisons would look like. Have you noticed how many transgender people are murdered in the USA? All I see is chaos, mayhem and confusion. Our transgender community would be a target for violence.

The future is yet to come and what we make of it depends entirely on us.

Mrs. GeGe: I liked what people had to say about abolition. It makes so much sense to let people go and use the money for better things like education.

Theodore Riggins: I stand on the fence on this topic. Spending 40 plus years in prison... I hate the buildings, and what they stand for... You want to bitch about our courts and justice system, yea' most of us are screwed. Discrimination, racism, gender bias, it's a real thing.

... But I completely understand the need for it... How do we punish those that commit the most hideous, morbid crimes, how can our society honestly deal with these crimes? If we abolish our prisons, what would be the solution?

... Is the prison system the best solution for lawbreakers? Is building more prisons the solution for crime in our country? Is the real problem the race of those running the prisons? Where are most prisons built? What type of communities work in our prisons? If the gatekeepers were mainly African-Americans, or Latino, or Trans people, would prisons be safer, less discrimination?

Shrek (John A. Lewis MQ2668 SCI Fayette): It would be awesome to abolish prisons but to do that we would need to get rid of some politicians and get a few of us in the right places. It can be done we just have to strike at the right moment.

The United States is warehousing us for very big profits and Rehabilitation went out many decades ago. I'm 58 years old today and been doing this for a long time, not proud but shit happens. Back in the early 1990's they shutdown all the institutions for people with mental illness. They should've left them open. We were getting the right treatment then, now they don't give a crap if we even get treatment just as long we stay locked down and bring in that money.

Sorry Taz, we will never be treated the same in these places unless all of the LGBTQ+ stand together and change many things.

Twinky Bear, I agree 110% with your thoughts. We must all stay together and support each other and stay strong as our whole family.

Continued on Next Page...

ABOLITION, CONTINUED

Twinky Bear: To me, I think a world without prisons would be a world without dictatorship. A world without “totalitarianism?” If we had no prisons I don’t think we would have even seen the likes of Hitler or Donald Trump, there would be no such thing as slavery and homophobia would be non-existent. “Taste the rainbow” the flag of the world would be just that, the LGBTQ colors: Rainbow. The Acronym HIV would stand for: Homosexuals Invite Virtue. Love would be free and love would be encouraged. The definition of love would be ever changing and up to each individual without outside hate or judgment. A world without prisons would be a world I would love to live in.

Eric Rudolph: Being that I have a life sentence and I’ve been here since 1993, I agree with getting rid of life without parole. They should allow people to have a second chance. Your background should be looked at before they decide to do anything. I’m totally against the death penalty, that should only be given if they are serial killers. This is how I see things on an abolition. I’m happy the lifers bill got introduced. If anyone has more information on this bill, please let me know or pass it on the next issue.

COLLECTIVE MINDS UNITED

Ceci Ransome

LGBTQ community, listen up, please: Everything around us is the result of collective minds. Everything from cars, homes, the clothing we're wearing to the satellites that circle the planet, is the result of the collected thoughts of the human race. AND since that's TRUE, why can't we as a community put our differences aside for the purpose and the advancement of our community? Can we as LGBTQ people accomplish this? We have our own degrees in life; we know what we need, want, and desire. A home is built by different professionals, we all are professionals in our field. Respect each other's gifts, we don't need the paper to do this, we are on another level, and some of us are in another dimension. So my LGBTQ community, as you read this, take some time to THINK! And let's do this. Let's gain our respect! I love you all, I hope to speak to you all one day, in person.

MIND CANDY

Rachel

I come off as a Bitch
and I act slow
To my haters and oppressors
They just don't know.

Life is chess...
and I hate checkers
They believe all my thoughts
are only of peckers.

I love the shadows
and whispers over shouting
I'm patient like a cat
So keep on doubting

Monsters in life
are also weak
and not quite as strong
as they may think.

All have gifts
My sisters peep this
Each one of us
Is a different bitch.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Mrs. Gege

Myth: People who talk about killing themselves rarely do it, more often they just want attention.

Fact: Talking about suicide should always be taken seriously. Many people who attempt suicide give warnings or clues about their intentions because they are seeking help, not attention.

Depression and suicide go hand and hand. but there are signs you might notice. A friend might isolate themselves when normally they go out to dayroom, yard, etc. They might have a slumped down demeanor and their facial expressions are numb and cold. They might sleep a lot more than usual. They might get agitated easily too.

If you want to intervene, you could speak to this person. Tell them your thoughts about them in regard to depression. Ask the person to get some help by reaching out to a psychologist or another staff member. In PA, you can encourage them to talk to a Certified Peer Specialist (CPS). CPS' are individuals who are also incarcerated who are trained to provide support. To request a CPS ask your block Sergeant. Encourage them to talk to family members and/or friends. Family and friends can call and complain about the condition you are going through or report suicidal ideation and get you the help you need.

I would be a liar if I didn't say that I deal with depression almost every day. But I get through it. I try hard to put that smile on my face, but sometimes it is hard to do. The best way to get better is to talk about your depression. When I talk about it I feel like I've lifted the weight of burden off of me and then I can feel a little bit better. We all got things to work on--this is one of mine and I share it with a lot of others

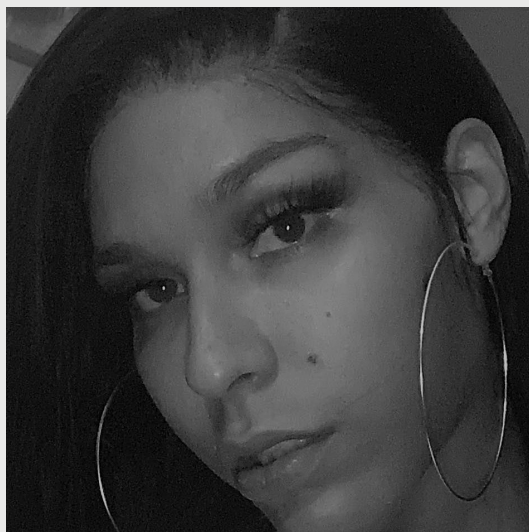
EAR PIERCINGS - REQUEST FOR HELP

Has anyone been able to get their ears pierced in the PA DOC?

DC-ADM 815 §3 (A)3 says that one small pair of post-style earrings are permitted as personal property (for "females/trans women" only), but only if the person had the earrings and piercings when she arrived.

Has anyone been successful in obtaining permission from the PA DOC and getting her ears pierced? If yes, what procedure did you follow? Can you please write a How-To for the next newsletter?

RIP Na'Tia



Hearts on a Wire is sad to report the death of Na'Tia Shaw on January 17, 2022.

Na'Tia had been part of the Hearts Community on the inside. When she came home she was involved in the outside collective until she moved away from Philadelphia. She was a fantastic dancer and the life of the party. She was attending culinary school and had a bright future. She was 31..

RIP Gemini

Hearts on a Wire is sad to report the death of Gemini Red on February 23, 2022, in Philadelphia.

Gemini had been part of the Hearts Community on the inside. She was a young 29, still getting to know herself and finding her place in the world.



These are devastating losses and our deepest condolences go out to the family and friends of these young women.

LEGAL: PA NAME CHANGES

HOAW Outside Collective

An inside member recently wrote to us about trademarking your name as a way of using it instead of your legal name if you are trans and are unable to get a legal name change due to a past felony conviction. We did some research and found what is possible and not possible when using a trademarked name (or “branding” your name).

You CAN:

- Conduct certain kinds of business transactions with the trademarked name, such as deposit checks under this name

You CANNOT:

- be issued an ID with the trademarked name
- update your birth certificate or social security record with the trademarked name

See page 27 for information on contacting TLDEF, including their name change project.

In July 2020, the PA Commonwealth Court rejected a lawsuit by the Trans Legal Defense and Education Fund (TLDEF) on behalf of several trans women. The lawsuit challenged the state law (54 Pa.C.S. §702(c)(1)) forbidding

legal name change for persons convicted of serious felonies on constitutional grounds. It was rejected for procedural reasons.

TLDEF tweaked their strategy and filed the name changes directly on behalf of the petitioners, served the State Attorney General, and made the constitutional arguments at the name change hearings. In late 2021, all three of these name changes were granted by the Philadelphia and Allegheny county courts. The AG did not appeal them.

These individual cases at the trial court level do not create binding legal precedent. This is nonetheless a very hopeful development. Individuals can follow the same procedure and make the same argument and likely reach the same result in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. And the legal groundwork for a constitutional challenge in the event of a denial is being laid.

WHEN

Juicy Queen Bee

When you're feeling lost
When you're feeling weak
When you're feeling
Down and out

Look to the sky
Hold your head high
Standing on faith
Be all you can be
Never let go

When thought of
Harming yourself
Seems to cloud your mind
Find that place
To love live your life
Standing on purpose

Living to live
Singing to be free
Living to love
Not allowing fear
To keep me down

Living to live
Help those in need
Being a voice to those
That can't speak
Eyes for those can't see
Being all I can be

Living
Spreading my wings
Flying so high
Touching the sky
Being all I can be

LETTERS & LOVE

Hey Kings and Queens! Its ya gurl, Reina 'Queen Mink 'Williams aka KeKE! I just received the fall issue + I see a lot of talented younger + older, Gods and Goddesses shining BRIGHT! Keep up the unity + stay strong, especially in times of need! I would like to shout out a few of the old + new family:

[At Coal Tonwship] Shadow (Snuggles) miss you bro, Dee-Dee (congrats), Dreq take care of my sis, Ryu (Sam) get ya butt home, Naira (Peaches) Gurl, you was always the creme creme la creme of the group, luv you.

[At Greene] Indy, hey boy, keep ya head high!

[At Forest] Twin + Zoey, Fidelity, T-Cup, JB, Savage, Papi, Sydney, Dilly, Stasia, Knowledge, Black, R.J., etc. Ms.Gigi, I see you big sis~ We'll reunite soon:) Last and most importantly, Carey AKA CR/Doo-doo, I love you so much. Words have no description on the depth of my love! You were my childhood husband + 'til this day, we going hard. I know you going through a lot but remember I'm in your heart + my spririt never leaves your side! You're my favorite soul mate! Til death do us part! WE will conquer all together, my love! Muah!- Cocoa fat-fat

~ Ms Reina Williams / Keke

Love

Ms. Reina Williams / Keke

Love is an indescribable emotion
that can make you or break you
It's an emotion with various degrees
It like an halo light that surrounds you
More like the oxygen we need to breathe
Can't you see that your love mesmerizes me
Like a fine diamond with powerful intensity
You see, its a conflicting energy
Its the most potent feeling that conquers everything
An emotion that's very pessimistic + very demanding
See, I always wondered why we run from this feeling
Because we're afraid to let love show our vulnerability
Its like a murder, once the prosecutor got substantial
evidence, its hard to beat the system
So what do we do, we never show our feelings
we dismiss them
We run, we hate + we fight against it
Instead of embracing, holding on to it, + cherishin' it
Why do we continue to be blinded
by what society portray it to be
Cause we allow them to filter our heads
with a bunch of garbage
But today I am no longer blind,
I opened my eyes + finally can see
that love can help me fix the way I move + mold me
into the woman Im supposed to be.....
Its my destiny
So take my hand, follow me + lets allow
love to guide us for eternity
Through a destiny so bright, ain't no light
More intense than mines
Cause my love is so pure + potent,
it's rare and hard to find
A love that's so raw + divine
that its a love this one of a kind
"It's limited edition, I'm glad to mention"

HOAW community:

I was paroled last May but I got violated and send back to prison for another 24 months. I felt deflated and worthless. Seeing your love and support for each other makes me smile. So thank you. I recently learned that my 16-year-old has come out as a trans male. I finally have a boy and I am so proud of him! I am hopeful we can reconnect.

Blessed Be

~ Yeti | Patrick Carpenter | 832016 | Washington State

LETTERS & LOVE

Dear Hearts Family,

Recently I received some great news concerning my case against the PA Department of Corrections, Dawn Guthrie v. John Wetzel, et al., case 1:20-cv-02351. The court denied the PA DOC's Motion to Dismiss. U.S. District Judge Malachy E. Mannion ruled that the case be remanded to Judge M.J. Schwab for further proceedings consistent with the Order.

For those who aren't familiar with my case, I am fighting for adequate medical care including Gender Affirming Surgery and permanent facial hair removal. My case also covers cross-gender strip searches that are being forced upon our transgender sisters and brothers in the PA DOC. Myself and the PILP Attorney remain very confident in the likelihood of a successful outcome that will be beneficial to ALL trans people in the PA DOC.

Recently, in a similar case brought against the Illinois Department of Corrections, the court granted a preliminary injunction granting transgender inmates' requests for gender affirming clothing, grooming items, adequate healthcare and housing consistent with their gender identity. The IDOC was also ordered to avoid cross-gender strip-searches!

Inmates in Maryland are given a choice of a search by officers consistent with gender identity or whomever you are most comfortable with. Why aren't we afforded the same humane treatment in PA? This is something that we all need to fight for. It is sexual abuse when a male authority figure forces a transgender female to strip off her clothing as he looks at her body. It is totally disgusting that inmates are treated as less than who we are. I am a woman and I deserve to be treated as such at all times. It is the same for trans men. These amazing guys are housed as females and most of the staff there will not acknowledge them as the men that they are!

This is all of our fight and if you are traumatized by the inhumane treatment that we are forced to endure daily, you must file that paperwork!! We can't wait for someone else to make changes for us. Please join the fight. We ALL deserve to be treated as the gender we identify.

Your sister,

~ Dawn Guthrie | MQ7942 | SCI Mahanoy

Dear Timothy: Hey love <3 Yes I'm out of the RHU and it feels good. I would love to meet your mom and dad. Yes, I want to be back on the west side of the jail but first they have to take away the separation from me for fighting. I miss you too my queen. My heart goes out to you. My family is doing well. It's good to hear you call home every week. It keeps your mind open and clear.

Shout out's to my HOAW family. Mariah @Mahanoy, keep your head held high girl <3. To all you others you know I got love 4 y'all.

Know you are loved and supported

~ Knowledge aka Reginald T @ SCI Forest

Ain't it Evil to Live Backwards?! That's why I live going forward. Shout outs to Chaos (wherever you are); Dink; Slim (on the other side) and all my other Brothers.

~ Skillz | SCI Houtzdale

LETTERS & LOVE

Dear HOAW Family,

Hello to everyone. Thank you to the outside collective for everything you've done for us TG's inside. A huge thank you to any of you who have called the PA DOC on my behalf. The unprofessional C.O. who frequently used derogatory terms has been permanently banned from my block. Security sat down with me and assured me she would not be back. They then asked if I could get the calls from outside to stop. Thank you so much.

I am also fortunate enough to be getting video visits from Tee. It's been a real blessing to talk to another trans person since covid has sectioned us all off from each other. There's been no LGBT support group, video conferences, or really any contact with the few other trans people here at Rockview. Shout out to my sisters Cree and Cassidy. I wish we could get more time to talk about 'mones and compare notes. Shout out to Nora and Sophie. Special shout out to Teddi, my friend, mentor, and seamstress. Special shout to Miss Jaina, you are the main reason I found myself. I know when you get out and can finish what you started here you will be happier. You're beautiful. Thank you to Harley Quinn for all the excellent info. Mrs GeGe, the one issue of L.I.G.H.T. I have is like a Bible on 'mones to me. Finally Keon I'm sorry everything happened like it did and I'll see you when we are both outside okay?

With Peace and Solidarity,

~ Monica @ SCI Rockview

Hey guys I love my new jail. I got my money straight now I bought a TV, tablet, and some sneakers. Houtzdale sucks. I get treated better here too! Tank 'sup your cousin ain't here no more so def try to get here.

Peace,

~ Able AKA Gator

I would like to give a shout out to Cory W. and Che Che up Camp Hill.

~ KeKe

Personal shout out to my uncle Teddy, GiGi and Char, and all here at SCI Somerset. Also, to all those of the LGBT communities throughout the country, stay strong.

~ Mr. InspirePA

DOUBLE STANCE

Dee Dee in Florida

Confusion is who i am
The only constant in my life
It's why i have no friends to talk with
It's why i have to write.

It leaves me vulnerable, influenceable
So easy to be led astray.
Hearts laden with good intentions
These two minds often render me unstable
The mediocracy of my life derives from the
Thorny vines of unbalance
I'm neither up nor down nor left or right
These hurricanes fight violently, chasing
Away the silence.

The essence of good will, ripped open,
Poisoned by unkindness

Two entries with two different propensities
Not enough clarification
Both volley for space, Neither friend nor
Enemy

This double stance will soon be the end of me socially

LETTERS & LOVE

In a time when things seem to be going to hell, there's an angel in Mahanoy. Her name is Mariah. Mariah is humble, and has a way of giving love a whole new meaning. She's all about the underdog. Mariah I love you beyond words. Harley, you're awesome girl! No filter in your words makes you Mahanoy's spunkiest girl. I love that I met you. Big Poppa, Thank you for lifting me up! Good men are so hard to find in this world. You chose me to love. I'm honored to love you back. Taz, I think about you a lot. Twisted, hold on love, it will all fall together soon. Fight. When you stop, they win. Ms. Kaitlin Mae Santos, I loved your words. Skyler Mullins, you're loved. Never forget that. Damn, Siobhan, you sound so sure of who you are! Good for you. Stay you! To our sisters and brothers who feel alone in your fight. You are never alone. I hold you close to my heart. Hold tight to your dreams! Remember all, a house divided can't stand.

Much love,

~ Sage Nicole AKA Sherman Graham

Dear HOAW Fam,

I'll be brief y'all, I didn't get issue #30, so any shoutouts, I didn't ignore y'all. I got #31:

Ary: No love lost but you could've hit me up and let me know what it was. I still love you though. Stay beautiful. Juicy: I see you, we both in our abolition bag. Love always. Didi: Keep motivating and elevating because I am! :) Harley & Dee-Dee: We got time it's love eternal with y'all. Let Shadow know I wrote him.

THANKS FOR THE LOVE! Y'all get me through these 4 years in the whole every issue.

~ Indy

Dear HOAW,

Shout out to the LGBTQIA+ in all the DOC. Shout out to my ex- wife Amber @ Benner it's all love, you still have a friend in me. Shout out to my homeboy Blue Magic @ Benner. Haven't heard from you, love you bro! Shout out to my homegirl Maxine. Keep ya head up. Also to Foxy, keep fighting hopefully you'll be free one day. I really miss the PA DOC Delaware aint it!

~ Jesse L. @ James T. Vaughn Corr. Center Delaware

I want to let the fam know I luv them & to stay strong! T-Cup, Ira, Zoey, stay fierce ladies & hold y'all heads high! Twin & JB, be the kings y'all destined to be! C.R. my amazing husband, you are my world & everything in it! We may be apart but in spirit we are always together! Stay strong & remember, I love you 'til death do us part.

~ Reina Williams

Hello family, it been a long time. There's a lot of new people writing. Some of y'all really touch me. Love to everyone that's a part of Hearts on a Wire. 2022 have to get better than 2021 for sure.

God bless.

~ Keith Brown #BD0455, California

PANTS...THAT KEEP NO SECRETS

Twinky Bear

I Love Em in Pants, that keep's no secrets --
Some say its in they Eye's --
Some say its in they smile --
Some say its in the way that they wear their Hair -

-
For me, its whats swimming underneath "a pair" --

Can spot it in Denim --
Love to see it in Linen's --
Sweatpants command my attention --
Basketball shorts flimsy, did I mention --

B*A*N/A*N/A*S They in

They Hammock's

And Yes

I have, they Print.....

Pants....Pants....Pants....

I Love it in Pants, that keep's no secrets -
I Love it in Pants, that keep's no secrets -
I Love it in Pants, that keep's no secrets -

LETTERS & LOVE

Hello, My Hearts Family!!!

I am feeling so Good and in L-O-V-E. I am happily engaged to the love of my life Dwayne. Daddy I love you more than words can ever describe. Boo Boo I can't wait to go home and start our lives together. Excited is not the word. No one can replace what we have and what we have built. I love you now and forever Babe.

Your future wife & Forever Girl

~ Didi @ Forest xoxo

The good thing about having to lose is... there is, then, everything to gain.

~ Rachel

I would like to say hi to my brothers and sisters at Forest, I miss you very badly. I'm here at Fayette and just paroled again. Hopefully I can do it right this time. Sydney and Ed, I'll be writing soon, hang in there. Stay strong & keep fighting the fight. Love you all.

~John Shrek Lewis, SCI Fayette

1st and 4most shout out to HOAW THX for everything I owe yall. Jynx Bloodthorne don't let appearances get in the way of being who you want to be, it's what's inside that matters. To Rebecca, of course. Ceci sorry for your loss, hang onto that LOVE. Juicy appreciate the words. Indy, I'm sorry. Harley Quinn get at me I want to help with that lawsuit I lost your info. Dylcia stay up strong woman! :) Psycho @ Mahanoy I miss you I have titties and a feminine figure now I <3 U, you know me as Kasper or Kas from Graterford Lower H block.. Twisted be strong send that info. Big Foot MWAH. To everyone else I LOVE yall stay up always be you, always love you and show your rainbow always.

Love and Loyalty

~ Ary (Zachary Graham | NP2097 | Greene)

Shout-outs to all my (M.P.) sisters... the Diva (M.P.) family, Lady Bug's (M.P.) family, Teddy Bear's (M.P.) family... Lindsey, Marvelous, Cherri, Nikki, Angie, Zyniah, Money, Snow Bunny, Big Baby, Kiki, Deanna, Dee-Dee, P. Y. T., Storm, Star, Princess, Anistasia.

Diva Love,

~ Contessia M.P. 4 Life

LETTERS & LOVE

Dear Hearts on a Wire!

I want to thank you for putting out your magazine! It's so very valuable to all of us Transgender Girls here in KY Prisons! It's hard to find any kind of info on being trans in prison. I'm 60 years old and I've been locked up for 31 ½ years now. I finally came to the point that I'm tired of hiding who I am and got up the nerve to come out to the DOC in July 2021. I'm proud to be a Transgender Woman! I want to thank my two Transgender Girlfriend Kyra Lee and Brianna who both helped me to be comfortable enough to come out in the open to the DOC! I want to thank Hearts on a Wire for the Issue #31 article about Estrogen! That knowledge about Estrogen impressed the psychiatrist to the point that they're starting me on hormones sooner. I'm going to come out to all the inmates here as they don't know I'm a girl yet. I've been keeping it on the low. I want to thank all of Sexy Transgender Girls and Guys out there for your stories of Courage! You have helped so many of us to find the strength to come out as who we really are. Strong Transgender Women! I love you all!

~ Letisha Ann | Kenneth Holman #104608

I want to express my gratitude and appreciation to the altruistic compassionate nature of the outside collective for giving us this outlet and space. Issue 31 had me hooked! It's been a while, and I was enthusiastic and eager to dive in. Unfortunately, I been in the RHU since 10.22.21 so this was definitely a boost of spirits on my behalf.

Ceci I want to send my condolences on behalf of you losing your husband. Sometimes we forget the brevity of life and how precious our existence is. Stay strong sister. CPS Simpsons, I really enjoyed your ideology on abolition. I find myself in agreement with your views and opinions which seem authentically focused on instigating effective rehabilitation. To everybody @ Forest that I spent 3 years of my life with I miss yall unmeasurably. Diamond Sistah! Aaayyoww! BOUNCE DAT KITTY! LOL I love your whole life. Fidelity I don't know if you went home yet, but if you read this, you are my sister, friend & confidante. I miss our sincere conversations. Auntie SJ AKA Ms. Mocha the turn up was real before I left Forest LOL! Remember I got in the vent start rapping CTFU! I love & miss you Diva. Big foot what up? I agree with everything you said pertaining to how we should treat each other. We all have to strive to implement genuine bonds and empathetically support each other. It takes courage and strength to be authentically you. We have to love ourselves and be fiercely defiant to oppression. We have to always be unapologetic for living out our pursuit to happiness. I love yall humbly.

~ Solid Nir @ Fayette | D. Malloy MS5034 | FREE THE REAL

Dear Hearts,

Thank you so much for your help to keep in touch with my heart while he was in the RHU. Shoutout to the LGBTQA for keeping me calm while he was there. Since he's been out we talk every day we can in main yard. Knowledge my love thank you for letting me be me and be in your life. You see me for me without judgment I love you for that and always will xoxo. It feels good to finally be who I am on the inside.

~ Tammy | Timothy Scheib | MP5176

LETTERS & LOVE

Shout out to Marian at Mahanoy. You're missed a lot. Stay out of trouble and keep your head high.

To Whittany. Although we have not met, just wanted to send you love. As time goes by, those that respect you will call you by your name. And those that don't, well then they're not worth your time. You have support from myself and my girl Syd. Keep on fighting!

To Didi, Pretty, Will, Diamond, ST, T, Alexis, Fidelity, Savage, CR, Bey, Gio, Five (you can do better), Knowledge and Puck. If I missed anyone, I apologize, you are all loved.

To my girl Syd! You have no idea how special you are, and how strong you are. You are the sweetest most loving person I have ever met, and my love for you is beyond words. I have the baddest, prettiest girl in the community. I hope you know how much you mean to me. I love you!

~ ED @ SCI Forest

Hearts! To ALL out there in our community, I hope all is well with you. Shout out to Juicy... May your loved one always reside in peace. Also I loved your piece on abolition. Your poetry is always a nice addition as well. Want to give a huge shout out to Jade and Amber in WCI-WI... Love you both! I'm still in Segregation, 3+ years. There are more pluses to isolation than downsides. This girl doesn't play well with others. It's the vampire in me... Love to everyone on the Wire!

~ Rachel | Sherman Kapp #398919 | GBCI, WI

Heart on a Wire and LGBTQIA+ fam: Thank you! Receiving HOAW has gotten me thru some lonely times. I've been the only trans woman on my side of the block for years & years. I've wished time & time again for whatever higher power there is to allow me to have a trans friend. To share in the joys & struggles & ambiguities. Someone I could turn to for advice. I may not have gotten my wish but I have HOAW to look forward to. Thank you to all who contribute.

Gratefully,

~ Ash Horan | GZ4476 | SCI Mahanoy

Dear family/community: I'm in SHU/Adseg, because my safety depended on it. I filed a PREA against my cellmate and they took me to central control for 4 days. I was subjected to artificial lighting for 4 days with no sense of time. Central control was cold. I asked for blankets and they said 'we are looking for some for you. Just be patient,' but it never arrived. I was also subjected to water fetching every or every other hour and irregular bathroom 'privileges.' My hormones came at irregular times. My property was stolen.

Meanwhile he was put back in the safety of a cell with his TV, his property, his canteen, and all other things. Where is my justice? Does anyone feel the same?

~ Luna Banemoldn', Lexington Correctional Center

Hello HoAw: I have found out that it is not legal to be on Megan's List for life. It is over-sentencing. If you want to know more you can write to me.

Yours truly,

X Marcelino Avila | GX4436 | SCI Greene

LETTERS & LOVE

Sending out my love, thoughts & care to all of my sisters and brothers at SCI Forest & all jails & out in society too! I searched for 41 years of my life for the mate & love of all my hopes & dreams. It truly seemed like a pipe dream & never meant to be for me, but then & against all odds, Sept 4th 2020, I finally found her, my wife Mrs "5¢" Lakisha Annabelle McKenney, I love you and need you more than life & the world my tigress & boo! You've proven all the doubters as well as the former me, all wrong. We have come such a long way, you have healed/restored me alot & in ways that nobody else, nor my own self, could not & did not ever do. I know that I cannot live, love, nor be ever again without you, that is how rare and powerful our love is.

~ Anistasia

Shout out to chilly willy william. A man who has never broke my heart. A man who has never cheated on me. A man who bends over backwards for me. A man who treats me like a queen. A man who has such a great kiss and wonderful strong arms to hold me tight. A man who tells me he loves me no matter what. A man who protects me. All I do is tell him. I love him so much. He's the king of my HEART! Shine bright like a diamond!

<3 Love your wifey Miley xxooxx <3

Shout out to all the girls out there. hi to my sister Cree at SCI Rockview. I miss + love you. Thank you to everyone at HOAW for everything you do for us on the inside. I love getting my newsletter. They always help me + inspire me to stay strong. Everyone at HOAW makes me feel loved + wanted so thank you.

~ Brittney Lynn| SCI Albion

I just read one of your newsletters and loved it. Shout out to CR, Shadow, JB. Because I'm the way I am I have no family support from the outside, but again I love the community. It makes me feel like I'm around my own. Thank you HOAW for showing that we have a place in this world.

~ PooPoo

Tammy my Heart is yours. i love you too. we will always be connected at the heart. LgBtQa family thank you for keeping my baby calm and safe. My love goes to you all. Hearts on a wire thank you for keeping us in touch with one another.

Love

~ Knowledge | Reginald T | GH0074 | SCI Forest

I WON'T TELL Summer Breeze

Chorus:

I won't tell, I won't tell
If you run in my cell
I won't tell, I won't tell
If you run in my cell

Verse #1:

We be sneaking and geeking
A lil late nite freaking
He's my lil secret
That's how we will keep it
When yo bros come around
There won't be no speaking
I keep my fronts on point
Cause i know you be peeking
Ain't worried bout no hoes
It's me he be seeking

Verse #2:

When the cops do a round
He be talking me down
I be dropping it low
Putting on a freak show
We don't need no bed
Get yo ass on the floor
I be making it clap
While he deep in my trap
Throw up both yo hands
If you feeling this rap

LETTERS & LOVE

Hello my beautiful family,

Just sending my love in these difficult times. I hope & pray everyone is staying healthy & safe. I am going on my 4th month on HRT after a long struggle. Finally. I love you all, keep your heads up,

~ Victoria M. Drain | #726-985 | Ohio

I wouldn't trade my womanhood for all the dope I want for life, for all the money in the whole entire world. My lord god in heaven knows I love being a woman.

~ Miss T. Nelson

Dear HOAW Family,

It's been a rough time since leaving Smithfield. Special thanks to Miss J, Miss Juicy, and Ms Dior. Miss Whitney I hope you are okay. Special shoutout to Jerry at Smithfield. You know I miss you love. I wrote to your sis with my info. I wouldn't be who I am without you in my life.

Love to all who share the struggle every day.

~ Rich | SCI Forest

To everyone that shares their thoughts, ideas, emotions, art work, thank you all. <3 Y'all definitely keep it poppin. LGBTQI+ have a huge existence in this universe leaving rainbow prints in the sky. So to all my brothers and sisters y'all rightfully royalty always remember y'all's lives matter.

Juicy you will forever have a place in my heart. To my friends that's always on my mind Tyreek, Slim, Mili from North Philly, Nasty, Six pack, Love, Bre, Precious, Unique, Niara I love you girl you're always missed, Bigfoot what up bro much love and respect, Dawn Guthrie hi beautiful, Ms. Janel I'm trying to see you in my future. All you Kings and Queens stay strong, stay safe and be PROUD. Peace,

~ B. R. 2 STAR | B. Scott | KZ2276 | Fayette

Heyyyy HOAW FAM, I hope everyone is doing good. I have been dealing with manic depression. We had zone 1 bingo here the other nite & it was cool to see people we haven't seen in a while from Ashley, Kash, Jo Jo, Gator & more. I have been approved for HRT from the psych; now I have to see the Dr. Shout out to Miley for reaching out. I'm about to start grievances for those of us in male prisons to be able to get the make-up products that those in female prisons get. I would like to thank every1 from HOAW for the support they have given me & my friends. Especially Adrian for the video visits that I look forward to every month. I learn from our friendship.

~ Taz | Tyler Trewitz | NM4043

OPPRESSIVENESS

Dylicia Alicia Snow

Abandoned and Abused from a young age,
Consequences put me in a cage,
So much Pain in the World,
Treated like a Man when I'm a Girl,
Everyday we hear of violence,
they are killing in the streets,
Discrimination on a leash,
It's our Countries biggest feats,
Sad to say there's so much
Racism in a land that should be Free,
Bigger than Black and White,
Won't someone please just shine the light,
We Need Peace and Unity,
But all that we ever get is scrutiny

LETTERS & LOVE

Hey HOAW family: As you might recall in issue #30 I was seeking advice about telling my father I am transgender. I have to admit it didn't work out the way I thought it would, that door is closed in my face for good. My family wants me to stop taking hormones and I said not a chance in hell. They said they'll always love me, I'll take that cause I'll always love them too. However I'll always love me more and I'd rather have that door closed now than to have it shut in my face when I get home. I am going to be myself and love myself and stay true to myself no matter who accepts it. Shoutout to my husband Maz I love you babe for having my back and being there when I need you most, I really wish there was a way we could grow old together. There isn't a day that goes by I don't think about spending the rest of my life with you! I LOVE YOU MAZ. To Spade thanks for the advice. Shoutout to my brothers and sisters Heather, Steph, Reggie, Redhead, Detroit, Meghan etc.

~ Egypt Ily Moore @ Benner

Dear HOAW family,

I am a trans woman incarcerated in Maine. I have been housed at the male facility for most of the last 3 and 1/2 years. Maine has got to be a good 20 years behind most states. I am currently 1 of 4 transwomen housed here amongst 1000 cisgender men. Needless to say, I have been met with resistance from nearly every angle. However, anytime I have been hit with resistance or psychologically beaten down by ignorant bigots, I remember the stories of adversity that I have read from other trans people incarcerated across the country and I keep pushing forward, trying to make changes where I can. To date I have started and facilitated the only LGBTQ group within the Maine prison system. I am also engaged to a wonderful man who is also incarcerated at the same facility as me. We are trying to get married here, and if allowed, would become the first inmates in Maine to marry each other under the Marriage Equality Act. I am determined to not let them win and to continue to make positive changes for trans people everywhere; even after my release. It is through your strength in adversity that has given me hope, thank you. With community we can create change.

~ Mysti Aymara | MDOC#96919 | Warren, ME

I truly enjoyed Issue #31 from the beginning to the end. And I would like to give a shout out to my homegirl DEEDEE at Wakulla and tell her I cried cause that poem *Love is like a Rose*. And to all the other trans women who read Hearts on a Wire my love goes out to all you all. I get very emotional when I hear all the B.S that goes on in prison. Just know we are special people and God loves us... Big hugs + kisses to H.O.A.W yall keep up the good work and may God continue to bless yall to help us trans women who need a voice. Thank you again.

Your sister,

~ Kayla Lashae | 219 Dayone | Q wing WOK CI

I've been here 4 years and on segregation half of my time behind my sexuality. I was forced to come out of the shower in my bra, called a faggot, taken to a back room off-camera and beaten by a sergeant. I need y'all's support.

~ Tink Tink

LETTERS & LOVE

First, I want EVERYONE's attention. If you were in Rockview from 2010-2021, I owe you an apology, but specifically GiGi (Ghost, Is that you?), Hannah, Bam, Big Shirley, and lil Mama. I've talked shit on all of ya. (sometimes to your face) I'm so sorry. This is hard to write, but I feel as though talk is cheap and anyone can say anything. Gigi, I want you to pay attention. You know me the best. Forgive me.

Since 2010 I was raped multiple times (lost count). I blamed all of you for this, not the rapists. I seen it as you "enticing them" and they seen me as a weak white boy that is "guilty" by association. Essentially, I blamed you for portraying a gay image on me that got me harmed. I know that this isn't logical, but it's how I lived with it. I raged against the community. Sometimes I did it with a smile and a friendly chat. I once drew full-body caricature of GiGi to humiliate her. When I fished it to her, I fished it face up so everyone could see. You know what happened? SHE LAUGHED?

#EpicBackfire She hung it up on her door. In no time flat, the whole block was cracking up. Next thing you know, there is a football team of C.O.s, counselors, etc. calling their friends on their walkie-talkies to come see it. At one point, GiGi was like, "MY EYES ARE UP HERE, BUDDY!" LMFAO! That C.O. turned red and walked away. (Remember me now, GiGi?)

This moment changed my life. I stopped seeing her as a "thing" and saw her as a person. Although I did not show it, she had a huge effect on me. I went to extremes to hide this part of me, but GiGi cracked the shell. Since then, I've secretly been researching LBGTQ+ things. Janet Mock's "Redefining Realness" blew through my emotional walls and left me bare, exposed, vulnerable. I sobbed uncontrollably for days after I read the book. I felt like a fraud because VERY deep down, all along I wanted to be with you. To tell y'all who I am. To tell you I'm scared and I look up to y'all. To tell you the truth.

This is who I am. I am "Twisted" from issue #31 HOAW. My name is Munta (pronounced "moon-ta") and I AM A TRANS WOMAN. I'm making it my personal mission to fight for our rights. We have a right not to be raped. We have a right not to be brutalized WE HAVE A RIGHT TO LIVE!

~ Munta

Diana Jessica Garza



Thanks to HOAW for giving me a hand.

Sometimes I ask myself what's my reason for this life that I am in. I have come to the understanding that I have a powerful voice and the willingness to keep moving forward even when there seem to be no light. I feel my way in hope for better days. I must inform everyone that my freedom has come. I realize that until every-one else is free a part of my heart is still inside them hateful walls. My thoughts are on those ones who are ready to give their best no matter how long we have to fight.

~ Ms. Zoni "that=part"| Darnell Diggs

LETTERS & LOVE

Hey all you sexy trans mamas!

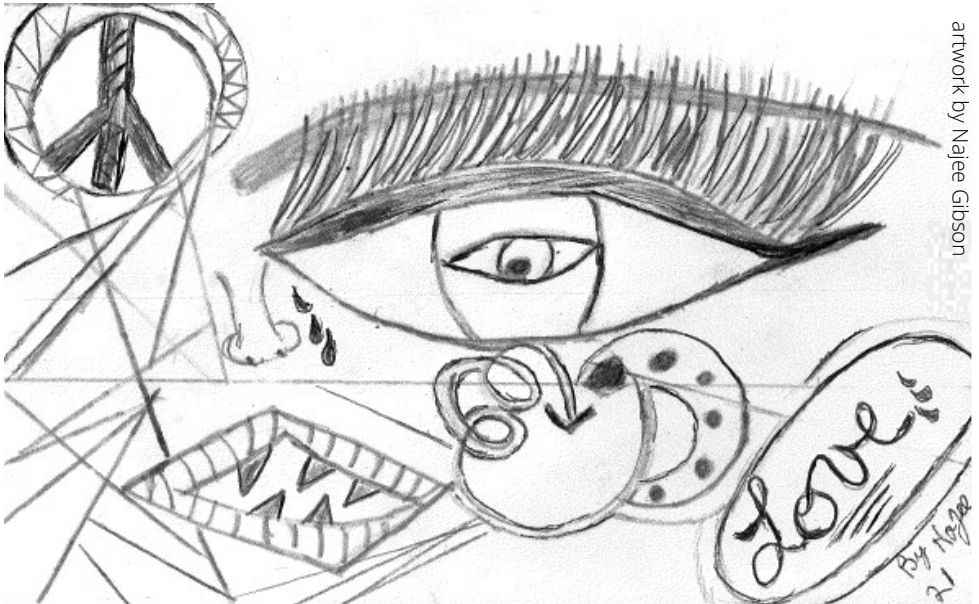
Story time: I'm sitting here in my cell thinking about something my mom said to me after I came out to my family as a trans female. She said to me she's always wanted a son, and when she found she was having a boy she was so happy. To find out I'm a trans female hurt her feelings and broke her heart. 10 years later what she said hits me hard. I don't wanna do anything but eat, sleep, and cry. I feel really bad for her and wish I could poof a baby boy in her arms who would be a cisgender heterosexual boy. I wish I was not trans. I hate that I am. I can not change it so I just have to learn to love myself.

We keep losing our trans sisters. The only way we can decrease the killings of us trans females is if we stick together. We need to stop with this bullshit in our community with this "Oh I'm better than this one." Like stop! It's killing us! I'm sick of it!

~ Brittany @ Houtzdale

Shout out 2 all the LGBTQIA in all of the DOC Around The world stay Real stay loyal 2 one another most Important stay yourself and never change and always keep y'all heads up stand up stay proud . 2 the most Important woman in my life i love you with all my Heart and soul Babygirl You are my everything , I love you and can't wait to expand our family. Shout to all my Brothers and Sisters @ Benner keep y'all heads up and always keep it 1,000,000,000% with one another and love your life...

...Jacquan Blue Richardson...<3



artwork by Najee Gibson

LETTERS & LOVE

Love and support to the Hearts community. I want to thank those who showed love to me in their letters. It means a lot.

Unfair judgment is something we experience from those so-called normal people. It hurts when we are judged harshly for simply embracing who we are on the inside. Sadly some of us, myself included, are judged because of what other people believe based solely on media headlines, sound bites and word of mouth. I myself passed judgment based on what I heard and in most cases once I got to know the person I realized I did not have all the facts. I felt victim to accelerating someone else's agenda. I now need to remember I am not defined by other people's perceptions. I am defined by who I really am: a trans woman, an abolitionist, a prison conditions litigator, a loyal and mostly honest person. What defines me are my actions and my heart. When people take the time to get to know me, many have changed their prior judgment. Sadly some never will but it is their loss. It still hurts to be judged, but I will no longer allow others' judgment to define me.

"Twisted" your letter in Issue #31 reached me deeply. I've been where you are now. I spent 40+ years denying who I was. Presently I am fighting the PA Prison System for the most basic treatment for gender dysphoria. To give up is to empower the hate, not an option. So "Twisted" you do have a friend to talk to, someone who experienced much of what you endure now. Someone who fights every day for a reason to live. To the Hearts community, we all share similar issues. Together we are strong. Light and love to all.

~ Ms. Linda Mai Li MQ5447 @SCI Benner

Ary, never give up on your dreams to support others. You're truly an inspiration. Linda May, I hope you're doing well and recovering. We miss you here. To everyone else I don't know stay strong and remember you're loved.

~ Kayla Shay LH1546 @ Greene

I finally started by HRT on 10/1/21. I'm so happy. Shout out to Monica and Harley Quinn. Hope everyone is doing their best. You all are like family to me.

~ Cree

UNTITLED

Twinky Bear

God, I wanna go home so bad
Take away my breath
and I'd head to the water
Grow gills
to become my life supporter
Give up all the prospect
of happiness on land
For a few minutes
with my parents
to willingly be confined to the
Blackness past the sand
Or walk a thousand miles
and taken on the blisters
Would welcome the single life
and forget all about my mister's
Yes I'm a wisher
Out here shooting my shot
As if I were a fisher
Man, and that's with only
a single worm on my hook left
My life,
I've done nothing with it
so far
but make a mess
To be able
to hug my mommie again,
I'd give up my life
with one day left
God I've done made
the biggest mistake,
please make prison go by swift
Daddy I love you too,
don't know
how much of my mind
I will have left
I'm turning it all over
to God
and praying for a gift
My parents loving embrace
is all I want
if God grants me one last wish
This jail time is killing me

MY DAUGHTER

CR AKA Corey

You are the special blessing that has always brought great joy and happiness into my life since the day you were born.

I want you to know that you've grown beyond my greatest expectations.

Be happy in your life and always know that wherever you go and whatever you do I'm very proud of you.

I will treasure you always and love you forever
You mean the world to me and I love you with all my heart!!!

LETTERS & LOVE

Shout out to Somerset community Char, Chan, Chanel, Ms Shy, Kayla, GiGi, Lo-Lo, Step, Love, Alysa, Peeches, Fresh #1 Ronnie, Bandy, Jamie, Ricky, Strawberry.

~ Somerset Teddy/Theodore Riggins

I hope that all of yall in HOAW are doing wonderful. A shoutout to all the LGBTQ community in Texas, and family and friends Allena, TJ, Red. I miss and love all of you Xxx

~ Ms. Karma

Hello to everyone! I give my love to all of the amazing guys and girls I've met here at Forest. I would like to say "Hi" to the other Sydney out there. I hope FCI Allenwood has opened up enough to at least be around some of the other girls. Covid sucks. And hello to Dom @ SCI Muncy. I hope you have success in your fight to get to a male facility. I feel you. I've been trying to get access to all the GD medical treatments and the anxiety alone of not knowing if they'll ever meet my needs is excruciating. I'd like to be moved to a female facility. I hope you get what you need, & if you ever come to Forest, know that you got family here homeboy!

A big shout out to my incredible, thoughtful, grumpy but lovely boyfriend, Ed. It's been 3 eventful and amazing years. I never want this to end. You are my heart, you've put up with a lot with me. You've been the truest person to me on this journey. Without you, I wouldn't be the same. I love you to smithereens! XOXO Thank you for you.

~ Sydney | SCI Forest | T. Brennan | MY5979

It's hard not to think about the past but hopefully we will have a better future. To my king Vonny, you're my one and only. It's sad that you can't make my bed rock like last year. You ate this cake up and I enjoyed the icing. I can't wait for you to come beat up these pinatas again. This has been a lonely and quiet year for me. Next year just better be better. Feliz veinte-dos. Tu Reina @SCI-Benner

~@Kashlee_Vasquez

Special shoutout to all the HOAW family and my people @ Forest - Savage, JB, Papi, Mal, My LilSis Mariah, SJ, and BR2STar, MC Aica Fox, CR @ Phoenix. A very special shout out to my wife of 3 yrs Zoë, we will be home soon! Shout out 2 Allen will see u on the streets bro

~ LAIYOY AKA Twin

Dear HOAW family,

Shout out to Alexis Mitchel! I miss you kitten. To those I left behind at Houtzdale; Cait, D, Nikki T, Skillz I never forget y'all. Keep y'all head high. I hope 2022 is good to us ALL.

~ 50 Shades of Jay | Jacob Mitchell LS2414 | SCI Phoenix

LETTERS & LOVE

Hello Kings + Queens. Just wanting to send loving shoutouts to Brothers and Sisters who are currently in the struggle like myself. I have landed at my new place of imprisonment (I am now housed at Houtzdale). It's much different than Frackville but my mission is clear: graduate from the T.C. program and get the fuck up out of prison. Even though B-4 I got locked up my life was not perfect, it was mine! Since 2017 I have been some unjust legal system's #. I have done some learning and growing, I've cried some tears and met a man who eases my fears. I am now ready to stand up and fight for our community of LGBTQ freaks, geeks and queens like myself. Social justice is my mission... I've found it, thank you God.

Sending light,

~ Twinky Bear AKA the real jailhouse wife of PA

I pray of all that iz in tha Community iz doin' well n safe during tha Covid Crap still go'n on. I hope ppl iz think'n of safety 1st so MASK-^... Shoutout 2 tha volunteers@ H.O.A.W., thank you 4 all you doin' 4 tha Community. Shoutout 2 Ben, Allison, n Lil Noah I love ya with all my heart n soul, Rob i love you 4 stick'n by my side through thick n thin. Lucy i want 2 say you iz my TRU BFF 4life #FACTS. 2 Twisted I am with you n wish i had an idea 2 help you but can only say stay strong n would like 2 know you if you willing, Holla @ me. Stay well family.

~Prettyboi Jay | SCI Albion

TIPS FOR WRITING LETTERS TO CIVIL LAWYERS

Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project (PILP)

Here are some tips and suggestions from attorneys and legal staff of the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project (PILP) about writing effective and productive letters to civil lawyers and law firms when reaching out for legal help about conditions of confinement in prisons and jails:



Give enough information: It's always a good idea to include your *name*, *facility*, *ID number*, the *pronouns* you use, and the *name you are incarcerated under* (if it's different from the name you go by). This helps any attorney or paralegal reading your letter to quickly figure out who you are and where you are held without doing extra research.

Don't give too much information: If you are contacting a lawyer or law firm for the first time, it's probably best to send a *short introduction letter (about one or two pages)* describing who you are and what issues you are looking for help with. It's great when clients keep records of things like medical issues, grievances, and misconduct reports, but when lawyers receive a big packet of information and documents from someone they do not know, it can be overwhelming and take a lot of time to go through and may take them longer to respond. A shorter intro letter will be quicker to read and process and then the lawyer can reach back out for more information or documents if they need more. It might be a good idea to put in the intro letter which documents the incarcerated person has and can send later if the lawyer would like to see them.

TIPS FOR WRITING LETTERS TO CIVIL LAWYERS

continued

Try to describe the situation in chronological order and provide dates: Sometimes people face issues in prison that have been going on for a long time or include multiple incidents. It may be easier for a lawyer to understand the problem if you describe the situation starting with what happened first and go in order when you describe everything that has happened. *Whenever possible, it is useful if you include the dates when the incidents you describe happened.* It is also helpful for the person learning about your situation to know whether a problem is ongoing or if it happened in the past. Knowing when problems started or occurred will help legal staff evaluate whether there is a concern about any Statutes of Limitations.

Be clear about what type of help you are looking for: It is absolutely okay if you are not sure what type of help to ask for, but if you do know what you would like from the legal office you are writing to, it can be helpful for the person reading your letter to know what you are hoping to achieve. For example, not every person wants to file a lawsuit. Some people may want help finding specific resources or would like an advocate's help to request an accommodation or service.

Describe any steps you have taken to resolve the problem on your own: The first question PILP staff often ask incarcerated people who write letters is whether they have *filed any grievances* about the issues they are having in the prison. Even though grievances often do not solve the problem directly, it is necessary to exhaust administrative remedies, which usually means going through the entire grievance process, before filing a lawsuit about constitutional violations that happen in prisons. Knowing whether you have made requests to staff or filed grievances may help an attorney decide what the options are to address the problem going forward.

No need to send physical evidence: Although it can be really helpful when people collect evidence on their own, it can be confusing for legal offices to receive items in the mail that they have not requested. There is also a risk that evidence can be damaged or altered by sending it in the mail, which can make it less useful. It is usually best to describe what kind of evidence you have in your possession and ask before sending it to a legal office. If you are worried about evidence being confiscated or destroyed in the prison, it may be a good idea to send items to a loved one on the outside who can keep them safe.

PILP is a statewide legal aid organization that fights for the constitutional and civil rights of incarcerated and detained people in Pennsylvania, by providing civil legal assistance, pro se assistance, legal advocacy, and legal representation. PILP cannot provide assistance with criminal law issues.

You can write to PILP at any of its three offices: **Lewisburg** (P.O. Box 128, Lewisburg, PA 17837), **Philadelphia** (718 Arch Street, Suite 304 South, Philadelphia, PA 19106), or **Pittsburgh** (247 Fort Pitt Blvd, 4th Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15222).

BOOKS & PENPAL RESOURCES

Books Through Bars provides small packages of free books to individuals incarcerated in PA, NJ, DE, NY, MD, and VA. Due to the pandemic they are currently prioritizing requests from PA. **Ithaca College Books Thru Bars** and **Providence Books Thru Bars** send free books nationwide. **Book 'Em** sends free educational books and quality reading material to prisoners and prison libraries in PA. **Books For Prisoners at UCSD** and **East Bay Prisoner Support** send socially conscious reading materials nationwide. **Tranzmission Prison Project** sends books to incarcerated LGBTQ folks nationwide. **Prisoners Literature Project** ships free books to every state except TX. **Prison Library Project** ships free books to all states except HI, ME, and MI.

Send a letter that includes your name, ID number, full address, any restrictions on incoming books, and types of books wanted. Make your request by subject rather than specific title or author, and provide several areas of interest if possible. For example, African-American history, basic math, carpentry, how to draw.

Please be patient. These programs get many requests, it may take a while.

Black & Pink, and **Montreal Prisoner Correspondence Project**, are organizations that match incarcerated members of the LGBT community anywhere in the country (and in Canada) with pen pals

Additionally, there are several state organizations. The **Sylvia Rivera Law Project** corresponds with transgender people incarcerated in New York state, and the **Transgender, Gender Variant & Intersex Justice Project** supports trans and intersex people incarcerated in CA - their resource guide *A Transgender/Gender Nonconforming Guide to Parole Preparation* may be available beyond California.

Hearts on a Wire appears on several resource lists as a pen pal organization. While we are aware how valuable it can be to have contact with people, this has never been a service we have provided, nor is it something we have the capacity to take on. Hearts has worked to correct these wishful-thinking resource guides as we become aware of them, but we continue to get frequent requests for pen pal matching.

Books Through Bars
4722 Baltimore Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Ithaca College Books Thru Bars
PO Box 113
Brooktondale NY 14817

Providence Books thru Bars
42 Lenox Ave
Providence RI 02907

Book'Em - Pittsburgh
PO Box 71357
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Books For Prisoners at UCSD
w/Groundwork Bookstore
0323 Student Center
La Jolla, CA 92037

East Bay Prisoner Support
PO Box 22449
Oakland CA 94609

Tranzmission Prison Project
P.O. Box 1874
Asheville NC 28806

Prisoners Literature Project
% Bound Together Books
1369 Haight St.
SFCA 94117

Prison Library Project
915C W. Foothill Blvd PMB128
Claremont CA 91711

Black and Pink
2406 Fowler Ave Suite 316,
Omaha, NE 68111

Prisoner Correspondence Project
QPIRG Concordia
c/o Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve Ouest
Montreal QC H3G 1M8
CANADA

Sylvia Rivera Law Project
147 W. 24th St., 5th floor
New York, NY 10001

Transgender, Gender Variant & Intersex Justice Project
370 Turk St #370
San Francisco, CA 94102

LEGAL RESOURCES

PA Institutional Law Project Philadelphia

718 Arch St., Suite 304 South
Philadelphia, PA 19106

PA Institutional Law Project Lewisburg

P.O. Box 128
Lewisburg, PA 17837

PA Institutional Law Project Pittsburgh

247 Fort Pitt Blvd, 4th Floor,
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Mazzoni Center Legal Services

1348 Bainbridge Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147

PA Innocence Project

1515 Market Street, Suite 300
Philadelphia, PA 19102

ACLU Pittsburgh Office

313 Atwood St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

ACLU Philadelphia

PO Box 40008
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Transgender Law Center

PO Box 70976
Oakland, CA 94612-0976

Lambda Legal

120 Wall Street, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10005-3904

NCLR National Office

870 Market Street Suite 370
San Francisco CA 94102

GLAD

18 Tremont, Suite 950
Boston, MA 02108

TLDEF

520 8th Avenue, Suite 2204
New York, New York 10018

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

Mazzoni Center has legal services for LGBT people in Pennsylvania, including discrimination cases.

Pennsylvania Innocence Project only takes on direct appeal and PCRA cases from factually innocent individuals incarcerated in PA who have been wrongfully convicted.

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 legal cases that have the potential to change the situation for other people in similar situations to the plaintiff.

Transgender Law Center is a national organization that takes on impact litigation related to trans rights.

Lambda Legal is a national organization that takes on impact litigation related to LGBT/HIV rights.

The **National Center for Lesbian Rights** is another national impact litigation firm that takes on impact litigation related to LGBT.

GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) is a national organization that takes on impact litigation related to LGBT/HIV rights.

Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund (TLDEF) is a national impact litigation firm that takes cases related to trans discrimination.

Incarcerated Writers Initiative at Columbia is currently accepting submission for Journal publication.

- Fiction (5,000 words)
- Poetry (5 pages)
- Nonfiction (5,000 words)
- Visual Art (5 pages)

more information at <http://columbiajournal.org/iwi/>

Heather Gluck
Incarcerated Writers Initiative
Columbia Artists/Teachers
415 Dodge Hall
Mail Code 1804
2960 Broadway
New York, NY 10027

SUBSCRIBE

Subscriptions are **FREE** for Trans people & allies who are locked up.

If you want our newsletters, please **ask to be added to our mailing list** and **let us know how you are connected to the Trans community.**

We will **not** add people to our mailing list who have not reached out to us directly.

Back issues of the newsletter are available to view or download at heartsonawire.org

GETTING OUT?

Get in touch!

We do our best to support our inside members in reentry. Let us know when you expect to get out, where you are going, and what you need.

PILOT PROGRAM

Our experiment with virtual visits between inside and outside Hearts on a Wire community members is going well. We currently have more requests than we have capacity for!

If you are **Transgender** in the **PA DOC** and you want to try out a visit with an outside member, please write to us and let us know so we can add you to the waitlist.

Hearts on a Wire
1315 Spruce St
Philadelphia, PA 19107

WRITE TO US! SUBMISSIONS

You can send us... Letters | Original Artwork | Recipes Interviews | How-to articles | Ideas Articles responding to current events, prison policies, and this newsletter | Original Poetry | Book Reviews | Contribuciones en español son muy bienvenidos!

Next Issue: When Audre Lorde first wrote about self-care in her 1988 essay collection *A Burst of Light*, the Black Queer activist and poet was battling cancer while doing work that continues to inform and inspire movements of resistance. *"I had to examine, in my dreams as well as in my immune-function tests, the devastating effects of overextension. Overextending myself is not stretching myself. I had to accept how difficult it is to monitor the difference. Necessary for me as cutting down on sugar. Crucial. Physically. Psychically. Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."*

There are studies that show self care not only reduces stress - but also improves our quality of life and transform the way we see the world – no matter what our circumstances are.

What wellness practices and self care can you create for yourself? What does wellness look like inside prison? How can 'self care' support care for ourselves and our community? How do you resist isolation?

Guidelines:

- If you contribute make sure you tell us **exactly** how you want to be credited [Anonymous? ID number? Chosen name? Facility?]. **We will only use your location and/or government name if you explicitly tell us to do so.**
- We will no longer publish full addresses as this leads to the newsletter being barred in some institutions. Shoutout to the mail censors in Florida, Indiana, & Wisconsin.
- Please respect other people's privacy; only make disclosures about yourself.
- **No shade.**
- Your original work only. **We will not publish work that has previously been published elsewhere.**
- We get more submissions than we can possibly print.
- **We prioritize writing by trans and non-binary authors.**
- We reserve the right to publish excerpts and to make light edits for length and clarity.