

Polare Edition 4

Published: August 1994 Last Update: June 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015

Editorial

by Lea Westin, Polare Editor

Welcome to the fourth edition of *Polare*, a magazine on gender issues published by the Gender Centre.

Firstly, let me apologise for the delay in getting this issue out. There have been quite a few changes with staff in the last two months which has meant that *Polare* didn't quite meet the deadline that it was supposed to.

However, this issue is packed with some really good articles on a whole range of topics. We look at H.I.V. in the context of relationships and gaol, and an article on teenagers and your gender reassignment. In particular we would like to draw your attention to the legal article addressing issues around child access and the legal service that will be operating on Thursday evenings. We go on to look at electrolysis, H.I.V./ AIDS and an article on ancient history and transgender people.

You may notice that this edition of *Polare* is 32 pages as opposed to the usual 24 pages and if contributions continue to come in at this rate we will be able to continue to produce a 32 page magazine. So thank you to all those who have contributed to this edition. Sit back, relax and enjoy.

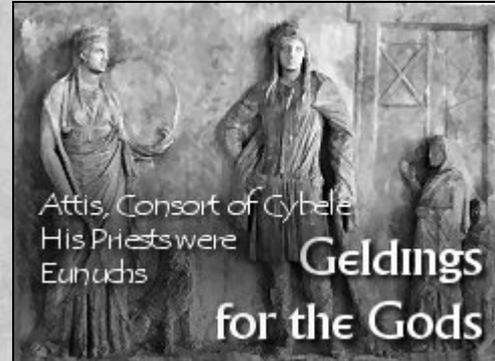
President's Report

by Jean Noble, Management Committee President

Well, to say a lot has been happening would be an understatement, as it's been positively full-on. Firstly it's my sad duty on behalf of the executive to officially inform the membership as to the regrettable resignation of the Projects Manager, Rachelle Alexander. Rachelle is taking a well earned rest, so I'd like take this opportunity to farewell her and to wish her the very best in her future endeavours. She, as we all know, has left an indelible mark on the organisation and her personality and style shall be greatly missed by all. She may leave knowing that the organisation is completely satisfied with her and is grateful for all her commitment and support over the last two and a half years. The position was advertised and a new Projects Manager was selected. His name is Bill Robertson and we at the Centre are confident that the membership will support his appointment. Until Bill starts at the end of July, Lea Westin is very competently filling in as Projects Manager. I would like to congratulate Bill and say that we look forward to a rewarding working relationship.

Unfortunately I was unable to attend the Easter barbecue, although I've been informed that all thought it was a raging success and that the attendance level was high. I am pleased that the membership feels appreciative of the Centre's efforts in doing its part in encouraging the social aspects of our lives.

Feature Articles



In tribute to Attis, the priests of Cybele - known as Galli or Galloi - would castrate themselves and dress as women. They'd then travel the countryside, and perform wild musical rituals to the "Great Mother" just as Attis did.

Geldings for the Gods

Changing gender and dress are very ancient behaviours. The first recorded incident of cross-dressing is a 7th century B.C.E. Assyrian tablet showing King Ashurbanipal getting into drag. But customs and rituals associated with cross-dressing were very much older.

Your Teenager, Gender Reassignment & You

Okay, you've been living in your desired gender for about a year or more, taking the necessary hormones, you have a child who says they've always loved you and accept what it is that you're doing, but what really happens when you embark on gender reassignment surgery.

H.I.V., Relationships and Gaol

Wayne is thirty-six years-old, H.I.V. positive, and an inmate in the Long Bay "Hilton". He's been in a relationship with Cheryl, transsexual and also H.I.V. positive for three and a half years. Wayne and Cheryl share their story, a love story in spite of their macho surroundings.

Electrolysis

Facial hair remains a difficult problem for many people living in a female role. There are treatments to slow and/or soften facial hair including creams, ointments, waxing and medication. However, Electrolysis is currently the only proven treatment that achieves this.

Child Access and the Transgender Person

Rachael Wallbank guides us through some of the legal issues faced by transgendered parents and those with gender issues with regard to child access - regardless of the length of the relationship, and also provides an explanation of how family law currently stands.

The feedback was that you want more of these types of gatherings so be it, we try to please.

Did you know that we (that is the Gender Centre) are more than one year old. We're proud to inform you that during this period we had a dramatic increase in the amount of people accessing the Centre in general terms, but most importantly residents who are expanding and staying longer. The social and support activities are getting great word of mouth and outreach is another area in which we are growing to keep up with the demands. The areas we visit (the streets and clubs, gaol, home and hospitals) are all established and running well. It's quite a team effort to have, in twelve months, brought all of this together. Thanks on behalf of the executive and the membership.

I can now tell you that the final stages are now here for the implementation of the complete "Resource Development Project", which will be available by the end of August in a series of five leaflets which cover the following areas of interest:

- » **Hormone Information** - for male-to-female transgender people;
- » **Hormone Information** - for female-to-male transgender people;
- » **H.I.V.** - Lifestyle concerns for people living with gender issues
- » **Neo-Vaginal Surgery**; and
- » **Breast Surgery Information**

As I was invited to attend the focus group for these resources, I would like to say thanks to all who took the time to come along and participate in requests for input. At the focus meeting I had the chance to catch up with some of the community. It's always good to hear from the membership but more so at these types of groups as it's also your responsibility to let us know what it is that you need. Otherwise how can we deliver the goods? So join in the next one okay, they can also be a lot of fun.

So as you can tell it hasn't been dull and uneventful. I'll take my leave of you by way of saying on behalf of the executive and staff, let me assure the membership of our aim to maintain the traditions and standards that have thus far ensured the continued success of the organisation to date.

News in Brief

from the pages of Polare Number Four

Male students at a Ballarat High School are campaigning for the right to wear skirts to classes. The *Ballarat Courier* reported on 26th April 1994 that students were irate when administrators made a seventeen year-old male student return home last week for wearing a skirt to school. About a dozen boys showed up two days later in dresses and skirts borrowed from female friends or sisters.

"Girls can wear pants, so why can't guys wear skirts?" asked another sixteen year-old male student who strolled to class in a green skirt with tiny flowers on it. "It's just not right - it's flagrant sexism", he said

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Geldings for the Gods

Changing Gender and Dress are Very Ancient Behaviours.

by Roberta Perkins

Article appeared in Polare magazine: August 1994 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



King Ashurbanipal on a chariot during a royal lion hunt.

Changing gender and dress are very ancient behaviours. The first recorded incident of cross-dressing is a seventh century B.C.E Assyrian tablet showing King Ashurbanipal getting into drag. But customs and rituals associated with cross-dressing were very much older. For instance, the priests of the ancient Earth Goddess Ishtar in Babylon dressed as women to appease the deity. There are many accounts throughout the ancient Near East of priests attached to goddesses donning female apparel, and in the case of the priests of Attis, consort to the Earth Goddess Cybele, in the kingdom of Phrygia, they also castrated themselves because, according to mythology, the God had removed his testicles whilst sitting beneath a pine tree.

In Babylon an annual ritual involved young men slicing off their own genitals, including the penis, and flinging these into nearby houses as they ran bleeding and in great pain through the streets of the city. In return for this sacrifice women's clothes were handed them and thereafter they spent their time at female tasks.

In his youth, Julius Caesar apparently lived as a girl in the court of King Nicomedes, and later he was referred to behind his back as 'Queen of Bithynia'

...

With so much cross-dressing/gender going on in Near Eastern civilizations in deference to their gods and goddesses, it is little wonder that the Hebrews, fearful of their more powerful enemies, and with a solitary masculine god, Jehovah opposed to other gods and their ceremonies, introduced the Deuteronomy law 22:5, which made donning the clothing of the opposite sex "an abomination before the Lord, your God". While such laws and isolationist stance were a source of strength to "God's chosen people", unfortunately Christian civilisation later adopted these attitudes, to the detriment of every transgender in Western society since.

A source of great interest to the Greek historian Herodotus in the fifth century B.C.E. were the Scythians, a bold equestrian warrior tribe from the Caucasus Mountains in Georgia who terrorized the civilised centres of Asia Minor. He noted that their priests, or enarees, dressed and behaved as women, but accompanied the warriors on raids, even participating in the battles. According to Greek mythology, the Scythians were punished by the Goddess Aphrodite for sacking her temples in Syria by changing their leading warriors into women. The Greek physician Hippocrates thought that the enarees had slowly demasculated themselves by riding horses too much and squashing their testicles.

Greek mythology is full of incidents of cross-dressing or changing gender, a clear indication of the bisexual and androgynous minds of the ancient Greeks, especially when the supermen of their legends, like Achilles, spent some time in female drag. The strongman of Grecian mythology, Hercules, was obliged to live as a serving maid to Queen Omphale in punishment for killing the catamite Iphitus. Many of the deities were cross-dressers or bisexual, most notably Hermaphroditos, after whom the modern term for a biologically androgynous person comes from. The young God Dionysus once disguised himself as a woman to enter the kingdom of the warrior women, the Amazons, in order to conquer them. There are many examples of role reversal, like that of the Amazons, such as the masculine women guarding Sappho on the island of Lesbos, or of the boy Ganymede, who served as both a water carrier and sexual playmate to the gods. Foremost among female transgender people in Greek mythology is Kainonis, who was changed into a man by Poseidon, but because he made his spear a phallic symbol and demanded adoration of it by the people, the centaurs slew him with tree trunks (their phallic symbols). Then there was the mortal man Tiresias changed into a woman as punishment for killing a female snake. Ten years later the Goddess Hera asked Tiresias how she liked being a woman and she replied that she enjoyed sex ten times more as a woman than as a man. With that Hera promptly changed her back into a man.

That gender-crossing was also a fact in Greek society is seen in the existence of the Goddess Venus Castina, whose sympathy and understanding for "feminine souls locked up in male bodies" prompted men with a yearning to be women to pray to her. Much later, a similar custom existed in the Roman Empire. The second century A.D. Jewish philosopher Philo wrote of certain men in the city of Alexandria: "Expending every possible care on their outward adornment, they are not ashamed even to employ every device to change artificially their nature as men and women ... some of them, craving a complete transformation into women, have amputated their generative members." The Roman poet Manilius, observing the same phenomenon among some of his countrymen, commented: "(They) hate the very sight of (themselves as) a man, and long for arms without growth of hair. Women's robes they wear ... (their) steps broken to an effeminate gait." In the satiric of Juvenal is this poem:

Isn't it now high time for them to try The Phrygian fashion and to make the job complete, take a knife and lop off that superfluous piece of meat?

Thus sex-change surgery, however crude, was alive and well from the earliest civilizations to the time of the Romans.

Some of the Roman Emperors themselves were not beyond cross-dressing, and a few went even further. In his youth, Julius Caesar apparently lived as a girl in the court of King Nicomedes, and later he was referred to behind his back as 'Queen of Bithynia' who, it was said, was "every woman's man and every man's woman."

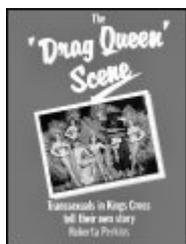
Another story associated with Caesar concerns a senator, Publius Clodius, who fancied Caesar's wife, Pompeia, and on one of his assignations with her disguised himself as a woman in order to meet her during a ceremony to the Goddess Bona Dea, exclusive to women adherents. Clodius, however, was unmasked by the women and dragged before a court on a charge of sacrilege. He was acquitted, supposedly by bribing the jurors, but Caesar's enemy, Cicero, exposed him, forcing Caesar to divorce Pompeia and to break up his friendship with the unfortunate senator. The story of Clodius' cross-dressing antics was used by the enemies of the emperors to discredit the aristocrats as decadent.

But propaganda was hardly needed in many cases, for some of the emperors brought about their own ruin, and others genuinely enjoyed cross-dressing. Caligula turned up at banquets dressed as Venus. However, he believed himself divine and therefore might be expected to have imitated the deities, but his choice of the Goddess of Love was an interesting one. In the end his own guards thought he went too far and assassinated him while attending gladiatorial contests. Nero killed his wife in a fit of rage and then in deep remorse for her loss sought a companion who closely resembled her. He found a young male slave, Sporus, closest to the ideal, had him castrated by his surgeons and the two were formally married, with the young man acting as the wife. Later he married a gladiator and this time he was the wife, screaming like a deflowered virgin on their wedding night. His excesses ended in his suicide. Eliogabalus was a particularly tragic figure in Roman history. He also married his slave and thereafter became the wife "delighted to be called the mistress, the wife, the Queen of Hierocles". He even offered half the empire to the surgeon who could refashion his genitals into a vagina. Obviously, Eliogabalus was a true transgender and lived well before his time, but the Romans weren't amused and after four years into his reign he too was assassinated.

Another Roman Emperor known, or said, to have cross dressed was Tiberius, who, by all accounts dressed as a female during sexual escapades on the Island of Capri. Domitian and Hadrian took as lovers female impersonators from the stage. All of these rulers defied the ancient Scantian Law against homosexuality, which the Romans observed, and this may have been no small contributor to their violent ends. On the other hand, the Roman histories are so full of propaganda by those critical of the aristocracy that fact and fiction may have become indelibly confused, particularly in the caustic writings of Plutarch and Pliny.

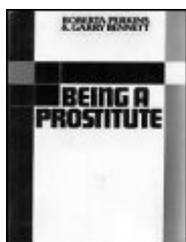
Roberta Perkins

Roberta Perkins established the Gender Centre (then known as Tiresias House) in 1983. She is also a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at The University of New South Wales and has conducted many government-funded research projects into prostitution. A transsexual herself, she has the confidence of the people she interviews; a sociologist, she has counselled transsexuals for a number of years; an activist, she has worked with them in the struggle to overcome the problems they face every day of their lives. Roberta is also the author, and co-author of five books and scores of journal articles on sex work research in Australia and has also taught Native American Studies for many years in Sydney



The Drag Queen Scene: Transsexuals in Kings Cross
Author: Roberta Perkins Publisher: Allen & Unwin (1983)
I.S.B.N.-13 978 0868610474

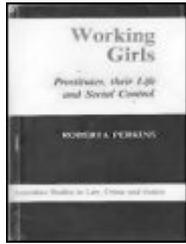
Through a unique series of frank interviews, *The Drag Queen Scene* deals with the experiences of male-to-female transsexuals who live and work in Sydney's Kings Cross area. It focuses on twelve people — showgirls, strippers, bar girls and prostitutes. Each of the twelve speaks for herself, providing first-hand insights into life and work in her world — a world a few people understand. Their stories uncover the raw reality behind the shallow popular view of the "Drag Queen". These revealing every-day accounts demonstrate how much accepted attitudes are based on ignorance, prejudice and callousness. By offering the reader a rare opportunity to view a closed subculture as its participants see it, *The Drag Queen Scene* is an attempt to break down the resistance facing transsexuals, to influence changes in social attitudes and the law. In this book, twelve voices, hitherto silent, challenge the reader to question the stigmatising and ostracising transsexuals endure.



Being a Prostitute: Prostitute Women and Prostitute Men (with Garry Bennett)
Author: Roberta Perkins and Garry Bennett Publisher: Allen & Unwin (1986)
I.S.B.N.-13 978 0868616780

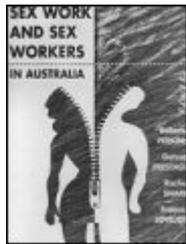
Constant media coverage and popular concern about prostitution, recent changes to legal and administrative regulations governing prostitution in its various forms in its several States, and the emergence of organised groups to represent the views and interests of prostitutes in public discussions and to influence policy formation ensure that the subject retains a high level of visibility and social significance. At the same time there have been remarkably few empirical studies

of prostitution in Australia and our knowledge is largely confined to sensationalised reports of criminal cases and media exposés. So a book giving detailed accounts of the perceptions and experiences of a variety of prostitutes, male and female, homosexual and heterosexual, of different ages and background, and covering the diversity of forms of occupational types and organisational settings of prostitution at the present time would seem to be timely.



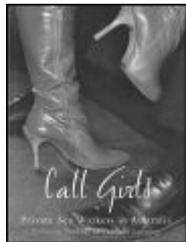
Working Girls: Prostitutes, Their Life and Social Control
Author: Roberta Perkins
Publisher: Australian Institute of Criminology (1991)
I.S.B.N.-13 978 0642158765

From Abe Books: This book has three objectives: 1. To demonstrate empirically that prostitutes are basically ordinary women with only their occupation distinguishing them from others; 2. To bring to the general public a balanced, well-informed view of prostitution, shed of its tawdry reputation; 3. To convince legislators to adopt a more practical method of dealing with prostitution.



Sex Work and Sex Workers in Australia
Author: Roberta Perkins
Publisher: University of New South Wales Press (1994)
I.S.B.N.-13 978 0868401744

From Google Books: *Sex Work and Sex Workers in Australia* is one of the most comprehensive books on the sex industry. This book's main focus is on prostitution and it is broken down on many levels: female, male, transsexual, health care, oral histories, and foreign workers (e.g.. Thai). It is very easy to read and one leaves this book with an excellent history lesson as well as viewpoints from both men and women which balances this book.



Call Girls: Private Sex Workers in Australia
Author: Roberta Perkins and Frances Lovejoy
Publisher: U.W.A. Publishing (2007)
I.S.B.N.-13 978 1920694913

From Booktopia: *Call Girls* casts a penetrating, red light gaze upon the upper echelons of the worlds oldest profession private sex workers who use the telephone as a means to solicit clients. Containing frank accounts from women working in the Australian sex industry. *Call Girls* puts a human face on this hitherto shadowy, clandestine world as it documents how many women became sex workers; run their businesses; maintain their health; and how the call girls work affects their relationships with husbands, lovers and families. Far-removed from the moralising, victim stereotypes and *Pretty Woman*-inspired fantasies which pervade popular culture, *Call Girls* places the world of the sex worker within social, political and legal contexts which will surprise and change the preconceived notions of many readers.

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Your Teenager, Gender Reassignment and You

What happens when You Embark on Gender Reassignment Surgery?

by Max

Article appeared in Polare magazine: August 1994 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



... let [your teenager] know that not only have they got space in which to absorb and process your changes but this space is filled with your love for them.">

Okay you've been living in your desired gender for a year or more (possibly several), taking the hormones, growing whiskers, breasts, whatever it is that your particular hormone induces in you. You have a child who says they love you and accept what it is that you're doing. In fact they'll go to the extremes of defending you, even against non-accepting family members. But what happens when (and this is on the basis of having contact with or living with your child) you embark on gender reassignment surgery?

... I found out the next day from her boyfriend that she was upset by what was about to happen.

Example: Overall what is occurring with my daughter is that she refuses to discuss the issue fully. She talks to me only on a superficial level about what I'm doing and is in denial about there being an issue that needs discussing at all. In regard to my operation, my daughter initially denied I'd told her that I was going to Queensland to see a specialist regarding my chest operation. I had in

fact told her about a month earlier. When I got back from Queensland I told her that I was going back in three weeks for the operation and she promptly refused to discuss it. According to her it wasn't going to make any difference. She said I looked pretty flat anyway. This being with a shirt and strapping on. I found out the next day from her boyfriend that she was upset by what was about to happen.

Since then I've had the operation and have spoken to my daughter on the phone a couple of times. She sounds as she usually does, accepting of the whole thing. As they say, "the proof is in the pudding". And so I will watch carefully her response when I show her the result of my operation.

As is known, the teenage years are a naturally difficult time for young people. They are busy trying to discover themselves and their own morals. The choices as to their career looms over them as does the decision of what to do the next afternoon/evening/weekend with their friends. Their priorities in life are totally different to ours, but can also be very similar. The common denominator is self-obsession. They also need a roof over their heads and money in their pockets, like all of us. If it wasn't for self-obsession and a determination to become who we believe ourselves to be then we wouldn't have stepped outside of the boundaries of who we were raised to be. We would still be who we were, not the people we have become.

Throughout the teenage years, parents bit by bit give their children control of their own lives (naturally this varies according to the combination of the parent/child relationship and personality types), whereupon the final result being, the new "matured" offspring deals with the parent on a new level. One that incorporates their acceptance of the broader vagaries of life. We, on the other hand, in a more realistic perspective, in that we are no longer their mother, the life giver, the nurturer of their formative years (or father) can only expect that coupled with puberty (which I'm sure you are aware, appears to last until one is about twenty-five) our change of gender is quite a large pill to swallow.

During this period of puberty, the child needs to be assured that what has been the most stable and fundamental factor of their formative years (be you initially mother or father) now is not the time for change within the parent, especially the major and drastic changes such as we have made. For the child, death of their parent is very difficult to accept and yet this is what we ask of them when we ask them to accept our new gender. They need to come to terms with mortality before we can reasonably expect them not only to accept the death, but all the loving idiosyncratic ways of the original parent wrapped in the representation of the new self.

So what do we do? Yell and rant at them? Coddle them in cotton wool by telling them whatever they want to hear? No. We have to be persistent by talking to them about our decisions. (In the event of them not seeing us as afresh for the first time (as the new us) or for a very long time, as this is a major shock to them.) Our children, naturally enough, need time to absorb the impact of their emotions. Quite often we have prepared ourselves for a shock - mental preparation - and yet, when the confrontation occurs find that we are far from ready. An example of this could be the break-up of a relationship.

Emotionally we crack and become either blubbing messes and/or raging torrents of anger (hopefully expressed in words not actions), until we purge our systems of these emotions.

The outburst of emotions comes from one who is at an age (especially if they've been through some years of gender reassignment) who should be in touch with their emotions. This "in-touchness" can only come from maturity and the desire to work through problems by talking honestly about them with our loved ones, our counsellors and more importantly ourselves. Teenagers have a tendency to either vehemently vent their anger or to withdraw into themselves, both being a form of denial.

It would then be selfish and inconsiderate for us to expect our children to be as immediately emotionally and mentally responsive as we'd like. Through experience, our children have at least, by their teens, learnt rationality. With our heightened sensitivity (brought about by our hormones) we can afford to help guide our children into further discussion regarding the further changes we make.

And if they're not living with us? Phone them once a week/fortnight - remember not to "crowd their space" by ringing too often, they may come to resent it and you. Alternatively you can write to them. If you're getting little or no response from them this way and they're still at school maybe you could write in confidence to their school counsellor explaining the situation. It's quite possible the school counsellor may already know of the situation and without breaking the child's confidentiality with them can let you know how your child is dealing with your life's choices. You may find the counsellor a very good ally.

In the meantime, don't pressure your teenager, it only pushes them away. But do let them know that not only have they got space in which to absorb and process your changes but this space is filled with your love for them.

Max, the author of this article, has been transitioning for four years and his daughter is eighteen years old. She has recently come back to live with him after having spent the last two years living consecutively with both Max's older and younger sisters.

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H.I.V., Relationships and Gaol

A Tough Environment for Wayne and Cheryl

by Wayne Jones

Article appeared in Polare magazine: August 1994 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



... relationships are a reality within the New South Wales prison system and that these relationships need to be extremely strong to survive.

My name is Wayne Jones and I am a thirty-six-year-old H.I.V. Positive inmate in the Long Bay Hilton. I have been in a relationship with a Transsexual for three and a half years

now who is also H.I.V. Positive. Our story while not totally unique is a very complicated one and certainly one that one day needs to be told in full. What we want to discuss in this article though is how very tough it is for people such as us to survive in this world of the Macho image and still be able to earn the respect and friendship that we have been so lucky with.

... we are now in a legal de facto relationship in the eyes of the courts, it is not seen that way in the eyes of the Department of Corrective Services.

My partner and best friend, a forty-six-year-old Transsexual has, like me, spent most of her adult life behind bars, While we would both love nothing more than to one day get out of gaol together, we both know that it will never happen. As I have already said, I am a H.I.V. positive person and as I still have fourteen

years gaol left to serve, I don't ever really expect to see the outside world again. My partner on the other hand was recently released from gaol but was back seven days later. Now some people would say that that is very irresponsible, however they do not know the circumstances as I know them. Cheryl came back because she wanted to and she didn't feel that she had any other choice if she wanted to live out her remaining years with any sort of real happiness and peace. Why Cheryl couldn't achieve that peace and happiness outside is another story altogether and one that cannot be told here, or by me. What I can tell you however is why Cheryl 'wanted' to come back to gaol. Basically it was because she wanted to be with me. Although I had spent nearly two years convincing Cheryl that she should accept parole and go home, I can now understand why she had put up so much opposition. I wanted Cheryl to have some quality time on the outside before the AIDS virus takes its full effect on her and there is nothing wrong with me wanting that for Cheryl other than the fact that it was not what Cheryl wanted. How can a person have quality time on the outside if they are hurting every day because they can't be with the person that they want to be with? That is the question that Cheryl put to me when she came back and it is a question that I can't answer because I know she is right. You can't have quality time of any real value if all you are doing all the time is pining to be with the person you love.

Anyway, regardless of whether people understand it or not, Cheryl did what she wanted to do and came back to gaol to be with the person she loves and wants to share her life with. Thankfully we were able to be placed back in the same gaol and cell as each other again, a fact that we are extremely grateful for as it was by no means a safe bet that we would get back together. It was in fact, highly probable that certain factions of the Department of Corrective Services (D.C.S.) would cause us to be placed in separate cells if not gaols. There is quite a few people with the D.C.S. who would dearly love to have myself and Cheryl put into separate gaols. Some feel that when a person comes to gaol they should lose ALL rights including the right to be with the person you love. Others feel that to leave Cheryl and I together is to condone what they see as homosexuality. There is also the few (a small few thankfully) that feel that because we both have AIDS we should be segregated and because Cheryl is a tranny she should be segregated or placed into protection.

Thankfully for us there are some people with the D.C.S. who are understanding of our situation and have therefore made arrangements for Cheryl and I to be left together for now at least. There is however always the constant fear of one day being told that we are to be parted and if this ever proves to be the case it would totally devastate the both of us to such an extent that I doubt very much that either of us would survive very long at all. Its one thing for a couple to be separated with one person in gaol and the other on the outside, but it's an entirely different situation when both people are in gaol and different gaols at that. At least the other way there is always the visits, but if Cheryl and I were to ever be placed into different gaols now, we would certainly not get any visits with each other as even though we are now in a legal de facto relationship in the eyes of the courts, it is not seen that way in the eyes of the Department of Corrective Services. The fact that Cheryl and I have now been sharing a cell together for just over three years does not really mean much to some people and the fact that in that time we have spent almost twenty-four hours a day with each other also means very little to some people. To us however it means a great deal more than most people could ever imagine for the things that we have had to go through and survive in that time are too numerous to mention here.

To be involved in a relationship in gaol is one story and to have the H.I.V. virus in gaol is another story but to be in a relationship in

gaol and to have the H.I.V. virus is an entirely different story again as both Cheryl and I can testify. It is hard enough to deal with either issue on its own but to deal with both issues at once is a task that would cripple most lesser relationships. The more adversity that we have encountered, the closer we have become and the harder people have tried to come between us, the stronger they make our relationship.

To be knowingly involved in a relationship in gaol means to leave yourself open for abuse, discrimination, torment and a great deal of hurt. To be knowingly H.I.V. positive in gaol means all that again and more. Put the two together and believe me it can make a persons life absolute misery if they are not ready to handle the repercussions that it causes.

Cheryl and I have been very lucky in so far as we are both more than prepared to battle the odds and fight to stay together as we both feel that to give in and not fight for the relationship would be to just quit on life in general. Having said that however, I must also say that we have had quite a lot of support from people who have been in a position to assist us with our constant fight to stay together. We have had professional staff and Prison Officers alike help us with our battle and I have to admit that we probably wouldn't still be together if it wasn't for that help and support.

As I have already stated earlier, Cheryl and I spend twenty-four hours a day in each others company and while that seems a bit much for some people, it is that way because we both like it and want it that way. We work together and live together and are very rarely apart for any longer than about half an hour. I guess it all comes down to the knowledge that either one of us could be placed on escort or worse yet, die from the H.I.V. virus, so we therefore want to spend as much time with each other now while we still can. It takes a very special kind of relationship to survive in gaol for any great length of time and our relationship certainly is a special one to say the very least.

While I could write much more about ours and other relationships in gaol, I will refrain from doing so partly because I would need to type another four or five pages and partly because I have drifted away slightly from what I originally intended to write about.

I guess the main point that I am trying to make is that relationships are a reality within the New South Wales prison system and that these relationships need to be extremely strong to survive. While we don't have to worry about such things as paying the rent or phone bill etc, we do have to constantly worry about being placed on escort for other gaols or being placed into different cells etc. Next time you and your partner are arguing or next time you see another couple arguing, just remind them how very lucky they are in being together and not have to worry about some prison officer not liking them and causing them to be placed in separate homes or suburbs.

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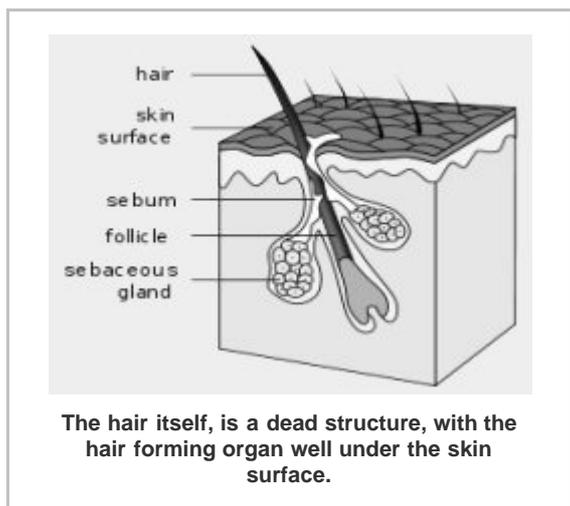
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Electrolysis

Introduction to the Advantages/Disadvantages of Galvanic Multi-Needle, Thermolysis and Blend

by Unknown Author

Article appeared in Polare magazine: August 1994 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



Facial hair remains a difficult problem for many people with gender issues who are living in a female role. There are treatments to slow and/or soften facial hair including creams, ointments, waxing and medication. None of these however, including the use of Aldactone, Androcur or hormone therapy will result in the permanent removal of hair. Electrolysis is currently the only way to achieve this.

Operators who do electrolysis only will be likely to have the greatest expertise and have previous experience with clients who are on a variety of hormonal treatments.

There is currently no regulation either legally or through professional groups to ensure that people you go to for electrolysis will have the expertise to treat a difficult facial hair problem. For this reason we recommend that anyone seeking out an operator take extreme care, as poor treatment can be a waste of money

and leave the client with scarred or damaged skin.

If you are currently undertaking electrolysis treatment or are considering it in the future, then the following information may be of assistance.

Operators who do electrolysis only will be likely to have the greatest expertise and have previous experience with clients who are on a variety of hormonal treatments.

The total cost of treatment is difficult to determine, so be wary of operators who try to give you exact quotes. It would not be unusual however if the total cost to remove a full, thick, dark beard was in excess of \$10,000.

With full beard removal, three to six hours of treatment may be required each week, depending on the method used. The hours will reduce as treatment progresses. Treatment can be painful and may take between two to five years to complete.

Appointments should be timed carefully by the operator to give skin time to recover between treatments and to treat hair at the correct stage of re-growth.

The client will need to be committed to arriving promptly to each and every appointment made. Experienced operators will demand this and may refuse to treat a client who does not demonstrate a clear commitment to their therapy.

Some methods require high electrical currents to effectively reduce strong hair growth and this may result in small welts and fine red scabs forming. These should change from red to brown over a few days and then heal. If they remain red and heal poorly or continue to ooze fluid instead of drying out, then permanent damage to your skin could occur. Should this occur it would be advisable to seek treatment elsewhere.

It may be helpful to choose an operator who has been recommended by someone who has achieved good results or alternatively ask for an initial consultation that involves a test patch or short treatment to see how your skin reacts to their method.

Before you start treatment, establish with the operator that the clinic pays careful attention to health and safety. All needles must be sterilized to avoid the risk of infections, including H.I.V. and hepatitis. The safest methods include disposable needles or the use of an autoclave.

Hair

The hair itself, is a dead structure, with the hair forming organ well under the skin surface. Only the needle method of electrolysis can permanently remove hair according to the F.D.A. (U.S.A.). The hair is of no practical concern to the electrologist other than to indicate where the follicle is and to act as a guide for depth of insertion. To have successful epilation we must recognise our targets. In the

follicle there are two main targets that we know of, the Matrix and the Bulge.

The Matrix

Actively dividing cells found in the hair follicle bulb which produce the hair.

The Bulge

A small sac of germinating cells just below the sebaceous gland in the top third of the follicle.

The Three Stages of Hair Growth

1. Anagen - growing;
2. Catagen - transition; and
3. Telogen - resting

Types of Hair

There are basically two types of hair growth on the human body. The first type is a fine, soft colourless hair called Vellus and the second type is a coarse, thicker, well developed variety known as Terminal hair. When a Vellus hair has been stimulated it is known as Accelerated Vellus.

Hair Cycle

Hair has a three phase cycle. The first is the growth cycle or the active phase, followed by a brief transitional phase ending in a resting phase, reducing the follicle to one third of its normal size. The length of the total growth cycle and the duration of the alternating rest periods vary greatly from body region to body region and from person to person.

There are three methods of hair removal that have proven permanent:

1. Galvanic Multi-needle - Chemical reaction liquefies the tissue;
2. Thermolysis - coagulates the tissue in the follicle; and
3. Blend - A combination of the above.

Galvanic Multi-Needle Method

In 1875 Dr. Charles E. Michel (1833 - 1913) an ophthalmologist, published the first account of successful permanent hair epilation by electrolysis in the St. Louis Clinical Record.

In 1916 Professor Paul M. Kree, aware of the growing demand added five more probes to the unit. This major invention which cut down the time required is known as a Multi-Needle.

This method uses a Direct (Galvanic) current. When the probe is placed into the follicle, the application of direct current causes the body salts and tissue fluids to break down into their constituent chemical elements which quickly rearrange themselves to form three entirely new substances; lye (which is highly caustic), hydrogen and chlorine gas. The chemical reaction happens all around the probe and is proportionate to the moisture in contact with the probe. As the moisture is converted into lye, it is the lye that liquefies the tissue in the follicle thus achieving permanent hair removal.

Advantages of the Galvanic Multi-Needle Method:

- » Hair is successfully removed in a shorter time frame;
- » flexibility to move around curved follicles;
- » less discomfort for the client;
- » minimum re-growth; and
- » no disturbance to the surrounding tissue (no heat).

Disadvantages

- » Requires minimum three minutes per hair.

The Galvanic Multi-Needle method is best suited to strong deep terminal or accelerated vellus hair (e.g. beards), plus all body hair.

Thermolysis

In 1923 Dr. Henri E. Bordier of Lyon France, was the first to use High Frequency for the removal of hair. He revolutionised electrolysis with this new method, promising greater speed and hopefully better results. Although it was not until the 1940s that it became popular. This was also known as Radio Frequency, Diathermy or Short Wave.

Thermolysis uses a high frequency current and gained its name because of its action of destroying tissue in the follicle by heat. When the probe is inserted into the follicle, it acts as a transmitter for the current. Because High Frequency current is continually changing direction, it has the ability to produce an area of friction within the moisture of the tissue surrounding the tip of the needle. The friction in turn results in heat which coagulates the fluid into a thickened mass, destroying the follicle.

Advantages of Thermolysis

- » Visual results instantly; and
- » greatest advantage is its speed (one to three seconds per hair).

Disadvantages

- » Very high re-growth;
- » only able to successfully remove hair in anagen (growing) stage;
- » curved follicles cannot be destroyed;
- » surrounding tissue is heated, therefore treatment is limited; and
- » Thermolysis is best suited to Vellus hair for facial down.

The Blend

In 1945 Dr. Henri E. St. Piere of San Francisco, in collaboration with Arthur Hinkel, a service engineer at General Electric, developed the Blend technique. They saw the popularity of thermolysis but also knew of the problems with re-growth. The two men thought that if they could combine the two modalities and utilise the speed of thermolysis and the effectiveness of galvanic, they would have a way of permanently removing hair quickly and easily.

The Blend uses high frequency and direct (Galvanic) current and is a dual action method. The Galvanic current produces lye while the High Frequency current heats up the moisture. When the lye is heated it will produce a much higher degree of caustic strength, it will diffuse easily into the heated mass which is very porous creating a turbulence around the needle, pushing the lye into any opening it can find.

Advantages of The Blend:

- » Treatment time is seven plus seconds per hair; and
- » The re-growth rate is believed to be less than that of Thermolysis.

Disadvantages

- » Heating effect on surrounding tissue (limited treatments); and
- » heating of hydrogen gas, by short wave, in the follicle can cause 'blow-out'.

The Blend is best suited to vellus, accelerated vellus and scattered terminal hair for facial down, fine body hair and scattered coarse hairs.

The Gender Centre can provide referral to electrolysis professionals in the Sydney area. For more information contact us on (02) 9519 7599.

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Child Access and the Transgendered Person

For Those Who Are, or Have Been, Legally Married or in a Legally Recognised De Facto Relationship

by Rachael Wallbank

Article appeared in Polare magazine: August 1994 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



This is obviously too large a topic to deal with adequately in any one article; let alone an introductory article.

However, it was considered that this topic would be a useful one to cover at any depth for many members of our community.

The threat to the parent/child relationship is a threat to a person's most basic needs ...

The term 'family law' in this article is loosely used to delimit this discussion to the legal issues affecting those persons who are, or have been, legally married or are, or have been, in a legally recognised de facto relationship. The way the law presently stands, those having financial issues arising out of other non-legally recognised relationships, however real, have their rights determined by way of equitable considerations involving the law of trusts - which is a

significantly different system of legal considerations and is not discussed here. There are two primary family law issues which arise at the ending of a legally recognised marriage or de facto relationship (to simplify I'll refer to them both as a 'marriage') namely property division and access to children. In this article I will address access to children. The other issue of obtaining a divorce is relevant to legal marriages but is really an incidental right arising out of twelve months separation and is generally of no great complexity except where one party seeks to annul the very existence of the marriage. As this last matter is of greater concern and deserves a separate discussion in its own right it will also not be covered in this article. The only prerequisite for a legal de facto marriage is that the parties have lived together as biological 'man and wife' for a continuous period of not less than eighteen months; but legal issues of child access arise no matter what the length of the relationship.

For a great many people with gender issues, the gender issue itself is the initiating factor in the dissolution of that marriage.

Access

As numerically the transgender person is likely to be a biological male, and therefore the non-custodial parent following upon a marriage break-up, and again because of space restrictions, I will limit the discussion of access in this paper to such generality. Following upon a marriage break up the continuing relationship between the non-custodial parent and that parent's children will generally be the crucial issue for the non-custodial parent. The threat to the parent/child relationship is a threat to a person's most basic needs and instincts and in the context of the break up of a marriage involving a transgender person as non-custodial parent, this factor can create the most fear and generate the greatest source of dispute and manipulation.

The legal case in relation to legal marriages is that cited at paragraph 91-267 in the 1982 Australian Family Law Cases Reports as the marriage of N. and H. and was a judgement of the full Court of the Family Court of Australia delivered on 19th October, 1982; confirming the decision of the Trial Judge in that case that access to a transsexual parent be refused. At the time of the original hearing in November, 1981, the father was scheduled to undergo gender realignment surgery in March, 1982. It should be understood that an appeal from an original decision of a single Judge to the Full Court of the Family Court does not represent a re-hearing but merely a review of the original decision of the single Judge. Although this case is comparatively old, in my view it still represents a valid application of the current Family Law Act to the individual circumstances of that case; even though the observations of the Judges in relation to transsexuality or transgender would no doubt be different now; reflecting the positive evolution of the community's attitude to these matters over time. In summary this decision held that even though the father and the mother had agreed to the father having reasonable fortnightly access to the very young child who was approximately three years of age at the time of the original hearing and that such access had been exercised on a regular basis so that a close relationship had been developed between the child and the father, it was considered to be against the interests of the child to continue that relationship by way of access to the father basically because of the continual strife that such access caused to the new family unit created by the mother and her new husband and their new young child. This strife was violent and basically arose from both the father, who was then living as a woman on a full-time basis and the mother's new husband who had a primitive hatred of 'poofers', and other such people including transsexuals. The issue of the father's pre- or non- or post-operative transsexual state was irrelevant. By the time of the original hearing, the transsexual father could not uplift the child for the purpose of access or return the child at the end of access without violent confrontation arising between the transsexual father and the mother's new husband and the mother. It would seem that the mother's attitude to the transsexual father's access to the child changed drastically from reluctant acceptance to active antipathy once she had the security and had adopted the

ways and patterns of her new husband and marital relationship.

The Full Court upon Appeal confirmed, applying the Family Law Act, that a parent does not have a right to access to a child but such access takes place for the benefit of a child, but that before a parent and child were to be deprived of access to each other there had to be real and compelling circumstances in the case to justify such an order. On the face of it, this judgement would seem harsh and threatening to transgender parents as it can be said that the access to the child, which was progressing well of itself, was terminated primarily as a result of the 'unreasoning feelings of acute hostility' on behalf of the mother's second husband. The Judges of the Full Court stressed however" that this does not mean that in all cases that a transsexual will be deprived of access or custody. The fact that a person is a transsexual may be a necessary factor to be taken into account. But in the ultimate test, the welfare of the child is always the paramount consideration; a decision which cannot be arrived at in a vacuum, but by asking the specific question what is best for the welfare of this child in these circumstances".

What were the factors in this particular case that created such " ... a sad and indeed tragic result for D ... " (the father) as the Judges had no doubt? Firstly, the child was only months old at the time of separation and at the time the father transitioned. As a result of this circumstance, and as a result of the father and the mother's own practice of always referring to D. as a favoured Aunt, the child only grew to know the father as a favoured Aunt; and not as the child's father. The mother was thus able to argue, and the Trial Judge to a large extent accepted, that in this case to deprive the child of access to its father would really only amount to depriving the child of access to a favoured Aunt; from the child's then subjective perception. Secondly, the father had a history of mental instability, and although this had improved significantly with the father's acceptance of the father's transsexuality, there was no doubt that the father was prepared to enter into violence with the second husband and, prior to the advent of the second husband, the father had committed several acts of violence upon the mother after separation had occurred. The evidence does not make clear whether these acts of violence were of a minor or major nature, although it is implied in the case that these acts of violence were of a comparatively minor nature. Nevertheless they existed. Finally, the father's case was badly conducted in that although there was an abundance of expert evidence presented by the father almost all of such expert evidence was concerning the father and the father's transsexuality while failing to deal with the far more relevant and crucial issue of how a continuing relationship between this transsexual father and the child would benefit or otherwise affect the child. The Judges in the Court of Appeal in my view quite rightly criticised the father's case with comments such as "What the Trial Judge should have been offered was evidence of the psychological affect on the child of having a father who was a woman, or of discharging the access order. These are certainly matters which exercised his Honour's mind. This emphasis on the appellant and his problems, and not on the problems of the child, no doubt was the cause for the Trial Judge's strong criticism of the appellant's (the father's) witnesses."

What lessons can then be drawn from this decision by those transgendered parents going through, or contemplating going through, the ending of the marriage in relation to child access? In my view they are these:

1. There should be no agreement on property division 'without' a final Court Approved agreement on orders in relation to child access. There should be no 'trusting' of the 'custodial' parent in relation to future access. Once access has been agreed to and established it is considerably more difficult for the custodial parent to thereafter deny or restrict access; especially if such access rights and terms are incorporated in consent-orders agreed to by the custodial parent after receiving legal advice. It is simply human nature that the custodial parent is more likely to agree to such a consent-order in relation to access while the incentive is there for such person to achieve a prompt and reasonable property settlement;
2. The court will always consider the individual circumstances of each case and of far more relevance than a persons transgendered nature or state of transition will be the history of that person's relationship with the child or children involved. If there has been a close and loving parent/child relationship prior to separation then the most extreme circumstances and present threat to the child would have to exist before a Court would disturb that relationship no matter what the appearance, gender status or sexuality of that parent;
3. Every effort, including immediate legal action, should be taken to ensure that there is no interruption to that parent/child relationship following upon separation and/or transition. In the event that immediately following separation the custodial parent seeks to unreasonably restrict or deny access by the non-custodial parent to the child then immediate action should be taken to enforce access in the Court as any delay will not only reflect badly upon the urgency of the non-custodial parent in terms of Judge's perception of that person's attitude to access but, given delays in reaching the final Hearing, any failure to act will provide the custodial parent with more grounds to argue that there has been a significant change after separation in the relationship between the child and the non-custodial parent; even though that change was in effect caused by the actions of the custodial parent. The need for immediate action to enforce access rights cannot be over-emphasised in this situation and the continuity of the relationship between non-custodial parent and child is crucial;
4. Role play or deception, no matter for whose benefit or for what practical reasons, or in answer to the demands of the custodial parent, should be avoided especially where very young children are concerned. It should be made clear to the child that the parent concerned remains the father or mother (as the case may be) of the child no matter what apparent gender change takes place and no matter what casual social role playing may be a practical necessity during social outings at access time. The older the child the easier this is to achieve;
5. The transgendered non-custodial parent should not be drawn into personal dispute with either the other parent, that parent's new partner or any relatives in relation to access but, if met with serious opposition of any such kind, should immediately seek a legal remedy through the Courts rather than risk creating a

history of upset or dispute;

6. In the event that legal proceedings are necessary then expert evidence will be crucial but should be carefully considered and presented so as to economically present a fair understanding of the transgender state, the stability of the transgendered parent, but most importantly, the positive affect upon the child or children of access to the transgendered parent.
7. The above is of no consequence if you don't give the same attention to practical matters such as accommodation. The temptation to go on deprivation 'guilt trip' or attempt to 'purchase' forgiveness and acceptance by giving the former partner 'everything' can be strong. Unfortunately I've never seen it work at all. Avoid the bed-sit/communal life, if you can, as restricted daytime or visiting access is no real access at all and is easily lost. If possible, look after yourself and the children by obtaining safe, private and adequately sized post-separation accommodation objectively suitable for overnight weekend and holiday access.

Obviously the above can only represent a 'thumbnail sketch' of child access issues in relation to marriage breakdown generally; and for the transgendered person in particular. Nevertheless I hope the issues touched upon above may provide a useful basic guide to the legal and general attitude which should be consistently sought to be adopted and promoted by a transgendered person faced with these family law issues.

If you have further questions in relation to any of the specific legal issues discussed above or any other legal issues that are of particular interest to you and that you wish me to discuss in future articles please feel free to either write to *Polare* or myself care of the Gender Centre as I will obviously seek to direct future articles as per your interests of yourselves as readers of this magazine. If you are confronted with any of the issues raised above please feel free to utilise the new Legal Counselling and Advice service.

Rachael Wallbank

From Lynn Conway's website:  Born on the 4th March 1956, Rachael Denise Wallbank was admitted to practice as a solicitor and attorney of the Supreme Court of New South Wales on the 4th July 1980; after completing an Arts Law degree at the University of New South Wales. Rachael has practiced law continuously since that time and established her own firm, Wallbanks, on the first of July 1985. Wallbanks specialises in undertaking legal work on behalf of people in the areas of family, de-facto relationship and estate law. Rachael has also obtained post-graduate qualifications in mediation and alternative dispute resolution at the University of Western Sydney. Rachael is an accredited specialist in Family Law as awarded by the Specialist Accreditation Board of the Law Society of New South Wales.



Rachael has three children, Kate, Rebecca and James. Having accepted her transsexualism, Rachael transitioned and has subsequently undergone sex affirmation procedures and had her legal sex reassigned in the State of New South Wales pursuant to that State's, births, deaths and marriages law.

From 1999 to 2003 Rachael appeared on behalf of the Applicants, Kevin and Jennifer, in their successful original and appeal proceedings before the Family Court of Australia against the Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Australia recorded in the judgments of Justice Richard Chisholm delivered 12th September 2001 and the Full Court of the Family Court of Australia delivered 21 February 2003 whereby the marriage between Jennifer and Kevin, a man of transsexual background, was declared a valid marriage according to the marriage law of Australia.

Rachael also represented the applicant parents in the case *Re: Bernadette (Special Medical Procedure) [2010] FamCA 94* which was the first case in Australia where both Phase 1 (puberty suppression) and Phase 2 (affirmed sex development) hormonal treatment was approved for an Australian adolescent and the jurisdiction of the Family Court to determine whether or not young Australians can receive such therapeutic medical treatment was challenged.

For further information about Rachael and Wallbanks Legal, visit her website. 

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