

LETTERS

Oh, come on. I love Mika, but no straight man ever makes that big a deal about his sexuality, so at minimum he's bisexual. But more than likely he's 100% gay. Perhaps he's stuck in that unfortunate phase where you secretly know you're gay, but in public you try to rationalize that you might be straight because you enjoy the company of women. Enjoying their company is not the same as being attracted to them.

His interviews remind me very much of the ones from Darren Hayes's early days. Darren just refused to "label" or discuss his sexuality, and tried to make it this big mystery for years. For the record, nobody cared when he finally did come out, and he wrote the most amazingly beautiful record after he was "free" to be himself.

NATHAN WEST, NASHVILLE, TENN.

Correction: In the February 2008 issue of *Out* in Influences/Contributors on page 18, we failed to identify the whiskey glass in the photo. The Double Old Fashion Barware Whiskey Glass is by Marquis by Waterford. *Out* regrets the error.

FIVE WAYS TO BE A TRANSALLY

By Dean Spade, Harvard Law teaching fellow and founder of the Sylvia Rivera Law Project

- 1. Work with trans people** to push your city's homeless shelter system to place residents according to gender identity and safety rather than birth gender. Such policies have already been won in San Francisco, New York, Boston, and Washington, D.C., and are an attainable goal that can save lives. For information about how to get started, visit SRLP.org
- 2. Establish gender-neutral bathrooms** at the places where you work, go to school, shop, eat, or get essential services. Trans and gender-nonconforming people face harassment—sometimes even arrest—when using gendered bathrooms. Gender-neutral facilities are also beneficial for parents with kids who are a different gender, people with disabilities whose assistants are of a different gender, and even women who are tired of waiting in line while men's rooms sit empty.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

OUT MAGAZINE, THE MOST WIDELY READ GAY PUBLICATION IN THE WORLD, ANNOUNCES ITS FIRST ANNUAL FICTION ISSUE CONTEST.

The contest is open to gay and lesbian writers who have previously published no more than a book of short fiction, poetry, or essays. Contestants should submit unpublished short stories or stand-alone excerpts from novels, with a maximum length of 4,000 words. The winners will be chosen by Dale Peck and the editors of *Out* magazine, and will be published in the fall of 2008; other prizes are to be determined. Submissions must be received by May 1, 2008, to be eligible. *Please send submissions to: outfiction@planetoutinc.com.*

- 3. Fight for the inclusion** of trans health coverage in the employee benefits package at your job, school, or in your state's Medicaid program. For resources visit AFSC.org/lgbt/trans-health-care.htm.

- 4. Support a prisoner.** Trans people in U.S. prisons face violence and isolation, and something as simple as a pen pal can help enormously with making post-release plans, locating helpful resources, and coping with the stress of incarceration. See BlackAndPink.org to get connected with prisoners seeking support.

- 5. Donate to trans organizations**, which struggle to keep their doors open. Some to consider include TGI Justice Project (TGIJP.org), focusing on trans prisoners; the Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP.org), providing free legal help to trans people; the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTEquality.org), working on federal legislative issues; FIERCE! (FierceNYC.org), organizing trans youths of color; and TransJustice (ALP.org), part of the Audre Lorde Project, dedicated to ending racism and transphobia.