



# Transgender Harmony

Transgendered Support Group

JUNE, 2006

## *Changes in Treatment Approaches for Juvenile TGs*

*In this issue we highlight some articles which shed light on the situation that juvenile TGs are facing today.*

*This is far different from when many of us were children, I*

*know that is particularly true in my own case.*

*As the way is not always clear for us, it is equally murky for these kids.*

### **CALENDAR:**

**June 12th:** Coming out at the workplace

**June 20th:** Stealth v Out

**July 26th:** TBA

**July 10th:** TBA

**July 24th:** TBA

## *Dancing to the Tune of Alienation*

Why is everybody cheering transsexuals all the way to the operating theatre?

*by Josie Appleton*

'Welcome is every organ and attribute of me, and of any man hearty and clean / Not an inch nor a particle is vile, and none shall be less familiar than the rest'. (Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass.)

*Where transsexuals were once spurned as freaks, now they are feted and held up as role models. 'She's not a girl, she's got a dick', the teenage son of a pre-op transsexual told a young hitchhiker friend in Transamerica. The friend responded enthusiastically, saying that in his mind transgender people have a 'liberated state of being'.*

*Transamerica is a road movie of self-discovery that ends up under the surgeon's knife in LA. The scene going into the operating theatre is shot from*

*above to rousing music, portraying it as a moment of spiritual transcendence. Although Transamerica is a truly terrible film, it received rave reviews - a sure sign that transsexuality has arrived as an 'issue'.*

*Meanwhile, Antony of Antony and the Johnsons has bagged the Mercury Prize with his songs crooning about transsexuality. 'I'm singing about transformation', he says. 'It's psychic, sexual and mortal transformation. The songs are about growing.' In his view, 'Transsexuals are among the most highly evolved and beautiful creatures on the planet.' Few would demur. Some groups have taken to calling transsexuality 'gender giftedness', a cut above those who live as their birth sex.*

*What seems to have been forgotten is that transsexuality begins with self-disgust. At base is a feeling that your*



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## *Dancing to the Tune of Alienation*

THE TRANSSEXUAL STARTS NOT WITH WHITMAN'S DELIGHT IN 'EVERY ORGAN AND ATTRIBUTE OF ME', A SENSE AT BEING AT HOME IN ONESELF AND IN POSSESSION OF EVERY FACULTY. INSTEAD, IT STARTS WITH A FEELING THAT THINGS ARE 'NOT RIGHT'.

*body is not your own - indeed, that you really are the opposite of the person you were born. The transsexual starts not with Whitman's delight in 'every organ and attribute of me', a sense at being at home in oneself and in possession of every faculty. Instead, it starts with a feeling that things are 'not right'. One criteria for transgender surgery is that you must 'abhor your genitals'. 'What do you feel about your penis?', asks a doctor in Transamerica. 'It disgusts me', he replies, shuddering.*

*In this respect, transsexuality is little different from the various other ways in which people experience alienation from their bodies. In *Better Than Well* (2003), Carl Elliot describes all the different ways in which people feel that they are 'stuck in the wrong body', and look to medical science to make them feel okay: from a bodybuilder who takes large amounts of anabolic steroids; to those who pursue endless rounds of cosmetic surgery; to those who undergo amputation of one or more limbs, convinced that this arm or leg is not 'theirs'.*

*Tellingly, one of his case studies for voluntary amputation was also a transsexual. Cutting off a leg or your penis are both attempts to feel more at ease with the body. This is transcendence via the operating theatre, as surgeons nip and tuck the bits that don't feel right.*

*Why is this a cause for celebration? Why is transsexuality held up as a higher state of being? Perhaps because today's society has no spiritual or*

*ideological answer to individuals' experience of alienation. It can't offer salvation through God, politics or communities, so it instead celebrates individuals' fumbling attempts to find themselves. On websites, in the papers and in Hollywood, would-be transsexuals are cheered all the way to the operating theatre.*

*People who could go one way or the other are encouraged to think of themselves as transsexual. One Dutch university hospital has introduced puberty-stopping drugs for 11- to 16-year-olds who feel that they are really the other sex, advising about the options for an operation once they are 18 (1). The transsexual narrative should not be offered so casually, especially since the teenage years involve a lot of confusion about sexuality and identity. It turns out that three quarters of those on the programme decide that they are gay rather than the opposite sex. Some of the rest may have done so too if they hadn't been schooled in transsexuality since the age of 11.*

*One consultant psychiatrist noted the phenomenon of 'conspiratorial transsexuals', individuals who were convinced by transsexual websites or friends that this is the explanation of their problems. 'Some smart people with mild Gender Dysphoria fool themselves into believing they are essentially female and therefore Transsexual.' He also notes that five per cent of people remain unhappy after the operation, some even changing back. Astonishingly, though, he claims that "changing back" does not*



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*Dancing to the Tune of Alienation*

## *Dancing to the Tune of Alienation*

necessarily equate with "failure" since they may be happy to have "exorcised their gender demons" (2).

Surely there must be easier ways of 'exorcising their gender demons'? The change of sex is an extreme and essentially irreversible operation, which involves mutilation and pain on the part of those who undergo it. This should not be seen as an acceptable way of settling identity confusion.

Clearly condemnation is no answer to those who are convinced that they are transsexuals. Some people are deeply unhappy, and feel more at ease after the operation has been done.

Instead, we need more of a cultural discussion about these forms of body modification. We need to be able to tell

the difference between acts of self-determination, which mean taking control over your own life and body; and acts of alienation, which are really various forms of running away from yourself, and leave you yet more entrapped.

Read on:

[Transamerica: dysfunction by numbers](#), by Tara McCormack

(1) [Wrong Body....They have that 'pecker'](#), the treatment of transsexual teens in the Netherlands (See article below)

(2) [Minefields and Pitfalls in Gender Identity Disorder, for both Patient and Doctor](#), Dr Russell Reid, GENDYS network

## *Wrong Body....They have that 'pecker'*

by Ellen de Visser, 'Volkskrant' Magazine, 13 September 2003, translated into English by Barbara Blake ([barbara\\_blake65\(at\)yahoo.co.uk](mailto:barbara_blake65(at)yahoo.co.uk)), herself the mother of a transgender teen.

Willem was nine years old when he first went to school in a skirt. Until that time his parents had compromised by buying him 'unisex' clothes, such as red pants and colored shirts for fear of the reaction of other children and parents. His mother knew that he was different from an early age. In pre-school he always played in the dolls corner and at a school party he once wore a lovely princess 'dress up' outfit all afternoon, only changing when he got home.

Eventually Willem decided for himself that this must change, and insisted on going to school in a skirt and blouse. His mother recalls that they rang the school to tell them that Willem was coming to school dressed as a girl. But it was not necessary! For him it was a great milestone, but for the school and his classmates it was normal, because everyone already thought of him as a girl!

Valentin was just four years old, and sitting in the back of a car returning from a childrens' party when he told his mother that he wanted to cut off his 'pecker'. His parents already realized that that he was different to other boys; he did not like playing with boys' toys

"I AM VALENTIN, WHEN YOU LOOK AT ME YOU THINK I AM A GIRL, BUT I AM NOT A GIRL YET!" SO SPEAKS VALENTIN WHO IS 13 YEARS OLD. WITH GENDER DYSPHORIC CHILDREN, LIKE VALENTIN, THEIR PHYSICAL GENDER DOES NOT ACCORD WITH THEIR FEELINGS ABOUT THEMSELVES.

## *Wrong Body....They have that 'pecker'*



**Willem, age 12**

like tractors, but loved to play with Barbies.

"When watching films, Valentin always identified with the female characters", said his mother Klette de Rouge. "He was always pretending to be Snow White or the Rose Princess, never the prince!"

As he got older his feelings grew stronger. From ten to twelve years of age he attended the ballet school in Amsterdam, but gave this up because he could see no future for himself as a male ballet dancer. Deep in his heart he wanted to dance as a ballerina in a tutu and 'en pointe', just like any girl his age!

Now 13, Valentin has the appearance, movement and interests of a girl his age. His long blonde hair stretches down to his waist, and he proudly shows me the skirt he bought for himself, just last week.

On his first day at secondary school, he told everyone "I am Valentin, you think I am a girl, but I am not a girl yet, one day I certainly will be! I will explain more fully later, but it will make no difference what you say or try to argue. That is what I am!"

Relations, friends and neighbors often argue with Connie Smit, about the behaviour of her son Colin, and feel that she should make him dress and behave as a boy. They just don't understand about him. She shows me some old photos of nothing but a shy, reserved boy who was not comfortable with what was expected of him. During last year's summer vacation they chose a new name, Jasmijn. "For her, Colin no longer exists", says her mother. "And he hates his 'pecker' " Connie Smit finds that as time goes on Jasmijn becomes more

natural and is perfecting her image as a girl.

Connie says "Our children are not trans-vestites, freaks. or sights to stare at. They only want to be what they really are"

Our Brother/Sister -

The official name for this is gender dysphoria, but Willem's brothers refer to him as our 'brusje' (brother/sister). With gender dysphoric children, their physical gender is not in agreement with their feelings and behaviour. "It is not just boys who sometimes want to play with girls dolls or girls who eagerly play computer games" Explains Els Schif, Willem's mother, "It means children who consistently, and over a long period adopt the behaviour of the other sex".

Precisely how many gender dysphoric children there are in the Netherlands is not clear, although Professor Cohen Kettenis, (professor of psychology at the Medical centre of the Free university in Amsterdam), has treated over 400 children and adolescents over the last 15 years. The support group Berdache currently has 120 children and adolescents as members.

Lejo De Hingh, father of Valentin and secretary of Berdache, sees enormous relief in the faces of each new child who comes along to the group. Often they have already had to cope with enormous problems and difficulties. In the past they may have been passed from the school doctor, to their family doctor, and to social services, etc.

"Parents may not be able to control the behaviour of their child and often think that they are the only ones like this, or that their child may be mentally ill",



**Valentin 13 years old, acting as an elf in 'The Lord of the**



**Jasmijn aged 9, (born as Colin)**

## *Wrong Body....They have that 'pecker'*

says Peter van Leeuwen, father of Willem, and also founder of Berdache. "We know of harrowing examples of children who have developed mental illness or become totally withdrawn and uncommunicative. Parents have so many concerns and questions that need to be dealt with. Which issues need to be dealt with first? How do they inform the child's school and when? What should they do about teasing and bullying? How should they deal with tensions within the family?"

### *Tough Girl -*

By far the most children in Berdache are boys who feel they are girls. "That is not to mean that they are the more important part of the group", says Els Schijf, " But girls who feel that they are boys, often find it harder to talk about their feelings, though girls can more easily behave as boys" says Monique de Vries, mother of 12 year old Bas. "With a 'tomboy' no one has problems".

Bas was born as Debby but has always wanted to play football. Her mother remembers that about the only time she wore a dress was for her first communion and straight afterwards she was out of the dress and back in boyish clothes to play outside with the other boys again. Her parents always said that "she has become a boy"

That became very clear when she was eleven years old and entered puberty, having her first period and then her breasts started to develop. "She was in panic and cried. There was much drama to follow. She threatened to cut off her breasts with a knife.!

What do you do when your daughter says 'Mom, I don't want to sit at the toi-

let anymore, I want to stand like a boy' ?"

### *Puberty -*

"Puberty is often a nightmare for these children" says Professor Cohen, "They develop an enormous dislike for their body".

She thinks that gender dysphoria is partly inborn. Previously, society and behaviour were thought to be the main causes, but now some of it at least is thought to come from the make up of the brain when it is being formed before birth. However the role of other factors is still unclear. Cohen is the head of the gender team at the Free Hospital where gender dysphoric children can receive help. They currently have a waiting list of over a year for patients to be seen and treated, (though children just entering puberty are given priority).

"It takes a long time, with tests, interviews, and observations, as well as psychiatric evaluation, before the children can be properly diagnosed. Gender dysphoria is not a static condition that can be determined by a single test. We need time to study the children properly and exclude all other explanations for their behaviour" says Professor Cohen, "In some cases the gender dysphoria can develop as a result of severe trauma."

Her gender team keep a close eye on the behaviour of children the beginning of puberty. "Sometimes the gender dysphoric feelings can reduce", says Professor Cohen, "children seem as it were to grow out of it, although the interests of the opposite sex they have developed as children often still remain"

Most children seen by Professor Cohen at puberty however, react with horror to

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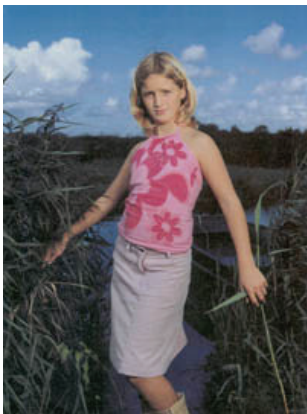
## *Wrong Body....They have that 'pecker'*



**Jamie, age 14**

the changes in their bodies. "It appears that their feelings become much stronger and they do not feel at home in the body that they now developing. If it appears that the gender dysphoric feelings are becoming stronger then they will be prescribed medicines to temporarily halt puberty until they are 16".

Cohen emphasizes that the treatment at this stage is reversible and if it appears that the child has taken the wrong track then the treatment can be stopped and normal puberty should then ensue.



**Kristel aged 11  
(born as Jeremy)**

When the gender team at the Free hospital started this treatment five years ago, it was the first in the world to begin treating adolescents with puberty stopping drugs, leading initially to uproar and questions being asked in the Dutch Parliament. Subsequently other countries such as the UK have shown great interest in the treatment, and in some cases have followed the example of the Netherlands.

For Bas the treatment has literally saved his life. He had become so depressed that there was great concern that he would take his own life. Puberty 'retarders' help in the meantime.



**Manon aged 10  
(Born as Benjamin)**

As they become adolescents, children must decide how they want to live their lives in the future. Some of them may decide to wait until they are adult or have had a family before making a final decision. This is acceptable, as they will have completed their development to adulthood and know more clearly what they really want, rather than if they make the decision early.

Hormones -

"During the period from the start of puberty to age 16 we have a number of

searching conversations with them" says Cohen. "Again we make it clear that their gender may be changed medically, but that may not be the best option for them at this time. We point out all the disadvantages, for instance they cannot have children (biologically). For mutual support they can join the special support group run by Annerike Gorter, for young people between the ages of 13 and 16 years. Young people when they are 16 and quite certain that they have the wrong body, can be prescribed hormones as well as puberty blockers to begin to change their outward appearance to more closely match their chosen sex. After that comes the actual sex-change operation" says Cohen. "Almost three quarters of the youngsters eventually become homosexuals, and at this stage they will leave the program. The full treatment is only for those very feminine boys or masculine girls who continue to need the change of sex".

Therefore Cohen always advises parents that their children should wait until they complete their youth (i.e. are over 18) before completing their sex change. Bas already knows for certain that he wants the operation just as Jasmijn does.

Valentin and Willem are still not totally certain and have therefore not changed their names yet.

"I hope that Willem has a good look at all the options" says his mother Els. "He needs to consider everything carefully, before he chooses what is best for him".

Valentin knows that he does not want to be an adult male with a deep voice and body hair.

"The only question is whether I want to be a complete girl for ever"

## *Wrong Body....They have that 'pecker'*

*Hiding Behind the Curtain -*

*Manon (aged 10), has come to the Berdache family day for the second time. The playground they use, lies sheltered in the park with private admission. The children play with each other on the climbing frame, the adolescents hold back self-consciously, the parents chat and occasionally shout to the children. "Last year when Manon was still called Benjamin, her eyes were opened to what she was" said her mother Elise Meussen, "After that she relaxed and no longer fought against everything. Previously, Benjamin had been a boy of the most extreme behaviour. Always shouting, climbing to the highest branches, and being very aggressive to everyone. When we finally took him to the psychologist, Benjamin said that he would rather be dead. He had already decided that he could not be what he wanted to be. He had to appear masculine, so he had already learned to hide all his feelings away. For years he had concealed his real self, because he thought that it was not acceptable. It was like he was hiding behind closed curtains. As soon as Benjamin came home from school, he would dress up as a girl. If the door-bell rang he would hide himself".*

*Now she has adopted the name of the teacher who helped her when he came to the Netherlands from Great Britain. Her parents have decided to be totally open with her and all their family and friends. For her ninth birthday, they bought Manon a Barbie doll. She said "finally I have a present that I really like!"*

*Willem's parents also decided to be totally open about the situation. They spoke to the teachers of the secondary school that Willem started attending last*

*month, and at the parents evening other parents were informed. "You cannot hide yourself in a school with 1100 pupils" says his mother Els Schijf, "If you say nothing then there will be rumour and gossip, and that is not good".*

*Valentin has this year at the school camp slept in the girls tent. "That caused no problems", he said.*

*He had decided to dress in more 'boyish' clothes for school, but the first day he went to school like this he was sent home because everyone thought that he was a girl masquerading as a boy!*

*Bas was intending to dress differently at secondary school. On the first day at school everyone was saying "Bas was a girl but was now a boy". For the gymnastics lesson, the boys said: "Come on man, come and change in our dressing room".*

*"He has become so accepted as a boy" said his mother. "He has so many friends, and the girls treat him as a boy, insisting on standing in front of him in the queue"*

*Humour Helps -*

*"How gender dysphoric children themselves deal with problems can vary enormously" says Peggy Cohen, "Confident intelligent children are able to cope, but there are those who get in an awful mess". In 'It is girl' (a guide for parents written by Els Schrijf), all the possible problems are listed in order - learning difficulties, isolation, abuse, envy towards brothers or sisters (or anyone who represents what the child wants to be), tensions between children and parents, especially about gender issues. Sometimes, children have bad luck, recognizes Cohen, and live in a*

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**Jasmijn aged 9,  
(born as Colin)**

neighborhood or go to a school where they are not accepted. When Jasmijn went to her year five class as a girl, her mother wrote in the school newsletter "Our greatest fear is how we protect her from the outside world that does not understand or accept her condition". After that it went a lot better for her, says her mother Conny Smit "There was clarity, and Jasmijn even gained some friends."

### *A New Class -*

"However she has just moved up into a new class, who do not accept her as a girl She gets so teased and abused by the other children. Even the neighbors condemn her. They find it ridiculous that we let our child go out in a dress. During the summer holiday she was at the pool and some other girls said "There is a boy in girl's clothes" Jasmijn became very upset about this" says her mother. "She quarrels with her younger sister, and sometimes argues with her father. Also she can be very aggressive and has learning difficulties. She wants to be who she is and that makes it very difficult for her". Conny wants to try and help her daughter to be more able to defend herself against these things, and learn not to react so violently.

Valentin's parents have seen how he deals with stupid remarks from other children. He gives a demonstration :

"Are you a boy or a girl?" Answer: "Yes"

"Let me see your 'pecker'" Answer: "You show me yours first"

"You are a transvestite." Answer: "I am very happy, how are you?"

"Humour helps" says his mother Klette de Rooij. They enjoy the film 'Life of Brian' because in it all the women play

men's roles but are given away by their high pitched voices.

Openness, professional help, and training to help them look after themselves, are all useful, but they are not sometimes not enough to stop serious pressures and difficulties for gender dysphoric children in secondary schools. Conversations about menstruation, and courtship largely pass them by. Els Schijf sometimes hears of adolescents who have decided not to get involved with the opposite sex, or to fall in love.

### *'Dumb Girl' -*

How great are the problems that have to be overcome before a child can finally become themselves!

"He has changed from an embarrassed girl into a confident guy" Says Monique de Vries, of her son Bas.

The mother of Manon tells how frightfully glad her daughter was when for the first time she was called a 'Dumb Girl'. Conny Smit says : "Jasmijn was formerly full of sadness and uncertainty. I thought :'That child I am about to lose'." From the soft yellow walls of her bedroom hang photographs of her beloved horse, and the floor lies strewn with Barbies.

Her mother says: "I have an enormous respect for her, because she perseveres to get what she wants. Children do not choose the most difficult way consciously, it has to be driven by something deep within them."

## FORD REAFFIRMS SUPPORT FOR FAIRNESS

**'Ford's action is a positive outcome and win for equality and fairness,' said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese.**

WASHINGTON — Ford Motor Company [released a statement](#) today saying it would feature all of its brands in a 2006 ad campaign in gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender-themed publications. Indications that Ford made a deal with the right-wing extremist group American Family Association to cease some advertising in community publications were put to rest with this announcement, said the Human Rights Campaign.

"Ford's action is a positive outcome and win for equality and fairness," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. "Ford has sent a powerful signal that corporate America values its gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender employees and consumers."

*The Human Rights Campaign is the largest national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender political organization with members throughout the country. It effectively lobbies Congress, provides campaign support and educates the public to ensure that LGBT Americans can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community.*

### **-LGBT COALITION STATEMENT FOLLOWS-**

**Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organizations**

### **Commend Ford Motor**

*Hail "Reaffirmation of Commitment to Our Community and American Values"*

A broad coalition of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organizations today commended Ford Motor Company for reaffirming its support for the LGBT community. In a statement released today, Ford reaffirmed its commitment to its progressive workplace policies, said it would place corporate advertising in LGBT publications on behalf of all of its brands, including Jaguar and Land Rover, and would continue financial support for LGBT organizations and events consistent with its business condition.

### **Coalition Statement**

"We welcome today's statement from Ford Motor Company and commend their firm stance in support of inclusion. It is an unequivocal reaffirmation of Ford's historic commitment to our community and the core American values of fairness and equality. Moreover, it is conclusive proof of what Ford leaders have repeatedly assured us -- that there never was any deal with anti-LGBT organizations concerning Ford's support for our community.

We are proud to be back in gear with Ford and look forward to working with them in the years ahead."

AMERICAblog.com

Commercial Closet Association

Family Pride

Freedom to Marry

Gay & Lesbian Alliance

Against Defamation

Gay and Lesbian Leadership Institute

Gay and Lesbian Medical Association

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)

Human Rights Campaign

Mautner Project, the National

Lesbian Health Organization

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center (NYC)

Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center

National Black Justice Coalition

National Center for Lesbian Rights

National Center for Transgender Equality

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC)

Out & Equal Workplace Advocates

PFLAG National (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)

Pride at Work

Servicemembers Legal Defense Network

Triangle Foundation

World Congress of GLBT

Jews: Keshet Ga'ava

was dropping its threat of a boycott, saying Ford "heard our concerns; they are acting on our concerns. We are pleased with where we are." The next day a Ford spokesperson appeared to confirm an agreement by saying the company would stop advertising its Jaguar and Land Rover brands in gay publications. AFA is an extremist anti-LGBT organization that routinely threatens boycotts against LGBT-supportive companies, television programs it does not like, or even cartoon characters such as SpongeBob.

On December 5, eighteen leading LGBT organizations issued a statement calling upon Ford to disavow any agreement with AFA, to reaffirm its commitment to the LGBT community and to meet with the LGBT community and resolve the issue. As a result of that statement, Ford Motor executives met with LGBT community representatives in Washington, DC on December 12. There, Ford said it would issue a statement based on the topics discussed and the comprehensive statement released today was the result.

### **Background**

The controversy erupted on December 1 when the American Family Association (AFA) officially announced it



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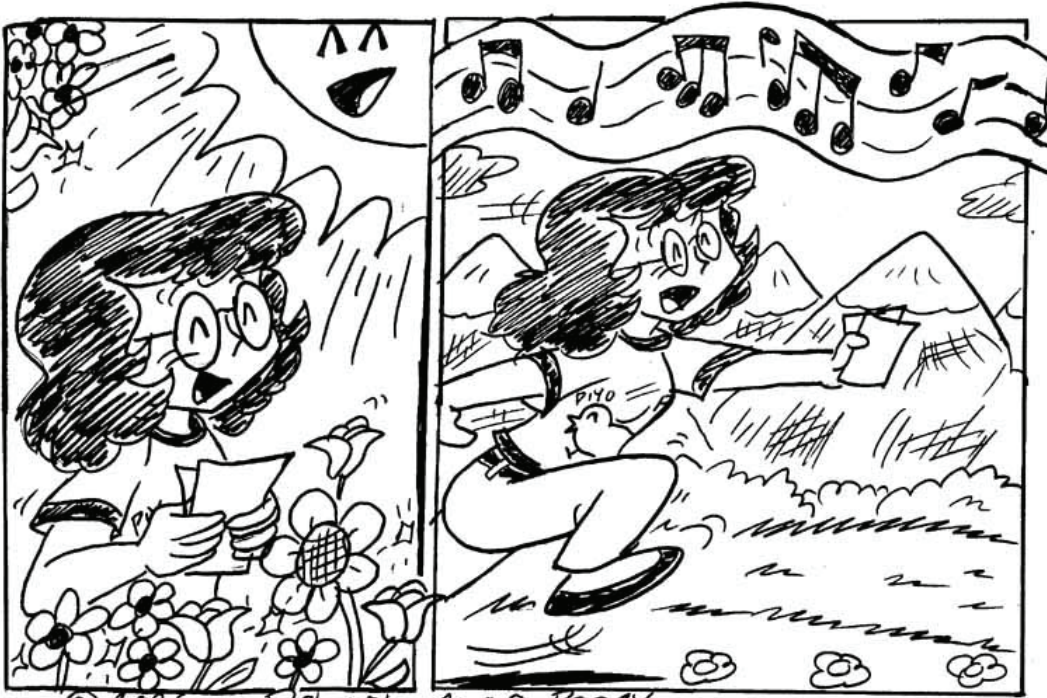
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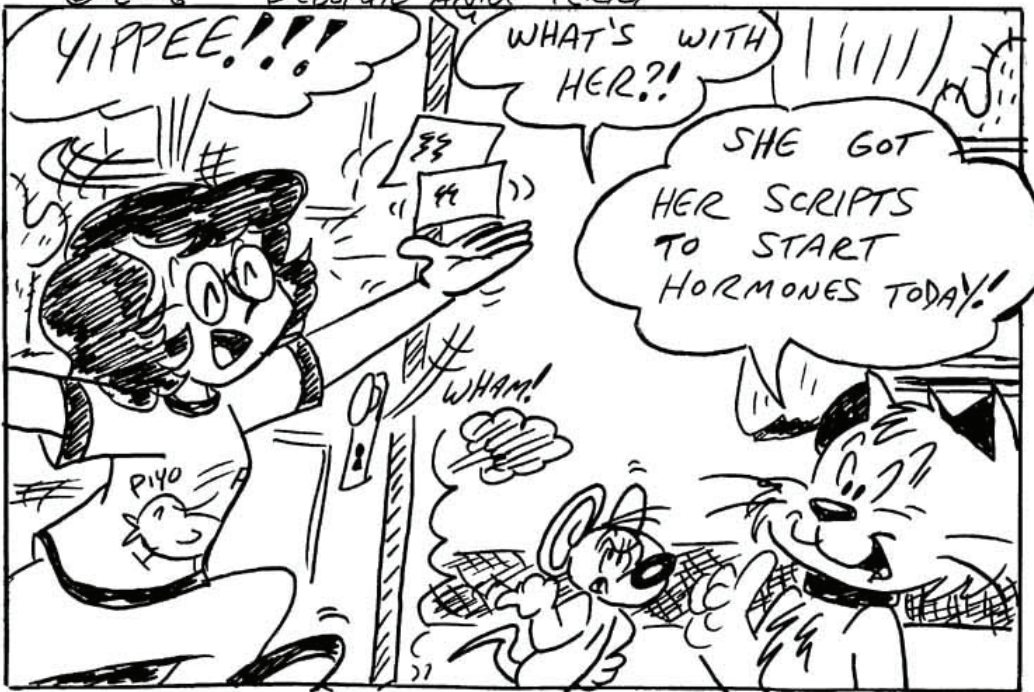
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*Fluffy and Mervin by Debbie Anne*



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*The mission of Transgendered Harmony is to provide resources and opportunities for the support of ALL transgendered persons in the pursuit of health and happiness in their lives. We believe this will be accomplished through education, personal interaction developing a fuller understanding and acceptance of self, raising the understanding and acceptance by the general public, professional counseling and providing a support network.*

SERVING  
THE  
TRANSGENDER  
COMMUNITY  
IN  
PHOENIX, AZ

Getting The Last Word... Defining Courage



BY JANET

There has been some discussion on the web group recently about courage. Many of us have wondered if what we do constitutes courage.

Being lazy, I looked up the definition of courage on Dictionary.com. Their definition is: **cour·age**, *n.* *The state or quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face danger, fear, or vicissitudes with self-possession, confidence, and resolution; bravery.*

To be honest, I like that definition, particularly the part about 'face[ing] vicissitudes with self-possession, confidence, and resolution.

Community Resources

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Isn't that what we do when we finally come out and deal with our gender challenges? I would categorize that as a 'vicissitude'.

Going back to Dictionary.com again, we see vicissitude as "... the sudden or unexpected changes or shifts often encountered in one's life, activities, or surroundings." Sound familiar? I'd say that being trans-gendered qualifies.

So, are we courageous? I think so. There is no question that we face danger and fear. Perhaps the real question is whether we believe that we are possessing of confidence and resolution.

Resolution is not quite as difficult. Once we decide to face our issues rather than evade them, we have made a resolution.

So, it seems that the ques-

tion becomes one of confidence. Do we each as individuals believe in ourselves? There is no easy answer.

Still, this question is not unique to trans-gendered people. Everyone deals with issues of confidence, and has had to deal with those issues on a fairly regular basis.

We tend to sometimes confuse courage with heroism, the outward, spectacular show of extraordinary power or will. But, courage is not a big, flashy, external thing. It is rather, a quiet, internal matter.

The word *courage* originates from the Latin word for 'heart'. When we face our situations, are we not following our hearts; even in spite of what we think others may do or say?

Then, my friends, we **are** truly courageous.

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DR. THANES VANIG—SPECTRUM MEDICAL GROUP – SEE PAGE 10

HEALING WATERS MINISTRIES

A GLBT friendly, non-denominational Christian church  
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Sunday Service at 10:00 am  
Dr. Joseph Pearson. Senior Pastor