



: the newsletter of the Prisoner Correspondence Project

Welcome to Issue Twelve! You may notice a few changes in this issue. First up, as you can see we have a new banner heading on this page. We had a bunch of submissions, too many to pick just one favourite, so we'll be cycling through them over the next few issues. The first one is thanks to Damian. There will be a new one in the next issue so keep 'em coming!

The other main change in this issue is that the inside member submissions all speak to the theme of "Coming Out in Prison." We had a great response to that callout as well and will be compiling those into a resource for the Resource Library. Check out the ones we have so far on pages 13-18, and if you want your submission to be included, there's still time. It was so successful that we're going to be doing another themed issue for the next newsletter, check out all of the details for that on page 18.

Other than that, all of your favourites remain: Homoscopes, Celebrity Gossip, Featured Resources, etc. (you should have seen the uproar when we experimented with taking them out!!)

Until the next issue, we remain,

In Struggle and Solidarity,

Your friends at the Prisoner Correspondence Project

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**GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE  
 THE COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN  
 AND THE WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE**

# SINCE WE'VE BEEN GONE

Where to begin? As you've probably already heard, Prisoner Correspondence Project is gaining new inside members at an ever growing rate. Welcome to all our new friends, we're very pleased to meet you! The only catch to being oh-so-popular is that our postage and printing costs have jumped enormously these past couple years. But fear not, we're working out solutions to our money woes! In just two short months, our fundraising and cost-cutting efforts managed to get us out of the red...for now.

As winter melted into spring, fundraising for the project metamorphosed us all into social butterflies. In April, Lady Gaza hosted Josh's birthday party with full bar service benefitting the project. What a glamorous night it was...what I can remember of it, anyway (your humble author may have personally benefitted the project a bit too much that particular evening). In early May, Caitlin and veteran collective member Kristin launched their new short film DELILAH, a Sapphic-psychedelic retelling of everyone's favourite Biblical missive, with a screening and fabulous fundraiser party for you know who. And later on in May, the project teamed up with the queer tattoo artists at Tatouage Royal in Montreal to host Queer Flash Day. Sylvie, Lu Ci, and Muriel designed the gayest flash sheets we've ever seen and spent a whole day tattooing...with all profits going to the project! Thanks goes out to those three inking angels from the bottom of our tatted-up hearts.

We've also saved a bundle in international postage this year by recruiting a network of friends of the project who've volunteered to carry our U.S. mail across the border to be mailed domestically from the States. Believe it or not, we've already managed to save more than a thousand dollars though this system, and thanks so much to everyone who's helped us. In case any of our American members are wondering why your mail has suddenly started coming from the U.S., there's your answer!

In other news... in February we hosted another screening and discussion of Jean Genet's Un Chant d'Amour as part of Social Justice Days. Little did we suspect that, after the lights came up, we'd be swarmed by an ardent throng of prospective new outside penpals, making the night one of the most successful penpal matchup events we've ever had! In April, we guest-spoke at a class called Women in Conflict with the Law, at Concordia University's Simone de Beauvoir Institute, and in May we facilitated a discussion about the project with members of AIDS Community Care Montreal. That same month, the ever-giving Josh sacrificed her night at the DELILAH party to represent the project at the Canadian University Queer Services conference in Ottawa (Joshie, we're still sorry!). And in May we sat at our usual tabling spot in Montreal's Anarchist Bookfair. This year, we came resplendent in what we overheard unofficially declared 2014's "must have" item for the fashion-forward montréalais militant: our new line of Beyoncé-themed Prison Abolition Now! t-shirts (we also made designs featuring Judy, Céline, and Liza).

Did we forget to say that you are beautiful?  
The best of our best.  
Condemned by family  
Condemned by society  
Condemned by law  
Did we forget to say that you are, still, beautiful?  
The best of our best.  
Yea, you stole  
you robbed  
even killed

Even so, did we forget to say that you are beautiful? The best of our best.

The rose has thorns, yet, do we not say that it is beautiful?  
The best of the best

Gratitude, and eternal love.  
The best of the best.

by Tatia Marie



Plain and simple. Fuck them! I am now 53 years old and am still running and jumping around as if I was in my 20s. And I know when I get out in 2 1/2 years from now I will find someone who will love and care for me and me for him.

### Sincere One

I have been in prison now for 14 years.

In 2009 I chose to get involved with a gay man – feminine gay nonetheless. He was not the first and although whatever the score is or was I knew at that moment I wasn't being reserved with my sexuality any longer.

I left that institution, returned to an institution I had been to before... when I was reserved. People come and go in prison – gossip stays and rumours fester. So I developed a mantra of sorts... "If you want to know something – ask. Ask if you want to know the answer. Do not be offended by the answer to the question you asked." With that, people who wanted to know would ask. Don't lie. In prison, alliances and associations are sensitive. Give people the truth, allow them to deal with you or not, whether anyone likes it or not, everyone can respect someone who does not hide. Only telling a few is dangerous in this respect because people and prisoners get offended if they feel they are being made a fool. In regards to this, I'm open, honest, and proud of who and what I am – gay!

There was no traditional coming out party or uneasiness and I've been fortunate to have strong familial ties and support. My decision to be who I am wasn't motivated by race although most prisons are racially divided. Those politics should not affect any decision for anyone and never will mine.

If you don't stand for something, you'll end up on the bottom rung of the ladder being someone you never imagined you'd be, thinking back to how things were. My choice? To stand and be counted, which brings me to the close of "Coming Out." We are perpetually coming out – with everyone we meet. My personal favorite is when I'm playing sports. I'm not a feminine man and am competitive and aggressive in sports. The day always comes when someone who isn't around me constantly asks if I'm gay – it's not disgust on their face as I answer, shoulders square and looking directly in their eyes, it's surprise. That millisecond after "Yeah, you didn't know that?" Sometimes it costs a potential friendship – sometimes not. Who wants a friendship based on judgement? It's challenging but I look at how long people fought for what they believe is right. I get my strength from our struggle, my inspiration from other LGBTQs and live vicariously through them. I have sense of self, our struggle and widespread acceptance is bigger than self; we are represented by each other as a group as well as individuals.

I love you all.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF QUEER FRIENDSHIPS

With the success of all of these Coming Out submissions, we want to do a themed issue for the next one as well. We put a bunch of suggestions to the Inside Advisory Committee, and they have determined that the theme of the next issue will be THE IMPORTANCE OF QUEER FRIENDSHIPS. As always, we accept writing, art, and poetry on the subject. Please, when submitting, let us know what name you want it published under as it saves us a lot of guesswork.

Feel free to take the topic wherever you want, but if you're having trouble beginning, pick one of these as a place to start:

1. What is the importance of friendship with other queers who are inside prison? What is the importance of friendship with other queers who are out of prison? What can be gained from friendships with queers of a different generation?
2. Tell us about one of your most important queer friendships. How did you meet? How could you tell? What did you learn?
3. In prison, is there an automatic base for friendship with other gay or trans prisoners? Is there an expectation that you should be friends? Do queer friendships always have to negotiate a sexual tension?
4. Last year, Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore, a San Francisco activist and writer, put out a book called "Why Are Faggots so Afraid of Faggots?". What are some of the barriers to friendship? What are they/you/we afraid of?

# GAY CELEBRITY GOSSIP

## SILVER SCREEN EDITION

We've always known that there was a dark and seamy underside to the Hollywood dream, but with the recent tell-all by hustler-to-the-stars Scotty Bowers in *Full Service: My Adventures in Hollywood and the Secret Sex Life of the Stars*, all the salacious details step out from the shadows to take their rightful place in the sun in this issue's GAY CELEBRITY GOSSIP – SILVER SCREEN EDITION.

Let's start off at the top, shall we? CARY GRANT (*An Affair to Remember*, *North by Northwest*) was Hollywood's most eligible bachelor and, it appears, kept up some of those bachelor habits even after his marriage to BARBARA HUTTON. He lived for years with Western star RANDOLPH SCOTT, also married, the two of them taking up a house just behind the famed Chateau Marmont. When



Bowers spent the night with the pair he recalls "The three of us got into a lot of sexual mischief together. Aside from the usual sucking – neither of them were into fucking, at least not fucking guys, or at least not me – what I remember most about the first encounter was that Scott really liked to cuddle, and talk, and was very gentle."

But it wasn't all cuddles and rainbows and lemondrops. Well, maybe lemondrops. When it came to the legendary director GEORGE CUKOR (*A Star Is Born*, *My Fair Lady*) Bowers writes, "In no time at all he started to suck on my erect penis. He was so good at what he was doing that before I knew it I was dizzy with ecstasy and simply lay back until I experienced an absolutely exquisite orgasm... There was never any foreplay or necking. There was no preamble, nor was there ever any form of penet-



ration. Anal sex was out of the question. To put it crudely ... George just wanted to suck dick. And he would do it with a quick, cold efficiency."



Cukor found a kindred spirit in playwright COLE PORTER (*Kiss Me Kate*, *Anything Goes*). Bowers recounts how on another evening, he took nine of his best-looking young guys over to Porter's house and Porter "sucked off every single one of them in no time. Boom, boom, boom and it was all over." And he always swallowed.

It wasn't just the boys, however. KATHARINE HEPBURN (*The Lion in Winter*, *On Golden Pond*) may have been illicitly linked with SPENCER TRACY for most of her life, but once told Bowers "I know about your reputation, Scotty. When you get a chance, do you think you can find a nice young dark-haired girl for me? Someone that's not too heavily made-up." Over the next 50 years, he would fix her up with over 150 different women. "Most of them she would only see once or twice, and then tire of them." The one great exception, apparently, was a young beauty named Barbara who Hepburn would see on and off for almost the next 50 years, and to whom Hepburn gave \$100,000 shortly before her death.



But thank goodness. Now we have Ellen and Neil Patrick Harris.

PROGRESS.



## SASKATCHEWAN PENITENTIARY

### GAY COUPLE'S FIGHT TO LIVE TOGETHER

The struggle continues for a gay couple in Saskatchewan to be able to be housed together as they serve out the rest of their life and indeterminate sentences. Jean Richer, 46, and Leslie Sinobert, 62, have been in a long-term relationship at Saskatchewan Penitentiary in Prince Albert, SK, and have been kept separate by the prison administration. Technically, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) does not have a policy to separate people in relationships in any facility, and so Jean and Leslie have been arguing that keeping them apart is unfair and homophobic even by the CSC's own terms.

In 2007, while they were both housed in the medium security unit of Saskatchewan Penitentiary, Jean had filed grievances demanding the prison allow the two to bunk together, which were refused. Come April & May of 2013, they were both transferred to the minimum security Riverbend Annex, and within a week of their arrival, Jean filed an application to get them housed in the same housing unit, hopefully to be able to spend some quality time together alone. The prison officials rejected their application, telling them that they had ample time to meet up in shared spaces like the yard, the gym, or the cultural centre, but would stay housed separately because Leslie was classified to be housed in the Mental Health unit—despite, as Jean notes, not receiving any counselling or treatment.

### NOTED CANADIAN TRANS WOMAN PRISONER, KATHERINE JOHNSON, DIES AT 66

Katherine Anne Johnson, 66, died this April in the hospital of the Fraser Valley Institution for Women in Abbotsford, British Columbia. Having been held in many institutions in Canada, she described her experiences of being a trans woman in the Canadian prison system as co-author of the 1997 book *Prisoner of Gender*.

In 2009, Katherine filed a complaint with the Federal Court of Canada to make CSC pay for her sexual reassignment surgery, as they are legally required to provide the same levels of necessary health care as in outside communities, and to be transferred to a women's prison where she would feel safer. She won both requests.

Her struggle, along with that of Synthia Kavanagh and that of Shelley Ball, is part of the ongoing struggle to have trans women's needs met in prison. In 2010, the Conservative Government cut funding to prisoners' sexual reassignment surgeries, which was already difficult to access because of the so-called "real life" test required for a diagnosis. Prisoners' Legal Services is continuing the challenge against both restrictive requirements and against the government's decision to cut funding.



Katherine  
Johnson

I am and embraced it as days went on and am very proud to be black and queer. Wouldn't have it no other way. Coming out in prison is in a sense political cause now in California they are segregating gay prisoners from non-gay prisoners. As for losing, I actually gained in a sense a beautiful understanding family that makes one proud. My mother has been truly supportive. Wish I could say the same about my brother and so-called homeboys. In their eyes I've committed the ultimate sin. My support system consists of my mother and a true dear friend whom I love deeply. I am blessed to have the support system I have. To say it is not hard, that'll be a lie, but racial background always plays a major role in coming out or being out in prison. Blacks actually embrace the queer population over the other groups to a certain degree which is kinda ironic when you look at it in its totality. When it's all said and done though, be proud of who you are. Don't be discouraged behind what the next person says and think about your sexuality. Know that who and what you are is no different from who and what you are racially. Love yourself, and love what you represent, Yours truly, Rogue

#### Billy Mackenzie

First, your quote is spot on from Harvey Milk. Only for me I didn't realize I was indeed "their children" when I was growing up, especially in Texas. I had no others to look up to let me know that I wasn't a child of Satan. Watching the news and seeing it in school, people that were just thought to be gay getting beat up or worse, just sealed my closet, I thought, forever.

My coming out has nothing to do with politics, it was an extremely personal transformation and has developed what the rest of my life will be. What better place to exit the confines I had locked myself away in than to do it here in prison, where I am hated by inmate and system alike. I've endured quite a lot in my 21 years, but I've received so much love and support it's worth it. Not only does it turn me from victim to survivor, but it allows me to be someone part of a greater good. Someone the teenagers of today and the children of tomorrow, don't have to look at themselves in the mirror and cry out "Am I the only one who feels this way about myself, my body, or who I am?"

I could have done it quietly, but that's what I did my whole life, sneaking into movie houses, spas for just a quiet little bit of time to be with someone just like me. That's why I made it very clear to myself the day I got to prison I would (and have remained) abstinent. For me, when I fall in love, I will not allow the system to move one of us and keep us apart like my fear has done on the outside. Because if I would have just come out like my first boyfriend asked me to do, I would have saved myself and the people I harmed so much grief because I thought they wouldn't love and accept me.

He's the great gift, once I come out, and learned to love and accept who and what I am, everything is so real. As a very dear friend told me once just before I'd made the wrong choice, "Billy, God don't make junk. If He accepts you, you have to accept you." She was absolutely right. I also believe by coming out in prison has given the ability to share what mistakes I made, and still am some-

times, that allows me to show instead of tell you how you should do it.

At first I was so self-conscious that any word spoken about gays was automatically directed toward me and we all know gays take everything personal. LOL. I think my coming out in prison was best done to anyone who asks. It's a little harder though due to the convicts' perception of what a "punk" should be. That he's always a man who is very "femm." I do not fit that description and I never could because I'm a gay man, deep voice, who loves men. I don't have girl's mannerisms. I also don't have a different name than the one given me. It confuses a lot of men in prison. They don't know what to think of it. I call it the "Locker Room Shock." They're like "you can't be gay, you're one of us."

For me this has been a blessing in disguise. Saying no has been easier for me. If I would've done this in the free world it could have been disastrous for me. I knew where all the candy stores were and I wouldn't have set boundaries for myself as well as others. Billy would have sampled every sweet in each store and that's not what this is.

There is no right way or wrong way to coming out. No "magical moment." You just do it. Don't expect, like I did, to do it perfectly. Maybe it won't hurt a bad when you fall on your ass, like me. Just know this, when your tears allow you to see, you will see many hands reaching out to help you back up and moving forward. Always move forward.

A very precious gift has been given to me. You will find that those who judge won't matter to you anymore. And those matter to you, won't judge you.

When you leave that closet, close the door behind you, break the key off in the lock. Make sure you leave two things in that closet. Your anger and your fear.

That's I did in prison. I've made some very loving relationships inside and out which have shown me a great deal of support.

Know that I love you, and my hand is always here, like others have been for me.

Please remember just one last thing – Always stay on the yellow brick road.

#### Me-me

I have been bi since I was in my 20s, but my problem was that I was always the pitcher (is this term still used?) I am a Mexican, I came to prison again in 1991 and am still here, 23 years, a very long time for any human. Finally I've had the guts to do what I have been wanting to do for so long, and that is be the catcher. Now let me tell you, I am still in the closet. It is hard for me to come out because I am supposed to be a vato firme, a hard-ass dude. Even though I let everyone know that I mess with gays, so I guess I have that closet door open, eh? Anyway, I met this lovely African American, and he would go to my cell at least twice a week. Everyone thought that I was the pitcher because they all knew that he was gay, but when we were in my cell we both pitched and caught and it was the greatest sex I had ever had!

I told my family that I was bi about 10 years ago and I have yet to receive a letter from them though Mom, Dad, Grandma were gone before I had a chance to come out to them. So how do I feel about them cutting me off?

be a better place. Come out!  
Love Selene

### **Steve Howe**

Coming out in prison is way harder and can be very dangerous. There are so many guys who are to the extreme with hate and homophobia. They could have so many other issues in their life and decide to not want to be on the yard anymore and a queer is a top target to attack. Or you will get guys who are so hateful and ignorant to anyone who's gay and they will just cut you or beat you. So it's very hard to be out or let it be public info in here that you are. I've seen some very ugly situations because of it. I decided to finally come out when I finally got sick of hiding and lying and I'm fearful daily of some wacko coming after me because of it. But I try to be aware. Once it's out, it's out and it's going to be a topic of conversation always because it's such a small world in here and it will be common knowledge until you leave. It's impossible for only a few people to know about it. There are no secrets in here and the general consensus in prison is "Nobody cares about anything or anyone except themselves" Guys in here are worse than gossiping women.

Coming out as a political strategy is not realistic and it's because there is so few of us on any yard. My yard has 1000 inmates and the most gay or t's all at one time is like 9 or 10 total so there is no strength in numbers to have political strategy.

My challenges are alienation. Once you're out, you are constantly put down, made fun of, sexually harassed, stolen from, pushed around, no one has respect for you. Guys who like you or don't care about you being gay, they will get harassed for being too close to you so it's easier to just stay away for them. It's very hard to find a cell mate to accept you. Guys either don't want you in or their homeboys will give them shit if they see you in a cell with a straight guy. The cops don't care and try to force you in and you end up getting beat up for going in or getting a write-up for not going in so you end up with a gay cellie or some weirdo that no one else will live with. It's very hard until you're able to find a spot. All the officers really don't care at all and 90% are as homophobic as the inmates and they think it's funny to see us get beat up or harassed all the time and the couldn't care less if you are happy or comfortable so you really don't have anyone to turn to at all. It's very frightening most of the time. I don't know where to find any resources and would love to find some. Like this penpal you all offer is very exciting to me. I have grown very lonely and don't get mail much and I'm dying to have someone to write to. As far as what to be ready for, I advise to keep your coming out to yourself until you have been on the yard a while and learn how things go and who people are. Watch other fags and see the way they get along and be ready to deal with it all for good, no turning back.

My race had no effect on my coming out, it's the same for all races. We get it from everyone. My race tells me to never mess with other races or I will be on my own and I don't expect them to put much in protecting me ever. But I follow the rules to not make any extra drama for myself. It is hell and it never feels comfortable. I'm on my toes all the time, I am treated like I have leprosy, and I only have been close to other fags and it seems as if they

never stay or last very long. I'm miserable, lonely, and scared. I hate it here and I can't wait to leave.

Thanks,  
Respect,  
Steve Howe.

### **Rogue**

I think coming out in prison is a catch-22 in regards to the cultural environment in prison. A while back I wrote an article that Black and Pink printed called "Is it taboo to be black and gay?"... when I decided to come out a lot was going on in my life that had be pulled in a million and one directions. My decision was purely based on the fact that I was educated in knowledge of self and in the traditional sense and we always hear people say "as long as I'm comfortable with me I don't care what people think." That is an oxymoronic lie. We do care and it is that care that shackles us to that fear. Society is forever depicting 'homosexuality' as a sickness and a curse which plays on the mind of the person who is not in a hetero relationship. It is not wrong to love the person of your respected gender. Being gay in prison is chopped up in the different groups: your tops, bottoms, versatiles, and the branches off of those groups. You find your particular fetish and you run with it. I love trannys, but I don't define myself by just that. There is no question to it, coming out in prison is more harder because you live in a fishbowl society and when you break news that big, it becomes cannon fodder. Prisoners are more brutal in that aspect than people realize because prison has that "hardcore" image to uphold. I came out in '08 because I was tired of lying to myself and there was so much chatter about gays and gay bashing that it was time for me to stand up and be accounted for.

It is possible to be out to an intimate group in prison but that becomes a problem in the long run being that intimate groups will not be around you always and men love to gossip just as much as the females. That's fact. I think also one of the reasons I chose to come out was you hear that quote in quote "gang members are not gay and have no reason being gay." Well let's just say I am gay, a gang member, a blood, and have a reputation. My story will take more than 500 words, but the fact is I was no longer in fear of what

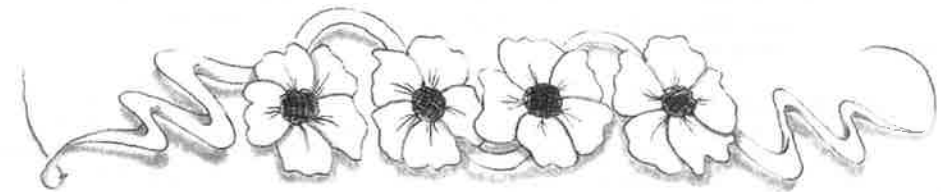


## **TEXAS COUNTY CHANGES ITS TREATMENT OF TRANSGENDER PRISONERS**

Harris County, a county in Texas including Houston and the surrounding area, recently adopted some major changes to the way transgender people are housed and treated in county jails. The changes are a response to new federal laws requiring prisons to take some steps to reduce sexual assault and rape within their walls.

Transgender people will now live in housing that matches their gender identity and can use their chosen name with guards and staff and on official documentation. Guidelines for searches will also be changed.

We do hope this will be a change for the better, especially for trans women who are locked up in men's facilities when they'd be safer and more comfortable with other women. But these laws won't do anything to keep our queer and transgender sisters and brothers, friends and lovers out of prison in the first place. What do you think? Is this the place to start, or should we focus on just keeping people out of prisons and ending their existence altogether? New policy or not, prisons are violent places for queer people, transgender people, and straight people alike – we don't want any of us to spend one more day behind bars.



## **DANGEROUSLY HIGH LEVELS OF PRESCRIBING EXPOSED**

A recent investigation by CBC News, a large Canadian news network, exposed nearly a decade of dangerous medical practice in Canadian prisons for women. Prescriptions for mood-altering medications spiked among female prisoners, and the investigation showed the extent to which these drugs, specifically Seroquel, are used to sedate prisoners. Seroquel is only approved for treating schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, but was widely prescribed to anyone who had sleeping problems. It can be – and is – deadly when prescribed improperly.

Doling out prescription sedatives is a widespread practice in US prisons, and nobody is surprised to hear Canada is no exception. But the investigation also showed that Canadian prisons have sharply increased this practice in recent years. In 2002, a Correctional Service Canada study reported that 42 percent of female inmates were on prescribed psychotropic medications. In 2013, the same study repeated again reported almost 63 percent of women in federal prisons were on psychotropic drugs.

Another study interviewed 22 women in prison, and 21 of them said either a federal or provincial prison had prescribed them Seroquel. One of them described her experience: "the thing with prison is that they like to heavily medicate people, and I'm a prime example. Seroquel, stuff like that. I was on a lot of medications. I was a walking zombie. I could not function. I do not remember half of my time."

Seroquel is manufactured by an American pharmaceutical company called AstraZeneca, who agreed to a \$520 million settlement after whistleblowers alleged that the company paid kickbacks to doctors who prescribed the drug for unapproved uses, including many prison doctors in the United States.

So are doctors prescribing these drugs to prisoners because they get something extra on the side? There's no evidence to say that's happening in Canada, but who knows what more investigation will turn up. Or maybe these drugs are just a convenient way to control people and break down their ability to fight back against the prison system. Whatever is happening, we hope everyone reading this is getting the health care they need and none that they don't. If we can help each other survive their system, we can fight it!

## GAY HOMOSCOPES, OR, HEY, WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?



**ARIES** you are stunning! Whatever it is that you've been doing to update your look, put a skip in your step, and challenge your mind, is working like a tiny charm that is lodged inside a heart-shaped locket and then strung on a flawless golden chain. Good work! With the planets shifting as Mercury moves out of retrograde I encourage you to spread your glory with those around you. The tips and tricks that have been making you sparkle can be shared, and we all hope you are feeling generous.

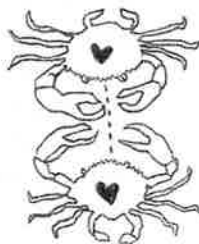
**TAURUS** you have been taking aim. You have targets and goals ahead and you are shooting toward them with every ounce of direction and power at your disposal. In light of recent planetary shifts and upcoming solar configurations, I certainly encourage this dazzling display of ambition. You are sparked and charged to progress gaily forward. However, I must advise you that it may also be quite pleasurable and even educational to begin to aim not just for the center but also to veer wildly off course. Looking not for straightforward, goal-oriented outcomes, but also attempting to waver and explore will yield a treasure that is equally bizarre and unexpected.



**GEMINI** you have been having some strange dreams lately. Perhaps they are the kind of hot and steamy shower scenes where everyone remains fully clothed, or perhaps they involved coordinated aerobics workout routines in matching purple jumpsuits and violet beehive hair-dos. What the stars are saying about these nightly trips, is that whatever is going on in your subconscious right now can actually tell you a lot about how to behave in your relationships. If you are dreaming of swan diving into a fountain of chocolate, this is the week to divulge something sweet to a crush. If you dream of slowing morphing into a glimmering blue gemstone in a velvet case, it could be time to give a loved one a complement or a back rub. Pay attention to the subtle clues of the night, and you will surely shine bright like you always do.



**CANCER** you have us all on the edge of our chairs with what to us feels like birthday cake but to you just feels like toast. While you walk through the world with a careless ease, we remain taken by your high style, your girlish giggle, your charming smile, and your playful gaze, even when you aren't even gazing at anything in particular. We all dream that you might be gazing at us. Why are we clinging to your every word and savoring your every glance? Well, that is because you have a delicate wonder that will only increase in the coming months. Do not be afraid that acknowledging this power will make it disappear. It will, in fact, only enhance its reach and keep the rest of us waiting at your wings and begging on our knees for more, more, more.



**LEO** this summer is heating right up and you are hot pants, radiator, smoking, fire. It is hard to say whether those around you will be delighted to roast marshmallows in some of your heat or whether the extreme temperatures you are bringing to the forecast may per perceived by some as "a little bit much." What the stars are warning Leo, is not to tone down the glow that makes you, well, you, but to tread carefully on the line between too much and not enough. Ease those around you into tasting what you have to offer and you will have an easier time keeping the banquet under control.

Well, hello, **VIRGO**. Surely you already know that you are getting more delightful and witty as time passes along but I'll remind you in this astrological moment that in the coming months you will not only gain a very becoming (and I must say radiant) sense of yourself but critical advice you offer those around you will enrich everything and everyone who has the benefit of taking the time to listen to any unsolicited advice you may dole out. You are a tiny kitten dancing on a surfboard in an orange sunset over a skyline of alien hovercrafts and raindrops and rain. Do not forget your fabulousness and you will manage to help those closest to you make tough decisions and overcome significant pain.



queer and don't want the reputation of a gay man, that they will be picked on and ridiculed or won't be respected. Others are just straight afraid of being picked on, possibly assaulted, or extorted.

I personally have been open the whole time. Yes, people have called me names and said things to try and hurt me, but I know who I am and don't care what they say or think about me. I feel most of these men are hiding something in their own closet, and use the ones who are open to try and make themselves look better or manly and tough. I don't want those people in my life anyway, and I am happy they stay away from me. Mostly, I'm respected for my honesty, some may not like my lifestyle, but respect me because I don't hide who I am. That's the positive-type people I want around me, not those who are so negative.

I chose to be open because for me after hiding my sexuality for so many years, I am relieved to be who I am, without living a secret life or having to lie all the time. It's like the world was lifted from my shoulders and I was finally free from it all.

I have found being open to only a few people could be like playing with fire. It's very hard to trust others in prison and most of the time secrets are not held for long. I'm not saying it isn't done. Do I have secrets about other men? Yes, but most of the time one person confide in another and before you know it everyone is talking. Being in prison is like a giant soap opera - everyone is always spreading a rumour and saying something about someone else. So I feel the best policy is just to be open and honest, then there is no chance to get burnt by that fire.

The challenges of coming out or being open in prison can vary, depending on who you are yourself. Everyone handles things in different ways. Personally, I ignore the bad comments and actions that ignorant people may say or do. I realize they are the ones who have issues that only they can deal with. Since I came out before coming to prison, I experienced how good it felt to be the true me and not live a lie like I did for so many years. It was like the world was lifted from my shoulders and I never want to go back to them lies again.

At first my support came mainly from my family, they are still very support-

ive of me and my lifestyle, I eventually looked to other people in the gay community to have someone to talk to that understood how I felt and could relate to things I was going thru. I would encourage anyone who may struggle with their sexuality to first of all be honest to themselves, then their family. After that seek someone you are comfortable with who is already out, and talk to them on how they handle things and what they may have gone thru. If necessary, talk to a counselor or psychologist on what you're going thru. I just know from personal experience that being who I truly am is such a relief and makes me feel so much better and whole.

As for relationships I've had in prison, I have never had a problem talking to my family about that. I learned to be honest and open about everything, especially with my mother; it has made our relationship so much stronger and I am now closer to my Mom than I ever was. If your family knows of your sexuality, then it shouldn't be hard to tell them of a prison relationship. If your family doesn't know, I would suggest breaking that to them first and letting them have time to digest that before letting them know you are also in a relationship.

I hope my writing has helped someone somewhere, all I would like is for someone else to feel the happiness I have enjoyed since I learned to be open. Todd Moritz "Toddles"

### Selene K Vinson

Coming out in prison means you lose any respect you have had whereas in the freeworld coming out gains you respect from the people around you who can appreciate your resolve and strength to be who you are.

I chose to come out cause it's such a burden and load on a person's mind to pretend who they are not. I am a woman. Pretending to be uber macho was a façade that stressed me out.

So coming out as transgendered has been a slow process for me. I told my wife of ten years that all my life I've felt I was a woman in the wrong body and I am going to change it so I slowly broke my family in by cross-dressing. Taking estrogen secretly and what once was breast forms I wore turned into small b-cup breasts and dressing appropriately as a woman all the time as was best suited for who I am. I use female bathrooms and live full-time as a woman. I was accepted by my parents and wife only. No one else understood nor took the time to understand.

Now I am in prison where I have to be manly or face punishment. I've been off my hormones for 4 ½ years. I am miserable but I've never given up the fight to be the woman I am and I never will. I have moral support from some acquaintances in here and few gay guys I associate with. I identify as a woman/lesbian. I am sexually attracted to women. Very few men attract me sexually. So I guess to an extent I am bi. But my sexual attraction is majority for women. My (real female) wife and I love my choice to be a woman as is suited to my spirit and soul.

Coming out with the support of a loved one is so easy. The ones who don't have love and support have it hard. But I would still encourage them to do so. It takes off a sever burden to their hearts and minds. Be who you are and love who you love, everyone, and the world will





and radical politics written by a trans woman  
**Still We Rise: A Resource Packet for Transgender People in Prison (From the TGI Justice Project)** - A comprehensive guide on access to medical care, information, and referrals.  
**Trans health information project:** TIP Guide to hormones and self-injection

## Smut

**Penetration** - A short story about fisting  
**Meatus: A pornzine for queers outside the box** - A collection of erotic writing about gay bio men  
**Reversed Seduction** - short erotic fiction by longtime correspondent and contributor premothea. A younger female inmate develops a plan to seduce her beautiful friend with a titillating surprise ending  
**Read me a story** - new pieces by Promethea  
**FagPunk** - a collection of sexual experiences of a gay boy that digs boots, bondage and mohawks.  
**Straight to Hell** - one of the longest-running (man-on-man) smut zines out there.  
**The Visible Woman** by Rachel X. Zall - 2 trans women find comfort & pleasure in each other's company.  
**Payback's a Bitch** by S. Bear Bergman - short smut story about giving control (& taking it back)  
**Heavenly Bodies** by Andrea Miller - a series of short pieces in which a lesbian fucks her way through all 12 zodiac signs.  
**A Taste of Sin** by Fiona Zedde - 2 black butches are picked up by an eager-to-please femme.  
**Big Gifts in Small Boxes** by Patrick Califia - a trans man visiting home for Xmas finds a way to keep things interesting.  
**Hot Pink** - a compilation smut zine put together by Black and Pink  
**Wanted Issue #1** - a compilation of erotic writing by prisoners, put together by the Transmission Prison Project.  
**Wanted Issue #2** - a compilation of erotic writing by prisoners, put together by the Transmission Prison Project.

## Women / Feminism

**Pocket guide for women living with HIV (not prison specific)** - A pocket guide for HIV-positive women that provides up-to-date information in plain language about a wide range of issues often faced by women with HIV. Topics include

healthy living, nutrition, getting care, treatment basics, relationships and pregnancy. It also addresses street drugs and touches on hepatitis C co-infection. (by Positive Women's Network)  
**Corpus: volume 4** - Corpus, is an HIV prevention publication that brings together health information, politics, creative work, and essays all on issues related to HIV/AIDS, and where health and AIDS intersects with other issues faced by gay and queer communities: incarceration, racism, policing.  
Issue 4 is about women's relationships to gay men and AIDS;

**Never Innocent: Feminist trouble with sex offender registries and protection in a prison nation** (by Erica R. Meiners) Using recent work by anti-prison theorists and community-based activists who are working against the prison industrial complex, this article links prison abolition to feminist frameworks to question escalating sex offender registries and community notification laws that are the state's response to sexual violence against children and women.  
**Tenacious:** art and writings from women in prison  
**Women Prisoners' Resource Guide** - a list of addresses and contact information for incarcerated women  
**One woman's struggle** - By Kebby Warner, a short zine about one woman's struggle with the DOC, medical neglect, and about being a mother  
**Women in Prison: How It Is With Us** - by Assata Shakur was a member of the Black Panther Party who went underground She was captured in 1973 and held as a political prisoner until 1979 when she was broken out of prison by a unit of the Black Liberation Army.

## Sex Work

**Audacious: the reality of being a transsexual or transvestite sex worker** - An article written by a member of the Prisoner Correspondence Project about her experiences as a transsexual sex worker dealing with the Montreal policing, court and prison systems.

Write to us at:

Prisoner Correspondence Project  
OPIRG-Concordia  
1455 de Maisonneuve O.  
Montreal QC H3G 1M8  
CANADA

**Hey Girls! Safer sex for sex workers/ He les filles! Le securisexe pour les travailleuses du sexe**

## Spirituality

**The Holy Male** - a Queerzine encouraging the exploration of the spiritual, sexual and artistic lives of queer men past and present.

\*\*\*This section is (clearly) new. Send us your suggestions as to what you might want to see added here in the upcoming issues.\*\*\*

## New This Issue!

### LGBTQ PRISON LITERATURE

**Men Against Sexism** - The story of a group of prisoners in Washington state who successfully organized to fight homophobia and violence in their prison.

### LIVING WITH HIV/HEP C

**HIV and Aging** - Advice on staying healthy for those in their 50s, 60s, and 70s.

**Clinical Trials: What you need to know** - some basic information about clinical trials: how they are conducted, how people can join a trial, and what they can expect if they decide to participate.

### SAFER SEX

**Brazen** - a safer sex guide for trans women by trans women (not prison specific)

### SMUT

**Wanted Issue #1** - a compilation of erotic writing by prisoners, put together by the Transmission Prison Project.

**Wanted Issue #2** - a compilation of erotic writing by prisoners, put together by the Transmission Prison Project.

### SPIRITUALITY

**The Holy Male** - a Queerzine encouraging the exploration of the spiritual, sexual and artistic lives of queer men past and present.

# RESOURCE LIBRARY OF THE PRISONER CORRESPONDENCE PROJECT

The following is a list of the resources available through our resource library as of Winter 2014. All resources are provided free-of-charge to prisoners and are yours to keep.

We are constantly in the process of updating the resource library, so please forward any suggestions of things you would like to see available or resources you have access to that you would like to share

Please note that we are only able to send five or six at a time. If you request more than that, they will be sent in batches over several weeks, so please indicate which are the highest priority and we will attempt to send them in that order.

## Emotional Support

**Support (sexual abuse & survivorship)** - In a time when sexual assault and abuse are an increasing problem and when most women have been sexually abused in one way or another, Cindy Crabb (Doris Zine) brings us a document showing ways to prevent sexual violence and support survivors of sexual abuse.

**Taking care of Your Body and Mind** - A pamphlet on safer slashing / safer cutting in prison put out by PASAN

**Survival in solitary: a manual written by and for people living in control units by California Prison Focus** - A collection of writing, poetry, and information about coping with solitary confinement and life sentences

**Trying to understand self-injury** - A short zine written by Black Ice Press, about disassociation, and the reasons why folks might choose to use self-injury to cope

**Freeing the Human Spirit through Meditation and Yoga** - a one-page guide to some basic yoga poses that can be done in prison

**Prisoner Rape Support Package** - put together by the Preventing Prisoner Rape Project in Australia

**Hope for Healing: information for survivors of sexual assault in detention** - a kit put together by US group Just Detention

## Safer Sex

**Beyond Appearances** - For prisoners, sex workers and other "high risk" communities, on HIV/AIDS issues, including prevention.

**C it's no joke: Hep C** - A guide explaining how to transmit Hep C, including tips on safer tattooing,

sex, and drug use.

**Queersafe** - A zine (not specific to prisons) about safer sex for queer men and women, different sexually transmitted diseases, and taking care of specific body parts put out by Head and Hands in Montreal

**Turnover: A collection of HIV prevention comics** - Turnover, through comics and illustration, explores issues of youth and HIV transmission, barebacking, and physical and emotional wellness.

**Risk in prison** - Two articles written by Matthew Jones (incarcerated) and Liam and Bridget from the Prisoner Correspondence Project (non-incarcerated) talking about the concept of "risk", and "risky sexual behavior" in prison

**You improvise to survive: Addressing sexual 'safety' of Queers Inside and Outside of Prisons** - A short compilation put together by the Prisoner Correspondence Project of the first submissions we received for the Fucking without Fear resource series.

**What if I'm HIV positive?** - A general, non-prison specific resource about what you should know if you test HIV positive

**Safer barebacking" (not prison specific)** - An article about how to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV/AIDS and other STD's/STI's when fucking without condoms

**VIH y el joint" (Spanish only)** - A basic resource sheet put together by PASAN about reducing the chance of transmitting HIV in prison

**The Bottom line (not prison specific)** - A gay man's guide to anal health: how the ass works, what it does, how it relates to other parts of the body, and how to get maximum pleasure from sex with minimal pain or damage

**Women Lovin** - Developed, designed and written by women: solid information on sexual health issues for queer women combined with practical tips and risk-reduction

strategies. Only sent to women's prisons.

**Brazen** - a safer sex guide for trans women by trans women (not prison specific)

**Hepatitis C Infosheet** - basic information on the virus

**Reading this can save your ass** - Safer rimming tips

**50 things you should know about hiv & safer sex (abstract)**

## Living with HIV/Hep C

**Living with HIV: starting points** - information on HIV and AIDS, how to stay healthy, what does CD4 count and viral load tell you, next steps

**Positively healthy (not prison specific)** - a gay man's guide to sex and health in Canada

**A practical guide to complement therapies** - for people living with HIV

**A practical guide to herbal therapies** - for people living with HIV

**A practical guide to HIV drug side effects** - for people living with HIV/AIDS

**A practical guide to HIV drug treatment** - for people living with HIV

**A practical guide to Nutrition** - for people living with HIV

**HIV and Hep C coinfection** - answer some basic questions about living with HIV and hepatitis C

**HIV disclosure** - a legal guide for gay men in Canada

**HIV viral load testing** - introduces the viral load test and answers basic questions about how it fits into a treatment plan.

**Hepatitis C Peer support group manual (non prison specific)** - tips and tricks for starting a support group

**Hepatitis C Pamphlet** - Newly diagnosed, the basic facts, treatment options

**Hepatitis C: Managing Common Symptoms and Treatment Side Effects** - for people living with Hep C

**Hepatitis C: Get the Facts** - all the info in plain language and detailed illustrations

**Living with HIV and HepC Co-infection** - offers key information on living with both viruses, covering useful topics such as HIV and hepatitis C basics, the effects of co-infection, ways to stay healthy, treatment strategies and preventing transmission.

**HIV and Aging** - Advice on staying healthy for those in their 50s, 60s, and 70s.

**Clinical Trials: What you need to know** - some basic information about clinical trials: how they are conducted, how people can join a trial, and what they can expect if they decide to participate.

## Writing/ Literature/ Art on HIV + AIDS

**What causes/defeats AIDS** - AIDS project Los Angeles, Annual report 2006.

**If We Have To Take Tomorrow** - list a collection of writing about same-sex and same-gender desire, and HIV/AIDS by and for gay black men.

**To be left with the body** - This collection, put out by AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA) is dedicated to poetry, prose, and photography written by and for HIV positive folks about the marginalization and criminalization of queer and HIV positive communities.

**Corpus: Volume 4** - health information, politics, creative work, and essays all on issues related to HIV/AIDS, and where health and AIDS intersects with other other issues faced by gay and queer communities. Issue 4 is about women's relationships to gay men and AIDS;

**Corpus: Volume 5** - health information, politics, creative work, and essays all on issues related to HIV/AIDS, and where health and AIDS intersects with other other issues faced by gay and queer communities. Issue 5 is about rural gay identity and AIDS;

**Corpus: Volume 6** - health information, politics, creative work, and essays all on issues related to HIV/AIDS, and where health and AIDS intersects with other other issues faced by gay and queer communities. Issue 6 is the International issues, and explores shifting global responses among gay and queer men to AIDS.

**The De-gaying of AIDS & Reclaiming Culture / La deshomosexualización del SIDA** - Available in both Spanish and English, these short essays speak to

how AIDS has been de-gayed, and the effects of this on, among others, prisoners and communities of color.

**Gay boy talk: stopping HIV infections among young gay men (Also available in Spanish) Not prison specific** - The purpose of this article is to discuss the importance of influencing discourse about homosexuality at the social and cultural levels in HIV-prevention efforts targeting young gay men. The discussion is based on Sexual Stories, a study which sought to understand the interpersonal, social, and cultural contexts in which behavioral risk for HIV infection occurs among young gay men.

**Latino Sexual Rebellions** - Art and writing by Latino men on family, sexuality, and HIV.

## Our Events

**Imprisoned Pride: how queer and trans prisoners get written out of mainstream pride movements** - A zine put together by the Prisoner Correspondence Project that is a transcript and photos from an event we organized in summer of 2008, during Montreal Pride festivities; an anthology of writing by queer and trans prisoners about pride.

**You Improvise to Survive: Negotiating Sexual "Safety" for queer and trans folks, inside and out** - A short compilation put together by the Prisoner Correspondence Project of the first submissions we received for the Fucking without Fear resource series. These submissions were the focus of several workshops and events we have put on with folks on the outside

**Beyond prisons, towards community strategies** - the transcription of a panel we held in the fall of 2009 on supporting work within and against prisons

**Erased Histories: Community Responses to HIV/AIDS** - The transcription of a panel of different (mostly gay and lesbian) community activists about their work around HIV and AIDS in the earlier days of the epidemic, including how AIDS issues interact with courts, cops, and prison issues.

**Building abolition futures** - the transcription of a panel from spring 2010 about how sex offender panic is linked to homophobia and the recent push for sex offender registries

**Hell No, We Won't Go: In Conversation with Laura Whitehorn** - The transcription of an interview we conducted with former political prisoner Laura Whitehorn, on anti-prison organizing, HIV mobilizing, and being gay in prison.

## Resource Lists

**Back Issues of The Word is Out!**: Our very own Prisoner Correspondence Project newsletter. Includes featured resource, prisoner art and writing, callouts for our different projects, and a list of all our services. Issues one through ten are available. Most recent sent unless others are specified.

**Cellcount**: A general newsletter / list of services and resources offered by PASAN, the Prisoner HIV/AIDS Support Action Network. Also includes tips on safer drug use, etc. We will send you the most recent edition, though you can also request backissues (Canada)

**A resource list for the Incarcerated Native American**: Includes listings for newspapers for Native American prisoners, book program listings, legal resources, and education programs for prisoners (USA)

**Queer and trans zine resource list**: a list of addresses and contact information for self-published 'zines

**Prisoner resource guide**: a collection of organizations and services offered to prisoners(USA)

**Prison Book Programs**: National prisoner resource list: expanded version of the prisoner resource list (USA)

**Locked out**: resource for LGBTQ prisoners (USA)

**Resource list for Straight/non-queer inmates**  
**Canadian publications for prisoners**

## Legal

**TGI Justice Project** - A brief overview of the programs and services offered by the Transgender, Gender-variant, and Intersex justice project, and how to contact them (USA)

**The Sylvia Rivera Law Project**  
An overview of SRLP, it's mandate and programs, and ways to contact them for more information (USA)

**Jailhouse Lawyer's manual** - A handbook of legal rights and procedures for use by people in prison. 36 chapters informing prisoners of their legal rights and how to secure these rights through the judicial process.

**Pennsylvania Legal aid** - a resource list of legal aid and pro bono organizations in Penn-sylvania

**Texas Legal Aid** - a resource list of legal aid and pro bono organizations in Texas.

**Florida Legal Aid** - a resource list of legal aid and pro bono organizations in Florida.

## Tattooing

**Tattooing and you: the safe-guards within prison walls** - A pamphlet / guide on safe tattooing inside prisons, things to consider, and materials to use

**Think Before You Ink** - prisoners perpetual calendar

## Drug Use

**My crack kit** - A short guide (pamphlet size) showing how to safely use crack, and reduce the risk to your body and your lungs.

**Safer shooting** - A postcard with short descriptions about how to shoot up safely with injection drugs.

**Be kind to your veins** - A guide to caring for your veins while fixing in prison, where to shoot up, etc, put out by PASAN

**Keeping fit** - A prisoners guide to syringe care, cleaning your needles, and what to do to take better care of your body while shooting up in prison

## Coming Out / LGBTQ Identity

**African Americans Coming Out** - A basic, non-prison specific guide to coming out for gay and lesbian African Americans

**FTM International: the chest issue** - The organizational and resource issue of the magazine FTM International, includes resource list for female-to-male trans folks.

**Intro to intersex activism: a guide to gay, lesbian and bisexual allies** - A short guide for people who are interested in knowing more about intersex identities and intersex activism

**Out of the closets and into the libraries: a collection of radical queer moments** - A 'zine put together archiving different moments in queer / gay history and snapshots of queer struggle (not prison specific)

**Tim Tum, a trans jew zine** - Concentrates on the struggle with being a transgender young man, issues of identity, and visibility among both queer and heterosexual groups. Highlights being a boy in Jewish American culture, and the struggle for identity when interfacing with normalizing power that attempts to gender you inappropriately.

**Making he lives of transsexual people visible: Addressing the politics of social erasure** - An examination of how social institutions and theoretical approaches

have led to the erasure of transsexual (people who identify as members of the other gender) and transgendered (a broad term for a range of groups that do not fit into the current two-gender system) experiences and begins to counter this through developing research and a detailed analysis of the forms of marginalization and oppression facing transsexual and transgendered people.

**Sex que(e)ry** - Que(e)ry is a collaborative zine on queerness, sexuality & gender. It was made at the University of Chicago

**Bent bars** - from our sister org in the UK, a compilation of stories on coming out in prison.

**Getting Together** - The ins and outs of dating & relationships for gay and bisexual men.

**Bisexuality 101** - A great collection of articles compiled by PFLAG on history and on bisexuality and biphobia along with some answers to frequently asked questions.

**How to be an Ally to a Bisexual Person** - Bisexual Resource Center - A brochure of tips and conversation starters for bisexual people for talking to people about bisexuality with straight and gay people alike.

**I Think I Might Be Bisexual, Fluid, Pansexual or Queer-Identified (So Now What?)** - BiNet USA - An article about bisexual, fluid, pansexual, and queer experience, with quotes from bisexual people, safer sex tips, and thoughts on confronting biphobia.

**My Gender Booklet** - a short booklet introducing terms, concepts and history around gender and transsexuality,

## LGBTQ Prison Literature

**Building Bridges** - A short article written by Lin Elliot in the mid 1990s that provides a brief overview of the realities of being queer in prison.

**Prisons and Closets** - An article written by Jason Lydon about his experience being in prison as queer, and about negotiating outness.

**Ultraviolet: The case of the jersey 4** - A small newspaper about the case of the new jersey 4 - four black lesbians who were convicted for defending themselves against a homophobic assault

**A view from Treblinka Dungeon, Pelican Bay** - An article written by Lofofora Contreras about her time spent incarcerated at the SHU (Security Housing Unit) at Pelican Bay as a transsexual woman, and about communities of trans prison-

ers coming together to support one another in the face of torture.

**Wiener Society** - A gay punk zine put together by Neil, prisoner in the US, includes poetry, music reviews, etc.

**Left Back: Issue 3** - Gay punk prisoner zine distributed by Fanorama; includes poetry and writing about prison life

**Thoughts of my liberation: Issue 5** - A zine put together by two-spirit Native American prisoner Iron Tipi Warrior about his experience of prison

**GLBT? Going to a Federal Prison?**

A booklet put together by Catherine Lynn Quick, a longtime member of the project, on what to expect for LGBT people when first going a federal prison.

**Enter the Cat House** - two short zines by Catherine Lynn Quick, a long time member of the project. Words of wisdom from Mother Cat.

**Men Against Sexism** - The story of a groups of prisoners in Washington state who successfully organized to fight homophobia and violence in their prison.

## Hormones

**Hormones without a doctor** - A comprehensive guide to street hormone use / hormone use without a doctor. Includes a pill and patch identification guide, what dosage to take pills, and other general tips about safe hormone use. Mostly MTF

**Gender Anarchy: a translesbigay 2 spirit zine" Issues March 2007 or December 2008** - A short zine put together by US transsexual prisoner about trans issues and hormone access in US and California prisons

**TranzLezbos** - A short zine, including poetry, for transsexual lesbians, put together by trans lesbian prisoner Lofofora, who is on the inside in California.

**Hepatitis C and hormone therapy** - A pamphlet about how you can transmit hepatitis C while injecting hormones (not specific to prisons)

**MTF hormone therapy** - Some basic information about taking hormones for people who are thinking of transitioning male-to-female

**FTM hormone therapy** - Some basic information about taking hormones for people who are thinking of transitioning female-to-male

**FAQ on transitioning** - A basic guide that answers frequently asked questions about transitioning, hormone use, and gender transition

**Tracing this body & new flesh struggles** - An article about kink



Coming Out. I have spent the last few months trying to quietly and carefully come out to only selective people in this prison, and in my life. I can only hope and pray that other people in my situation have more success and better results. I am so thankful that I found the Prisoner Correspondence Project and its members because the information and support I have received from you has kept me positive and confident in who I am. The letter of support from Amber, the newsletter, the openness of the materials I have received has helped me understand and accept I am not alone. I am not weird. I am not a freak. But most importantly I am not alone. I have felt so trapped and so alone for so long.

Coming out in a federal prison is a very difficult choice. You open yourself up to a lot of different things. People will automatically think they can say and do things to you they never would have dared before. But you have to be ready to handle it with patience and a level head. One of the reasons I am making this decision is I recently had to watch someone leave I was deeply in love with and could never be with out of fear of the prison's reaction. I am a white gay male and I fell in love with an openly gay Hispanic man, who is the most beautiful man I have ever seen. I regret not standing up and saying it so bad it hurts. I will not let my fear of being judged and what people think destroy the possibility of a great relationship. Everyone's situation is different, so only each individual person can make the decision to tell the prison population "I'm gay (or bisexual)!" Some simply can't because of violence. This is very sad. I wish strength, happiness, hope, and lots of good luck to anyone out there in prison stuck in their decision to come out. Only you know when and where is right. Thank you for letting me share a little of me with you. My life really has just now started. Now I can be ME!

Sincerely,  
Shane

#### Samantha

I suppose I came out when I was in my early 20's and when I did it felt fabulous because a heavy load fell from my shoulders. My father wouldn't speak to me for a whole year because of it. He said I "soiled" the family name. My mother though it was wonderful. Hell, she grabbed me in an embrace and squeezed telling me she "was happy because she finally had a daughter!" She even cried. As the tears ran down her cheeks my father told me to get the fuck out of his home and never come back because he didn't raise no queers. I knew he was just upset, so I hugged my loving mother and left. And even though my heart was crushed from what was said, I was also happy it was out in the open. After a year, my father and I reconciled, telling me I'll always be his baby. I cried with complete awe and joy. My older brother says he's alright with it, but yet, he refuses to write me. Anytime I write to him, he always has his wife write. This is pretty much an omission on his part. It used to bother and hurt me a lot, but I've come to accept his decision and respect his feelings as well.

When I first came to prison in the 90s, I heard so many horrible and horrific tales about what can happen to us transgender women, that I shaved off all my hair and began to use a razor to my face so I could grow hair. My

counselor during that time gave me two choices of prisons I could go to: Mule Creek or High Desert. They sent me to High Desert of all places, a level 4 maximum state prison where they sent the most violent inmates. For awhile no one really noticed that I acted a bit flamboyant. I got along pretty well but was expected to be down for the whites on the yard. I understood that politics were a way of life in prison and you didn't falter one iota, otherwise you got dealt with. After so many years I began feeling guilty and hating myself because I locked myself back in that dark closet again. I couldn't take it anymore so I sat my cellie down and explained to him who I truly was. When I finished he told me that if I was in my right mind I would lock it up. He also said he suspected I was queer but never said anything because I was cool. So I locked it up and came back out for good. Now I'm SNY and even though I'm out and proud I still keep the respect of others at my right hand. Don't get me wrong, I know that there are a lot of haters out there that still give us a hard time, but I let their words roll off me like water from a shower. I realize there will always be people who think we (transwomen and the gay community) are an abomination, but I keep my distance from people like that.

My support comes from my family out there on the streets as well as friends but, in the prison system, my transgender sisters. They are a select group because many have too much baggage and are sloppy in what they do. Don't get me wrong, because I know they themselves are going through difficult times, I just try to stick with as few as possible, is all. In some cases it depends on the institution you are at whether or not race plays a part. Like I used to get the blues because I had a Hispanic husband, and even been in several altercations because of it. But then they left me alone after they seen I wasn't going to let them get the better of me.

When I explained to my family and friends that I'm in a relationship in my prison; they always ask if the person is good to me; then when I say yes, they are relieved. They know I'm safe in other ways as well.

My challenges are trying to be able to be called by the right pronouns - Mrs instead of Mr, as well as getting cup-bras and makeup. We as transwomen should have the same rights as the women in CDCR prisons around the state. CDCR should respect and understand that we are women too, and with that I bring this to a close.

With love and solidarity,  
Samantha

#### Todd Moritz "Toddles"

Coming Out in prison can be hard for some people, especially men. In my 10 years in prison I have seen a lot, some are open from day one, some get caught in sexual acts then decide they might as well be open, some finally can't hide their true feelings and get overly stressed so they come out, and last but not least are those who hide it.

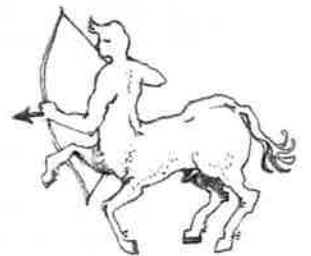
We'll start with those who hide it. Why, some may ask. Mostly it's a pride thing, a lot of men in prison have a fear that if they are gay or bisexual they aren't really men. They worry what others will say about them or directly to them. They are afraid of being titled as

LIBRA, you may have noticed that with Saturn shifting across its course, small details that normally feel completely unimportant now appear to hold the utmost significance. The tone in a stranger's voice, scuff marks on a floor, the taste in your lover's mouth, and the cuticles on your nails now suddenly seem to hold more meaning than a secret diary. What to make of all these tiny signs the cosmos is sending your way? My recommendation is to simply observe without judgment, anything that you take to be attention grabbing, interesting, or even mundane. The details may not carry answers or warnings or even advice but right now they will inspire a pause and a much-needed break that will allow you to push your own limits when the time comes in the not-so-far-away.



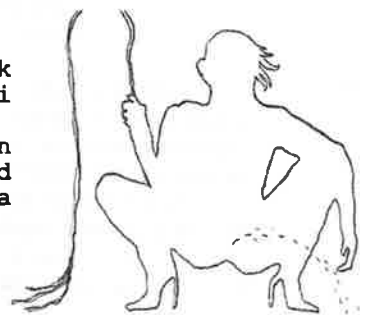
SCORPIO, you are a tender heart in this astrological moment. It might feel like you are being "too sensitive," but I am here just to offer the gentle reminder that there is, in fact, no such thing. Mercury and Saturn urge you now to feel all the feelings and to cry boxes and boxes of Kleenex into a sea of emotional mermaids and tiny fish, swimming in a lake of pineapples, pansies, persimmons, and whatever else you can drag up from below the emotional surface. Your tender heart will benefit not only you but all those nearby that can pick up some of the release that comes with this outpour of whatever may come. Do not be bullied into stoicism. Remain on the verge of tears.

SAGITTARIUS, in the coming months, your skills for telling the best jokes, laughing the catchiest laughs, and making the friendliest friends will come in handy in getting you not only the most social advantages but also in concrete outcomes for whatever else you would like to accomplish. Everyone who is cackling at your wittiest puns is also eager to help you construct whatever solid or metaphorical thing will make a giant chunk of progress in an unfinished project, goal, or idea. If you can use the irresistible pull of your own charm to get down and dirty in your own work with the help of those already around you, your budding relationships will not only flourish but I envision you will be more than satisfied with the results.



CAPRICORN you are the biggest prize at the fair, carried high up on the shoulders of its winner along with a corn dog, cotton candy, some funnel cakes, and a fizzy drink. Anyone who gets to bathe in the glory of you and the all delights that surround you is currently feeling not only proud of you but also proud of themselves for having the good sense to keep you around. Now is not the time to question your worth or your esteem. Open your eyes, ride the biggest roller coaster you can find with your hands up over your head, and take comfort in the fact that you are the winner and the winnings combined. Flawless.

You have rightly noticed, AQUARIUS, that now is the exact correct moment to begin to end all of your statements with a question mark all of your questions with a definitive period. Do not take hardline positions when you could open up fact to numerous and sometimes, admittedly, conflicting possibilities. On the other hand, you do not want to risk asking for something you need and having those around fail to meet your requests. If you remain steadfast in your bounds but soft and fuzzy with your preconceived notions, you will be pleasantly amused if not completely taken by all things to come.



PISCES, if you woke up tomorrow and everything around you was monochromatically pink, would you miss the large spectrum of colors previously available, or would you be wowed by all the cotton candies, bubble gums, magentas, and hot hot pink? I ask, Pisces, because what may soon initially present itself as a devastating loss could in fact open up a ticket to becoming more rosy and gay. Do not lose sight of the daily colors of your spectrum but I challenge you to do whatever it takes to bring out your softer, pinker, hotter you.

# COMING OUT IN PRISON

In the last issue, we asked you all to submit pieces on Coming Out in Prison, and got some great responses. We're going to be compiling them all into a zine and adding it to the Resource Library, so if you didn't have time before, or it never reached us, don't worry, there's still time to add your voice to the mix. The prompting questions below.

This time in our featured resource section, we decided to give more information about some other organizations who publish regular newsletters with important information for the political queer prisoner! Several of these wonderful publications are already available through our resource library, but you also have the option of contacting them directly to be placed on their main mailing lists!

## SIX (MOSTLY) FREE PUBLICATIONS FOR PRISONERS

**Black & Pink** is an organization very near and dear to our hearts. They are a family of LGBTQ prisoners and "free world allies" working towards the abolition of prisons through advocacy, education, direct service, and organizing. Black & Pink has several chapters throughout the US, and coordinate a newspaper, an online penpal listing of queer prisoners, a queer erotica zine called Hot Pink, as well as numerous other kinds of direct support for queer prisoners. Their newspaper is published monthly and is free to prisoners. You can contact them at:

Black & Pink  
614 Columbia Rd  
Dorchester, MA 02125

**UltraViolet** is a publication of LAGAI, a radical queer activist group who have been active since the mid-80's. They are based out of San Francisco and are active in supporting Bay area actions around anti-authoritarian and pro-feminist causes. UltraViolet has been published since 1988- they chose the name UltraViolet to represent "the invisible fringe of the rainbow." It is a forum for discussion of issues important to the queer community, a source of information about political issues and actions you don't hear enough about in the mainstream (and mainstream gay) press. It is published about 3 times per year, and is free to prisoners. You can contact them at:

Ultraviolet % LAGAI  
3543 18th Street, #26  
San Francisco, CA 94110

**Cell Count** is a publication of PASAN, a community-based organization in Canada providing HIV/AIDS and Hep C prevention education and support services to prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families. The Cell Count newsletter consists of 20 pages that focus on prisoner stories, poetry, art, news, prisoner rights, harm reduction, and 60 penpal ads. It is published 4 times per year, and is free to prisoners. You can contact them at:

Cell Count % PASAN  
526 Richmond St East  
Toronto, ON, Canada  
M5A 1R3

**Journal of Prisoners on Prisons** has been in publication for more than 25 years. It is a prisoner-written, academically oriented and peer-reviewed non-profit journal. It brings the knowledge produced by prison writers together with academic arguments to enlighten public discourse about the current state of carceral institutions. Subscriptions are \$15CAD/year for prisoners, and are published twice a year. You can contact the Prisoner Correspondence project to obtain a subscription form, or contact JPP directly at:

Journal of Prisoners on Prisons  
c/o Justin Piché, PhD  
Department of Criminology  
University of Ottawa  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
K1N 6N5

**POZ Magazine** is a publication created by and for those living with HIV/AIDS. Includes news, treatment updates, investigative features, and connection to the poz community. This publication is offered for free to HIV+ people who are unable to afford a subscription, and is published 8 times per year. You can contact the Prisoner Correspondence Project to obtain a subscription form, or contact POZ Mag directly at:

POZ Magazine  
462 7th Avenue, 19th Floor  
New York, NY 10018

**Prisoner Express** is a newsletter sponsored by the Durland Alternatives Library. It promotes rehabilitation by offering inmates information, education and the opportunity for creative self-expression in a public forum. The Durland Alternatives Library has a number of ongoing programs as parts of its Prisoners Express project. In the newsletter you will find stories, poems and art submissions by prisoners, as well as information about the other Prisoner Express programs. It is published about twice per year, and is free to prisoners. You can contact them at:

Prisoner Express  
127 Anabel Taylor Hall  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, NY 14853

### Patrice Daniels

For many in prison, coming out is a very scary thing. Prisons are primarily all-male facilities with an emphasis placed on masculinity. Overt maleness is celebrated. Homosexuality is almost exclusively cast in a feminine light. Even before prison, males are inundated with this narrative. Physically weak boys are labelled and called 'sissy'. No one wants to be called a sissy, right? So for many of us, hiding and suppressing things started at a very early age.

Also, in prison the environment is a very predatory environment. And homosexuals are often the prey. It's also about power and control in here. Prisoners have very little external control over things so many look for ways to compensate for that absence. Which often manifests itself as rape or exploitation. Prison has a social hierarchy that's almost always adhered to and homosexuals are right before pedophiles and rapists and child killers in that structure. Meaning - we are pretty low on that totem pole. So there is little incentive to come out (at least visibly).

There is a community of closeted individuals who know each other and are only out to each other. So - it is possible to only be out to a few people. Most often they keep the secret because you keep their secret (and often you guys sneak and have gay sex - relations - etc).

Sometimes people are forced out of the closet. Which sucks. I believe it should be someone's own choice. Now, the only exception would be if the person being outed is someone who openly publicly talks bad or negative about homosexuals. Often the loudest "gay bashers" are in the closet. I have heard guys talk bad about homosexuals and personally know I had recently received oral sex from them or was anally penetrated by them. I will bust a guy out if he is misrepresenting who he is (via verbally disrespecting homosexuals).

As a black gay male it also complicates things. Homophobia is extremely rampant in the black community in America. Most of us were raised with the Biblical mandate to not engage in gay sex. We were taught it is taboo and sinful behavior. So at an early age I was placed in a very precarious situation. I had these desires and urges and yet the people I loved most told me they were wrong. So once again I had to learn to suppress what I felt.

To be perfectly honest - I didn't decide to be authentic ALLY myself until I was about 31 ( I am now 38). I lived a life of external validation for many years. But once I learned to like and love me - internal validation was something I truly cherished. I no longer cared about what others thought of me.

The other fact of the matter was this - there was a small openly gay community in prison and they were tightly knit. So it wasn't like I was going to be completely alienated. Human beings are social creatures.

As far as my immediate family was concerned -

they loved me no less. They didn't necessarily approve but they didn't condemn me either.

I believe coming out is more about personal development and transformation than politics. Ultimately, we are human beings and there is nothing defective about us. The key is for us to accept and believe that - despite what others say. With that said, coming out can be a political statement as well but it rarely is - unless you're a public figure or a celebrity of some sort or someone highly visible within the community.

I hope my insights have been of some use. Ultimately I want my narrative to be one of solidarity with all oppressed people.

Thanks for your time  
Patrice

### Shane Knight

First and foremost let me say this outloud so everyone in the world will know the truth about me. My name is Shane Knight; I am 41 years old; from Atlanta, Georgia; I am a white male; and I am bisexual. I love both men and women equally and have my entire life. So this is my

### Prompting Questions

1. What does coming-out mean in prison and how is it different than outside prison? Why did you choose to come out? Why did you choose not to come out? Was that choice made for you? Is it a one-time thing or something to constantly negotiate? Is it possible to only be out to be out to a few people in prison, or is that playing with fire? Is it important?
2. Harvey Milk, one of the first openly-gay politicians encouraged gays to come out saying "Once they realize that we are indeed their children, that we are indeed everywhere, every myth, every lie, every innuendo will be destroyed once and for all." Do you think about coming out as this kind of political strategy? Or is it about personal transformation and development?
3. What were the challenges? What did you lose? How are you overcoming the challenges? What are your sources of support? Where would you encourage others to look for support? What would you tell them to be ready for?
4. Has your racial and family background affected your decision to come out or not? Has the way race works in prison affected your decision to come out or not?
5. How do you tell your family or loved ones outside about a prison relationship?