

THE Round Table

Fall 2018

"...a path from where we are to where we should be." --Peter Maurin

GENDER REVOLUTION



Why This Issue?

I'm new to these concepts about gender, and I'm guessing some of our most loyal readers are new to them too. Learning new language and concepts can often make me feel uncomfortable and sometimes defensive too. But when I remember that it is a liberating thing that people are finding new ways to be understood in the world, I am inspired to keep learning and to accept discomfort as part of growth.

This issue is all about how people experience gender - it includes a resource for definitions and language and some powerful pieces about parenting, the women's movement, liberation, and how gender looks in different cultures. Our committee has learned a lot from the process of putting this issue together, and we hope you will too.

First in this issue is a page of useful definitions on which I continue to puzzle. Identity is an evolving thing. Annjie's wonderful account of how the Karen House community continues to learn and grow comes next. Then, there is Jessica's story about transitioning from male to female while in a Missouri maximum security prison. It is an astonishing account of the rise of the human spirit.

Noelle and Morgan both express their pain eloquently and each one offers a different analysis of the trans person's search for a community, for a place in society. These are both powerful and difficult essays to read because they are both doing analysis in the midst of their experience. Stick with them.

Mandy is working to raise three children with the freedom to choose who they are. Carly skates on a roller derby squad that is working to better welcome trans persons and has helped open Carly's eyes to the failings of the women's movement. Annie shares with us about the power of opening oneself up to the Divine Feminine.

The Catholic Worker turned 85 this past May. Maria describes the gathering to celebrate and also to continue to clarify our thought about responses to sexual assault as well as racism and whether property damage constitutes a violent act. Finally, the letter from Karen House relates our own current struggles and all the support the house is receiving during these days of transition. And it invites you, dear reader, to consider lending a hand – literally.



- Mary Ann McGivern

Cover: Kristina Vidovic
Centerfold: Sean Ferguson and Jenny

The Round Table is the quarterly journal of Catholic Worker life and thought in St. Louis. Subscriptions are free. Please write to *The Round Table*, 1840 Hogan, St. Louis, MO. 63106. Donations are gladly accepted to help us continue our work. People working on this issue include: Sarah Nash, Jenny Truax, Haley Shoaf, Sean Ferguson, and Mary Ann McGivern. As always, letters to the editor are welcomed.

Gender 101: Terms & Definitions

When we first began discussing and preparing for this edition of the *Round Table*, the planning committee thought it was important to develop and share a page of terms and definitions with our readers. We recognize that this language might be new to many of us, so we are grateful to be learning with and alongside you! All of the information below was developed by the Trans Student Educational Resources.

Gender Identity: One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or another gender(s).

Gender Expression/Presentation: The physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. Many folks seek to make their gender expression match their gender identity.

Sex Assigned at Birth: The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex based on a combination of anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes.

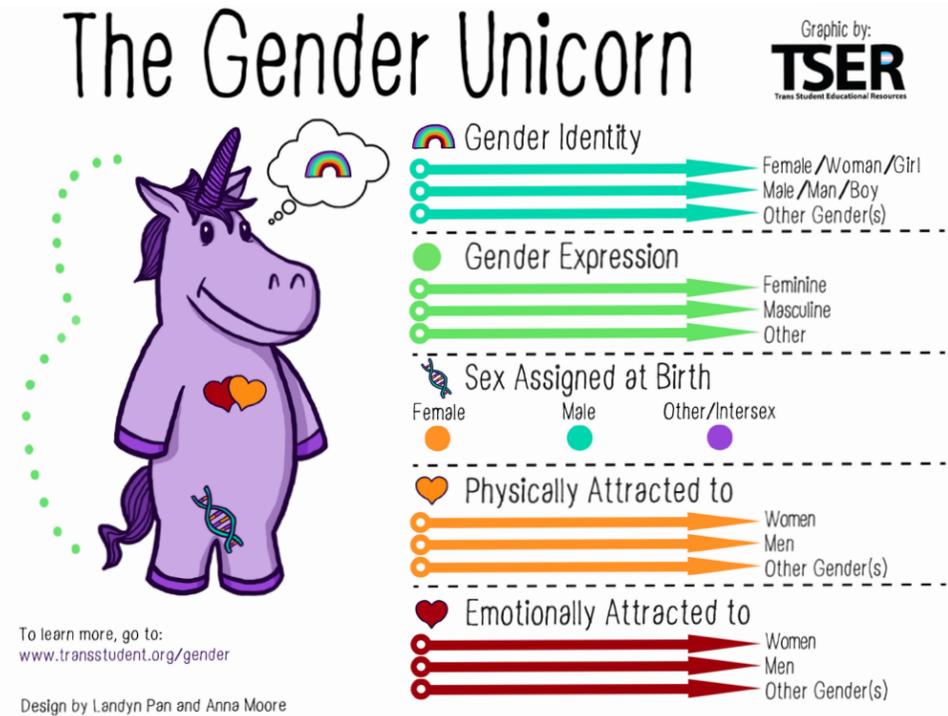
Sexual Orientation: One's physical, romantic, emotional, aesthetic, and/or other form of attraction to others. Gender identity and sexual orientation are NOT the same.

Gender Binary: The categorization of gender into two distinct, opposite sexes.

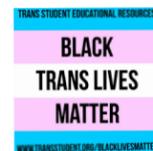
Trans/Transgender: An umbrella term applied to those whose gender identity is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Cis/Cisgender: Someone who identifies exclusively as their sex assigned at birth.

Queer: A general term for gender and sexual minorities who are not cisgender and/or heterosexual. This term has a complicated history as a reclaimed slur.



The Gender Unicorn graphic was created in 2014 and has been used as a training tool and educational resource for thousands of schools across the world. It was created by a team of young transgender TSER volunteers to comprehensively illustrate and discuss the separation between sexuality, gender, and sex assigned at birth. The goal of the graphic is to help create a healthy educational environment for young trans people through facilitating understanding and suggesting small shifts from gendered rhetoric toward gender neutral terminology.
Source: www.transstudent.org/gender



The **Trans Student Educational Resources (TSER)** is a youth-led organization dedicated to transforming the educational environment for trans and gender nonconforming students through advocacy and empowerment. TSER believes that ending oppression is a long-term process that can only be achieved through collaborative action. Check them out at www.transstudent.org!

Deepening Our Welcome at Karen House

by Annjie Schiefelbein

Nothing will make a person feel their age more than getting asked to write a “historical perspectives” article. I am, gratefully, my age, and have 25 years of Karen House history to look back on, so I accept this task with humility, if not intimidation.

Karen House has a lot to teach new house members. The Catholic Worker and Karen House practice has offered many of us new understandings and ways of living in the world, and a lot of amazing philosophy, traditions, and practices. But this has never been a one-way street. Each new person comes to Karen House with new knowledge, identities and experiences, expanding the community in ways that we had previously not known we could (or should) expand. Karen House has always been a space that is willing to change, to take in new information and live in the discomfort of birthing new realities. Considering our community’s understanding of sexual orientation, for example, I think my coming out as gay (though Sue and Tim and others had done it long before us) and living with my partner Jenny in community pushed my own learning edge and also brought the community forward in many ways. Many queer folks living at Karen House since have continued to push the learning further.

How we came to an understanding of gender has been a bit different – a slow but steady road. I read through past Roundtable issues, community notes, and interviews with community members to understand our evolution better. John, a former community member wonders if the overt welcome to the lesbian, gay and bisexual community paved the way for the transgender inclusive work that has happened since. Barb Prosser remembers an early welcome. As she wrote in a Round Table article, our welcome towards transgender folks perhaps began with Cass House in the 1980s. “Tim reminded me that we were probably one of the few or only emergency houses to offer hospitality to transgender people. And what struck Tim about the memory of one guest was how nonplussed the other guests were at what might have been viewed a different lifestyle than theirs. No drama



"Perhaps the most significant step forward in our specific welcome to transgender people was beginning a relationship with MTUG (Metro Trans Umbrella Group) of St. Louis."

or judgement.” The first lifting up of the trans community in the Round Table appears in our 2006 issue on LGBT issues. Interestingly, though, Jenny recently found notes from the Round Table meetings from that issue. While there was great interest in a trans author, the Round Table committee could not find anyone to write, an indication of our lack of relationships with the actual community itself.

The Karen House community generally are welcoming to everyone, but sometimes we have lacked information and experience about what a specific welcome means. We have led (in this and so many other areas) with a lot of heart and dove in, even if we lacked the language or experience to do so especially adeptly. We have always welcomed women and children, and we also always have welcomed, though not explicitly, transgender women – as long as they presented as feminine.

We altered this practice in 2011, making our hospitality explicitly for women, children, and transgender folks.

In 2012 we created a new Karen House values statement which stated that, “We especially and explicitly extend this personalist welcome to those that society has deemed less than human--people of color, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, the very young and very old, immigrants, women, people with different abilities, and the poor”. We created this document so that people interested in our community would understand our values and what we were about. We also, at the time, had conversations with our guests about this change. Many community members of that time remember that it went very well, although in retrospect, again, our language and presentation may have not been what we would chose today.

The document was an important public step, one that reached people visiting our website and people who read our values statements on our walls. But our community did not include anyone who was transgender; we knew we were missing the perspective of people who had first person experience and analysis. In 2016 we utilized resources from The National Center for Transgender Equality to examine our policies and our physical set up in order to help make our welcome clear and visible. This was an attempt to “put our money where our mouth was” and to look specifically at the ways we were being exclusive,

unwelcome, or not inclusive. As a trans guest described Karen House (to another transperson), “Karen House is trans-welcoming, but not trans-educated.”

It was gratifying to see from the memories and thoughts of many people who currently or formerly lived at Karen House that our initial steps did make a difference. Six people I interviewed remarked independently about posters that were in the house – one challenging the gender binary around 2008 based on the poem by Nancy R. Smith and published by Crimethinc, and one celebrating different targeted identities that Jenny Truax created in 2011, inspired by work from Southerners on New Ground. When they saw the signs, they all described feeling welcomed and amazed that they found a place they might be able to call home. So even within our faltering steps and lack of relationships, we continued to move forward.

Perhaps the most significant step forward in our specific welcome to transgender people was beginning a relationship with MTUG (Metro Trans Umbrella Group) of St. Louis. In 2016 we contacted MTUG to do a training. The training was phenomenal, and renewed our conviction to make our welcome overt to the trans community. The presenters reiterated to us that there are no safe places for trans folks who are experiencing homelessness in St. Louis (and most other cities). Either they are

Karen House is a place of Love, Acceptance, and Celebration !

Let's celebrate...

<p>WOMEN WHO ARE PAID LESS THAN MEN, OFTEN TREATED AS SEXUAL OBJECTS, AND TAUGHT TO DEFER TO MEN</p>	<p>ELDERLY AND YOUTH WHO ARE OFTEN OVERLOOKED, IGNORED AND PATRONIZED</p>	<p>PEOPLE OF COLOR WHO ARE SURVIVORS OF GENOCIDE, SLAVERY, LYNCHINGS AND HUNDREDS OF YEARS OF TERRORISM BY THE WHITE POWER STRUCTURE</p>	<p>TRANSGENDER PEOPLE WHO FACE DISCRIMINATION, HATE CRIMES, WHO ARE TAUNTED AND TREATED LESS THAN HUMAN</p>
<p>PEOPLE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES WHILE THEY CONTRIBUTE MUCH TO OUR SOCIETY, MANY BELIEVE THEY DO NOT DESERVE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS</p>	<p>PEOPLE WHO ARE LESBIAN, GAY & BISEXUAL WHOSE RELATIONSHIPS ARE CONSIDERED SECOND-CLASS BY SOCIETY</p>	<p>PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE AMONG THE POOREST PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRY, CONSIDERED INFERIOR, A BURDEN TO SOCIETY</p>	<p>LOW INCOME PEOPLE WHO ARE OFTEN BLAMED FOR THEIR POVERTY</p>

Let's Create a Home Where...

<p>WE TREAT EACH OTHER WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT</p>	<p>WE SAY NO TO DISCRIMINATION, HATEFUL LANGUAGE, AND SYSTEMS THAT OPPRESS OTHERS</p>	<p>WE CAN ALL LIVE WITHOUT FEAR</p>
<p>WE CAN ALL GIVE AND RECEIVE LOVE</p>		<p>...WE BUILD A NEW SOCIETY WITHIN THE SHELL OF THE OLD</p>



Annjie Schiefelbein recently added "chicken whisperer" to her list of skills. She continues to enjoy working as a Nurse Practitioner and being part of the extended community of Karen House.

The Karen House 'Inclusion Manifesto' graces the dining room wall at Karen House and is available for download on our website.

rejected outright because of their identity, misgendered in sleeping quarters, or at tremendous risk of violence in most shelters. One in five trans folks have experienced being unhoused due to outright discrimination by family or agencies (including landlords, loan managers, and property sellers). Out of the 1.6 million unhoused youths in this country, 20-40% identify as LGBTQ. In the case of younger people, agencies who normally work with unhoused youth often lack the awareness, training, language, or resources to appropriately help.

Through our connections to MTUG, we formed a relationship with the Trans Flat, a transitional housing space for transpeople started by MTUG's Sayer Johnson in 2016. The first step was identifying folks in the trans community who were in need and a possible good fit for Karen House, and we were delighted to welcome them in to our fold. Early the next year, we were called to a meeting set up by Winter Outreach, a group that provides long-term and short-term options for unhoused people. They were desperate to identify resources and spaces for

the unhoused trans people they were finding at severe risk in the frigid weather. From that meeting, our relationship with MTUG deepened, more folks moved in and others moved on, and each soul helped us to strengthen our welcome.

Now, we have one or more trans people at any point in time living at Karen House as both guests and Core Community members. Prioritizing and, as Gregory writes, "uplifting and supporting transgender people and their liberation" has become one of the pillars of the work of the house.

Karen House, in her 41 years of life, has transformed lives. In that same time, Karen House has been transformed, over and over again by people seeking greater truth and equity. Our history continues to transform us, and we do not know what we might become. Dorothy Day said the final word is love, but it, I think it was the first word of Karen House, and continues to be the constant word every day. And if we are led by love, good will follow.



I remember the first time I checked myself out in a full-length mirror after I'd dressed up, and just thinking "yeah, that's right." In some ways it was deeply emotional, but it wasn't like there were trumpets or anything like that, because it just seemed correct.

I grew up that way. Unfortunately mixed into that, I came from a very, very abusive childhood.

There was a lot going on. My father was dying of cancer; my mom was an alcoholic; my stepdad was an alcoholic; my stepmom was a pharmaceutical addict. I lived with my mother in a school bus for a while. I didn't know who I was, period, much less what my gender identity was. I was doing good to know where I was. It was only later, when I was tired of being the person I was, that I would come to fully understand my identity.

What did the process of coming out in prison look like?

By the time I was 20, and the haze of the drugs and everything else I had self-medicated with had finally gone away, and I was there in ad-seg [solitary confinement], I came to a lot of realizations. I realized the pain I had caused others, as well as many other things.

I had to come to some agreements with myself, because I did not want to continue to live a life that wasn't mine. So I decided I was going to try to become a monastic, and because I hadn't separated gender identity and sexuality yet at the time, I thought that if I repressed my sexuality, my gender identity would be repressed as well. At least that was the thinking of a 20-year old.

While I was pushing the Department of Corrections for Buddhism, I decided to become a monk. I spent about a year really trying to understand the monastic code. And as I did, and worked to live by the code, I realized that it was doing nothing about this gender identity, it was doing nothing about the fact that I felt like a woman. Just because I was a monk, didn't mean anything, I was still a woman, and that is really the only way to put that.

So I had to come to terms. And I finally made a deal with myself. Before prison, I wanted to go to college to become an actuary, so I have always lived life with these statistics concepts. Back then I thought, "The average lifespan, is 72 years," and my deal with myself was that I would never go beyond halfway through my life without being the woman that I am.

It helps that during that time period, while I was studying the monastic code, I was also studying what it meant to be transgender. So I came to terms with that. I was like "Okay, I'm not going to do the monk thing," but I told myself I would not go past that halfway mark. That calculation was 36.

By the time I turned 30, it got to be really hard. I told my friends and my spiritual advisors. And then I hit 36, and I was still here, and I had to make good on my promise to myself. I am not going to live one more day, I can't live one more day, without being myself. And that's when the case



"Sentenced to life imprisonment when she was just sixteen, [Jessica] has done everything from train service dogs, to bring Buddhism to the DOC, to designing and teaching a course on the Impact of Crime on Victims, to most recently teaching computer coding to other inmates."

started. I filed my petition for my change of name, around my 36th birthday, and that was my declaration to the world that "This is who I am." And everything else sort of followed thereafter.

What was the reception from others in the prison?

You know, you would have expected it to have been bad. And that really is the irony. I am always working to live my life in a way that the world is better off for me having been in it. And of course I started off on a pretty rough scale on that, so I spend most of my days trying to make things better for people. Most everybody knew me that way - as James, who was always trying to help. So when I changed my name to Jessica, and had it put on my door and my clothes and everything else, there was a bit of teasing, but generally speaking, I was accepted pretty quickly.

There is still to this day a lot of misunderstanding about what it means to be trans. A confusion of things, or misunderstanding of the concepts, and I still get some of that. Also, there is just the fact that I live in a misogynistic world. I have a friend I was teasing with, and I said, "I must have really made it into the world of woman because these freaking misogynists treat me like I'm lesser than them now."

But, generally speaking, my world accepted me the same way your world accepts you being a woman, if that makes sense.

A Different Kind of Freedom

by Haley Shoaf

Jessica Hicklin is a trans woman serving time at the Potosi Correctional Center in Missouri. Sentenced to life imprisonment when she was just sixteen, she has done everything from train service dogs, to bring Buddhism to the DOC, to designing and teaching a course on the Impact of Crime on Victims, to most recently teaching computer coding to other inmates. Amidst all of this, however, she struggled with a different type of battle, and a different type of prison - that of living as a trans woman in a men's prison, and not being able to access treatment to support her transition.

In 2016, with the support of Lambda Legal, she filed a lawsuit against the state of Missouri, challenging the state's "freeze frame" policy, which denied access to hormones, and other treatments, to transgender inmates. In 2018, she won the case. We interviewed Jessica to learn more about her story, what led up to her case, and how her life has changed since.

Can you share a bit about your background?

I grew up in Southern Kansas, and when I say Southern Kansas, I mean a town of like 2400 people. Very small, very conservative. I don't recall even knowing anyone who was gay, let alone trans, so I had no vocabulary or people to reference in knowing how I felt about myself. But I always did know. In some ways I am that stereotypical trans girl, when I was young I was like "I know this isn't right, but I don't know what that means."

Growing up, there was a playroom over our garage. It was a secret place, where I would go. My sister had the Barbie corvette, and I wanted it, dammit. And she had the Cabbage Patch Kids, other toys like that. So I would go up there, and I would play with her toys. Even as I started going to school, all of my friends were girls, and there was this element of "I speak your language, I don't speak their language (boys language)."



Haley Shoaf is a longtime house taker, a full time coding educator, and part time prison reform advocate.

How has your life changed since winning the court case?

It is my internal life that has changed so significantly. Because while I typically do put on the “Yes we can do this,” positive energy of “Yes we can change things,” internally, I was dying. I’ve told people throughout this process “I’m tired of trying to make the world a better place when I’m not the one doing it.” After I won the case, I finally got to tell people “If I get to do something good in this world, I will get to do it as the woman I always knew I was.”

I wake up every morning, and I get ready to go to work, and I do my hair, and I put on my makeup, and I dress the same way I would as a woman on the street. I finally feel like I am paroled from the prison I was born into. I’m still in concrete walls, I get that. I have been in them a lot of my life. But I have been in an other one since the day I was born. And I feel like I was paroled from that. And I still have things I struggle with, we’re still in the process of treatment, and some days that’s hard. I’m taking hormones, my body is changing, it has not changed. I am still doing my vocal training.

But by and large, I finally feel like I have come home to myself. And it gives me a new lease in life, because I can tell people now “Look, I’m a strong powerful woman.” I do things in this world as a woman, and I am proud that I can do them as a woman. I am proud that I can stand up for what women represent.

I’ll share a story about my mother, when I first told her I was trans, and we were discussing the name change. She was very upset. Very very very upset. Not because I was trans. It was that, she was like “People are going to call you a six-foot freak. People are going to reject you. And then when they finally accept you as a woman, people are going to act like you are supposed to be on your back or in the



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[I]f we are to contribute to this thing, this human experience that we are all a part of, then it is our obligation to do so authentically, truthfully.”

kitchen.” That’s exactly what mom said to me. And she was crying, and she was really upset, and I was so sad, that my mom had gone through life with that view of her womanhood. And I can do something about that now.

Deep seated in me, I want to wave the “Women are powerful” flag much more than I have ever thought about the LGBT flag. Because at the end of the day, I am just a woman. But now I feel like I am actually living that truth.

Prison is known to be a hypermasculine environment. How has that influenced your experience?

This prison has evolved greatly in two decades. Twenty years ago, there was a whole lot more violence, a whole lot more fighting, a whole lot more “We have to fight because you bumped into me.” Hypermasculinity means cavemen behavior.

There was a whole lot more of that, even eight years ago. And I grew into all of this in the midst of that. So when I talk now about things like respect and living my truth out loud, it wasn’t always easy to do. And that hypermasculinity still exists in most prisons really. A lot of people will tell you this place is unlike any other. So, given this world where people have no control over anything, a lot of times that masculine concept is what they have to stake their domain. And that masculine concept rears its head.

It’s a lot people shouting at each other, establishing dominance. And in the midst of that, being a woman is always interesting, because where someone might try to assert their dominance in my world, I have to use more tact, and that is better for all of us.

Without being too stereotypical, woman tend to have more of a global perspective on things. Just tonight, I was walking to supper and two guys were having an argument because one of them didn’t hold the door for the other. And all of the other guys are standing around watching them argue, because that is kind of the way this hypermasculinity exudes. The environment is like “Hey, we’re going to stand and watch these guys fight over who held the door and who didn’t.” And I’m the one that leaned in and caught one of their attention and started a conversation about something totally different. So I find that in this world of too much testosterone, I am the one who has to distract, if that makes sense. And it’s hard, and it’s stressful, because there is a part of me that goes “Wouldn’t it be nice just to be myself, and not have to be...” I get called “mom” a lot, believe it or not, and that is kind of the role that I’m in. In the hypermasculine world where everyone acts like little boys, I get to be mom whether I want to or not. And I think, half joking, but it really is true. You put too many guys together they act like boys – and somebody has to raise them.



“...[I]f we are unique, but each a part of the rainbow, how wondrous would a rainbow be if its colors were all represented quietly, in muddled tones? No, it is the fact that colors of a rainbow are so bright and vibrant that makes people stop and take them in, so too our authentic experience of being the humans we are.”
Source: Flickr / jiihacxi

You identify as a Buddhist. How has this impacted and affected your transition?

When I was young, anger and violence were “undeniable forces.” Over the years, as I practiced as a Buddhist, I understood these ideas were wrong, but, this realization left me mostly meek and ineffectual in my world. I was just here – quiet, unassuming, just existing. As I’ve come home to myself...I’ve found a much more profound strength. The undeniable strength of beauty (inner beauty) and compassion.

In short, I have, in coming home to my womanhood, become what I call a ferocious butterfly.

That is where the strength to overcome fear comes from. Even as I walk around day to day in a maximum security prison full of murderers and rapists when you find the good heart, you stop saying things like that and realize, “I walk around all day surrounded by human beings, just like you do.” What is there to fear in that?

In saying that coming home to my womanhood has allowed me to find the strength of beauty and compassion, it is not that I mean to imply that such things are merely the provenance of women. It is that for me, as I learned to live my truth, I was empowered to embody those things that are part of my femininity. The more woman I feel, the more authentically beautiful I feel, the more confident I am to live in my world as a part of it, as a responsible part of it.

I guess what I mean to say is that it is the truth that is powerful and empowering, and no matter what our truth may be, if we are to contribute to this thing, this human experience that we are all a part of, then it is our obligation to do so authentically, truthfully.

To put this in what may be a bit of a cliché, if we are unique, but each a part of the rainbow, how wondrous would a rainbow be if its colors were all represented quietly, in muddled tones? No, it is the fact that colors of a rainbow are so bright and vibrant that makes people stop and take them in, so too our authentic experience of being the humans we are.

It needs to be said that learning to understand the spectrum of gender in a religious context was hard for me. As a Buddhist, in the beginning, I kept thinking “Gender isn’t supposed to matter, I’m not supposed to be attached to the fact that this body is wrong.” It took many years to turn those thoughts into a practice itself.

Anything else?

I work in technology, teaching computer coding, and there is an interesting dynamic behind that. And I take a certain amount of joy in that, I’ll admit this. I do live in a world that is hyper masculine. I live in a world where guys think that they are supposed to be in charge of everything.

So there is a dynamic, I can see, but the idea that there is a woman teaching this highly technical skill, people struggle with that. But they are willing to struggle with it, and I laugh about that. There is this dynamic that I get to see where I am a challenge to people. But for some reason, I am a challenge they are willing to take, if that makes sense. If I can take that forward from here, when I get out into the world, into the tech world, I am so looking forward to that.



How It Feels To Be Forgotten

by Noelle Janak

I began this essay the day after the two-year anniversary of one of the most catastrophic mass shootings in this country's history. Omar Mateen, a Muslim allegedly closeted gay man, shot 49 people dead in Pulse night club on Latin Night June 12, 2016. As I reflect on the lives lost and those of us who are forever shaken because of the Pulse Massacre, I can't help but feel despair. I feel despair because it feels like no one cares when we die. Queer and trans people of color are forgotten until our deaths and our contributions to liberation movements become politically expedient to those outside our communities.



"The work Rivera and Johnson did with the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) group helped form homeless queer youth activism that we see today, yet it is erased in our memories. Instead of uplifting these narratives, Pride parades celebrate corporate sponsorships and feature police with rainbow flags, as if Stonewall wasn't an uprising." Photo Credit: Diana Davies via New York Public Library Digital Collections

Erasing Our Accomplishments

Historically, we see this deleterious trend repeated over and over. Bayard Rustin was cast away when his sexuality became public following a 1953 arrest for public sex with multiple men. Though temporarily set aside by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and most notably by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rustin was hand-selected by King to organize the March on Washington because King thought he was the only man who could accomplish such a feat.

King didn't reverse his opinion of Rustin's sexuality; rather, Rustin was needed politically, so King overlooked what he saw as a moral failing. Today, the March on Washington is remembered for King's "I Have a Dream Speech," not for the Black gay man who organized the action, nor the labor organizer who first attempted it years earlier. A similar erasure happened to Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, a trans Latina drag queen and Black trans woman respectively. In our collective memory of

the Stonewall Riots and queer activism that followed, white gay men stand in front, leading the charge toward "equality." From the 2015 film *Stonewall*'s lead white protagonist to a white-washed conception of HIV/AIDS activism in the 1980s, the Black and Brown trans mothers who built the queer movement we know today are all but figments of a history forgotten.

The work Rivera and Johnson did with the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) group helped form homeless queer youth activism that we see today, yet it is erased in our memories. Instead of uplifting these narratives, Pride parades celebrate corporate sponsorships and feature police with rainbow flags, as if Stonewall wasn't an uprising. After all the whitewashing of queer agendas and mainstream queer organizations' support of Israel apartheid state's pinkwashing efforts, the main-



Noelle Janak is a first year doctoral student at the University of Texas at Austin studying African and African Diaspora Studies. When they are not reading or writing (which they are constantly), they enjoy rewatching Law and Order SVU episodes, even though they think the real police should be abolished.

stream queer movement is just now speaking the names of these two women, who made "gay marriage" possible. This history of erasure, of forgetting, of neglect and abandonment continues in our movements today.

Denying our Identities

Last summer, the Saint Louis Metropolitan Police Department murdered Kiwi Herring, a Black trans mother of three, in her home and imprisoned her partner for first-degree assault after a confrontation with a homophobic and transphobic neighbor. When I arrived at Kiwi's house to pay my respects, I immediately noticed how small the crowd was. I noticed with increasing alarm how observers misgendered her repeatedly with reckless abandon. As a Black, non-binary and queer person, watching this reaction from our movement told me whose Black lives we actually value. Less than a month later, officer Jason Stockley was acquitted of the murder of Anthony Lamar Smith, a Black man who was shot in cold blood by Stockley six years earlier. The night of the acquittal thousands of people poured into the streets proclaiming the value of his life and the persistence of a racist police state. Walking through the same streets some of us had walked three weeks earlier, I could not help but feel powerless—for Anthony, for Kiwi, for people like me.

Building Community

Though despair seems inevitable in light of our current administration and our movement's erasure of Black trans and queer lives, hope remains ever-present and that hope comes with community. Recently, a Black trans queer comrade went into distress and within minutes of an alarming

social media post, Black queer and trans folks from across the city of Saint Louis rallied around him to ensure his survival. In a world where Black trans people become suffocated by systems of oppression and often do not make it to our fortieth birthday, this type of loving and accountable community saves lives. In these times of uncertainty and seemingly unending state violence, we have much reason to fear and doubt justice will prevail. However, we must lean into narratives like these because we are our only hope.

Being Mindful

As the Movement for Black Lives continues to reckon with its identity as a queer and trans-centric movement juxtaposed with whose lives we actually uplift, activists and organizers need to be mindful of our own actions. When speaking to your spheres of influence, do you find yourself speaking the names of Black cisgender straight men? In your organization, do you have Black trans and queer folks working there? Additionally, are they in upper leadership? When is the last time you donated to an organization like FlowerBoi Support, which exists to empower Black and Brown masculine folks to examine toxic masculinity and embrace tenderness? If you find yourself embarrassed by your honest answer to these questions, I challenge you to do better. Black and Brown queer and trans folks comprise the upper ranks of the Movement for Black Lives leadership, yet our deaths and lives are perniciously marginalized within a movement we started. In the face of systematic murder and subjugation, silence and ignorance is complicity. My challenge to the readers is to remember and lift up our history of resistance and fight for Black trans and queer folk while we are still here. ALL Black lives matter. Ashe!



"Though despair seems inevitable in light of our current administration and our movement's erasure of Black trans and queer lives, hope remains ever-present and that hope comes with community."

Gender Diversity Around the World

For most of human history in cultures throughout the world, gender diversity has been accepted and celebrated. Through violence and genocide, European colonialism enforced, among other things, cultural constructs like the gender binary and rigid gender-specific roles. While most Western societies today have strict either/or conceptions around sex, sexuality, and gender, hundreds of distinct societies around the globe have entirely different social constructs around these concepts. Here are a few examples.

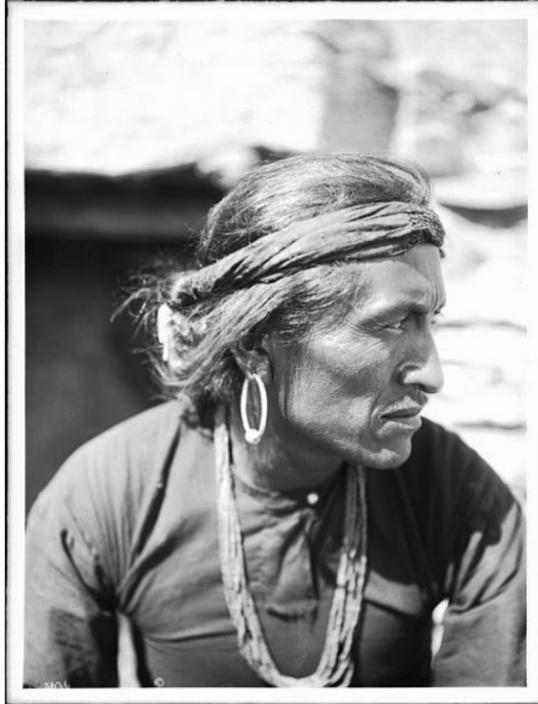


Photo: University of Southern California Library

Indigenous North America: Nadleehi and Dilbaa

Traditionally, the Navajo people have two defined gender roles outside of men and women. Nadleehi is the term for male-assigned people who take on feminine roles, and Dilbaa is the term for female-assigned people who take on a more masculine role in society. Nadleehi and Dilbaa people are highly esteemed and often assume roles as healers or warriors in their tribes.

Indigenous Mexico: Muxes

In Mexico's Oaxaca Peninsula, Muxes embody a third gender category. They take on feminine roles in society, but do not necessarily identify as women. "I'm so comfortable being in between two. I myself represent duality of two things. In the Zapotec vocabulary Muxes means both feminine and fear. I think we all have fear, and I like this definition because I think that being a Muxe allows you to defeat that fear so that you can be your own self."



Photo of Lukas Avendano - Muxes performance

Kenya and Tanzania: Mashoga

Mashoga is a Swahili term that connotes a range of identities on the gender continuum. While sometimes used to refer to gay men, a large proportion of mashoga are transwomen. Mashoga people dress androgynously, in a style that most people know as distinctly Mashoga. They usually take on more feminine roles in society, and like many other non-binary cultural genders, Mashoga people play crucial roles in wedding ceremonies.



Photo: Sharyn Davies

Indonesia: Bugis Society

The Bugis people of southern Indonesia recognize five gender categories: women, men, calabai, calalai, and bissu. Calabai are assigned male at birth but take on feminine roles. Calalai are assigned female at birth but take on masculine roles. And bissu, or "gender transcendent," embody traits of all the other genders, and often have important roles as spiritual guides in Bugis society.

South Asia: Hijra

The Hijra people of South Asia are individuals who are assigned male at birth but take on more feminine gender roles, and so belong to a distinct third gender role. In India, Hijra are seen as representing the non-binary deity Shiva, an immortal being who transcends gender and time.



Photo: USAID in Bangladesh

White Feminism Steamrolls Roller Derby

by Carly Spurloch (a.k.a. Shia LaBUFF #611)

Many people recall fondly the days that they watched roller skating women on tv, wearing tutus and fishnets, wrestling in mud pits, playing a sport called roller derby. Roller derby has its roots in the U.S. going back to the 1920s but many people know about the sport from the 1960s and 1970s when bouts were televised, skaters putting on more of a show than playing a competitive sport. Roller derby mostly died out throughout the 1980s and 1990s but in the early 2000s a group of women in Texas decided to revive the sport, creating what is now modern roller derby.

Since its revival, hundreds of leagues have been created around the world, thousands of women have skated, and the sport is still growing. There are men's leagues as well, but because roller derby was created largely by and for women, most roller derby participants are women. The world of roller derby is considered by many to be a radical space, filled with strong women of all body shapes and sizes, owning and managing their own teams and leagues, and kicking ass on the track. Queer women are a significant part of the derby population; any given league probably has a number of lesbian, bisexual, or pansexual women. There are even a representative number of genderqueer and gender expansive players.

In December of 2017, I signed up to play with St. Louis' Arch Rival Roller Derby league (ARCH), whose All Star team is currently the fifth best in the entire world. I was warmly welcomed and experienced for the first time in my life being surrounded by a ton of empowered women, queer women, and nonbinary/gender expansive badassess.

The league has made several changes in the past few years to attempt to be more inclusive, including changing the name from Arch Rival Roller Girls to Arch

Rival Roller Derby, being aware of everyone's pronouns, and refraining from playing the national anthem at bouts. Unfortunately, there are many elements of ARCH that have yet to see change and not all league members are as willing to go the extra mile to make these changes. An obvious problem is that the demographics of ARCH do not reflect the demographics of St. Louis, a city still deeply segregated. We should not be able to count the number of players of color on one hand.

In May of this year, the Off the Track podcast released an episode called "Oppression in Roller Derby," featuring two indigenous roller derby players speaking about their experiences in their respective derby leagues. While talking about racism in derby communities, the host, Mick Swagger, said: "Because [people of color], in order to thrive in this community, the space has to be as revolutionary as it is for white women" ("Oppression in Roller Derby" 00:22:42). The guest of the podcast, Naty Guerrero-Diaz, agreed and said: "White derby

players are often... saying 'This is the most revolutionary thing that ever happened to me, I've grown as a person, I've met people who are like minded.' And that's all true but it's not true for all of us. This sport or this community-it's not been the most revolutionary community that I've ever been in." (00:24:05)

Racism and exclusion are not the problem of a few individual leagues but rather an issue of the broader derby world. It may be true that roller derby has been revolutionary for many white women and even for genderqueer people, but it is plagued by whiteness and colonialism. Recently, a team entirely made up of indigenous players from around the world, Team Indigenous, was formed to compete at the 2018 Roller Derby World Cup. A goal of theirs is to decolonize roller

"It is up to every feminist, every organizer, every Women's Studies major, and every Women's March attendee to critically examine the work that they are doing and the people that they are including in that work."

derby: "When I talk about decolonizing roller derby, I talk about recognizing that opportunity and access exist in roller derby only for white privileged American and European people," said Melissa Waggoner, a founding member of Team Indigenous (Constable).

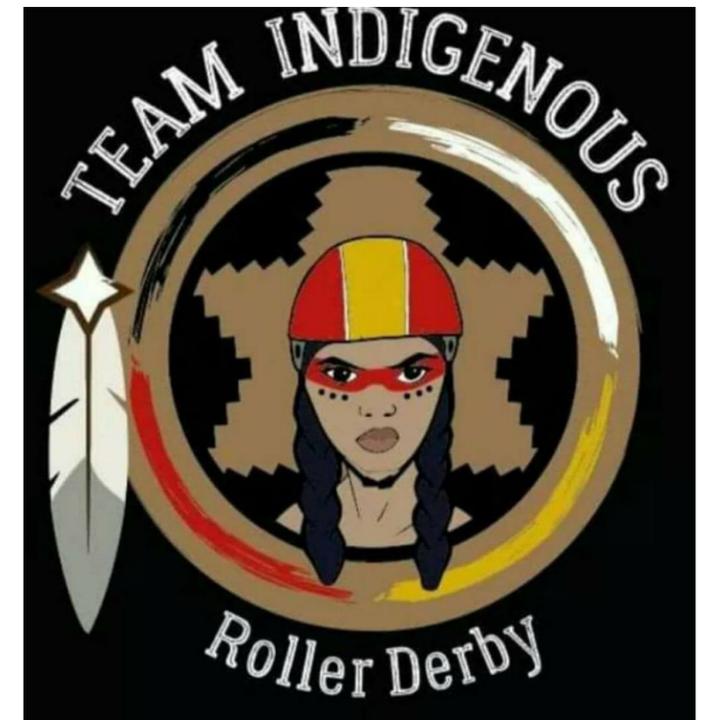
These social issues that the roller derby community is facing are issues that the feminist community have been grappling with since the women's movement began.

The story of the women's movement is filled with "firsts:" first woman to do, first woman to be, first woman to say. It's a story of women rising up together against the common enemy of men and most often winning. Unfortunately, the story of the women's and feminist movement is riddled with falsehoods and deception.

Suffragette Susan B. Anthony, praised for her efforts to win the vote for women, was quoted as saying: "I will cut off this right arm of mine before I will ever work or demand the ballot for the Negro and not the woman." Although it is widely thought that women won the right to vote in 1920, most Black women were not able to vote until the 1960s. Margaret Sanger, known for fighting for women's rights to use birth control and for founding the organization that later became Planned Parenthood, was a supporter of eugenics and the "exterminat[ion] of the Negro population," as she wrote in a personal 1939 letter. More recently, Hillary Clinton became famous for being the first woman to be a presidential nominee of a major party. What many people didn't know or chose to ignore about her was that she supported her husband as he implemented racist policies during his presidential terms and that she is infamous for her use of the term "super-predator," which is "unambiguously a term meant to malign, stereotype and target black and Latino youths" (Savali).

The women's movement started as a group of white, middle to upper class, heterosexual, cisgender women because the women that started the movement never intended to include anyone else in their fight. This exclusion is evident in the women's movement still today. We saw this with the Women's March on Washington just last year when what should have been a meaningful political protest turned into more of a parade of white women wearing transphobic pink "pussy hats."

It is up to every feminist, every organizer, every



"When I talk about decolonizing roller derby, I talk about recognizing that opportunity and access exist in roller derby only for white privileged American and European people," said Melissa Waggoner, a founding member of Team Indigenous.

Women's Studies major, and every Women's March attendee to critically examine the work that they are doing and the people that they are including in that work. Likewise, it is up to every roller derby player to critically examine who is on the track and who is being excluded from it, intentionally or not. Changes must be made to begin to decolonize the sport of roller derby.

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Carly Spurloch is a recent college graduate, a roller derby player with Arch Rival Roller Derby, and a new member of Core Community at Karen House. For a schedule of upcoming ARCH bouts, go to archrival-rollerderby.com!

Who Do You Say That She Is?

by Annie Girresch

Content Warning: This article is written from my identity as a Christian, but does not presume that Christianity is the only valid belief system. It is also written from the perspective of a theist.

“Did He, then, speak with a woman in private without our knowing about it? Are we to turn around and listen to her? Did he choose her over us?” These words, spoken by the character of Peter so well-known in the Christian scriptures as the “rock of the church,” give us a glimpse into the conflict over feminine spiritual leadership in the earliest days of Christianity. They are found in Karen King’s translation of The Gospel of Mary, the only existing Christian gospel written in the name of a woman. The Christian tradition often casts imagery of God and spiritual leadership in exclusively masculine terms. However, there has always been a presence of the sacred feminine in the language used for God and in the leadership of women, even if it was never captured in the canon of scripture or recognized by institutional religion. An emergent spirituality of devotion to the Divine Feminine is percolating in a number of communities, both in explicit Goddess devotion and in the sacred space created by women, for women.

Although I’ve had a practice of honoring the divine feminine privately for years, the first time I encountered this collectively was through the work of Taya Shere. Taya is Co-Author of [The Hebrew Priestess: Ancient and New Visions of Jewish Women’s Spiritual Leadership](#) and Co-Founder of the Kohenet Hebrew Priestess Institute, which offers multi-year training in Hebrew priestessing. Taya’s work is a game-changer: she and the Kohenet community are embodying their way into an evolution of the Jewish tradition. They are playing into new forms of religious practice that honor the divine feminine and the unique spiritual leadership of women. Her book highlights thirteen archetypes of the priestess in the ancient traditions of Israel, such as the Prophetess,



“Opening to the Divine Feminine means opening to new forms of spirituality and social structures. We can’t simply replace the old forms with women’s faces. A feminine embodiment of the sacred looks and feels different.”

the Midwife, and the Shrine-Keeper. It then traces what these forms look like today. A dear friend, Lizzie Salsich, has studied under Taya and has brought her into relationship with many other women in St. Louis. Some of these women gather regularly to study, pray, and



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make ritual, discerning what these forms could look like in a uniquely Christian way.

I am inspired by the work of several communities who are creating sacred spaces led by and for the unique spiritual journeys of women, some even offering explicit Goddess worship. There are two churches in California that are fully devoted to the Divine Feminine: herchurch and the Church for Our Common Home. In San Francisco, herchurch is a Lutheran congregation formed out of the feminist Christian tradition. Their weekly gathering is called “Liturgy of the Divine Feminine,” and they have developed new rituals like The Goddess Rosary, The ChristSophia Mass, and a Croning Ceremony. Here in St. Louis, the InPower Institute is a power-house community for spirituality, healing, and wellness that is run entirely by Black women. Holding sacred space in a variety of modalities, InPower’s team of healers, sages and revolutionaries embody what can only be described as an emergent spiritual leadership that has grown far beyond the conventional categories of religion. From weekly gatherings called “Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul,” to workshops on Sacred Sexuality with Pastoral Fellow Lorren Buck, the space created is deeply feminine and speaks to the overall needs of women in ways that traditional religion often cannot. InPower also offers a regular gathering called Lewa Farabale for women of color. This gathering is rooted in the Womanist tradition, flowing from the Christian Bible and African American women’s experiences of seeking liberation and healing. Whether creating full-blown, modern-day Goddess temples or digging deep wells of healing and restoration led by and for women of color, emergent communities are honoring the sacred feminine.

As much as I am in awe of Divine Feminine practice, it is not without its challenges. Much feminist theology has been done by white, educated women from North America. The divine feminine circles I find myself in tend to be majority white spaces. White women need to be thoughtful about how we evolve our feminist theology and practice. We need to watch out for cultural appropriation and deal with it when it happens. We need to discern where and how our feminism has bolstered white women at the expense of women of color, historically and presently. We also need to support the work of women of color, without rushing to create organizations that perpetuate white feminism.

Another challenge with honoring the divine feminine is cisnormativity. Cisnormativity is the system that defines gender on a binary of male and female and assumes that everyone’s gender correlates with the sex

organs they are born with. This is where divine feminine communities can really go awry and marginalize trans and non-binary siblings. I have often noticed how these spaces sacralize the cis female body. We reflect theologically about our wombs, or we give thanks for our fertility. The danger here is in equating certain body parts with a female gender identity. There are women who do not have wombs, there are people who have wombs that are not women, and there are people who do not have a gender. Even using the word “sister” universally can be a challenge for non-binary or agender siblings. I understand why cisgender women want to celebrate the sacredness of our bodies; we have often been taught to hate them. But we can find ways to do this that do not simultaneously alienate people and reinforce harmful and untruthful beliefs about sex and gender.

Opening to the Divine Feminine means opening to new forms of spirituality and social structures. We can’t simply replace the old forms with women’s faces. A feminine embodiment of the sacred looks and feels different. If you’re a person who believes in a higher power, I invite you to ask yourself: What would it do for my body to understand God as She? What would it do for my community? How might it help me to see something that I couldn’t see from just a masculine perspective? I hope these questions lead you into deep wondering. May She bless you and keep you.

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What We Lost When Love Won: How Trans People on the Margins Have Been Left Behind

by Morgan Hunlen

Healthcare, legal status, employment, housing, police brutality – the issues that affect the trans community are multiple, damaging, and can be experienced simultaneously by many trans people. But these issues only begin to scratch the surface of the politics that affect trans lives. Even our own community can serve as a vehicle to propagate unhealthy norms and ideas. As a queer trans person of color, I've witnessed quite intimately how our community can silence minority opinions and how this affects the idea of "normal."

There Are Differences Among Us

To better understand how these unhealthy norms and ideas arise requires looking at the erasure of transgender diversity throughout LGBT+ history. Until very recently, modern transgender history usually began with Magnus Hirschfeld's founding of the Institute for Sexual Science in Weimar Germany and skipped to Christine Jorgenson's sex change operation in the early 1950s and then to Stonewall in 1969. However, there were several uprisings that prominently featured transgender people of color in their ranks that have largely been forgotten, such as the Cooper's Donuts Riot in Los Angeles in 1959 and the August 1966 riot at Compton's Cafeteria in San Francisco. The exclusion of these two events underscores the larger theme of important events in transgender history being forgotten or swept aside, especially when they involve people of color. Ideas such as drag and ballroom culture being used as a safe outlet of gender expression and initial guerilla efforts at activism by Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson have fallen victim to the victor's history. When combined with the devastating effects of the AIDS crisis, a lot of our history has simply ceased to exist in the public consciousness. That same lack of history and culture has allowed what has been created in its place to be the dominating narrative. And there begins our community's long track record of failing to be intersectional with others in favor of being "normal," or cisnormative.

Unequal Access

The idea of a transgender person has begun to permeate through society, especially in the last ten years. Greater visibility in media and social awareness has led to a "lavender wave" of people claiming their identity. This has been, without a doubt, a positive wave that has made material conditions better for trans people across the country. But the expansion in rights hasn't been distributed equally across the community, and the result has been that those who have a higher standard of privilege have been able to have their experiences stand out over others. For example, in my travels from city to city, I've found that transgender support communities tend to be overwhelmingly white regardless of the share of minority populations in an area. This by itself doesn't present a problem, but because black and brown transgender people experience much higher rates of violence, homelessness, HIV/AIDS, unemployment, and death, it presents a bleak picture: communities that are often desperately in need of support go without.

Even within support spaces, homogeneity tends to isolate those who have varying lived experiences. If a black trans woman of color enters a support space that's made up almost entirely of white people, it could be hard for that person to get around the cultural differences present in that sort of space. But because the narratives of white trans people are so prevalent, people of color are left with few options for community.

Even outside the intersection of race, trans people who are poorer, queerer, and hold non-traditional forms of labor such a sex work routinely find themselves pushed to the margins, their experiences associated with their marginal identities silenced in favor of the majority's issues. This "us vs. them" idea is reflected in the same forms of media that popularized the existence of trans people at the turn of the century. Most stories feature trans people of similar narratives, similar experiences, and similar expressions – either depicting trans people as unhappy and homeless, or navigating society with an emphasis on western beauty standards, "knowing from birth" type sto-

ries, and on storybook-like transition timelines. These sorts of narratives inherently leave behind trans people who fail to meet the ideas presented as "normal" in society, and they ultimately separate the community into people who've suffered under this current climate and people who haven't. The difference ultimately lies in cisnormativity.

Cultural Expression

From the early reaches of the gay liberation movement to the end of the AIDS crisis, drag and ballroom culture was a critical way in which transgender people of color sought community and refuge. It was often impossible for black queer people to present in public and lead normal lives; they did exist and continue to exist on the margins of society. Drag was an outlet, an expressive platform that provided a chance for an oppressed class of people to experience freedom. After the AIDS crisis, which decimated black ballroom and drag cultures, drag became more and more popularized as it was carried into the mainstream by an advancing trend of gay and lesbian rights. However, the new mainstream culture depicts drag queens in a more superficial light. This sort of straight-washing of drag culture is indicative of how the trans community, the most mobile of people, continue to integrate into public society and ideas of cisnormativity. Cisnormativity is a word that is used to describe ideas of what cis, or non-trans people, live, act, and present as. Cisnormativity is the default in a culture where the vast majority of the population isn't trans. And a massive effect of cisnormativity is the encouragement of trans people to represent that idea to the best of their ability, whether they can or not.

To clarify, we all practice internalized cisnormativity in some fashion. As a survival tactic or a matter of preference, many trans people even choose to integrate into society and live like a cis person in a practice called "going stealth." This is not inherently a bad thing. By being perceived as a cis person, a trans person can avoid harassment and discrimination in society and life can be generally easier. Even trans people who aren't stealth may lead lives where they're recognized as the gender they identify as and that's fine. The issue arises when trans people try to claim that cisnormativity is the only true way to be stealth, or intentionally erase non-normative trans people from the community in a desire to promote ideas of cisnormativity. Actions like that are what led to many of the problems I talk about here, and many of the situations where marginalized trans people have been hurt by those who share in these ideas.



"Initial guerilla efforts at activism by Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson have fallen victim to the victor's history."
Marsha P. Johnson, Joseph Ratanski and Sylvia Rivera in 1973 by Gary LeGault

Experiencing the Loss of Shared Cultural Expression

I distinctly remember coming out as trans and looking in vain for communities where I could find other black trans women. Instead of being able to attend support groups or use sites like Tumblr support, I would find myself shuffling through the obituaries of the trans woman who were killed, desperately looking to learn anything about the kind of narrative I could expect in my life. I went through my transition feeling excluded from my own community due to my otherness, my awkward existence as a person who existed on the margins, and, even today, I find myself having to defend my own identity and the identities of my non-binary siblings to those who would exclude us from the community. These issues matter. Being able to build a support system you can depend on can be the difference between life and death, success or suicide. Not having a community where marginalized trans people can feel included, they face the prospect of building these communities all on their own.

If the trans community is to move forward to a new era of discourse and civil rights, we must be willing to accommodate those of non-normative backgrounds and ideas. We need to remember and celebrate the accomplishments of historic trans role models, those who gave so much for their community only to be erased in favor of the dominant narrative. We must, at every opportunity, continue to assert the idea that there are more ways than one to be trans, and the policies that we decide to focus on first must address the intersections created by transphobia and poverty. The path to a united and equitable future must lie in the community's acceptance of diversity. Only then can our community know justice, and experience freedom.



Morgan Hunlen is a black, pan, transfeminine, person of color who is involved in local LGBT+ advocacy efforts. She is currently studying Urban Planning & Transportation Issues at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.





Catholic Worker Thought & Action

Gather Us In: The Catholic Worker Turns 85

by **Maria Bergh**

The Catholic Worker turned 85 this year, and about one hundred Catholic Workers gathered at the invitation of the Rochester Catholic Worker to celebrate from July 27 to 29th. The Rochester Catholic Worker, called St Joseph House of Hospitality, is the only house old enough that Peter and Dorothy both visited, and the first to become a non-profit. It is a vibrant and evolving community, which offered me the same generous hospitality they offer their guests.

Catholic Worker gatherings are like a family reunion, but more so: together we are the Body of Christ, made of disparate parts necessary to do the works of mercy. Going forth from the gathering, each carries the others in memory as a very real (and imperfect) cloud of witnesses to encourage our efforts at home. Leading up to this year's gathering there were a series of long-distance discussions that felt fundamental to many in the movement: How do we address racism? Is property destruction violent or non-violent? How do we address gender and sexual violence? It is natural that we experience these topics differently, and good that the gathering agenda left time to clarify thought around each of these concerns.

The Rochester Catholic Worker received the Midwest Catholic Worker "Lament. Repent. Repair" letter and found it helpful in unpacking issues of race, broadening their discussion of race and privilege. This led to invitations for Lincoln Rice of Casa Maria in Milwaukee and me to address the first question of anti-racism. Lincoln and I structured our talk around acknowledging the impact of racism, remembering historic white and black figures in the movement (including Dorothy, Peter, Dr. Arthur Falls, Helen Caldwell-Day) and their approaches to racism, and closing by identifying and addressing symptoms of white supremacy in our communities and suggesting ongoing work. We were introduced by Richmond Futch, a black artist and member of the Rochester Catholic Worker community who offered powerful concluding words on the power and the need to recognize, rather than subvert, black organizing traditions that are consonant with our movement. The subsequent question-answer period made it clear that this discussion was necessary, and further time spent unpacking race, white supremacy, and ethnicity would be fruitful.

The question of property destruction was partially addressed by a panel led by Rosalie Riegel on the most recent Kings Bay Plowshares action, giving it history and context. Kathleen Rumpf spoke as the first Catholic Worker to participate in a Plowshares action (NYCW 1983 Plowshares 7), as did Steve Baggerly (Norfolk CW, 1997 Prince of Peace Plowshares), and Michael Walli (Dorothy Day CW, 2012 Transform Now Plowshares). The fourth invitee, Mark Colville, is serving time for the Kings Bay Plowshares, so he submitted a statement to be read aloud. Kathy Kelly, a longtime friend of Catholic Workers and member of Voices for Creative Nonviolence described this panel as important for her to hear.

Arun Gandhi expanded this with a theoretical grounding, sharing how his grandfather, Mahatma Gandhi, formed him in non-violence. His grandfather was troubled at Arun's wastefulness as a child and tasked him with creating a genealogy of violence: physical violence (e.g. assault, rape, abuse, destruction, murder) and passive violence (e.g. overconsumption, anger, isolation). Arun recalled that physical violence did not grow much, whereas passive violence grew seemingly endlessly. Gandhi taught that passive violence creates anger, which leads to physical violence. For this reason, Arun emphasized that in Gandhian non-violence the target of an action was always to be viewed as a misinformed friend rather than an enemy against whom damaging actions could be taken. Arun maintained this was the source of Gandhi's power, and also upheld practices that promote exchange rather than unilateral charity. There were clear differences in Gandhian and Catholic Worker approaches to social change, so while Arun could not condone property destruction, we would be short sighted as a movement to end the conversation there.

While not initially planned, a discussion on sexual violence, power and the Catholic Worker occurred. The Catholic Worker is not immune to sexism, heterosexism and sexual violence, and that topic was an essential one for us to address. While there were no reported concrete outcomes, it met a need for timely dialogue.

Throughout the gathering, it was evident how much white men dominated the conversation in length and quantity of

comments, so clearly the problem of power inequity is not isolated any one Catholic Worker community. We all have work to do to encourage and support women, LGBTQIA, people of color, and others who have been historically silenced and marginalized, especially victims of harassment, assault, and other forms of violence.

Following these weighty conversations we laughed together in the basement of St. Boniface Parish while

bowling, dancing, and holding a talent show. Mass closed out the weekend and we travelled home, some by way of an action at Hancock Airforce base opposing Reaper Drones. While our work never ends, I am grateful always to steep ourselves again in the cloud of witnesses, to re-member our holistic Body of Christ, and go forward working through our differences. After all, our relationships, far more than being right or radical, are our greatest strength.



From Karen House

by **Carly Spurlock**

Whenever I get the opportunity to train new housetakers, I always love to tell them: "Every day at Karen House is different, I never know what to expect." In the four years that I have been involved at Karen House, in all of my different roles, this statement has remained true.

Unfortunately, this year has been a very difficult year for Karen House and the Karen House community in a way that we've never had to experience before. A previous guest emptied our bank account of all of the money we had. Three core community members left within a couple months of each other, two of them unexpectedly and quickly. Multiple guests have severe and untreated mental illnesses. And to top it all, the house has become infested with bed bugs.

All of these events have left us with our heads spinning, feeling a lot of heartbreak and exhaustion.

I have two asks of you all, our supporters: The first is that you stay connected to us in every way that you can. It's so important to know that Karen House is loved, by people from all kinds of places. So keep reading the Round Table, keep sending us letters, keep responding to our posts on social media, keep visiting the house.

Even now when there are only two of us in Core Community, there are still so many amazing people who continually come volunteer their time or bring us donations. These people are invaluable to Karen House, make the work of the house so much lighter, and make the house a warmer place to be. However, there is still a serious lack of volunteers at all levels. My second ask is that

if you are able, consider coming to spend some time at the house. Learn to be a housetaker, or take house again if you have in the past. Bring a group of people to come clean, cook, or do yard work. Spread the word that we need more live-in Core Community members that can bring life and energy to the house. In other words, if you or someone you know wants to build or strengthen a relationship with Karen House, please reach out to us and we will work with you to use your time, energy, and talents.

Karen House is rich in friends and supporters. You maintain the house and have maintained it for 41 years with your work, your donations, your prayers, and your thoughtful contributions to community decisions. We ask that you continue to reach out with your love and kindness during this difficult time.

Through thick and thin, Karen House continues to be a place that I so dearly love and care for. It is one of the most amazing things that I have ever been a part of, allowing me to form relationships with and learn from some of the most amazing people I've ever met. I am so excited to bring new people into the community so that they can share this wonderful place with me.



Maria Bergh has her toes in the dirt and her head in the clouds as a designer, writer and farmer in the Catholic Worker tradition. For the past two years her community has been Su Casa Catholic Worker in Chicago.

The Round Table

Karen Catholic Worker House

1840 Hogan ■ St. Louis, MO. 63106

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Fall Needs at Karen House:

- Sheets (Queen and Twin)
- Blankets
- Bicycles that are in good working condition
- Cold Medicine
- Vitamin C Packets
- Socks and Underwear for bodies of all sizes
- Forks and Spoons
- Milk and Butter

We Welcome YOUR Ideas for Participating in the House!

With a smaller live-in community right now, we are excited to have people who know and love the house around as much as possible to help out with whatever tasks, chores, and projects you have energy for while you're here!

We have kids who like art projects, meals to be cooked, volunteers to be hosted, and donations to be sorted. Even if it's been a while, we want you here!

Especially with the holiday season creeping up on us, we will most likely need extra help with house shifts and all the merriment that goes along with it!

CHRISTMAS DONATIONS!

If you are interested in helping out with our Christmas gifts, here's the details. We could use your help with these items for the guests and house:

- Gift cards to Target, Walgreens, Shop N Save, Aldi's, and Amazon
- Movie passes
- City Museum passes
- Books of bus tickets
- Donations of money (send to 1840 Hogan St. Louis, MO 63106, or you can donate with PayPal on our website!)



"We are creating a world that we've never seen. We're whispering it to each other cuddled in the dark and we're screaming it at people who are so scared of it that they dress themselves in war regalia to turn and face us. Because of our ancestors, because of us, and because of the children we are raising there will be a future without police and prisons. Yes, there will be a future without rape, without harassment, without constant fear and childhood sexual assault, a future without war, hunger and violence. With abundance, with gender as a joyful spectrum where each of our bodies is treated like sacred ground - whether we have insurance or not."

- adrienne marie brown

Check KarenHouseCW.org for updates on Karen House, resources on the Catholic Worker, an archive of past Round Tables, and more! Our website has a HUGE trove of resources on racism, white privilege, and the Black Lives Matter movement!