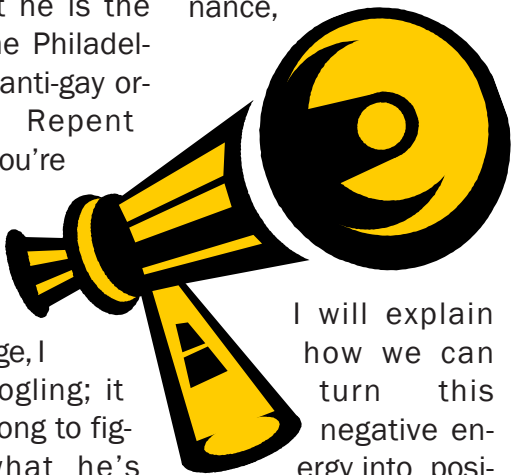


# OUTlines

What's IN for those who are OUT (or not) at Penn December 2005 ~ Vol. 16, No. 2

## Behind the Bullhorn

Michael Marcavage has received due notoriety in our community. I won't waste much time with background information, but he is the leader of the Philadelphia based anti-gay organization Repent America. If you're not up to speed on the events following Mr. Marcavage, I suggest googling; it won't take long to figure out what he's about.



does to LGBT persons is inexcusable, but if you will allow me some room for paradox and a little cognitive dissonance,

I will explain how we can turn this negative energy into positive energy.

But I am not going to use this space to talk about the wrongs committed against our community by this group and others like it; there is plenty to read from that perspective. Instead, I'm going to look behind the bullhorn to see what our community can learn from Mr. Marcavage. I implore you to keep reading, though. This is not an excuse or justification for Marcavage's actions, but an exercise in looking in the mirror. What Repent America

You see, Michael Marcavage and I have something in common: we are both victims of misinformation. This misinformation is comprised of the stereotypes and myths surrounding the LGBT community as a whole. The difference between him and me is that I remain a victim and he has become a victimizer. For Marcavage, it causes a spiritual and social withdrawal from people like myself and inhibits his growth as

an integrated human being. For myself, I become a target of spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional violence which inhibited my growth.

But, I have the upper hand; I know the misinformation by which these people operate. Through years of study, spiritual practice, and healing, I have begun liberation from pain. Part of this process involved coming out and finding a group of supportive friends, but it only begins there. Many people still struggle with internalized homophobia and self

loathing, making them more susceptible to bigotry. Doubt and fear pervade causing people to pull inward and stunt growth.

Yet, I nor anyone can expect people to light the darkness of the closet immediately. It is a journey through which everyone travels at a different pace; and even I struggle sometimes to light every corner of the closet. This is why a supportive, respectful community is so important; it builds a frame around us on foundations of brick and stone

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### Inside Look

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# QPenn Planning Afoot

QPenn planning is happening! We realize many of you have not been apprised of the current situation so we hope this story can be an update and invitation to future meetings. Also, mark your calendars for QPenn, March 21-28, 2006!

There are significant changes this year to planning organization and how we expect groups, events planners, and individuals to communicate with us. Below is a list of some changes in the way things are being handled this year:

- centralization of all information through the QPenn Planning Website <[www.vpul.upenn.edu/lgbtc/qpenn/](http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lgbtc/qpenn/)>

- committees used to plan Advertising/Publicity, Keynote Speaker and/or Entertainer, Rally, and Supplement

- group representatives and liaisons to resource centers to increase accountability and consolidate information

- each event has one person through which updates and questions can be directed to increase

accountability and information flow

- each event must keep the QPenn Planning Committee apprised of progress through general meetings or co-chairs, if we do not hear about an event it may be cancelled due to non-communication

## Next Steps

**-Groups (Grad and Undergrad):** please pick a representative and tell Kathy <[ktotoki@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:ktotoki@sas.upenn.edu)> and Phil <[cochetti@gmail.com](mailto:cochetti@gmail.com)> who it is. Representatives do not need to attend all planning meetings but do need to keep the Planning Committee up-to-date on events the group would like to hold through the Co-Chairs if they cannot come. If a group does not

have a representative or is out of communication with the planning committee, the event is in jeopardy.

**-Individuals:** if you are unable to make the committee meetings but would like to have your input heard feel free to contact Kathy <[ktotoki@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:ktotoki@sas.upenn.edu)> and Phil <[cochetti@gmail.com](mailto:cochetti@gmail.com)> to include your business. This can be asking us to read an e-mailed statement or by giving us a general sentiment of the type of events you'd like to see. An individual can hold an event even if he/she/ze can't attend planning meetings, he/she/ze would just need to be in communication with the Co-Chairs.

**-Event Ideas:** send us your ideas! If you would like to hold and organize an event, please e-mail us the idea and your name and e-mail contact.

Hope to see you actively engaged in this year's QPenn planning.

~Kathy Totoki & Phil Cochetti (2006 QPenn Co-Chairs)



# On the Tube

*The L-Word. Queer as Folk. Will & Grace. Noah's Arc. Dante's Cove.* What do all of these television shows have in common? No, don't think about the attractive, stylistic people or even the luxurious apartments and houses. Think deeper. I know it's hard, but you can do it. Got it? Yes! They are all centered on the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people.

Since 1998, when *Will & Grace* first premiered, the LGBT community has been making its way into the mainstream through television. Slowly but surely we are becoming more and more visible. Now, the question is whether or not the wealthy, highly sexual, impressively stylistic, and ridiculously good looking characters in these shows are giving an accurate portrayal of our diverse community.

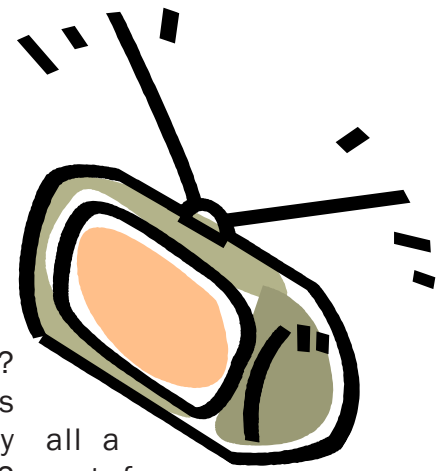
*The L-Word* revolves around a group of queer friends in their late twenties and early thirties and their experiences as professionals in Los Angeles. It is one

of the first female centered shows of its kind. On the other side of the country, *Queer as Folk* follows the lives of gay friends in Pittsburgh. It revolves around a mostly male cast but includes a lesbian couple. *Will & Grace*, the longest running of all these shows, explores the daily life of two gay males, one straight female, and female with an unlabeled sexual orientation whom are all good friends. Taking place in New York City, it is the second of the two shows mentioned not set in Los Angeles or near a beach.

Traveling back to the west coast, *Noah's Arc* explores the lives of four black gay men in Los Angeles, whom are all best friends. It is one of the first and only shows of its kind that deals with queer people of color. While *Dante's Cove* is a supernatural, mystery series that follows the lives of a group of gay and lesbian twenty-somethings in a hotel turned apartment building, it is the only show mentioned where the plot is purposefully unrealistic.

What are these shows really doing for our community besides entertaining us? How do these shows portray us? Are they helping our struggle? Until recently during a women's discussion group at the LGBT Center, I had never even considered such questions. I mean its television, and how much on television IS realistic?!?!? Honestly I can't think of many, if any at all, television shows representing any group or community completely and accurately. Is that even possible?

On one hand, I understand concerns and problems with the lack of butch females, transgender people, non-flamboyant gay males, and other images the media lacks when representing the LGBT community. I feel that the lack of representation is a problem that definitely needs to be tackled on many levels and not just on television. On the other hand, I feel as though with each of the mentioned LGBT centered shows we are taking one step ahead. To me, they are



all a part of a process. Progress starts with small steps and slowly but surely great improvements will be made. These shows do embody parts of our community. These shows are allowing us to be seen and heard. These shows are opening doors.

So the next time you watch *The L-Word, Queer as Folk, Will & Grace, Noah's Arc, or Dante's Cove* I encourage you to question what these shows are doing for our community. By no means should we stop questioning whether they can be improved. We should, however, give credit where credit is due. Even if you do not find these shows entertaining, see them for what they are, which in my opinion is a part of our rise into the mainstream and journey to better acceptance within society.

~KeAndra Dodds

# OUT & IN-FOCUS:

## *Marcia Martinez-Helfman CW'75, L'84*

A few days ago I had the opportunity to interview Marcia Martinez-Helfman. Today, she is the Chief Human Resources Officer of Pennsylvania Hospital. Marcia was born in New Mexico during the fifties and came to Penn for undergrad in 1971 and then continued at Penn for graduate school in sociology. Marcia later taught

school in Santa Rosa, New Mexico before returning to Penn for her Master's Degree in Social Work and Law Degree.

What interested me most about Marcia was the distinction between not only her time at Penn and mine, but also how her coming out process differed. It is hard for my generation to

understand the idea of not even knowing what homosexuality is. With so much exposure to television and the news

***"When Marcia meets people and tells them about herself she doesn't prepare for the worst thing to happen. Instead she simply goes in expecting there to be no problem with her sexuality or any aspect of her life."***

in this age, one can hardly not know about different sexualities. However, in the seventies Marcia describes the times as very closeted and people didn't come out at all. It wasn't until after having been married to a man for seventeen years that she decided to be true to herself at last. Issues in Marcia's marriage did not cause her to realize

she was lesbian suddenly.

Instead, she remembers having feelings for other girls during adolescence, yet she decided to repress and ignore them due to the climate. With Stonewall occurring in June 1969, there was still a lot of fear and danger for people both in and out of

the closet. To this day, Marcia commends the men and women who were out at that point in the seventies. When she came out, it was in her feeling of freedom that she most reveled in and loved. Now, she has this same freedom with her partner of ten years, Sarah, and her son.

On top of dealing with her sexuality, Marcia

also had to deal with her being a Chicano woman at Penn. She remembers being made to feel different just because people commented on her accent. It was not until the arrival of her brother and a group of Latinos from Arizona a few years later that Marcia saw others like her on campus. However, this did not occur until her junior year and her first two years were difficult.

I, personally, delighted in talking with Marcia because she was so...happy. There have been very few times when I have listened to someone who was so content with all aspects of her life and her past. It is true she faced many obstacles with her sexuality and race but she didn't let them affect her. She made friends throughout college and succeeded in class. Moreover, she actually recalls her college graduation as one of the best days of her life.

At the moment as the Chief Human Resources

Officer at Penn Hospital, Marcia can't recall any real problems with her sexuality at work. In fact she has found people to be very accepting. This might be due to her way of treating people. When Marcia meets people and tells them about herself she doesn't prepare for the worst thing to happen. Instead she simply goes in expecting there to be no problem with her sexuality or any aspect of her life. This seems to be a good strategy due to Marcia's lack of bad experiences. Marcia told me that more times than not, people do not want conflict, and I think that she just might be right.

~Malek Lewis

**If you, or another Penn alumni you know, want to be featured in "Out & In Focus," or if you want to suggest another alumni to be highlighted, please contact the OUTlines staff at 215-898-5044 or center@dolphin.upenn.edu.**

**Tha**



## Homecoming Wrap-Up

Homecoming. It's the time of the year when your family comes to visit, old friends come back, and who can forget The Game - Penn v. Princeton. On an amazingly beautiful and unseasonably warm November day, the campus was pulsing with events catering to every interest and community, celebrating the diversity and legacy that is Penn. Needless to say, the LGBT community made their presence known in the midst of the weekend's festivities.

While we couldn't be "queer there and everywhere," between two of us we were able to experience all the events hosted by PennGALA (Penn's LGBT Alumni Association) and the LGBT Center, allowing us to give the perspectives of a newbie (sophomore Marianne) and a old head (staff and alumna Ninah).

### PennGALA Brunch (Ninah)

PennGALA's annual homecoming brunch was held at the Carriage House, the splendid home of the LGBT community. This academic year marks the building's fourth year on campus as well as the first graduating class to benefit from its presence for the entirety of their undergraduate experience.

The presentation was given by the Delaware Valley Legacy Fund and focused on wills and estate planning for the LGBT community. It impressed upon the intimate gathering of alumni, staff, and students the importance of planning your financial future to protect yourself and your partner and the potential to continue to give back to the community even after you have passed on.

# Penn GALA



Giving was further highlighted by the announcement

of two new gifts to the LGBT Center. Alum Mark D. Gordon (C'65, L'68), a major donor and supporter of the Center, provided seed money for the Mark D. Gordon Lectureship. This fund will sponsor an annual lecture on issues of importance and interest to Penn's LGBT community. The second gift was provided by Leslie Townsend, Center friend, to support transgender identified students in need of emergency financial support. Townsend is known for her modeling and real estate careers, stage appearance in the transgender version of "The Vagina Monologues," as well as the film "Beautiful Daughters," a documentary about the making of the play.

The brunch ended with the opportunity for guests to reminisce, cel-

...continued on p. 6

## Homecoming Wrap-Up

...continued from p. 5

celebrate, and nosh on delectable treats before dispersing to other campus venues. And in her classic “sleep till noon” undergrad fashion, in walks Marianne...

### Speed Mentoring (Marianne)

After waking up to my roommates perfect pancakes, I headed off to the Wills and Estate Planning session at the LGBT Center. I have neither a will nor an estate; I was in it for the brunch and I showed up late just in time for the food. Yum. However, I did get to meet the some alumni and see my friends. After all, isn't that what Homecoming is about?; free food and friends.

I went to the LGBT Speed Mentoring later in the afternoon. This was an exciting and new experience. What is this “Speed Mentoring”? Well, it's rather like speed dating. It sounds scandalous, but it's not. There were several men-

tors (mostly Penn LGBT alum) and an array of undergraduates looking to learn from their knowledge and experience. For five minutes, the mentees had the chance to ask mentors questions about their careers, resumes, interviews, their pets, whether they like long walks on the beach, and so on and on, but only for five minutes.

After your time is up, you move on to the next person and the person after that, it begins to feel as if you're having the same conversation over and over again. Depending on what you're looking to do after college, the mentoring event could have been a success or a bust. It just depends on your future plans.

*Exhibit A:*  
“Marianne, look at how many lawyer's cards I got!”



“Wow, Albert, that's nice. I got....two. There was only one architect. ☹️”

After speed mentoring, all the cool kids left Huntsman Hall and walked to the Annenberg Center for the Taste of Penn, sponsored by the Diversity Alliance.

### The Taste of Penn (Ninah & Marianne)

This event is always amazing. It was an ingenious idea to gather together the many cultural alumni groups for a true celebration of diversity. The Alliance created several food displays, each with an array of dishes expressing a group's culture and heritage. What would the LGBT table be?

In years past, we jokingly claimed it was the

bar, however in poor taste that joke may be. You could have just as easily said the dessert table but that is probably just as bad. (Does anyone know what gay food actually is?) This year, though, somewhat more of an effort was made to represent queer food as there was an incredible pyramid arrangement of rainbow colored Chinese style take-out boxes offering several different tapas.

As always, the crowd was massive, swelling as event went on and people sought to find Penn's heart and soul. The music was lively, so much so that some folks started a dance circle and really – what's a party without the electric slide?

~Ninah Harris &  
Marianne

# COMPROMISING ON ROLE MODELS

It's all very interesting to me how even in our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning community we seek the perfect role model. More ironic to me is a statement by Sheryl Swoopes in which she said her greatest fear about 'outing' herself is that she would no longer be considered a role model for young people.

Hmmm, it seems a little sad to me that the first African-American female pro-basketball player to come out – and who has won two most valuable player and two most valuable defensive player awards, earning her comparisons to Michael Jordan – fears her sexual orientation will negatively impact her status as a role model. I find this not only ironic but quite disappointing in light of the number of pro-athletes who have gone to trial as result of indictments for heinous crimes such as rape and murder, in addition to those who recently had to defend themselves in front of Congress because they were suspected of using steroids.

Is Sheryl Swoopes the perfect role model for people in and out of our community when she states she was not born a lesbian, but instead became a lesbian after falling in love with an assistant basketball coach who helped her through her divorce and happens to be female? I found her statement to be provocative, especially in light of my recent education as an intern at the LGBT Center. Although I have been 'out' for over ten years, I had never realized there was such a raging debate regarding sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender identity, and the issue of nature versus nurture.

I personally was amazed and disappointed by Sheryl's statements. She clearly loves her son, and goes to great lengths to ensure the world, but more specifically her son, understands she loved her husband and her current sexual orientation does not change that fact. At the same time, I am also proud of her commitment to her true self, her partner's love, and

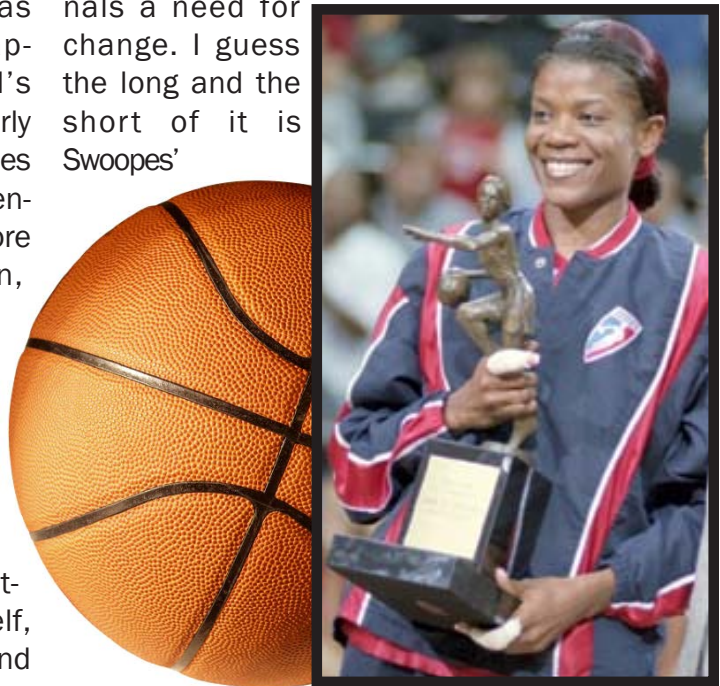
the greater LGBTQQ community.

'Outing' yourself to friends and family can have grave repercussions to your relationships, never mind when your teammates and the world is informed. Homophobia and heterosexism are still evident within the athletic community; simply refer to the mere fact that Rene Portland, Penn State's women's basketball coach, has a well documented reputation of homophobic acts and statements. Or on our own campus, just the mere existence of Penn's Athletes and Allies Tackling Heterosexism and Homophobia (PATH) signals a need for change. I guess the long and the short of it is Swoopes'

sexual orientation should not cast a shadow on the role model she has become. More importantly, it is vital that individuals do not compare her 'fall from grace' with athletes who have required legal representation to defend their acts.

Finally, in my mind, Sheryl has found someone who loves her unconditionally and takes care of her heart – isn't that what we all want? Does it matter if just recently Sheryl has chosen to be with a woman? I don't mind, because honestly I could use a couple more role models...

~Alex Ernst



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## Behind the Bullhorn

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*...continued from p. 1*

even when we are weak.

And this brings me to the lessons we can learn from Marcavage. Despite his misinformed vitriol against our community, he is still a human being with thoughts, fears, anxiety, and emotions. This is hard for any one of us to acknowledge. Humanizing our enemies may seem like dangerous territory, but for me it is grounded in eastern and western spirituality and the benefits become manifest with time.

Here, we must acknowledge an inborn human paradox; although we occupy only one body we are equally capable of great good and great harm no matter our background. This is the basis of our free will and choice. Sometimes we wield this choice consciously and other times it is the nature of our social and mental conditioning, becoming automatic.

In acknowledging this paradox and seeing Marcavage as human,

we must look inward. In what ways have we as individuals and a community turned misinformation into victimization? We are not immune from the viruses of racism, classism, sexism, and so on. I see every day examples of LGBT persons committing acts of misinformation against their own community.

Many of us hide behind our metaphorical bullhorns, shouting misinformation through our actions, words, and inaction. Some of us do it consciously; others without thought. How can we expect to turn this hostile world into one of peace if we cannot create an environment of respect ourselves? I am not saying we are at fault for the problems caused by fundamentalists; I am not blaming the victim.

I am offering that maybe we can take the negative energy as a signal to orient our own hearts toward peace. Hostility, even against hostile people, never brings peace within or without. We have control over how we treat each other and we should make sure we spend our energy positively. The ben-

efits of our actions will be stronger individuals and a stronger community.

We must start this process by seeking first to understand, first to love, first to forgive. The benefits of these actions are repaid over time and the cycle of peace enhances all of us. We will make mistakes and fall into the traps of social and mental conditioning, but if we remain humble and open, we can liberate ourselves from all sorts of misinformation. It is not about specific acts of charity and kindness committed out of an obligation; it is about cultivating an attitude of peace, respect, and love so that we engage with each other in a warm and giving environment.

This does not mean we should stand down against the hatred and bigotry. In fact it requires just the opposite action. We must root out hatred and bigotry wherever we find it. But we must do it as a community; we must not fall into the expectations of our enemies to lash out in anger.

The Pink Angels embody this type of action.

They are an LGBT counter protest group founded by Chuck Volz, senior director of Philly Pride. They are easily recognized at events like OutFest by the large styrofoam pink angels that block out protesters and whistles that drown out their message. They are providing an alternative to the Repent America protests in a fashion that doesn't involve screaming angry epithets or slogans. Their strength is in their implicit message that Repent America's protests offer nothing good to our community or the larger human community, and we should diminish them simply by our strong and solid presence.

We must challenge ourselves to look inside before we spew our own hatred back at our enemies. This may provide a respite from the pain we feel, but it will only be temporary. Instead let us seek each other out, let us stand loving and defiant against those that seek our destruction, and let us move to a higher level of self fulfillment and community. Let us put down our bullhorns.

*~ Jason Lally*

# Reaganomics → Heterosexism

I had the pleasure of hearing Suzanne Pharr speak at a recent conference about the “Expansion and Contraction of Democracy.” She mentioned that she had for much of her past spoken about the Left and the Right, but switched the way in which she talked about politics because she felt those de-

scriptions did not capture the nature of the argument fully. At this conference, she concluded LGBT rights and the associated movement have suffered great losses because of Reaganomics and the ideology linked with that administration and generation. While I hope to do her argument justice, it is difficult to understand as it includes many historical issues.

During the Reagan administration devolution began as the federal government shed its responsibility to the poor. Along with this anti-government movement, we saw an anti-tax surge and the breaking down of the labor unions. Due to these changes,

we also had a breakdown in human services as human needs became seen as human problems. The vogue concept was that “there is not enough to go around.” Furthermore, the national media helped galvanize the concept of people of color as the social problem. Reagan’s ideology has no partisan bounds as Reaganomics and trickle down theory was passed from Reagan to Bush I, to Clinton, and now to Bush II.

How does Reaganomics translate into heterosexism? Pharr pointed out that in 1992 we saw a fusion of racism (caused by Reaganomics) and homophobia when LGBT rights were considered special rights; special rights, therefore, are not civil rights. Clinton was also elected in 1992, after which queer people received the Defense of Marriage Act

(DOMA), Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, and the *Boy Scouts of America et. al. v. Dale*. Rights for queer people became an issue of national debate during this time,

Since many people of color do not have the same opportunities as Whites to education, social mobility, etc., there seems to be a correlation between TANF

and DOMA in that they both restrict people’s rights/benefits. Pharr continued by pondering what activists can do to mitigate these issues considering

the sequence of oppression in this country.

Pharr outlined several tools of which activists should be aware. While religion and religious texts are used against us, we should also point out the liberation, fairness, and justice found in them. Acknowledge the issue of violence against women and children in society, as this issue is pervasive. Advocate for sex education for children, youth, and adults. Expand the concept of family and recognize other forms of families in society. Never be silent, as it will render us helpless. Finally, she says it is always important to say, “tell me about your life.”

~ Félix A. Pérez



**Under Reaganomics, people make their own way and the government has very little responsibility to ensure they are to be protected and given benefits.**

and as Pharr points out it held true to the idea of Reaganomics and special rights.

Under Reaganomics, people make their own way and the government has very little responsibility to ensure they are to be protected and given benefits. The same ideals can be applied to queer rights in the United States as the government does very little to ensure we are protected and given rights. Postulating this argument, there seems to be more of a similarity between Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and DOMA. TANF, or what we call “welfare,” disproportionately assists people of color in the United States.

# Screwed Up?

Last week in my psychology class we watched a video of kids being shown a Barbie and a Ken doll. The researcher asked the first child, who was around four years old, if Ken was a boy or a girl to which the child responded that Ken was a boy. Then the experimenter gave the Ken doll the Barbie's purse and asked the child again if Ken was a boy or a girl. The child responded that Ken was now a girl.



The second child, who was seven years old, was put through the same exact experiment. The researcher first showed both dolls and

asked if Ken was a boy or a girl to which she responded that Ken was a boy. Ken was then given Barbie's purse and asked the child again if Ken was a boy or a girl, to which she responded that of course Ken was still a boy. She was even confused that the experimenter didn't seem to understand giving a boy a purse doesn't make him a girl.

What's interesting to me about this demonstration is the way in which a child's idea of gender switches from being defined by accessories (clothes, hair, or even activities) to being defined in a

more permanent and inflexible way.

I've experienced this in my own life with my younger cousins. When Sean was four years old he was convinced that because I had short hair, played sports, and wear "boys" clothes I was a boy. I can't begin to count the times his older brother said, "she's a girl so stop calling her he" and Sean's response every time was, "but he has short hair." He's now six years old and is just starting to refer to me as "she," but often asks why I have short hair if I'm a girl.



So why are we so stuck on teaching children strict, static definitions of girl and boy? Why do parents feel the need to teach kids that boys play with trucks and girls play with dolls when so many people (I'm not the only one) don't fit into this stereotypical gender ideal? I'm reminded of a sarcastic line in a Melissa Ferrick song, "and if you let little girls play with trucks their sexuality gets all screwed up." Are we, as a society, really so scared our children will be "screwed up" if we don't teach them the acceptable toys with which to play?

~Karrie Moore

The editorial staff of *OUTlines* seeks submissions from all members of the Penn community. Poetry, stories, essays, artwork, and articles are welcome. Inquiries and/or submissions should be sent to:

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