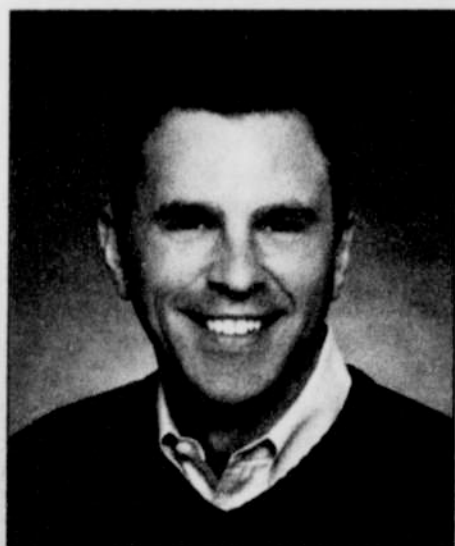


## JOEL HAMLEY

Broker, ABR  
The Real in Realtor



Portland's Top Realtor  
(OK, versatile)

Office: 503-238-1700, ext. 630  
Mobile: 971-506-9499  
joelhamley@meadowsgroup.com



www.JoelHamley.com

## Let Your Spirit Soar

First Unitarian Church  
1211 SW Main St., Portland  
www.firstunitarianportland.org  
Sunday Mornings: 9:15 & 11:15  
Commitment ceremonies welcome everyday.



## FEELING STUCK?

RE: Making a change?

Whether behavior, health, career or relationships,  
it's normal to feel two ways about change.

COME SEE ME AND IN 5 SESSIONS  
YOU WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A CLEAR DECISION.

Contact Ann, Motivational Enhancement Facilitator  
Hollfield Associates (360) 606-1684 www.hollfieldassociates.com

## DAVID W. OWENS

P.C. & ASSOCIATES  
serving the community since 1975  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Serving Oregon & Washington  
503-224-3100

DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS  
ADOPTIONS • ESTATE PLANNING

WILLS • TRUSTS • ADVANCE DIRECTIVES  
POWER OF ATTORNEY

GUARDIANSHIPS AND CONSERVATORSHIPS

www.owens-law.com • 101 SW MAIN, SUITE 700 • Portland, Oregon 97204 • Parking Validated



## Diane Young

BMW Client Advisor

I look forward to providing you  
with a buying and ownership  
experience that can't be  
found anywhere else.

Contact me today to arrange  
a test drive.

*Diane*

**Rasmussen BMW**  
SW Jefferson at 20th Portland, OR  
(503) 226-0380 • Toll Free 1-800-ASK-4BMW  
dianey@rasmussenbmw.com

## northwest

# Boys Will Be Girls

Transgender child caught between two worlds

by Teresa Coates

Like a lot of 5-year-old girls, Roxy likes playing with her Bratz dolls and her favorite color is pink. She likes to wear the blue dress with big purple flowers that her mom bought for her at Wal-Mart. And she loves going to her dad's house, but she has to leave the dolls and dresses at home. When Roxy is with her dad, she's a he.

As a toddler, Roxy, which is not her birth name, played dress-up with her sister and avoided rough-and-tumble play with her brother. She told her mom that she wanted to pull her penis off. At preschool, the teacher noticed how she never took to playing with the boys, preferring the kitchen set over the Legos.

Kate Herman, Roxy's mother, realized something was different with her youngest child's gender play. After all, it's normal for little boys to want

tact with their three children, seeing them nearly every day. Their 13-year-old daughter came out as bisexual and he has accepted it gracefully, but dealing with a transgender child has proven difficult. They can't agree on the best way to raise Roxy, frequently arguing about the direction of her life. Herman hasn't given up, though, and continues to e-mail him information about transgender issues, parenting books and Web site links in hopes that he'll come around to accepting Roxy on her own terms.

Roxy is taking it all in stride. She wears her pink "Daddy's Little Girl" shirt, accented with shiny butterflies. She talks about her dad proudly, happy to be able to spend time with him. She knows he loves her.

"I know he loves his son," Herman said. "He loves all his children."

**"To hear the pain  
in their stories,"  
Herman starts, then sighs.  
"If you heard the stories,  
you'd see Roxy in them."  
—Kate Herman**

to try on their mom's high heels, or for young girls to play with Hot Wheels. But what Herman saw was different. Her son never wanted to be with the other boys. He wanted to wear dresses. And he wanted to be called a she. Herman says she "always knew there was something going on, but it was easier to ignore it." She and her husband assumed it was a phase. They encouraged their child to choose gender-neutral clothing, toys and heroes. Roxy still wanted the girly things.

Herman is a hypnotherapist, and as her Gresham-based business grew, she took on several transgender clients. Their childhood stories sounded eerily like her own child's unfolding story. The emotional trauma they had suffered through the years was enough to make Herman change her parenting style. "To hear the pain in their stories," Herman starts, then sighs. "If you heard the stories, you'd see Roxy in them."

She stopped pushing Roxy into gender-neutral or masculine roles and allowed her to express herself the way she wanted. Roxy decided she wanted a blue dress and sparkly shoes. Her mom bought it, but Roxy was so excited, she couldn't wait to put it on at home. They had to stop in the bathroom at the store to change.

Meanwhile, Herman and her husband, who requested that his name be withheld, separated and filed for divorce. He maintains regular con-

Kindergarten is coming in the fall, and Herman is concerned about Roxy's integration into public school. Preschool was a bit rough at times, with other children being standoffish, and Roxy never fully acclimated to the setting. Now she tells her mom "over and over again" that she wants to go to school as a girl, and Herman is hoping Roxy gets an understanding teacher who will accept her as transgender.

Roxy specifically asked to be referred to by female pronouns, and while her mother flips between the two unintentionally, she plans to start using female pronouns once the divorce is final. She and the child have been seeing a therapist who is well-versed in transgender issues and who helps Roxy deal with the confusion among pronouns, outside reactions and the flip-flop of gender roles between homes.

Herman continues to learn all she can about transgenderism. Last month, Roxy underwent chromosome testing to find out her X and Y makeup. Herman is hoping for some answers.

"My hope is that it will back up what [Roxy] is feeling," she said.

Herman wants people, family especially, to listen to Roxy and to "just try to understand what she's going through." 10

Portland freelance writer TERESA COATES spends her spare time perfecting the domestic arts.