



MIDWEST RAINBOW NEWS



FEBRUARY 2024

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"If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

--Aboriginal elder Lilla Watson

HOUSEKEEPING

DISCLAIMER

The ideas and opinions in the Midwest Rainbow News are solely those of our contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Midwest Rainbow News.

The Midwest Rainbow News makes no representations as to the accuracy of statements made by individual authors, including but not limited to legal and medical information.

By sending submissions to the Midwest Rainbow News, you are agreeing to have your submission published. We may edit submissions to fit our anti-oppression values and/or our own editing guidelines.

Missing your copy?

Although things seem to be improving in terms of uniform delivery of the newsletter, please reach out if you do not receive your copy for more than one month in a row. Thank you!

Midwest Rainbow News
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Pittsburgh, PA 15217

MAMA SAYS

I hope everyone has been surviving the snow and bitter cold! When the snow flies and the temperature drops, I find nothing more relaxing than a hot cup of cocoa, a good movie and someone to share it with. So, fix a cup of cocoa, bundle up in front of the TV and enjoy!

I have been giving a lot of thought as to the direction we have been taking with the Midwest Rainbow News. In earlier issues the goal was to give voice to everyone while still being informative. When there was a shift in policy, we faced a censorship issue and were banned from some camps. Changes were made and somewhere along the line I stopped being effective in passing along information many may not have access to.

So, each month I will try to have some informative content that will be of use to someone. This month we are reprinting an article about Gender Dysphoria and next month I will include an open source letter from Dr. Maddie Deutsch. Her letter contains information on Estrogen Hormone Therapy.

Please feel free to write in and suggest topics you would like more information about and would be of interest to the community. I can assure you, we will do our best to bring you current information.

While listening to a podcast the other day the person speaking put into proper perspective the answer to a question we have all been asked: "Since you are Transgender, you are gay?". The answer is this:

"Your Gender is defined by WHO YOU GO TO BED AS".

"Your sexuality (gay, straight, bi, ect.) is defined by WHO YOU GO TO BED WITH".

Lets not forget that March 31st is Transgender Day of visibility! Write in with your suggestions as to how you want to celebrate!

With a Mother's Love,
Patricia

RECIPE CORNER

PEANUT BUTTER CUP COOKIES

Ingredients -- serves 2

- 1 Package duplex cookies
- 1 Hershey's chocolate candy bar
- 2 Tbsp. Peanut butter
- 1 Package plain peanuts crushed

Directions

1. Separate the cream filling from the cookies and place into a bowl. You'll only use the chocolate side of the cookies.
2. Put chocolate cookies into an empty milk bag and crush them.
3. Break the Hershey's chocolate candy bar adding just enough water to combine chocolate with cookies.
4. Combine chocolate and cookie crumbles.
5. Then roll them into balls and press each ball in the middle with your thumb to form a chocolate cup.
6. Mix the cream filling and peanut butter well, then gradually stir in the crushed Peanuts .
7. Spoon that mixture into the chocolate cups and Enjoy!!.

Stay Warm and Safe this Winter
Michelle "Sauce Queen" Miller

SEND SUBMISSIONS TO OUR PO BOX OR THE BLACK-PINK GAZETTE TABLET CONTACT

IF YOU'RE A NEW SUBSCRIBER AND DON'T HAVE THE CONTACT ON YOUR TABLET YET, PLEASE BE PATIENT. IF YOU'RE STILL MISSING THE CONTACT AFTER A COUPLE WEEKS, WRITE TO OUR PO BOX.

THE PRISON JOURNALISM PROJECT

The Prison Journalism Project is a great place for any prisoner to express their views while working to establish themselves as a credible writer and journalist. Many first time authors have been published on the Prison Journalism website. It only takes imagination and willingness to write your story. It is 100% free, costs you only time and dedication. Ask about their writing program and upcoming correspondence-based classes. For more information on how to get started, contact them at:

*Prison Journalism Project
2093 Philadelphia Pike #1054
Claymont, DE 19703*

WRITE FOR US!

We are actively seeking material from our readers to publish in future issues. We will no longer publish messages from one reader to another.

We are looking for:

- Articles with accurate information about relevant policies, legal developments, and current affairs (cite your sources!)
- Tips, life-hacks, and how-to articles that our readers would find useful
- Media recommendations — books, authors, podcasts, tv, movies etc. Preference given to free things. Write a little bit about why you're recommending it and/or what you got from it.
- Personal essays on topics relevant to our community, including but not limited to: mental health, personal growth, what sucks about being LGBTQ in prison, what's cool about being LGBTQ in prison, pride, shame, self-acceptance, friendship, liberation from oppression, dealing with difficult family relationships, etc.
- Good news — if you have something to celebrate!
- Reports from your camp on conditions for LGBTQ prisoners
- Responses — If you have something constructive to add to a particular conversation, you can write a response to a previously published piece



ON DYSPHORIA

Gender dysphoria is a term that describes a sense of unease that a person may have because of a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity



We all know that transition is the treatment for Gender Dysphoria (GD). But what you may not understand is, just because you have been diagnosed with GD, does not mean they have to approve you for hormones (just because you have an infection, they do not have to give you antibiotics to treat it). The severity is what matters!

So what exactly is GD? The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5th edition (or DSM-V) defines GD as:

A marked incongruence (difference) between one's experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender, of at least 6 months duration, as manifested by 2 or more of the following indicators:

1. A marked incongruence (difference) between one's experienced/expressed gender and primary and/or secondary sex characteristics.
2. A strong desire to be rid of one's primary and/or secondary sex characteristics because of a marked incongruence (difference) with one's experienced/expressed gender.
3. A strong desire for the primary and/or secondary sex characteristics of the other gender.
4. A strong desire to be of the other gender (or some alternative gender different from ones assigned gender).
5. A strong desire to be treated as the other gender.

6. A strong conviction that one has the typical feelings and reactions of the other gender.

Note: "primary sex characteristics" are genitals, and "secondary sex characteristics" are other physical characteristics that differentiate between men and women, like breasts or facial hair.

The condition is associated with **CLINICALLY SIGNIFICANT DISTRESS OR IMPAIRMENT IN SOCIAL, OCCUPATIONAL, OR OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS OF FUNCTIONING, OR WITH A SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED RISK OF SUFFERING, SUCH AS DISTRESS OR DISABILITY.**

Why did I put the above in all capitals? Because that is the key to treatment! It applies to all of us, to one degree or other, but we often find it hard to admit, especially in a prison environment. Let me explain as best I can just how I was able to show that I fit those criteria.

Social: This would include relationships, going out to parties, out to eat, or even to the store – anything you may do socially with other people. Growing up, I was in no way afforded the opportunity to express myself as a woman except in hiding. **NO ONE** could ever find out. My father made it very clear he was not going to have a sissy for a son. In an attempt to meet his expectations, I became **VERY** violent so that **NO ONE** would call me or see me as a sissy! I had no friends and was a loner, because I was terrified someone would see through my deception and see me for the freak I knew myself to be.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



DYSPHORIA, CONTINUED



So you see, the dysphoria caused major problems for me socially growing up and that carried over to adulthood, affecting even my relationships. When I would enter into a relationship, as a woman, I expected my partner to see me only as a woman. When he would fall in love, he would begin feeling guilty because I was obviously not receiving the same pleasure in bed as he, he would try to fix what he saw as a problem by trying to please me. In my mind, at that very moment, it was as if a switch was thrown. I suddenly realized he did not see me as a woman, but rather as a gay boy. Nothing wrong with being a gay boy, that's just not who I am. That was always the start of the end of our relationship.

Occupational: How could I keep a job? I could not permit anyone to get too close. What if someone noticed I had missed washing off some of the makeup from last night? What if I got injured at work and was knocked unconscious, taken to the hospital where people would discover I was wearing female undergarments? How long could I keep a job?

Other areas of functioning: Depression would often overwhelm me and would sometimes result in attempts to end my life. It wasn't like I could just keep happy thoughts in my mind. Every time I looked in a mirror I would see some stranger looking back—not the woman I knew should be reflected. For years I would not look into a mirror, wouldn't shower in front of anyone; hygiene took a back seat. ALL DUE TO THE DYSPHORIA!!! Depression is most often a result of a chemical imbalance and is easily treated with antidepressants, but when the depression is the result of dysphoria, all the antidepressants in the world will not fix the problem. If you have a broken leg, simply treating it with pain medication will not fix it! You have to set the bone, put it in a cast, and permit it to heal if you want the pain to go away! Fix the dysphoria and the depression will fix itself!

LIFE DIRECTIONS

I just lost one of my childhood friends this past Thursday! Listen, when we have done decades on top of decades we really don't expect to be shot in the back! Harsh reality is we don't run to a fight any more, we stay away from any problems as much as we can! Always remember we were once just like the young ones now a days! There is Hope, for us but we have to stay away from our old self and neighborhoods. Because it's way different than when we were young! Please sisters and brothers think about what is your next move and don't go back to where we started a troubled life! Be mindful to all we have hurt while being locked up! I love you all, be at peace with yourself and others life ain't over til it's truly over!

Sometimes life directs you in a path that is unexplained! You may have high hopes of being successful in auto body machine or a doctor or even a big time Lawyer! But life directs you in a whole different direction. To use me as a perfect example, I got Great grades at school! Then I was a gang banger/ drug dealer! Then I ended up in prison in a blink of an eye and never seen it coming my direction! FACTS: what you do in your lifetime is what affects your whole being as well as your Freedom! So life has its ups and bad downs! but it also has its Treats/Fruits! I truly chose to run those streets and chose to be and do me! Many know me and will and can say that Mylowe don't hide behind nothing and always up front with whoever! I guess that's my Life experience and the fruits of being who I am today and any other day! PEACE.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE ON LGBTQ BILLS IN MISSOURI

Source: PROMO Missouri



On Wednesday, January 17, seven anti-LGBTQ+ bills were heard in the House Emerging Issues Committee and two anti-LGBTQ+ bills were heard in the Senate Education and Workforce Committee. Each of these bills target the equal opportunity, safety, and fairness for trans, nonbinary, and intersex Missourians using particularly malicious language.

Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee:

- **SB 728** (Koenig) – aims to create a “Parents’ Bill of Rights” specifying rights parents have over their children’s health, wellbeing, and education, while the child is at school.
 - This bill censors historical and inclusive curriculum, forces schools to adopt only certain facts about American history, suggests teachers are groomers and forces them to out students to their parents, and bans students from using pronouns that do not align with their perceived gender as stated on their birth certificate.
- **SB 770** (Brattin) – also aims to create a “Parents’ Bill of Rights” censoring historical and inclusive curriculum and forcing schools to adopt only certain facts about American history, while also specifically banning curriculum like the 1916 Project and all perceptions of critical race theory.
 - It also includes a bathroom ban forcing transgender and nonbinary students to use school restrooms and locker rooms designated by the sex marker on their birth certificate.

There are also three POSITIVE filed bills that warrant attention:

SB 787 (Razer) – The Missouri Nondiscrimination Act (MONA), which will add sexual orientation and gender identity to the Missouri Human Rights Statute for protections in employment, housing, and public services.

SB 1209 (Arthur), **HB 2296** (Ingle), **HB 2263** (Nurrenbern), **HB 2343** (Fogle) – The Youth Mental Health Preservation Act, which will ban the dangerous practice of conversion therapy in Missouri while protecting gender-affirming mental health care access.

HB 1999 (Mann) – An LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum bill, which will allow school districts to include instruction on LGBTQ+ contributions to society.

House Emerging Issues Committee

- **HB 1519** (Hudson) – allows doctors, public hospitals, and private hospitals to refuse gender-affirming health care services based on their moral, ethical, or religious beliefs.
- **HB 1520** (Hudson) – The ban on trans care for youth that passed last year expires in 2027 and allows youth already receiving treatment to continue to do so. This bill removes both protections.
- **HB 1674** (Matthiesen) – requires employers to force their employees to use restrooms and locker rooms not in alignment with their gender identity.
- **HB 2308** (Schnelting) – aims to amend the Missouri Human Rights Act by defining sex and gender, and mandating that school restrooms and locker rooms can only be used in alignment with the gender markers on student birth certificates.
- **HB 2309** (Schnelting) – aims to provide statutory definitions of “sex,” “gender,” “male,” “female,” etc. in the Missouri Human Rights Act following a scientifically incorrect binary based on internal and external reproductive characteristics.
- **HB 2355** (Baker) & **HB 2357** (Lonsdale) – forces students to use restrooms and locker rooms that align only with the sex marker on their birth certificates even if that is in misalignment with their gender identity.



IN THE NEWS



TRANSGENDER SWIMMER LIA THOMAS HAS MOUNTED A LEGAL CHALLENGE AGAINST WORLD AQUATICS

By Matt Lavietes for NBC

Transgender swimmer Lia Thomas has been quietly mounting a legal battle against World Aquatics to overturn the swimming governing body's effective ban on most trans women competing in the highest levels of the sport, a lawyer representing Thomas confirmed to NBC News on Friday.

Carlos Sayao, a partner at top Canadian law firm Tyr, said Thomas is asking the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland to overturn the new World Aquatics rules, issued in June 2022, that prohibit trans women from competing in women's swimming events unless they transitioned before age 12.

The U.K.'s Telegraph was the first to report on Thomas' behind-closed-doors legal challenge in an article published Thursday evening. Details of Thomas' challenge, which The Telegraph reported began in September, were not made public previously because cases brought before the Court of Arbitration for Sport are meant to be kept confidential by all parties involved.

The new rules, which would effectively bar trans women from competing in women's swimming events at the Olympics, came several months after Thomas, then a student at the University of Pennsylvania, made history by becoming the first openly transgender woman to win an NCAA swimming championship.

And in May 2022, Thomas told ABC News' "Good Morning America" that it's been a lifelong goal of hers to compete in the Olympics. Thomas made global headlines for her NCAA win and became the face — and often conservative media's punching bag — of the worldwide debate over whether trans women should compete in women's sports.

Sayao confirmed his comments to The Telegraph regarding the rules imposed by World Aquatics, which he called "discriminatory" and said caused "profound harm to trans women."

"Trans women are particularly vulnerable in society and they suffer from higher rates of violence, abuse and harassment than cis women," he told the British newspaper.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport, or CAS, confirmed the legal challenge in a statement on Friday after an original version of this article was published.

"Ms Thomas accepts that fair competition is a legitimate sporting objective and that some regulation of transgender women in swimming is appropriate," the statement reads. "However, Ms Thomas submits that the Challenged Provisions are invalid and unlawful as they discriminate against her contrary to the Olympic Charter, the World Aquatics Constitution, and Swiss law including the European Convention on Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and that such discrimination cannot be justified as necessary, reasonable, or proportionate to achieve a legitimate sporting objective."

The international sporting court also noted that its cases are normally dealt with in private but that the legal parties involved in Thomas' case "agreed that general information concerning the procedure itself be communicated by the CAS Court Office."

A hearing for Thomas's legal challenge has not yet been set, according to the statement.



ON HEARTS AND MINDS



HEARTBREAK

So I feel like a fool for the fact that I entrusted my heart to someone and I thought that she was single but I found out from her that she was in a relationship with someone. I didn't know this! These past few days I've been acting like a lovesick teen from high school and it just dawned on me that I'm messing shit up big time. I haven't felt this way in a long, long time. So yeah, I can say I am a major fool for letting myself get this way.

But, here is the thing that I don't understand. If the person you're in a relationship with is not comfortable with being out in the open with you then why even be with them? If I am with someone, be it a man, woman, or a transgender person, I am comfortable with being out in the open with them because I know who and what I am!!! I am Joseph and I am bisexual. If you were to ask me what I will do? I'll tell you I don't know what to do because I'm tired of wearing my heart upon my sleeve and it getting torn into a million little pieces. This has happened over and over again to me since I was 12 years old. All this heartache and heartbreaks are taking quite a toll on me. I'm just a Hopeless Romantic who seems to mess everything up. Well I am going to for now. Sending Love and Positive Energy to you all.
Love Always and Forever Joe

MORE BROKEN HEARTS

It's been awhile, I hope everyone is having a good New Year so far. February will be here soon and that means Valentine's Day. Hope you have that special someone to share it with. Last time I wrote I was engaged, I don't know if I still am now. I was told some things that he said, his mom told me they weren't true. Then I was told he said he was done, and now I can't seem to get ahold of his mom now. To all the brothers and sisters out there, take care of yourself, and love yourself. Because that love is the only one that matters in the end. Stay safe and please be kind to one another. Till next time. Bryan

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

It's been bitter cold out but I'm keeping warm and I hope you are too. This camp is a little different from where I was before but I have many supportive friends that are making a positive impact on my stay here. I finished school and now have my HiSet. I'm also thinking about getting my bachelors degree in communications through Ashland University. The past was hard and filled with painfully sad memories, but the future is what we make of it and the only thing I can do is stay positive while helping those who need help along the way. If I can make someone smile everyday then life is definitely worth living so I encourage everyone to stay hopeful and not give up. Stay warm and lots of love to anyone reading this <3 Shawna



**Reach us at:
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LEGAL/ADVOCACY

NEWSLETTER

RESEARCH

Lambda Legal
C/O Help Desk
4221 Wilshire Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90010

LAGAI (Ultraviolet)
3543 18th St #26
San Francisco, CA 94110

Liberation Lit (inquire for free books)
P.O. Box 45071
Kansas City, MO 64171

ACLU
906 Olive St., Suite 1130
St. Louis, Mo. 63101

Black and Pink
6223 Maple St., #4600
Omaha NE 68104

Library of Congress
101 Independence Ave. S.E.
Washington, DC 20540-4660

Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services
925 S. Country Club Dr.
Jeff City, Mo. 66109-4510

Prison Health News
4722 Baltimore Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Centurion
1400 Edgewood Drive
Jefferson City, Mo. 63109

Transgender Law Center
P.O. Box 70976
Oakland, CA 94612

Slingshot (quarterly radical newspaper)
3124 Shattuck Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94705



National Center for Transgender Equality
1032 15th St NW
Suite # 199
Washington, D.C. 20005

Prisoner Express (twice a year)
Prisoner Express
PO Box #6556
Ithaca, NY 14851



GLAAD
18 Tremont St Suite # 950
Boston, MA 02108



TGI Justice Project
131 Franklin St.
San Francisco, CA 94102

LEGAL/ADVOCACY



Southern Poverty Law Center
400 Washington Ave.
Montgomery, AL. 36104

The Midwest Innocence Project
3619 Broadway Blvd., Suite 2
Kansas City, MO 64111



MacArthur Justice Center
906 Olive Street, Suite 420
St. Louis, MO 63101

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