

Then and Now

By Marcia Deihl

THEN

*"And though we live separate, I keep two rooms open,
And one has you in it and the other does not.
And I move in the middle, unsure and protected,
And trip on my rope, vaguely sensing I'm caught."*

– Ferron, "Shadows on a Dime"

A love affair. A breakup. Pain and confusion about who I was. There were only two choices then: a woman was either a straight woman or a lesbian. I had been the first, then the second. Neither one fit. I felt there must have been something terribly wrong with me, and there was no one to talk to. It was 1979 and I was 29 years old.

I fell in love with "Kit" on Valentine's Day of 1978. We were friends at the time, but something about the Blizzard of '78 and our increasing sense of joy and relaxation when we were together primed me to accept her proposal on that most love-centered of holidays.

At the time, everything started making sense. I had been one of the few feminists in my crowd to have boyfriends

from the early 70s until about 1975, when we were all listening to lyrics like "Lesbian, lesbian, any woman can be a lesbian" by Alix Dobkin and "Sweet Woman" by Cris Williamson. So when I met Kit, it all fell into place. My crush on the gym teacher, my high school crushes on mother/daughter pairs, my diaries that said things like, "I don't know whether to act like me or a girl."

I met my first out lesbians in 1970 when I joined a Bread and Roses C-R (consciousness-raising) group during my junior year in college. Women's liberation was just one of many huge transformative movements that were going on then, including Black Power, the American Indian Movement, and the anti-war movement.

April 15, 1970: "The Revolution is starting. After all my radical conversion and all, still didn't march today. . . Harvard Square was under siege when I came up at 8:30 to go to the concert. Heavy fighting. I am confused. But I can't agree with violence at all. I am too idealistic though."

For four years I'd been living with David, who was gay before either of us realized or admitted that he was. The women in my C-R group kept complaining that their boyfriends wanted sex all the time, but I was frustrated that my pretty John Lennon-lookalike boyfriend couldn't get beyond pawing and kissing.

Marcia, continues on page 10

In The Womb

By Willa Simmet

I don't know what happened in the womb. Two eggs lying next to each other in mom's strawberry-jam-like ovaries are shot with two meteorites of sperm. One egg receives the first shot and gets to pick whether to grow a penis or a vagina. The next egg picks. And my twin and I begin our trek into society, according to the gender given to us. Eight months later, two bodies pour out of the red womb and onto a white sheet.

First things first: "It's a girl!" For the next baby: "It's a boy!"

Rubber hands, white like the sheet and everyone's skin becomes splatter-painted with our blood. Only a few seconds are allotted to us, before a color gums onto our skin. The person who I will come to call Dad holds me, the baby in the pink blanket in his arms and mom grasps onto my twin wrapped in his blue blanket.

The white bathtub is the womb. We kick through the suds with our four-year-old feet, pretending that we are still unborn babies. We crawl from one end of the womb to the other. Mom picks us up and out of the womb. She helps my twin put on a red flannel shirt and blue sweat pants. I scream as she pulls a denim dress over my head.

Willa, continues on page 12



HONOR ROLL

Justin Adkins
Katelynn Bishop
Debbie Block-Schwenk
Jen Bonardi
Cerridwen
Anna Chase
Fernanda Ferreira
Hilary
Megan Jewett
Lucy Lizard
Julie M.
Lynne Levine
Robyn Ochs
Mareika Phillips
Dave Rini
Ellyn Ruthstrom
Jennifer Taub
Tracy
Laurie Wolfe
Gail Zacharias

And many more
fabulous people!
You know who
you are!

Bi Women is
published quarterly.

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From your editor

The theme of this issue is “Then and Now.” We present you with writing on this theme by BBWN long-timers Marcia Deihl and Sharon Gonsalves, St. Olaf College student Emma Simmet, Dallas activist Chiquita Violette and writer Carole Spearin McCauley.

Author Meredith Maran discusses her new novel, *A Theory of Small Earthquakes*. Janika Saul talks about being bi in Estonia. We have a double Research Corner with a piece from Jennifer Taub on coming out and a special report from Elizabeth Clark, who reports on her just-completed study on bi women in monogamous relationships. We also have a short report on the 20th BECAUSE Conference.

And, as always, there’s Ask Tiggy, News Briefs and our Calendar.

Enjoy this newsletter, and please consider adding your voice and/or artwork to the next issue of *Bi Women*, which will focus on “Traveling While Bi.”



Next in *Bi Women*

The theme for the Summer '12 issue:

Traveling While Bi

It's time for another travel issue! What's it like to travel while bi? Do you seek out bi or LGBT communities in other parts of the country (or world)? If so, what have you found? Do you prefer – or avoid – LGBT-themed travel experiences? If you're traveling with a same-sex partner or with a group of LGBT friends, are you comfortable being out? What have you learned from your travels? Where would you like to go in the future, and why? Do you have a great travel story? We want to hear from you. Essays, poems, artwork and short stories are welcome.

**Submissions for the next issue
must be received by August 1st.**

Send your submissions and
suggestions for future topics to
biwomeneditor@gmail.com

Upcoming themes may include:

Choice; Moms & Mentors; Bi & Single;
more...

If you do not want your name
published, or wish to use a
pseudonym, just let us know.

***Bi Women* is online at
biwomenboston.org.**

BBWN is an all-volunteer organization. Want to host one of our monthly brunches, be the woman who coordinates the brunches, help out with our website (we use WordPress)? Or, if you're a student, consider an internship. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Robyn (biwomeneditor@gmail.com).

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay and transgender people within the larger society.

Bi Women Around the World: Janika Saul, Estonia

AN INTERVIEW

Robyn Ochs: Janika, please tell us about yourself.

Janika Saul: I am 25 years old and happy. I live in Estonia, a small Eastern European country. We Estonians would like to think our country is as developed as Western Europe, though in reality in some important ways it is not.

I was born in a small town of about 25,000 inhabitants. After finishing high school I moved to our student city Tartu, Estonia's second biggest city, with about 100,000 people. Most important is that because of the students this city is always young and kind of hippy-like.

I studied to become a math and physics teacher but after teaching for a bit I realised I wasn't ready yet. Therefore I decided to not go for my masters and instead started working in a totally different field. I have been a travel agent for 3.5 years. In my free time I love reading, watching movies and doing sports but also going out to party and having spontaneous adventures with my friends or partner.

At the moment I'm not active in any LGBT organizations. I took some time off for personal reasons. This doesn't mean I am giving up on activism! [She smiles.]

RO: What is the actual word in Estonian that you use to describe your sexual orientation? Does it have the same meaning as the English-language word "bi"?

JS: I describe myself as 'bisexual.' It has the same meanings as in English and for me it's mostly an ability to love a person without stressing sex/gender.

RO: How did you come to identify as bi? How old were you? Who did you tell? What happened?

JS: My bisexual identity is quite strong. When I was 15 and thinking about sexuality for the first time, I happened to have a walk and talk with one of my best friends. We discussed sexuality and how we see our possible future partners. As it turned out, she was bisexual too, so we gave each other the idea that everybody thinks like us: that the person not the gender is important, and that female-male partnership is not the norm.

It was a lucky coincidence that I had this conversation with this friend and not my other best friend who in this matter believed in a black-and-white world. It would have been so different!

But instead, until I went to university and had my first girlfriend, I thought everyone felt like me. I really didn't



know I was different or needed to come out of the closet. And I am happy to say that during the years my confidence has not worn itself out!

RO: What is your religious background, if any, and what impact did this have on your coming out?

JS: I am not part of any religious groups. In Estonia it's more common to be atheist than to be a "believer" and we take pride in being the least religious country in Europe. Religion did not play any role in my

coming out, and conflicts between the church and sexuality are not so publicly visible.

RO: How did you come to be involved in the LGBT movement?

JS: I like to be active and take chances in life. In 2007 I saw an open call in an Internet forum to meet Ilke, an exchange student from Belgium and then it all started with a big bang. Ilke had been an activist for years and wanted to start an organization for LGBT youth. At that time there had been no active organisations for years, so Ilke, a few other students, my then-girlfriend and I formed Estonian Gay Youth (EGN), an NGO [non-governmental organization] and we started organizing local events. As Ilke had experience and contacts, we soon found ourselves in the Baltic Pride organizing group. This experience has changed me more than any other in my life.

Baltic Pride is organized by LGBT organizations from three different countries: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It is a week-long event with film festivals, parties, a pride walk, concert, etc., and it rotates between these three countries. This has been a real challenge but it has given us so much positive feedback and many possibilities to grow stronger as a person.

This year's Pride was in Riga, Latvia, May 30-June 2. You can find more about this at <http://www.balticpride.eu/en>.

I am truly happy that I have been there from the start of the EGN and also Baltic Pride. From there we started going to different conferences and youth camps, collected a lot of new information, friends and motivation. The NGO quickly grew bigger and bigger. Now it's not a small, local group of activists, but a national organization with a real office, publications, trainings, etc.

RO: What rights are accorded to LGBT people in Estonia?

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Janika, continued from previous page

JS: There is the law against discrimination in the workplace. Hate crimes based on sexuality and gender are not prohibited, but I would like to stress that in Estonia the statistics say that we have few—if any—hate crimes. This is because incidents that could be classified as hate crimes are usually listed only as assault, murder, robbery etc., and not as hate crimes. Thus, the statistics look good but they are wrong.

Marriage or legal partnership is not possible between same-sex partners. Our politicians stress that these couples can fill in all those different documents (wills, etc.) to get the same rights, but in reality this is really expensive, takes years and at the moment there are no couples in Estonia who have done this.

RO: Are bi folks well-integrated into Estonia's sexual minority community? What resources are available for LGBT people, or specifically for bisexuals in Estonia?

JS: LGBT community in Estonia is quite small and no real distinction is made between groups. Sometimes it happens

that being bi is stressed in conversations to show inclusion and acceptance, creating uncomfortable situations, but we are not excluded.

Bisexuality is included in most of the booklets and info materials. EGN's office, a few other LGBT organizations, a few gay clubs and one lesbian club are located in our capital city Tallinn. In other cities we have no clubs, no meeting points and no office, but EGN organizes events in Tartu and people can always get info from websites.

RO: Do you have contact with bi activists in other countries? Do you see a value in transnational activism?

JS: I have met only a few truly bisexual activists—I mean almost everybody is fighting for the whole community, not focusing on bisexuality. I met you, Robyn, a few years ago in Copenhagen. After the bi workshop my point of view shifted; I started seeing bi people's experience as unique, rather than simply as a subset of the larger community. Transnational activism keeps us going, gives us motivation and ideas, information and connections—in any field. May it never end!

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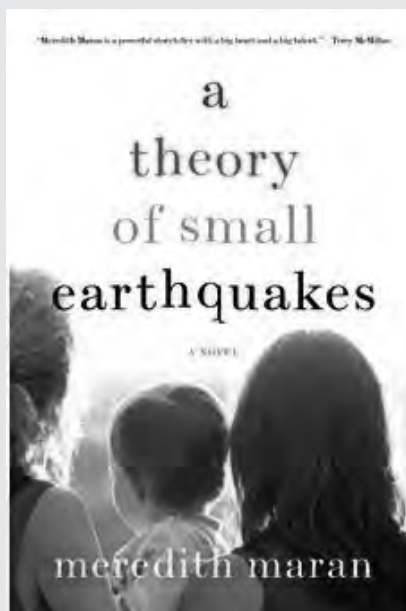
A Conversation with Author Meredith Maran

By Robyn Ochs

A few weeks after it came out, I dove into Meredith Maran's first novel, *A Theory of Small Earthquakes*. I was very excited, as one of her nonfiction books, *What's It Like to Live Now*, was a favorite and one of the first books I read in which the author explicitly and comfortably identified as bisexual. This book was published in 1995, and I don't remember its specifics, but I do remember my excitement at finding a rare moment of representation.

The back cover of Meredith's new novel begins with this:

"The kids may be all right, but what about their parents? Ripped from the headlines of today's battle over civil rights and the changing definition of family comes Meredith Maran's debut novel, a family story that spans two decades, set against the social, political and geological upheavals of the Bay Area. Alison Rose is powerfully drawn to Zoe, a free-spirited artist who offers emotional stability and love outside the norm. After many happy years together, the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake deepens fissures in the women's relationship, and Alison leaves Zoe for a new, 'normal' life with a man. Alison's son is the outcome of both of these complicated relationships, and the three parents strive to create a life together that will test the boundaries of love and family in our changing times."



Robyn Ochs: Can you tell us more about your own personal story?

Meredith Maran: Bi-wise, I've liked girls *and* boys for as long as I can remember. I got the message early on that liking boys was a fine thing; liking girls, not so much. Thanks to Facebook, I've recently re-friended the first girl I had a crush on, at age five. We've shared our memories of the day her dad came into her bedroom to find me lying on top of her, playing "Witches," and he turned purple and threw me out. Even then, I knew somehow that had I been caught lying on top of the *boy* I had a crush on, his father's response wouldn't have been quite so apoplectic.

RO: What was it like to be out as bisexual back in the '90s, or before? Do you think you would have had a different experience had you come out instead in 2012?

MM: I began my first relationship with a woman at age 33, in 1984, and I immediately learned that in the lesbian world, being bi was unacceptable. It was seen as "being

Meredith, continues next page

Meredith, continued from previous page

on the fence,” or dismissed with a knowing wink as a phase en route to coming out as a lesbian. Instead of coming out with trumpets blaring and rings around the May pole (or should I say, gay pole), it was more of a slither into the land of Queer. In the straight world, being bi was much more accepted, especially by straight men who clearly got off on their imagined visuals. Fifteen years later, while I was writing a book about Berkeley High School, I was stunned and delighted to see teenaged girls identifying quite casually as bi. What hasn’t changed is that being bi is still stigmatizing for a boy or a man.

RO: Alison, your protagonist, is gripped with anxiety and yearns for a “normal” life and as a result makes choices that made me want to jump right into the pages of the book and—alternately—reassure her and shake her. Without giving away too much of the plot, is there anything you’d like to say about this?

MM: Alison is complicated. Me, too. How ‘bout you? My intention in the novel was to pull the reader inside the heart, mind, and body of a complicated woman whose sexuality happens to be a bit more complicated than average as well. Women like Alison are the ones I choose for my closest friends, and I’m sure my friends choose me for the same reasons. And I know they alternately want to reassure and shake me, too.

RO: I’m sure anyone reading this book would wonder to what extent your novel is autobiographical. I am aware that your own life trajectory differs from Alison’s, but are there some parallels? Did you ever write for *Mother Jones* and other mentioned publications? Did you struggle with internalized homophobia and internalized heterosexism?

MM: First novels are always thought to be autobiographical, and in this case it’s true and not true. There are big parallels between my life and Alison’s, both external and internal. Yes, I wrote for all of the magazines Alison writes for, except *The New York Times Magazine*. Giving her that gig was my way of crying out, “*New York Times Magazine*, here I am, come and get me.” And yes, I’ve struggled with every kind of internalized everything. A lot.

RO: I’ve heard from Jan Clausen and other authors who have written about complex identities that it’s a challenge to get published and hard to get books reviewed. What has been your experience?

MM: The same. I first tried to publish this book in 2006, and even my very experienced (and very queer-affirmative) agent was stunned by the rejections we got. Alison was consistently described as “unlikeable,” “unsympathetic,” “unrelatable.” Neither of us is a conspiracy theorist, but we both suspected that had Alison been as complicated as she

is, but heterosexual, we wouldn’t have had that problem. It’s been, shall we say, fascinating (read: incredibly frustrating) to write a book about how internal and external homophobia change over time, and then have it take eight years to get that book published because homophobia isn’t changing quite fast enough.

That said, I believe the book has been reviewed in mainstream magazines that might not have covered it if it didn’t have a bisexual theme. Heterosexual editors and reviewers at *Reader’s Digest*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *People* and many other magazines made a real point of reviewing the book as a way of demonstrating their own support for equal rights.

RO: What kind of responses have you gotten to this book, especially from lesbian readers and reviewers?

MM: My greatest disappointment so far is the response to the book in the queer media—or lack thereof. I’ve had and will have a few reviews and profiles, but my dream was to start a conversation between the straight and queer worlds, and coverage in the straight media has been much stronger. I haven’t given up yet, and hope this interview will help bring the novel to the attention of other Q journalists and readers.

RO: What kind of resources would you wish to see for women who identify as bisexual, pansexual or fluid?

MM: Resources? How about love, compassion, support, and did I mention love? In the first interview I ever did about the novel—many years ago, while I was still writing it—I said that the takeaway I wanted to give the reader could be expressed as, “Let’s all get over ourselves about who we love, already.”

RO: What’s next?

MM: I’ve got a nonfiction book coming out from Penguin in January. It’s called *Why We Write: 20 Acclaimed American Authors on What Gets Them Started and Keeps Them Going*. It was a complete delight to interview an eclectic group of commercially successful (famous) writers—including Isabel Allende, Walter Mosely, Terry McMillan, and Armistead Maupin—while I was finishing up my own first novel. They taught me a lot, and I put everything they taught me about writing into both books: my novel, and *Why We Write*.

I’m also working on a second novel, which I hope to get back to soon. I’ve learned the hard way that writing a novel is best attempted by those with trust funds (not me) and/or wealthy husbands (also not me). Spending eight years on this one sent me into debt, but je ne regrette rien. It’s been the best writing experience of my life.

#

Then

By Sharon Gonsalves

Then, for me, was 1985. I was 25 years old, living in Albany, NY, an angry lesbian separatist. While engineering for our local womyn's music radio program I found myself attracted to the chief engineer at the station – a MAN! What's a radical dyke to do?! I knew that if I followed my heart my social life would be in shambles.

Enter the Boston Bisexual Women's Network. Somehow I got hold of their newsletter – maybe from one of the few ostracized bisexual women in Albany, maybe while passing through Boston on my way to a weekend in Provincetown. Regardless, the rest is history!

I attended a bi weekend retreat that summer and felt like I had found "My People." I could be bisexual and still be a feminist and an activist. I moved to Boston in September 1985 and instantly had 700 (the size of the BBWN mailing list in those days) new friends, all totally accepting and many very vocal about our right to exist and be seen and heard.

I started going to newsletter mailing parties, bi brunches, organizing meetings and conferences. I joined a support group of former lesbians and we called ourselves "The Hasbians." I even started writing articles about the bi experience and having them published in anthologies.

Those were exciting times and also difficult times. We were building a national and even international community around political and social issues surrounding bisexuality. We were elbowing our way into the gay and lesbian political arena and speaking out about the many models of relating that suited our individual needs: open relationships, polyamory, serial monogamy and even celibacy.

The AIDS crisis hit and bisexual men were seen as pariahs and blasted by the straight and gay media. We came together as outspoken advocates and practitioners of "safer sex" and, yes, we lost some friends.

We also made many more. Eventually LGBT became the norm and inclusivity was in. Today many high school and college campuses have Gay/Straight Alliances and more people have a place and people to go when issues of sexual and bisexual identity arise.

Kudos to Robyn Ochs and others for creating and sustaining a vibrant and long-lasting organization. May the Boston Bisexual Women's Network go on and on and on until the need for support and community no longer exists. It sustained me for the 11 years that I lived in the Boston area and has helped me remain grounded in a bisexual identity while living someplace where no bi community exists. Thanks to all who participated THEN AND NOW!

Sharon lived in the Boston area from 1985-1996 and was very active in BBWN. She helped organize many events, and spoke and wrote about bisexual issues during that time. After living on Kauai, Hawaii for the past 16 years, she's back in the area helping her aging parents.



Sharon with Robyn Ochs at a recent Stop the War Against Women Rally in Boston

Boy Child

By Carole Spearin McCauley

I birthed you because I wanted you.
They said, how odd in an age of abortion
I helped you outgrow diapers, crayons,
dayglo guns, baseball bats,
pre-algebra, hair mousse, magic cards,
Dungeons and Dragons,
the Indiana Jones fan club, your first cell phone.
Yesterday you told me I'm weird because I'm a writer.
Also the only mother who won't join the PTA.
"Better weird than boring, huh?" I answer.
You hug me, and we laugh.
If you were a girl, I wouldn't know what to say
about what comes next:
how to be not only weird but queer.

Today you beg me never to say your nickname—
"Bubble"—in front of your friends.
You've outgrown Bright and Bouncy. Now you're Serious.
About your first girlfriend who arrives in our yard
to bicycle ride with her, even though you hardly know her.
Isn't that weird?

Wait till I tell you about my first girlfriend.

Carole has written 12 books—medical nonfiction, literary and lesbian mysteries. Her short work has appeared in about 200 periodicals and anthologies, including The New York Times, USA Today, Redbook, Self, North American Review, Women:Omen, North Atlantic Review, Lesbian Short Fiction, and Girl Jock.

Bi Memories

By Chiquita Violette

Back when I was in kindergarten, there were some cute people who made my heart race, but I did not know the term for liking both the girls and the boys. Surrounded by all these pretty faces, there was much to like, however, my greatest loves were lunch and recess. I miss those simpler times, free of politics, less about responsibilities and niceties and more about midday naps and swings sets.

In seventh grade I had a secret crush on my bestie from my athletics class. For two semesters, joined at the hip, we commiserated over our impossible coaches screeching that we were not fast enough, that we missed goals and lacked team spirit. I knew then that we would both forever hate sports. What I did not know was that – despite the many conversations about the guys that we liked – she had a secret crush on me. Fifteen years later, we confess and laugh at ourselves, commiserate some more, feeling twelve all over again.

When I was in high school my close group of friends and I discussed to what percentage we might be gay/bi/straight. My fluidity made it difficult to answer this query. I announced myself as 15%-20% bi, getting a “That sounds about right” response from my friends. In my head, I thought I was closer to 60/40 or 50/50, but I was not certain how much truth my friends could handle. The bell rang and lunch was over, enough soul searching, time for fourth period.

When I was questioning my identity five years ago, I discovered *Bi Any Other Name* in its bold red and black cover on a shelf in my favorite bookstore. I confirmed my bi identity and came out to my best friend. I did not know

how many times I would return full circle to this book: I passed it on to a questioning friend who later confirmed her bisexuality; I met a contributor who befriended me and gave me the opportunity to work with her at a major LGBT conference. This marvelous individual also helped me get to the conference!

At the conference, I met one of *BAON*'s co-editors. In one of the bi-themed sessions we made a group video and she asked me if it would be okay to use the video as part of her LGBT curriculum. I could not say yes fast enough. star-struck, I just wanted to shake her hand. I had no idea that watching us make that little video impressed her so much. I never saw any of this coming when I decided to start turning that first page.

Today, I am no longer an uncertain and questioning LGBT youth needing someone to look up to or seeking out others like myself for reassurance that it is okay to be myself. I now have LGBT youth looking up to me. I have a responsibility to encourage them to speak up, support them if they need it, offer wisdom from my own personal experiences and help lead them to see their own personal greatness. I have to show them that they have every right to just be and that being true to oneself and one's personal integrity is one of the keys to peace and happiness in this chaotic world in which we live.

And tomorrow? I am forever uncertain of what it will bring but retracing my steps makes me look forward to happy times in the future.

Chiquita, 27, is a “too cool for school” bi activist residing in Dallas, Texas.

The BECAUSE Conference Turns 20

By Robyn Ochs

The Bisexual Empowerment Conference: A Uniting, Supportive Experience (BECAUSE) is an annual three-day conference for bisexuals, queers, non-monosexuals, the bi-curious or questioning, and all allies, regardless of sexual or gender identity, held in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota. To mark 20 years, organizers invited all its past keynoters to return and speak. Those present were Amy Andre, Lisa Diamond, Elise Matheson, Robyn Ochs, Carol Queen and Cecilia Tan. There were also many excellent workshops and good food. My personal favorite was the Sunday morning session on Bisexual Parents, brilliantly organized and facilitated by Sidney Gardner and featuring several bi parents, partners and children, including a recent high school graduate and a 10-year-old). For more information about the BECAUSE Conference, visit www.becauseconference.org.



Amy Andre, Lisa Diamond, Robyn Ochs

Credit: Paul Cotterman

RESEARCH CORNER

New Research Study Explores Experiences of Bisexual Women in Monogamous Relationships

By Elizabeth A. Clark, M.A.

Although the past two decades have seen an increase in scholarly research about bisexuality, the life experiences of bisexual individuals are still under-researched relative to those of gay men and lesbians. A recent study conducted at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology examined the experiences of bisexual-identified women who are in monogamous relationships. Utilizing a new scale developed by researchers at the University of Florida that measures experiences of anti-bisexual prejudice from both the heterosexual and the gay/lesbian communities, the study explored links between experiences of prejudice, sexual orientation self-disclosure (i.e., “outness”), and symptoms of depression. The study also asked about participants’ experiences of support or positive responses to their bisexual identity. Participants were recruited through the online message boards of groups targeted to bisexuals (including BBWN) and to the LGBTQ community in general, as well as through campus LGBT groups, women’s groups, and Queer or Women’s Studies departments at universities throughout the U.S.

The study, which included 271 respondents, 94 in same-sex relationships and 177 in mixed-sex relationships, yielded a number of interesting findings. Overall, the most commonly-reported experiences of anti-bisexual prejudice were those in which others questioned or denied participants’ bisexuality as a stable, enduring or valid sexual identity. These experiences were reported more frequently than prejudice based on perceptions of sexual irresponsibility or more general rejection and hostility, both from heterosexuals and gay/lesbian individuals, suggesting that outright denial or erasure of their identity may be the most pervasive manifestation of biphobia that bisexual women face.

There was no significant difference between the overall amount of prejudice experienced by participants in same-sex (SS) versus opposite-sex (OS) relationships, but SS participants reported certain specific experiences at higher rates than those in opposite-sex (OS) relationships. These included being treated as if their bisexuality was a transition to an exclusive lesbian identity and being suspected of carrying an STD. SS participants also reported more frequent experiences of generalized rejection or hostility from heterosexuals (e.g., “I have been alienated because I am bisexual”) than did the OS group, possibly because their relationship status makes them more visible as a sexual minority, increasing their vulnerability to both homophobia and biphobia from heterosexuals.

Outness also appeared to play a role in experiences of prejudice. Generally, the lowest levels of anti-bisexual prejudice were experienced by low-outness participants, which makes intuitive sense: it is difficult to discriminate based on sexual orientation when that orientation is not disclosed. Interestingly, though, this pattern (lower outness

= lower prejudice) only held for participants in same-sex relationships; participants partnered with men perceived about the same amount of prejudice regardless of how “out” they were. This may be because bisexual women in same-sex relationships who do not clearly declare their bisexual identity may be perceived as lesbian, thus escaping some anti-bisexual prejudice from the gay/lesbian community. However, as they become more vocal about asserting a specific bisexual identity, this protective factor may be canceled out as they become subject to biphobia from within the gay/lesbian community.

Experiences of anti-bisexual prejudice were significantly correlated with depression, adding support to other researchers’ claims that the elevated prevalence of depression within the bisexual community may be due to the “double discrimination” of biphobia. Interestingly, outness was also associated with depression: high-outness participants reported significantly fewer depressive symptoms than low- or middle-outness participants. Taken together, the study results highlight the cost-benefit analysis of coming out for bisexuals. Existing research suggests that while coming out may expose sexual minority individuals to increased prejudice, it also facilitates community-building and increases access to social support, resulting in a net benefit to well-being.

Participants in this study reported receiving support for their sexuality from a wide variety of sources, including friends, family members, partners, co-workers, counselors, and members of bisexual support groups. Notably, other bisexual individuals were cited as the most frequent source of truly affirmative, enthusiastic support. While individuals of other sexual orientations (particularly those in close personal relationships with participants) often offered acceptance and support, many participants expressed that only other bisexuals truly understood and celebrated their experience. These results highlight the importance of efforts to increase bisexual visibility within LGBT organizations and to foster a vibrant and active bisexual community.

Although the results of this study are exploratory and require further investigation, the study sheds light on some of the normative experiences of bisexual women involved in monogamous relationships. It is hoped that the results of the study will inform clinicians, activists, and policy makers in their ongoing work with the bisexual community.

Those interested in learning more can contact me at eac6200@ego.thechicagoschool.edu with comments or questions.

Elizabeth is a doctoral student in Clinical Psychology at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Her clinical and research interests focus on gender and sexual identity, particularly bisexual, queer, questioning, fluid, flexible, and other “non-binary” sexualities.

Sexual Identity Development Among Sexual Minority Women

By Jennifer Taub, Ph.D.

In a nod to the theme of “Then and Now,” we begin with the changes in the average age at which women come out. Reliable data specifically on bisexual women are not readily available, but the ages at which young people are coming out to family and friends as bisexual, lesbian or gay has dropped dramatically in the past 20 years, according to researchers in Israel and the UK. In 1991, the average age at coming out was 25. In 2010, it was 16 (Shilo & Savaya, 2012). This is a huge change in a relatively short period of time!

Coming out about one’s sexual identity is a rite of passage that sexual minority women have in common. However, the path for coming out and sexual identity development can be complex and can be different for lesbians and bisexual women. A typical lesbian identity development model follows this sequence: 1) awareness of same-gender feelings, 2) experience of same-gender relationships, 3) acceptance of lesbian identity, 4) disclosure of lesbian identity, 5) integration of lesbian identity into one’s overall identity. Clearly this is a general model, and there is a tremendous amount of variation across individuals. For example, awareness of same-gender feelings may take place within the context of a same-gender relationship; a woman may accept herself as a lesbian before she has any same-gender romantic or sexual relationships; she may disclose her identity to others only after she has integrated her lesbian identity.

Vivienne Cass’s widely used homosexuality identity development model mirrors racial identity development models (Cass, 1984). The individual first recognizes her own same gender feelings (Confusion), begins to accept the possibility of being lesbian (Comparison), and begins to tolerate and accept her own sexual and emotional needs (Tolerance, Acceptance). Once she has accepted her own orientation, there is a period of identity (Pride), where she becomes more immersed in lesbian subcultures but may also reject the “non-lesbian” world. The last stage is Synthesis, where one’s lesbian identity becomes integrated into the rest of the individual’s identities and has less primacy as a central organizing feature of one’s life. Research has indicated support for this general model, while noting that there is often overlap between Confusion and Comparison, as well as between Pride and Synthesis. Further, many people do not follow a clear, sequential trajectory. However, these models have been useful in understanding the typical developmental stages that a lesbian woman may experience as she comes to understand herself as different from the societal norms.

It has been posited that bisexual identity development follows a more complex path. To begin with, the stages involving recognition and acknowledgement of one’s attractions and desires must take place with both genders. While this can happen concurrently, it is common for this to happen at different points in a woman’s life. Additionally,

these models presume that the sexual minority identity is formed later, and in opposition to, the prevailing societal (e.g. heterosexual) model. However, many women who come to label themselves as bisexual, or choose to remain unlabeled (such as actress Cynthia Nixon, who is very public about her committed same-sex relationship, yet chooses not to self-define as lesbian or bisexual) do so from a lesbian orientation. It would appear to be overly simplistic to conclude that such women would simply travel through the stages again, as they realize their other-sex attractions.

Recent research has found more nuances and complexities in understanding women’s sexual identity development, which do not fit neatly into the previously developed “stage” models. Women appear to have a high degree of fluidity in their sexual identity development over a lifespan, and this fluidity is influenced by a woman’s attractions and relationships, as evidenced by longitudinal research. Developmental researcher Lisa Diamond followed a group of 80 sexual minority women over a ten-year period, conducting in-depth interviews every two years. This allowed Diamond to examine the varied paths that women take in their processes of integrating their sexual identities. Diamond found evidence for a tremendous amount of fluidity over time, as two-thirds of her sample changed their sexual orientation label at least once in the 10-year study period, and half of those women changed twice or more. Sixty percent of the lesbian-identified women at the start of the study had sexual contact with a man by the end of the study.

Ultimately, Diamond concluded that “Bisexuality may best be interpreted as a stable pattern of attraction to both sexes in which the specific balance of same-sex to other-sex desires necessarily varies according to interpersonal and situational factors” (Diamond, 2008: p. 9). Over time, women were seen to change their labels to fit with their current patterns of sexual attractions and behavior, and these were often seen to change over time. Many women who identified as lesbians at the start of the study reported progressively more “bisexual” patterns of attraction and behavior as the study progressed, resulting in more self-labeling changes from lesbian to bisexual or unlabeled identities than the reverse.

These findings present a challenge to the Cass model, which presumes that once an individual completes the stages and integration is achieved, sexual identity questioning is permanently resolved. In fact, with the majority of women changing their identity labels over time, identity change may be more common than a stable lesbian or bisexual identity.

Research Corner, *continues page 13*

Marcia, continued from page 1

July 3, 1970: "Fire Island: The 3 guys were very uptight about the 'fags' and I campaigned for Women's Lib. No ogling and people doing what they want. I can't convince them that homosexuality is OK. I think it is. Esp. David doesn't but I can see why."

I had developed a crush on Diana from my group and watched as Tess came out and moved on to a lesbian collective. The women's movement was gradually becoming central to my life. And I heard my first women's music.

May 13, 1970: "Women's Lib is gradually becoming real to me. . . I think most of them are more together by virtue of their years. I want to learn to give the finger to guys who yell at me on my bike."

October 9, 1970: "Big dance at da gym for Women's Center thing—great band & the folk singer but I couldn't get into some of the heavy anti-male stuff [probably Bev Grant and/or New Haven Women's Liberation Rock Band]."

Famous last words. Five years later, I started playing in a feminist string band called The New Harmony Sisterhood Band, which had grown out of my women's studies thesis. But I was straight. I often wished I had been a lesbian; it would have unified my politics and my love life so elegantly. I'd had one gay boyfriend who wasn't interested in sex and then another self-styled blues man who wanted sex with me and anyone else he could find—as much of the time as possible.

I did finally sleep with a woman in 1977, a couple of years after leaving him. My wild androgynous fiddle teacher stayed late one night, and we started a short-lived closeted affair. She was not interested in politics and didn't want her male band mates to know about us. So, oddly enough, until I met Kit, none of my lesbian friends knew I had come over to their "team." But when Kit and I got together, I announced it to the world with great relief and joy.

Then why did I leave her a year and a half later?

Remember that scene in "Annie Hall" where the couple's therapist asks the couple, "How often do you have sex?" He answers "Hardly ever," and she answers "All the time!" I fell in love like we all do, all that adrenaline, dopamine, and serotonin making a cocoon of wanting to be in bed making out all the time. But after about six months, I confessed to

my diary, "I guess if I fake it for men, I might as well fake it for this wonderful woman, who is much easier to be with, day or night."

Whether it was my Kinsey number, my youthful insecurity, my past stories of trauma, I don't know to this day. But "faking it"

at night in order to enjoy blissful days eventually caught up with me. I had also gotten into a recovery program for compulsive overeating and had lost the weight that I'd carried since I was a fat, bullied teenager. I couldn't deny that men were looking at me for the first time. I left her for myself, not for a man, but I knew I wanted to go back to men.

I braced for trouble. My band was made up of five women. We started out with one lesbian in 1974. As time went on, the other four of us fell in love with women, too. It was a microcosm of the second wave women's movement, where the oft-repeated mantra was, "Feminism is the theory, lesbianism is the practice." I was so happy to have arrived in that culture, and I didn't want to give it up. With the inexperience of youth, I searched for how to proceed.

May 14, 1979: "Loved seeing Kit again, though . . . I'm so lucky to have her for yes, a lover. If I keep telling myself I'm bisexual, what's the problem? Still, I foresee future problems over my acting out."

Then, when I turned thirty, my public musical life collided with my personal life. Acting on a dare, I planned to throw myself an "I'm Settled" party, as a sort of claim that I, too, wanted the furniture and family heirlooms that my brother got when he was married. I even wrote a song for the occasion, with lines like "No hubby, no house, no car, no kid, and no regrets for what I didn't or I did." Fifty friends came to my house to celebrate. Kit was there, but she wasn't celebrating. It had become clear that we were in the process of breaking up. [See *Bi Women*, December 1999/January 2000, pp. 6-8]

July 26, 1979: "Not a fun day by any means. She knows what I want to do, but I want her to know why and know me. I can't keep this up 'because it would hurt Kit.' Of COURSE it's hurting Kit, and me too. I bawled and screamed but remain convinced it's the right path. As I told Kit, It's absurd on one level that I'm doing this party—settled? Mostly because of her support and now I'm throwing it away. But what I can't tell her is that I've wanted this cleared up for months."

December 18, 1979: "In fact I feel more and more hetero lately. I just didn't want to admit such I'm sure but it took two years. What a funny world where I go to a shrink to ask permission to be hetero!"

EUREKA!

In 1980, I went to a coming out class at the Cambridge Adult Ed Center, where there was one lesbian, several gay men, and me, a self-identified bisexual. The lesbian in the group informed me that there was no such thing and that it was a copout. (Years later she wrote me that she had come out as a bisexual.) I wrote in my diary that I'd probably end up with a gay or bisexual ("I guess he would have to be") man—a prophecy. [See *Bi Women*, Summer 2011, p. 12]

A year later, I attended a Tuesday night bisexual rap at the Cambridge Women's Center, but there was no click of chemistry among the women there to continue meeting.



Marcia and Kit, Then

Marcia, continued from previous page

But in 1982, I hit paydirt. I met Lisa Orlando and Robyn Ochs. [See *Bi Women*, September/October/November 2008]

September 22, 1982: “Bi discussion at the women’s center. Met Lisa Orlando who’s like me! A fag hag punk woman.”

September 7, 1983: “Good BiVocals meeting at Megan’s. Monogamy I.”

September 14, 1983: “Bisexual Network Meeting.”

September 28, 1983: “Bi(rthday) Party – first one for the BiVocals. I made toys, Lucinda did a neat ritual where we said one word about the others. I was ‘flash’ – ‘creative’ – ‘independent’ – ‘humor’. I like it. I love these 5 women. Gee.”

In therapy, they call it “reframing.” Just as I had looked back at my life and found all the obvious lesbian signs, I now looked back and found more bisexual ones: crushes on brother/sister or girlfriend/boyfriend couples and attractions to girly boys and boyish girls. I’d started referring to myself as bisexual in college, after meeting Diana. The bisexual label was not new to me, but the community was.

NOW

After thirty years, BBWN and thousands of other bisexual groups in the world have created a safe haven. I hope countless younger (and older) women won’t have to reinvent my wheel of pain. I am delighted to be one of the Boston pioneers of the label that has to keep on speaking its name. Robyn has been tireless in spreading the word about healthy sexuality, the freedom of choice, and how to work with our allies. I fought in the 1990s to get that “B” in there in my various queer organizations. Now even the mainstream media know what GLBT means.

I am no longer tripping on any rope, like in the Ferron song; I’m solidly at home in both rooms of identity, and I enjoy the transits between them.

I love the variety and surprises of a bisexual life. Recently, I met a woman in my church who identifies as bisexual and had attended a BBWN group, even though she is married to a man now. She gets it. When one of the other members said to her, “You know, Marcia is bisexual . . .” my friend smiled and said, “Me too.” The other woman looked a bit puzzled. These small stories take place all the time, all over town, thanks to BBWN.

When I sing “I’m Settled” at open mics, I say that back then I was a “vaguean”—vague about my sexual identity, vague about my life’s path, full of bravado and fear. Then I add, “Now I’m sure of who I am. I’m a monogamous bisexual!” which for some reason makes the audience burst out laughing. (Isn’t that impossible? Don’t you have to have one of each?)

The struggle some of us faced over leaving the lesbian tribe was referred to in a recent movie about the second wave women’s movement in Boston that was shown at the Brattle Theater as part of the WAM women’s film festival. In “A Moment in Her Story,” there were clips of our band singing at a rally about the joys of self help: “Get your speculum

at the neighborhood clinic/Learn about your cervix and what’s in it!” But the filmmaker made it clear that within the Boston area second-wave women’s movement, if you weren’t a lesbian, you were “sleeping with the enemy.” Some straight and/or bi women who were interviewed thirty years later talked about their pain back then.

The great news is that as one gets older, one gives less of a shit. As a young woman I worried that “They” were judging me, and I know now that there is no “They.” There are compassionate people and there are fearful people. These days, women of my age are more interested in working together to keep the gains we won than from being rolled back even further. Many of our friends have died, reminding us about what’s really important. We’re simply happy to see each other around in this cold, supposedly “post-feminist” world that has no idea about those groundbreaking days when women found magic and power in each other.

And what about Kit? For a writer and diary keeper like me, riding my bike past her old house every day on my way to work can’t help but conjure up memories. We’re both alive and well. She married a great woman, and I went on to have three more boyfriends, the last of whom was a bi trans man and the love of my life who died a year ago [see *Bi Women*, Summer 2011, p. 12]

There’s a photo of Kit and me laughing together on the web site of a GLBT awards dinner in 2010. We meet at least once a year just to catch up. For years, I’d always be sure to bring up how sorry and confused I was, as part of the 12-step program of making amends. After a few years of this, she just laughed and said, “Oh, is it amends time again? Come on, enough’s enough. We were both young then, and it was like we were playmates.” You mean I wasn’t such a devastating heartbreaker? What a comedown.

At our most recent lunch, we talked about role models. I said, “You had your former boss as a role model.” She answered, “I had Marcia Deihl as a role model.” Huh? Then she added something that warmed my heart: “We were each other’s role models back then.” We talked about former friends that we missed—Kay Gardner and Rita Arditti. And I admitted to a mad crush on Janet McTeer after seeing the film *Albert Nobbs*.

“Then and now,” for me, comes down to that moment. I have now what I didn’t have then: the freedom to tell the whole truth, without hesitation. Our love, our painful breakup, my going back to men, and my crush on Janet McTeer, are all of a piece in my bisexual life.

So then why did I go home and have a little sob into my pillow after our last meeting?

She was the most sane, creative, compassionate, funny, and attentive lover I had ever been with in my sixty-two years. We were so good together, except for that one thing. Ah, but sex is not a small thing and neither one of us could endure an affection-only “Boston Marriage.” Today I know

Marcia, continues page 15

Willa, continued from page 1

My twin and I play our toy drums outside. He slips his Snoopy super performance tee shirt off of his head. I reach my arms through the top of mine, but Mom slips it back onto my head.

"Little girls can't take off their shirts," she says.

Angry, I chuck my twin's toy drumstick into the puddle.

Ten years old, I go with my family to Walmart. Walking up and down the aisles, we throw items into the cart. My twin and I fight for bags of Kit Kats and rubber super balls to add to our collection. Mom puts a blue package in the cart. She often buys these packages that look like packs of diapers.

"What are these?" I say, as the check-out clerk slides the blue diapers over the scanner.

Mom doesn't tell me. "Let's take a walk when we get home," she says.

We start on the same path that we always take, the mile-long path past the 100-year old houses with rotting couches and Budweiser cans on their front porches.

"A young girl becomes a woman when she starts menstruating. This means that she bleeds out of her vagina once a month and those things in the blue packages are there to soak up the blood," Mom says.

I start crying.

"I don't want to!" I sob. "It's all your fault. I don't want to!"

I take a shower and Mom sees her daughter's naked body. She says that she wants me to wear a bra. I cry again. My twin doesn't have to wear a bra. The next day she comes home with a plastic grocery bag of three white bras. She keeps it a secret and tells me to follow her upstairs so that I can try them on.

I am 11 years old. I hold my arms above my head to do a dive into the deep end. My twin and his friends laugh when they see my underarm hair, soft like a baby's, and coarse like tree bark. They still haven't had a voice change or a fresh supply of fuzz. I hide underwater. I pop up and swim toward the side of the pool, keeping my upper arms hugged to my chest.

As a 12-year-old, I hold my breath before I pee. During a walk, I had decided that if I held my breath before I peed, the blood wouldn't fall. I pray now too, sure that if I pray God will not condemn me to this place.

While at basketball practice, I sit alongside the other fifth graders with my back against the wall. We stick our legs out in front of us, and I see that I am the only girl with hair plastered to them. My teammates run their hands over their legs, smooth like the outside of my twin and my super balls. I go home and take a pink plastic razor from the top shelf of the cupboard next to the toilet and scrape the hair off of my legs.

It happens today. While sitting on the go-kart seat with Ben, we swing past fake palm trees and back around toward treasure chests on a pirate ship. Something's wet. I had not held my breath or prayed. We hit one of the rubber tires. It feels warm and it's still wet. Ben gets out and tries

to maneuver the car to the right so we can continue with the race.

"Get out! Get out, Willa!"

I sit there, silently. I do not want to move.

"Get out! Get out!"

He wants to win. My pants are white. I sit there. He shakes my arm and pulls me out. I inch along the fence toward a café. I inch along the white wall toward the bathroom and slump onto the toilet, where I peer inside of my pants. A red tundra greets me. I didn't ask for this. I wad up some toilet paper, for the first time, and put it onto the Spongebob thong. Some of it wads up inside of me as I sit down. I perch on the bench, tell Ben that I am sick, call my parents and go home.

I don't tell Mom about the tundra. I don't tell anyone. I go upstairs and reach inside the blue package for the first time, pull slowly at the perforated edges on the outside of one of the pads. I don't want to make a sound. My twin is downstairs playing the piano, singing in a voice that has not changed. I have the thing open. I unpeel it and plaster it on top of the tundra. I place the orange wrapper at the very bottom of the garbage pile, digging past used Kleenex and Dixie cups. I flush the toilet, wash my hands twice, creak open the door, scurry to my bedroom and hide myself under the white comforter.

Fourteen years old and the blood pours out of me in buckets. Before school I plaster two pads on top of each other. We have no lockers at school, so there is no place to hide the pads during class. In the bathroom, I do not want to make a noise. Toward the end of the day, it feels very wet. I wrap a sweatshirt around my waist. The red tundra has crusted to the butt of my pants. I turn my head to see a boy pointing at my ass, laughing. I decide not to come back to school. For a week and a half, I am sick.

I try again and again to push a tampon inside of me. I want to plug myself up. I sit on the toilet with a cardboard box filled with wads of cotton between my feet. My parents are at work. My twin is playing video games. This is a good time to practice. I think I have one inside of me. I waddle around. I waddle back to toilet, reach my hands inside and yank it out. I repeat. I repeat again. I put the mess inside a plastic bag, and take it outside to the garbage can. If I sit the right way on the couch, I can't feel it.

I go to the ninth grade dance. I struggle with slapping make-up on my face. I struggle with buying the boy a corsage. I struggle with wearing high heel shoes. I struggle with rubbing the back of my body against the front of his.

I struggle. I go to the girls' bathroom and sit.

I shave my head. Dad and I stand on the floor, in the audience at the Neil Young concert. I wear my Dad's shirt from the 1974 concert that he had attended. Stale cigarette smoke funnels into my ears. The man talks, "Hey, I was at that concert, man, back when Neil was a young dude."

"This is my Dad's shirt. He was there too."

Willa, continued on next page

Willi, continued from previous page

“Dude, your son’s got a sweet shirt on,” he says to my dad.

My Dad’s face is red now. I walk through the back of the crowd to the girl’s bathroom, pushing my chest forward as I walk in.

I grow my hair long again.

Grandma says, “You look like such a nice lady.”

I thank her. Three days later, I give Anna the electric razor. “Mohawk,” I say.

James and I go to a concert. Roo Roo Kangaroo asks for all the ladies to come to the middle. Roo Roo Kangaroo asks for all the guys to come to the middle. I don’t move.

Willi is a student at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, where she studies English and Spanish.

Research Corner, continued from page 9

Jennifer is a licensed clinical psychologist who lives in Boston. She has conducted research about bi women and is a proud member of BBWN.

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Dear Tiggy,



I have known for a few years that I’m bisexual but have only recently begun to tell a few people. I’ve been contemplating telling my big sister in my sorority, but the other day, I heard her tell my other sisters that she thought that there was no such thing as being bisexual. She said she thinks that bisexuals are really just gay and closeted, and most of my other sisters agreed. It ticked me off, but I didn’t say anything.

How can I explain bisexuality to my “big”? Her opinion is one that I hold highly and I want to be able to share this with her. This also brings up the issue of coming out in general because I attend a Catholic college and there are some strong opinions about sexuality here.
-Em

Dear Em,

Ideally, the first set of people you come out to serve as a support network so that if you experience some backlash along the way, they’ll provide you a soft place to fall. Unfortunately, you got a sign that you can’t trust your big in that capacity just yet. I’d say that for now, you should take her off of the list of people you’re coming out to. It’s disappointing, but don’t worry—you can put her back on the list when the time is right.

Take heart in the fact that if and when you do come out to her, just being friends with you might be enough to change her perspective on bisexuals. Knowing someone personally is the most effective catalyst to explode stereotypes.

You could try educating your big on bisexuality without coming out to her, but that’s going to be messy. You’d have to find a way to bring it up in conversation naturally, and if she asks you point-blank whether you’re bi, you might choose to lie. It’s an option but you risk feeling bad about the dishonesty. Better to table the bi enlightenment sessions for the moment.

As you build your support network, it makes sense to start with other queers (or, even better, other bisexuals) because they will obviously support you and can empathize. When you decide to be generally “out,” you might find such compatriots within your college’s LGBT student organization. If you don’t have one because the campus is too hostile, contact Dignity—a national organization for LGBT Catholics—at www.dignityusa.org and see if they can suggest queer support groups that work with or near your college community.

Are you a bi lady in need of some good advice? Write to Tiggy Upland at tiggyupland@gmail.com. This advice column is for entertainment purposes only. The columnist reserves the right to edit the letters for any reason. Find more Ask Tiggy on www.biresource.net.

News Briefs

By Robyn Ochs



Sixth International Workplace Pride Conference Holds First-Ever Workshop on Bisexuality

On Friday, June 15th, 2012 the Workplace Pride's annual conference takes place in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. For the first time in history the conference's program includes a workshop on bisexuals at the workplace "Creating a Safe Workplace for Bisexual Employees: Leading the Way to Greater Understanding. *70% of bisexual employees feel that they can't be themselves at work because the workplace is being experienced as unsafe. How can employers create and maintain a safe workplace for bisexual employees?*" The workshop will explore the unique experiences and challenges faced by bisexuals in the workplace. Expected facilitators are: Wilma Ruis (moderator), Erwin Heyl, Ronete Cohen and *Bi Women* contributor Hilde Vossen.

Bisexual First-Year Student Takes on Chick-fil-A

Hillary Dworkoski, an out bi woman who just finished her first-year at NYU, is leading a campaign on Change.org to get the fast-food restaurant Chick-fil-A removed from her campus. She says supporting a company that funds anti-gay groups undermines NYU's diverse campus community and is inconsistent with the university's values. Chick-fil-A's charitable arm, the WinShape Foundation, donated almost \$2 million to anti-gay groups in 2009 alone, the most recent year for which public records are available. This money has supported anti-LGBT groups including Focus on the Family, Exodus International and the Family Research Council which have worked against marriage equality, against the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in hate crime laws, and for "reparative" therapy to "cure" LGBT people.

Dworkoski says the support she has received on campus has been overwhelming, though some make the argument that Chick-fil-A has freedom of speech. To this she replies: "Imagine that Chick-fil-A had been donating to racist organizations. No one would make this argument." And to the few she has encountered who disagree simply because they like Chick-fil-A's food: "I typically just ask those people what's more important to them: waffle fries or human rights."

"True Blood" star Anna Paquin...

...who came out publicly last year as bisexual still has to put up with ignorant people who deny her bisexuality. In an interview in *Zooey Magazine*, she responded: "I'm sure for some people, saying they're bisexual feels less scary than making a statement that they're gay. For me, it's not really an issue because I'm someone who believes being bisexual is actually a thing. It's not made up. It's not a lack of decision. It's not being greedy or numerous other ignorant things I've heard at this point. For a bisexual, it's not about gender. That's not the deciding factor for who they're attracted to."

And "X-Files" Star Gillian Anderson...

... tells *Out* magazine (3/13/12) that she has a bi history including a girlfriend when she was in high school and numerous subsequent relationships with women, though she says they were the exception rather than the rule. She is quoted in *Out* as saying: "If I had thought I was 100 percent gay, would it have been a different experience for me? Would it have been a bigger deal if shame had been attached to it and all those things that become huge life-altering issues for youngsters in that situation? It's possible that my attitude around it came, on some level, from knowing that I still liked boys."

Lambda Literary Awards: Bi Books

The following books are finalists for awards in the Bisexual Fiction and Bisexual Nonfiction categories. Winners will be announced at the 24th Annual Lambda Literary Awards in New York City on Monday, June 4, 2012.

Bisexual Nonfiction:

- * *Big Sex Little Death: A Memoir*, by Susie Bright, Seal Press
- * *Bisexuality and Queer Theory: Intersections, Connections and Challenges*, edited by Jonathan Alexander & Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio, Routledge
- * *The Horizontal Poet*, by Jan Steckel, Zeitgeist Press
- * *Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literature*, edited by Qwo-Li Driskill, Daniel Heath Justice, Deborah Miranda, and Lisa Tatonetti, University of Arizona Press
- * *Surviving Steven: A True Story*, by Ven Rey, Ven Rey

Bisexual Fiction:

- * *Boyfriends With Girlfriends*, by Alex Sanchez, Simon & Schuster
- * *The Correspondence Artist*, by Barbara Browning, Two Dollar Radio
- * *Have You Seen Me*, by Katherine Scott Nelson, Chicago Center for Literature and Photography
- * *Triptych*, by J.M. Frey, Dragon Moon Press
- * *The Two Krishnas*, by Ghalib Shiraz Dhalla, Magnus Books

Calendar, continued from page 16
night. www.prideri.com for details.

Thursday, June 21, 7pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). Meets in the community room of Eastern Bank at 250 Elm St in Davis Sq in Somerville. It starts with a one-hour check-in and discussion followed by an outing to a local eatery. Info: bliss@biresource.net.

July

Monday, July 9, 7pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See June 11th)

Tuesday, July 10, 7-9pm, BRC Board Meeting. (See June 12th)

Thursday, July 19, 7pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). (See June 21st)

Saturday, July 21, 11:30am, Saturday Bi Brunch. (See June 16th)

Sunday, July 22, noon, BBWN Potluck at Deb & Gina's in Arlington. Please bring a potluck dish and/or drinks to share. A great opportunity to meet other bi & bi-friendly women in the Boston area. Email Deb at debmo345@gmail.com to RSVP/get directions.

August

Wednesday, August 1, 7 pm, Bisexual Social & Support Group (BLiSS). meets 1st Weds. at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St, Boston. All bi & bi-friendly people

of all genders & orientations welcome. Meetings are peer-facilitated discussion groups, sometimes with a pre-selected topic or presenter.

August 12-18, Carnival Week in Provincetown. A week of festive activities including Drag Bingo, the absolutely fabulous Carnival Parade on Thursday, & much more. Bring your beads, bathing suit, & sunscreen! More info at www.ptown.org/Carnival.asp.

Monday, August 13, 7pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See June 11th)

Tuesday, August 14, 7-9pm, BRC Board Meeting. (See June 12th)

Thursday, August 16, 7pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). (See June 21st)

Saturday, August 18, 11:30am, Saturday Bi Brunch. (See June 16th)

Sunday, August 19, noon, BBWN Potluck BBQ at Fernanda's in Brockton. Please bring a potluck dish &/or drinks to share. Feel free to bring something to throw on the grill. A great opportunity to meet other bi & bi-friendly women in the Boston area. Email Fernanda at fern.ferre@gmail.com to RSVP/get directions.

Save the date: September 23rd is Celebrate Bisexuality Day! Plan an event in your community to celebrate our rich and vibrant culture.

Marcia, continued from page 11

male/female categories are becoming obsolete. Will I ever be with a woman again? Who knows.

One of my writing courses was called "Discover Your Life By Writing It," and I see that almost every intimate "secret" I've ever kept is now in the pages of *Bi Women*. My tears are just fine. They are a tribute to Kit and the risk inherent in any love affair.

I'll sign off with a toast to thirty years, using the farewell that my long-time bisexual friends Norm Davis, Robyn Ochs and I always use, preferably out loud and when we are in public: "Bi." "I know you are."

Marcia is a founding member of BBWN.



Marcia and Kit, now

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street in Boston, behind Club Cafe. Call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

Come to our monthly bi brunch! All women are welcome! See calendar for dates.

2nd Tuesdays:

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. All are welcome.

2nd Mondays:

Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. 7pm. Email kate.e.flynn@gmail.com for more info.

1st Wednesdays, 3rd Thursdays:

BLISS: Bisexual Social & Support Group.

2nd Thursdays:

Younger Bi Group. For bi folks 20-29. 7pm Info; Kate at youngblissboston@gmail.com.

3rd Saturdays:

Biversity Bi Brunch. 11:30am at Johnny D's, Davis Square, Somerville.

Boston-area women:

Keep up with local events. Sign up for our email list! Send an email to: biwomenboston-subscribe@yahooogroups.com



Bi Women wants you!!!



SUBSCRIPTION RATE for Bi Women (sliding scale)

___ \$0-20: pay what you can

___ \$20-39: suggested

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___ \$100 on up: Goddess

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Please send my **Bi Women** ___by email ; ___by postal mail; ___both ways

BBWN, P.O. BOX 301727, Jamaica Plain,, MA 02130 or online www.biwomenboston.org

CALENDAR

June

Sunday, June 3, AIDS Walk Boston. The 6.2-mile Walk starts at the Hatch Shell at 7:30am in Boston's Back Bay & raises money & awareness for essential HIV prevention, advocacy & services. Info: www.aac.org.

Wednesday, June 6, 7-8:45pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLISS). BLISS meets monthly 1st Wed at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope Street, Boston. This special meeting we will make signs, and brainstorm chants and fashion ideas in preparation for Boston Parade.

Friday, June 8, 6pm, Boston's Dyke March. Gather at the Boston Common Gazebo at 6pm for a night of frolicking and marching with the queerest women in town.

Saturday, June 9, Pride Day in Boston. The theme this year is Celebrating 30 Years of Worldwide Pride Movement. Kicking off from Copley Square, the parade route winds through the South End, through the Common, up Beacon Street & down the other side of Beacon Hill into Government Center. Get your bi pride on & march with the BRC contingent. Exact place to meet

up will be posted on www.biresource.net & the BRC Facebook page the day before.

Sunday, June 10, Heat on the Street: Perkins Street Block Party, noon-7pm. Keep on dancing at the hottest women's block party the day after Pride. Info: www.bostonpride.org/jpbp.php.

Monday, June 11, 7pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. A peer-led support group for women in a straight marriage/relationship struggling with sexual orientation or coming out. Info: kate.e.flynn@gmail.com.

Tuesday, June 12, 7-9pm, Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. All bi & bi-friendly community members welcome to attend. At the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. near Back Bay Station on the Orange Line. Info: Ellyn@biresource.net.

Saturday, June 16, 11:30am, Bi Brunch. This mixed-gender bi group now meets the 3rd Saturday of the month at Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Sq. in Somerville, across from the Davis stop, Red Line.

Saturday, June 16, Providence Pride. Rhode Island has the unique distinction of a day-long festival along the river, followed by a parade at

Calendar, continues on page 15