

“Pat, The Whole LGBTQI Spectrum of People Are Important In Society!”

By Marti Abernathey

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Abstract

Transgender people ain't necessarily homosexual people By Autumn Sandeen Today I read an article in the Argus (A California bay area newspaper) entitled “Homosexuals Important In Society,” by PFLAG’s Pat Skillen. As a transgender person, I was frustrated a bit by the title and the message of the article; the writer used the acronym GLBT [...]

Article

Transgender people ain't necessarily homosexual people

By Autumn Sandeen

Today I read an article in the Argus (A California bay area newspaper) entitled “Homosexuals Important In Society,” by PFLAG’s Pat Skillen. As a transgender person, I was frustrated a bit by the title and the message of the article; the writer used the acronym GLBT throughout the piece, referenced murdered transgender teen Gwen Araujo, but associated the term GLBT only with being homosexual.

For example, one quote from the article was “Why do we need to remind everyone homosexuals always have been and remain an important part of our society?” Well, I and many other people don’t primarily identify as a homosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual-or heterosexual for that matter-we primarily identify as transsexual, genderqueer, intersexed, intergender, etc. Many trans people embrace the term “transgender” as our community descriptor, using transgender as an umbrella term to describe us folk who don’t completely fit into binary gender system of only male and female. [1]

Gwen Araujo’s name was brought up in the Homosexuals important in society article. Gwen’s attackers may have seen her as homosexual male, but it’s clear (from many news sources) that she saw herself as a heterosexual female. The Homosexuals important in society article’s question of “Why do we need to remind everyone homosexuals always have been and remain an important part of our society?” doesn’t really apply to transgender people like Gwen and me. A better statement would have been “Why do we need to remind everyone homosexual and transgender people always have been-and remain-an important part of our society?”

I’d like to tell Pat that while many transgender people want to be part of the larger GLBT community, we’d like our lives to be recognized as transgender lives-not as homosexual lives.

My apologies if this sounds like a nitpicky complaint to many. I can assure you; however, that this is not a small issue to many transgender people (for example "Re: Putting the T in LGBT,") The term transgender is actually a misnomer and the problem lies in the fact that we have confused the ideas of sex and gender. Sex is what we do with our bodies - it's physical. Gender on the other hand is an identity - what our bodies actually are.

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[1] Autumn Sandeen identifies as a male-to-female transsexual/lesbian-leaning asexual-and that's asexual in terms of not sexual, not asexual in terms of bisexual or pansexual.

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