Arts and Culture

On September 17th, the BGSU Fine Arts Center closes one of its first exhibitions of the 2006-2007 academic year. The show was entitled “Jake in Transition from Female to Male” and the artist was photographer Clarissa Sligh. The exhibition documented the physical, emotional, medical, psychological, and social transition of Deb to Jake through a series of sexual reassignment surgeries. As Sligh’s work travels to a new gallery, the Queer Query is interested as to the mark it left on Bowling Green State University and the surrounding communities. Answering our questions about the impact of “Jake-In-Transition” is the gallery director of the Fine Arts Center, Jacqueline Nathan.

To read interview, go to page 5.

Editorial Page

The silver screen kisses of Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall/Clark Gable and Vivian Leigh were just lacking in a certain je ne sais quoi. Luckily, a playful, yet insightful, lesbian gives us a lesson in the art of classy kissing.

Bisexuality has increasingly met animosity in certain segments of the queer and straight communities. Its legitimacy has even been questioned on primetime television. One editorial explores the journals of an unrelenting bisexual in hopes of reaffirming that the bisexual identity.


Local News

As Transcendence, the BGSU trans support, advocacy, and visibility student organization on campus enters into its second year, the Queer Query checks in for a progress report with the 2006-2007 president of the organization Joelle Ruby Ryan.

Ryan provides a grounded, yet hopeful outlook for Transcendence’s upcoming academic year.

To read this progress report, check out page 3.

Humor Page

Did a meteor kill the dinosaurs? Was it a change in the earth’s climate? Maybe the separation of Pangaea? The answer to that question is D. None of the Above. Turns out the dinosaurs were just too gay for their own good.

To read this new, outlandishly funny “theory,” go to page 7.

In the News:

Canada receives a rebuke from the Pope over the Canadian Gay Marriage policy. A Colorado court files in favor of a transgender person in an antidiscrimination suit.

Read the News on page 2
When is it OK for boys to be girls, and girls to be boys?

By Ilene Lelchuk,

Park Day School is throwing out gender boundaries. Teachers at the private Oakland elementary school have stopped asking the children to line up according to sex when walking to and from class. They now let boys play girls and girls play boys in skits. And there's a unisex bathroom.

Admissions director Flo Hodes is even a little apologetic that she still balances classes by gender.

Park Day's gender-neutral metamorphosis happened over the past few years, as applications trickled in for kindergartners who didn't fit on either side of the gender line. One girl enrolled as a boy, and there were other children who didn't dress or act in gender-typical ways. Last year the school hired a consultant to help the staff accommodate these new students.

Children with gender variant behaviors feel intensely that they want to look and act like the other sex. They prefer toys and activities typical of the opposite gender. Signs usually start appearing between the ages of 2 and 4.

For some children, it's a passing phase. Some grow up to be heterosexual, some gay.

Some children insist they are the opposite sex although they might have a hard time explaining it. One nurse therapist said a boy once told her, "I think I swallowed a girl."

Adapted From San Francisco Chronicle, 08/26/06
http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/08/27/MNGL2KQ9H41.DTL

Worker Wins Transgender Bias Case

By Associated Press

DENVER (AP) -- A woman who was fired while preparing to undergo sex-change surgery was let go in violation of state anti-discrimination law, the head of Colorado’s civil rights agency has ruled.

Advocates praised the ruling, saying it was the first of its kind in Colorado and a sign that society has begun to better understand transgender people.

Danielle Cornwell, 54, claimed in a complaint filed in April with the Civil Rights Division that she was fired in July 2005 because she was a woman and because she had recently told the company she planned to undergo gender-reassignment surgery.

Originally known as David Michael Cornwell, she had realized while working for Intermountain Testing Co. that she was a transgender woman, according to the ruling. She began assuming a feminine appearance, and also told her employer she planned to change her name and dress in women's clothing.

The company, which uses X-rays and other methods to test materials for the construction and manufacturing industries, argued Cornwell was fired because of a decline in business and because she had a low performance rating.

Continued on page 6

Pope Tells Canada: End Gay Marriage

(Vatican City) Pope Benedict XVI hit out Friday at Canada's laws allowing same sex marriage and abortion, saying they result from Catholic politicians ignoring the values of their religion. "In the name of 'tolerance' your country has had to endure the folly of the redefinition of spouse, and in the name of 'freedom of choice' it is confronted with the daily destruction of unborn children," the pope told a group of bishops from Ontario. Such laws, he said, are the result of "the exclusion of God from the public sphere." He lamented that Catholic politicians yielded to "ephemeral social trends and the spurious demands of opinion polls." Benedict has made the defense of traditional family values a major goal of his papacy, speaking out often on the issue. During a trip to Spain in July he challenged that country's Socialist government for instituting liberal reforms such as gay marriage and fast-track divorce. Same-sex marriage was recognized by Canada's parliament last year. New Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper has pledged to hold a vote in the House of Commons later this year to determine whether the issue should be revisited.

Adapted from Cnn.com 09/08/06
Progress Report: Transcendence Enters Its Second Year

By Bethany Nanamaker, Queer Query Editor

On Friday, August 25th, Transcendence officially kicked off its second semester. The student organization meets for a general meeting on the last Friday of every month in the Women's Center of Hanna Hall.

As BGSU's first and only student organization for transpeople and trans-allies, the Queer Query is obviously interested in the future of Transcendence. So we thought we'd check in for an update. I met with Joelle Ruby Ryan, the 2006-2007 president of Transcendence, to discuss the groups' goals, current initiatives, and viability for the future. My conclusion: Transcendence is full of life and ambition.

Ryan outlined the long-term goals of Transcendence as follows:
The group seeks to establish a permanent presence in the community. They want to see the continuation of their annual Transgender Awareness Days. Transcendence seeks to build awareness in straight/LGB communities. In addition to building a trans-presence in the BGSU arena, Transcendence wants to build awareness of the national and international issues that transpeople experience.

Transcendence's goals are not only related to visibility. They also seek to serve as a support network for people who identify as transgendered or people who are questioning gender. They also have advocacy ambitions to make BGSU more trans friendly. They are pushing for more gender-neutral restrooms in BGSU buildings. They are advocating for the inclusion of gender identity and gender expression in the BGSU Anti-Discrimination Policy.

Whew. Big ambitions for one little student organization. As Ms. Ryan put it, Transcendence is advocating a "cultural shift. We are talking about radically changing gender as we know it." But Transcendence has been careful to set small-term, manageable objectives to progress towards this long-term radical change. These manageable, short-term objectives have included the film series they have hosted to achieve their visibility goals. They are working towards gender-neutral bathrooms one building at a time.

This year Transcendence has another long-term goal that needs to be immediately addressed with manageable tasks. Much of the leadership are in their final year at BGSU, and to establish a permanent presence, Transcendence is focusing on leadership development this year.

Transcendence also sees one of their short term goals for this year as improving relations with the GLBT community and women's studies groups like owe. Ms. Ryan is committed to the belief that the Transcendence must "build bridges" to groups that are interested in GLBT issues if they are to thrive.

The future isn't going to be easy for Transcendence. They have committed to huge goals. But they have managed to promote manageable tasks to achieve these goals. Most importantly, Transcendence has a heartfelt commitment to their cause. They are passionate about the right to choose your identity. They are passionate about the right to live your chosen life without fear or isolation. This passion is their greatest asset.
How to Kiss an Obsessive Compulsive Lesbian

By Loren Wood, Undergraduate in Film Department

I quote Ingrid Bergman in 1943’s “For Whom the Bell Tolls”:

“I don't know how to kiss, or I would kiss you. Where do the noses go?”

Well, honey, about a quarter of MY nose went on the OR floor after a surgeon chopped it off. So you see, there’s a little less of me to go around, but I’m still gonna spread it. Around. Myself. I’m going to spread myself around. And in the process I will give you the privilege of sharing my wisdom of canoodling. Nose-placement included. Unfortunately for Ingrid, it wasn’t until 40 years later that I was even around to aid in her kissing quandary. But there is hope for all of you. Dig this:

I am an unrepentant tonsil-knocker. Can you say “deep-throat”? I’ll just about tickle your epiglottis. If you don’t know what that is, then I don’t think you should kiss me. But I really won’t be too picky. Okay, well, for your sake it’s the flap in your throat that divides your oral cavity from the rest of your esophagus; it opens and closes when you swallow, and when I had an eating disorder, I would shove my entire forearm down my throat and grab it. Isn’t that fun?

Seriously, let’s break it down now:

Position of noses is going to be a piece of pie for you [. . .]. You stand facing me so our noses are absolutely parallel, and our eyes are absolutely parallel (if one drew an invisible line through our pupils), and then our eyes and our noses would be absolutely perpendicular (but not really because of physical asymmetry in human faces, especially mine); and then you tilt your head at about a fifteen- to twenty-degree angle opposite from mine (because I calculated this based on the width of my tip cartilages in relation to the sharp angle of my zygomatic bone which is approximately forty-five degrees, and the depth of lip fleshiness I create when I put that orbicularis oris in gear). And then, babe, all you do is pucker up and go in for the kill, and our noses won’t collide.

Embracing the Grey

By Bethany Nanamaker, Queer Query Editor

No body wants to admit it, so I'll just say it: bisexuality confuses the hell out of the rest of the queer community. And, for that matter, the heterosexual community too. No worries, it confuses me too and I am a practicing bisexual. After all, we are trained to think in either/ors. Either we like chocolate OR vanilla, cats OR dogs, men OR women.

The famous Kinsey report that suggested TRUE heterosexuality and TRUE homosexuality is actually limited and that most of us have a degree of attraction to both sexes is no longer vogue. It has been replaced by the Sex and the City ideology, “I’m not even sure bisexuality exists. I think it's just a layover on the way to gaytown.” Or as the familiar saying goes, “you're either gay, straight, or lying.”

Like most stereotypes, the layover position has elements of truth. The title “bisexual” has and continues to encompass the attitudes: 1) “I’m a homo in the closet taking baby-steps” and 2) “Meh. It’s college. I’m drunk and feeling experimental.”

With the prevalence of these attitudes in my everyday interactions, I started to doubt my own conviction as a bisexual. Maybe I am really just gay, I thought. Then I was reintroduced to Susan Sontag, a thoughtful writer from the 20th century. Sontag, who identified as bisexual all her life, was able posthumously restore my faith in bisexuality.

I'll be the first to admit that bisexuality may not be as firm a ground as homosexuality or heterosexuality. But isn't that firmness, that certainty, the very attitude we fear in the anti-queer frontliners? How often are we reminded that while black and white worldviews are comfortably certain, the grey is usually more accurate?

Want to read the article that renewed my faith in the legitimacy of my greyness? Check out the September 10th New York Times Magazine which shared a number of Sontag’s journal entries of Susan Sontag.

Here’s a taste of the honesty—the humanity—that attracted me to Sontag:

Continued on page 6
The Queer Query Interviews . . .

Jacqueline Nathan, Gallery Director

By Bethany Nanamaker, Queer Query Editor

On September 17th, the BGSU Fine Arts Center closes one of its first exhibitions of the 2006-2007 academic year. The show was entitled “Jake in Transition from Female to Male” and the artist was photographer Clarissa Sligh. The exhibition documented the physical, emotional, medical, psychological, and social transition of Deb to Jake through a series of sexual reassignment surgeries. As Sligh’s work travels to a new gallery, the Queer Query is interested as to the mark it left on Bowling Green State University and the surrounding communities. Answering our questions about the impact of “Jake-In-Transition” is the gallery director of the Fine Arts Center, Jacqueline Nathan.

Queer Query: Ms. Nathan, first of all, I am interested as to how “Jake-In-Transition” was selected to come to the Fine Arts Center. What is the process of selecting a traveling exhibition? What inspired you to choose Clarissa Sligh’s art?

Jacqueline Nathan: The process of selecting exhibitions begins with our Mission Statement, to seek “excellence, collaboration, diversity and outreach…to stimulate and educate artists and art audiences, communicate ideas, and promote the vitality and significance of the arts.” As the Gallery Director, it is part of my job to research available shows, and recommend them based on our mission, but also on such factors as cost - it costs thousands of dollars to bring in an exhibition - security requirements and availability. Clarissa Sligh’s show is circulated by the Visual Studies Workshop in Buffalo, New York, and I was intrigued when I found it advertised. After looking at the images, finding out about the artist’s credentials, and the availability of the show, I recommended it to the Advisory Board because of my respect for the artist, for its high quality, diversity and social themes, and its probability of stimulating discussion and thinking about the visual arts in contemporary society.

Continued on page 8
“Embracing” continued from page 4

“My desire to write is connected with my homosexuality. I need the identity as a weapon, to match the weapon that society has against me.

It doesn’t justify my homosexuality. But it would give me — I feel — a license.

I am just becoming aware of how guilty I feel being queer. With H.[Harriet], I thought it didn’t bother me, but I was lying to myself. I let other people believe that it was H. who was my vice, and that apart from her I wouldn’t be queer or at least not mainly so.

. . .

Being queer makes me feel more vulnerable.”

Susan Sontag, Dec. 24 1959

Quote adapted from NYtimes.com
http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/10/magazine/10sontag.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

“Worker” continued from page 3

In his Aug. 21 decision, Civil Rights Division Director Wendell Pryor agreed Cornwell was fired because she was a woman said the evidence did not support the company's claims. He said no other employees doing similar work were fired.

“Given this, it appears that the (company's) decision to discharge (Cornwell) was based on her gender -- female,” Pryor wrote.

Intermountain Testing President Gary Bollerud did not return a call. His attorney, John Husband, declined to comment.

The ruling means Cornwell and representatives of her former employer will meet in October to try to agree on a resolution, her attorney, John Hummel, said Thursday. Cornwell said she would not seek her job back. Hummel said such cases typically are resolved with a cash settlement.

“The well's been poisoned,” Cornwell said.

Hummel, who works for the Legal Initiatives Project of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center of Colorado, said it was gratifying that the agency did not find the case controversial.

"Maybe that's a sign of progress in society in beginning to understand transgender people more than they had before," he said.

Taken From the New York Times, 09/15/06

“Compulsive Lesbian” continued from page 4

All the Ingrids of the world, do you know where to put your haaaaands? If you’re me, then perhaps they would delicately cup each cheek, or each breast, or go on your back, or belly, or ass, or waist, or shoulders, or thighs, or maybe everything all at once in a whirlwind of passionate groping. I know how to frisk. Please frisk me.

Close your eyes for f***'s sake while you do all of this. Because otherwise... it's weird

I also really like lipstick and flavoured lip gloss. For you, not me.

So it's easy. All you really need is a protractor and a pair of lips. Maybe if you’re lucky I’ll give you a lesson on other tricks of the trade. But I only do this by private instruction...
“While the gay male and female dinosaurs were very productive,” says leading paleontologist Michael Smitts, “they weren’t very re-productive. Instead of producing offspring, it appears the gay male dinosaurs spent most of their time building and decorating shelters, making dinosaur art, and doing philanthropic activities to help underprivileged dinosaurs. The gay female dinosaurs, on the other hand, appear to have spent most of their time running the dinosaur government, and talking about their feelings.”

Eventually, says Smitts, there just weren’t enough dinosaurs reproducing to keep the species going. “In the dinosaurs’ case,” says Smitts, “they were literally ‘too gay to function.’”

New information has come to light, however, that illuminates the sexual diversity of dinosaurs, and provides another explanation for their demise: that the dinosaurs were gay. Or more accurately, too gay.

Recent discoveries and advances in genetic testing have led some scientists to theorize that a freak mutation in the dinosaurs’ genes may have resulted in a steady increase in the percentage of dinosaurs born with same-sex attraction, until there were far more gay dinosaurs than the species could tolerate.
Q. Q.: As you saw the exhibition become a reality, did you have any hopes or goals regarding the communities’ reactions to exhibition?

J.N.: I think it is of the utmost importance to promote understanding and acceptance of the differences among us. It is my hope that this exhibit provided a way to access the thoughts and feelings of one individual going through an experience that seems very foreign to the great majority. My goal was that our visitors, in seeing the images and reading the texts – both Jake's and Clarissa's, would connect with some of the very human, psychological and social feelings of difference, self-examination and change, even if they had trouble with the subject.

Q. Q.: “Jake-in-Transition” has the potential to stir quite a controversy; the photographs are very frank and no aspect of the sex change seems to go undocumented. Moreover, transsexuality is not subject-matter that is frequently discussed outside the GBLTQ-A community. Did you have any concerns about hosting this exhibition?

J.N.: Of course I had some concerns; however, I think it is the job of a university art gallery – of a university, for that matter – to expose its students and audiences to the consideration of new ideas, alternative ways of thinking and challenging intellectual experiences. By encouraging participation from other divisions and organizations on campus, the exhibition became a fertile source for class discussion and student engagement.

The artist's explanations of her difficulty, as a straight African American, documenting Jake’s transformation, also helped audiences to deal with their own discomfort.

Q. Q.: Over all, how would you characterize the communities’ responses to “Jake-In-Transition” exhibition and its corresponding programs?

J.N.: I have been very pleased so far with the broad utilization of this exhibition as a teaching tool in several classes, with the programming and the general community response to an admittedly difficult subject. I was very grateful for financial support from the community, including the Ohio Arts Council, the BGSU Ethnic Cultural Arts Program, the John Domrose Foundation for Personal Rights, the Women’s Center, Transcendence and the Photography Division.

Q.Q.: Not surprisingly, we over at the LGBTQ-A Resource Center were thrilled to see an exhibition that’s related to LGBT issues, particularly trans issues. Can we hope for more GLBT related artwork or artists in the future?

J.N.: The Galleries will continue to seek out exhibitions that meet our mission, goals and objectives. Since among those objectives are ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as political and social themes, it’s quite likely that other issues of interest to the LGBT community will be addressed at some point in future exhibitions.

---

What’s Happening at BGSU?

- Vision (BGSU's GLBTIQSS Organization) Meetings: Tuesdays 9:00 p.m. in 107 Hanna Hall
- Transcendence (BGSU's Transgender Support, Visibility, and Advocacy Organization): September 29th 7:00 p.m. in 107 Hanna Hall.
- First Year Success Series: “Coming Out at BGSU” Sept. 27th, 7:00 p.m. Harshman Community Room
- First Year Success Series: “They Call Me ‘Lesbian:’ Stereotypes of Female Athletes.” Oct. 4th, 6:00 p.m. Offenhauer East room 105
- First Year Success Series: “The Locker Room Closet: Gay Men and Sports.” Oct. 16th, 7:00 p.m. McDonald Hall 70.
- First Year Success Series: “My Best Friend Just Came Out.” Oct 17th, 4:00 p.m. Kreischer-Ashley Activity Room