

Volume 1, Issue 5

February 2007

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- Book & Movie Reviews & Recommendations
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## TransOhio Recruits!

It's only a few short months into 2007 and TransOhio has a full schedule. On the first day of February, we found ourselves in a second brainstorming and planning session with other Central Ohio transgender group leaders. We can't say that it went smoothly the entire meeting time, after all, anytime there's a gathering of group leaders, regardless of the community, in a small meeting space, there are bound to be heated exchanges.

And of course, there were.

But the differences were overcome and the realization began to set in that we were all in the same room for the same reasons.

We were there because we have something to offer the transgender community: A voice, an outlet, and torch-bearers that have no hesitation to push for visibility, education and equality for and about the transgender and gender-queer community of Ohio.

In September 2006, our short-term goal was to publish a monthly newsletter that included a

calendar of local and national events, short stories, opinion essays and more. Our first TransOhio newsletter was published in October 2006 and this February 2007 issue makes number five. Not only is it the 5th issue, the number of people submitting their personal work and events to us keeps increasing! While we continue to flush out long-term goals for TransOhio, we are continuing to add short-term items we'd like to make happen. For example, currently TransOhio is only sent out electronically.

Over the next few months, we are seeking to find funding that will allow us to print copies of the TransOhio newsletter and have them delivered and available to groups, individuals and organizations that are beyond the Columbus metro area. Additionally, TransOhio is continuing outreach to other Central Ohio transgender groups.

Interested in being a part of TransOhio? Please contact us at [TransOhio@wowway.com](mailto:TransOhio@wowway.com). Torch-bearers are needed, wanted and openly recruited!

## Central Ohio GLBT Census: Have You Been Counted?

In a collaborative effort between the Columbus AIDS Task Force, Stonewall Columbus, and United Way of Central Ohio with additional support from The Legacy Fund of the Columbus Foundation and Abercrombie & Fitch, a 2007 GLBT Census of Central Ohio was launched January 25, 2007. The census will be accessible online through April 15th, 2007.

The 2007 GLBT Census of Central Ohio can be taken online at [www.glbtcensus.com](http://www.glbtcensus.com). Also, if you don't have access to a computer, there are computers available for your use at the Stonewall Community Center. Stonewall is located at 1160 North High Street in the Short North (just south of 5th Avenue).

Groups involved in this effort are asking that only residents of the Columbus metro area res-

pond to this census. Keep in mind that if you live out of the area and you submit your information in this count, it's very possible that the numbers of GLBT people who actually live in Central Ohio will be skewed. Skewing these results could have an adverse affect on monies and services made available to the Central Ohio community! If you're interested in the questions asked on the census, a pdf version is available at [www.glbtcensus.com](http://www.glbtcensus.com).

If you have specific questions about the GLBT Census of Central Ohio, contact Lynnette Cook by email at [lcook@uwcentralohio.org](mailto:lcook@uwcentralohio.org). Cook is the Assistant Vice President, Research, Evaluation, and Information Management at United Way of Central Ohio.

Everyone Counts!

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# Local & National Calendar of Events

## February 2007

- GLBTQI 6-week Self-Defense Workshop begins on Saturday, January 27 - March 3, 2007, 12pm - 2pm. Aikido of Columbus, 3003 Silver Drive, Columbus, 43224.
- Ohio FTMI chapter meeting. Saturday, February 25, 2007. Toledo, Ohio. Details TBA. For more information, join [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FTM-I\\_Ohio](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FTM-I_Ohio).

## March 2007

- TransOhio in Houston, Texas. March 2-5, 2007. Presenting at Sunday's PFLAG-Houston meeting and PFLAG-Houston's Monday night Trans-support Group. Come meet us! For more info email [TransOhio@wowway.com](mailto:TransOhio@wowway.com).
- ACLU of Ohio, 2007 LGBT College Campus Connection Conference, Saturday, March 3, 2007. 10am - 5pm. University of Akron Student Union. Akron, Ohio. For more information, visit: <http://www.acluohio.org/sga/CampusConnection.asp>
- Bowl for Equality. Saturday, March 10, 2007. 1pm-4pm. AMF Main Lanes, 4071 E. Main Street, Columbus, Ohio. More info: <http://www.equalityohio.org>
- The FORGE Forward 2007 Conference, March 29 - April 1, 2007, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. <http://www.forge-forward.org/conference/>

## April 2007

- Sixth Annual Trans-Health Conference, Philadelphia, PA. April 5-7, 2007. For info: <http://www.trans-health.org>

## May 2007

- Lobby Day for Equality, Statehouse. Wednesday, May 16, 2007. All day. Info: <http://www.equalityohio.org>

## July 2007

- CampOUT, July 26 - 29, 2007, Lothlorien Nature Sanctuary, Bloomington, IN. [http://www.lagarou.org/campout\\_2007](http://www.lagarou.org/campout_2007)

## September 2007

- Southern Comfort Conference, September 11-16, 2007, Atlanta, GA. <http://www.sccatl.org>
- Out & Equal Workplace Summit, September 27 - 29, 2007, Washington D.C. For more information, visit their website at <http://www.outandequal.org/summit/2007/OutEqual-2007Summit.asp>

*Would you like to add your event to our calendar? Email event information to [transohio@wowway.com](mailto:transohio@wowway.com)*

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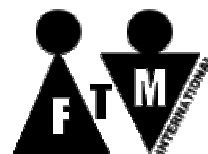
## Ohio Chapter of FTMIInternational

Ohio now has an official chapter of FTMI. On January 27th we met and elected temporary officers so that we could get the chapter started. We will look at fully elected officers when we have more participation and interest. Temporary officers include: Damien, President; Tom, Secretary; Milo, Treasurer and Jake, PR Specialist. We've written our mission statement and will we'll be writing chapter bylaws which will be presented in draft form for review at the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Ohio Chapter of FTMI will be on Saturday, February 24, 2007 in Toledo, Ohio. Location and time will be announced soon! The next meeting includes a discussion about the Ohio FTMI Conference and the official naming of the chapter.

If you are interested in joining FTMI Ohio or being a part of the planning of the Ohio FTMI Conference, please contact Damien at [\[querpapa@yahoo.com\]\(mailto:querpapa@yahoo.com\). For more information on FTMI, please visit \[FTMI.org\]\(http://FTMI.org\). For updates on FTMI Ohio please join our yahoo group FTMI-I\\_Ohio at \[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FTM-I\\\_Ohio/\]\(http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FTM-I\_Ohio/\). Lets show FTMI and Ohio how dedicated we are to providing education, support, information and advocacy to our community and the community at large. No voice is too small, no help is too little and no one is turned away.](mailto:Spea-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

For more information on FTMIInternational and the services and programs they offer, please visit their website: <http://www.ftmi.org>.



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## The SOFFA Corner facilitated by TransOhio SOFFA's

### Crossing Over: A Journey Out of Transphobia by Diane Drotleff

Okay, I'll admit it. Once upon a time, in a land, far, far away, I was devotedly transphobic. Even now I still occasionally refer to myself as a "trans-phobe in recovery", since I do believe it's a process which demands serious self-introspection, is worked in steps, and requires an understanding and supportive network to achieve and maintain "sobriety". Of course, being an enlightened queer feminist who's dabbled extensively in everything from polyamory to BDSM, I couldn't conceive of myself as sexually or erotically "against" anything. But I didn't view gender identity and trans issues as "sex" issues; my B.A. in Women's Studies had provided me with at least that much awareness. Still, what I originally defended as staunchly as I would a dissertation I later recognized as nothing more than transphobia masquerading as feminist outrage. What follows is a brief history of one bio-girl's journey along the winding path through the often elusive terrain of gender identity politics.

Until just a couple of years ago, I was not what I would call supportive of anyone with any kind of non-gender normative thing going on, particularly male-to-female transfolks and cross-dressers. My very first personal experiences with meeting transgendered people were steeped in the midst of my women's studies program. Every day I was encouraged by my professors and peers to deconstruct notions of femininity, "essential" feminine qualities, modes of dress, manners, emotions, and, in some cases, the actual etymology of the words "women" and "womanhood". Shucking anything having to do with what was viewed as traditionally feminine was the name of the game and my fellow classmates and I were, more or less, expected to conform to that standard, though there were a brave few who bucked it. I am a pretty solidly femme girl and always have been, though up until recently I never viewed my girlishness as a singular identity of its own merit. I suppose I never really thought about gender identity in any real sense until I began my academic study; I didn't have to. I grew up with my brain and my body pretty much aligned, at least as far as gender expression was concerned, and it would still be a long time before I truly realized that not everyone was as fortunate in that regard as I had been.

The very first self-identified transperson whose name I actually knew (though it escapes me at the moment) was a member of the flagship trans support organization in our midsized, Midwestern city. She came to deliver a presentation to a safer-sex organization where I was in training to be a volunteer. I had zero info about the "T" in "GLBT" at that point; I still had severe animosity toward the word "queer" and considered myself strictly bisexual and thought that was somehow superior to being either exclusively gay or lesbian-identified. To say that I was put-off by this person would be an understatement to say

the least. All I saw at the time was a man "pretending" to be a woman, parading around in the most gender-normative, frilly white outfit I had ever seen with makeup so thick I wondered how she got it on without a trowel. In short, an ensemble no "real woman" would ever be caught dead in. She proceeded to talk about how she had always had "women's feelings" growing up as a little boy and I couldn't stop thinking, "what the hell are 'women's' feelings? Do I only get to have one prescribed set of socially-acceptable feelings because I have a uterus, breasts and a vagina?" Then there was the anatomy part. I couldn't get past the "if you don't bleed you don't get to tell me anything about how a woman feels/thinks/acts" part. It was a profound experience for me, but I look back on that now and it is so apparent that I needed to be there in order to be where I am now. Paradigm-shifting progress is amazing and sacred, and had I not had those hurdles to cross I don't know that I would have the deep appreciation and affection for transfolks I now have and continue to expand upon.

Needless to say, I think my Higher Power had decided it was high time I get over my transphobia because I started practically tripping over transfolks and gender-benders everywhere I went. I began attending conferences and national gatherings, starting with BECAUSE during the two years it was held in Milwaukee. There I met people who gender-fucked in a variety of ways: my first truly bi-identified men (some of whom were, gasp!!, attracted to me), drag kings and women with beards and women who packed and men who wore incredibly long and expensive evening gowns which looked tremendously better on them than they ever would have on me. I was suddenly aware I'd been pigeonholing an entire group of people based on one experience of one person. It started to blow my world apart, little by little, and it was fantastic and terrifying concurrently.

I had my first boyfriend who liked to be fucked up the ass and had his own (double gasp!) vibrator, which I stumbled across one day while looking for matches to light some incense during our lovemaking. I bought a harness and two silicone dildos and fucked him thoroughly and repeatedly, though arguably not as often as I now wished I had. And I suppose it's just continued from there. I think my most substantial progress, however, has occurred in the last two years. Though neither of them identified as trans per se, my most recent boyfriend and girlfriend gender-bend in a couple of key ways. I had never been partnered to anyone before who defied the gender normative "girl" and "boy" roles for me as much as they did and I began to work through some of my issues with feminine guys and my crap with butch(-er) women at the same time.

*(continued on page 4)*

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## Crossing Over: A Journey Out of Transphobia

*(continued from page 3)*

Unfortunately, when the relationship ended traumatically after slightly over a year, I felt completely unmoored and wondered if I was now back at the starting block regarding my comfort-ability with gender fluidity. My girlfriend had called me out on my transphobic crap verbally, and my boyfriend had done so through his tender love and care of me, his quiet ushering of me into unknown territory with a subtle gentleness I had never experienced from anyone with a bio-male body who was also queer-identified.

That transformative relationship was the direct stepping stone to where I currently am regarding the inclusion of transfolks in my life. I am a proud member of a vibrant and well-established leather organization with a high percentage of trans-identified folks. My new-found friends, each in different incarnations, exemplify and explain things to me in ways no one has ever been able to. They seem to accomplish this both in literal ways, by directly expressing how they feel about their bodies, their sex lives, and their decisions on how and when to transition to more subtle, harder to define spiritual dimensions. My closest friend in this group, a stunningly sexy and incredibly kind FtM guy, has made this process as painless for me as I think it's possible to be. I'm constantly probing him with embarrassingly intimate questions

and admitting stuff to him that I've never disclosed to anyone for fear of condemnation or censure, and he's answered every single question I have had thus far with an openness and honesty I rarely find in anyone. In large part due to him, I'm not scared to ask questions of my trans friends anymore, but I try to ask them respectfully and forthrightly at all times. If I ask something inappropriate or am being unwittingly insulting, I trust that people will tell me that.

At this point I suppose I consider myself pretty well "recovered" from my transphobia, but I'm also not naïve enough to think that there's not more to learn, to experience, to be exposed to. I've yet to seriously date or be partnered to anyone trans-identified and I know that if that should ever occur it would bring yet another dimension to my now multi-layered understanding of trans-folks and the unique issues they deal with every day. Not being trans myself, I also know that on a key level there is only so much I will ever be able to understand or empathize with when my trans friends and lovers try to explain what it's like to be in their bodies, in their minds, in their hearts. But now I finally feel, for the first time in my life, that it's a journey I am prepared and ecstatic to undertake.

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## Open Mic @ TransOhio

All this time I never knew  
It takes strength to be true  
Sleepwalking through life  
Never taking the time  
Realities passing by  
Unsure which is mine  
So many possibilities can seem sublime  
Too passive to realize  
What it takes to make the realities mine

Last night I cried myself to sleep  
Lying there my body empty  
Thoughts wander tears creep  
I have never felt so naked  
Stripping myself down to the core  
Vulnerable and alone is my fate  
Loss of trust in myself  
Makes me afraid to go places  
I've never been before

I can see the world outside my window  
I see life all around  
People coming and going  
But here I sit at my window  
Too afraid to make a sound

The February 2007  
Open Mic @ TransOhio  
features poetry by writer  
Karen M. Patrick.

If you're interested in sharing your  
poetry, artwork or short stories,  
email your work to  
[TransOhio@wowway.com](mailto:TransOhio@wowway.com)

Sitting here by myself  
Waiting for someone else  
I watch the phone  
No one calling  
My sense of self  
Seems to be falling  
I go out on the town  
With all eyes on me  
People looking, staring  
Do they see what I see  
At times I wonder what to do  
Living for others is no way to be  
Can I always please only others  
Never being true to me?  
Some will call it selfish  
Some things are just meant to be

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## Thoughts on Being Transgender by Robbi Cohen

Why Being Transgender Does Not Necessarily Imply a Sexual Component: A Confusion in Terms, Part 1 of 3

A key factor in discerning what it means to be transgender, or gender variant, requires the ability to differentiate between commonly accepted, but erroneous, labels. Even though it has been general practice, the identification of gender identity with sexual preference has led to an abysmal gap in our understanding. Simply put, it is a case of apples and oranges. Gender identity and gender presentation, on the one hand, and sexual preference or sexual orientation, on the other have, been confused and misconstrued for so long it is no wonder that, until recently, it was even a source of contention within the LGBTI community. Fortunately, through the advocacy of organization such as NCTE, NTAC, HRC and NGLTF, much of the inaccuracy has been dispelled. Still, the need for education is critical both within the LGBTI population and in society at large.

In part one of this article, I want to address just what the differences are. In part two, I would like to focus on the history that brought us this unfortunate conflation of gender and sexuality. Part three will look to the future and possibilities that exist when we address these issues with a new and different mindset.

Briefly, gender identity is whom I see regarding the person I believe myself to be and gender presentation is how I wish to present that person to the world. Sexual preference is to whom I am sexually attracted. I am not asserting that these two may, at times, not have an interactive relationship. Both are extremely complex and easily have an effect, one upon the other. But, their core natures are distinct and any attempt to confuse the two will invariably end up doing disservice to both.

Until recently, it has been commonly accepted belief that one's birth sex was synonymous with one's gender. If you were born with a penis, you were a male and were expected to act as a man. If you were born with a vagina, the role of female was to be the assigned role. Of course, this formula completely ignores the phenomenon of intersex, which should give us a clue that binary models for sexuality may not be accurate. It has been postulated that a continuum model may be closer to reality. If we look at sexuality from a sociologist's perspective, and we include the diversity of sexual expression that is evident in to-

day's culture, it seems prudent to entertain the continuum model. It is even possible to go one step further and embrace a diversity model in which any modality we perceive in ourselves is an acceptable way of expressing sexuality.

Once we make the decision to explore the diversity model, it is not so difficult a task to understand and accept that sexual preference and gender identity are just two avenues in which diversity expresses itself. The reality is that the combinations and permutations of that manifestation are extensive. There is no distinct rationale to suspect that gender and sexuality are identical, or coextensive, and to do so makes the error of an assumption, which, in truth, has no basis in fact.

An appeal to reality will validate the accuracy of this model. We may find transgender persons who are attracted to men, to women, or to both. There is certainly no reason to suspect that, because one perceives oneself to be gender variant, one's sexuality must necessarily change. Similarly, there are many different possibilities for the expression of gender variance, e.g., androgyny, gender queer, goth, m to f, f to m, pre-op, post-op, TG, TS, CD etc., just to name a handful. None of these has their essential basis in sexuality, which can express itself in another set of differing modalities. The bottom line to gender identity is to express, on the outside, the person one sees on the inside. True gender freedom means exactly that... no limits, no intolerance, no abridgement of civil rights. In that regard, freedom to express one's gender perception and freedom to express one's sexuality ARE similar to each other, and no different than freedoms other minorities claim as their birthright. When we equate gender with sexuality, however, we make the mistake of delimitation that echoes the same constraints majorities have historically imposed upon minorities. As is generally the case, such situations arise from misunderstandings and mistaken labels. Both can be easily avoided if we educate others as well as ourselves.

Next Month: A brief history of this confusion and its root within the phenomenon of patriarchy.

Don't forget to complete the 2007 GLBT Census of Central Ohio!



The census can be filled out online at  
<http://www.glbtcensus.com>

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## Local Resources

- BRAVO (Buckeye Regional Anti-Violence Organization): [www.bravo-ohio.org](http://www.bravo-ohio.org)
- Central Ohio CD Support: [www.crossohio.org](http://www.crossohio.org)
- EqualityOhio.Org: [www.equalityohio.org](http://www.equalityohio.org)
- Gay People's Chronicle: [www.gaypeopleschronicle.com](http://www.gaypeopleschronicle.com)
- Gender Dysphoria Program of Central Ohio: [www.genderprogram.com](http://www.genderprogram.com)
- Ohio Chapter of FTMI: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FTM-I\\_Ohio](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FTM-I_Ohio)
- Outlook News: [www.outlooknews.com](http://www.outlooknews.com)
- PFLAG Columbus: [www.pflagcolumbus.org](http://www.pflagcolumbus.org)
- Stonewall Columbus: [www.stonewallcolumbus.org](http://www.stonewallcolumbus.org)
- The Alpha Omega Society: [www.aosoc.org](http://www.aosoc.org)
- The Crystal Club: [www.thecrystalclub.org](http://www.thecrystalclub.org)
- TransFamily of Cleveland: [www.transfamily.org](http://www.transfamily.org)
- TransOhio.Org: [www.transohio.org](http://www.transohio.org)



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## National Resources

- FTM International: [www.ftmi.org](http://www.ftmi.org)
- Hudson's FTM Resource Guide: [www.ftmguide.org](http://www.ftmguide.org)
- Human Rights Campaign: [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)
- Out & Equal Workplace Advocates: [www.outandequal.org](http://www.outandequal.org)
- PFLAG: [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)
- PFLAG's Transgender Network (TNET): [www.pflag.org/tnet.html](http://www.pflag.org/tnet.html)
- Tgcrossroads: [www.tgcrossroads.org](http://www.tgcrossroads.org)
- Transster.com: [www.transster.com](http://www.transster.com)



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## Local Trans-Friendly Shopping & Services

<p>Dr. Timothy E. Moats, D.D.S Family Practice</p> <p>656 High Street Worthington, Ohio 43085 Tel: (614) 885-6698 Fax: (614) 433-7952</p>	<p>Radiant Laser Hair Removal</p> <p>11138 Kenwood Road Cincinnati, Ohio 45242</p> <p>Tel: (513) 489-1900 <a href="http://www.radiant-laser.com">www.radiant-laser.com</a></p>	<p>Becca's Hair Studio</p> <p>3700 Wilmington Pike Kettering, Ohio 45429</p> <p>Tel: (937) 298-9222 Becca - Owner</p>
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