

Calling All Those with Queer Sensibilities!

From CT and Beyond!

QUEERS WITHOUT BORDERS is Going to Print Again and We NEED YOUR HELP!!

In Connecticut (as with most places throughout the world) there is a decided lack of queer voices in media. In Hartford, this often seems doubly the case. We house a blog site at <http://queerswithoutborders.com/wpmu> but want to add queer voices to print media (especially in the greater Hartford area) to provide an alternative to the politics-as-usual approach of existing publications geared toward the LGBT community (and beyond!).

With this in mind, WE NEED YOUR HELP!!! This is a call for submissions to our THIRD print publication, *queer voices*. Send us your stories, poems, comics, etc. (the sky would be the limit, if we believed in such things as "limits"). We are especially looking for pieces that outline personal experiences with queer identity, politics, theory, and practice.

As well, we seek submissions that take note of the intersections between the politics of sexuality, race, class, gender, nation of origin, ability, age, and any host of stuff that are way over-simplified and organized into some really stupid categories. After all, none of this stuff exists without some kind of overlap with the others, and talking about one means talking about all of them (even when ignored, what goes unsaid is often as telling as what is actually articulated)!

Submissions should be emailed to queerswithoutborders@gmail.com by July 1st, 2009.

Thank you for your time and submissions! Projects like this cannot exist without the active involvement of many! We need YOU! We need each other!

Yours in solidarity: Queers without Borders!

WHAT NORMAL?!

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queer voices editorial

by m(A)tt



This season marks an important turning point for Queers Without Borders and the LGBT/Queer movement in general. June 28th 1969 saw the Gay Liberation movement spark in front of the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, touching off several days of large-scale street battles against an abusive police force that had taken the weakness of the queer community for granted. Contrary to the lies peddled in the hipster bar rag *Metrolite*, there were trannies, cross-dressers and all sorts of weirdos who fought back then, just as we are all fighting back today.

In several states, including Connecticut, same-sex couples now have the right to get legally married. The well-funded non-profit Love Makes a Family has declared its intention to fold, seemingly with the belief that the fight is over and we have won. For some of us, marriage was never anything more than a very small battle on the long road to liberation. At best, it's a



D u n a m a i :
<http://www.dunamai.org/>
related article that mentions MHC's involvement in

e x - g a y w o r k
<http://www.ecinc.org/RealChanges.htm>

“Our culture is permeated with sexual imagery. Magazine racks offer pictures of girls in teensy bikinis. Primetime situation comedies almost continually revolve around sexual storylines involving teenage promiscuity, extra-marital affairs, homosexuality and worse.”

“At times, a pastor or counselor may very well find himself helping men who frequent adult bookstores, strip clubs, massage parlors and prostitutes. On occasion, he may also be compelled to minister to men involved with peeking in windows, exposing themselves to women, making obscene telephone calls, sexually assaulting others, or even having sex with animals. He will most certainly deal with promiscuity—among teenagers and adults. More than likely he will minister to homosexuals—both male and female.”

What did Bash Back! hope to accomplish? Why these shocking tactics?

There were a few main points and goals of this action:

* To confront the oppressors that run the church and show them some of us are unafraid and will resist them. Calling them out IN FRONT of their congregation was an important part of that. Showing that we are angry with their destructive behavior was also an important part of the message.

* To provide a space for those who had been mentally tortured by MHC and other places similar to confront their “demons” and fight back! Their emotional health was a very real concern of this action.

* To show the youth we are not alone! With an action of great energy and helpful fliers we wanted to send a message of acceptance and understanding. We realize that thinking you might be queer in a church like that is terrifying. And unbearably lonely. By tossing out a thousand flyers we provided a way “out”. Or at least planted the seed.

* And to generate visibility to Bash Back!! To build momentum and give us energy to our movement. I think we nailed that one.

completely that they grow to hate themselves and/or act out against or ignore their spouses and families. This church is nothing short of a disease in the community, and in the minds of those who attend.

“D-willy”, Pastor of Mount Hope, (and personal enemy of Bash Back!) stated that he did not “choose to identify MHC as anti-choice”. However, every Halloween the Church puts on the heavily p r o t e s t e d “Hell House”, an extremely offensive and yes RADICAL approach to shock people into their right wing belief structure. One of the rooms within this Hell House completely inaccurately depicts a womyn receiving an abortion. In the act, the doctor uses dirty tools, and horrible machine sounds play over loud speakers. With the presence of demons, and her screams of pain, one leaves feeling like they just witnessed a most violent atrocity. How is this not a c t i v e l y a n t i - c h o i c e ?

Another important reason that MHC was chosen, was the deep personal tie many organizers have to the church. Some members of Bash Back! have been members of MHC. Others were raised in evangelical churches very similar in message and method. For them, this was a liberating step. A personal confrontation with those who had made the journey to adulthood and personal identity a struggle wrought with self-hate, repression, guilt and loneliness. All of which eventually evolved into healthy anger, strength, free sexual expression, and a c t i v i s m . This has helped to build a strong community within Bash Back! And we support their choice to confront those that would choose to put them back in that dark place of self-hate!

From here I could go into all the other reasons MHC should be confronted. For example, the undeniable fact that mega-churches are really just big business. Seen by the way they pressure their “congregation” (or audience) to buy their books and D V D s a n d o t h e r product. Or the incredible amount of money grossed by that church in a year. Another reason is the international church plantings. MHC has no regard for indigenous culture. There are dozens of reasons we c h o s e M o u n t H o p e C h u r c h .

R e l a t e d l i n k s :

L . I . F . E . M i n i s t r i e s :
<http://www.freedomeveryday.org/men/index.php>

P u r e L i f e m i n i s t r i e s :
<http://www.purelifeministries.org/>

reform that makes it easier for long-term partners to share insurance plans and reap other financial benefits for fitting into normal society. At its worst, marriage is one more step away from our fighting, uncontrollable movements of the past that struck fear into the hearts of the right-wing and the entire establishment.

Included in this issue is a new QWB mission statement with the title, “This document is queer as fuck.” In the past several years of its existence, QWB has worked hard to carve out a unique space here in Connecticut for those of us who can never be defined by the tiny rich white elite at the top of the big non-profits--not Love Makes a Family, not True Colors, not the Human Rights Campaign. Over the past year, we’ve been grappling with the fact that we honestly just don’t know how many of us non-conforming queers are out there. So we’ve set out to try and connect with the queer masses and build a broad front without any “borders” whatsoever.

The document on page 11 is a collaborative effort, and will continue to be edited and changed for as long as we find it useful. It is one step in a strategy to grow QWB from a small collective into a larger organization based in as many different communities as possible. “Queer as fuck” can be considered an invitation, an introduction, a love letter or a declaration of war, depending on who happens to be reading it. The process of writing and distributing it gives us a chance to let you know who we are, and it helps us figure that out for ourselves too.

queer voices is produced by
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(mal)Contents

Boston confronts “ex-gay” scammers.....4

Thoughts on allies and queer theory.....8

“This document is queer as fuck”.....11

“You’re Such a Dickhead: Phallusies About Lesbian Sex”.....13

Tyranny of the State and Trans Liberation.....15

Russian Gay Pride March Broken Up by Cops...18

Bash Back! Communiqué About Protest Action at Right-Wing Church.....20

“Soap Dispensers”
by Allison Wonderland

I have no regard for Danger signs
Or ones that that warn Keep Out
I use the men’s room whenever the ladies’ one is full
Or just because I feel like it
I am Miss and Ms. and Mr. and Mrs.
Sir and Ma’am and It
What are you?
Labels are for soap dispensers
M or F?
What’s the difference?
Fuck gender Genderfuck Gender is fucked up
It defines me and maligns me and confines me
So I am he or she and not me
Pick one – either, or
Neither, nor
No, pick *one*, *pick one*
Like I have a choice in this or a voice in this
Wasn’t it decided for me?
Not allowed to consent, not allowed to dissent
Fuck gender Genderfuck Gender is fucked up
What are you?
Labels are for soap dispensers
M or F?
What’s the difference?
Pick one
Danger
Pick one
Keep Out

<http://aisforallison.blogspot.com>

Bash Back! Lansing: Why We Chose Mount Hope Church

W h a t w a s t h a t n o i s e ! ?

Bash Back! responds to the backlash
B a s h B a c k N e w s . w o r d p r e s s . c o m

In the past weeks there has been an unprecedented amount of controversy and reaction to the Bash Back! action at Mount Hope Church, in Lansing Michigan. Thanks to the media (who have failed to cover this with any amount of effort or concern for the truth), as well as incessant blogging. Many important pieces of information have been lost, and at times, changed completely. We would like to set some things ... “straight”! In order to provide a full explanation, we will break this into parts.

- * Why Mount Hope Church?
- * Why these tactics and what did we hope to accomplish?
- * Dispelling myths.

W h y M o u n t H o p e C h u r c h ?

The first issue we would like to address is the nationally wide-spread question of, “Why Mount Hope Church?” (MHC) Good question. The first thing to realize is we did not just randomly pick a place, nor did we pick the biggest place. A lot of issues went into our decision; I will discuss the major ones: First, MHC’s stance on queer identities. In their recent press release, Dave Williams (or D-Willy as we affectionately refer to him) states that they simply see being gay as a sin equal to an other, such as, lying or stealing. This is a sneaky way of getting off the hook. You can see for yourself that they take it much more seriously. According to one of MHC nearly all forms of sexual expression (and specifically homosexuality) are considered “sexual addiction”. Openly lumping homo’s in with such sinners as peeping-Toms, flashers and even rapists!!! These “addictions” they work to “cure” through strict “support groups” such as Dunamai (see web link at bottom). And at times even send men to live in brainwashing camps such as Pure Life Ministries (see bottom). They also organize with other ex-gay organizations such as Love in Action, Homosexuals Anonymous, and L.I.F.E. Ministries. It is clear that MHC takes an active approach to repress queer identity and all forms of sexual expression out side of the Christian, straight, married and husband controlled structure. This ruins people’s whole lives and families by making them repress their desires so

Fedotova-Fet attempted to register a same-sex marriage with her girlfriend Tuesday.

Another female protester, Ksenia Prilepskaya, was dragged into a police van; her clothes were roughly pulled off by OMON troops and her glasses were broken. The organizers' web site, Gayrussia.ru, reported Sunday that she had suffered a suspected concussion.

A police spokesman said about 40 people were arrested around the city, both at Vorobyovy Gory and at Novopushkinsky Skver.

Prilepskaya said Saturday afternoon that she was being held at the Ramenki police station with 32 people, including Tatchell, Thayer, Alexeyev and 10 to 15 Belarussians.

The Belarussians were freed at about 2 a.m. Seven others were still held after that, including Alexeyev.

Alexeyev told The Moscow Times that he was freed at about noon Sunday after being held for almost 24 hours. He will go to court on May 26 on charges of organizing an illegal protest, he said. The other protesters were fined 500 to 1,000 rubles (\$17 to \$34).

Alexeyev said he was held separately from the other protesters and interrogated for six hours by FSB officers.

"They insulted me in all possible ways," he said, adding that they used homophobic insults and psychological pressure but no physical violence.

Boston Bashes Back Against Exodus

by Dykonoclast

At 9AM on Tuesday April 28th, somewhere between 50-70 people came to the iconic Park Street Church across from Boston Common to attend an Exodus Ministries training. Attendees watched a video wherein 'former homosexuals' and 'former lesbians' spoke of the power of god to heal 'sexual brokenness' and restore heterosexual desires to the most fallen of souls. During the 'male homosexuality' portion of the training, 'former homosexual' Jeff Buchanan shared his experience of having turned from his homosexual past, as well as the causes of male homosexuality, which include resentment of male authority and lack of bonding with fathers. This had been going on for quite some time when Jason Lydon, pastor of the Community Church of Boston, whom the event organizers had foolishly invited, stood up and informed the attendees of their culpability in the suicides of two eleven year old boys in April 2009, both prompted by anti-gay bullying. As security moved to stop him from distributing 'JESUS WAS GAY' flyers, he continued, 'If Jesus Christ walked into this church today, he would overturn your tables because you have turned his house into a den of thieves!' As he was removed from the building, attendees' ears rang with the echo of, 'GOD LOVES QUEEEERS!'

Attendees were very shaken indeed, with one calling for a prayer to refocus the event, which continued. After Buchanan, Melanie Spinks, a 'former lesbian,' took the lectern to address the essence of womanhood, the causes of 'female homosexuality,' and which profiles of women tend to struggle with same-sex attraction. Event-goers had just been informed that lesbians can be attractive when an attractive young woman stood, declared her rejection of Exodus Ministries and her affection for another young woman two tables away. The two ran to each other in an affectionate, snogular embrace,



held hands and skipped out the door before security could reach them. Ever mischievous, the two ran around back outside the giant window of the conference room, bringing them into the Granary Burying Ground, final resting place of such patriarchs as Paul Revere, Samuel Adams and John Hancock, visiting place of hordes of schoolchildren. What better setting to engage in gratuitous homoerotic c a n o o d l i n g ?

It is not known to the authors what transpired in the conference room after this, as, to the best of their knowledge, all radical queers had excised themselves from the training at this point in the p r o g r a m .

So what is Exodus Ministries? According to their website, 'Exodus is a nonprofit, interdenominational Christian organization promoting the message of Freedom from homosexuality through the power of Jesus Christ.' Yes, they're awful, but perhaps not quite in the way an outsider might envision. Exodus? Fred Phelps; these folks are incredibly polite and sweet, diverse and intergenerational, and they are convinced that they love all us rug munchers and peter puffers. In fact, they are 'former homosexuals' themselves. They reject a surprising number of harmful notions, though, as might be expected, they have their own set of harmful notions with which to replace them. They teach that attraction is involuntary and 'homosexuality meets legitimate emotional needs.' Naturally, however, they believe that same-sex pairings are 'illegitimate' and 'wrong' ways to meet these legitimate needs, and teach that all people can and should engage in none but the most godly, heteromonogamarital sexual relationships. It is not surprising that Exodus and other ex-gay ministries frequently drive their quarries into suicide, a phenomenon well enough known that it made its way o n t o S o u t h P a r k .

As the conference disrupters sat on the Common and reflected on what had transpired inside, they marveled how vitally crucial a monomaniacal insistence on gender binarism was to Exodus' concerns; while the two are not mutually exclusive, gender conformity nevertheless seemed to be elevated above sexual conformity on their list of priorities. Exodus' discussion of the causes of homosexual behavior involved parental influences and the centrality of male authority. Melanie Spinks explained that fathers should always approach their daughters; for a girl to approach a man and to take initiative is a masculine trait and she might grow up with an appetite for box lunch. Jeff Buchanan nauseated the radical queers when he insisted that the

Russia: Police Forcefully Break Up Gay Rights Protest

Slavic Pride takes place for the first time

By Anna Malpas, *The Moscow Times*

An attempted gay rights protest on Saturday was swiftly broken up by OMON troops, who dragged protesters into police vans.

More than 30 protesters were detained, including Peter Tatchell, a prominent British gay rights activist, Andy Thayer, an activist from Chicago's Gay Liberation Network, and the organizer, Nikolai Alexeyev.

The unsanctioned protest, called Slavic Pride, was originally announced as taking place at Novopushkinsky Skver in central Moscow, but organizers changed the location at the last moment to the Vorobyovy Gory viewpoint near Moscow State University, a popular spot for wedding photographs.

Police learned of the plans and detained almost half the activists as they arrived at about noon, organizers said. More than 30 OMON troops turned up, in at least three vans.

A handful of protesters including Tatchell and Edvard Murzin, a heterosexual human rights activist, unfurled banners and shouted slogans including, "No compromises! Equal rights! Homophobia is a national disgrace!" Minutes later, OMON troops hurled themselves through a hedge and grabbed protesters, including Tatchell, who was dragged to the ground. As Tatchell was bundled into a police car, he called out, "Russian people don't have freedom."

The protest was filmed by television crews, including state-financed Russia Today.

The OMON troops were "needlessly violent," Tatchell said Sunday. "I had my arm badly twisted up behind my back and they also twisted my wrist ... causing extreme pain."

Tatchell was taken to the Ramenki police station but released without charges later Saturday after a British Embassy official arrived and Tatchell displayed a press pass, he said.

Organizer Alexeyev arrived separately, walking arm in arm with a drag queen in a wedding dress. Two burly OMON officers began questioning him. Alexeyev asked what offense he was committing, and one said, "We have reason to think that you are going for a walk with a man dressed up as a woman." Minutes later, both were detained. The man in drag threw his bouquet at a plainclothed official.

The OMON went on to pick up protesters including Irina Fedotova-Fet and Thayer, both of whom were standing alone and talking to journalists.

society. However, over the years I have become more aware that my and our communities' assimilation is simply subordinating our identities and our essence to the State. In return we are "allowed" to live within the margins of this society, especially if we are not able to "present" within the acceptable boundaries. I must admit that many of us, especially those of my age, struggle with a 1950's societal mentality that was engrained within the deep recesses of our brains as we were young. Yet I also feel and know that I will not be truly liberated in my gender identity until I personally can liberate myself from subordination to society and to empower my individuality.

For many reasons, I am a strong believer of civil disobedience and direct action ~ when the cause and reasons are just. However the fear of challenging the State as a non-operative trans person was a significant challenge and barrier to putting my beliefs into actions. Yet my heart and soul told me that my not acting upon my beliefs was simply allowing the State to control my individual expression preventing my rebellion to a system that works to subjugate my individual identity. I actually needed to go through a year or two process of dealing with this conscious and subconscious fear of being controlled by the system. And it turned out through a long and convoluted process; I was able to put my individual beliefs ahead of those of submission to, and fear of, the State's total control of my gender identity. Oddly, one night before an affinity group and I were to risk arrest shutting down a Government Building in New York, a dear friend and I saw the opening of V for Vendetta. And for me the transformation of Evey Hammond was so pivotal to my personal transformation. For those not familiar with Evey's transformation, I paste the following from a wiki on V (though in reality one needs to see this transformation for words do not convey the essence of the struggle):

In her cell between multiple bouts of interrogation and torture, Evey finds a letter from an inmate named Valerie, an actress who was imprisoned for being a lesbian. Evey's interrogator finally gives her a choice of collaboration or death; inspired by Valerie's courage and quiet defiance, she refuses to give in and is told that she is free. To her shock, Evey learns that her imprisonment was a hoax constructed by V, designed to put her through an ordeal similar to the one that shaped him. He reveals that Valerie was another Larkhill prisoner who died in the cell next to his; the letter that Evey read is the same one that Valerie had passed on to V. Evey's anger finally gives way to acceptance of her identity and freedom.

At any rate these are my thoughts to what over the years I am confidently coming to believe is a critical dialogue on the path to realizing complete "Trans Liberation."

role of a father is to impart masculinity to male children and to affirm femininity in female children. He recommended that fathers take their daughters on dates, tell them they're beautiful, that they're princesses. It was a strange, alternate universe wherein fundamentalist Christians proclaim radical feminist assertions, here eerily echoing Twisty of I Blame the Patriarchy who once wrote, 'Masculinity is what [men] do to keep women feminized. Femininity is what women do to keep from being pathologized, criminalized, ostracized, jailed, raped, and butchered.'

'If gender roles are so natural,' queried a disrupter, 'why do they need to work so hard to make sure people fit into them?' Exodus' hatred of women was on abundant display throughout the session. In proclaiming his own heterosexual success, Jeff Buchanan drew attention to 'his' wife staffing the check-in table and, speaking in the imperative, demanded, 'Wave, honey!' While male-perpetuated abuse featured prominently in their discussions as causes or galvanizing influences of homosexuality, they presented absolutely no analysis, systemic or otherwise, on why men feel entitled to the bodies of children or women. Melanie Spinks proclaimed gender essentializing stereotypes as fact, averring that 'relationship is essential to femaleness,' further insisting that this is a 'gift, not a weakness.' On the value of women, Spinks asserted, 'There is not a woman on earth who can give you a sense of identity, purpose and security.'

Between the sections on male and female homosexuality, national speakers stepped down and allowed local queer-hatin orgs to speak. One such, the Massachusetts Family Institute, had their white cotton panties in a twist over a bill pending in the Massachusetts state legislature, An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes. This bill aims to include gender identity and expression in Massachusetts' non-discrimination statute and amend existing hate crime laws to include trans and gender variant folks. Inexplicably, our fundy friends and media have termed it 'The Bathroom Bill,' shrieking that, if this bill passes, men will be able to go into women's bathrooms and rape the shit out of everyone inside. We hate to break it to them, but, as chromosome checks are not in place outside public facilities, there is currently nothing stopping men from doing this as things now stand. Meanwhile, as much as these radical queers support whatever it takes to end discrimination against trans and gender non-conforming people, we cannot support hate crimes legislation. To quote the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, 'Rather than serving as protection for oppressed people, the hate crimes portion of this law may expose

our communities to more danger—from prejudiced institutions far more powerful and pervasive than individual bigots.’ Read the whole thing.

The disrupters sat waiting on the Common until, right at noon, protesters showed up from Join the Impact, a pro-marriage LGBT rights group. Choosing a spot on the Common far from Park Street Church, Join the Impact brought signs and chants, delivered through a bullhorn. The three radical queers ran over to join the energetic crowd and tell them of their deeds. Would the disrupters like to speak over the bullhorn? And how! The three took turns attempting to impart a liberationist, pro-feminist, pro-trans message and to encourage the crowd to move closer to the church where they could be heard by Exodus attendees. The leadership’s response was that they had a permit and that the lady trying to talk about trans issues ought to give the bullhorn back. As the protest wore on, the disrupters were disheartened to observe that only cis men were asked/permitted by the leadership to speak over the bullhorn and that they kept to androcentric messages generally. Considering the violent misogyny of Exodus, whom the protest was called to counter, more attention needs to be given to the alarming ways in which gay/queer organizing can replicate the very unsavory power dynamics against which we are struggling. None of us will be free until we are all free. This story has a happy ending, however! After a while, disregarding their leadership, the protesters were enticed by the idea of abandoning their permitted spot and marching over toward Park Street Church where Exodus could hear that they were not welcome in Boston. After a minute or so in front of the church, the crowd was amenable to marching around back into the Granary Burying Ground. There, on the final resting place of Crispus Attucks and Mother Goose, Exodus attendees were forced to hear high-octane, righteous queer rage against their poisonous message. With chants resounding, with sirens wailing, with queer faces peering down at them and cameras snapping at them, a much-shaken Exodus audience sought window coverings. We’ve got news for you, Exodus: we don’t go away when you close your eyes.

*Have you or someone you
know been a victim of the
"ex-gay movement"?
Check out BeyondExGay.com*

The essence of this point was reinforced at a recent demo protesting the hypocrisy of HRC, where one of the chants included the words Fuck You to HRC. Several people, though one in particular asked with all seriousness "Are we allowed to say that?" Then when the first police car came, they were convinced that the police were called because of our using the words Fuck You. And in reality the cops didn't really give a damn what we were chanting about. Clearly on the surface this is all kinda silly and a nit; except for the fact that the reaction and fear of this trans person typifies the implicit warnings of Emma Goldman; that the tyranny, or fear of such tyranny, by the State has such a profound impact on our actions and our behaviors. And this clearly ties in very closely with our goal of achieving true and complete Trans Liberation.

We who defy societies precepts of gender identity and expression challenge, More... at its core, societal, religious and state demands and constructs. Yet sadly I fear that we as a truly inherent revolutionary community will seek the safe route of assimilation; as our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters have done before us. Yet through serious self-reflection, political analysis and dialogue, particularly through an anarchist lens, I postulate that we can avoid the same reformist road that the majorative homosexual movement has been trapped in. To this point, I have remarked over many years how ironic it is that the essence of a transsexual person defies society’s construct of man and woman/masculine and feminine; yet at the same time many in our community work so very hard to subscribe to a binary system that we in our essence defy. Granted this is a complicated analysis and many reasons for so strongly subscribing back to the binaries (major drivers being safety and survival); though at the same time it is something that we as a community and as individuals must seriously challenge.

If we are to liberate society and ourselves from its tyranny against those who traverse gender and sex, we need to ~ no actually we must ~ liberate ourselves from the mental and physical constructs that manipulate us into subordination for the benefit of the "greater good of society, religion and state"

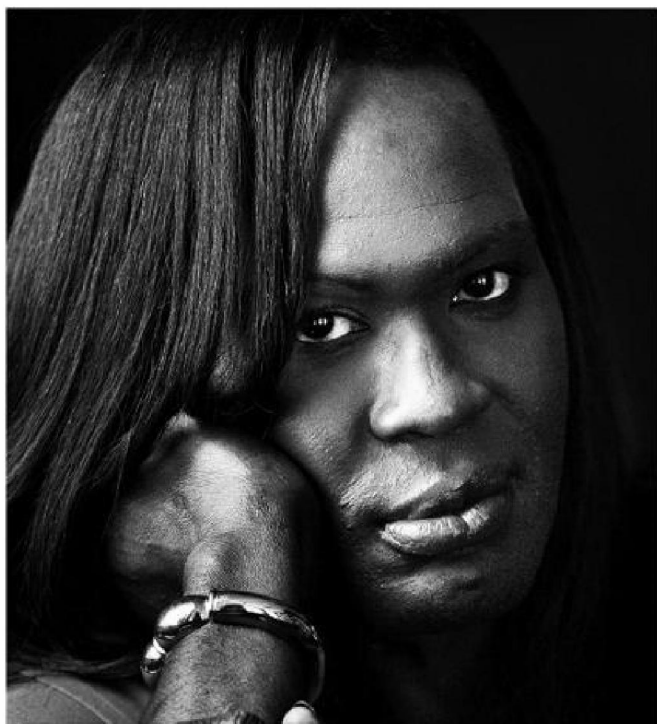
Speaking to the issue of safety, when I embraced my gender identity I lost so many core things in my life. And so I fully understand the need to integrate, or more accurately assimilate into our

Tyranny of the State and Trans Liberation

by jerimarie liesegang of queers without borders

It has become very clear to me over the years that a key tenet to Trans Liberation lies within the liberation of ones self from the tyranny of the State, Religion and Society; and equally important from our own self-imposed tyranny. And with that said, viewing Trans Liberation within an anarchist lens has proven an invaluable vehicle for my analysis. As Emma Goldman so eloquently states in her 1911 essay "Anarchism: What It Really Stands For"

Anarchism is the only philosophy that brings to man the consciousness of himself; which maintains that God, the State, and society are non-existent, that their promises are null and void, since they can be fulfilled only through man's subordination. Anarchism is therefore the teacher of the unity of life; not merely in nature, but in man.



Duanna Johnson

Was a transwoman brutally beaten by Memphis Police officers. When she threatened to sue, she was murdered in November of 2008. Police beat us and kill us in the streets. When will we BASH BACK?

bashbacknews.wordpress.com

My Queer Quandary

By m(A)tt

When I was 16 I attended my first Straight and Gay Alliance (SAGA) meeting, or GSA as it is now known at my former high school, since having the word "Gay" come first is apparently now acceptable to the administration. How far we've come! I was there motivated partly because my new girlfriend identified as bisexual, and partly because of my vaguely socialist, anti-establishment outlook.

My first meeting included me and the club's two faculty advisors. There I found out about Children from the Shadows, now known as the True Colors annual conference. A few days later I was in a car with people I barely knew on the way to the conference (instead of spending the day in school) feeling highly anxious. I had almost no experience with anyone who didn't seem "normal" in terms of gender or sexuality, and summoning the courage to go to a SAGA meeting

... queer is not something you are, but something you do ...

was a difficult task in itself.

Being in that space was a quick and effective remedy against homophobia. So even though my girlfriend dumped me later the next week, I became a SAGA member for the rest of my time in high school. During that time, in a school that had no shortage of heterosexism, I had the luxury of slowly "outing" myself as an ally to the people around me. I personally had very few friends, and no popularity to speak of, so most of the people who mattered to me were either supportive or apathetic. The social penalty of solidarity was pretty minor.

After high school, I became close to a number of queer folks through antiwar activism and other causes, most of whom were MUCH more radical than anything I ever encountered in SAGA, which suited me very well. Because of the personal and political relationships we built, I was always invited and welcome to the meetings that preceded, and eventually became Queers Without Borders. Yet at regional and national meetings of Students for a Democratic Society, I opted to attend the ally "auxiliary" meetings

which introduced new members to queer perspectives and issues, while the Queer Caucus addressed issues of patriarchy and heterosexism within the organization.

More recently, thanks to queer voices contributor Phyllis, I've been exposed to the idea of "queer" as an anti-identity, that is, queer is not something you are, but something you do. So instead of a fixed, unchanging identity with a checklist of how you look, what you feel and what you do--such as being a gay man, a lesbian woman, a post-op trannie, or a straight dude like myself--radical queer theory suggests that a person's gender and sexuality are always changing and defy all imposed labels and expectations.

This all makes a great deal of sense to me, and very consistent with my ideas as a social anarchist--someone who believes in the maximum freedom of expression of all human beings as well as healthy social relations. The question that concerns me however is how I go about reconciling this theory with my own reality as someone who does think of himself as a man, born as a male, with no physical or romantic interest in other men, up to and including this point in my life.

On the one hand, I have never been the victim of violence or discrimination based on how I appear to

... why should I differentiate myself from someone that I am in common struggle with?

strangers. On the other, I have always been queer in the sense of being odd and an outcast. Some of this queerness applies to the kind of guy I am. I'm sensitive, uncompetitive, and really emotional, while men in this society are taught to be very different. Likewise, as I was taught how to be a boy at school and in my family, I was damaged by the hatred and disdain I was shown because of how I expressed myself and how I performed at various activities. I'm 24 now, and I expect to battle the self-hatred I have been taught for much of the rest of my life.

So in a true sense, I'm pretty queer. But what does this mean to my label of "ally"? If I am fighting a

bed? But no one seems to need an instruction manual or a visual aid to answer that one. And it's not because no one is curious. It's not because the idea of two men getting it on is too repulsive to think about. It's because where lesbians are involved, dicks are not, and people haven't quite grasped the concept of phallus-free fucking. There's this enduring belief in our culture that a dick is a vital, indispensable part of sex, that sex isn't "real" unless a penis is present. (In my sophomore year, I would learn that there was a word to debunk this bunk. In fact, there were two words: phallogentric and heterosexist.)

But I didn't need the labels to be able to comprehend the fallacies - or phallusies, if you will - about lesbian sex. I thought of all the dick-shaped devices designed for women. Apparently, I needed a penis in order to have sex, but it was not a requirement that this penis be accompanied by a human male. A freestanding, simulated shaft would suffice, even if it were strikingly similar in color to the mailbox on the corner of the street. In other words, a dick, any dick, was preferable to no dick at all. (But I preferred no dick at all.)

That night, I e-mailed my friend - one, because I felt that he deserved a response, and two, because I was too shy to give him the response in-person. In mailbox-blue font, I wrote:

To answer your question, the lesbian repertoire of sexual apparatuses - clits, tits, and digits - is more than adequate.

The next morning, I had a reply waiting for me:

LOL. Yeah, that makes sense. I feel stupid now, since it's pretty obvious. I'm not sorry that I asked, but I'm sorry if I made you uncomfortable or anything. Anyway, after you left, I was looking stuff up online. Did you know that girls have, like, 8,000 nerve endings in their... clit? 8,000! That's fucking awesome. And it's supposed to be there - the clit, I mean - it's supposed to be there just for... pleasure. That's all it does. It has no other purpose. So, all that stuff about girls having penis envy is bullshit, right? I mean, why don't guys have, like, clit envy or something?

Inquiring minds want to know: Why don't guys have clit envy?

You're Such a Dickhead: Phallusies about Lesbian Sex

by Allison Wonderland

<http://aisforallison.blogspot.com>

Inquiring minds want to know: What do lesbians do in bed?

The first time someone asked me this question, I had no idea how to respond, or if I even should respond, for that matter. It happened during the summer after my first year of college. My friend and I were hanging out at his place, watching *Gremlins* and bickering over gumdrops (he wanted the purple ones, I wanted the purples ones – it's a short, boring story). Anyway, during the scene where Gizmo begins multiplying, my friend turned to me and asked, "What do lesbians do in bed?" He sounded hesitant, his voice halting, the question peppered with "ums" and "uhs," as if he had the hiccups.

I vacillated between blushing and bristling. This from the guy who, when I came out to him the year before, had responded, "Why didn't you tell me sooner? We could've picked up girls together!" Gaping at the television, I attempted to ascertain the connection, however vague, between the furry, seemingly-innocuous creatures onscreen and my friend's probe into Sapphic sex. In the end, I determined that no such connection existed. Still, for some reason, I felt obligated to answer.

I contemplated various responses. I considered a snarky remark, something haughty and condescending, such as, "Use your imagination." Or I could take a more indignant approach, perhaps a huff, followed by a simple, "It's none of your business." I could also take the juvenile route: "Ewww, gross, pervert."

After several minutes had passed and the question remained unanswered, my friend mumbled, "Never mind. I was just curious," and stifled himself with a handful of gumdrops.

"You're such a dickhead," I said, and whacked him on the arm with the underside of the remote.

He exhaled slowly, then chuckled, relieved that I hadn't subjected him to cunt force trauma.

Later, after I'd gone home, I replayed it all in my head: rewind, pause, fast-forward, pause, *ad nauseam*. I wanted to understand exactly what it was about his question that had irked me so much. Just as the neurological wiring in my think tank began to fizzle and short-circuit, I finally figured it out.

Dickhead.

I realized that this question, What do lesbians do in bed?, begs *this* question, What do gay men do in

common problem as a human being who is not "normal" by society's notions of gender, then why should I differentiate myself from someone that I am in common struggle with? For example, in some contexts, I can face the same treatment as someone who, for instance, I am marching alongside in a queer protest--verbal abuse, police brutality, etc. But being in that position is, at this point in my life, still quite optional on my part. I have never been the victim of serious violence except for once, and never have I faced violence motivated by homophobia or transphobia. I have no particular desire to change from a relatively straight appearance in my day-to-day life, aside from liking to wear my hair long. This basic difference in experience between me and someone who experiences daily discrimination and violence, I believe, necessitates a separate label and a different role.

In practice, this means respecting the decisions and autonomy of the "most-affected" in a given situation. In QWB, I'm a full member, and I speak more than others, but this is an organic relationship based around years of common work and a shared politics, where my participation is invited. But even there, I take direction from my friends, and in the interest of full disclosure, I let new folks know that I'm a hetero ally.

Imagine a scenarios, where it's been revealed that I am actually straight, after I have played a significant part in making a decision that had a bigger impact on queer folks than on myself. In such a situation, said person would quite rightfully be offended by my presumptuousness and my lack of honesty.





We are a collective of people with diverse backgrounds, ages, identities and a variety of progressive political outlooks. We are committed to creating a welcoming space for social action with a solid foundation of **respect and compassion**.

We want a free world based on equality, learning and healthy relationships. We believe in each person's right to free expression of gender, sexuality and beyond, based on the desires of the consenting individual, not by other peoples' definitions and prejudices.

We oppose the violence and discrimination in our communities, living spaces, workplaces and schools against anyone regardless of their sexuality, ability, gender, ethnicity, race, spirituality or national origin. We will **NOT tolerate** any effort to terrorize us into submission here in Connecticut, elsewhere in the United States, and around the world--we are here, there, queer and everywhere.

We seek to build grassroots power to directly confront injustice and inequality. We work to create new liberating cultures based on the value of difference, free of domination and ignorance. We oppose self-serving elitist organizations (including LGBT) claiming to speak for everyone and setting the agenda for all. **Fuck those assholes!**

We defend all people against injustice in all its

forms, be it military occupation, police brutality, violent bigotry or corporate tyranny. **We take sides.** We fight for concrete improvements in the quality of life for all poor, working and oppressed people, winning demands from the ruling class. We want Queer Revolution for a better tomorrow.

Like this document, we are all constantly changing; take nothing for granted. We are definitely not normal, we do not seek to be, and we aim to **abolish** the whole idea of normal.

We are queermos, trans people, dykes, fags, bi, boydyke, faygeleh, trannie, gender fuck, boychick, two spirit, andro, genderqueer, feminists, womyn, lesbians, gays, butch, femmes, bdsm perverts, sex workers, bearded ladies, ladyboys, bois, riot grrls, radicals, people living with aids, sluts, bears, cubs, drag performers, tops, bottoms, middles, burlesque all-stars, veganas everywhere, genderqueers, genderfuckers, sluts, poly people, radical cheerleaders, tranarchists, Anarcha-Queers, trannies, fairies, perverts, sex-worker, sex-radicals, pink and black blocers, sex workers, nerds, sluts, artists, organizers, bi boys, ze's per's xe's and they's, dykes, fabulous femmes, crusty punks, tranny-fags, boi-dykes, riot grrls, gender fuckers, sluts. **Help us grow this list.**