



MIDWEST RAINBOW NEWS



SEPTEMBER 2023

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"Until you realize how easy it is for your mind to be manipulated, you remain the puppet of someone else's game."

-Evita Ochel

HOUSEKEEPING

DISCLAIMER

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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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MAMA SAYS

August has been brutal with the high heat and humidity! I hope everyone found creative ways to keep cool. The Friends and Family e-newsletter put out by central office notified its readers of a change in policy. Here is a direct quote sent to me by an organization directly affected by this change:

"Books: Offenders are no longer allowed to receive publications purchased by family and friends; however, offenders may purchase reading materials (books magazines newspapers religious materials and correspondence courses) from a bona fide vendor. This change allows the Department to continue our effort of improving practices to limit the avenues for introduction of drugs and contraband into facilities. A publication includes any printed material that is published and made available for commercial purposes (books, magazines, and newspapers). Reading materials must meet censorship guidelines and must not exceed \$100 in value, threaten safety and security of the institution or exceed property limits. The Department provides access to reading material in the library and religious reading material in the chapel at each correctional center."

A large percentage of Missouri prisoners receive a state stipend of somewhere between \$5 and \$8.50 per month depending on court fees and child support payments. With rising prices, their stipend often does not cover monthly hygiene needs, let alone funds to purchase books, magazines, or newspaper subscriptions. Several organizations and legal groups are working on ways to fight this ban before the actual policy is released. You can certainly help by asking your family and friends to contact their state Representative and let them know that this expansion of censorship within the department of corrections is unacceptable and must not be permitted to stand.

With a Mothers Love, Patricia



END OF SUMMER PLAYLIST

Here are some of the songs I love that help me escape this life of hell and allows me to find a sweet slice of heaven where I am in control and I can jam like jelly.....

- 1) Sweetest Pie, Meg thee Stallion
- 2) Plastic off The Sofa, Beyonce
- 3) He's All Over Me, Whitney Houston/Shirley Caesar
- 4) Lose Control, Ledisi
- 5) Shake it Off, Mariah Carey
- 6) Alive, LiL John
- 7) Don't Judge Me, Young Devi
- 8) Trill Luv, Yakki
- 9) Emo Rock Star, Young Boy NBA
- 10) Cuff It, Beyonce

LEMON DROP POP

- 1/2 bag of lemon candies
- 2 servings of country time lemonade
- 1 pitcher of ice
- 2 cans of 7-up or sun drop

Open the lemon candies and pour on top of ice then add country time lemonade and then pop the top of the soda's, pour them in and shake briskly until mixed....drink up, it's magic in your mouth.

Summer Breeze made it!

GOOD VIBES

I almost gave up
I was right at the edge of greatness
but couldn't see it
Life's problems really had me
But good vibes came and grabbed me
They held me close
So I couldn't let go
I stand here today
Because good vibes kept me
I am alive today
Only because of Life's good grace
Good vibes kept me
They held me
So I wouldn't let go

Summer Breeze

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

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.



ON OUR HEARTS AND MINDS

THE ME THAT ONLY I CAN SEE

As I sit here crying, pondering life, I feel the demons gaining ground and the darkness starting to engulf me. I feel mercy calling to me. But like the fleeting breeze, I can not locate it. Am I losing my mind? Am I losing myself? I don't know, only THEY DO. I think that's why they must be freaking out and being so loud, causing my head to hurt so bad. Then like that fleeting breeze I hear a small angelic voice crying out. So scared and so alone. Why? Why must this be? Over and over again. Until there is but me sitting here so broken and so cold, feeling so alone and lost, roaming the highway of my thoughts and memories trying to figure out where I started going wrong and became such a poisonous thing. Only to see the real me staring back at me with his evil grin. I turn to flee and smell sulfur in the air. My blood turns cold as the cold damp darkness starts to engulf me. I open my eyes only to realize I'm still trapped in the darkness with these tears of fire burning down my face. Only to finally find that mercy and be engulfed by my fate.....

NAVIGATING DOC PROCESSES

So everyone knows, once you get a legal name change, DOC will still use your dead name (given name) in all their records, call outs, jpay, etc. They will add your legal name on your ID so it will have both legal and dead name on them. As for getting the birth certificate updated, they say they are 6months behind. It's been over a year and mine still hasn't showed up yet ... Hrt I got referred and finished the 2 hr questionnaire. Last month they Emailed mental health and they meet this month and I'm one of the ones they are reviewing and I should find out if I'm approved any day now!

Trust me girls I know how stressful this process can be I've been requesting Hrt since 2018, been through the irr process twice, all I can say is don't give up! It ain't always going to be easy, but you have Brothers And Sisters that are here for you And there are people out there on the streets fighting for our rights everyday. Stand tall, stand strong, stand together !!! I love you all and I mean all, not just my beautiful Children And grandchildren gosh I'm getting old Lol Take care,

Mama Crystal

CONFRONTING EMOTIONS IN THE HOLE

The hole is something that those of us who are incarcerated know is not where we want to be, but is also a reality that we may end up facing. Being in the hole brings with it a variety of thoughts and emotions that we cannot outrun. So how do we face these in a positive way?

I am in fact writing this from the hole where I am trying to stay strong given my circumstances. One thing that I keep reminding myself, is that I am more than my mistakes. Say it with me people, " We Are More Than Our Mistakes." The hole forces us to confront a variety of emotions and thoughts that are not pleasant like depression, anger, gender dysphoria (this is really tough for me since I can't shave like I need to) and shame. Rather than focusing on the negative, try and focus on the positive. Take this time to do some serious "Self Reflection." What do you need to work on in order to become the best you? For me it is my anger and my pride. These two things have been my biggest downfall and the cause of 100% of my problems. What I have found to be helpful to get myself out of the funk of being in the hole is reading books, doing positive affirmations (for example, Today is going to be a good day), journaling, exercising, focusing on what I can control and keeping my mind on positive things. When I find myself getting down I try and redirect my thoughts to something positive. If there are staff being rude or not helpful I try to ignore them as best I can. Another important thing that I try to remind myself of is that getting more violations while in the hole is not going to help me get out of the hole any quicker, So I HAVE to keep myself in check. Try to remember that "This Too Shall Pass." Next I have some good news to share. On July 7th, I was approved for hrt. I met with medical yesterday and they are going to be drawing blood and getting me started on Estradiol and Spiralactone. I have been working towards this for years now and I am so excited to start my hrt. I want to say thanks to Momma Patrica, Bree, Dakota, and all the other girls who have been there for me. There were so many times when I thought "is this ever going to happen?" For those who are still working towards hrt, Don't give up! Much Love To Everyone In The Alphabet Tribe

Your Sister Lexie





ON OUR HEARTS AND MINDS

INFLATION AND MORE

Have prices gone up at your institution? Where I am located prices have spiked as high as 300%, making it almost impossible to buy staple items like soap, toothpaste, lotion or clothing. It's a shame you have to be "penitentiary rich" just to buy a toothbrush and other hygiene items. It's a damn shame I can buy 2 or 3 albums of music but I can't afford a pair of shoes, sweats, a .22 cent spoon or a typewriter. Are you kidding me? Every week it seems like the only items that are in stock at my camp are oversized clothing, 3x or bigger, and oversized shoes and the more pricey food items are the only items that are always available. We don't even have Tone soap or Crest toothpaste in stock. Recently, Dial Soap went up 90% and it seems to only be getting worse. Even though CNN and other news outlets show that inflation has been dying off since 7/2022, it's alive and well within the unfriendly confines of the Missouri Dept of Confusions, and it's a troubling trend. I try not to be a worrywart, because they say trouble don't last always, so I keep hope alive always, and I pray things get better soon. What do you do when staff adds insult to injury for example locking you up sending you to adseg and then mishandling or losing all of your property? Even when it's a proven trend, you file on it and you cannot win. They want us to suffer unjustly, even though we received state sponsored and spiritual sanctions that punish us daily. What we really need is real social rehabilitation services that allow us to leave this place better off than when we came. With or without the proper help we will, we have, and we can make it home better and ready to change the world for the best.

For those of you stuck in the struggle...don't give up....get locked in, get in your zone. Release bad energy/vibes/people and upgrade to some hussleconomics, hussle hard until the hussle is dead.....its trap season so if it moves, catch it, finesse it and then release it back into the wind, hopefully it comes back to you tenfold.....Family I want you to know I am privileged every time I am able to communicate with you all and I pray you feel my vibes and they help you reach greatness.

I got another issue I want to address: the supposedly Muslim/gay beef that the new school is cooking up. It's an elephant in the room and it needs to be addressed. Sometimes people have issues and they make their issues into something bigger. United we ball, divided we all fall. We are all we got, we don't need no gender, homophobic, religious based drama.....

We are the best of the best and united we can be awesome and successful. To those who understand what I'm saying I love ya and I pray you get your shine on. I just wanna be successful and want some company at the top too...let's create a success team around ourselves, people dedicated to the betterment and empowerment of themselves, their loved ones and those whom they are forced to live around.....by any means necessary.....We need positive flows in our lives, no more beefing with our cellmates and unworthy or random people, its time to get to that bag.....Autumn is coming soon, autumn is always harvest time so make sure you sow goodness so you can harvest and reap greatness.

OUR BODIES IS OUR TEMPLES

it's been a long summer! but I have something to say on the up and up with you all! ("Drugs"). This duce stuff is not what's happening! because you get out there and lose great friends and love ones due to the money issues plus lies, and I personally seen people sell their clothes and shoes! But it causes death, mental issues, loss of weight and focus, as well don't care how you get it even if it costs you your relationship(s). It's not worth it! Your Life means a lot to people like me who love all of you! and you are better than that stuff! I have a lot of friends who are still on it and the ones who I helped get off are the ones who lost everything and everybody! and the ones who still have love ones but lost that special someone! I want you all to think about what you could lose and who you could lose! Our Bodies is our Temples. I love you all!!!!

Love your Brother Mylowe.





IN THE NEWS



MISSOURI'S BAN ON GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE FOR MINORS IS OFFICIALLY IN EFFECT

By Ali Condon for PinkNews, Aug. 31, 2023

A ban on gender-affirming care for minors has officially come into effect in the state of Missouri.

The new law, known as the Missouri Save Adolescents from Experimentation (SAFE) Act, bars healthcare providers from providing gender-affirming care using evidence-based treatments like puberty blockers or hormones to minors for gender transition purposes unless the minor was already receiving such treatment prior to 28 August 2023.

It will also prohibit minors from undergoing gender-affirming surgeries, though these are not typically offered to children by healthcare providers.

The law, which will expire in August 2027, warns that any healthcare provider who violates it will have their license revoked.

Gender-affirming healthcare is the age-appropriate treatment that can be provided to transgender and non-binary people to alleviate symptoms of gender dysphoria or distress, and is backed by every major medical association in the US.

There is an abundance of evidence that proves this care is medically safe and improves the mental health of eligible candidates who participate.

Civil rights union ACLU had sued to overturn the new healthcare ban in an attempt to block it but were left disappointed last week when a judge ruled against them and allowed the law to take effect as planned.

The judge ruled that there was not enough evidence to justify a preliminary injunction as ACLU had requested and that the medical and scientific evidence they had provided the court was 'conflicting and unclear'.

Although adults over 18 can still access gender-affirming care in the state of Missouri, they are not covered by Medicaid.

People in correctional facilities are also heavily restricted from receiving treatment.

Commenting on the judge's ruling, ACLU's Tom Bastian told PBS: "While we are disappointed in and disagree with the court's ruling, we will not stop fighting to protect the rights of transgender people in Missouri.

"The case is not over and will go to a full trial on the merits."

Meanwhile, Yamelsie Rodriguez, the CEO of Planned Parenthood in Southwest Missouri, warned: "Trans and gender-expansive young Missourians will have their rights stripped away — unless a higher court intervenes. They are terrified and furious that Missouri politicians are using ideology and junk science to deny them life-saving health care and erase their existence — and we are right alongside them.

"Politicians have no business probing around or dictating what care can be provided in our exam rooms."

A second law also came into effect this week in Missouri, which heavily restricts transgender student-athletes by requiring them to play on sports teams that align with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Missouri is now one of over 20 states that have enacted policies to ban gender-affirming care for minors. According to the Human Rights Campaign, at least another seven states are considering introducing similar laws or policies.





The first openly lesbian finalist of an international beauty pageant has said she plans to use her win to help push LGBTQ+ inclusivity.



Emma-Jay Webber was crowned Ms World International Woman – a title for beauty queens who promote body positivity and diversity – during the Ms World International Pageant, in Florida.

The fork-lift truck driver and mother-of-two, from Bristol, United Kingdom, is “very proud” of how far UK pageantry has come in terms of inclusivity but added that more still needs to be done to improve what she describes as a “heteronormative industry.”

Speaking to PinkNews, she says: “I’m still trying to take it in. It’s incredible to be able to use this platform to promote my love of LGBTQ+ rights. This is a dream title to win.”

Despite suffering from jet-lag from her trip from the US, and having only been back in the UK for a few days, her win has “not been lost” on her.

“In the pageantry industry itself, there is hardly any LGBTQ+ history. When I won my first title, I became the first openly lesbian woman in UK pageantry, and that was 2019.

“That wasn’t that long ago, which is unbelievable. It was kind of a surprise to [me].”

Beauty pageantry wasn’t her first career choice for Webber, who says she has more of a sporting background.

“I was actually just googling things to improve my self-esteem because I was at a very difficult point in my life at that time, and stumbled across pageantry and thought: ‘Wow, those girls on stage have a similar kind of body size to me’.

“I had no clue what I was getting myself into. I just fell in love with the industry... What it’s about is not what people expect it to be.

“People expect it to be like [the Sandra Bullock film] Miss Congeniality or [the reality show] Toddlers & Tiaras where they spray-tan children. It’s not true at all, it’s about sisterhood and promoting your cause.”

Webber’s main cause was clear from the get-go, especially after she experienced discrimination in pageants because of her sexuality.

“I’ve had my experiences in terms of people [asking] where my husband was and assuming my sexuality and gender and it was crazy.

“So, I felt a massive responsibility. I felt I’d found my place in the world, to be like: ‘This is what I’m meant to be doing’. It’s been a whirlwind since then.”

While things have improved in recent years, diversity and body-positivity have historically been a major issue in beauty pageants around the world.

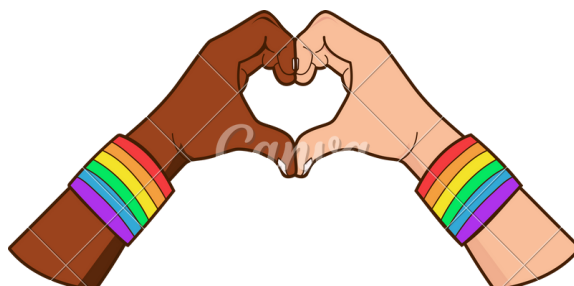
‘A woman is a woman, a trans woman is a woman’

The first transgender competitor to enter the world-famous Miss Universe competition was Ángela Maria Ponce Camacho, in 2018 – having been crowned Miss Spain.

Although a wave of diversity and inclusivity drives have made pageantry a more welcoming place, Webber believes there are still problems.

“The terminology used in the terms and conditions have changed in the UK,” she says. “When I first competed, technically I was breaking the rules in the Mrs category because I was married to a woman at the time.

“The rules clearly stated that you had to be married to a man to be in the Mrs category. There are still rules globally that [say] to compete in a woman’s pageant, you have to be the same gender you were assigned at birth, which is unbelievable. A woman is a woman, a trans woman is a woman, they should be able to compete.”





BEAUTY QUEEN CONTINUED

I just needed to do something'

UK pageants have since implemented rules to allow trans women to enter, but Webber says that in less supportive countries “beliefs and legislation” prevent beauty queens from having the opportunities they deserve.

She recalls one instance of homophobia while competing in 2018, when she was holding hands with her girlfriend and received poor reactions from onlookers.

“You could just feel that atmosphere. People were looking and whispering, and that’s when I kind of realised, hang on a minute, this isn’t right. I needed to do something about it.

“My platform then changed to LGBTQ+ rights within pageantry. From there, it’s just escalated in terms of campaigns.”

This is just the beginning for Webber, who is ready and willing to help fellow LGBTQ+ beauty queens find their footing in a competitive industry.

“I always say it’s like a glamorous Brownies. We’re an army of women who want to make a positive impact on the world. If you want to get involved, absolutely do it, but do your research first.”

And she has a message for all queer people.

“In a world, at the moment, where we feel like we are going backwards... especially in the States – and the worry about what will come into place in the UK – just stay strong. LGBTQ+ people have always been here, will always be here.”



THE MORTICIAN IN SAN FRANCISCO

A poem by Randall Mann

This may sound queer,
but in 1985 I held the delicate hands
of Dan White:
I prepared him for burial; by then, Harvey Milk
was made monument—no, myth—by the years
since he was shot.

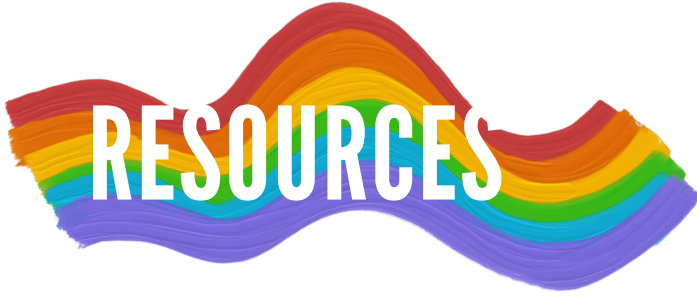
I remember when Harvey was shot:
twenty, and I knew I was queer.
Those were the years,
Levi’s and leather jackets holding hands
on Castro Street, cheering for Harvey Milk—
elected on the same day as Dan White.

I often wonder about Supervisor White,
who fatally shot
Mayor Moscone and Supervisor Milk,
who was one of us, a Castro queer.
May 21, 1979: a jury hands
down the sentence, seven years—

in truth, five years—
for ex-cop, ex-fireman Dan White,
for the blood on his hands;
when he confessed that he had shot
the mayor and the queer,
a few men in blue cheered. And Harvey Milk?

Why cry over spilled milk,
some wondered, semi-privately, for years—
it meant “one less queer.”
The jurors turned to White.
If just the mayor had been shot,
Dan might have had trouble on his hands—

but the twelve who held his life in their hands
maybe didn’t mind the death of Harvey Milk;
maybe, the second murder offered him a shot
at serving only a few years.
In the end, he committed suicide, this Dan White.
And he was made presentable by a queer.



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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 411794
Kansas City, Mo 64141
Chair Person: Kathy Franklin

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
6223 Maple St., #4600
Omaha NE 68104

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

