

# Polare Edition 64

Published: July 2005 Last Update: June 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015

## Editorial

by Katherine Cummings, Polare Editor

**T**he die has been cast, at least for issue 64, which will be the July - September issue, not the July -- August issue. We would like to return to bi-monthly publication if we can find a way to do so, and we are considering a number of options. Several of you have come up with suggestions for saving mailing and/or printing cost, including picking up your copies at the Gender Centre rather than having them sent out (hard for the West Australians) or reading the essential material on the webpage (hard if you don't have access to the Internet). Another Internet-related solution came from Jan Squire (see letter pages), who suggested, among other things, that we provide a P.D.F. copy of *Polare* for those who would like to access it in this form. This means we would email a P.D.F. document to those who opted to receive *Polare* in this way and they could then read it on their monitors and save, delete or print it (or selected parts of it) in hard copy.

There are significant advantages for those who choose the emailed P.D.F. version. They would receive their copy sooner than if it were mailed; the internal illustrations could be in colour rather than black and white; and if the recipient moved house but kept the same email address, the issues would continue to arrive without interruption.

One of my sailing clubs has recently offered this option for our monthly newsletter and I have found the new system to be far preferable to the old monochrome, mailed copy. Let me know what you think. In order to get the fullest possible response I have placed a full-page advertisement elsewhere in this issue. Note that the emailed version would be available internationally and interstate as well as within New South Wales, with considerable reduction in postage costs and delay.

NOTE: If you elect to go with the P.D.F. mailing your email address will not be revealed to other recipients of *Polare*. A "blind copy" mailing will be used so that the only email address each person sees will be her/his own.

Moving on to the peripherally related matter of copies of *Polare* returned because they are undeliverable. I have editorialised before on the waste of money, time and resources caused by people who move on from the addresses they have given us so that they miss out on their copies and we are lumbered with the cost of posting them out to non-functioning addresses. When the copies come back from the post office I remove the addresses from the address list for the next mailing but in one case I have not been able to do this for a returned copy of issue 63. The recipient scored out the address so heavily that I have been unable to decipher the address to remove it from the mailing list. Even application of a solvent to the ink failed to reveal anything legible as the fibres of the paper were destroyed by the savagery of the scoring. So guess who is inevitably going to receive an unwanted copy of the next issue?

## Feature Articles



This book will not be popular amongst the many transsexual women who claim to be, and to have always been, women for it acknowledges and pays homage to reality, not fiction.

### Transactions

*Transactions* by Erica Zander is easily one of the best books on the life of transsexual women available today. Instead of the typical approach, what is presented is a down-to-earth and insightful view of transsexuality. Honest, open and candid, and without the myths.

### Gay Sheep Lead the Way in Oregon

Charles Roselli, a researcher at Oregon State University says ten years of study indicates that sexual orientation has been hard-wired into sheep's brains before birth. He hopes to verify this by altering conditions in the womb for selected animals, creating gay rams.

### A Letter from Gina

Gina writes about the political landscape with regard to transgender and intersex issues, and mentions some interesting ways for transgender and intersex people to lobby our politicians in the future based on how achievements have been gained in the past.

### Past, Present, Future

Gwendolyn Ann Smith says that its often hard as a transgender person to feel that we are making progress. Having been a transgender activist for well over a decade, she recounts some of the achievements thus far and mentions areas where improvements still need to be made.

### Stephen Whittle Married at Last

After years of campaigning, a man who changed sex after being born female has won his final battle against discrimination by marrying his long-term partner. For many years marriage seemed an impossible dream for Stephen Whittle and his partner Sarah Rutherford.

### Dave or Diane

Diane is suing the U.S. government for sex discrimination. Last

Please remember that if you want your address removed from our mailing list we have to be able to read it on the returned envelope.

This morning (D-Day, Sixth of June) I received an email from Julie Peters who appeared on the cover of Issue 63. She enclosed a couple of recent digital images, showing her being very yo-ho-ho as she helped a friend take his motor-sailer down the coast of Tasmania. She was wearing, she claimed, nine layers of clothing, and still looked decidedly cool, albeit happy and tough. An interesting contrast to the pussycats and jingle-bells image on the cover of #63! Of course we did include in Julie's story a macho image of Julie offering to save a cow stuck in a tree ...

Further to my suggestion that those of us with a military background might form an association of some sort, I have now received expressions of interest from four transgenders. I would be happy to act as a convener, as Jan Squire suggests in her letter on page 5, but what would the membership envisage themselves doing? Lobbying on behalf of transgenders in the service? Observing Anzac Day in some way? Trafalgar Day is more my thing but I'm flexible. Let me know.

## Manager's Report

by Elizabeth Riley, Gender Centre Manager

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### Community Support Worker

As mentioned in my report in the last edition of *Polare* we are undergoing a process of restructuring positions at the Gender Centre in order to maximise our capacity to provide quality services to the community. In light of these changes the former position of Social & Support Worker has undergone a number of changes in the job description including its title which has been changed to Community Support Worker. These changes and the job title better reflect the new directions the Centre will be adopting.

The position of the Community Support Worker is now ready to be filled on a permanent basis and we are formally advertising the position in this edition of *Polare*.

Anyone interested in applying for the position should follow the directions in the advertisement and I will provide you with a copy of the job description and the essential criteria that applicants need to meet. The closing date for applications will be set at three weeks from the date at which *Polare* would reasonably be expected to arrive through the mail.

### Accreditation

I mentioned also in the last edition that the Centre was undergoing an accreditation process with Quality Management Services (Q.M.S). Three staff members have since attended accreditation training conducted through Q.M.S. and we have begun the process of measuring our service provision against the standards. Following our training we entered into negotiations with Q.M.S. to select the appropriate elective standards that we would follow. We had originally been furnished with the Primary Health Care Module but it became apparent the Community Services Module was more applicable to the work of the Gender Centre and we have elected to meet those standards instead. The core standards, as the name would suggest, remain unchanged.

In all there are 22 standards that we are required to report on and on which we must provide evidence across a range of organisational processes that demonstrate the degree to which we are meeting those standards. In summary these are; leadership and management, human resources, physical resources, financial management, knowledge management, risk assessment and management, legal and regulatory compliance, identifying and meeting community needs, focusing on positive outcomes, ensuring cultural safety and appropriateness, confirming consumer rights, empowering consumers, coordinating services and programs, service agreements and partnerships, collaboration and strategic positioning, incorporation and contribution to good practice, community and professional capacity building, client-centred services, advocacy, external training and education, telephone help lines/websites and records.

It may seem laborious to have listed all of these but I think it is of value for community members to be aware that the Gender Centre, like all funded non-government organisations, is subject to an array of conditions that must be met in order to sustain our funding and we have continued to meet, and often exceed, these obligations in the 22 years that we have been operating.

fall, the Congressional Research Service offered Dave a job as a terrorism research analyst, then rescinded the offer when Dave disclosed he was in the process of making the medical transition to Diane.

### A Thin Woman Trapped in a Fat Man's Body

Washington Post journalist, Gene Weingarten explains a new sophisticated method of testing body-fat percentage that supersedes callipers and pinch tests, and further explains that to be considered healthy, women are permitted to have higher body fat percentage than men.

### But How Do I Tell My Parents, Workmates, Friends?

One of the problems often facing transgender people about to transition is who to tell, how to tell them and the right tone to adopt. This article aims to address some of these issues by giving examples of different ways people have approached this traumatic experience.

### Oh to be in England, Now That April's There!

April Ashley realised early that her femininity would cause problems for her. By sixteen she was institutionalised, given shock therapy and testosterone to make her more masculine. She escaped to London, then to Paris where she became one of the stars at the Carrousel Club.

### April Ashley & Me

Katherine Cummings first became aware of April Ashley when the story broke about her divorce proceedings. Her heart went out to April Ashley, who was fighting a courageous battle on behalf of all of us who might one day want our gender fully recognised under the law.

## ***Polare***

A few responses and suggestions were received following Katherine's and my reports that, due to increases in costs in the production of *Polare*, there seemed to be no alternative but to reduce the frequency of publication from bi-monthly to quarterly. Our funding body has confirmed that no extra funding is available and have, therefore, recommended this option. One particularly useful suggestion, however, was to establish an email list of subscribers and to then deliver *Polare* via email in P.D.F. format. This is an excellent suggestion which would allow people to receive their copies of *Polare* in full colour and without the delays associated with printing, packing and posting. Katherine has more to say on this option in her editorial but I think it is an excellent idea that will benefit those of you with email addresses while at the same time reducing costs to the Centre.

## **New Website**

Just a final note on the new website. I hope many of you will have had the opportunity to browse through the site and look at what it, and we, have to offer. I think the site is much more visually appealing than the old site and there is no question that it is significantly easier to navigate, and much more functional. If you haven't had a chance to have a look I urge you to do so when you can. As always, if you have any suggestions for improving the site we would love to hear from you, preferably by email so we can send your suggestions on to our web designer.

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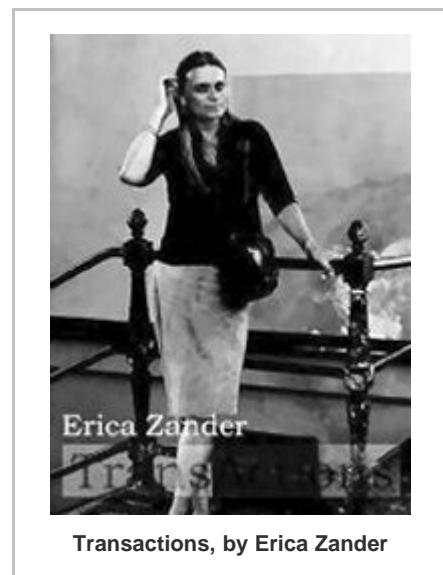
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## Book Review: Transactions

### Honest, Open and Candid

Reviewed by Willow Arune

Article Appeared in Polare Magazine: July 2005 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



### Transactions

by Erica Zander  
Published by Periskop, Stockholm  
(2003)  
I.S.B.N.-13 978 9189443012

**T**his is easily one of the best books - if not the best - on the life of transsexual women available today. Instead of the American or Canadian approach, what is presented is a wonderfully European, down to earth and insightful view of transsexuality. Honest, open and candid, without the myths that one normally finds in those books that are strictly "politically correct".

As a transsexual woman, I find that far too often the mythology of transsexuality is overwhelming. I was not born a woman, but a male. I am now legally and hormonally female, but that does not erase that portion of my life that I lived as a male, nor can it ever do so. Further, I can and do take pride in what I am, without reservation.

This book will not be popular amongst the many transsexual women who claim to be, and to have always been, women for it acknowledges and pays homage to reality, not fiction. It

presents practicality and common sense, far from the quasi-fictional accounts that most books dwell upon. Nor does it pander to matters of gender generally, for it acknowledges the deep divisions that do exist - like it or not. Quintessentially European, it is as refreshing as a cool sea breeze after a hot and muggy week.

After years of books that sensationalise or sanitise the world of transsexual women, we finally have a book that with clarity and insight looks at us as we truly are. It is an essential addition for any collection of gender studies. A small part is autobiographical; the majority of the book is an exploration of how transsexuals fit into society.

I fear that many of the reviews of this book by transsexual women will be negative for many of them are believers in the myths that surround our lives.

This is a book that gives rightful pride to transsexual women, should they but have the courage to embrace it ...

Other reviewers said:

#### Truth, transition and reality!

At first this book starts out as a hard read but when you give it a chance you find that it grips you and pulls you in! I found so much truth and wisdom about being trans and transitioning and encouragement that I was uplifted by reading it! I did find though that even though Erica didn't face a lot of ridicule she does acknowledge that discrimination does exist! And as one of the reviews written about this book said, "I did find it cut through a lot of myths which is so needed in the trans community!" I would recommend this book to anyone no matter what stage of transition they are in! Excellent!


and:

#### A living documentary!


Would you like to get under the skin of a transsexual woman? This is how close Erica Zander takes you. All her thoughts, feelings, successes and failures are to be found in this book. In a way, *Transactions* could have been two books; There's the autobiographical part, with notes from her diary before, during and after her sex reassignment surgery. And there are chapters with facts, terminology, statistics, scientific finds and different views on what transsexualism really is. And what it isn't. And then there are the philosophical texts, where Erica presents her ideas about male versus female, the effects of hormones on our bodies and minds, the symbolic value of clothes, jewellery et cetera. Her book is also beautifully structured, and you easily find the most interesting parts or the information you are looking for. For this reason *Transactions* is excellent for references.

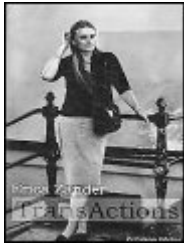
But there is so much more. Personally, I preferred the analysing chapters, which gave me many new angles to think about or discuss with my friends. On the other hand these texts might well have felt impersonal without the background of the self-exposing notes from her diary. The main reason why her book feels so real and alive, is that it was written here and now; Erica wrote it throughout her transition. It isn't a look in the rear-view mirror, no reconstruction. It's a living documentary.

## Erica Zander


**From Erica's website:**  I grew up in a nice and reasonably well-off family, with mother, father and a younger brother. School was always easy for me, and in spite of living with constant feelings of being different I never lacked friends. Also being very fond of animals I kept everything from stick insects, toads and salamanders, mice, chinchillas, rats - they make lovely pets! - to lizards, a fox cub and a couple of boas. I was aware of my trans side from five or six years of age, and identified as a heterosexual transvestite from when I first saw the word at fourteen.



A year later I stumbled over a newspaper article about transsexuals. The accompanying photos of 'men' with breasts both fascinated and worried me, but being totally hooked on women I didn't think this was for me. Soon after I made my debut as a girl though - in the city centre and in broad daylight, but at fifteen I had no problems passing as a female. For more of her biography, [please visit Erica Zander's](#)  website



**Transactions**  
Author: Erica Zander  
Publisher: Periskop (2003)  
I.S.B.N.-13 978-9189443013

**From Amazon Books:**  Erica Zander is a Swedish lesbian-identified male-to-female transsexual. After thirty years as a "so she thought" transvestite, and fifteen as a former trans, she transitioned at the age of forty-eight. Erica still lives with her wife of thirty years; together they have two adult sons. In this candid autobiography, trans activist statement and post-op diary, Ms. Zander discusses a wide range of topics related to gender and the individual's quest for wholeness. Her

text has an immediacy that is only possible because it was written throughout her transition, not years later.

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# Gay Sheep Lead the Way in Oregon

## Sexual Orientation Hard-Wired into Sheep Brains before Birth

by Sandi Doughton, *Seattle Times* Science Reporter, 20th June 2005  
Article appeared in Polare magazine: July 2005 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



In 2004 Roselli identified a region in sheep's brains which was twice as large in heterosexual rams as in gay rams, similar to a 1991 study of gay men.

Oregon State University is investigating the possibility that homosexuality is biologically based by studying a group of rams that refuse to engage with females and prefer to make love with other 'male oriented' rams, as O.S.U. delicately phrases it.

***Roselli stated that around eight percent of rams tend to be gay and are referred to by Australian sheep farmers as 'shy breeders'.***

Charles Roselli, a researcher on the project says that ten years of study indicates that sexual orientation has been hardwired into the sheep's brains before birth. He hopes to verify this by altering conditions in the womb for selected animals, creating 'gay' rams. The project adds to the growing belief that the brain is a 'sexed' organ resulting in sexual orientation across species, including human.

This theory flies in the face of some religious groups who see homosexuality as a 'lifestyle' which can be prevented or cured ... a matter of choice, not heredity.

There are mixed feelings about the possible results of this research as, on the one hand, if it is shown that homosexuality is inborn this should remove any basis for discriminating against gays, and should suggest their having the same rights as heterosexuals in every regard, including the right to marry. The other side of the coin is that if the biological cause for homosexuality is identified it may be possible to 'correct' the condition, or, at worst, cause unborn babies carrying the 'gay gene' to be aborted by parents who do not wish to raise homosexual children.

Another scientist who is working on the genetics of homosexuality is Brian Mustanski at the University of Illinois. Mustanski is also involved in researching the field of H.I.V. prevention.

Mustanski says, "It's pretty definitive that biological factors play a role in determining a person's sexual orientation."

In Australia scientists have reported that changing one gene in female fruit flies causes them to reject males and try to mate with other females. In Sweden it has been shown that gay men's brains reacted positively to the smell of male perspiration but were unaffected by female pheromones.

Experiments with rats have shown that injection of hormones into pregnant rats at a specific stage of foetus formation can cause male offspring to behave like females and vice versa. It has also been shown that the hormonal balance of developing rats can be altered if the mother rats suffer from stress.

In Italy scientists from the University of Padua suggested that homosexuality does not 'die out', as do other traits which discourage reproduction because the mothers and aunts of gay men tend to be more fertile than female relatives of heterosexuals.

Ray Blanchard of the Clark Institute in Toronto has put forward a theory that the more older brothers a man has, the likelier he is to be homosexual. A man with four older brothers is three times more likely to be gay than a man with none. As a result of these and other experiments there is a growing belief that there are a number of biological pathways that may result in homosexuality but although they insist that genes and hormones play an important part they also recognise that there can be strong social influences.

As Dr. Roselli, of the Oregon Health and Science University of Portland says, "I think there's probably a very complex interaction that's going on between both biology and the environment that is involved in determining these types of behaviours."


Roselli stated that around eight percent of rams tend to be gay and are referred to by Australian sheep farmers as 'shy breeders'. In 2004 Roselli identified a region in sheep's brains which was twice as large in heterosexual rams as in gay rams, similar to a 1991 study of gay men.

A study of fraternal and identical American twins showed that in fraternal twins the probability that both twins would be gay was 22


percent whereas in identical twins the figure rose to 52 percent.

This provides a clear indication that there is a genetic element in the predisposition of identical twins who are gay. Again it must be stressed that there is probably a 'nurture' component in the situation but unless it can be demonstrated that the social situation of fraternal twins differs markedly from that of identical twins it will be hard to ignore a factor nearly twice as large in identical twins as for fraternal twins that if one twin is gay then the other will be gay also.

### **Charles Roselli PhD.**

**From Oregon Health & Science University:**  Charles Roselli PhD. is a Professor of Physiology and Pharmacology and a Professor of Anaesthesiology at the Oregon Health & Science University in the U.S.A.. According to his profile page on that university's website, his research goal is to obtain an integrated understanding of the steroid sensitive brain circuitry, neuro-chemical mechanisms, and the sub-cellular signalling pathways that mediate the central actions of androgens. A major research focus is the characterization of the aromatase signalling pathway in neural tissue. Aromatase is a cytochrome P450 enzyme (CYP 19) that catalyses the conversion of testosterone to estradiol. Although androgens and brain derived estrogens are believed to act co-ordinately to regulate brain function, the challenge is to understand the complexity of this interaction at a sub-cellular, cellular, and systems level. A second research direction in my laboratory aims to understand the cellular mechanism(s) by which herbal preparations inhibit prostate growth and to explore their potential as viable treatments for prostate carcinoma.



Charles Roselli has published over a hundred papers that can be accessed through the [Oregon Health & Science University's website.](#) 

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## A Letter from Gina

### Some Pointers on Lobbying

by Gina Dumas, O.M.A.C.T.I.S. (Formerly the Western Sydney Transgender Support Group)  
Article appeared in Polare magazine: July 2005 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



... the lobbying that I have been engaged in has become much more demanding ...

aware of the 'nature of the beast'.

Experience, learning and observation are the keys to the political strongholds. Of one thing I am certain ... we will never move the political cake in one piece. The issues will be moved one slice at a time, or not at all.

To this end, my focus had been that of challenging the public's perceptions of what they think they know about sex. Only society's leaders bring about change in political awareness to any meaningful extent. Picking key leaders is one of the lobbyist's prime tasks. Approaching them patiently is of paramount importance, too.

Perhaps the vital issue is to know what sort of validation a politician will seek before engaging with an issue. Politics is nothing if not the ultimate in public relations. If a politician can't sell it by leaning on experts, he or she won't touch an issue.

One slice at a time. If we look at the cake that comprises our issues, where has one slice been moved already? How was it done? The answer lies in the risks taken in the re: Kevin case, by those involved. This case has opened the way for us to move the next slice.

The vulnerability that our community experiences is that of being lumped together as one easily confused identity and being blamed for our differences communally.

The political answer? Don't allow this to happen. Present the public with the extension of the issues decided in re: Kevin ... blameless issues.

Anyone who is watching the scientific drift of consensus is able to see human brain sex and the fact that the brain is a sexed organ of the human body, is able to see where the next slice vulnerable to movement lies. When the next slice goes the whole of the cake will shake.

Ultimately, regardless of into which niche any member of the community fits, the prejudice, intolerance, misunderstanding and the all too often wilful ignorance of our detractors will be undermined by the winning of a science-backed blame-free issue ... the issue of birth variance and the law, as it appertains to the sex of the human body. There are looming human rights issues, waiting only for our lobbying efforts to mature.

The illumination of one focal issue in the public mind will never mean that all of our issues are based in birth variance, this is not a demonstrable reality. What it will do, however, is forever cast doubt on our collective supposed guilt for being different.

The extent to which one slice of our community successfully divests itself of blame will be the beginning of the winning for all, whose difference is somehow framed by that most misunderstood of words, 'sex'!

**J**ust a line or two (I hope) to keep in touch. My workload has demanded that the support service volunteer base be expanded to return our efforts to realms of what is sustainable. I have looked at the various functions that evolved for the service, as demanded by the needs of our clients, and have begun to divide them.

***Perhaps the vital issue is to know what sort of validation a politician will seek before engaging with an issue.***

The advertisement has been changed to show the out-of-hours service we provide and the volunteers are a lively bunch, keen to reach out to people with experiences unlike their own.

For my part, the lobbying that I have been engaged in has become much more demanding. Having been involved in politics for much of my adult life I am well



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# Past, Present, Future

## From Nearly Nothing to a Strong Community with a Rich Future

by Gwendolyn Ann Smith

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Gwendolyn Ann Smith

**I**t is often hard, as a transgender person, to feel that you are making progress. I have been an activist within the transgender community for well over a decade. To some, I am well beyond my "sell by" date, remaining in the fray while so many others have long since moved onto other interests.

*It is always heartening to know that when one stands up for rights, they are not standing alone.*

You may wonder what keeps me going. I simply have a passion to see this nascent community continue to grow in strength. To be honest, I think we can look back and see change within our history and easily compare it to where we may be going.

I'm not going too far back, into discussing Lord Combury, Pope Joan, Contessa d'Eon, Jean d'Arc, or other potential transgender folks through history. This

column is only so long, and Leslie Feinberg already wrote a perfectly suitable book covering centuries of history. No, I'm only going back to the last century, and considering where things were in the post-World War II world.

This was a time when the transgender community - if I could even refer to it as such - was indistinguishable from the rest of the queer community. If we go back far enough, there really wasn't a distinction between the various portions of the community, if only because we were all small and hidden: Everyone needed as many allies as we could. In the years immediately following Stonewall - an event that included the transgendered alongside with the rest of the larger community - transpeople made great strides, turning away a number of anti-cross-dressing laws while also winning the right to change gender markers on identity paperwork and even the right to marry. At least in a sizable number of [American] states.

This was not to remain: By the mid 1970s, transgender people were being removed from pride parades, transwomen were being routinely shut out of lesbian spaces, and by the latter parts of the decade society overall was increasing in intolerance towards all parts of the L.G.B.T. community. It would be another decade before transgender people would again - rather grudgingly, at times - be welcomed back into the greater community.

Today, there remain some places where transgender is still viewed with suspicion within the larger community, with the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival still clinging to outdated policies, and transgender people still facing an uphill battle towards acceptance in some community spaces. Even with this, transgender people are largely included within each of the major queer organisations (barring some remaining issues with H.R.C.), and most local groups include "transgender" in their mission statements and the like.

The same is true in the world at large. With the current strength of the conservative right, and sometimes lukewarm acceptance from our allies, some have been loath to push for transgender rights. Likewise, D.O.M.A. laws have undermined transgender marriage rights, and the current [George W. Bush, Republican Party] administration has paved the way for the loss of identity paperwork alterations.

Nevertheless, the community continues to win victories, largely with local and state gains with anti-discrimination and hate crime laws. For the first time, a pending Federal hate crime bill, in the House of Representatives, includes transgender people.

Perhaps more important, the transgender community is gaining increased visibility, and is getting more chances to educate others. Transgender-themed news stories are carried in the major media on a regular basis, and much of this media is positive.

One of the other benefits of today is a sizable - and growing - number of highly competent individuals and organisations focusing on the rights of transgender people. It is always heartening to know that when one stands up for rights, they are not standing alone.

All of this makes me rather confident about our future. In spite of the obstacles we still face, I can now foresee things that would have been mere pipe dreams a decade ago.

It is likely that by the next decade, issues of transgender inclusion within the larger community will at last be an issue of the past. If anything, much of the heavy lifting is complete, with the majority of people understanding why transgender people are in the community

and most showing a willingness to work together.

I also feel it will be only a matter of time that we will see transgender-inclusive hate crime and anti-discrimination laws in a majority of states. It may still be some time before we see such on a federal level, but we may see such eventually achieved, or made largely moot given wins at the state level. While we still face a seemingly uphill battle over rights that had previously been secured, I strongly suspect that we can secure these, particularly once we see a change in the administration. One cannot move the unmovable, yet the fight for civil rights will not, cannot cease.

Meanwhile, I see transgender organisations growing, becoming vibrant, strong forces for continued community growth. Meanwhile, we already have a number of new transgender activists coming up through the ranks, many of whom will grow into some of our strongest leaders to date.

I do not know if we shall see society fully embrace transgender people in my lifetime, but I could see a time when the transgender are viewed as simply another part of human diversity, rather than some rag-tag group out on the fringes, deserving of both scorn and pity versus true acceptance.

I've seen this community go from nearly nothing, when I first started to look for others like me at the start of the 1990s, to the strong community that has a rich future ahead. It is this future that gives me the strength to continue to be involved. Indeed, it is our past, present, and future that makes me nothing but proud to be transgender.

## Gwendolyn Ann Smith

**From Gwendolyn's website: Gwendolyn Ann Smith is a graphic designer, desktop publisher, web designer, writer, and transgender activist.**

**She writes transmissions for four major L.G.B.T. newspapers in the United States, *Baltimore Gay Life*, the *Bay Area Reporter*, *Between The Lines*, and the *Philadelphia Gay News*. Individual Transmission pieces are also often printed in *Express Gay News*, the *Houston Voice*, the *New York Blade*, the *Southern Voice*, and the *Washington Blade*. In addition to these, she has contributed to several other publications and online forums over the years. Her website contains a vast number of her writings that are of interest to transgender people and our allies.**

**Gwen has spoken publicly since High School, and has presented on transgender-related topics since 1994. She has spoken in a number of different clubs and forms.**

**Gwendolyn Ann Smith also founded the Transgender Day of Remembrance in 1998, a day which occurs annually on 20th November. It is a day to memorialize those who have been killed as a result of transphobia, or the hatred or fear of transgender and gender non-conforming people, and acts to bring attention to the continued violence endured by the transgender community. The Transgender Day of Remembrance was originally organised to memorialize the murder of Rita Hester in Allston, Massachusetts, however since its inception, it has slowly evolved from the web-based project started by Smith into an international day of action. In 2010, Transgender Day of Remembrance was observed in over 185 cities in more than twenty countries.**



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# Stephen Whittle: Married at Last

## Accomplishing the Impossible Dream

Article appeared in Polare magazine: July 2005 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015

by the Manchester Evening News

***Getting married wasn't about politics, it was about family, but without the politics it would never have happened.***



Stephen Whittle marrying his long-term partner, Sarah Rutherford.

**A** man who changed sex after being born a woman has won his final battle against discrimination by marrying his long-term partner.

For many years marriage seemed an impossible dream for Dr. Stephen Whittle O.B.E. and his partner Sarah Rutherford, 45.

Stephen, 50, is a female-to-male transsexual who was born female and has had surgery to become a man.

Now, after years of campaigning, the law has been changed for transgender people, allowing Stephen to be recognised as a man and paving the way for marriage.

He said: "We both thought it would be the one thing they wouldn't change. We thought we would get recognition but being able to marry seemed impossible you never, ever thought about it as even holding down a job down seemed impossible at times."

Stephen said that as well as being one of the happiest days of his life, his marriage to Sarah may also be the first transsexual wedding in the country.

He added: "Getting married wasn't about politics, it was about family, but without the politics it would never have happened. There was a moment of truth when we finally got our marriage certificate - I held it up and everybody cheered, it was terrific," he said.

Stephen, of Mauldeth Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, helped to form the Manchester Transsexual Group and launched the Press For Change campaign for equal rights. "I remember thinking quite early on that I never did anything to hurt anybody else but I was being treated like a criminal and there were a lot of people in the same situation."

In 2002, after ten years of campaigning, the European Courts ruled that transsexuals had the right to privacy and could be registered under their new persona.


That meant people like Stephen could get a new birth certificate which, in turn, opened the door to marriage and a new life.

Now the couple, who have been together for twenty-six years and have four children - all conceived by sperm donor - were able to prove their love on Saturday when they married at Heaton Mersey Methodist Church.

"It was wonderful and it's hard to say how good we felt," said Stephen "We could feel the wave of happiness and positive thought behind us and it was quite overwhelming."

All transgenders of our time owe a debt of gratitude to Stephen Whittle and to his colleagues in Press For Change. This is particularly true for those of us who have British birth certificates and have been able to take advantage of the Gender Recognition program. Congratulations, Stephen and may your formal marriage be as happy as your informal one has been and last many times longer.

## Stephen Whittle

**Edited from Wikipedia:**  Professor Stephen Whittle (O.B.E.) was born in 1955 in Manchester, United Kingdom. He was the middle child of the five children in his family and suffered from rickets in early childhood. In 1966 his mother, being concerned at how different he was from his sisters, entered him in the examination for Withington Girl's School. Being one of the highest scorers in the city in the exam that year, he received a scholarship to attend. It was during his time at Withington Girl's School that he started





reading medical books. He knew that he was romantically attached to other girls at school – he never told them, and so his love was not reciprocated – but he also knew that he was sexually attracted to men. On top of that was a strong desire to be a man, to grow a beard and to have a hairy chest. He had read articles about people like Della Aleksander and April Ashley who had had a sex change. In 1972, at the age of sixteen, whilst visiting his doctor about a sore throat he read about a female to male transsexual person.

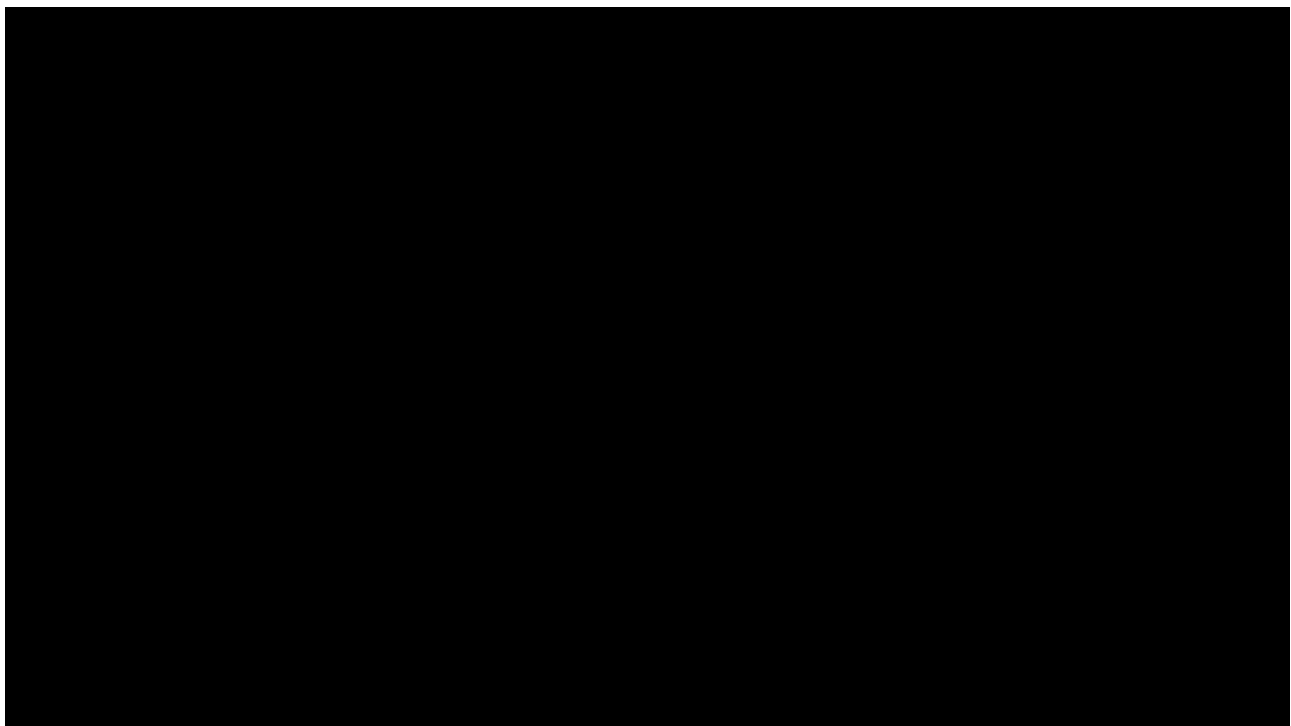
In 1974 Whittle came out as an F.T.M. transman, after returning from a Women's Liberation Conference in Edinburgh, which he attended as a member of the Manchester Lesbian Collective. He began hormone replacement therapy in 1975. He has been active in transsexual and transgender communities since the age of twenty when in 1975 he joined the Manchester TV/TS, the first support group for transsexual people in the United Kingdom. In 1979 he joined a former army officer and then royal sculptor, Judy Couzins, a transwoman in the Self Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT). In 1989, he founded the U.K.s F.T.M. Network which he coordinated until November 2007. In 1992, along with Mark Rees, the actress Myka Scott and an airline pilot Krystyna Sheffield, he founded and became vice-president of Press for Change, an organisation that works to change the laws and social attitudes surrounding transgender and transsexual lives. Whittle remains as one of the vice-presidents. Whittle underwent phalloplasty surgeries from 2001 to 2003. The Channel 4 documentary *Make Me a Man* followed his life during the surgeries.

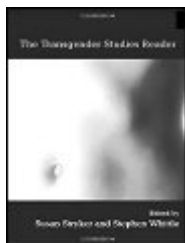
Though unable to marry legally in the United Kingdom until the passing of the Gender Recognition Act 2004. He and his partner (now wife), Sarah Rutherford, have four children by artificial insemination.

He has written and spoken extensively on his personal journey, his writings have included, among other things, an article on the ground-breaking transsexual employment discrimination case presided over by the European Court of Justice. In 2005 he was awarded The Sylvia Rivera Award for Transgender Studies by the Centre for Lesbian and Gay Studies for the monograph "Respect and Equality". In 2007, along with his co-editor, Susan Stryker, he was awarded a Lambda Literary Award for their annotated collection of fifty key historical and contemporary transgender science, political and theory texts - "The Transgender Studies Reader".

In 2002, Whittle was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis which has become an increasing problem since late 2005, yet he continues in his fulltime university post, and his fight for the human rights of trans people throughout he world. In recent years, he has collaborated with other members; Paisley Currah, Shannon Minter and Alyson Meiselmann, of the World Professional Association of Transgender Health W.P.A.T.H. on amicus briefs to courts in many jurisdictions. In 2007, he was the first non-medical professional and first trans person to become President of W.P.A.T.H.

He is the recipient of the Human Rights Award by the Civil Rights group Liberty, for his commitment and dedication to ensuring the advancement of rights for transsexual people through judicial means in the United Kingdom, Europe, and around the world; he was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.) for services to Gender Issues; and was awarded the Virginia Prince Lifetime Achievement Award by the U.S.A.s International Federation for Gender Education.





A Transgender Studies Reader  
Author: Stephen Whittle and Susan Stryker  
Publisher: Routledge (2006)  
I.S.B.N.-13 978-0415947091.

**From Amazon Books:** Transgender studies is the latest area of academic inquiry to grow out of the exciting nexus of queer theory, feminist studies, and the history of sexuality. Because transpeople challenge our most fundamental assumptions about the relationship between bodies, desire, and identity, the field is both fascinating and contentious. *The Transgender Studies Reader* puts between two covers, fifty influential texts with new introductions by the editors that, taken together, document the evolution of transgender studies in the English-speaking world. By bringing together the voices and experience of transgender individuals, doctors, psychologists and academically-based theorists, this volume will be a foundational text for the transgender community, transgender studies, and related queer theory.



Respect and Equality: Transsexual and Transgender Rights  
Author: Stephen Whittle  
Publisher: Routledge-Cavendish (2002)  
I.S.B.N.-13 978-1859417430.

**From Amazon Books:** In this fascinating work, theoretical discussions of sex, sexuality, gender and law, and an extensive range of primary and secondary research materials, are combined to provide an insightful analysis into the inadequacies of current law.



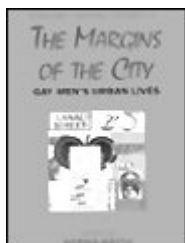
The Transgender Debate: The Crisis Surrounding Gender Identities  
Author: Stephen Whittle  
Publisher: South Street Press (2000)  
I.S.B.N.-13 978-1902932163.

**From goodreads:** Transgender has become a cultural obsession. From the high camp of RuPaul to the working class transsexual icon, Hayley of Coronation Street, it pervades our lives. Yet for many it remains a freakish interest on the sidelines. For transsexual and transgender people, though, it is a reality bound up in complexities, legal contradictions, family discord, and a desperate need to explain what it means to be a man or a woman, or neither, or both. Addressing the historical, social, legal and medical issues surrounding this new community, this book throws a light onto the complex issues, clarifying them in a way that all those who think they know what they mean, will be called to question the certainties that gender roles are no longer about.



Reclaiming Genders: Transsexual Grammars at the fin de siecle  
Author: Stephen Whittle and Kate More  
Publisher: Continuum International Publishing Group (1999)  
I.S.B.N.-13 978-0304337774.

**From Barnes & Noble:** An interdisciplinary work bringing together an international group of transgender writers, this text provides a collection of essays that are central to both academia and activism. Based on academic and "street" experiences, the book addresses the practical issues faced in changing the world view of gender while forcing theory a step forward from limitations of "queer", feminism and postmodernism. In a wide-ranging set of contributions, it addresses our engendered places now and what we can aim for in the future. It evaluates the mechanism we can use to galvanize both the micro theories of gender as a personal experience of oppression and the macro theories of gender as a site of social regulation. The collection aims to take identity politics and reclaim identity for the "self".



The Margins of the City: Gay Men's Urban Lives  
Author: Stephen Whittle  
Publisher: Ashgate Publishing Group (1994)  
I.S.B.N.-13 978-1857422023.

**From World of Books:** Within cities, gay life has always been marginalized in social, political and cultural terms, even although significant gay places have often been geographically centrally placed. This work looks at the physical and spatial development of gay places over the last twenty-five years in a social context.

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## Dave or Diane

### Being Different is No Reason for Guilt

Reprinted with kind permission from Mark Brown, Chicago Sun-Times  
Article appeared in Polare magazine: July 2005 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



Diane Schroer

**E**ach time I talk to Diane Schroer it gets a little bit easier to accept what's happened to my old room-mate Dave, a little less worrisome about whether I've slipped up and used the wrong name or called her 'man' as in "thanks, man" or "hey, man." That's not to say it didn't come as a shock at first or that it still doesn't have its awkward moments.

*... the most painful part is hearing how Diane, as Dave, grew up with thoughts always clouded by the sense that there was something wrong with him because he should have been a girl.*

But she's convinced me it's the right thing for her, and that has helped make me aware that this is one of those areas of human experience about which I had previously chosen to remain wilfully ignorant.

That's why I'm hoping you'll stick with me long enough to hear me out on this again today, and occasionally in the future, when the natural inclination might be to look away to avoid seeing something that we might prefer not to know. People in Diane's situation could use a little more understanding from the rest of us. There are more of them out there than we realise, many suffering silently with their tortured thoughts.

How the story began ...

If you missed Thursday's column, it was about how Diane, a twenty-five-year Army veteran and Special Forces commander, is suing the federal government for sex discrimination. Up until a few months ago, Diane was known as Dave, which is who she was when we shared an apartment at Northern Illinois University for the 1976-77 school year.

Last fall, the Congressional Research Service offered forty-eight-year-old Dave, a job as a research analyst on terrorism, then rescinded the offer when Dave disclosed he was in the process of making the medical transition to Diane. A.C.L.U. lawyers filed suit Thursday in the District of Columbia on behalf of Diane, who now lives in Virginia.

It had been a couple of years since I'd heard from Dave, but my curiosity didn't go on high alert when I received an e-mail in early April from "D.J. Schroer," one of Dave's nicknames, requesting my current address. A letter arrived at home a week or two after that. The first few paragraphs were full of foreboding with a warning that he was about to disclose something I might find extremely disturbing.

My God, I wondered. What did he do? Sell secrets to the Chinese? That led to a strange mixture of relief and stunned amazement as I went on to read that after many years of uncertainty and inner discomfort, he had decided to live his life as a woman and had already begun doing so. He wrote about the burden of shame and guilt he had been carrying his whole life and about how he was confident he was now on the right path. He also disclosed that he and his wife of sixteen years were in the process of divorce. I knew they didn't have kids.

I responded fairly quickly with an e-mail to 'D.J.' (I couldn't bring myself to use 'Diane' yet) offering reassurances that the news, while stunning, did not upset or offend me and saying that I had always known Dave as someone who knew his own mind. I promised to be in touch soon.

But it was a couple of weeks before I screwed up my nerve to call and was relieved when I got a recording that allowed me to just leave a message. I think I was afraid because I didn't know quite what to expect. Early the next week, I answered the phone and found myself talking to somebody with a quiet woman's voice who said her name was Diane. It took a couple seconds to register. "Oh! Diane," I said, and each time I've said it since, it gets a little easier, and when I slip up, she doesn't seem to mind. Diane asked me to tell her story.

Since Thursday, I've heard from several other buddies of Dave's going back to high school and college who expressed support because they knew him as a quality person, something who's not dependent on any feature of his anatomy or how he dresses. I haven't heard from anybody in the military, but Diane says her friends there have been very supportive, too.




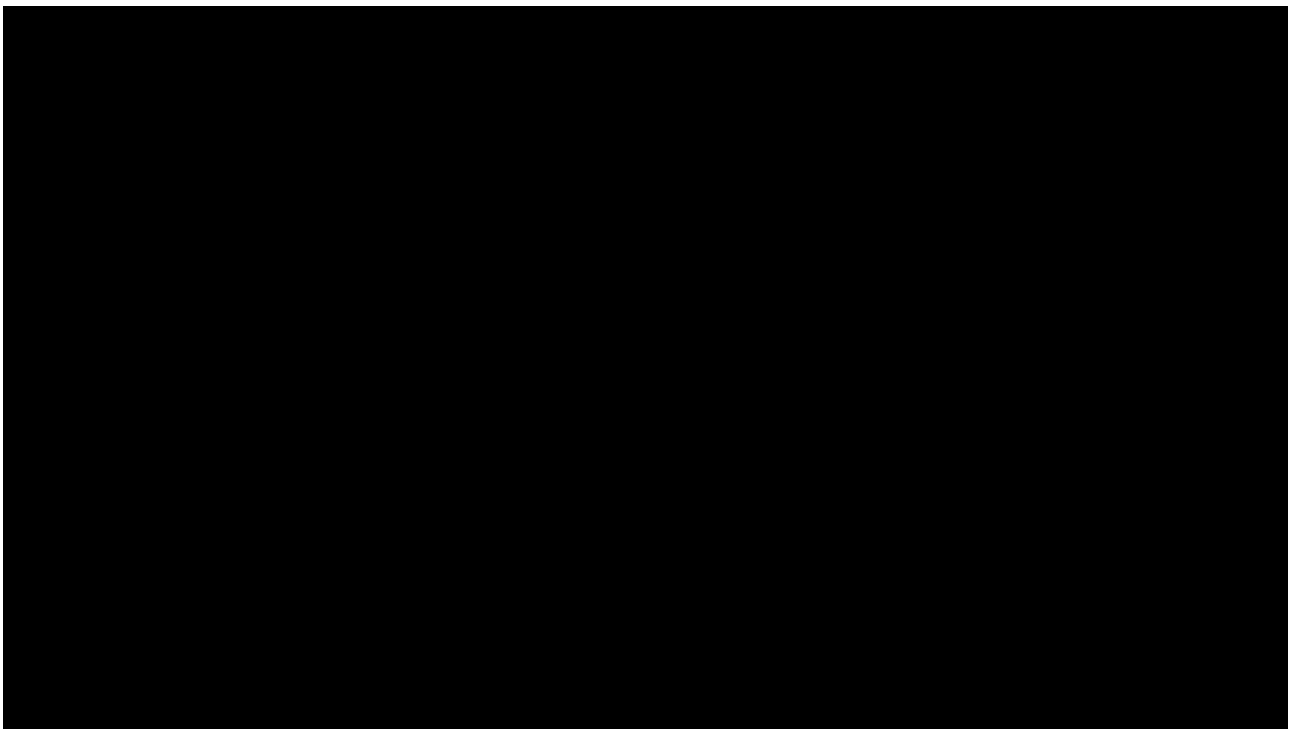
We've talked several times in recent weeks, and the most painful part is hearing how Diane, as Dave, grew up with thoughts always clouded by the sense that there was something wrong with him because he should have been a girl. He had those thoughts every day of his life, on the playground, in college, in combat, until he decided to become one.

Doctors say transsexuals are born with a disconnect between their bodies and the gender identity in their brains. It is a recognised medical phenomenon. A large number of individuals with this condition end up killing themselves, possibly more than go through with the expensive medical procedures Diane has started.

On the chance that Diane's story can inspire more of them to hang in there and shed the guilt, I plan to keep telling it.

## Diane Schroer

**From You Tube: in Anti-Discrimination Ruling**  Starting a new life and searching for a new career isn't easy, but Diane Schroer, a highly-decorated veteran, is no stranger to a challenge. A former Airborne Ranger qualified Special Forces officer, Schroer began taking steps to transition from male to female shortly after retiring as a Colonel after twenty-five years of distinguished service in the Army. When she interviewed for a job as a terrorism research analyst at the Library of Congress, she thought she'd found the perfect fit. Schroer accepted the position, but when she told her future supervisor that she was in the process of gender transition, they rescinded the job offer. The [A.C.L.U.](#) is now representing her in a Title VII sex discrimination lawsuit against the Library of Congress. This is Diane's story ...



On 19th September 2008, a federal district judge ruled that the Library of Congress illegally discriminated against Schroer, in a groundbreaking decision that found that discriminating against someone for changing genders is sex discrimination under [U.S.](#) federal law. On 28th April 2009, the judge ordered the government to pay nearly \$500,000 in compensation for the discrimination, which was the maximum he could award in the case.

## Further Information

The following links are provided for further information about this case:

[A.C.L.U. website: Schroer v. Library of Congress - Case Profile](#) 

[Time Magazine: A Transsexual v. the Government](#) 

[The Bilerico Project: Col. Diane Schroer Awarded Half a Million in Anti-Discrimination Ruling](#) 

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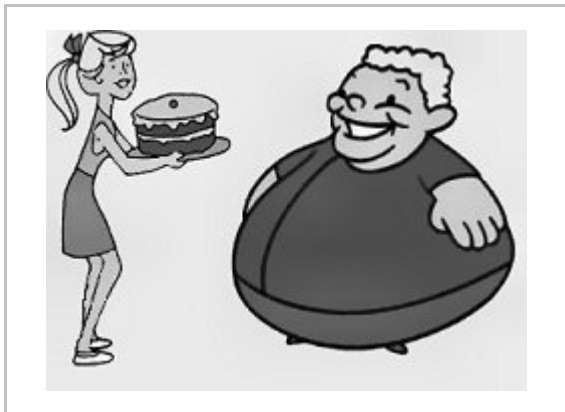
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## A Thin Woman Trapped in a Fat Man's Body

I hear black pantyhose are very slimming ...

by Gene Weingarten, Washington Post

Article appeared in Polare magazine: July 2005 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



**B**y and large, Americans buy, and are large. We consume too much and don't get enough exercise. Be honest now, when was the last time you went outside for a nice, brisk morning waddle?

*Unfortunately, once you decipher it, the new food pyramid is pretty specific. Apparently, I need to eat a lot more broccoli.*

People in other countries are making fun of our girth - even Germans, whose main diet staple is lard and who, in general, are built like farm machinery made of meat.

Fortunately, help is on the way. Wondrous new technologies are coming to our rescue. I recently had my body-fat percentage tested on a sophisticated apparatus that works as follows: You take your shoes and socks off and stand on a little scale, which shoots electrons up one leg into your pelvis, where they being around in your butt, colliding with fat cells, muscle cells, reproductive organs, etc., and then rocket back down through your other leg and into the machine, which analyses your fat content based on this unnerving reconnaissance. For some reason, this is considered way better than the old-fashioned system, which was to pinch some waist fat with medical callipers.

(My guess is that medical callipers became useless in measuring Americans' fat folds, and fireplace tongs lack sufficient accuracy.)

Anyway, my reading said I am too fat. I have two options to bring my percentage of body fat to within normal levels:

1. lose some weight through a sustained regimen of sensible eating and regular exercise; or,
2. have a sex change operation.

Option two would work because, to be considered healthy, women are permitted to have higher body fat than men. My body fat reading of 23 percent would have been normal for a woman of my age and height, whereas, for a man, it is an indication that he is basically a stick of margarine with ears. In my opinion, this is part of a long-standing anti-male bias in the weight biz. In the mid 1990s the medical establishment released a new optimal weight chart that replaced the old, familiar system people my age grew up with. The old one took your height and weight and sex, and adjusted your optimal weight by whether you were 'large-boned', 'medium-boned', or 'small-boned' (everyone, of course, declared himself/herself 'large-boned'). The newer system was more complex, involving body mass, and it appeared to have been drawn up by ticked off feminists. Under the new criteria, a perfectly normal, healthy man with a stocky build - your typical major league catcher, for example - was computed to be overweight. But short women got a break. Someone built like Madeleine Albright, for example, was not defined as fat even though she is built - I mean no disrespect here - like an igloo.

Apparently, the assault on men continues. I went for my body-fat measurement with my friend Pat, who is tiny. Pat is 5ft. 1½in. tall and weighs exactly 100 pounds. No reasonable person could look at Pat and call her overweight; no reasonable person would call her underweight, either. Pat stepped on the machine, which declared that to bring her fat levels to normal range - to become a perfectly healthy, normal American woman - Pat would have to ... gain 17 pounds.

Pat laughed, said the results were obviously in error and completely meaningless. But she walked away with this big smile on her face, and spent the remainder of the day on an ice cream and brownie binge.

I was advised to lose 5 to 10 pounds or risk remaining somewhat overweight. This was sobering news. I was fully prepared to address the serious danger to my health when, the very next week, a new study came out, by the 'Centres for Disease Control and Prevention', saying that the best way to live a long life was to be ... somewhat overweight!

At this vulnerable point, when I didn't quite know what to do and needed some lucid and unambiguous guidance, the U.S.D.A. unveiled its new food pyramid. Have you seen this thing? It is clear that, left to their own devices, the designers of the new food pyramid would have instead created a food rhombus or a food hypercube or an inverted isosceles food dodecahedron, but were persuaded by U.S.D.A. public relations people that the thing had to at least seem simple. So the food pyramid now is three dimensional, with six partitions of different widths and colours. But it is very, very easy to use, according to the gigantic interactive website you must consult to understand it.

Unfortunately, once you decipher it, the new food pyramid is pretty specific. Apparently, I need to eat a lot more broccoli.

So I'm weighing Option Two. I hear black pantyhose are very slimming.

## Gene Weingarten

**Gene Weingarten is a two-time Pulitzer Prize winning journalist known for both his serious and humorous work. Weingarten's column, "Below the Beltway", is published weekly in the Washington Post Magazine in the U.S.A. and syndicated nationally by The Washington Post Writers Group, which also syndicates "Barney & Clyde", a comic strip he co-authors.**

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# But How do I Tell My Parents, Workmates, Friends?

## Who to Tell, How to do it and the Right Tone to Adopt

by Katherine Cummings, Robin Goldstein & Jacob Hale

Article appeared in Polare magazine: July 2005 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



... perhaps I should tell many people simultaneously ...

One of the problems which often faces transgender people about to transition is the problem of who to tell,

how to do it and the right tone to adopt. Because gossip can be damaging, inaccurate, and travels like wildfire, I believe one should try and tell as many people as possible simultaneously, so that garbling of the facts is minimised by the one person who can be authoritative ... you.

***Because gossip can be damaging, inaccurate, and travels like wildfire ...***

When I transitioned at Sydney College of the Arts, where I was Head of the Information Resource Centre, I sent around a memo to all the staff, telling them what I intended to do, and why. I also offered to be at my desk for the next two weeks to answer any questions and listen to any comments, before starting my journey of transition in earnest. About one in three of the staff responded, in person, by phone or in writing, and all the responses were positive.

Some time later an American friend of mine had the useful idea of gathering examples of 'transition letters' and creating an archive of them on the Internet, to help others who were on their way to transitioning and wanted examples of the kind of letters they might write to their families, their work colleagues and their friends.

I am attaching a few examples here, the first two written by a delightfully zany lawyer friend of mine named Robin Goldstein.

Below, please find my 'outing' letter. Actually it is two letters, a letter to my former law department friends at Sony (who heard about my 'change') and attached to that a second letter which was my 'grand' coming-out letter which I mailed off last 4th July under the heading 'Some Fireworks for the 4th'. That letter went to about 100 people and I received virtually nothing but support with some occasional confusion and no ill will (at least directly expressed towards me). Others in the community have said they find my writings amusing, so perhaps my letters will help someone else in their journey.

Dear first name,

Though we've all heard about the Information Superhighway, when I think of the fastest way of moving data I don't think of the Internet, or any of the other electronic communications channels which are being built by the phone and cable companies, but of the Sony Law Department where information moves at the speed of light, or faster (often without the associated illumination!)

Anyhow, I understand that you may have recently heard some rumours about me, my life and what I did during my summer vacation (or, as the book will be titled: 'R.D.G.s Excellent Adventure'.) Well, except for the part about the chimp and the case of Cool Whip, they're all true. However, to make sure that all my friends are starting from the same point, please allow me to share the attached letter with each of you. While Siskel and Ebert give the storyline two thumbs up ("A kind of 'Rain Man' meets 'Raiders of the Lost Ark'", The 'feel good' movie of the 1990s), those closer to me have more often remarked "Wow" or occasionally "You're kidding, right?!" ... Well, Wow is a pretty reasonable response, especially in light of the fact that "No, I'm not kidding!"

So please allow me to impose upon our friendship by offering the following as a way of sharing the knowledge that if you pick a destination and start walking towards it, though it may take more than thirty years, if you don't lose sight of your goal you will eventually get to where you are going.

Since I have no plans to appear on Phil or Oprah (though my agent is negotiating for a guest shot on *the Simpsons*), if you find yourself out this way (or even if you just find yourself), please don't hesitate to get in touch. Since leaving Sony I have lost over fifty pounds and though I will never be as beautiful as I would like (sigh), you can rest easy (hell, I can rest easy) that I don't look like Rich-in-a-dress. With respect to all other issues regarding my transition, as far as I can tell the journey from Richard to Robin has not affected my intelligence, ability, memory, or love of pizza and chocolate. I have, unfortunately, completely lost my sense of humour, but the doctors tell me that is a side-effect of taking oestrogen. Oh well ... some things are worth the sacrifice.

In closing then, I offer the words of my M.I.T. grad school roommate, with whom I recently shared the attached, and who, thereupon, remarked:

*"We always knew you were strange, and that was part of your charm. Now, I guess, you're just a lot more charming."*

Well said, Teddy. Truth *is* stranger than fiction!

Thanks for your friendship. Since this is not a 'secret' journey, please feel free to share these letters with whomever you think would benefit. Stay happy and healthy and please stay in touch.

With warmest regards,

Robin

... and to my friends ...

Dear Friends:

Although the increased use of e-mail and other forms of electronic communication have made the use of the written word popular once again, it is rare that such missives carry with them anything more than raw information and, perhaps, the occasional idea. I hope this letter will carry some emotion with it as well.

As many of you who have had the chance to be or speak with me over the past eighteen months know, the path my life has taken is certainly one for the record books. Multiple moves, multiple homes and multiple jobs were only cherries on the cake 'celebrating' my divorce from Carol after being together for more than thirteen years. But even these events pale in the light of self-discovery, and the process of finally coming to terms with a central issue which has been a troubling part of my life for as long as I can remember.

Two years ago, while living in Boston, a personal crisis brought me to the point of seeking counselling for a severe depression which had all but ended my life. Through therapy I began to unravel much of the pain and confusion which had made even the simplest things difficult and the most joyous occasions sad. And, in the middle of it all, amid the turmoil and depression, I finally admitted to my therapist, and most importantly to myself, that for my whole life I have felt at odds with my identity and social role as a male; that I have always felt that I should have been female. I thought that such a revelation would make me unique, but, late to my own party as usual, it turned out that this condition is well known and described in the literature as Gender Identity Disorder, or Gender Dysphoria, meaning an emotional state characterised by anxiety, depression and restlessness concerning one's own gender.

Well, labels are one thing, but being trained as an engineer and an attorney (oh yes, and as a city planner, whatever that is?) I was more interested in the 'what', the 'why' and the 'so what'.

As to the 'hat', I am a 'transsexual'. When being honest, it is clear that for as long as I can remember (certainly as far back as the age of three or four) I have had a strong female identity. I have always identified more closely with women and, given my 'druthers', would have chosen to grow up as a little girl rather than as a little boy. Of course, this did not happen. Rather, sensing from childhood that being 'different' was 'bad', this sense of incongruous identity was mostly repressed, resulting in what I now recognise to be a lifelong state of chronic depression. However, unlike the tabloid view of transsexualism (a misnomer, I believe, since my depression has always surrounded my gender identity and body image and not my sexual orientation), I have never seen myself as the classic 'women trapped in a man's body' - 'next on *Geraldo*'. Rather, I have, more generally, felt perpetually outside, inappropriate, uncomfortable and just plain wrong. At least once a day, every day, for over thirty years.

As to the 'why', this is less clear. Although you can never rule out being dropped on my head as a baby (this didn't happen, by the way ... I wasn't dropped on my head until at least fifth grade), current theories support the idea that a pre-natal hormonal imbalance within the developing infant's brain can result in certain senses of self-identification not being well formed or, in some cases, being formed counter to actual physical development.

No modern theory of transgendered behaviour finds a basis in 'faulty upbringing'. Rather, it is more likely that our brains are 'pre-wired' or pre-disposed to develop in a certain way and that this pre-disposition simply sets the stage, in the case of a such a hormonal imbalance, for an individual developing a cross gendered identity and associated behaviour.

Therefore, having reached that place where I now understand, and am at last comfortable with who I am, how I feel and how I may have gotten this way, I have arrived at a point in my life (and in this letter) where I need to address the more important (at least as far as I am concerned) issue of "So what do I do now". In discussing these issues with someone close to me, I was asked "Can't you just pretend you don't feel this way?" Well, to quote another famous person, "Been there, done that". In actuality, I realise I have spent my entire life pretending I didn't feel the way I do, only to have my true feelings reappear, up close and personal, in ways that could only be described as intrusive.

So, after moving west last year to the land of fruits, nuts and flakes thinking that a change in venue would 'cure' me (it didn't), and, having reached the opposite coast, struck with the realization that there was

literally no place further to hide, I re-entered therapy with a specialist in the area of Gender Dysphoria working here in the South Bay.

This has not been an easy process and, in many ways, has required that I break my life down to its most basic elements and rebuild it again without pretending to be what I'm not. But, with the love and support of my family and those friends to whom I have already come-out, on 1st June, Richard took one step back, and I began my new life living full-time as Robin Diane Goldstein.

As those who have seen me recently may have noticed, I don't look exactly the same as I did when I moved out to California last May (that dashing young associate for a major metropolitan law firm). These changes in my body and appearance will continue to become more visible as I work to bring my outer image and self-image into harmony. I don't have any preconceived notion of what I will look like at the end of this process, but it will definitely be happier, healthier and most clearly female. (To give you an idea of the power of this transformation on my physical being, I have been able to lose almost twenty-five pounds since the end of May, as I work to banish depression from my life forever.)

As far as other physical changes go, these are obviously personal and I will explore them with my therapist and my doctors, as appropriate. This process is not about a 'sex change' operation, which, under accepted medical standards and should it take place at all, is at least two years in the future. Rather, this process is about finding a sense of peace and happiness with who I am (the person I have always been), living within a body and in a gender role which feels correct, and learning how to make the best use of the talents which were gifted to me at birth and those which have been passed along to me during life by family and friends. These seem like modest goals.

Having said all of the above, the following two provisos are most important to me in this journey:

1. I reserve the right to do whatever is necessary (within the law) to discover and live a life based on happiness, including living and dressing in a manner consistent with the gender role I assume; and
2. I reserve the right to change my mind at any time about any steps I might take in furtherance of paragraph 1. (sheesh ... you can take the boy out of the lawyer but ...)

(Oh yes, and I reserve the right to continue to tell bad jokes regardless of what I am wearing, which, when you come to think of it, may be the worst joke of all!)

And that's it. I truly want to thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for taking enough stock in our friendship to try and understand what I have attempted (poorly, no doubt) to say. If you think this letter was difficult to read, please remember it has taken me a lifetime to write! Ultimately I recognise that this is my issue to come to terms with, and I don't have the right to expect anything from you or anyone else. Rather, I simply hope for your continued friendship, if you are able and willing to give it (and if you aren't, I understand that too and will always remember you fondly as a friend of Richard) and for your support as (come to deal with one of 'life's little lessons'. Obviously, this is not a secret journey, so please feel free to share this note with whomever you feel would be best served. I will be happy to speak with you about any concerns you may have, and to answer any questions as best as I can.

Thank you for your time, for your patience, for your indulgence and for your support, and ultimately for your friendship, all of which has made it possible for me to get to this point with only a minimal amount of brain damage.

Robin

This sample letter is written by Jacob Hale, an F.T.M. who was working as an academic at a university in Los Angeles. I had the good fortune to meet Jacob (or as I called him, 'Kodiak Jake') when I was visiting friends in San Diego. Like most F.T.M.s he was absolutely masculine, a charming, witty companion and it was totally impossible to detect any female quality which he might once have known. His letter was mainly for the benefit of his working colleagues, academics and administrators of the university.

Jacob wrote that this went to all the faculty in his department and to the department secretaries, with copies to the dean, associate dean, and the M.T.F. colleague mentioned in the letter. A shorter, more formal letter went to the provost.

Dear Professor X:

I am writing to inform you that I am in the process of transitioning from female-to-male. I will begin teaching under my new name, 'Jacob Hale', at the beginning of Fall 1995. The legal change of my name and sex status, in accordance with the laws of the State of California, will occur between the end of Summer Session one and Fall 1995.

This transition is both deadly serious and extraordinarily joyous for me. I have been struggling with gender pain for as long as I can remember. Never had I felt the profound sense of peace which I felt that morning when I awoke knowing that I was on the verge of transitioning into manhood. Although I have had moments of worry and fear since that morning, these worries and fears have been about possible problems others might cause me. That feeling of peacefulness at my core has stayed with me. For the first time in my life, I am at peace with myself.

You will, no doubt, notice a number of physical and behavioural changes in me over the next few months.

Please be assured that I am entirely healthy and that these changes are necessary for my wellbeing. I realise that my transition will require some adjustments on your part, as well as on mine. For example, I am sure it will take a while for all of you to become accustomed to calling me 'Jacob' or 'Jake', and to using masculine pronouns to refer to me. I won't be a stickler about this but I do expect you to make an effort and, over time, to succeed. If you're more comfortable starting to call me 'Jacob' or 'Jake' now, that's fine; or, if you're more comfortable waiting until the start of Fall 1995, that's fine too. I anticipate that both names will be used for a while.

There is nothing confidential or secret, in any way whatsoever, about this information.

If you have any questions about this that I might be able to answer, I sincerely hope you will feel free to ask me. I feel quite comfortable talking about my transition, and would much prefer talking with you than having misconceptions exist due to lack of knowledge about transsexualism, particularly about female-to-male transsexualism. Two other people you may contact for more information are my therapist, and my friend who transitioned male-to-female as an Associate Professor California State, Northridge.

I have already spoken with Dean Jorge Garcia, Acting Associate Dean Donald Hall, and Professor Daniel Sedey, Chair of the Department of Philosophy, about how to ensure that my transition will cause the least disruption possible at work. All three have been extremely helpful and supportive, which I appreciate deeply. I will continue to work with them on this. If any of you have any suggestions about this, I would appreciate hearing them. However, I'm sure that my newly found sense of internal peace, my comfort with myself, cannot help but enable me to become an even more effective teacher, scholar, and participant in the California State, Northridge, community. I would have liked to have written individual letters to each of you, but clearly this is impractical. Still, please accept my apology for this somewhat mechanical form of communication, and please, as I said before, feel free to talk with me about this.

Sincerely,  
(girl-name deleted), Associate Professor

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# Oh to be in England now that April Ashley's There!

## An Inspiration and an Icon to the Transgendered World

by Katherine Cummings

Article appeared in Polare magazine: July 2005 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



April Ashley

**A**pril Ashley was born George Jamieson in June 1935 to a working class family in Liverpool, England. She realised very early in life that her feminine appearance was going to cause her problems, at school and in society, and by the time she was fourteen she went to sea in the merchant marine but became depressed and tried to commit suicide. By the time she was sixteen she was in a high security mental hospital with desperation her only companion. She was given shock treatment and testosterone to make her more masculine.

*She has truly been an example, an inspiration and an icon to the transgendered world.*

She escaped this barbaric treatment and found a new life in London and then the famous cabaret show at the Carrousel Club in Paris in 1955, where she became one of the stars of the impersonator show, along with Bambi and Coccinelle. The three of them must have been a stunning addition to the Carrousel's attractions.

Five years later, in 1960, April took the inevitable decision to undergo gender reassignment in Casablanca. At that time the risks were far greater than they are now and she was told there was only a 50 percent chance of survival.

She did not return to the Carrousel after reassignment but took up a modelling career and lived the high life of society parties, sex and delicious sin. She slept with Omar Sharif and with Peter O'Toole and, later, (in 1982) with Michael Hutchence. She also had a weakness for "toy boys" and confesses to having slept with many adoring undergraduates.

She was the toast of the town and the darling of society. She took a big part in the Bob Hope movie *The Road to Hong Kong* and modelled for *Vogue*. In 1961 the vile Fleet Street press outed her as transgendered and she lost the friends who were not worth keeping.

One of her admirers, however, Arthur Corbett, the son of Lord Rowallan (who was at one time governor of Tasmania) persisted in wooing her and April and Arthur were married but almost immediately separated. Arthur Corbett, himself a cross-dresser, sued for annulment of the marriage on the grounds that April was not a woman, and the Corbett v. Corbett case gave rise to the infamous Ormrod decision which laid a dead hand on the marital fortunes of transgenders for many years. Ormrod was clearly biased against April from the outset and his reference to the neo-vagina as a "pouch" and his omitting any reference to April's innate self-identity, preferring physical evidence of genitalia at birth and chromosomal tests show this. In later years he stated in correspondence that he didn't understand why April would want to have vaginal sex when anal sex was so pleasant! His judgement has been questioned many times by more intelligent and humane jurists but was really only invalidated by the recent *Gender Recognition Act 2004 U.K.* passed in Britain, which allows post-operative transgenders to have their records re-issued in their newly recognised genders.

After her divorce and annulment April worked in the restaurant milieu in London, then moved to Hay-on-Wye in Wales, a charming village where every second shop is a second-hand bookshop. She was adored by the people of Hay-on-Wye and missed when she decided to move on after eleven years. She lived in San Diego, California, for a number of years. This year she moved to the south of France, as the San Diego climate was not good for her health. A recent photo shows she is still very beautiful, although her bouffant hair is now a gloriously soft grey.

She says she hates growing old but if we could all retain our beauty as she has there would be little to complain of. In addition to her physical beauty she retains her wit and her charisma. She has said that she would like her womanhood to be recognised as a present for her seventieth birthday. There seems no doubt that at long last she will attain this legal status, so long denied, and those of us who have admired her for so many years and applauded her insouciant defiance of convention will be able to celebrate with her this long-delayed admission of her true status. She has truly been an example, an inspiration and an icon to the transgendered world.

### April Ashley

From Wikipedia:  Born George Jamieson in 1935, in Liverpool, United Kingdom, April Ashley was one of her parents six surviving children. She joined the Merchant Navy at the age of 14, however she was



later given a dishonourable discharge, attempted suicide and was sent to the mental institution in Ormskirk for electric shock treatment.

She moved to London in 1950, and then to Paris a few years later, using the name April E she became a Drag Queen and joined the cast of the cabaret show at the Carousel Theatre, with the famous French entertainer Coccinelle.

At the age of 25 and having saved around £3,000, Ashley had her seven hour long sex reassignment surgery in Casablanca, Morocco under Dr Georges Burou.

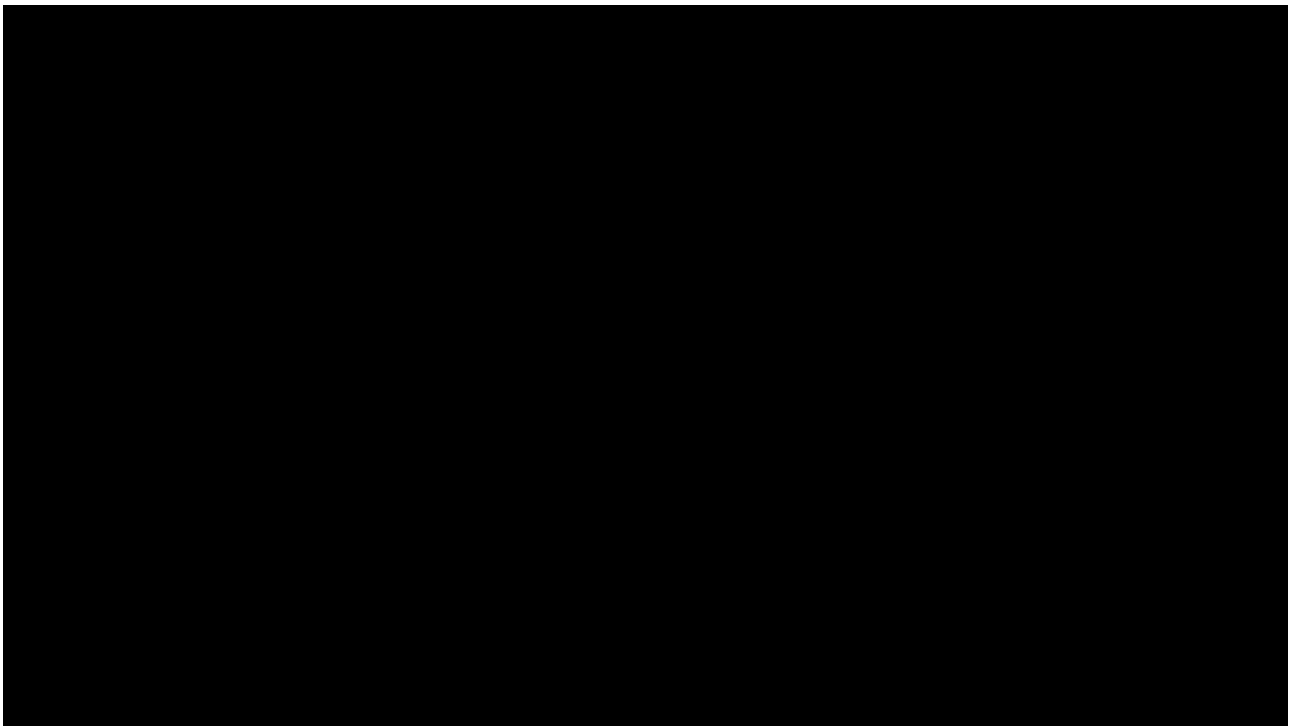
After returning to England, she became a successful fashion model, appearing in such publications as *Vogue* and winning a small role in the film *The Road to Hong Kong*, which starred Bing Crosby and Bob Hope. After a friend sold her story to the media in 1961, under the headline "Her" secret is out, the *Sunday People* outed her as transsexual. She became the centre of attention and her film credit was instantly dropped.

In 1963 she married the Hon. Arthur Corbett (later 3rd Baron Rowallan), the Eton educated son and heir of Lord Rowallan. However, in 1970 Corbett had the marriage annulled on the grounds that Ashley had been born male, even though he knew about her history when they married.


In 2005, after the passage of the Gender Recognition Act 2004, she was finally legally recognised as a female and issued with a new birth certificate, and in 2012 she was appointed as a Member of the Order of the British Empire (M.B.E.) for services to transgender equality.

[Further information about April Ashley can be found on her website.](#) 

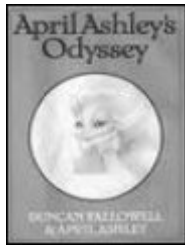
Another website of note is [The April Ashley Project](#)  which features the following video:



**The First Lady: I Was a Vogue Model and a National Celebrity But I Was Living With a Secret That Was to Shake the World...** Author: April Ashley and Douglas Thompson  
Publisher: John Blake (2006)  
I.S.B.N.-13 978 1844542314

**From Amazon Books:**  April Ashley was a *Vogue* model, the lady of the manor and a glamorous young woman, yet she was living with a secret that was to shake the world. She became the world's most famous transsexual when her secret was revealed in 1970. The revelation ruined her marriage to war hero Arthur Corbett and left her battling against prejudice in a time when gender operations were a taboo subject. Christened George Jamieson in 1935, she was one of nine children brought up by a drunk sailor. She felt disillusioned with her physical appearance and gender and soon suffered great self-loathing as she became withdrawn from her family. After a suicide attempt and electric shock treatment, she decided to go through with a sex-change operation. Since then, she has never looked back becoming a beautiful woman with a glamorous life. In the 1960s and 1970s, she was adored and her popularity was at an ultimate high. Having slept with an array of big names such as Omar Sharif, Peter O'Toole and a one night stand with Michael Hutchence, April was much in demand. Indeed, although she agreed to be photographed by David Bailey yet refused to sit for Picasso and Dali as they were

deemed too lecherous!



**April Ashley's Odyssey**  
Author: April Ashley and Duncan Fallowell  
Publisher: Jonathan Cape Ltd. (1982)  
I.S.B.N.-13 978 0224018494

**From Transgender Archive:**  In this outstanding collaboration with friend and writer Duncan Fallowell, the descriptions of social scenes positively sparkle: in Paris where Sartre sat about in his dingy overcoat, in London where April shone in the salons of wealth and rank, and in Spain where her suitors included very famous actors as well as her future husband. This is an emotional and dramatic story as well. We encounter the Liverpool slum where a young boy was relentlessly bullied and beaten senseless by his peers; the first, unexpected remarks about his unusual beauty; the terrible confusion which set in when he went to sea; the suicide attempts and sentence to the most stringently policed section of a mental hospital; then escape to London, and soon after, to Paris. "The day I wear women's clothes", April (then called Toni) had said, "is the day I know I can become one." But in Paris Toni was to wear elaborate costumes in a club called Le Carrousel where celebrities gathered to feel they were doing something "existential". It was the first break from many years' strictly androgynous dressing habits. Until then Toni had largely let people make up their own minds. Of course, with close friends (of which there was not just quantity but an endearing variety) the labels were unimportant. Then the decision was made. Toni flew to Casablanca. The operation and its psychological effects are described in moving detail ...

While *April Ashley's Odyssey* remains out of print, a copy of the book in its entirety exists on [the AntiJen Pages](#) . 

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## April Ashley and Me

### Katherine's Many Attempts to Catch-up with the 'Lady on the Go'

by Katherine Cummings

Article appeared in Polare magazine: July 2005 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



April Ashley

I first became aware of April Ashley when the story broke about her divorce proceedings. I was still sixteen years from my own transition but my heart went out to April Ashley, who was fighting a courageous battle on behalf of all of us who might, one day, want our gender fully recognised under the law.

***April Ashley ... was fighting a courageous battle on behalf of all of us who might, one day, want our gender fully recognised under the law.***

When Ormrod J. brought his findings down and changed the lives of many transgender people who had proceeded to marriage after reassignment, as well as condemning those yet to reach those hurdles, I was passionately indignant on April's behalf. If I had known how to contact her, I would have done, but I was aware that she would be inundated by messages from her real friends and from the press and crazies of all descriptions.

A few years later, her book (*April Ashley's Odyssey* by Duncan Fallowell and April Ashley) was published and April herself came to Sydney on a signing tour. I tried to meet her then, but when I saw how the crowds were harassing her I held back and the opportunity passed.


A few years ago, long after I had become Katherine, I found myself in Hay-on-Wye (I had to buy two extra suitcases before I left town, I bought so many second-hand books). I knew April had gone to live in Hay-on-Wye and tried to find her, but alas, she had moved on and nobody seemed to know where she had gone. In the following years I was in San Diego three times (I was even negotiating for a job with the university there at one point) and April was living there, but of course I didn't find that out until much later.

A Canadian friend of mine mentioned April's website and I took the step of contacting her and sending her my book. We have become friends since then although I try not to bombard her with email.

When the decision was made to ask April if we could use her on the cover of this issue her acceptance was immediate and un-self-conscious. There was only one catch. She had been involved in a recent series of television interviews (including ones with her former colleagues at the Carrousel, Bambi and Coccinelle) and had no time to prepare anything for me, nor to select photos she would like used. She asked me to look after it for her, as she was off to London for more interviews.

Talk about a lady on the go! She has such energy and charm I think we will be running her again on the cover of *Polare* when she turns one hundred ... if *Polare* and I survive! And ... oh! to be in England now that April's there!

#### April Ashley

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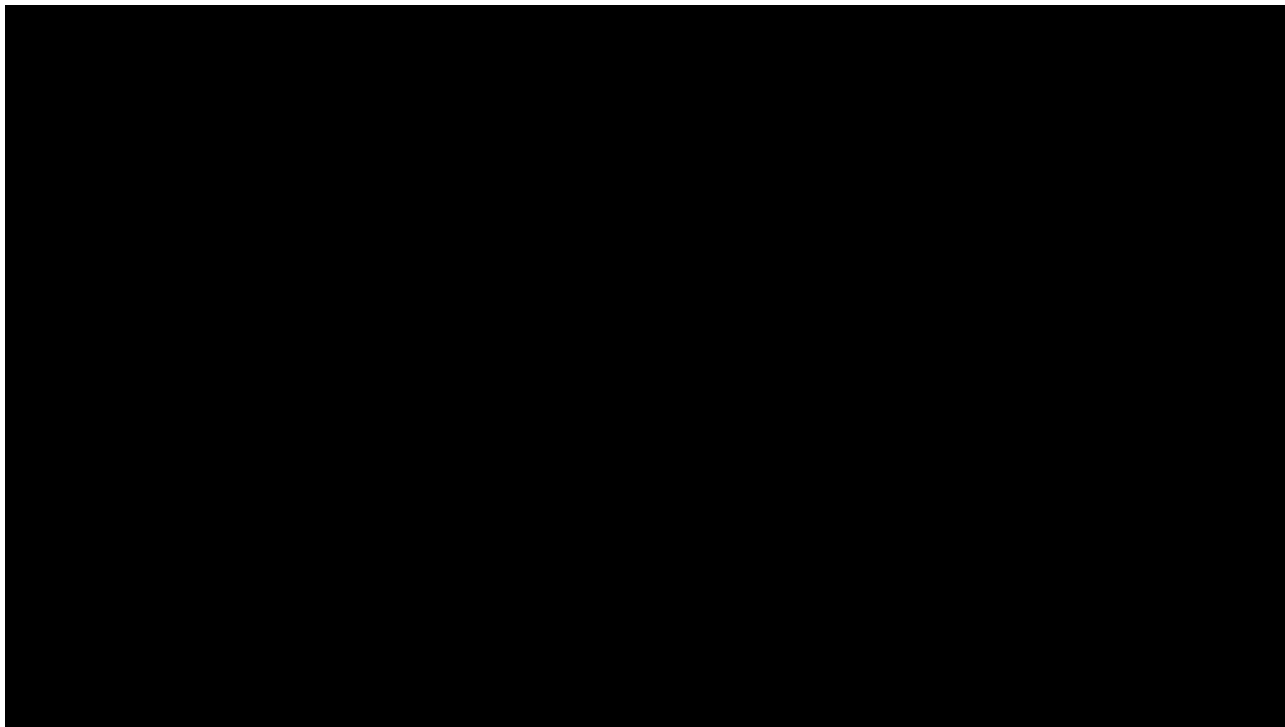


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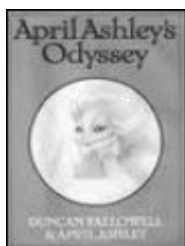
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Publisher: John Blake (2006)  
I.S.B.N.-13 978 1844542314

**From Amazon Books:**  April Ashley was a *Vogue* model, the lady of the manor and a glamorous young woman, yet she was living with a secret that was to shake the world. She became the world's most famous transsexual when her secret was revealed in 1970. The revelation ruined her marriage to war hero Arthur Corbett and left her battling against prejudice in a time when gender operations were a taboo subject. Christened George Jamieson in 1935, she was one of nine children brought up

by a drunk sailor. She felt disillusioned with her physical appearance and gender and soon suffered great self-loathing as she became withdrawn from her family. After a suicide attempt and electric shock treatment, she decided to go through with a sex-change operation. Since then, she has never looked back becoming a beautiful woman with a glamorous life. In the 1960s and 1970s, she was adored and her popularity was at an ultimate high. Having slept with an array of big names such as Omar Sharif, Peter O'Toole and a one night stand with Michael Hutchence, April was much in demand. Indeed, although she agreed to be photographed by David Bailey yet refused to sit for Picasso and Dali as they were deemed too lecherous!



**April Ashley's Odyssey**  
Author: April Ashley and Duncan Fallowell  
Publisher: Jonathan Cape Ltd. (1982)  
I.S.B.N.-13 978 0224018494

**From Transgender Archive:**  In this outstanding collaboration with friend and writer Duncan Fallowell, the descriptions of social scenes positively sparkle: in Paris where Sartre sat about in his dingy overcoat, in London where April shone in the salons of wealth and rank, and in Spain where her suitors included very famous actors as well as her future husband. This is an emotional and dramatic story as well. We encounter the Liverpool slum where a young boy was relentlessly bullied

and beaten senseless by his peers; the first, unexpected remarks about his unusual beauty; the terrible confusion which set in when he went to sea; the suicide attempts and sentence to the most stringently policed section of a mental hospital; then escape to London, and soon after, to Paris. "The day I wear women's clothes", April (then called Toni) had said, "is the day I know I can become one." But in Paris Toni was to wear elaborate costumes in a club called Le Carrousel where celebrities gathered to feel they were doing something "existential". It was the first break from many years' strictly androgynous dressing habits. Until then Toni had largely let people make up their own minds. Of course, with close friends (of which there was not just quantity but an endearing variety) the labels were unimportant. Then the

decision was made. Toni flew to Casablanca. The operation and its psychological effects are described in moving detail ...

While *April Ashley's Odyssey* remains out of print, a copy of the book in its entirety exists on [the AntiJen Pages](#) . 

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The Gender Centre is committed to developing and providing services and activities, which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices. We offer a wide range of services to people with gender issues, their partners, family members and friends in New South Wales. We are an accommodation service and also act as an education, support, training and referral resource centre to other organisations and service providers. The Gender Centre is committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues. We specifically aim to provide a high quality service, which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.