

tity disorder, in and of itself, would do anything to change this state of affairs.

Similarly, psychiatrists will continue to incarcerate youth—including gender-variant youth—to forcibly drug them, shock them and torture them in ever new and more creative ways, as long as there are controlling and vindictive parents with paying insurance policies. It makes no difference whether they use GID or some other label, as long as they have any labels at their disposal at all and as long as society is willing to condone these atrocities.

We need to address these issues specifically, rather than assuming that labels are the direct and only cause of oppression.

Another important issue that's connected to GID is Oregon disability law as it applies to transsexuals. Does inclusion of transsexuals as a protected class—according to the Bureau of Labor and Industry's interpretation of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and Oregon disability law—hinge on the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*' label of GID, or would this inclusion stand just as well based on a medical diagnosis in the *Merck Manual*, the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association Standards of Care, or elsewhere? If the inclusion does hinge on the *DSM* diagnosis, is it possible or desirable to change this?

I am hopeful that queer, transgender, transsexual and psychiatric-survivor activists will see your articles and Daphne Scholinski's book as opportunities for much-needed dialogue and strategizing on these issues.

Ashley Sinclair, Administrative Director
The Jasmine Foundation

Reform, not eradication of GID is needed

To the Editor:

In her book Daphne Scholinski speaks, among other things, about the judgments passed on her because of her gender presentation. Everyone in the queer community can relate to this. Who hasn't wondered if they looked or acted in ways that would out them as "queer" to someone else? Whether we're taken for gay or lesbian or transgendered, the fear and ignorance we face are the same, and it's others' responses, not our identities, that become the real problem.

Transsexuals have known for decades that the only option available for them to resolve issues of sexual identity was to deal with doctors who held the power to grant or deny needed medical treatment. We are very vulnerable; we have to submit to the labels of pathology, and generally are forced to pay for our own treatment even though we can't control its course. Therapists demand that we endure an excruciatingly vulnerable transition period to obtain their approval for surgery. Many transsexuals have failed to complete transition just because they didn't fit the gender stereotypes of their "gatekeepers," or have succumbed to others' discrimination.

The same biases apply to others who fall under the power of the medical establishment, and the real problem with gender identity disorder is that it's misused by therapists who insist on involuntary gender conformity. This misuse of a diagnosis must stop; what is needed is reform of GID's diagnostic criteria and restriction of its use to consenting patients. It doesn't make sense to pathologize individuals, especially adolescents, when the source of the problem is others' prejudice.

Some of us who are queer try to evade prejudice by "passing" in straight society. Others of us don't care, don't pass as well, or don't want to live in shame or secrecy anymore, so we risk being singled out, often because of how we present to the world in gender terms. Those who hurl insults, deny us jobs or housing, or inflict violence, don't really give a damn who or what we think we are.

To them we are all "queer," because we have defied the gender repression they've internalized.

The current debate on GID is useful, but let's look beyond the medical terms, beyond the theories, to all the people who are suffering because they dare to show the world who they really are. They're all around us, and the labels don't matter as much as seeing some of ourselves in their struggles for dignity. Perhaps then we can start to remove the fear from our lives, by working together to eliminate gender-based discrimination in all its forms.

Lori Buckwalter
Portland

Thanks to everyone

To the Editor:

We wanted to let *Just Out* and the community know how much we have appreciated their support and help throughout the years. In 1998, Galloway and Luckett will be facing new challenges and focusing on promoting Barb's new CD release, *When I'm with You*.

The great response from our community, family and friends has enabled us to take the next steps toward getting our music heard. We truly appreciate Renée and all the staff at *Just Out* for their work in the community and continual presence. The calendar service is vital to all local performance artists.

We also want to thank the following: the Lesbian Community Project, It's My Pleasure, Artichoke Music, Pacific Coast Printing, Metro Hair Design, Celia Lyon and Barb Davidson, Smokey Satterlee, Cacy Lee, Kiera O'Hara, Rene Corbin, Tim Ellis and Theresa Demarest, for not only (in many cases) their financial support but more importantly for their words of encouragement and friendship.

This community is filled with wonderful people and that is something to be thankful for.

Donna Luckett and Barb Galloway
Portland

TRANSITIONS

Dancing along in the madness

I am dying now. The finality of it all is appalling to me, even though it is what I chose. I decided to do hospice and quit taking all my meds when I got tired of fighting my body. I feel like I gave my body every chance to let me be active and happy in this world.

I feel like I should say something profound and touching, to compel everyone to continue the activist work that was so important to me. But my only advice is to be kind.

Many people were kind and took care of me these past few months. I thank them and love them for keeping my heart warm and my house full of flowers.

I have read and heard that people worry about being forgotten after they die, and that's true for me too. A friend once wrote that I was a perfect combination of rage, poetry and humor. That was my favorite way anyone had described me. If people remembered me that way, I'd be satisfied. The way I describe myself is this: I am an incurable lesbian feminist who for the past 15 years has been, and forevermore will be, "dancing along in the madness" with my sisters everywhere.

Marguerite Brodie
Portland

Editor's note: Marguerite Brodie passed away on Dec. 25. She will be greatly missed. She sent this in August with instructions to print it after her death. As you wished, Marguerite.

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