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Having a change of Hartwell
Transgendered student addresses SRS misconceptions

I have recently become aware of an article published in the April 7th issue of The Maine Campus. In it, the author, Mike Hartwell, makes several incorrect assumptions. This is understandable, as he never consulted me prior to writing or publishing the article. Given this, I would like to take a few moments to set the record straight.

First, it is true that I am being charged more to live here than others; I am being charged slightly more than double the typical rent for a person in my program, adding up to an extra $2,500 over the course of seven months. Even if I find a person willing to live with me, I am barred from having a roommate. This extra rent has resulted in a total of six voided paychecks, five of which were consecutive. Without Songs for Change or similar assistance, I would have run out of funds months ago.

Not only is Disney charging me extra rent, I have also been denied training in an entire line of business otherwise typical of my role, severely restricted in bathroom use, and required to walk well over five times the normal distance to change my work clothes. Changing my work clothes on the clock, it should be noted, is a necessary function of my role. My goal in this internship is to help the Disney Corporation, and its subsidiaries, address this unfortunate situation which they did create, and join Xerox, Apple Computers, Walgreens, Bank of America and many more companies in preventing any similarly unfortunate situations in the future.

Further, we have been learning more about transsexualism every year. Studies such as the one found here — http://www.sympo­sion.com/ijt/ijtc0106.htm — as well as others, indicate that there is a biological cause for GID, putting the lie to prior studies involving questionable research methodologies.

Even given all of these inaccuracies, I must thank Hartwell for using the proper pronouns along with my correct legal name, Claire. Transexuals are neither monsters nor perverts. We are a population in need of assistance and understanding. We make some of the most difficult personal decisions conceivable, risking the loss of family, friends, spouses, children, our livelihoods, our dignity and even sometimes our lives.

Claire Folsom is a UMaine student.