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Message from the President

I have been having a grande ol intersex time of late, reading and researching and connecting with others near and far. It's very wonderful and I feel quite empowered about it. We are living in an age where creating thriving communities for marginal minority groups like our own is very possible and where our voices are being heard by law makers and the public at large.

Firstly, there have been some significant happenings afoot in terms of legislative change. As of Tuesday 25 June 2013, Australia became a world first in terms of protection people with intersex when the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Act 2013 was passed through the Senate. This bill has recognised that intersex is separate from gender identity and is the result of biological

expression thus giving us specific protection under law. Congratulations to all the advocates who helped make this happen!! Now here is hoping none of us need to use this...

The Senate inquiry into the coerced and involuntary sterilisation is due to reports on 17 July. If this is passed, the bill may have a significant effect on future protocols surrounding paediatric surgeries carried out on intersex infants. Earlier this year, several members of the AISSGA gave evidence to the Senate enquiry of our experiences with surgery as intersex people. Alongside representatives from OII Australia and the National LGBTI Alliance we offered a comprehensive and heartfelt presentation.

Secondly, I need to tell you about the newly implemented framework for *Treatment of Intersex Conditions in Victoria*. The framework promotes greater inclusion of peer-based support groups within medical practice and has already resulted in an increase in the frequency of newly diagnosed individuals and parents finding their way into our group. This is so great! Welcome!! It is wonderful to know you!!! There has even been someone who has contacted us about their child who is not even born yet. Welcome to the future everybody!

Next, the committee has decided to establish a private AISSGA Facebook group just for our members so that we can all chat and stay connected and informed and entertained. If you would like to join the group send me an email to aissgaustralia@gmail.com with your Facebook name.

There are already several Facebook groups out there such as *The Commons* and *The Way We Were Born!* These are very interesting as an info hub for peer based advocacy and information on a variety of intersex issues. For more informal gathering and sharing points specifically for AIS try the *Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome* group set up by Imy in England, and *NewRareOrchids*, which is an offering created by orchid sisters from the AIS-DSD group in the USA. I would

recommend joining any or all groups - let us know if you want to as you will often need an introduction.

In terms of media, many members of the AISSGA were interviewed for a significant article in *The Age*, which came out in June. Also, 3CR Melbourne Community Radio's Lia Incognita talked to Morgan Carpenter, Secretary of OII Australia, and Phoebe Hart, the filmmaker behind *Orchids: My Intersex Adventure*, about issues facing intersex people including coercive medical interventions, stigmatisation and discrimination on 12 May 2013.

Phoebe represented the AISSGA at a panel on intersex issues in Australia at the Health in Difference 2013 Conference coordinated by the National LGBTI Health Alliance in Melbourne on 20 April 2013. Morgan Carpenter, Mani Mitchell & Gina Wilson joined her and they had a jolly time informing all and sundry on what makes us tick, healthwise.

Finally, we're also looking into Charity/DGR status for the AISSGA to assist us in getting grants in the future. If anyone has any expertise in this area, please let us know!

xx Bonnie

AISSGA National Conference, Melbourne, August 2013

The proposed date and location for the AISSGA National Conference for 2013 is **Melbourne on the weekend of 24-25th of August.**

We are seeking sponsorship to host the event as we have done in past years, which means that we are able to provide catering and, in some cases, can offer travel stipends to attend from interstate (please note, these stipends will be the form of reimbursement for travel costs already spent).

So please let us know if you are planning on attending so we can send you updates by emailing us at aissgaustralia@gmail.com

It takes more than two

*Ed – thanks to all the AISSGA members who were interviewed for this *Age* article.*

June 20, 2013



Christy North, now 34, was diagnosed with complete androgen insensitivity syndrome when she was aged two.

When they are born some people have not travelled the conventional biological path to being male or female. What happens then? Andrew Bock reports on being intersex.

Given a choice between male and female on official documents, Tony Briffa ticks both boxes but prefers to tick neither. Briffa also prefers not to be referred to as "he" or "she".

"I would honestly feel like I was lying if I filled out a document and I put one or the other," says Briffa, a former mayor of Hobson's Bay who has tried living as both a female and a male.

Briffa was born with partial androgen insensitivity syndrome, one of more than 30 "intersex" conditions. The term refers to more than 30 different conditions characterised by having biological attributes of both sexes or attributes that are not wholly female or male. These may be chromosomal, hormonal or physical variations including ambiguous genitals.

"I was born both and I feel both," Briffa says. "And I fiercely want to be recognised in the gender I was born, which is both."

For the first six weeks of our lives we are arguably all intersex. Humans do not develop sexually distinct features until a series of genetic and hormonal catalysts begin their work in the seventh week of life in the womb. Individuals who do not travel the conventional biological path to maleness or femaleness develop intersex conditions, also known by doctors as disorders of sex development or DSD.

Sometimes known as hermaphrodites or androgynes, these permutations of male and female have been known to exist; people recognised that sexuality is more like a spectrum, or "an overlapping pair of bell curves", than a binary set of two genders.

Medical studies estimate between one in 250 babies are born with one of the milder intersex conditions and one in 4500 births for rarer conditions. This means intersex conditions are more common than Down syndrome. International studies show over 1 per cent of all babies have some kind of intersex condition.

"Society is happy with the idea that this kind of variability around sex is incredibly rare," says Gina Wilson, president of advocacy group Organisation Intersex International. "We're saying it's more common than being redhead."

Over the past century differences of sex development were hidden from the public and hospitals hid diagnoses from parents. Surgeons performed genital surgery entailing sterilisation and lifelong hormone treatment to assign infants one gender or the other, often with the consent of poorly informed parents. Sometimes the surgeons got the gender assignment wrong.

The use of surgery to change the sexual anatomy of children was promoted during the 1950s and 1960s by the controversial New Zealand-born sexologist and paediatrician, Professor John Money.

Money had his own - now disputed - theories about how sexual identity developed.

Based at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, he argued that social and environmental cues

interacted with a child's genes and hormones to shape whether the person identified as male or female. He said early assignment of gender with medical reinforcement would help a child grow up happily in one gender.

Medical diagnoses and treatments have improved dramatically in Australia in the past 20 years.

These days fewer gender assignment or genital enhancement operations are done on children than 10 years ago.

The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne currently performs one or two gonadectomies a year on infants with undescended testes. According to medical studies, in certain cases undescended testes have a 50 per cent chance of becoming cancerous, although some intersex groups point to studies that show lower risk and dissatisfaction with surgery.

The hospital also performs 10 to 15 genital reconstruction operations a year often on girls under the age of two. Genital surgery is conducted mostly on infants with female chromosomes and congenital adrenal hyperplasia, a condition that causes some girls to have more masculine-looking genitals. Surgery is conducted on female infants to open or enlarge vaginal openings or to reduce or reshape clitorises.

Associate Professor Sonia Grover, director of the department of gynaecology at the Royal Children's Hospital, says studies show girls with CAH would identify as females and want to have periods and sex later in life and that surgery done early produced good results. All infant surgery is conducted with the informed consent of parents.

"While we have the data to say they are going to end up identifying as females ... and we have evidence that surgical outcomes are good, and sensory outcomes and sexual function are good, where's the pressure to change the practice?" Grover says.

She says genital surgery can be compared to widely accepted cosmetic surgery to correct such things as a cleft lip and palate.

But when it comes to surgery older people with intersex conditions often suffered because of social and medical attitudes of the time.

"Trace" was born in rural Victoria with Klinefelter syndrome (which gave her one extra X chromosome than the usual male) and non-conforming genitalia. Like other older intersex people, her early medical records have gone missing, but four operations as a child left her without any genitalia.

"It was never explained to my mother. She was told I had a condition and that I would never have a child and it would be best for me to have operations 'to clean up downstairs'," Trace says.

Trace was raised as a boy but her father, a Jehovah's Witness, physically abused her. She was eventually made a ward of the state but placed in a girls' home while she went to school as a boy. She refused to attend sports classes, preferring to be punished than having to undress in front of others in changing rooms.

She was placed on male hormones but later began to question her gender and stopped taking the hormones. In her 20s she became confused about her gender identity and eventually decided to adopt a female identity and name.

"If there was choice in life I certainly would have lived androgynously but society was so gender-driven in early days."

Trace, now a successful business person, counts herself lucky because "many older intersex people don't manage to fight off poverty and depression and some take their own lives".

Every intersex condition has different physical manifestations and requires different management. Women with complete androgen insensitive syndrome (CAIS) are often tall and striking looking with slightly masculine or angular features and ageless skin. Some well-known actresses, models and athletes are known to have the condition.

Christy North, now 34, was diagnosed with CAIS when she was two and had internal, "non-

functioning" testes surgically removed. At 12, she found out she wouldn't menstruate or be able to have children. She was also put on a lifelong oestrogen replacement course.

Hospitals no longer remove the testes of women with CAIS but North is not unhappy that hers were.

"I am more than happy to be female. I don't have a choice. I was born a female. I am XY. But I can't become male. I have female parts. Just not the internal makings of a female.

"In 20 years they will know what happens when you take HRT for 50 years. We also don't know what would happen if I stopped taking it. I just think what I do now could help those in the future. I don't want to see myself as a guinea pig, but I guess I can be."

Parents face extremely difficult decisions about what treatments they allow their child to have soon after being told their baby has an intersex condition.

Andie Hider, vice-president and medical liaison representative for the Androgen Insensitivity Support Group of Australia knows a couple "torn apart by grief because of a wrong decision [about gender] made when the child was young".

Michelle Hoare, president of the Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia Support Group of Australia, says: "You don't want your child to look different. That's one of parents' main concerns."

She poses the question: "Would you terminate a child that has abnormal genitals?"

The Australian president of Organisation Intersex International, Gina Wilson, is concerned that prenatal screening and ultrasounds may be leading to an increasing number of terminations of foetuses with intersex conditions.

Anne, a parents' representative for AISSGA, whose daughter has CAIS, says "You think it is the end of the world when you first find out and then you find out they can still lead a happy fulfilling life regardless."

Indeed, while there are people with intersex conditions on company boards, winning Olympic medals and contributing at every level of society, there is still a stigma surrounding the condition and most intersex prefer not to disclose that they have it.

Professor Grover confirms that stigmatisation is still a big problem.

"We would never have one of our patients [with a disorder of sex development] as the face of a Good Friday appeal because of the stigma associated with the diagnosis," she says.

"That's what does the damage. Shame and secrecy," says Mani Mitchell, president of OII New Zealand.

"If we are going to change anything it is to help parents be comfortable with a child who is different. Helping parents find a different language to talk to their kids."

Mitchell says society advocates acceptance of racial difference but has trouble accepting sexual difference. "We don't deal with racism by turning everybody brown."

Advocacy groups believe the continuing use of the medical term "disorder of sex development" perpetuates stigma and helps persuade parents their child has a problem that needs to be fixed.

The federal government is taking steps to help reduce this stigma. From July 1, the new federal Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender will allow Australians to tick a third box, the "X" box, denoting "Indeterminate/Intersex/Unspecified" on all government documents, including passports.

Also The Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Bill 2013, which is expected to be passed by the Senate this week, will give intersex people legal protection against discrimination for the first time in Australia.

But Andie Hider says governments need to go further. "Do we really need to have male or female on a driver's licence or a birth certificate?"

Indeed, some intersex people see debates about subjects such as different and same-sex marriage as absurd. "Every relationship I have is going to be part heterosexual and part same-sex." Briffa jokes: "Maybe I can marry myself."

Andrew Bock is a Melbourne journalist.
<http://m.theage.com.au/national/it-takes-more-than-two-20130619-2oj8v.html>

Ed – there's also a video interview of Christy online as part of the story
<http://media.theage.com.au/news/national-news/my-life-with-androgen-insensitivity-syndrome-4503360.html> – thanks for the plug!!

Call to end intersex genital operations

Andrew Bock June 20, 2013



In a submission to a recent Senate inquiry the organisation compared such surgery to 'infant genital mutilation'.

Advocacy groups have called for an end to genital surgery on infants with intersex conditions, saying many operations are not medically necessary and are performed to reinforce a particular gender.

"No genital surgery is life-preserving," says Gina Wilson, president of Organisation Intersex International in Australia. "It's cosmetic and normalising."

In a submission to a recent Senate inquiry the organisation compared such surgery to "infant genital mutilation".

Ms Wilson said surgeons should wait until a child reached an age of informed consent. The term intersex refers to people with genetic, hormonal or genital features that are not completely male or female, or a mixture of both.

Andie Hider, vice-president and medical liaison representative for the Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome Support Group of Australia, said: "Unless there is significant impairment that will cause ongoing health concerns until it is rectified, I don't think there is a justifiable reason to operate."

The group, which represents one category of intersex conditions, has called for a moratorium on non-urgent medical intervention. The calls come as new federal government guidelines that allow Australians to tick a third box, the "X" box, signifying "indeterminate/intersex/unspecified" on all government documents and passports, take effect on July 1.

The Senate this week is also expected to pass the the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Bill 2013, giving intersex people legal protection against discrimination for the first time in Australia.

Medical studies estimate there are between one in 250 births for milder intersex conditions, to one in 4500 births for rarer conditions. This means intersex conditions are more common than Down syndrome.

Melbourne's Royal Children's Hospital performs one or two gonadectomies a year on infants with undescended testes. It also performs 10 to 15 genital reconstruction operations a year, often on girls under the age of two.

Ms Wilson points to several studies showing dissatisfaction among people with congenital adrenal hyperplasia who had surgery as infants.

<http://m.theage.com.au/national/call-to-end-intersex-genital-operations-20130619-2ojdr.html>

Living outside 'male or female'



Ed – nice tie, Tony!

7:30 Report: Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Broadcast: 08/07/2013

Reporter: Monique Schafter

Transgender, intersex and gender diverse people have received greater recognition by federal and state laws, and we hear from some of the people helping redefine notions of sex and gender.

Transcript

CHRIS UHLMANN, PRESENTER: Most people are born clearly male or female, but some aren't. These who don't fit either category face daily challenges living in a society divided into men and women, from identity in official documents to which changeroom to use.

But now transgender, intersex and gender diverse people are being recognised in the eyes of the law.

Monique Schafter reports.

NORRIE: When I was a child though I wasn't happy with boy roles and not being allowed to play dolls and stuff. I seemed to identify much more with the feminine side of things and patterned myself on my mother.

MONIQUE SCHAFTER, REPORTER:
Sydney's Norrie was registered male at birth, but as a child began a lifelong quest to discover his or her true identity.

NORRIE: I identified I guess as a transsexual in my early 20s. I had friends that were trannies. I went on hormones. I was doing drag shows. So, had the sex change and discovered that being stuck in one role wasn't really good for me. And I thought about what gender would I want to be, given the option and it's a whole person. It's male and female in some ways; in other ways, it's neither. Physically, I'm neuter. (Laughs) Like your pet. Socially, I'm both.

MONIQUE SCHAFTER: In 2009, Norrie began a journey to be legally recognised as neither male nor female. Norrie applied to the Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages to have her ID certificate changed to "sex non-specific", and in 2010, became the first person recognised as neither man nor woman in the eyes of the New South Wales Government. But four months later, the Registry wrote to Norrie after receiving legal advice and said the change had been issued in error and was invalid.

NORRIE: When it happened, I couldn't see a way forward. I was just down in a deep, dark, black hole. It was a strange time. It really felt like I had in a way been socially murdered or socially assassinated.

MONIQUE SCHAFTER: Norrie appealed the decision to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal, but the case was dismissed. So Norrie went to the NSW Supreme Court, and on May 31st this year, won.

NORRIE: Oh, we'd won! After so long. It seems a court has finally said, "Of course sex is not just

binary. Don't be silly."

EMILY CHRISTIE, SOLICITOR, DLA PIPER:
This is the first time that a court anywhere in Australia has recognised that somebody can be something other than male or female. It breaks open this binary idea of sex, binary idea of gender identity and said that actually, yes, there are some people in the world who don't fit into these two categories and that the law can and should recognise them.

MONIQUE SCHAFTER: The matter was sent back to the tribunal to decide on an official sexless designation for Norrie, but the legal battle continues. The Registrar of Births, Deaths & Marriages has now applied to the High Court for special leave to appeal.

NORRIE: Government had said they were gonna do this thing and had done it, and then pulled it out from under me. "No, we couldn't have done that. You're wrong, you're not getting it."

MONIQUE SCHAFTER: Norrie's case only applies to people who've had what's commonly known as sex reassignment surgery and choose to identify as sex non-specific.

NORRIE: If you're gonna specify in terms of male or female, I'm not specifically male or female.

MONIQUE SCHAFTER: However there are others, like Tony Briffa, whose biological sex is not distinctly male or female who are also pushing for real recognition.

TONY BRIFFA, HOBSONS BAY, VICTORIA:
People that are intersex like me are a combination of male and female. We were just born that way. That's what nature made us. And we should be able to be recognised as a combination of male and female if we want to.

MONIQUE SCHAFTER: Councillor Tony Briffa, former Mayor of Hobsons Bay, Victoria, was born intersex. Doctors made the decision the family should raise the baby as a girl and surgically removed Tony's male attributes. Tony lived as a woman for 30 years.

TONY BRIFFA: I had a wonderful childhood as Antoinette. Grew up as a girl, had wonderful experiences as a woman. Then lived a few years as a man to see what that was like and I took some testosterone at the time for a few years to see what that was like. And that was an interesting experience, but that wasn't the full me either. I just want a birth certificate that actually reflects what I am, and that is a combination of male and female. It's not really too much to ask.

MONIQUE SCHAFTER: For people who aren't male or female, everyday life throws up a number of challenges.

How do you negotiate things like public toilets and changerooms and those sorts of parts of society?

NORRIE: Um, I go where I need to when I need to and just keep my head up high and keep to myself. ... Sometimes I've been made to feel uncomfortable in the ladies' changeroom at the pool. So I started just using the handicap one, which is also the child changing one, so it seems like an appropriate third option.

TONY BRIFFA: I went through a body scanner at Sydney Airport and obviously the staff there realised that I wasn't exactly male. So I got asked the question: "Excuse me, are you a man or a woman?" And that's a trick question for someone like me. And I ended up saying, "Well, I'm a woman," because I knew that that was gonna be the easier option for me if I was going to be searched because I don't have typical male genitalia. So I then was searched, unfortunately, by Customs. But that was OK because that's how I present. But, incredibly, they didn't search my backpack. They just wanted to search my person to work out what I was. And it's all about my sex.

EMILY CHRISTIE: There is a lot of stigma and a lot of discrimination towards people who don't fit into our ideas of who we should be and what sex is and so people tend to stay hidden.

MONIQUE SCHAFTER: For people like Norrie and Tony Briffa, the fight for legal recognition is far from over.

TONY BRIFFA: Intersex people have larger

issues such as the medicalisation that we receive as children in terms of the surgeries, the non-consensual surgeries that are irreversible. And in things like marriage - you know, when John Howard changed the Marriage Act to specify that marriage was between a man and a woman, what the hell does that mean for someone like me?

CHRIS UHLMANN: Monique Schafter reporting.

New protections for sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex people pass the House

Attorney-General
Minister for Emergency Management
Minister for the Public Service and Integrity
The Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP

Minister for Mental Health and Ageing
Minister for Housing and Homelessness
Minister for Social Inclusion
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Mental Health Reform
The Hon Mark Butler MP

30 May 2013

The Gillard Government is moving to better protect Australians from discrimination, through legislation passed by the House of Representatives today.

The Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Bill will make it unlawful to discriminate against someone on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status.

"These new protections are long overdue and I'm delighted we are bringing them one step closer," Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus QC said.

"The absence of these protections at the Federal level means that many members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community have been victims of discrimination when accessing accommodation, healthcare, and everyday consumer services.

"The Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs has tabled its report and urged passage of the Bill this parliamentary term."

The Attorney-General also announced the Government would look to move amendments to the Bill in the Senate to insert a qualification on the exemption for religious organisations for the provision of Commonwealth-funded aged care services.

This amendment would reflect the views of the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, which found "it is fundamentally important that all older Australians maintain the right to access aged care services on an equal basis."

The Committee noted that "in some areas of Australia there is very limited choice of aged care service providers, and hence does not agree with the argument that individuals will always be able to choose a non-religious service provider should they so wish."

Minister for Ageing Mark Butler, said the proposed amendments would ensure older couples and individuals would no longer need to worry about experiencing discrimination when accessing aged care services.

"While most aged care service providers are accepting of residents regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status, we think there should be legal protection that ensures such discrimination cannot occur," Mr Butler said.

"When such services are provided with tax payer dollars, it is not appropriate for providers to discriminate in the provision of those services."

The legislation will also protect same-sex de facto couples from discrimination by extending the ground of marital status in the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 to include relationship status.

The new protections build upon the Government's reforms to eighty-five Commonwealth Acts which removed discrimination against same-sex couples and their children.

Work continues on the draft Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill following the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee's report which recommended significant policy, definitional and technical amendments.

While this work is being completed, the current Bill will provide important protections against discrimination in our community.

Lawsuit Filed after Doctors Performed Intersex Surgery



6:10 AM, May 15, 2013

Columbia, SC (WLTX) - Two South Carolina parents said the Department of Social Services allowed doctors to perform an unnecessary surgery on their child before they adopted him--and now they've filed a lawsuit over the incident.

Pam and Mark Crawford said doctors removed the child's penis when he was 16-months-old.

According to the Crawfords, their child, who's referred to in court documents as "M.C.," was born with an intersex condition where his sexual anatomy doesn't fit typical definitions of male or female.

The Crawford's also said they knew they were adopting an intersex child, but the state said the child was a female.

M.C. is now 8-years-old.

Anne-Tammar Mattis with Advocates for Informed Choice said doctors performed sex-assignment surgery on the baby.

"The medical record makes it clear that doctors felt this child could be raised as a boy or as a girl," Mattis said. "There was no compelling reason to go either way. And why they decided to do irreversible genital surgery, knowing that is unclear."

On Tuesday morning, the Crawfords filed a lawsuit against DSS, Greenville Hospital System, and the Medical University of South Carolina.

The Crawfords said they want justice.

"This was a careless and reckless action by bringing a lawsuit against the defendants," Mark Crawford said. "We hope to put other doctors, hospitals and state agencies on notice that they cannot mutilate children without being held accountable."

M.C. was raised as a girl, but gradually began wanting to be a boy.

"We have our anxieties for how we raise him and about his future, but we try to help him focus on the positive opportunities," Crawford said.

The State Department of Social Services declined to comment on why the surgery was performed on M.C. A spokesperson said it is against department policy to comment on lawsuits.

Lawyers for the Crawfords said these are the first lawsuits of their kind filed in the United States.

<http://www.wltx.com/news/article/236687/2/Lawsuit-Filed-After-Doctors-Performed-Intersex-Surgery>

When to do Surgery on a Child with 'Both' Genitalia

Understanding the case of an intersex child whose adoptive parents claim was robbed of his genitals, and of the right to decide what should happen to his body

Alice Dreger May 16 2013, 9:13 AM ET



At 16 months-old, a foster child in South Carolina known as M.C. underwent genital cosmetic surgery. The goal was to refashion M.C.'s "ambiguous" genitals to look feminine, in order to match the child's female gender assignment. M.C., now eight years old, though, identifies as a boy.

His adoptive parents, Mark and Pam Crawford, believe the state was wrong to allow the surgery and that doctors were wrong not to inform those making the decision that the surgery was not medically necessary. A recently-filed lawsuit, brought on behalf of M.C., alleges that doctors "robbed M.C. not only of his healthy genital tissue but also of the opportunity to decide what should happen to his own body."

Doctors have believed for many years, based on little to no evidence, that children require male-typical or female-typical genitals in order to grow up psychologically healthy.

This case is as groundbreaking as claimed by the two groups representing the plaintiff, Advocates for Informed Choice (an intersex legal rights group) and the Southern Poverty Law Center. Never before in U.S. litigation has a child's right to genital integrity been asserted in this fashion, and so the case is likely to cause quite a stir among pediatric groups treating these kinds of children. Unfortunately the case is also causing a host of misunderstandings.

First off, contrary to some news reports and commentaries, M.C. was not born "with both sets of genitals," male and female. As I've explained elsewhere, the only way you could be born with "both sets of genitals" is if you had two bottoms. The clitoris and the penis are homologues -- they are the same organ developmentally -- so you get

one or the other, or one in-between organ. Similarly, the labia majora and the scrotum are homologues -- so you get either a set of labia majora, a scrotum, or something in between. But you can't have all the female parts (clitoris, labia majora, etc.) and all the male parts (penis, scrotum, etc.) on one person; even if there were room enough, sexual physiology wouldn't allow it.

What people mean when they say a person "was born with both sets of genitals" is that a child may be born with a phallus that looks a lot like a penis plus a vagina (the tubular organ that goes from the outside of the body towards the uterus, if there is a uterus). This can happen because of hormones, in conditions like congenital adrenal hyperplasia and partial androgen insensitivity syndrome. But to say that gives you "both sets of genitals" is to pretend that somehow all that matters to males is their penises and all that matters to females in their vaginas. In fact, many of us women also care about our clitorises. (For that matter, many men care about their scrotums.)

This then leads to another misunderstanding with M.C.'s case: some folks seem to be commenting as if, had M.C. come to see himself as the female gender he was originally assigned, we would not care that surgeons had removed most of M.C.'s phallus. In other words, we are supposed only to care about the removal of phallic tissue in this case because M.C. is a boy. But in fact, we should very much care about phallic tissue even when it comes in (or off) a female. When Mr. Rogers sang, "Boys are fancy on the outside, girls are fancy on the inside," he was prepping his audience to need Dr. Ruth. All girls are entitled to be fancy --sometimes super fancy -- on the outside, too. Many intersex women who had their clitorises surgically shortened in infancy are legitimately angry about having had tissue (and thus sensation) taken from them.

Because M.C. has rejected the gender assignment given to him, this case is also causing some people to confuse intersex (sex anatomy that is read as being not typical to males or females) with transgender (rejection of the gender assignment given to a person at birth). M.C. is a relatively rare case in involving both intersex and transgender. Far more often, the concerns of intersex and

transgender people represent opposite sides of the same coin: intersex people get surgeries they don't want, and transgender people can't get the surgeries they do want. M.C. should certainly be supported in his self-identification as a boy, but one would hope that the courts might understand his rights to have been violated even if he had grown to be a girl.

In that sense, it will be interesting to see whether the courts agree with the plaintiff's lawyers that the 14th Amendment is at play here, and whether they will limit that Amendment's scope to cases where "a boy lost his penis." If, in fact, they understand the case as being an unfair situation in which "a child lost healthy genital tissue for no legitimate medical reason without fully informed consent," then the implications will be much broader, perhaps touching even on routine neonatal male circumcision.

Of course, whether there was a legitimate medical reason will be one issue with which the courts will wrestle. Doctors have believed for many years, based on little to no evidence (and in some cases, faked evidence), that children require male-typical or female-typical genitals, matched to their gender assignments, in order to grow up psychologically healthy. Although the Southern Poverty Law Center's involvement might lead some to believe this case represents a sort of surgical hate crime, in fact, surgeons have performed these types of surgery in the belief they do so in the patients' best interests. They really care about these children.

But recently -- since M.C. was born -- major medical consensus has moved away from the assumption that genital-normalizing surgery is required in all cases of intersex. This case is likely to drive surgeons to be even more hesitant to remove healthy genital tissue and healthy gonads from children like M.C. Ideally, the case will also lead more parents like Mark and Pam Crawford to understand that parenting sometimes involves forms of unpredictability that cannot, and even should not, be made to disappear.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/05/when-to-do-surgery-on-a-child-with-both-genitalia/275884/>

NSW Govt Wants Intersex Excluded from Protections

Ed – kudos to Morgan on the next two articles!



May 20, 2013

Author // Ron Hughes

A NSW government bid to have intersex excluded from federal anti-discrimination laws has provoked a strong response from activists and the Greens.

The O'Farrell government's submission to the inquiry into the federal Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) complains that federal rules on exemptions from the act are stricter than state exemptions and therefore there would be an "overlap" with state and federal legislation.

The submission also requests that intersex people be removed from protections on the grounds that "there has been inadequate consultation on the proposal that intersex status be a protected attribute".

The submission goes on to say "It [intersex status] was not included as a protected attribute in the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012. This aspect of the Bill has therefore not been subject to the same level of consultation as has occurred in relation to the other protected attributes proposed."

OII Australia, the main body which advocates on behalf of intersex people, described the submission as "hugely disappointing as well as inaccurate".

"Firstly, the state government is incorrect to say that intersex was not consulted upon until the SDA

amendment inquiry," OII Australia secretary Morgan told SX.

"Intersex was previously included as a gender identity in the Exposure Draft of the Human Rights and Anti Discrimination Bill, much like how intersex appears as "indeterminate sex" in transgender provisions in state anti discrimination legislation."

"The proposed legislation at that time, like that in NSW, lacks utility because it misconstrues intersex as a gender identity. Intersex is about the body, not identity. Intersex people have as diverse a range of gender identities as everyone else," Morgan said.

The OII lobbied for a change that better fit the reality of intersex circumstances and the Senate agreed.

Morgan blamed opposition to the bill on "one or two fringe Christian groups".

"Most Christian groups recognise the nature of intersex and haven't objected. So the state government is keeping strange bedfellows," Morgan said.

Morgan said the NSW government had done nothing to support intersex people.

"The marriage equality bill was full of holes, not recognising that some of us don't have a binary gender on our birth certificates," Morgan said.

"The Victorian government published decision making guidelines on healthcare frameworks for intersex infants and kids in February but there's no sign of NSW doing anything like it.

"No intersex organisations get any state funding. So it's part of a pattern. There's just lip service to genuine LGBTI support."

Greens MP Cate Faehrmann (pictured) objected strongly to the government's submission saying intersex people are "some of the most marginalised and oppressed in our modern society."

She accused Attorney-General Greg Smith of being “anti-equality” and said the NSW government are hiding behind constitutional issues when they really just want to maintain the status quo.

“If the NSW Government was serious about addressing these constitutional concerns they would move to address the lack of protection for intersex people in the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act,” Faehrmann said.

“The community has every right to be outraged the NSW Government is lobbying the Commonwealth to maintain these last-century pacifiers to the far-right,” she said.

“We're in an age where a majority support full equality, including a Premier that supports marriage equality, but we have senior Ministers advocating for discrimination against intersex people to continue unchecked.

“The people of NSW actually celebrate diversity and want intersex people protected in the same way other groups are, but the NSW Government submission is making excuses for continued cruel discrimination.”

Morgan concluded that OII would “love” to speak to the state government about intersex issues, but were “deeply grateful” to the federal government for listening to their voices.

<http://gaynewsnetwork.com.au/news/northern-territory/11032-nsw-govt-wants-intersex-excluded-from-protections.html>

Australia can lead the way for intersex people



Our lives are medicalised, and our voices rarely heard. If the sex discrimination amendment bill passes, this will be a huge win for all of us

Morgan Carpenter

guardian.co.uk, Tuesday 18 June 2013

Australians have had had Australians have had had "X" passports for a decade.

These are heady times for Australian intersex people. Last week, the Senate issued its second report backing an intersex-inclusive anti discrimination bill – the sex discrimination amendment bill – and the attorney general published Commonwealth sex and gender recognition guidelines.

This has been possible as part of a government commitment to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) inclusion, even while public awareness of intersex remains sketchy.

You see, our lives are medicalised, and our voices rarely heard. This limited understanding was recently exemplified by a press agency report published globally this month: "Hong Kong man, 66, finds he's a woman". His surprise late discovery made him a news story and a freak show. The man had a swollen abdomen and was found to have an ovarian cyst, congenital adrenal hyperplasia – "which gave her the appearance of a man" – and Turners syndrome (no full second sex chromosome), "making him by definition a woman".

In actuality, he is an intersex man. His rare combination of diagnoses made him an "intriguing" case. Most medical research on or affecting intersex lies in medical case studies. As bioethics professor Alice Dreger has pointed out, some of it is even faked.

Doctors say he decided to continue "perceiving himself as having a male gender" (of course), even while scores of press reports state he's really a woman. Doubts caused by his intersex status outweigh a manhood based on birth assignment, identity documents, rearing, socialisation, beard, penis and self-identification.

Intersex people have queer bodies. We disprove a binary worldview. Some of us also have queer identities, reflecting our embodiment. This is why intersex is a separate attribute in the sex discrimination amendment. It's not a matter of sexual orientation or gender identity – we have just as diverse sexualities and gender identities as everyone else. It's not even, as the Coalition minority report suggests, a matter of "sexual identity". It's about innate physical sex characteristics, and the homophobic or misogynistic treatment we often have to face.

Back in late 2012, the draft of the human rights and anti-discrimination bill suggested that intersex people were a gender identity, protected from discrimination only when "genuinely" identifying as male or female. That excluded the most obviously different amongst us, the most vulnerable, as well as "non-binary" trans people. The bill currently before the Senate recognises the biological basis of intersex, and protects all of us. The bill itself has cross-party support. If it passes, it will be a world first.

Discrimination impacts our employment prospects, healthcare, education and interpersonal relationships; if passed, the legislation will really help. Alongside it, the new federal sex and gender recognition guidelines respect our diversity. Some intersex adults born in Victoria have had sex non-specific birth certificates for a decade. We've had "X" passports for as long, and the current government made access much easier in 2011. Now, that choice is to be rolled out across federal services.

At a time when our first woman prime minister has had to endure unprecedented scrutiny over her own sex and body, the government's leadership is welcome. It is to be congratulated for consulting, listening, and acting.

But there remain fundamental issues to resolve. Unnecessary cosmetic surgery leading to lifelong medicalisation is still carried out on the genitals of intersex infants to improve their marriageability and prospects. The man in Hong Kong would, if newly born here, be assigned female and undergo "therapeutic" surgeries to appear female, including clitoris reduction. That's before any clear

understanding of his future gender identity, and despite studies showing poor outcomes regardless of identity.

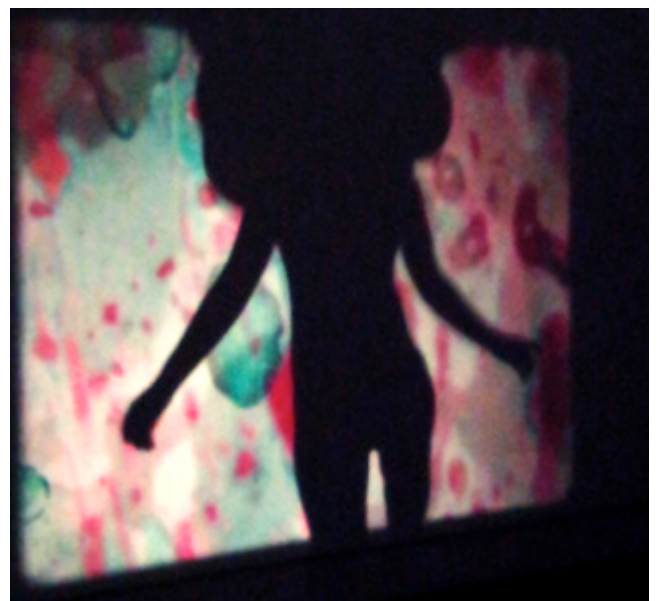
A ground-breaking case was recently filed in the US. We're watching with interest, but the chief justice of the family court of Australia referred this year to a case of our own, of a child with congenital adrenal hyperplasia. The adolescent, raised a girl and subjected to a clitorrectomy in infancy, was suicidal. The case was brought to authorise a change of legal sex to male. The court approved this – and also his sterilisation. There was no medical necessity for the sterilisation, it was to align his body and his legal sex.

A Senate Inquiry on involuntary sterilisation will report next month. We need leadership here, too, and autonomy over our own bodies.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jun/18/intersex-people-australia>

Stitch in Time: Expanded cinema performance about intersex bodies after medical pathologisation.

By: Bonnie Hart



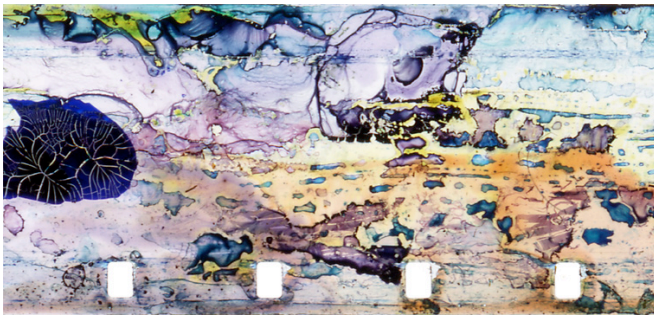
Bonnie Hart has created an expanded cinema live-action performance about her personal experience of

living in an intersex body.

The work is a presentation of the intersex body within time and space. Identification and Identity evolving from past actions and attitudes - moving beyond the reactionary to the self-emanating. The bi-polar gender construct and the non-dual spectral reality is explored through the use of iridescent hand-painted colour alternating black and white footage.

Exploring the historical medical treatment of intersex bodies, diagnosis, observation and surgery, this expanded cinema work uses multiple film projections into space and directly onto the artists body. The artist's body performs a 'reality intervention' to the projected image as it physically changes to course of events to create a space that has wellbeing and luminous inner wholeness at the core.

The performance was originally devised for the EXIST-ENCE5 Live Art Festival in Brisbane during June and has been shown at Fehily Contemporary Gallery, Melbourne and PACT Theatre, Sydney throughout July.



Bonnie's practice is an assemblage of digital and photochemical filmmaking, music, performance art and visual art. With a strong DIY handmade ethic using found materials and superceded technologies, her performance is a mimetic outward expression of a deeply introspective inquiry. Her current solo project Onnie Art is a fusion of performance art stagecraft, the textural beauty of handmade celluloid and a tragicomedy of continually malfunctioning mechanical equipment – loosely termed 'expanded cinema'.

Shot of The Day: Top Model Contestant Comes Out as Intersex

By: [Michelle Garcia](#)

Mon, 2013-07-08 14:14



The lead contender for *Poland's Next Top Model* is 22, strikingly beautiful, and happens to be intersex.

Michalina Manios, said that she was born with both male and female genitalia, and was officially considered male by doctors until she was 18. She revealed her past on an episode Sunday night

"I was born a hermaphrodite and when the doctors first saw me they assumed I was a boy as I had male genitalia," she said according to the *Daily Mail*. "But I grew up feeling more feminine than male and so four years ago I had an operation to remove the male bits and changed my name."

<http://www.shewired.com/shot-day/2013/07/08/shot-day-top-model-contestant-comes-out-intersex>



Feminine: Poland's Next Top Model favourite Michalina Manios stunned judges last night when she revealed that she was born a hermaphrodite and was considered male until just four years ago

She told the panel: 'I was born a hermaphrodite and when the doctors first saw me they assumed I was a boy as I had male genitalia.'

'But I grew up feeling more feminine than male and so four years ago I had an operation to remove the male bits and changed my name.'

The beauty has proved a hit with Polish supermodel Joanna Krupa, who hosts the show's Polish edition.



Front runner: The 22-year-old beauty has proved a hit with supermodel Joanna Krupa, who hosts the show

**'I always felt more feminine than male':
Poland's Next Top Model favourite tells judges
how she was born a hermaphrodite**

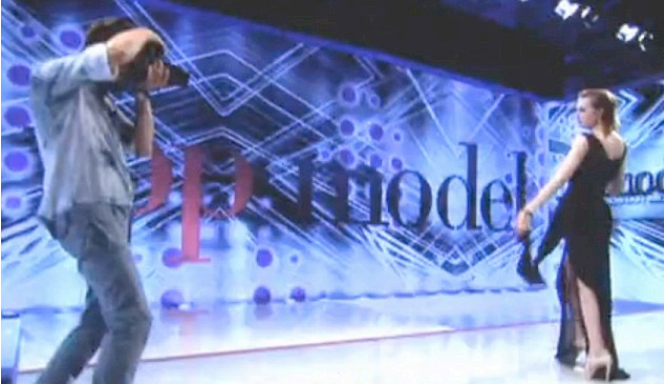
By Tamara Abraham

UPDATED: 17:22 GMT, 9 September 2011

With her flawless skin and versatile look, it is little surprise that Michalina Manios is a favourite to win Poland's Next Top Model.

But the 22-year-old stunned viewers last night when she revealed to judges that she was born a hermaphrodite.

She explained that she had both male and female genitalia at birth, but was officially considered male until four years ago because doctors had initially assumed she was a boy.



Pole position: With her flawless skin and versatile look, it is little surprise that Miss Manios is tipped to win

She is joined on the judging panel by fashion designer Dawid Woliński, journalist Karolina Korwin-Piotrowska and photographer Marcin Tyszka.

Supermodel Anja Rubik has also appeared on the show as as a celebrity guest mentor.

Miss Manios is not the first transgender model to make waves on the fashion scene in recent years. Brazilian supermodel Lea T, who has posed alongside Kate Moss and is muse to Givenchy designer Riccardo Tisci, was born male.



Versatile: Judges have praised Miss Manios for her ability to look different in every shoot she has done so far

And androgynous male model Andrej Pejic, the current darling of the fashion world, models more womenswear than he does menswear thanks to his delicate features, slender build and long blonde hair.

Nor is Miss Manios the first to appear in a Next Top Model show. In 2008, 22-year-old Isis caused a stir when she appeared on the show's flagship American version, hosted by Tyra Banks.

Read more:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2035608/Polands-Next-Top-Model-favourite-tells-born-hermaphrodite.html#ixzz2YUWNable>

Who Was Stella Walsh? The Story of the Intersex Olympian

Matt Tulis, June 27, 2013



PART ONE

Stella Walsh walked out of Uncle Bill's Discount Department Store with a bag full of ribbons. It was the evening of Dec. 4, 1980. The sun was long gone and a chill was filling the air. Two weeks earlier, she had given the key to the city of Cleveland to the Polish men's national basketball team. In a couple days, she planned to give these ribbons to her native country's national women's team before an exhibition game at Kent State University.

Walsh, or Stanisława Walasiewiczówna, her birth name, was Cleveland's No. 1 Polish-American. Although born in Poland in 1911, she had lived 68 of her 69 years in the United States, the vast majority in Cleveland, in the neighborhood that was now called Slavic Village.

At a time when people still debated whether women should compete in sports, she was supreme.

In her adopted hometown, she was famous, and beloved, on par with other notable Cleveland sports legends like Lou Boudreau or Otto Graham. At the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles, she won a gold medal in the 100-meter dash for Poland, and won silver in the same event four years later in Berlin. She also won another seven medals in varying distances during the off year, lesser-known Women's Olympics, five of them gold.

Her Olympic performance alone, however, does not do justice to her athletic career. At a time when people still debated whether women should compete in sports at all, she was supreme. She reportedly won more than 5,000 races, earned hundreds of trophies, officially set 20 world records in track, was the first woman to run the 100-yard dash in less than 11 seconds and one of the first to run 100 meters in less than 12. Her world record in the 220-yard dash went unbroken for 15 years.

Although Babe Didrikson is now usually considered the greatest female athlete of the early 20th century, 50 or 60 years ago that honor was often given to Walsh, who the press sometimes referred to as the "female Jim Thorpe," for she was just as good on the basketball court or softball diamond or on ice skates as she was on the track. From the time she was a young girl, sports was all she knew and all she did. Even at 69, she still raced in masters events, challenged and beat men in arm wrestling at the bar, and frequently raced school-age kids on the fields of her youth and won, just as she always had.

Despite her age, she remained athletic, a fit 5'8, less than 150 pounds. On this night, she wore her trademark white slacks, blue blazer, white tennis shoes and blazing red lipstick. Matched with a platinum blonde wig, which covered her thinning gray hair, from a distance she looked 20 years younger. Not yet retired, after she finished her errands she planned on returning home to care for her aging mother in the family home they still shared, then going to bed and waking up early to

work out before heading to a local high school track to coach young female runners.

As she neared her 1973 Oldsmobile Omega, two young men approached her. Cleveland was in tough shape. The city had filed for bankruptcy and many older residents had fled for the suburbs. Older urban neighborhoods, like Slavic Village, deteriorated and were no longer safe. One of the men grabbed for her purse, but Walsh fought back. She *always* fought back, whether it was against the young urchin who stole a box of chocolate from her car in 1936, or the man who tried to grab her purse in a park in the 1960s.

As she struggled to hold on to her purse, the younger of the two men, Donald Cassidy, took out a gun. Stella grabbed it. The gun went off and a bullet hit Stella in the chest. Shocked at what had happened, the two men ran. They didn't get the \$250 that was in a pocket in her slacks. They didn't get anything.

Walsh stumbled, fell down beside her car, and quickly lost consciousness. Eventually a man found her lying beside her car. He went inside Uncle Bill's and told an off-duty police officer who worked as a security guard for the store. The cop called for an ambulance, but it never came. Another police officer rushed her to St. Alexis Hospital in a cruiser.

Three hours later, while still in surgery, Walsh died. The bullet had ripped through her chest and tore an artery. She had finally run into something that was faster than she was. And just like that, the life of one of the most storied athletes ever to come out of Cleveland was over.

Her story, however, was just getting started.

PART TWO

For as long as anyone who knew Stella Walsh remembered, there had been talk of her femininity, or rather, her lack of femininity. By adolescence, her features had coarsened, and even though Walsh was the best baseball player at South High School, and played on the boys' team, the young girl with the big, wide-set eyes, thick nose and heavy jaw became a target. They called her "Bull

Montana" the stage name for wrestler and actor Lewis Montagna, best known for playing roles like thugs, henchman, and cave men. It was not a compliment.

There were other nicknames too, even more cruel and obscene. At least that's what Casimir Bielen, an old friend who Walsh visited before stopping at Uncle Bill's, said after she died. He didn't go into detail, but he told reporters that neighborhood kids said mean things to Stella about her "mutation or deformity."

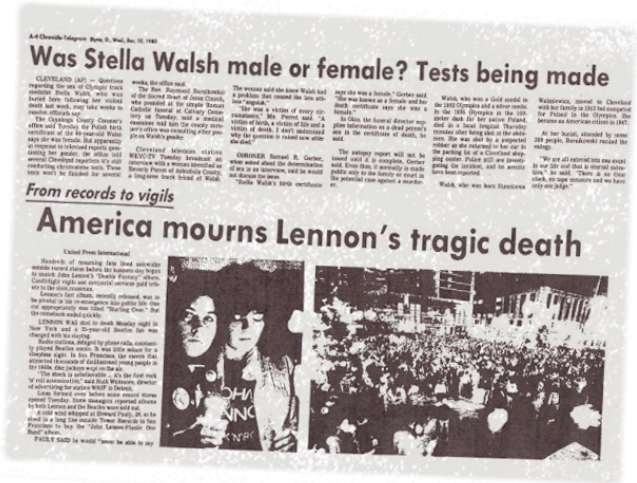
Both channels reported that Walsh's autopsy showed the female sprinter had male sex organs.

Bielen spoke out in response to TV news reports the night before Walsh's funeral. Although the news elsewhere that night was dominated by another murder — Beatle John Lennon's — in Cleveland the big story was Walsh. Someone in the coroner's office had leaked results from the autopsy to two TV stations, WKYC-TV Channel 3 and WEWS Channel 5. Both channels reported that Walsh's autopsy showed the female sprinter had male sex organs.

When reporters asked Samuel Gerber, Cuyahoga County's coroner for 44 years, about the determination of Stella's sex, he spoke cryptically, saying, "Stella Walsh's birth certificate says she was a female. She was known as a female and her death certificate says she was a female." He declined to comment further. Left unspoken was the result of the autopsy and what that indicated. In Cleveland, a city that had once revered her, "Stella's a fella" became a popular catch phrase, headline, insult and joke.

The Polish community was outraged. To them, Walsh was still a hero, a beloved volunteer who worked with young Polish track aspirants for the Polish Falcons Association. Bielen, the editor of Nationality Newspapers & Services, who had once hired Walsh as sports editor, joined more than 400 others in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church for her funeral. Virtually every press release written about Walsh over the last decade had come from Bielen, first scratched out on one of his yellow legal pads, and then typed carefully using his typewriter and letterhead. He watched

from the front of the church, and as TV news cameramen set up to record the event, attendees began yelling and shouting.



"Did God do this to me?" she asked Conyers.

"No," Conyers told her friend. "It was a mistake."

After watching the news, Bielen's outrage increased and he became even more determined to defend Walsh's reputation. He and others of his generation in Cleveland's Polish community revered her. He remembered the elation and pride that accompanied her victories on the track, and Bielen wasn't going to let anyone take that away.



"Get out of here," they screamed.

"You've got a lot of nerve after that garbage last night," another said.

— The cameramen stayed and the service eventually began. The Rev. Raymond Barnikowski, Sacred Heart's pastor, delivered the eulogy. His words seemed directed at those questioning Walsh's life. "We are all entered into one event in our life and that is eternal salvation," he said. "There is no time clock, no tape measure and we have only one judge."

After the funeral, Channel 3 filed suit against the coroner's office to have the autopsy report released, claiming it was a public record. And while Channel 5 backpedaled and sportscaster Gib Shanley criticized his station for reporting the story, Channel 3 refused to back down.

That night, after Walsh was buried in Calvary Cemetery, Channel 3 broadcast an interview with Beverly Perret Conyers, an old friend of Walsh's. Conyers said Walsh was a victim of circumstance, and admitted she had a problem that caused her great anguish.

"The news people agonized on whether they had enough facts — they wanted to be sure," said WKYC Television Vice President Neal Van Ells on a special news segment about the controversy two weeks later. "We didn't race into this story." It was an interesting choice of words; racing, and speed, was what made Walsh who she was. Walsh's family was beside itself. While her mother still did not speak English, her sister did. Clara Battiatto said she would do anything to sue Channel 3.

With some embarrassment, Conyers remembered that as a 10-year-old, she once saw Walsh changing clothes in a locker room at the old Woodland Bath House in Cleveland. She saw Walsh's "mutation," as she called it, making her one of the few who knew the details of her secret. Perhaps that is why, many years later, Walsh spoke to Conyers about her condition, one of the few times in her life she ever discussed the subject.

"They made something of nothing," she said. The news, however unwelcome, forced a thorough reconsideration of Walsh's athletic achievements. Reporters started seeking out runners who had lost to her, such as Hilda Strike, a Canadian who

finished second to Walsh in the 1932 Olympics, asking what they thought of Walsh now. Strike made it clear she thought she deserved Walsh's medal, but would not ask for it, saying, "They know where I am." Those who knew of Walsh's place in the history of women's athletics could not help but look back at her career through a new lens, one that made them wonder, was she a cheat?

While everyone waited on the autopsy report, which was incomplete pending chromosomal testing, there was another question still unanswered.

Who was Stella Walsh?

PART THREE

In August of 1931, Walsh wanted nothing more than to be "Miss Stadium," or "Queen of Cleveland," a title due to be awarded in a contest as part of Cleveland's 135th anniversary and celebrating the opening of the new Cleveland Stadium on the Lake Erie waterfront. Aside from the honor of being crowned queen, the winner also won a new car.

Walsh was already perhaps the best-known woman in the city and one of Cleveland's most prominent residents. For over the past year and a half her name had regularly appeared in the newspaper, often in banner headlines that stretched across the sports page.

Stella Walsh Cracks Record

Stella Walsh Flies To Two World Records At Philly

And Whirlwind Stella Looked Back at Rivals

Stella Walsh Is Radio Star Saturday: Girl Sprinter's Race at Hall to Go on Air

No woman had ever run so fast, and Walsh had her first world record.



Already a local legend who had long dominated area track meets, she had burst onto the national scene first in 1930, at the Millrose Games in Madison Square Garden, running the 50-yard dash in six seconds flat. No woman had ever run so fast, and Walsh had her first world record.

Later that night, reporters descended upon the family's home on Clement Avenue. Her parents, Julian and Victoria, couldn't speak English, but they sat on the front porch and displayed trophies and medals their daughter had won in local meets and races over the past three or four years. No one called her "Bull Montana" anymore. Now she was the odds-on favorite to win a gold medal in the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles, only the second Olympics in which women were allowed to participate in track events.

One week after her record setting run in New York City, Walsh tied the outdoor mark in the 220-yard dash at the Meadow Brook games in Philadelphia, winning by such a large margin she twice glanced back at her competition. One girl was so demoralized she ended the race in tears.

Now they began calling Walsh other names, like the "Cleveland Flyer," and the "Queen of Sprint." She liked that and liked being seen as a queen

instead of a bull. The girl who had once preferred to spend her days at home found she now enjoyed going out, particularly to sporting events where crowds gathered solely because they wanted to see her.

Although an amateur, Walsh realized her newfound prominence could still turn into something of tangible value. When she learned of the contest and that the prizes for being "Miss Stadium" included a trip and a new car, Walsh entered a new race, one that was equal parts beauty pageant and popularity contest.

"Girls with lots of dimples and personality usually become queens in this sort of thing," wrote a reporter in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, insinuating, of course, that Stella was not that type of girl. And she wasn't. She was well muscled. She had broad shoulders and strong legs. Her unruly black hair did nothing to soften her face. Men admired her, but they didn't ask to walk her home.

So, like she did any time she wanted to win something, she set her mind to it and developed a plan, using her celebrity to her advantage. She canvassed Cleveland, particularly her own neighborhood, collecting votes and selling tickets to the gala celebration at Stadium. Whoever gathered the most of both would be declared the winner.

At the celebration, Walsh sat, anxious, waiting for the crowning of the queen as a host of performers appeared, gymnasts, dancers, even swordsmen and yodelers. Finally, at the very end of the event, organizers called Walsh and the other three "Miss Stadium" finalists to center stage.

Anna Griffith, a demure pianist for the Cleveland Chorus, one of those girls with dimples and personality, received 200,900 votes. She finished second. Walsh received 327,400 votes. First place, as usual.

"She outstripped her competitors in the ticket-selling, vote-getting race about as handily as she has beaten all challengers of her track supremacy," the Plain Dealer story read the following day. There was no mention of dimples.

Still, the crowd cheered. Press photographers snapped her picture as she was wrapped in a robe and a crown was placed on her head. Beaming, she posed for photos.

She had wanted the car. But more than that, she wanted acceptance. And what did this mean, if not that she was accepted?

She was the queen.

By the summer of 1932, with the Olympics scheduled to begin in less than two months, the only thing anyone in Cleveland wanted to know was what country Walsh would represent. In 1930, she had applied to become a U.S. citizen specifically because of the Olympics, but had yet to complete the process and remained officially Polish. However, Walsh told reporters that she planned to run for the U.S.

The Great Depression changed those plans.

The factories and steel mills that for so long had drawn immigrants to Cleveland started closing and laying off workers. Her father Julian was cut back to part time, not enough to pay a mortgage and support a family, which now included Walsh's two younger sisters. Then, one week before Walsh was to take her oath of citizenship, she was laid off from New York Central. The morning she planned to complete her application for citizenship and take her oath, a messenger boy arrived with a telegram from the Polish Consul in New York. The Polish government saw opportunity in her misfortune. They wanted Walsh to remain a citizen and to compete for Poland in the Olympics. So instead of going to the federal court building, Walsh instead went to the Union Terminal train station to catch a train for New York.

"I'm not trying to duck the United States," she said to a reporter before she left. "But I've got myself to look out for. I can't run forever. If a big company like the New York Central can't give me a job, where can I get one?"

Four days later, four days in which Walsh's indecision dominated the Cleveland newspapers,

she announced she would run for Poland. The Polish government offered her something American citizenship did not, the promise of a job and money for her education. She couldn't turn it down. "I am going to run for Poland, but I will always have a warm spot in my heart for Cleveland," she said. "I sure do hate to leave this place."

After competing in the Olympics in Los Angeles, she planned to move to Poland, where she would work, study and continue running. She would make a new life where no one knew her as "Bull Montana," where the only thing anyone knew about her was that she was the fastest woman in the world.

Walsh briefly returned home to Cleveland, packed and then several girlfriends, her parents, her sisters and her coach saw her off with hugs and tears. She then returned to New York, working in the Polish Consulate for a week before joining her Polish Olympic teammates.

What she could not have known at the time was what the impact of this decision would have on her long-term reputation as an American athlete. She might always be a darling of her hometown, but outside of that community, she would be a foreign racer. She might have been Cleveland's queen, but she could never be America's girl.



The 1932 Olympics in L.A. / Photo Credit: Library of Congress

Everything went as planned — at least at first. In Los Angeles, Walsh, running under the name Stanislaw Walasiewicz (shortened from Walasiewiczówna when her family first moved to the U.S. before adopting the Anglicized Walsh) won the gold medal in the 100-meter sprint handily, running the distance in 11.9 seconds. The performance equaled the world record she had set in a preliminary heat the day before, making her the first woman in history to break the 12-second barrier. Sports writers went overboard describing her victory for readers, one noting that she had

blazed down the chalk-striped straightaway "with a fury no other girl sprinter ever has known." There was happiness in Cleveland, but it was tempered because she didn't win that medal for the U.S. Even local Polish leaders wished that Walsh had run for the United States.

"I doubt if there will be such celebrations as have taken place before," said W.J. Norwalk, publisher of the Polish Daily Monitor. "We are glad to see Walsh win, of course, but we would have been more glad if she had finished her naturalization and won as an American. We are Americans." Soon after the Olympics, just before she was scheduled to leave for Poland, Walsh competed in one last track and field meet on American soil. In Chicago, she stole the show from Babe Didrikson, tying her own world record in the 100-meter sprint, setting a new record in the 200-meter race, winning the broad jump and finishing fourth in the discus. Didrikson, on the other hand, won only the high jump and finished second in the discus, the only head-to-head event in which she was superior to Walsh.

Walsh sailed for Europe in late August. Once she arrived in Poland, she enrolled in the all-female Central University, Warsaw, on a scholarship from the Polish Women's National Alliance, beginning a three-year course in journalism and physical education.

She found life in Poland harsh and uncaring.

Walsh expected to be treated as a celebrity in Poland, just as she had been in Cleveland. Instead, she was just another person. She found life in Poland harsh and uncaring. In January 1933, as she walked across a set of railroad tracks, she tripped. As she landed on the ground, she knew something was terribly wrong with her ankle.

A doctor told her it was severely sprained, that she had likely tore a tendon and was bleeding internally. Her athletic career was in jeopardy. Word got back to Cleveland that she had been injured, and before long, a reporter sought her out. Walsh was angry that Polish authorities didn't

seem to notice or care that she had been severely injured.

"It's hard to get along in Europe once one has been brought up in the American standard of living," she said. "I'd hate to say what I think about this incident. I don't intend to run in Poland while I'm finishing my course at the Institute of Athletics. I'm going back to the United States when I'm through."

And with that, Walsh's life in Poland was over. She retained her Polish citizenship, but soon returned to Cleveland. When her ankle healed, she resumed her athletic career. Six months after the accident, Walsh competed again in a meet in Chicago and won five first place awards, in the 100-meter, the 60-meter hurdles, the broad jump, the shot put and the discus throw. In the offseason, just to stay in shape, she played basketball for the Vivian Beauty Shoppes and led the team to the Intercity Tournament Championship. At times, she outscored the competition all by herself. In Cleveland, anyway, she was still a star.

PART FOUR

There is a box of archival material at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland called the Stella Walsh papers. It's a bit of a misnomer, because there is very little in the box written by Walsh. In fact, the vast majority of the contents are documents written by Casimir Bielen. A note attached to the box states that Bielen "compiled the archives to bestow honors on Walsh during her lifetime and protect her public image after her death."

The first half of the box is full of press releases and various hall of fame nomination letters Bielen wrote for Walsh. He helped get her inducted into the National Track and Field Hall of Fame, the Ohio Hall of Fame, the Senior Citizen's Hall of Fame, and the Hall of Fame for Women.

"Her feats will serve as a reminder to all what effort and determination can accomplish."

There is a letter from U.S. Representative Benny Bonanno recognizing Walsh for being awarded Poland's Silver Cross of Merit, that nation's

highest civilian honor. There's a document that Sen. Howard Metzenbaum read into the Congressional record on May 6, 1979 — Polish Independence Day — that says, among other things, "Since her days of active competition, Walsh has devoted her life to helping others compete in athletics. She has worked with numerous Polish-American organizations and has been an inspiration to thousands ... Her feats will serve as a reminder to all what effort and determination can accomplish."

And there is a proclamation from the city of Cleveland, dated April 13, 1970, declaring that day "Stella Walsh Day" and signed by Mayor Carl B. Stokes.

Deeper in the box, however, is a letter addressed to Stokes, then a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and his reply.

The letter, from Bielen, is dated Dec. 15, 1980, 11 days after Walsh's murder and one week after the Cleveland TV stations' initial reports questioning her gender.

"On Monday, Dec. 8, 1980, the night before the burial, TV Channel 3 of Greater Cleveland located at 1403 East 6th Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44114 carried a news story concerning Stella Walsh on its six o'clock news broadcast. In this story they implied, inferred, and stated that Stella Walsh was a male that competed against females. This news broadcast also questioned whether her five gold and four silver Olympic Medals would be forfeited. These news stories were connected with Dr. Sam Gerber, County Coroner. Dr. Gerber denied making any statements or verifications to the charges that were made by Channel 3. Please see enclosed news release for a more detailed explanation.

"Stella Walsh was medically examined by hundreds of doctors before each participating athletic event to qualify. She passed qualifying medical examinations and was permitted to compete. The physical circumstances surrounding Stella Walsh were known to her family, friends, and the world — and accepted — for 69 years ...

"We are seeking your assistance in helping restore the reputation of Stella Walsh by reporting this incident to the Federal Communication Commission for investigation. Perhaps a congressional investigative committee could be appointed to conduct a local hearing on this matter.

"Stella Walsh was a citizen of the world. Her reputation was severely tarnished. She deserves the credit and restoration of her Olympic reputation."

Sexuality, after all, was still very much a taboo subject in 1980, rarely discussed openly, particularly sexual issues that deviated from "the norm." Most gays and lesbians were still living closeted lives. The word "transgender," had just been introduced. In most places, anyone who was different was still considered a freak.

As far as Bielen and Cleveland's Polish community was concerned, it was better to shut this conversation down. Nobody else needed to know about Walsh's mutation, her deformity, her "freakishness." Walsh's private, physical sexual uncertainty was a shameful embarrassment. There was no room in that world for gray, for ambiguity, for Stella Walsh as she really was.

PART FIVE

It was the summer of 1935 and shortly after setting the Canadian record in the 40-yard dash as well as winning a 60-yard race over Betty Robinson, a top short-distance sprinter from outside Chicago, Walsh hopped on a train and headed from Hamilton, Ontario, to St. Louis, Mo., for the National Women's Indoor AAU meet. There, she expected to have a rematch with Robinson in the 50-meter dash. But Robinson didn't show, making Walsh the easy favorite to win every race she entered. The weather in St. Louis was stormy, yet more than 4,000 people filled a dome built for indoor track and field events just to watch her compete.

Three years after her Olympic triumph, Walsh was still the top female sprinter in the world, 24 years old, in her prime, and running faster than ever. She

was, once again, the favorite for gold, this time in Berlin.

The story of what happened next is best told in "The Life of Helen Stephens," a biography of the Missouri sprinter by Sharon Kinney Hanson: "At the starting line in one of several trial heats, unbeatable Stella crouched confidently, a veteran competitor seven years Helen's senior. Helen took a side-glance and thought, There she is, there's Stella. Helen knew Walsh's records well. But this was the first time she'd seen her in the flesh ... "Helen made a good takeoff. She took the lead, broadened it, and victory was hers, again repeating her 6.6 time, some say a full four feet ahead of second-place Stella Walsh.

"Spectators went wild. Sportswriters went crazy, bolting onto the track, passing by the former titleholder, pushing toward the kid who had just stomped Stella ..."

For the first time in her racing life, Walsh was not No. 1.

One reporter asked Stephens what she thought about having just beaten Stella Walasiewicz. Stephens didn't recognize that name. She knew who Walsh was, but Stella Walasiewicz? "Stella who?" she replied in a long, Southern drawl. That was all the press needed to fan the flames of a rivalry. They went straight to Walsh and told her the 17-year-old girl who had just beaten her didn't even know who she was.

Walsh, who only wanted acceptance and for people to recognize and know her, was beside herself. She claimed Stephens jumped the gun. "I don't like to complain," Walsh said, "but I was robbed."

For the first time in her racing life, Walsh was not No. 1. Not only had she been beaten in a race she had once owned, but she had lost to a full-blooded American girl who had every intention of running for Uncle Sam in Berlin.

Making things worse for Walsh was the fact that Stephens, although hardly a beauty, (her nose was as long and beaked as Walsh's was broad) certainly looked more feminine than Walsh. She

was tall, lanky, less muscular and a blonde, an all-American country girl who the press loved.

Walsh? She was a foreigner who looked like a man.



At the Olympics in Berlin, Walsh demanded private quarters, refusing to take a roommate. She kept to herself and stayed away from the other female sprinters, especially Stephens. She avoided the women's locker room entirely, changing in her room and showing up at the track already in uniform. The other girls, all of whom had roommates and shared some kind of camaraderie, thought she was stuck up and standoffish. In the heats, Stephens showed that she was no fluke. She ran her first 100-meter heat in 11.5 seconds, setting the world and Olympic record in the process. She then repeated the time in the semifinals.

By the finals, Walsh already knew her time on top had come to an end. Observing her from the press box, a correspondent from United Press International wrote: "It's written all over her face as she digs her starting holes with a shovel. Next to her, is the girl who displaced her as the fastest femme — Helen Stephens, the country girl from Missouri. Helen laughs as she readies herself for the run down the straightaway. She knows she is tops."

At the gun, Helen sped down the track, her long, lanky legs carrying her farther away from Walsh with every step. Walsh her face grim, pushed hard

but couldn't catch her. She finished in second place, winning the silver medal.

For Walsh, it wasn't good enough. Apparently, it wasn't good enough for Poland, either. Perhaps that's why either Walsh or someone else in the Polish contingent let the rumors start flying. *Helen Stephens is not a woman. She is a man in disguise. She's a cheat.*

The accusation was formalized the next day when a Polish newspaper made the claim publicly. The Associated Press picked up the story and repeated the claim, attributing it to Walsh. They said she made the accusation to the International Amateur Board.

Stephens was angry, and humiliated. She was forced to undergo testing and a physical examination of her genitals to prove her sex.

The irony of the situation would go unnoticed for another 44 years.

After the 1936 Olympics, Walsh liked to say she was going to retire from track and field. She often said it any time she did poorly in a race. But she never really retired. Despite losing out on gold in Berlin, she continued racing, and racing successfully, although she often dodged racing Stephens.

Less than a year after her silver medal, in June 1937, she led the Cleveland Polish Girls' Olympic Club to an easy victory in the first American-Polish Olympic Games in Pittsburgh, winning nine out of the 10 events she entered. In 1939, she set a women's pitching record, throwing a baseball 94 feet per second. In 1943, she won a district AAU meet in Cleveland, falling just 16 points short of the world record for points scored in a meet. Then, in 1956, at the age of 45, she married Harry Olson, a former professional wrestler and boxer from California. The marriage allowed her to become a citizen and she tried out for the U.S. Olympic team in her signature event, the 200-meter dash.

She failed in that bid, but just barely, finishing third in her heat. At the time, she said she was retiring, a familiar refrain. She split with Olson after only a few months, but stayed in California for a while, abandoning her adopted hometown for a second time. She worked on and off in a factory for a few years and as a volunteer track coach in Van Nuys, and was the subject of a fawning feature in Life Magazine, but ultimately, in 1964, returned to her parents' house on Clement Avenue.

It was home.

PART SIX

Carl Stokes replied to Bielen's letter a couple days later. He did not give Bielen the answer he wanted. "It is my feeling, however, that a congressional investigation of the news stories would be more detrimental than useful. Since congressional investigations and hearings attract publicity, my intervention might only cause the rumors to become more widespread. It would be more effective, I believe, for local initiative to be taken. I might point out, however, that to ignore the situation, given that the news services no longer carry the story, may be the best alternative since to respond to the stories dignifies their claims." Bielen was undeterred. He tried to think of any possible angle he could that might stop what he saw as attacks against his friend's legacy. A story on the front page of the Plain Dealer two days after Walsh was murdered gave him an idea. The headline was, "Crisis in Poland."

"Aside from her cold blooded murder," he wrote, "the treatment by TV is having more propaganda value to the Communist. The Communist bloc countries — especially the Communist of Poland — are using her murder and ugly smearing for their ends to 'divert the attention of the worshippers of Walsh away from the internal power struggle' between the Polish people and its Communist rulers.

"Further smearing will only further assist the Communist. This now becomes a sensitive 'State Dept. problem.'"

Bielen started an S.O.S. campaign — Save Our Stella. He added a typed, unsigned note to his file on Walsh.

"The family of Stella Walsh has been warned to stop their fight against TV stations or the body of Stella Walsh would be dug up by court order to prove that she was a man with male sex organs. And the lawyers would also get a court order to force Gerber (the coroner) to release tests proving that Stella Walsh was a man. Please help them. They live in fear."

On Jan. 9, 1981, Judge Thomas J. Parrino ruled in favor of WKYC Channel 3. He ordered the coroner's office to release the autopsy report in two weeks. According to the Plain Dealer, "The coroner's office has said more time is needed to complete laboratory tests and it does not want to release an incomplete report."

The media had found a story rich in irony that combined sports, sex and celebrity.

In the meantime, Bielen made a last-ditch effort to save Walsh's reputation and started raising money to fund a lawsuit against the Cleveland TV stations, the "Olympian Walsh Defense Fund." He started the effort by contributing \$5,000 of his own money.

"An immediate action program calls for the circulation of petitions urging a boycott of products being advertised on TV3," he wrote. "This will also be a battle between the 'Polish Mass Media' and TV 3. Publishers and editors of Polish and other ethnic newspapers are eagerly and willingly looking forward to battle, dressed in their heaviest protective armor."

Bielen, assailed on all sides by a changing world, was tilting at windmills. The media had found a story rich in irony that combined sports, sex and celebrity, one that had all the elements of a great narrative — a meteoric rise, a tragic death, and an unbelievable revelation. After decades of obscurity everywhere but in Cleveland, the world re-claimed Stella Walsh.

As the press waited for the official autopsy report, the truth began leaking out. Even Bielen, her defender, provided more details about Walsh's condition with every interview.

"When she grew up, a couple of blocks from where I live, other boys and girls knew she had these physical deformities," he said. "She was ridiculed. We knew this. She was a hermaphrodite. It was common knowledge that she had this accident of nature. She wasn't 100 percent pure female."

As the press revealed more about Walsh's life, everyone wanted to talk to Harry Olson. If anyone had intimate knowledge, he would. He answered calls from reporters who simply wanted to ask if he and Walsh ever had sex. He said they had, but only a couple of times, and always with the lights off.



urethra and a non-functioning, underdeveloped penis.

"The report speaks for itself," said assistant county coroner Lester Adelson. "Everything is there as I objectively reported it. We used every means to find the truth: I'm not interested in sensationalism. I'm not interested in prurient interest. The only axe I'm grinding for is the truth."

This report essentially ended Bielen's effort to save Stella Walsh. The information was out there, irrefutable. There was nothing more he could do. He never did file a lawsuit against Channel 3. The boycott didn't amount to much.

The Walsh family bickered amongst each other, everyone accusing everyone else of leaking Walsh's secret to the media. Thirty-three years later, the only family members left are nieces and nephews who never really knew their aunt. The house Walsh grew up in and lived the vast majority of her life is owned by one with the Walasiewicz surname, but one who eschews interview requests and prefers to remain private. The shades are always drawn in the house, the door always closed.

PART SEVEN

Soon after Walsh returned to Cleveland from California, Dan Coughlin, a young sports reporter at the Plain Dealer, walked into the Sunrise Café, a bar and grill on East 71st Street, just south of Harvard Avenue in Cleveland. His editor had assigned him to write a story on Walsh.

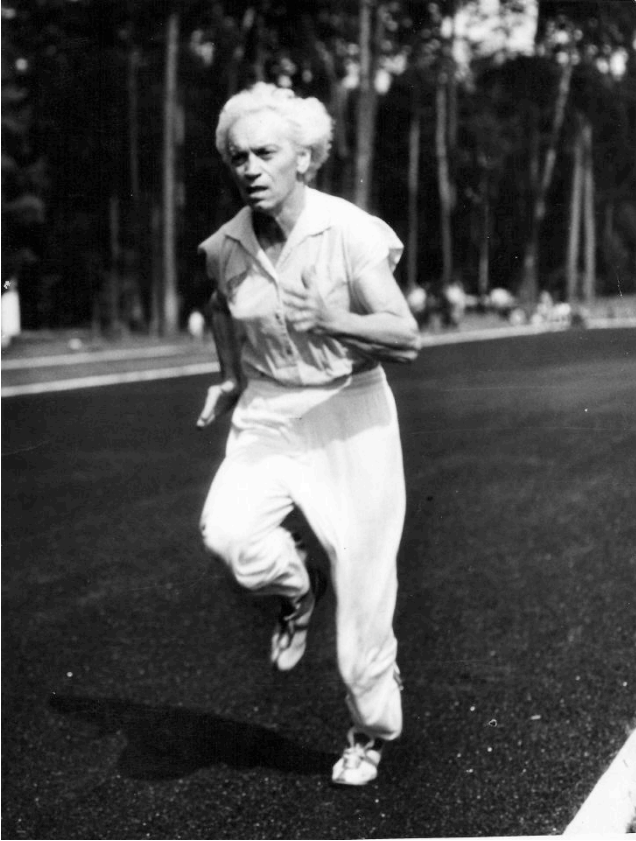
Coughlin remembers finding Walsh behind the bar, where she made drinks and took telephone reservations for cottages on Kelley's Island. It was early evening and the bar was empty.

He was shocked that such a remarkable athlete like Walsh would be relegated to tending bar in a joint that was empty at 5 p.m. Still, he sat there and talked with her for hours. A story ran in the paper the next day, and Coughlin became the guy she went to whenever she had an event or athlete who needed covered, or needed someone to remember who she was.

"I feel stupid as hell for marrying her," he told the Plain Dealer. "It's really strange. I guess she was a freak of nature. I'm very shook up about this." Embarrassed and humiliated, Olson was as confused as was virtually everyone else of his generation.

"[Her gender issue] is so nebulous that I don't know what to say," he said. "I tried to get information from the city of Cleveland and all I got was the door slammed in my face." Like Bielen, he just wanted the story to go away.

On Jan. 23, 1980, the autopsy report was made public. Stella Walsh had no uterus, an abnormal



For Coughlin, though, the most memorable moment in his relationship with Walsh took place one day in 1967. Walsh challenged Coughlin, more than 30 years younger, to a 100-yard race. He tried to put her off, but she wouldn't take no for an answer and he finally agreed to race her at Cuyahoga Heights field, a track at the end of East 71st Street, right on the edge of Slavic Village.

"I pull up there, take one last drag on my Pall Mall, grind out the butt on the cinder track," Coughlin says. "She has the girls' track team out, driving starting blocks in. One girl has a starter's pistol. A couple girls have stopwatches. Another group is holding a tape at the finish line. And there she is, dressed in her Olympic track outfit. She took this thing so seriously."

Walsh gave Coughlin a 10-yard head start. The pistol went off, and Coughlin outran the Olympian. Barely. Then Walsh told him his finish had merely qualified him for the finals, during which there would be no head start.

"The starting gun goes off and all she did was kick cinders into my face," he says. "She beat me by about 10 yards." She was still a champion.

The two went to a saloon after the race, where an ebullient Walsh proceeded to drink Coughlin under the table. After that, Coughlin was Walsh's favorite reporter. Whenever she saw him, she gave him a huge, bear hug and planted a kiss on his lips. "It was embarrassing," Coughlin remembers. "Of course, there were rumors about her.

"She was built like a man."

In the mid-1970s, Walsh started coaching a young Polish-American girl by the name of Terri Nolan. The two traveled to Poland in July 1977 for the Polish World Olympics in Krakow. Walsh, at the age of 67, ran in the Masters Division 60-meter sprint while Nolan, who was 15 years old and a sophomore in high school, ran the 400-meter and 100-meter races. Walsh, of course, won again, besting women who were more than 20 years younger. Nolan, who now lives in Maryland and has the last name Tomoff, also won both of her races.

Tomoff says that Walsh was a brilliant coach who never said an unkind word to her. For Walsh the coach, starts were of utmost importance. She was supportive, wanting nothing but the best for her athletes. Off the track, she was a funny, kind, gentle, woman who cared about her widowed mother more than anyone else on the planet. And while Tomoff always wondered exactly what was going on with Walsh, gender-wise, she never said a word. It didn't matter, anyway.

"I knew there was something different about Stella," says Tomoff. "But I went with it. It is what it is. She lived so supremely as a woman and never discussed that particular thing."

That was the thing about Walsh. She was always a lady. She may have looked like a man, but she lived every single day of her life as a woman, and an athlete. She never questioned her parents' decision to raise her as a girl. She was who she was, and she seemed perfectly happy with that.

PART EIGHT

What does it mean to be male or female? How does one tell if you are male or female? For most people, the answer is easy. It's an either-or proposition.

Most of us are baffled by those who live in the gray. Yet that's just where Walsh lived.

We live in a black and white world that wants easy answers to easy questions. Most of us are baffled by those who live in the gray. Yet that's just where Walsh lived, in a borderland then unrecognized. Just as she was never really accepted as either American or Polish as a sprinter, she was also neither entirely a man nor a woman. That did not mean, however, that she was more of one, or less of another, or, certainly, less a human being. She was just different.

Fully two months and one week after her death, the coroner's report was released. It included the results of chromosomal testing.

"The majority of her cells examined had a normal X and Y chromosome, and a minority of her cells contained a single X chromosome and no Y chromosome," coroner Gerber wrote. Normal males have XY sex chromosomes, while females have XX. "Individuals with this form of sex chromosome mixture (called mosaicism) may present a variety of physical forms ranging from almost normal males to individuals that would be indistinguishable from females with Turner Syndrome (a condition in which females have just one X chromosome)."

Gerber added that when Walsh had been born, it would have been difficult to determine her sex. Gerber said that her penis likely became more evident in puberty.

This happened then, as it does now, more often than one might think. According to Dr. Milton Diamond, a professor at the University of Hawaii's John A. Burns School of Medicine and director of the Pacific Center for Sex and Society, wholly one to two percent of all people in the world live in some intersex borderland, somewhere between male and female. As difficult

as it may be for society to accept such variation, it is even more difficult in sports, which separately values achievements by men and women. Most recently, female South African runner Caster Semenya's gender was questioned after she won the gold in the 800-meter at the 2009 World Championships. She was actually barred from competition for one year before being allowed to continue her running career, coming back and winning silver in the 2012 Olympics in the 800-meter race.

Walsh's chromosomal condition explains her muscular build, her manly looks and the fact that she started going bald later in life. But does it fully explain why Walsh was able to dominate women's athletics for the better part of her life? Is that the only reason Walsh was such a standout?

Look at the photos of Walsh and one can tell that, compared to her competition, she was physically superior. But does that mean she was a man? Does that mean she was a cheat? All because of her genetic makeup, her chromosomes, were different? Despite the preponderance of the XY chromosome, Gerber ruled that, "Socially, culturally and legally, Stella Walsh was accepted as a female for 69 years. She lived and died a female."

Perhaps that was her greatest victory of all. The fact that, amid such confusion and anguish, such prejudice and uncertainty, Walsh lived her life as herself. In that, she was unambiguous.

She was nobody else but Stella.

Matt Tullis is a journalism professor at Ashland University in Ohio. He has an MFA in creative writing from the University of North Carolina Wilmington. You can follow him on Twitter @matttullis.

<http://www.sbnation.com/longform/2013/6/27/4466724/stella-walsh-profile-intersex-olympian>

Sexual Nature: A Brief Natural History of Sex

Ed – this is the synopsis for Episode 2 of an interesting 4-part BBC Radio series.... It was first broadcast on Wednesday 23 January 2013. You can listen to the whole 28-minute program at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01pzvs6>



Via gender-bending fish, the shrivelled Y chromosome and meeting James Bond's komodo dragon, Adam Rutherford explores the multifarious ways Nature uses to make females and males.

The biological Ying and Yang of the two sexes is a fundamental condition for sexual reproduction, and we have to thank sex for the evolution of the extraordinary variety of complex life on Earth (see episode 1 of this series). Without sex, the Earth would merely be a world of bacteria, oozing in microbial slime.

Given the importance of sex in the continuation of species and evolution, you might be forgiven for thinking that Nature produces males and females in a standardised and uncomplicated way in all creature.

Far from it - as sex determination geneticist Jenny Graves explains to Adam Rutherford. Professor Graves has studied the molecular biology of sex in a multitude of zoological oddities such as the duck-billed platypus and the Australian dragon lizard, in a quest to understand the natural history of our own sex chromosomes, the X and Y.

Adam also enters the lair of a komodo dragon at London Zoo. A few years ago, the female dragon surprised everyone there with a virgin birth of a clutch of sons. She hadn't mated with a male and

her unfertilised eggs developed into young males by a process called parthenogenesis (a kind of cloning).

A wild female Komodo dragon may have this asexual reproductive trick up her sleeve if she colonises a new Pacific island. Without sex, she lays some males and can then found a new population by having sex with them. This is possible because lizards have a quite different set of sex-determining chromosomes from mammals.

Adam also investigates what makes a boy or a girl in the tropical undersea world of 'Nemo' the clown fish. 'It's doesn't go exactly like the movie', warns Prof Bob Warner of the University of California, Santa Barbara, who goes on to describe and explain a sexually fluid scene of opportunistic gender transformation - Nemo to Nema, and Wilma to Willy the Wrasse - when changing sex will maximise the chance of producing offspring. Testes become ovaries or vice versa in a few days.

Jenny Graves and Adam conclude with a discussion of the degeneration of the male Y chromosome. Many researchers claim it's been shrinking during the millions of years of mammal evolution. At some point, it will shrivel to nothing. Jenny gives the human Y chromosome 5 million years at most - but it could disappear much sooner. What will this mean for men and the continuation of the human species?

Become a Member

Membership fees for 2013-2014 are due on August 1 2013. Please complete the attached form and return by email or post with your payment. **Please note!** Payment by direct fund transfer into our account is now available. Account information is at the bottom of the form. Don't forget to include a reference with your name and "membership".

The Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS) Support Group Australia Inc. (A0041398U) is a peer support, information and advocacy group for people affected by AIS and/or related intersex conditions, and their families.

We support members (both in Australia and overseas) that have any grade of Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, and support any issues relevant to living with AIS. These issues include infertility, disclosure, hormone therapy, gender identity, surgical intervention of children with intersex conditions, sexual intimacy, etc.

— We also provide support to those with related intersex conditions like Partial and Complete Gonadal Dysgenesis, MRKH (also known as Vaginal Agenesis), 5a-Reductase Deficiency, 3b-Hydroxysteroid Dehydrogenase Deficiency, 17-Ketosteroid Reductase Deficiency and 17b-Hydroxysteroid Deficiency. (The previous name for AIS was Testicular Feminisation Syndrome).

We acknowledge that people with intersex conditions (including AIS) range from female to male and anywhere in between.

The AISSG Australia believes in a holistic model of health as per the World Health Organisation definition of 'health':

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity".

There are many benefits to becoming a member of the AISSG Australia, including the dAISy newsletter, regular conferences and meet-ups, and up-to-date information and news relevant to our

members. Of course, there is also the wonderful benefit of supporting and meeting others who have so much in common and much to share! We are also always looking for people who want to become more involved as representatives and/or committee members.

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| President: | Bonnie |
| Vice-President: | Andie |
| Secretary: | Phoebe |
| Treasurer: | Tony |
| Victoria/Tas Reps: | Elly & Christy |
| SA/NT Rep: | Carol |
| NSW/ACT Rep: | Melissa & Sandra |
| Queensland Rep: | Kylie |
| Parent's Reps | Annette |
| Men's Rep: | Leon |
| Specialist Role: | Trace |

We'd love to have representatives in other states and territories.

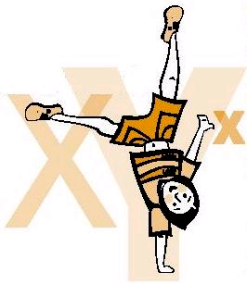
We also have representatives for parents of children with AIS and men with AIS / intersex... and the word is out that partners of people with AIS need support too!

Now is the time to join, renew or rejoin your membership.

The next dAISy

Next issue is January 2014. The deadline for submissions is 31 December 2013. To submit articles, art, jokes, information, poems, or whatever you would like to share please email aissgaustralia@gmail.com

We hope to hear from you again soon!



dAISy

The Newsletter of the Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS) Support Group of Australia
July 2013 Edition

Membership Application (2013-2014)

I wish to apply for membership of the Androgen Insensitivity Support Group Australia Inc. I enclose my annual membership fee, which ends on the 1st of August 2014.

Name/Organisation:.....

Address:

State: Postcode: Country:

Telephone Number(s):

Email address:

Age: (optional) If organisation name of contact person:.....

Signature: Date:

Membership type: (Please tick one)

Individual Membership:

Organisational Membership:

1 year \$20

1 year \$40

3 years \$50

3 years \$100

Please indicate your membership category:

Person with AIS, Gonadal Dysgenesis or similar condition (Please specify)

Family/Partner/Friend of someone with AIS or similar condition

Medical or Other Professional (please state interests in AIS and similar conditions)

Organisation (please state interests in AIS or similar conditions)

Would you like to make a donation to the AIS Support Group Australia?

(Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible)

\$10

\$20

\$50

\$100

other \$.....

Please make all cheques payable to the AIS Support Group Australia. Direct fund transfer to our bank account is now available. BSB: 032285 Account no: 483996. Please include a reference with your name and "membership". Thank you!