



MIDWEST RAINBOW NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2022

VOL. 2 ISSUE 9

"We support the trans community precisely because the community has taught us how to challenge that which is totally accepted as normal. If it is possible to challenge the gender binary, then we can certainly effectively resist prisons and police."

---Dr. Angela Davis

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?

We had some trouble last month with several camps rejecting the newsletter due to the new mail policy, but we are working on fixing that! If you didn't get the first issue of Midwest Rainbow News last month, look for last month's and this month's coming to you from FL. Hopefully soon we can go back to paper mail for everyone.

Midwest Rainbow News
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MAMA SAYS

I hope everyone enjoyed the new formatting of our newsletter and that everyone understands the reason why the change was necessary. It was a sad day when we realized changes in the system would make it necessary for us to discontinue publishing letters and personal well-wishes. It was a great way to lend supportive encouragement to those in our community who need it most. I want to personally thank all of you who contribute such great material for publication in the Midwest Rainbow News. Without your input and suggestions as to what news and information you would like, we could never grow to be your source of timely information.

I am constantly amazed by the creativity within our community. Take a moment to look around and simply enjoy the diversity. Hairstyles, creative makeup, earrings/jewelry, greeting cards; you name it and I'll bet you can find it on the yard. I'm working on some things we may be able to put in the News that may spark some creative interests. What information can the Midwest Rainbow News provide that would enhance your creative skills? If your thing is writing, I encourage you to contact the "Prison Journalism Project" and ask for a copy of their guidelines so you can start submitting stories for publication.

I am so happy and excited by the number of attorneys that have signed on to represent our transgender community (without cost) in their quest for a legal name change. Words cannot describe my humble gratitude for each and every attorney who has given their time and resources to this worthy cause!

Looking to the future, I hope you will notice what I hope will be positive changes and an opportunity for personal growth on a number of levels. We are just becoming acquainted with two organizations/chapters that I hope will enhance both our missions. I would like to thank Black and Pink Massachusetts and those at Liberation Lit, for their assistance and helpful advice!

With a Mother's Love,
Patricia

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 DOC 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

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.

LEXIE'S MICROWAVE FUDGE

Fudge (Microwave Required)

Add more or less ingredients for however much you want to make.

- Ingredients-

- 1 Jar of Peanut Butter (creamy or crunchy)
- 1 Bag of Hot Cocoa Mix
- 1 Box of Sugar Cubes
- 1 Bottle of Hershey's Chocolate Syrup
- 1 Empty tray from the duplex cookies or the peanut butter cookies
- 1 Medium Bowl

1. Take a whole layer of sugar cubes and place in bowl. Then add enough water to cause sugar cubes to liquify. Microwave sugar until it boils.

2. Add peanut butter to sugar, in bowl and stir. Microwave peanut butter, sugar combination for about two - three minutes.

3. Add hot cocoa mix to peanut butter, sugar combination. Stir in. The trick is to add enough that once done it will set up like fudge and not be mushy.

4. Add Hersey's syrup to ingredients that are in the bowl. Do not add the whole bottle but do add to taste. Stir in.

5. Microwave all the ingredients in the bowl for around 2 - 3 minutes. Take out of microwave. ** Caution bowl will be very hot**

6. Pour the mixture into the cookie trays and let sit and cool.

Enjoy!!!



SURVEY PROJECT

This month, we will start conducting several surveys concerning various programs within the system. This month we would like to start with the "Intensive Therapeutic Community" (ITC). If you have participated in the ITC program, please send us a letter or email with your answers to the following questions and/or any comments you would like to add. It is our goal to identify programs that may be exclusionary and help change these programs to become more diverse and accepting of our community.

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Were you in the ITC program as an "OUT" LGBTQ+ person?

What was your experience while in the ITC program?

Did your being LGBTQ+ affect your being able to program/progress towards graduating? If so, how?

Did you graduate the ITC program and, if not, why?

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RAINBOW NEWS RECOMMENDATIONS

Watch, read, or listen to something you think others might like? Write us with your recs and we'll include them below

LEXIE

I recently read a book that was sent to me by a wonderful place called "Women's Prison Book Project." They will send books and journals to women and trans women (sorry, no men) for free. Their address is

3751 17th Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55407

The name of the book is *Surpassing Certainty* by Janet Mock. For those of you who don't know, Janet Mock is a trans activist and a trans woman. In this book Ms. Mock says something that honestly made me stop and think. The following is a quote from her book.

"I've always taken issue with term passing. It promotes a false impression that trans women are engaging in a process through which we are passing ourselves off as cisgender women - which we are not. We are not passing as women. We are not trying to be or pretending to be women. We are women, and cis people are not more valid, legitimate, or more real than trans people."

This really got me thinking, why do we, trans women use this term, passing? How many times have I wondered if I pass? How many times has one of my sisters asked me if they pass. I am in complete agreement with what Ms. Mock said. Trans women are just as much a woman as a cis woman. We are beautiful, loving, kind, strong, creative, sexy, and empowered. We are not putting on some act. We are women, hear us roar!!

DON JUAN

I have taken some time out from my day-to-day sports program to check out some of these podcasts, and I happened upon some that I thought that not only our transgender family members, but everyone in the world would appreciate.

I have found some of the most caring and compassion-instilling videos about the science of gender and uplifting stories about what being transgender is to each individual as well as what being trans means in different social circles.

I have listed the "TED Talks" videos that I have found so far to recommend. I sure hope that all of you share these videos with all of your friends and family, because I truly believe that they are full of information that will help anyone to understand what you are going through, just simply trying to live your truth.

- **The Biology of Gender, Karissa Sanbonmatsu.** This video is amazing! When it comes to knowing her stuff, this lady scientist is an astrophysicist who happens to be a trans woman.
- **The trans story includes you, Nicole Maines.** This is a story about the trials and tribulations and finally peace of mind that this beautiful, green-haired vixen had to live through and with.

- **What is it like to be a transgender dad?, LB Hannahs.** An enlightening piece that takes you through a cross-section of a transgender male's life as a parent, which, he says, combined makes him "transparent."
- **The story of a parent's transition and a son's redemption, Johnathon Williams.** When I first saw the title, I kept overlooking this video because I thought that it was dealing with an elderly parent passing away and just how the son dealt with the death. How wrong I was. This video shows just how strong some families are, and how, with a little understanding and love we can accept people for exactly who they are and not who some people think that they should be.

I love all of you and I sure hope you enjoy the videos. With all the love and understanding one person can muster, I wish all of my family peaceful sleep and days filled with joy.



We can't print everything we get sent, but that doesn't mean y'all aren't brilliant and funny. Here are some excerpts from this month's mail

MAIL CALL

**Twerving in state boots is hard work!
Mama Tee suggests you consider
raising your rates. You're worth it.**

"these high prices is causing chaos I'm tired of encouraging these young girls/birls not to drop it like its hot for a fish steak or a bag or a few jolly rancher's girl stop.....at least get a bag of Keefe or a beef crumble or a pair of shoes....twerving in state boots is hard work and not a good look.....the struggle is real"

-Summer Breeze

**Dawn sent
a useful
exercise
for self-
reflection.**

The ability to live out and proud for the last twelve years has been the best time of my life. Finally I'm Dawn all the time. So my challenge to you is to go to the podcast app, download Deep Energy 2.0, and select some of the files. When you're good and relaxed, take a good look at yourself. Who are you? Where do you see yourself in the years to come? How would life be better if you were your true self? Are you willing to commit to being that person? Can you or are you willing to share the experience that you discovered about yourself? That's where I'm at now. I'm finding out more about myself as I put these words on paper.

-Dawn

PREA VS SEXUAL HARASSMENT

I have noticed over the years how members of our wonderfully diverse community utilize the PREA statutes whenever they feel staff has targeted them. Every time you call a PREA and your claim has nothing to do with the actual violation of the PREA regulations, you lessen its effectiveness.

PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) is, undoubtedly, a powerful tool when used correctly. When you claim a prisoner or staff member has violated the intent of the PREA standards, a set of events is mandated. You are interviewed, maybe evaluated by medical, and most likely placed in the hole while your claim is being evaluated. The person you claim violated the PREA regulations will also (if a prisoner) be placed in the hole pending the conclusion of the investigation and if the perpetrator is a staff member, well let's just say you had better have an air-tight case or the staff member will simply be interviewed without any repercussions.

Unless you are reporting sexual abuse or sexual assault, chances are the Sexual Harassment policy is a better tool to stop staff from harassing you. Go to the library and read policy "D1-8.13 Offender Sexual Abuse and Harassment". Within this policy, you find the definition of Staff and Offender Sexual Harassment. Their definition is simply:

1. Repeated and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal comments, gestures, or actions of a derogatory or offensive sexual nature by one offender directed toward another.

2. Repeated verbal comments or gestures of a sexual nature to an offender, detainee, or resident by a staff member, contractor, or volunteer, including demeaning references to gender, sexually suggestive or derogatory comments about body or clothing, or obscene language or gestures.

The Key is in #2 : "derogatory comments about body or clothing" . Recently I was witness to a staff member ordering a transgender prisoner to pull her shirt down and not expose her mid section while on the yard. The staff member said they had gotten a call from another staff member complaining. This prisoner was simply trying to get a sun tan so she simply rolled her T-shirt up to her rib cage and was in no way inappropriately exposing herself.

In a Missouri Department of Corrections pamphlet titled "Offenders' Guide to Sexual Misconduct" (June 2003), the criteria for Sexual Harassment is further identified stating:

"Sexual harassment is staff engaging in sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other offensive conduct of a sexual nature.

Examples of sexual harassment include but are not limited to: demeaning references to an offender's gender, derogatory comments about an offender's body or clothing, jokes about sex or gender specific traits, ..."

As far as why anti-trans comments fall under the sexual harassment policy, in June of 2020, the United States Supreme Court in *Bostic v. Clayton City.*, 207 L. Ed 2d 218 reaffirmed its position that: "... the Civil Rights Act of 1964's message is simple and momentous: an individual's homosexuality or Transgender status is not relevant... That's because it is impossible to discriminate against a person for being homosexual or transgender without discriminating against that individual based on sex."

In closing, don't use a broom to mop a floor. Use the right tool for the job. You will be more successful and achieve greater results.

With a Mothers Love
Patricia



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*



SOMETHING UPLIFTING

Today look for new vibes. Elevate yourselves and your minds. Remember this: we are somebodies! We have to stay empowered and refreshed. Life will try to drain you of your strength, but we must reach down into our emergency powers and keep pushing on no matter what situations we face.

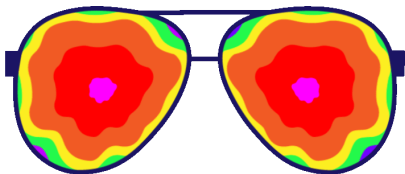
Things will and must get better. Family, remember to lift our sister Brittney Griner up in prayer. She needs our prayers.

We need to make our life's purpose to help others endure. It's hard out here for a bitch. It takes raw purpose and faith to endure each day behind enemy lines. So decide today to be a faithful steward to yourself and declare a clear purpose for your life today.

Here's a playlist for your soul. It has helped me endure many bad days.

1. Ella Mai, "Fallen Angel"
2. Aretha Franklin, "Deeper Love"
3. Beyonce, "Flawless"
4. Beyonce, "Break my Soul"
5. Lizzo, "About Damn Time"
6. Brandy, "Best friend"
7. Cardi B, "Up"
8. DJ Khaled, "Higher"
9. Latto Feat. Mariah Carey, "Big Energy"
10. Fabulous and Ne-Yo, "Make me Better"

Get your life while you jam to this playlist! Enjoy your day and make your next days be your best days! Sending my love! Summer Breeze.



JUST CAME OUT!

I have been gay almost my whole life but I only just recently came out to everyone I know that is a part of my life. Even though they took it really well and still love me for who I am, I still struggle every day with accepting myself for who I am, because my whole life I have been abused, beaten, and taken advantage of for being me. When I finally came out and my family told me that they still loved me the same today as they did yesterday, I felt happy, but coming out to my family about being gay wasn't the hard part. It was the part that came next, and that was listening to everyone else around degrade me or people like me—I hear it every day. people talking down on the LGBTQ+ community and it gets to me and it makes it hard to go through day-to-day activities. I guess what I am saying is one thing that helps me is talking to people I can relate to so this is me reaching out a hand to anyone needing any help in the LGBTQ+ community thank you and stay strong.

Tony

GOOD NEWS

I have some good news for all of the trans women who are approved for gender-affirming items. For some time now we have been trying to get women's briefs added to our gender-affirming order form. Well, all the hard work has finally paid off. We have succeeded in getting women's briefs added to the gender-affirming order form. I hold in my hand the updated order form. For those of you who are approved for these items, to get this updated form you most likely need to see your caseworker. There are other things that we are fighting to get added to the form and as we get these added I will write back in to let you know what they are. Thanks to all the girls who helped, Jade, Patricia, Bree, Owa, Jessica. Keep up the fight. United we stand, United we can accomplish great things!

-Lexie

WE'LL LOVE YOU TIL YOU CAN LOVE YOURSELF

We have heard it all before and have even doubted ourselves. "What is wrong wit choo honey chile?" "It's just a phase." "Baby, if you love me, don't be like that." "God can save you!" And we internally judge and demean ourselves. In turn bringing self-doubt, lower self-esteem, depression, insecurity, and thoughts or actions of suicide.

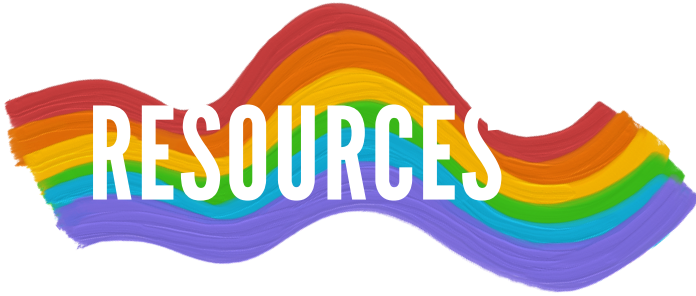
Our self-image and esteem should never waver based on anyone else's ideal being tossed around. We as humans—women, men, gay, lesbian, trans, queer, or any other identity we so live by—we are who we are, and if others can't handle it then fuck 'em! And we should never change ourselves for anyone but ourselves.

Too many lives are scarred, maimed, destroyed, taken, or given up to soon because of the destructiveness of homophobia, transphobia, and hatred among our peers, family, and society. We are expected and requested to conform into cookie-cutter existences and when we don't, the gates of hell are unleashed. It is so so sad that many find it impossible to open their mind and hearts in understanding and acceptance. Who are they to cast the stones at us!

In the beginning, there was STONEWALL! Now we have castles! Their stones continue to build us up! The LGBTQ+ FAMILY across the State, the Country, and the World is becoming stronger, more resilient, better equipped, and united as a whole.

We as individuals, when being knocked about by those that wish evil towards us, act vilely against us, attempt to force us to conform, disown us, cram religion down our throats, mentally beat us, or any other act of harm or abuse, we need to look up, out and around to our FAMILY. They will be there one hundred percent. We are all in this life together to live, love, survive, and THRIVE!

JP



**Reach us at:
Midwest Rainbow News
PO Box 81624
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LEGAL/ADVOCACY

NEWSLETTER

RESEARCH

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

Missouri Cure
P.O. Box 28931
St.Louis,MO 63132

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

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

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

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

Black and Pink
1247 S. 14th
Omaha, NE 68108

Centurion
1400 Edgewood Drive
Jefferson City, Mo. 63109

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

Prison Health News
4722 Baltimore Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19143



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

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



GLAAD
18 Tremont St Suite # 950
Boston, MA 02108

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



TGI Justice Project
370 Turk St # 370
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

National Lawyers Guild
PO Box 1266
New York, NY 10009-8941

