

## This is the Place: Building Utah's 1 to 5 Club

By Shauna Brock



In September of 2005, I crawled home to lick my wounds and start over after life had crashed and burned in North Carolina. Reeling, all I wanted was community. Anything to make being back in Salt Lake City a little bit easier.

About a week after throwing my suitcases on the bed, before all of my boxes had arrived, I took a seat in a town hall being held by the Utah Pride Center's staff and the mayor of Salt Lake. During a breakout session, my sibling and I asked if there was a bi-focused community at the center. The adult programs director grinned and said, "You're volunteered."

We took her seriously.

Within a week we'd scheduled a meeting with staff. We sat together in the multipurpose room, which was really a large garage with carpeting, and were cautioned that bi groups had trouble because leadership always got burned out. Having come out in Austin, where in 1998 the bi community was rocking hard, I couldn't imagine what that could mean. Burning out? Never. (Newsflash: I did.) Determined to make us be the group that stuck, the process began. We were encouraged to try, and fail, and see what happened.

Six people attended our first official meeting in November of 2005. We decided on a monthly peer support group and a monthly social gathering. Our name? The 1 to 5 Club, in honor of bisexual sex researcher Alfred Kinsey.

Side note: people ask me if I regret the name of the group, especially as research moves away from Kinsey's work, and fewer people know him. I don't. We tried Bi-Utah for a while, and it never felt right. Kinsey's scale isn't perfect, but because of him, we have a place to start.

*Shauna, continues on page 20*

## Northampton, 1990

The bisexual activist community started to get more visible in the late 80s and early 90s. In communities across the U.S., bisexuals fought to be added to the names of community organizations and events. In Northampton, Massachusetts, the local Pride Committee had changed their name in 1989 to the Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Pride Parade. The following year, several radical lesbians joined the Pride Committee and voted to remove the b-word from the parade. Local bi activists, along with the direct action group Queer Nation, protested the bi erasure and the following year bisexual was added again!





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**Boston-area women: Join our Google group: [tinyurl.com/Join-BiWomenBoston](http://tinyurl.com/Join-BiWomenBoston)**

**Kat reads BWQ. Send a picture of yourself reading BWQ to [biwomeneditor@gmail.com](mailto:biwomeneditor@gmail.com). Be creative!**



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. We strive to create a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities; class backgrounds; racial, ethnic, and religious groups; ages; and 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, full acceptance of bisexuality, and the liberation of all gay and transgender people within the larger society.

**Editor's Note**

It's been exciting for me to guest edit this issue because activism has been a consistent part of my life since I wrote my first letter to the editor in support of the Equal Rights Amendment when I was a teenager. Right now, with the world in such turmoil, it sometimes feels that there are endless things one can be out there protesting or protecting or standing up for. It's exhausting. And it is what we have to do.

We are lucky to have a long history of bi activism, from the days of the 80s and 90s when we fought to add the B (and often the T) to community organizations and events, such as the Northampton Pride debacle of 1990 noted on page 1. I was living in Noho at the time and experienced the overt biphobia of lesbians deciding whether we were worthy enough to be included in their Pride celebration. Fast forward to 2013 when I co-organized the first White House Roundtable on Bisexual Issues (see a photo of the second gathering in 2015 on page 7). Experiencing those two different events over the course of one's life attests to the power of activism to make positive change in the world.

I hope you enjoy reading the range of opinions and experiences of the writers in this issue. It's inspiring to know that bi+ folks are out there doing community building and advocacy on many different issues. So much of what activists do is unappreciated and unacknowledged. Thank you all for the energy and time you put into the varied spaces that you engage with. *It does* make a difference!

*Ellyn Ruthstrom*

**Upcoming in Bi Women Quarterly  
Call for submissions**

**Summer 2020:**

**Finding Sex/Finding Love**

How do you seek and find romantic and/or sexual connection? Do you use technology such as dating apps? Why or why not? Have you intentionally sought these connections, or stumbled upon them? We want to hear about your experiences, whether they are delightful, discouraging, amusing, or absurd! Submissions are due by May 1.

**Fall 2020:**

**Out at Work (Or Not)**

It's time to come back to the question of being out (or not) at work! What have been your experiences at work? Are you out? Partially out? Not out? Why/not? What challenges/opportunities have you found? What has been your experience (if any) in LGBTQ+ employee resource groups? If you're just entering the workforce, what are your hopes/fears/strategies? Submissions are due by August 1.

Submission guidelines are online at [biwomenboston.org](http://biwomenboston.org).

Send your submissions and suggestions for future topics to [biwomeneditor@gmail.com](mailto:biwomeneditor@gmail.com).

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

BBWN is an all-volunteer organization. Want to proofread, edit submissions, host one of our monthly brunches, help out with our Etsy store, or with our WordPress website? Or, if you're a student, consider an internship. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Robyn ([biwomeneditor@gmail.com](mailto:biwomeneditor@gmail.com)).

**AROUND THE WORLD: Anonymous, RUSSIA**

I am from Russia and my country is homophobic.

When thinking about Russia, it might not be the first characteristic that comes to mind, but I can assure you that it is one of the most prevalent in describing the contemporary Russian society. Most of my friends with whom I spoke about this issue replied to my concerns saying something along the lines of, "you're overdramatizing, no one here cares about others' business." And I wanted to believe that really badly. But when the anti-LGBT movement, called The Chainsaw, publicly posted a list of LGBT activists they were going to kill, and then took responsibility for the brutal murder of 41-year-old activist Elena Grigorieva that no one got arrested or punished for, I stopped lying to myself. People in my country DO care about the LGBT community. They care so much that the gender of one's sex partner is the biggest indicator of whether one deserves to live or die.

I didn't grow up pansexual. I didn't even know that word. I took my appreciation for all people and their beauty and charm as a part of my excessive friendliness. Only after visiting the U.S. did I start thinking to myself that my attitude towards certain people – especially of my own gender – might have a different underlying reason. It didn't scare me as I didn't intend to share my thoughts with anyone who might judge me for that, not even with my parents. When I began dating my girlfriend in Russia it felt like heaven. We complemented each other so perfectly and spent two and a half happy years together. We never revealed our relationship to anyone, so we have never encountered any direct homophobic treatment from people around us. However, my own thoughts and conflicts kept destroying me from the inside.

The whole concept of dating a woman in Russia was frightening to me and also extremely confusing. I was lost in my feelings and emotions and I did not know what to do or how to act. A belief that same-sex relationships are gross and unnatural lived deeply within my head. I couldn't avoid ideas and opinions I internalized as a child, which led me to constantly doubt myself, question my very being, and eventually lose myself for a long period of time. This, to me, was the scariest and most painful experience of being an LGBT person in Russia. If I had to deal with a crowd of people spitting at me, I would gather all my power and strength to fight for my relationship; but having to fight an endless array of my own preconceptions was much, much harder.

Another struggle that I had to face was the complete absence of

any useful information. I would have greatly appreciated a little "How to Be LGBT" guidebook of some sort, but the Russian internet did not offer any. I was in desperate need of answers, approvals, and confirmations, but the only piece of information I could find was my mom's old book on sex education, where all the information about same-sex relationships could be summarized as the following: "Homosexual men are deeply dependent on the pleasure of having penetrative anal sex and should be treated accordingly to cure this disease." Having my love called a disease was not helpful whatsoever.

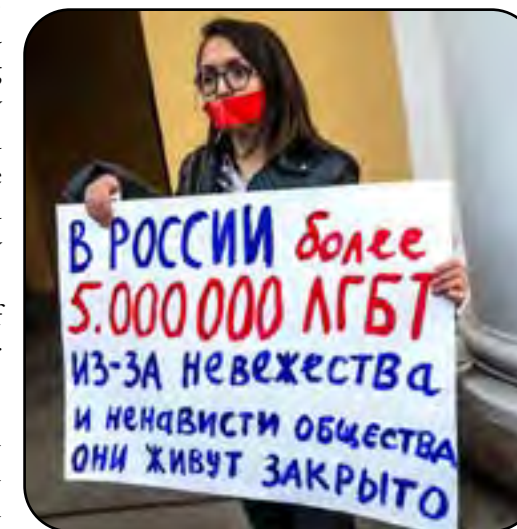
Additionally, I couldn't help but notice that relationships between women were completely out of the picture in my country's context. As if relationships between men were nasty, obscene, and really noticeable, while those between women were...nonexistent? Only later, as my relationship progressed and I started noticing what people were saying in real life and on the internet, I realized relationships between women exist in Russia only for the pleasure of men as an exotic, exciting, and extremely sexy fetish. Whenever I refused to "get to know a bit better" yet another man on my social media and

used "I have a girlfriend" as an excuse, there was not a single instance when I did not get "Why don't we do a threesome?" as a response.

In light of the hegemonic Russian notion of toxic masculinity and the image of a strong macho man as the ruler, the dominant, and the ideal, relationships between women are viewed as inferior with no right for existence outside of serving men's pleasure. Those relationships are expected to be broken down once a man expresses his interest in a romantic relationship with someone from the couple.

Nonetheless, despite all the points mentioned above, I was able to find myself. I built my own little support village, a network of people who understood me or were members of the LGBT community themselves. It was surprising to find out how many LGBT kids there were in my city, and I'm happy that we were able to keep each other strong. Nevertheless, I don't know if it's going to get better. If I was able to get out of that self-destructive rabbit hole, it doesn't mean it's easy for everyone to do. I can only hope that everyone will find their place in this world and live happily and love happily.

*Anonymous is a student from Russia who is currently an undergraduate in an American college.*



Russian activist Elena Grigorieva before she was murdered in 2019.



# Activism: The Moving Target

By Jenise Justice

I would often laugh at my friend Lillie A. Estes (1956-2019), founder of the Community Justice Network, when she corrected anyone who used the term “activist” to describe her work. She preferred the phrase “community strategist,” saying she was too old to be doing all that marching and protesting like the millennials. What made it so funny is that all our lives we have been activists. However, what Lillie was alluding to was that being an activist takes on many forms depending upon your station in life. Her place at the latter stages of her life was to support the younger activists by strategizing with them and sharing the wisdom of the past. It was Lillie who helped me shape my own view of my activism. However, it was a book by June Jordan (1936-2002) called *Life as Activism: June Jordan’s Writings from the Progressive* that helped me to see its magnitude. Jordan’s writings address issues from the end of the twentieth century and the intersections of many forms of injustice, and they celebrate the movement away from single-issue politics to a far-reaching activism. My own involvement in fighting for justice was shaped similarly and I coined it my intersecting activism. This quote defines it philosophically:

“At the end of life we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made, how many great things we have done. We will be judged by ‘I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless, and you took me in.’”

Physiologically speaking, my intersecting activism began the day I was born. A black girl’s conditioning meant following a heteronormative life that would include racism, sexism, and classism from the start. Being “bisexual” in how I viewed the world moved the metrics. I believe being born to love more than one gender created an opening for me to see no one’s issue above another. My activism is a moving target, inclusive of all systems of oppression. My earliest recollection of activism was my dad telling me the story of his return home from the Vietnam War and me raising my fist and saying, “I’m Black and I’m Proud.” I was two years old.

My protest took many forms. At the age of five, I mooned the class bully. At 13, I dated a white guy, which was an unspoken

taboo. In college, I dropped my African American Studies class because my white supremacist patriarchal black professor said I was too idealistic to be a lawyer. Later in life, I became the first female president of the Prosser-Truth Division of the UNIA-ACL (Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League) and helped form Africans United at Colorado State University against the criminalization of black people. In addition, I exercised my birthright to love who I wanted in one of the first public same-sex union ceremonies in the heart of the confederacy before Prop 8 went up for a vote.

The point of it all is to say, my intersecting activism takes into account diversity, inclusion, and intersectionality. I must point out three things regarding the concept of intersectionality as I understand it. Kimberlé Crenshaw used the term to reveal how feminist movements and antiracist movements exclude women of color. Secondly, there were women like Angela Davis and Audre Lorde speaking of the need for a new approach to analyzing black women’s experiences shaped by race, gender, social class, and sexuality before Crenshaw. Thirdly, the concept of intersectionality (or as we engage with it today) has moved away from one-dimensional thinking allowing for different power dynamics of different identity categories at the same time. Nothing is in a vacuum and this way of thinking has framed my work in LGBTQ+ spaces.

American sociopolitical activism prominent during the 1950s is where my interest peaked in

the early 80s because it was led by the civil rights movement and that is the movement I knew the least about. Then came the anti-war movement opposing American involvement in Vietnam and later the women’s and gay rights movements.

The LGBT Movement, as it was called in the 90s, became a place of isolation for me. I saw the interest of the movement being determined by white men (G). Then it trickled down to white women (L), to black men (G) and black women (L). The B was completely silent. I got angry and turned toward women’s issues and the ongoing issues of race and class until my work as a “motivational speaker” brought me face to face with what had been haunting me. I wanted to be heard and there were other women feeling the same way. When the statistics revealed bisexuals were over half of the community, even though the data did not support the African American bisexual women, I felt empowered to raise my voice.

At the urging of a friend, I wrote a book putting another face and voice of bisexuality into the fray. My book, *DownLow Sister OnTop: Celebrating the African American Bisexual Woman* is also my way of invoking political action—once I realized I could make changes to social conditions regardless of whether groups worked with me or not. The beginning of my book tour was challenging. African-American lesbians and heterosexual women did not support it as I naively hoped. I reached out to several black women who were promoting the #BlackLivesMatter Movement to get feedback, and was told “the fight though relevant was not their fight...bisexuals have the ability to pass so they are not as targeted as lesbians...good luck with your book.”

In heterosexual spaces, I received the cold shoulder, or they secretly wanted to connect with me. I was dropped from some engagements, while others simply ignored me. And, then there were those who would ask why it is necessary to single out the B at all. It was disheartening, but it made me more determined. They say when you do what you love, you will do it for free. My intentions with my writing are simple. I want to give a voice to the voiceless, raise the awareness, and open dialogue.

With clear intentions, I started the Leading Edge Love Movement. It’s another political action to debunk myths through dialogue but, more importantly, it connects the dots with what I believe is one of the roles we play that will transform society. That role is to show others what unconditional love looks like. We are leading-edge lovers. The movement is not limited to bisexuals, but we definitely have a unique position to start from. I theorize that diversity is our natural existence; therefore, we all play a key role in ushering in this new way of existing that celebrates our differences instead of trying to change them.

What is a leading-edge lover? A leading-edge lover is anyone who walks in their truth, respects all beings, and loves their family as much as they can. They are the closest point to source (know a power greater than self), neither straight nor curved (see life as organic not linear), uplift others (avoiding manipulations) and they can get extremely hot (power of influence is infectious).

It’s been five years since I first published *DownLow Sister OnTop*. I followed it up with an ebook called *Ask The Bisexual*. Currently, I’m developing a one-person show based on the 13 characters in the book and working on books two and three. I’m doing what I love with intersecting activism as my natural impulse to injustice. It’s pointing me in the direction of living in my truth and trusting however that shows up. When I do that, it’s an inspiration for someone else. I believe we can embrace each intersecting part of who we are as a unique grouping and set undeniably apart, while celebrating the cohesiveness of existence.

I don’t consider myself to be an LGBTQ+ activist, a bi+ activist,

or any configuration of activist group, unless the + stands for all groups who have been subjected to colonialism and racism and unless it stands for those social movements that have and continue to work to dismantle those forces. I’m an activist for those who have figured out a way to not allow the past, future, or present to get in the way of engaging with one another in the spirit of love. For me, this is the ultimate awareness that places all groups side by side as human beings. No one cause is above or below the next and, wanting the same thing: freedom. A freedom that comes from within. In the words of civil rights pioneer Vernon Johns, “You see a fight, join it. You see a problem, solve it.”

*Jenise Justice Brown is a storyteller, educator, and serial entrepreneur. Her passions include artistic expressions, societal equity, and self-inquiry.*



## Kate Michelle

I joined the LGBTQ committee at my Catholic parish (a huge rarity) and I’m one of few bi people that I know of in this group. So far, the group is still taking shape. That said, even with the small openings I’ve found in the Catholic community, people still focus mainly on LG issues, with a nod to transgender issues. The rest of us go hidden. So, in this group, I share my experiences, point this out, and I’m committed to keep pushing. I also ran in a local 5K to raise money for an LGBTQ+ health center. It’s still quite recent for me, so I haven’t done much yet, but this is where I’ve started.

*Kate lives in the DC area with her husband and two adorable cats.*



## Finding the B in LGBTQ Activism

By Helen Parshall

I think the process of writing this piece is a pretty good metaphor for being bisexual within the larger LGBTQ community. I stopped, rephrased, rewrote, and restarted so many times that I've completely lost count of what draft number this is.

This is the first time I sat down to delve into the ways the last five or so years have shaped my journey as an activist. It's hard for me to look back on the triumphs in my career without also remembering the intense moments of anxiety and pain, and I'm deeply aware of those of us for whom that anxiety is a daily reality.

Of course, we don't need the data to tell us that being bisexual comes with its host of mental health struggles. We're too busy constantly fighting to survive and be seen and have our stories told, especially when it comes to activism and social justice spaces.

Entering LGBTQ activism has brought me both joy and pain—it's what helped me come all the way out as bisexual—but it's also what has broken my heart more times than I care to think about, let alone put on paper. The LGBTQ movement often leaves our community behind, despite the fact that we make up about half of the population it seeks to serve. It's why the first time I came out in a professional, activist setting was terrifying.

Sure, I was interning at the nation's largest LGBTQ civil rights organization, but in my few weeks there, I hadn't yet had an experience that felt true to my fragile sense of my LGBTQ identity.

I was out as bisexual to my closest friends, but that was it. Coming out completely felt impossible when there was no tangible example of what the end goal looked like. I didn't know of any bisexual celebrities who felt relatable, and my queer friends were just as lost at figuring out life after college as I was. I'd somehow missed the *Grey's Anatomy* fandom at the time, and this was 2014, still two years before Sara Ramirez's iconic speech at the True Colors Summit.

Preparing to meet with my internship mentor, Beth, for the first time was a challenge, and talking with her over coffee was a delicate balancing act. I was careful to use gender-neutral pronouns when talking

about people in my life, and skirted around anything that felt real when she asked even the simplest questions to get to know me.

Real felt exposed. Real felt dangerous. Real felt like it could easily get back to my Catholic parents, who had no idea about my bisexuality (or so I thought at the time).

At some point during our coffee, though, she stopped me in the middle of a sentence. Bluntly, she said, "So, you're bisexual?"

Her tone wasn't really a question, but it didn't need to be. Here was this adult-ier adult sitting across the table from me, who was an out and proud bisexual writer. And she saw me.

Beth was telling our stories on a national platform. There I was, 21 years old and fresh out of college with an English literature degree, just trying to figure my shit out and find where I fit in. Beth showed me that I fit perfectly, exactly where I was, because she was creating space for people like me. She was building a community of other bi+ employees within HRC—a bisexual employee resource group—and helping ensure that we had a space that was distinctly ours.

I never imagined that nearly four years later I would become the leader of that same Bi+ ERG.

Through the years, our meetings have been as much ad hoc therapy as they've been work-related. And out of those conversations where we process our experiences and our pain, we have created momentum for the organization.



The HRC Bisexual Employee Resource Group 2019 Holiday Party.

One of my favorite parts of that process was a guide called "Coming Out as Bisexual to Your Doctor." It was written after a meeting where we discussed our own experiences as bi+ people navigating health care settings. We realized that there needed to be a resource for all the other bi+ young people in the world who didn't have access to the same things we did, so we created one. That kind of initiative—the decision to take things into our own hands and do the work that needed to be done—was how a lot of my work at HRC went.

I think it's because as bisexual activists we have to fight and claw for our seat at the table. And then once we've made it to the table, we're acutely aware that folks will pull that seat out from under us at any time. We have to shout just to be heard. Often the only ones who are around, willing to even listen, are our own community.

Sometimes that erasure is overt, but most of the time it isn't and that's the most dangerous part. Sometimes issues unique to the bisexual community just never make it to the top of the priorities list for "the movement."

I would never have become a bisexual activist without building a family of other bi+ people around me. There's something distinctly powerful in having a bi+ community that sees you exactly as you are

without you having to say a word. We have to continue to build community and hold each other up as bi+ activists because it's exhausting to fight day in and day out to be seen, especially when we know that if we don't fight our community might be forgotten altogether.



Bisexual activists from around the country gathered outside the White House, following the second Roundtable on Bisexual Issues in 2015.

I still struggle with that feeling of imposter syndrome, especially as I start a new job. In some ways, I feel like I'm still sitting in that coffee shop, afraid to put a name to myself and my identity. One day, I hope to be what Beth was for me to someone else looking to get their footing in bi+ activism and find who they are as a bi+ human.

But then I look at the people I've met and the stories I've helped to share, and I realize that maybe I'm already doing a little more than just getting bi.

A self-described "professional bisexual," Helen Parshall is an avid writer and passionate social justice advocate, who uses digital media to bring visibility to marginalized communities. When not joining her housemates at a rally in D.C., Helen can be found reading a book or watching Doctor Who, curled up with one of the dogs in her life.



Dear BWQ,

I just submitted my donation. I apologize that I couldn't make as big of a donation as I did last year, I recently lost my job and have been struggling a bit. *BWQ* is such a light in my life and an incredible resource, and I promise my ongoing support. As soon as I am able, I plan to give more to this great cause. Thank you for everything you do!

I love that *BWQ* provides a space for a community of women who have all had such different lives and distinct life experiences to unite over the shared experience of our bisexual identity. It provides something unique I have yet to find elsewhere of

feeling supported and loved by a group of people who I don't know and who don't know me, yet who understand me in an elemental way so that they don't need to have met and talked to me to know me. It reminds me in the loneliest of moments that I am never really alone.

Kat R., Austin, TX

Dear BWQ,

We just made our donation to *BWQ*. We wanted to let you know how much we enjoy each edition. We always come away with both new knowledge and new understanding. We read every word and especially love seeing writing by local women. I hope you continue this publication for decades!

Linda Blair and Maura Albert, Arlington, MA



## Bi+ Community Organizer is More Like It

By Kim theBWordPoet

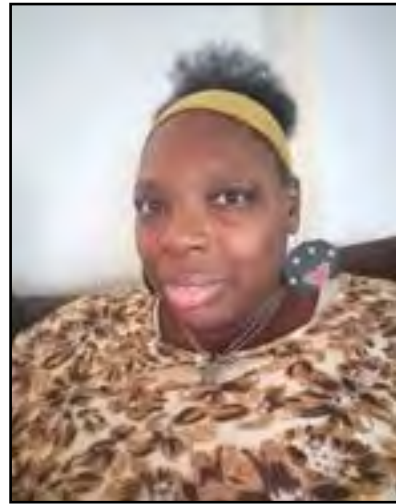
When I first came out in 1999, I identified as lesbian. I became the President of my Gay Straight Alliance during my freshman year at Youngstown State University. I didn't know what it meant back then to be an activist. I was doing what I loved, which was helping others find solidarity. It wasn't until a few years later that I started to see myself as someone who could make a difference.

In 2001, I re-came out as bisexual. After a year at Youngstown State, I came home to find that there had been a long-standing LGBT community in my hometown. So I started going to meetings. Every group was always packed, but the bisexual group intrigued me more and more. It wasn't until I was there that I felt like, "Yes. YES. This is ME!" I fell back into organizing by managing the Yahoo Group, building a website, and writing a newsletter.

Eventually, all the groups I was attending started losing their leaders, so to keep the support going for myself and others, I took over. I overextended myself leading two BIG groups, still attending other groups, and trying to start a new group. I was marching and volunteering at Prides. I knew so many leaders of groups and organizations. I was such a regular at the LGBT Center that I started to joke that I lived there. I really thought I was an activist.

As the severe burnout took over, however, I started to see that perhaps I wasn't an activist after all. The groups I was running fell apart. People weren't coming to meetings, they weren't engaging, they weren't giving input, they weren't volunteering with me. Even when I would do my best to provide the activities they expressed interest in going to, no one came. I wasn't helping anyone anymore. Or maybe I had, but I still needed help. I still needed the LGBT community. I particularly needed the bi+ community.

I learned more about the pioneers of the general LGBT movement, as well as the bi+ movement, to compare myself and my efforts to what they sacrificed to give us the privileges we have today. I've never lobbied, or walked on Washington, or written to my Congressperson. I've never participated in a protest or a riot. I don't work for an LGBT Center or Human Rights Campaign. I've never even been on a Board of Directors for anything LGBT. I just attend meetings, organize meetings and events when group leaders step down, attend rallies, run booths and volunteer at Pride, and sporadically post clips in *Gay People's Chronicle* and this publication. So maybe I'm not an activist, but I can say I'm an organizer.



Community organizing not only lets me help others, but it helps calm my inner thoughts. A lot of times I am filled with anxiety and dread and self-defeating thoughts. I dwell on things like my personal shortcomings, the fact that I am Black, and the fact that I am on the asexual spectrum. However, when I am doing for others, none of that matters (unless the people I'm helping MAKE it matter—which unfortunately happens quite a bit too). What I'm doing has nothing to do with me, but everything to do with them, yet it helps me keep my mind preoccupied.

I consider myself to be a bi+ community organizer since most, if not all, of my organizing efforts are for bi+ specific causes. I still maintain the bi+ website for Ohio, I still go to the local bi+ meeting regularly, I joined the first bi+ sorority in August 2019, and I still publish in *Bi Women Quarterly*.

Outside of publishing a bisexual poetry book, I hope to do more in the bi+ community organizing arena one day; exactly what, I don't know. I am trying to figure out ways to be a face in the asexual spectrum organizing community as well, but I feel like I want a firmer grasp of myself and role in the bi+ movement before I add on intersections. Those are my hopes for the future of my organizing.

*Kim theBWordPoet is a 39-year-old biromantic demisexual cis-female from Cleveland, Ohio. She runs Bi+ Initiative Ohio, and is a Soror of Alpha Zeta Gamma Sorority, Incorporated, the first sorority with a specific focus on bisexual women.*

## Marching Isn't the Only Way to Be Visible

By Kamille Washington

I'm terrible at protests. Terrible. I have no patience for sign-making, I'm not a natural yeller, and big crowds send me into genuine panic. If the revolution calls for a march, I'm afraid I won't be much help. Thankfully, revolutions are made of much more than just marches. They require sustained effort from all kinds of people—students and teachers, unions and executives, voters and politicians. If we're going to achieve all the change the world needs, the tent has to be big enough for all of us.

I believe that, for bisexual women, increasing our visibility is a major contribution that we can make in our everyday lives. So, I've done everything I can think of to make myself visible.

In addition to shouting about it to anyone who will listen, I have a water bottle with a sticker that reads "Hello! I'm bi, not confused." The sticker is huge, glittery, and unmistakable. It accompanies me to every class and every meeting. That sticker has led to so many wonderful conversations—with other bi+ women as well as folks just interested in understanding me a little better.

Earlier this year, I received a WhatsApp message from a classmate

who "had a question" for me. It turned out that, for the first time in her life, she was interested in dating women in addition to men. Moreover, she came from a country with a long history of opposition to same-sex relationships and worried about what the implications might be for her life back home. She sought me out because, with my shouting and my stickers, I had become visible to her. Rarely have I felt more honored.

It was a reminder that little things can have a big impact. Of course, it's still important for us to do the bigger things: to work to reduce sexual violence (which we know affects bisexual women at higher rates than the general population) and to speak up for bisexual people more generally, especially within the LGBTQ+ community. But visibility really matters too. It creates the space and trust necessary to building community.

*Kamille Washington is one half of the Unfriendly Black Hotties, a podcast about the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality in pop culture and politics. She lives in Cambridge, MA with her partner, Paige, and their French bulldog, Gunther.*



## My Activism



### Jennie Roberson

Even though I grew up in a family that's been involved in local and national politics for decades (I went to my first election night party when I was nine), it took me years to discern that "activism" was not just marching in the streets. Sure, that's showy and needed and effective, but there are so many ways to be visible and speak up for causes—bi+ visibility among them. I fell into the form I do (writing) almost by accident, by volunteering to write a piece or two for bi.org. But as the years have marched on, I've come to discover the power in putting my voice out there on the digital landscape—and how often that makes space for other queer voices in the community too. Speaking your truth as a bi+ person is a form of activism, whether it's with a bullhorn or a keyboard. I'm so lucky and grateful to do some rabble-rousing for the community—in digital and analog forms.



### Dee Dee Lynn

I've been the Facilitator Coordinator for the Seattle Bisexual Women's and Nonbinary Network, taking responsibility for meetings, training facilitators, and leading the only bi-specific group in Seattle Pride for the majority of the last 15 years. I was chosen as the bisexual leader from Seattle to attend the last White House Bisexual Leadership event in 2016. I've networked with groups with large bisexual contingents in the greater Seattle area, and most recently with Allyship, the National Park Service, and spoken at Seattle's Dyke March, and brought Robyn Ochs to a lunch with Seattle bisexual leadership. I've also been active in BiNet Seattle in the past as well as an active participant and outspoken advocate in online bisexually-focused advocacy groups.

### Francesca Maria Bongiorno

Marching with the bi+ contingent at New York City Pride. Attending Bi Visibility Day events at The Stonewall Inn, and at New York City LGBT Community Center. Reading my poetry at a Bi Visibility Week open mic (held at Bureau of General Services, Queer Division, which is a bookstore located inside the LGBT Community Center).

"I raise my voice not so that I can shout but so those without a voice can be heard."

~Malala Yousafzai



# To Bi, Or Not to Bi

By Mari Wrobi

It was my partner's first Pride. He was new to identifying as bisexual and excited for the opportunity to exist in a space that was by and for people like him. It was *my* first Pride as a bisexual femme dating a cisgender man. It felt like new territory for us both. Him, dating someone who was nonbinary and bisexual and for the first time coming into his attraction to people other than cisgender women. Me, dating a man for the first time in my life after every Pride I'd ever attended before had been in the arms of a woman. Only, as someone who'd attended countless Pride events before, it didn't feel *that* different to me. I was surrounded by people who loved me, I was loudly expressing my pride in being LGBTQ+, I was sharing a single space with my community, and I felt like I belonged.

It wasn't until an after-Pride event that we attended that we were faced with a very challenging question. A friend of a friend looked us up and down, noted our intertwined hands and our overall closeness, and asked us, "Why are you here?" We were silenced by her question—confused by it, even—so she asked again. "Like, why did you come to Pride? Do you know someone who's gay or something?"

That made it quite clear. Thankfully, someone pulled her away at that moment. But it left me thinking. As a bi person, was my inclusion in LGBTQ+ spaces always going to be questioned? Would I ever be able to exist in my relationship without feeling like it invalidated my experiences as a queer person? Was this person right, and were LGBTQ+ spaces not actually for me because of the way my relationship appeared?

It was this experience that led me to becoming a much more vocal bi activist than I'd ever been before. Previously, my bisexuality was almost an afterthought. An identity that didn't shape or affect the way I existed in activist spaces, or anywhere else. It was a part of me, but a part that I very often overlooked so that I could talk about the other parts—like my identity as a person of color, as nonbinary, as femme, as intersex. I even identified myself as queer before identifying myself as bisexual, even though I preferred "bi" much more. But this experience was so subtle and so jarring that it made me realize why I *needed* to be a bi activist.

So... what does it mean, then, to be a bi activist?



To me, being a bi activist means being vocal about my bisexuality. It means that I don't simply allow my bisexuality to be erased or forgotten. It means that every time I introduce myself in LGBTQ+ spaces, I introduce myself as bisexual too. Too often throughout LGBTQ+ history, bi activists are hailed as strictly gay activists or as gay people who changed their mind or as gay people with a straight past or as some other variety that translates to: ERASED. If my bisexuality is going to be erased from my activism, then I'm at least going to make it very hard to do so.

To me, being a bi activist also means normalizing the bi experience. Not just for other bi people, but for *everyone*. It means that not every bi person is going to have the same experience—and that's okay. It means that bi people who only date people of the same gender or who only date people of a different gender are *both equally bi*. That bi people in relationships that look straight and cis and bi people in relationships that look traditionally queer are *both still bi*. That bisexuality does not hinge on someone's relationship or lack thereof. That bi people who don't fit any of the predetermined molds are no less bi because of it.

Being a bi activist also means overcoming the harmful stereotypes that are thrown at us *and* accepting those who "fit" these stereotypes. Not all bi people are confused—but some of us might be. Not all bi people are promiscuous—but some are. Not all bi people are attention-seeking—but some of us like to be the center of attention. Not all bi people are going through a phase—but phases aren't necessarily a bad thing.

And that's just the start. To the untrained eye, it might seem strange that existing in a relationship deemed by much of the LGBTQ+ community as "not queer enough" is what propelled me into my bi activism. But it's also what opened my eyes to the harmful ways that bi people are still treated in our community when we don't fit the picture-perfect definition of what a bi person *should* be. So now, I won't be quiet about allowing bi people—including myself—to exist exactly as we are.

*Mari is a queer, trans, and intersex advocate from Sacramento, California—constantly challenging binaries, boxes, and bigots.*

# Simple poetry // to resist and to reveal // grim realities

By Martine Mussies (Cyborg Mermaid)

For living on this planet, I pay "rent." I contribute to the world with my music, my research, my arts and crafts, my love and friendship, and my writing. Although my name literally means "Little Warrior," due to my autism I cannot join my friends on the barricades. Therefore, I raise my voice through my own—soft and quiet—forms of resistance, to empower the misfits. On my blog and for *Bi Women Quarterly*, I write academic essays, anti-ethnographies, and various forms of poetry, such as #biku.

Poetry is often essential as a form of protest and communication during times of crisis. Most poems of protest like *Caged Bird* by Maya Angelou and *Making Peace* by Denise Levertov play a crucial role in bringing to light the unknown or hidden grim realities, raising awareness, and shaping cohesive fronts (Staeheli and Mitchell, 2016).

My short poem, "Vampires of the Rainbow Plague," was written as a protest against the Polish anti-LGBTQ+ sentiments. Originally in Polish, but translated into English especially for *BWQ*, this poem tells about the hatred around various Prides in Poland. (See both languages below.) People were waving with their holy books, wearing T-shirts with supposed imagery of Jesus Christ, using all kinds of profanity I think Jesus himself would be very much ashamed of.

The name refers to some often-quoted statements, by TV producer Maciej Pawlicki ("vampires") and archbishop Marek Jędraszewski ("rainbow plague"), respectively. The pedals that

anti-LGBTQ+ demonstrators were twirling with are a similar insult, for in Polish, the word "pedał" simply means a bike pedal, but is used as a pejorative term for (mostly male) gays as well (similar to "faggot"). I admit that my Polish is still very, very basic. Yet, words symbolize worlds, and therefore, with short poems like this one, I hope to inspire and encourage other language-learning misfits to raise their voices as well. Writing simple and quiet poems in a language you barely know might seem inane, but somehow, for me, it is enough to get some of my thoughts from my mind into yours: love is love, LGBTQ+ rights are human rights, and poetry is a powerful form of resistance.

*Martine Mussies is a PhD candidate at Utrecht University, writing about the Cyborg Mermaid. Besides her research, Martine is a professional musician. Her other interests include autism, psychology, karate, iaido, King Alfred, and science fiction.*



## Vampires of the Rainbow Plague

A violent tide washes o'er the streets  
With Bibles of hatred in tow  
Pedals they swing and hymns they sing,  
To destroy what they don't know

When ignorance takes root and phobia springs  
And freedom is viewed as a sin  
A march to be seen as a human being  
Hails a war of love about to begin

## Wampiry tęczyowej plagi

Gwałtowny przypływ zmywa ulice  
śpiewają hymny i pedałami się huśtają,  
Wraz z Biblią nienawisci na cholu  
Aby zniszczyć to, czego nie wiedzą

Kiedy wolność jest postrzegana jako grzech  
A ignorancja się zakorzeni i strach zapuści  
Marsz, który należy postrzegać jako istotę ludzką  
Zwiastuje nadchodzącą wojnę miłości



# I Have This Body for a Reason: Truly Diverse Well-Being for an And/Both/All World

By Laura-Marie River Victor Peace

I feel in between, in many ways, enjoying liminal spaces and being marginally comprehensible much of the time. I'm a cis woman partnered with a nonbinary person who's usually read as a man. I hesitated to claim my bi identity for years because I was afraid of asserting it, when most people see me as straight. I didn't feel strong enough to take the judgments of others who might not think I belonged under the queer umbrella.

I feel better now about saying I'm bi because I see there are many ways to be bi. Through activism, I want to make more room in the world for true diversity, all the ways of being queer that aren't dependent on physical sex acts in regular life, hairstyle, or any outside markers.

These days, I'm an activist who helps run a radical mental health collective and an inter-faith peace organization. I live in community and serve the hungry here in Las Vegas. I do fat activism and bi and queer activism also. I make zines, which is one of the main ways I reach out.

Inner life and inner worlds are at least as important as what we do in our everyday outer lives. My life is my thoughts and feelings, as well as my physical actions. I could have sex with any person of any gender in my dreams at night. I like how life is rich with possibilities, and things are changing all the time.

Imagination is an important part of my creativity as I am a writer. I have fantasies of all kinds, and they help me sort out what I really want and who I really am, which is funny because fantasy is often considered frivolous. Fantasy is important to me in understanding myself, creating meaning, and making decisions.

There's a bi/pan group here in Las Vegas at the Center. I enjoy attending because I like bi/pan spaces and I like different kinds of bi/pan people gathering to talk about how we're the same, how we're different, challenges we face being misread, misunderstood, discredited, and discriminated against.

I like hearing about situations we find ourselves in with partners who are or are not bi/pan also. Family, identity, different ways we identify to ourselves and others. I like our conversations about language, definitions, gender, and pronouns, as a diversity of people of various backgrounds and ages come together to share space and learn from one another while getting support.

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I feel grateful to this group for being a place where I can listen to people who are like me or not like me. As I learn that there are millions of ways to be bi/pan, I realize I'm not alone, and I feel very lucky.

I do bi activism by speaking up. I write a zine about gender and sexuality called *sexuality as hidden* that talks about bisexuality and pansexuality. I show up as much as I can to that bi/pan group at the Center, in hopes it will keep going. I cherish bi/pan people and see how we have needs particular to us that bring us together, even when many people would like us to be absorbed into other categories or otherwise disappear.

Bisexuality and pansexuality make many people uncomfortable, being and/both/all in a world that favors either/or. By being who I am and talking about it, I bring a face to what a lot of people consider too confusing or strange. I'm not confusing or strange, as an actual person, if someone talks to me and gets to know me and my life.

Bisexuality makes a ton of sense, and my version of that is loving anyone, at any time, in

any way, which feels extremely comfortable, and is not strange at all. Some people who want clear delineations and either/or might not like that, or people who like pigeonholing or who like everyone to stay the same. The way I could be with any person of any gender can be seen as too changeable and less stable, but I'm actually consistent with myself.

Being an activist in the different ways I do activism is about helping to create a world where all people are safe and cared for, free to live without violence, respected with any gender or sexuality, respected at any size and with any disability.

When I was little, I wanted to be a head. I was very troubled by my body and its needs, considering the contradictory messages I received about how to be a good girl and woman, which meant both repressing my sexuality into nothing and being a pleasing, attractive sex object. I was supposed to be happy, yet spurn the pleasures of life as sinful. I was supposed to be a pure, saintly virgin, but a sexy vixen at the same time.

I couldn't understand it, and I thought it would be easier not to

Laura-Marie, continues on next page



## What's in a Name?

By Robyn Ochs

I live in a *very* LGBTQ+ Boston neighborhood. In 1991, a small group of lesbian and gay neighbors formed BAGAL (Bourne Area Gays & Lesbians). Over the years, the group has continued and grown, comprising as much as 25 percent of households in this neighborhood. We are an informal group. We have a few social gatherings each year, and our email list stands at 160. I joined BAGAL around 2000 and may have been the first obviously bi person in the group. I have always felt welcome, and I currently manage the email list and schedule our events. For some time, bi+ and trans folks have been present, recognized, and active.

Fast forward to late-2019. A couple of members decided to create a Facebook group for BAGAL. Here's what the FB group was named:



I noticed this. It didn't sit right with me, but I let it slide because the description in "About" was inclusive: "The BAGAL group is designed to create a safe forum for folks who identify as Queer (GLBTQ+). ... I am using the term Queer as an umbrella term... the alphabet encompasses many of us!"

Two days ago, I decided to speak up. I wrote to the woman who had set up and was managing the page. I wrote:

*"I'm wondering if you'd be willing to change the group's name on the FB page to 'BAGAL—Bourne Area*

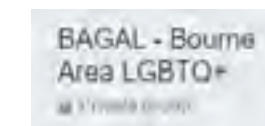
*LGBTQ+?' It says LGBTQ in 'About,' but seeing it the way it appears now gives me a little feeling of discomfort, as it leaves out bi+ and trans folks.*

*I know that BAGAL literally spells out Gay and Lesbian, but lots of groups have tweaked around this by expanding what follows the colon. BAGLY's sub head, for example, is "Boston Alliance of LGBTQ+ Youth." PFLAG, GLAD, NGLTF (for several years), and others have done similar.*

*I am not intending (at this time, at least) to start a big discussion about this, which is why I'm writing directly to you. If you changed it to 'BAGAL—Bourne Area LGBTQ+' I doubt anyone would take offense, and it would make some of us feel seen.*

*What do you think?"*

I waited. The very next day I received the following response:



*Thanks for bringing it to my attention!*

Sometimes, you just have to ask.

*Robyn Ochs is an international speaker and educator, and Editor of Bi Women Quarterly.*

Laura-Marie, continued from previous page

have a body at all, especially when men and boys wanted to prey upon me. I tried to ignore my body for a long time.

Part of growing up, an ongoing process, is learning how I have this body for a reason, how to love it and inhabit it, to experience pleasure and connect with people. I had to shed a lot of what culture told me about what I'm supposed to be, in order to become who I truly am.

Activism is about helping make a world where all people can be who we are, in a safe, happy way, with support and good examples of truly diverse well-being.

*Laura-Marie River Victor Peace is a zinester activist in Las Vegas, Nevada, and enjoys rest, transformation, and finding new kinds of pleasure. [dangerouscompassions.blogspot.com](http://dangerouscompassions.blogspot.com).*



### Luiza Veado, Brazil/US

I've pushed to include bisexual issues in the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, drafting their first bi visibility day press release and also published by the independent expert in SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity). I'm also the one person in the room that does not let the acronym discussions become LGT in international and regional meetings.

*Luiza Drummond Veado is a United Nations Program Officer at OutRight Action International and she holds an LLM on International Human Rights Law from the University of Essex.*



# Rebel Without a Card

By Lila Hartelius

This university year, I'm incorporating the topic of climate change into classes I teach in a food engineering department. At a certain point in time, I felt that to be sufficiently prepared for work in the agri-food sector, my students should be guided to integrate climate change into every aspect of their training, and I wanted to do my part in that.

I also wanted to feel I was addressing climate change in a more effective way than getting lost in a sea of protestors. Participating in rallies or marches can be fun and even exhilarating, and there is power in numbers. But sometimes I feel I can more efficiently use that power exponentially by acting on and spreading ideas to others who in turn can act on and spread them.

I'm discussing climate change in this *BWQ* issue for two reasons. When I realized the climate situation's urgency, taking action on bi+ issues paled in comparison. Working for bi+ causes has helped me better understand my assumptions about what an activist is and how these have impacted how I take action on climate change.

Have you heard the expression "card-carrying bisexual"? It reflects misinformed attempts to conceptually separate "real" or "practicing" bisexuals from "fake" or "non-practicing" bisexuals. It was not until I heard a woman on the radio refer to something she called her "carte d'ecologiste" that I realized "card-carrying activist" might be

as real a notion to me as "card-carrying bisexual." As much as I recognize activism's intent to challenge established structures or ideas, I've sometimes been hindered in taking action, feeling that to be qualified to be an activist I must possess some sort of pre-established set of specific skills, knowledge, experience, personal qualities, or time commitments I may not have. This has been more the case concerning climate change than bi+ issues; I know less about the former.

This feeling of being unqualified has sometimes prevented me from even recognizing opportunities to create beneficial change. This has been most pronounced in my professional life, partly due to a limiting personal belief that, because I don't feel I have the training and experience to call myself a "professional activist," work is not an appropriate place to play the role of activist, because this might be regarded as interfering with business matters and put my financial security at risk. As a lay

activist, my presumption said, I should stick to taking action in appropriate places, contexts I could think of as "activist friendly" or "activist spaces."

Writing for *BWQ* has opened a space in my mind for a category called "writing as activism," which has led me to the idea that there might be many ways to be an activist. Yet it was not until the end of this summer that I realized the influence I have as an educator regarding climate change. How many opportunities do most people have in their daily lives to speak to an audience of fifteen to thirty young people who are there to listen and learn?

In implementing the initiative I've taken in my professional life, the urgency of the climate situation has motivated me to overcome the feeling of being unqualified as an activist. I've realized that what matters is not the label I adopt, but the action I take.

Five to seven years ago, having recently moved from the San Francisco Bay Area to a rural region with no bi+ group close enough to attend regularly, I began combing YouTube for anything on bisexuality, hoping to assuage a new isolation I felt. In the process, I discovered some negative bisexual stereotypes that, to my shock and dismay, had been circulating in society while I was spending my latter adolescence and twenties feeling privately that being bisexual was pretty awesome. Sure, I got embarrassed when I thought evoking the word "bisexual" in certain contexts might be perceived as an obscenity, a taboo, but my exposure to and involvement in bi+ and LGBTQ communities had helped to buffer that sentiment.

What troubled me most in my online search were some of the messages coming from within the bi+ community in attempts to debunk common myths like those claiming all bisexuals are polyamorous, "indecisive," or "loose." Though I appreciated this myth-busting, it seemed to be accompanied by negative attitudes toward what I have heard called the "bad bisexual," meaning any bi+ person who allegedly perpetuates these and other "negative" bisexual stereotypes simply by being themselves and living their lives.

Concerned that this discourse could lower self-esteem in bi+ individuals who might see themselves reflected negatively in these stereotypes and internalize this harmful idea, I wanted to voice another side of the argument: *biphobia*, not bi+ individuals, perpetuates these stereotypes and deems them negative. For this reason, in 2016 I led a EuroBiCon workshop on the notion of the "bad bisexual."

It was not until writing this essay, however, that I realized that, in my university initiative on climate change, I had been asking myself the question, "Am I a 'bad activist' if, instead of participating in local environmental protests, I collaborate with an industry that contributes negatively to what I want to help change?" Once I became aware of this question, the analogous parallels of this self-doubt with other negative stereotypes in LGBTQ culture about bi+ identity rolled out like a tapestry in my mind. I had, I realized, been subconsciously wondering, "Am I 'sleeping with the enemy,' as some bi+ people have been accused of doing when involved in heterosexual relationships; am I 'not radical enough,' in a similar way to that in which some bi+ people have been accused of being 'not queer enough' or of being 'straight-acting, straight-looking'?" In other words, I had been carrying around an idea that to be worthy of approval from real activists, I had to work against and not with contributors to the problem in question. I realized that in my own mind I was a rebel in an arena of rebels—and on top of that, I was a "rebel without a card."

Seeking inspiration for a work-related project, I pulled a book from my bookshelf about recovering customer loyalty called *A Complaint Is a Gift*. I opened the book to a random page, never expecting it would help me articulate an approach to activism I had been discovering that countered the "oppose the enemy" concept. The page introduced the term "activist" in business context:

"As a group, activists are consumers who tend to be the most alienated from the marketplace. In this case, alienation can be described as a mindset that *when something goes wrong, normal complaint channels will not work so other methods of redress must be chosen.*" (emphasis mine) (Barlow & Møller, p. 112)

On the one hand, this seems to echo how classic ideas of what constitutes activism (marches, activist groups, etc.) have understandably emerged in response to sentiments that traditional routes of creating change (e.g. trying to negotiate within industries) are sometimes futile. At the same time, this description of "alienation" crystallized for me an important piece of what I'm coming to believe an effective activist should be—namely, someone who looks for and responds to opportunities for new paths of action where none currently exist, *inasmuch as one sees futility or insufficiency in following beaten paths of action.*

If I didn't feel participating in marches or protests was the most effective way for me to make a difference, I realized, it was legitimate for me to find other ways of creating change. Instead of seeing the agri-food sector as a force to oppose, I've chosen to regard it as a system within which a plethora of opportunities for collaboration and change can be found. I've chosen to circumvent normal activist "complaint channels" like protests and rallies and instead work from the inside out, planting seeds of reflection that I hope will grow into actions that help transform the way the agri-food sector operates.

Start where you are. Look for opportunities at work, at home, in the supermarket, on the train. Where *aren't* people acting on climate change? How could activities there link to it? Don't be intimidated or limited by the word "activist." What matters is taking thoughtful action where needed.

One sapling can become a tree, but many saplings together can grow into a forest. Bi+ community can provide opportunities for dialogue (it could start with a conversation over tea about an idea), which can germinate collaboration; but keep collaboration branching out beyond just "activist-friendly" spaces to other areas where it may be needed.

You don't need a card to identify as bi+, nor do you need one to be an activist. You don't have to fit in with specific ideas of what a bi+ person should be like to get approval; you don't have to take action in a specific way to adhere to a standard idea about what activists do. Just act—with sensitivity, accurate information, and a sincere heart.

Lila Hartelius, BA ([lilahartelius.wordpress.com](http://lilahartelius.wordpress.com)) is a bilingual (English/French), published writer who has served as editorial assistant for the International Journal of Transpersonal Psychology. Her work has been published in *Bi Women Quarterly*, *Weird Sisters West*, and *Tendrel* (Naropa University's diversity journal). She has been a workshop leader at EuroBiCon and has contributed to the efforts of Bennington College's Queer Student Union, Naropa University's GLBTQ student group, and Boulder Pride.



Photo by Markus Spiske on Unsplash



Photo by Heather Mount on Unsplash



# Creating Change 2020: From Just Getting Bi to Enjoying the Journey

By Iris Carufel

I almost didn't make it to the Bi+ Institute at the Creating Change Conference in Dallas. I had signed up for a different institute online, and then I almost decided to go to another institute with my colleague. I was comfortable around them because they were comfortable in their identity all their life, and while I know it's not true, I just always felt somehow "less than." For numerous reasons, I felt like a phony. In a split second of courage, I entered the Bi+ Institute by myself. Upon entering, Robyn Ochs' bright smile is the first thing I noticed as she greeted and welcomed me. What caught my eye next was a rosette-beaded medallion; I was comforted knowing another Native person was in the room with me.



We opened with introductions and had to share with the room why we were at the Bi+ Institute. I was still nervous, so decided to tell everyone I was just "present." Robyn, however, introduced herself as a "professional bisexual" which made me grin from ear to ear. I decided that one day I would be completely honest about myself and everything in me wanted to reintroduce myself in this brave space.

We learned a brief but important history of the bi+ community. I learned about Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton and Bessie

Smith, famous bi African-American Blues singers; and Steven Donaldson, an early bi student activist in the 1960s. I was thrilled to find out that a bi woman named Brenda Howard was indeed nicknamed the "Mother of Pride." For me it was thrilling to learn the history of the community as now I feel I have a foundation to stand upon.

I found it reassuring to know that many others suffer from outside perspectives that we are somehow "half oppressed," or have a "gay side" and a "straight side." Throughout this daylong institute, I felt somehow more whole than I had in months. When I first came out to my closest friends, I felt accepted. Some lesbian friends, however, didn't believe me because I had only dated men previously, and wrote it off as a "girl crush." One of the people I worked with told me I was just "bi-curious" and it hurt. But the worst reaction came from my mother, my main confidante. She had mentioned that someone she knew was bi and she was grossed out by it. I thought, well, here we are, I can't fully be myself in front of the woman who carried me.

Colonization has left its evil root of homophobia within our Native American communities. I know there have been awakenings of Two Spirit pride, but somehow it never occurred to me that I could be more than the straight narrative. I thought I was crazy for only realizing my own identity as a bi woman at the age of 26. I found my identity in serving Native youth, but I was afraid that my community wouldn't accept me.

Post-conference I volunteered at a cultural event on my home reservation. One of the youth I used to work with came up to me and asked outright if I was bisexual. I asked if her question was because she saw my phone (which now has a bi pride sticker). She nodded, and with the brightest smile she exclaimed, "I'M PANSEXUAL! But I really love women."

A new journey begins.

*Consider this: If you rarely (or never) see people like you represented in print, your voice is especially important. When you lift your voice, someone, somewhere will FINALLY see their own experiences reflected, perhaps for the first time. (See our call for writing on page 2.)*

## My Activism



### Jen Yockney

Three things I have done:

- Run more than 400 meets of my local bi, social, and support group BiPhoria in Manchester, England. It's the UK's oldest group and I've been there more than 25 years now. Even after all this time there are new people every month. The difference bi space can make for attendees, to be in a room with other bi+ people and not have to defend their identity, is still so powerful. The internet is fine, but people are just that much more tangible than pixels.

- Published more than 100 editions of the bimonthly print magazine *Bi Community News*, which has grown from a photocopied newsletter to a glossy color magazine.

- Given away around 20,000 printed copies of coming out and staying out guide *Getting Bi in a Gay/Straight World* to help bi people find themselves and one another.

*Jen Yockney lives in Manchester, England where she has volunteered since the early 1990s with bisexual projects variously giving face-to-face support, lobbying government ministers, archiving our bi history, and telling our bi stories. She was awarded the MBE by Queen Elizabeth II in 2016 for Services to the Bisexual Community.*



### Jan Steckel

I have been out as bi since a week before my 18th birthday, and started working for lesbian and gay rights making flyers for the Radcliffe Lesbians Association and the Harvard Gay Students Association. In the late nineties, I made a decision to stop pouring energy into LGBT organizations and only work for bi organizations. The exception is a lesbian-run women-only reading for which I do the publicity and where I have been out as bisexual for about fifteen years. Listening to some of the "lesbians" there talk about their love affairs with men and sometimes eventually come out as bisexual is part of my activism. I have published my prose and poetry about the bi experience in bi periodicals such as *Anything That Moves*, *BiMagazine*, *Bi Women Quarterly*, *Bitopia*, and *Biscuit*, as well as in lesbian and LGBT publications and mainstream periodicals. Since 1998, I've been an active member of the Bay Area Bisexuals Network, which recently became the Bay Area Bisexuals and Pansexuals Network. I've marched in the Bi (now Bi/Pan) contingent of San Francisco Pride every year for over two decades, and I've supported my husband Hew Wolff as host of Berkeley Bi Friendly for the same amount of time. My book *The Horizontal Poet* won a Lambda Literary Award for Bisexual Nonfiction, and my book *Like Flesh Covers Bone* won two Rainbow Awards in 2019: the one for LGBT Poetry and the one for Best Bisexual Book.

### Emily A. Fisher

I joined my local LGBT center, which had been making a great community for gay, lesbian and trans folks with a physical place to meet in a conservative town. I was the first bi person on their board and started to speak up for the specific needs of our community. Over my three years as board member, two years as president, we hired three staff and I worked with the board and our new Executive Director to implement a state grant of 1.4 million dollars. The Center's name was the Gay & Lesbian Center of Bakersfield. Many times I explained how the bi/pan+ community felt about being left out of the name and how I personally felt like I wasn't included in my own organization. In the end, we changed the name to the Center for Sexuality & Gender Diversity and our services for the community have expanded, now including bi/pan, nonbinary, and ace folks.

Along with another bi advocate in the community, I helped to build a seven-week bi/pan+ workshop that explores the issues we face and have a safe space to share. We cover the complexity of labels, how to react to people's invasive questions and comments, how to navigate a relationship while bi+, coming out as bi+, representation in media, gender and more. Many people have told me the workshop changed their lives. The workshops give them that place to be valid, develop the words and find out they are not alone. We've been running four-a-year since spring 2017.

*Emily A. Fisher works in California as a geologist. They are an advocate for the LGBT community through education and community building as well as being an enthusiastic rock climber.*



# We Aren't In it Alone: Better Together Conference 2020

By Amber Loomis

**Better Together was a multi-day LGBTQIA+ conference that was held in Melbourne, Australia in January 2020. It focused on facilitating conversations about LGBTQIA+ rights and building meaningful connections in order to cultivate positive change. This year, the conference was held on the lands of the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. This land was never ceded.**

The piece below shares some of my experiences and learnings in the lead up to and during the conference.

## January 8, 2020

As I prepare to board my flight, I feel a mix of excitement and nerves. Excitement because I am en route to a jam-packed three days of LGBTQIA+ organizing, idea sharing, and networking. Nerves because I have anxiety and almost always feel on edge about something.

I take a deep breath, settle into my seat and notice a message from one of my parents. Earlier that morning I told them I was on my way to an LGBTQIA+ conference.

We are so proud of what you're doing.

I blink back tears. At that point, I remind myself it's probably going to be an emotional few days.

## January 9, 2020

I wake up thinking about my late grandfather and how today would have been his 91st birthday. I'm not sure how he would have reacted to me coming out or the advocacy work I do, but I hope he would have been supportive. As I drink my coffee, I try to move these thoughts out of my head and center myself for the upcoming day.

I'm going to the transgender, gender-diverse, and non-binary caucus, scheduled one day prior to the conference's opening plenary. These caucus sessions are crucial components of the conference program. They are designed to bring sections of the LGBTQIA+ community together to discuss the issues that matter to us and explore solutions to some of the challenges that we are facing.

I'm non-binary and have only recently stepped into trans/non-binary/gender-diverse specific spaces. I often feel as though I'm not "trans enough" or that I am, somehow, a fraud. Spaces driven by members of our community can remind me that I belong. I hope that's how I'll feel today.

I join the discussion group focused on family and relationships. Although I've now had conversations about being bi+ with my immediate family, we haven't really broached the subject of gender so I'm not sure how I'll feel during this.

It's actually a comment about building community spaces that makes me nod so vigorously I feel like a bobblehead on a car dashboard. Someone brings up how difficult it can be for community leaders to access support. We spend so much of our energy creating spaces for other people to connect and be themselves. We don't always get to utilize those spaces in the same way other people do. Sometimes it reminds me of the differences between hosting a party and attending a party.

The discussion makes me think about how grateful I am for the Sydney Bi+ Network co-organizers and other community leaders I've connected with around the country and the world. I think about all the incredible people I've met and how finding a community has changed my life.



Photo by Ellyn Ruthstrom

*Bi and Pan activists protesting outside the Trump Hotel in Washington, DC with a Creating Change group in 2018.*

## January 10, 2020

Friday morning is full-on. Despite arriving early, the check-in line is already pouring outside the venue, down the sidewalk.

I smile. I see familiar faces: people I met at last year's conference, people whose work I follow online but have never met in person, and a few people I recognize because they always seem to pop up as a suggested friend on Facebook.

The start of the conference features personal stories, highlighting the diverse experiences, backgrounds, and needs of our rainbow community. Someone mentions panphobia in bi spaces. I know exactly what they are talking about and I can think of examples I've experienced, especially online. Esther Montgomery, a Mardudhunera woman from Western

Australia, discusses racism and makes it clear that it is essential for First Nations communities to have a seat at the table and to be part of decision-making processes. She talks about how we cannot be silent about our truth.

I leave the plenary feeling a mix of emotions. Fired up because I know there's so much work to do. Appreciative because I understand the value of having spaces where people can be their authentic selves. Hopeful because I want us to use the time over the next few days to have significant conversations with one another.

I also attend a session about being the hinge in a polyamorous relationship, the disability plenary, and Robyn Ochs' "Beyond Binaries" workshop. There's so much to unpack that I look forward to debriefing with friends. And dinner.

## January 11, 2020

On Saturday morning, I feel incredibly tired. My body hurts. I have a chronic illness and the long days, meaningful as they are, take a toll on me.

We start the day with an 8 A.M. presentation and panel discussion focused on the Sydney Bi+ Network's community-building efforts. We had a couple of last-minute changes to our panelist lineup, and I have to give the biggest shout out to Rawa, the ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association) World Bisexual Representative who opens the session in his indigenous language and facilitates the panel for us on such short notice.

Our presentation is about community building, the approaches we've taken, and lessons learned since starting our Network in September 2018. We acknowledge the bi+ activists who came before us and the importance of support from our colleagues and friends in other states. We discuss why having a community matters, particularly in relation to our mental health and well-being. Staunch bi+ leader Elly joins us as a panelist to share some of her experiences related to bi+ community, traveling around the world and connecting with bi+ groups.

I quickly scuttle off after our presentation for the bi+ plenary session. I do my best to stay in the moment, but my mind is still swirling with ideas and notes about the previous presentation.

Robyn Ochs starts the plenary by talking about bi+ stereotypes and how we can overcome them. We move into the panel portion and discuss some of our challenges, wins, and areas that need more attention. We also talk about the need to have difficult conversations with each other and the importance of taking time to celebrate who we are.

As the afternoon nears, I'm feeling beyond ready for the bi+ caucus. When I think about bi+ spaces, the first thing that comes to mind is the energy in the room. This caucus was no different. For some people, it was the first time they had ever been in a bi+ specific space. I remember how that feels. It's like

finally being able to exhale after holding your breath for a long, long time. It's a sense of absolute relief that you don't have to explain yourself time and time again. It's reassurance that you aren't alone.

Throughout the caucus, we explore an array of topics such as coming out, relationships, labels, mental health, culture, and visibility and erasure. We also talk about solutions and so we spend the last breakout session discussing how we can overcome challenges through individual, community, political, and cultural actions.

At the end of the session, people share that they feel connected, inspired, and seen.

## January 12, 2020

I'm on my way back home and have a lot on my mind.

There's no doubt we have an incredible amount of work to do. We have to maintain the connections we make and keep our conversations going. We need to continue to challenge the systems and structures that reinforce all forms of oppression.

To do this, we need to listen, reflect, and learn. We have to center the experiences and expertise of those who are often excluded. We need people from all corners of the world with all skill sets.

I feel a sense of urgency and panic, so I take a deep breath. I remind myself that there's an incredible community of people out there willing to put in the work, and although the work can feel overwhelming, we aren't in it alone.

*Amber is a trans, nonbinary, bi+ activist, educator, and researcher. They organize with the Sydney Bi+ Network, work in interpersonal violence prevention/response, and have a gorgeous rescue dog named Jessie.*





Back to the story.

Truth is, despite allies on staff, it was a chilly welcome. The executive director questioned us, we were left off calendars, rooms and meeting times were often moved around for other groups. I even had to weather consternation online. I'll never forget a conversation in a LiveJournal forum where the moderator didn't believe we existed because we were in Utah. But we pushed on. The Pride Center was going to be our home base. My mule-like stubbornness paid off.

Stepping beyond our meetings, which grew quickly to coffee and brunch and meeting at the Pride Center twice a month, our first huge push was Bisexual Awareness Month in 2007. For a lot of reasons at the time, we decided on January before eventually moving our celebrations to line up with Bi Awareness Day in September. For years, we'd thrown around the idea of a conference, and eventually it came true. Queer Continuum is now in its sixth year.

By that time, I'd also realized there was a need for sustainability in leadership. I couldn't do it all myself. No one can. As people who attended became regulars, I asked them to help. Imagine my surprise and relief when they said YES. But, suddenly, I wasn't a group moderator. Suddenly, I was a leader, and that was a learning curve. The nasty secret is that it's one thing to walk into a room, put on a huge smile, and lead a group. It's another to sit at a table and listen, truly listen, to the needs of your community. The questions came: about the name of the group, the times we met, the people we were reaching out to, the way that I often took on too much rather than trusting my team to get things done. What I learned is the best way to lead your community is to create a space for others to stand up, own their skills, and do what they do best. Leadership is about support, and it's about mistakes.

Mistakes were made. Big ones. I was often not proactive enough on issues related to accessibility, or the needs of our queer family of color. This was even an issue under our own Bi+ umbrella. It took a long time to fully integrate our ace and

aro members into conversations. It was only a couple of years ago that we found space and capacity for an ace-focused group. Initially, I pushed back on the idea. I was worried the proposed moderator was taking on too much. The group held firm, saying that we'd been putting groups like this on hold for far too long. They were right. The first meetup was scheduled for later that month and was incredibly successful.

Also, sometimes, in our zeal to speak out and see change, action we took was short-sighted and poorly thought out. But it always forced important conversations with community leaders. In these moments, I learned that I'm not as confrontational as people seem to think I am, but I also learned how to stand up for my team.

The Pride Center staff was right, by the way. I did get burned out. After fourteen years, I finally hit a wall that I am still peeling myself off of. Following Pride in 2019—right when the Pride Center was finally, openly cheering their bisexual and pansexual staff members and right as I was being told that Pride 2020 was going to have more bi-focused programming—I walked into our weekly sustainability team meeting and quit. Tears in my eyes, I explained that I couldn't do it anymore, but it was okay because the team at the table were leaders and I was proud to leave the group in their hands.

I'm still involved. I help with coffee, brunch, and the 5<sup>th</sup> Monday creative group. I'll volunteer at Pride, I maintain conversations with the team at BiNet, and I'm working on a proposal with an art gallery for a show in 2021. But I'm not on the planning team. It's not my role anymore. Walking away was hard, and in many ways traumatic, but I could do it because the community was there, and strong, and ready to take things to places I can't even imagine.

The true measure of success for me, though, came a couple of years ago. I was sitting in the 5<sup>th</sup> Monday Fluidly Creative group. During introductions, one of the questions was, "What brought you here tonight?" One participant who hadn't come with anything to work on shrugged, grinned, and said, "It's Monday. It's 1 to 5 night."

Keep showing up. They will too.

*Shauna Brock (she/her) is an award-winning writer who grew up in organizing spaces and art galleries. A bisexual, polyam dyke, she co-founded Utah's 1 to 5 Club in 2005, giving Bi+ identified individuals a safe space in Utah. In 2019, the Utah Pride Center and the 1 to 5 Club presented her with the Shauna Brock Bi+ Community Unicorn Award for her years of service to the community. She lives in Salt Lake City with her partner and their three fur-kids.*

**Things to remember as you build space in your community. (Or – eleven things I had to learn along the way.)** *By Shauna Brock*

1. You will get frustrated. You will spend a lot of time sitting in empty rooms, wondering if what you are doing will have an impact. It does. Expect fluctuations. Your coffee meetup was great in March, but that doesn't mean it will be in May. Sometimes only three people show up to a discussion group, but the next time, it might be five. Keep showing up.
2. Sustainability matters. Build a leadership team for the next generation. Have regular planning meetings away from your meetup groups. Utilize chats like Slack or Basecamp for notes and planning.
3. Make space for your leadership team to highlight their skills and talents. If someone has an idea, encourage them to do it and be supportive.
4. Start small but be consistent. Don't let internet chatter dictate everything. Decisions are made by those who show up, not those who complain on social media.
5. Be consistent and active on social media. Algorithms filter out groups that don't post regularly. If you can afford occasional boosts and promoted posts, do it.
6. As capacity builds, be willing to explore different meeting groups. Discussions, political actions, game nights, brunch, they all work better for different people.
7. You will make mistakes. Accept them as part of the nature of community building. Learn from them, own them, and grow from them. Surround yourself with smart people who challenge you.
8. Often, it's okay to leap before you look.
9. Use your local Pride Center's space (if you have one), but also be willing to expand. A lot of people are nervous about being in those spaces. Utilize libraries (they're free!), coffee shops, and parks (as weather and accessibility permit). Do your best to keep meetings centrally located, consistent, and near public transit lines. It's okay to put together meetup groups that are not for everyone (bar nights, etc.) as long as you also hold universally accessible events.
10. If you are sponsored by your local Pride Center, find an ally on staff. You might not be welcomed with open arms by everyone, but building bridges is crucial. They are your lifeline, and often your link to things like a budget. Also, follow the rules. (To a point.)
11. Keep. Showing. Up.



**Amy Luetzgen**

In the past two years I have organized Bi+ Pride Milwaukee (BPM). We have gone from having zero presence in the Milwaukee LGBTQ community to winning a Pride Award at Milwaukee PrideFest for best LGBTQ organization in 2019. When I accepted the award for BPM, I gave a short speech about how the bi community has been present and engaged in activism since Stonewall and that the B in LGBTQ has never been silent but, far too often, erased. BPM offers support and visibility to bi+ folks in our metro area. We have various activities such as bi cafe, happy hour, game nights, bi+ crafternoon, a discussion group at our local LGBT center, bi+ hiking and biking groups and more. We have been a presence in the Milwaukee Pride parade for the past two years and I recently reached out regionally to invite the Chicago and Madison bi groups to join us at the Parade this year to start increased geographical activism for our non-monosexual community.

We have grown our local social media following from about 150 when I first started being an admin to over 1000 folks who follow us on Facebook alone. We have been featured in local media. It has been insanely gratifying to see how folk feel supported by our activism and visibility. We have so many plans going forward and there is continued enthusiasm as we work to grow our vibrant, valuable, supportive bi+ community in Milwaukee. Our focus as we start this new decade is to continue on our strong foundation to build a supportive, sustainable structure for our beautiful and diverse bi+ beings and to work to be included in local queer events and organizations. As a bi+ person who has been out for well over four decades, but struggled with invisibility and erasure, it has been amazing to look to the future with so much hope and excitement as we raise our profile locally and regionally. As a mother of three wonderful people, two of whom are bi+, I am so glad I stretched my comfort zone to be a voice for our bi+ family. It has been a delight to see so many people come forward to lend a hand and participate in this important endeavor!

*Amy is an organizer with the award-winning group, Bi+ Pride Milwaukee.*





## NEWS BRIEFS

### South Dakota Leads the Conservative Attack on Trans Youth

South Dakota is the tip of the anti-transgender iceberg that is resurfacing after suffering a string of defeats across the country for their “bathroom bills.” Conservative activists are once again targeting doctors in an attempt to withhold healthcare from those who need it. With echoes of anti-abortion legislation, South Dakota Republicans attempted in February to criminalize doctors who assist transgender youth with their medical transition needs.

After being passed by the State House, fortunately, the bill was turned aside by the State Senate and it will not be dealt with during this legislative session. However, similar bills are already in process in Florida, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Colorado to restrict and punish medical professionals for assisting gender reassignment medical treatment for minors. These are not going away. With the current administration’s anti-LGBTQ attitude, there will doubtlessly be more such legal challenges to overcome.

### Jameela Jamil Comes Out as Queer

Jameela Jamil came out recently as queer, but some of her fans were not happy with how it happened. Best known for her role on *The Good Place*, Jamil had been chosen to be a judge on an upcoming reality TV show focusing on voguing. Many people started complaining that she didn’t belong on the panel because she is a cisgender, straight woman with no experience in the community. She then stepped forward and said she is a queer woman and explained why the producers chose her, not necessarily as an “expert,” but as someone who could bring in a certain audience to the show and who could relate to her as more of a novice.



If you are a fan of *The Good Place*, you already know that Kristen Bell’s character, Eleanor, identified as bisexual, though there weren’t any real relationships with women that were developed. We know that doesn’t make her any less bi, but we really do wish we’d see some more complex exploration about bi+ identity on programs rather than having it be a feature of a character that allows you to make cheap jokes about them. We’re not a punchline.



San Francisco was the bi hot spot the weekend of February 1-2 as several hundred bi+ folks gathered for workshops, discussions, and bi-tastic entertainment. Martin Rawlings-Fein, Jennifer Yee, Jan Steckel, Dr. Mimi Huang, and Lani Kaahumanu were among the speakers and organizers of this west coast conference that drew people from all over the country.

### Visit Our ETSY Shop!

**PINS. Amazing pins.**

Also, bisexual, pansexual & Philadelphia pride flags (rainbow flag with black & brown stripes).

And bi, trans, and rainbow earrings.

That’s one of the ways we raise funds to cover the production, printing, and mailing costs of this publication. There are 49 amazing bi, pan, lgbtq+, anti-racist, and other social justice pins on our new ETSY page. Please take a look. Favorite. Place an order. Then write a review. Spread the word!

## BHAM Highlights Resilience of Bi+ Community



Bisexual Health Awareness Month (#BiHealthMonth), led annually by the Bisexual Resource Center (BRC), raises awareness about the bisexual+ (bi, pansexual, fluid, queer, etc.) community’s social, economic, and health disparities; advocates for resources; and inspires actions to improve bi+ people’s well-being. Now in its 35th year, the Bisexual Resource Center proudly presents the 7th annual #BiHealthMonth campaign.

The theme of the March 2020 campaign is “Resilience.” The bisexual+ community makes up the majority of the LGBTQ community and experiences significantly higher rates of physical, sexual, social, and emotional violence and disparities than gay and straight people, as well as worse physical, mental, and social health. In the face of these high hurdles, bi+ people have always persisted: shaping history, organizing alongside vulnerable communities, and defying odds. We weather storms under the bi+ umbrella, an encompassing term for anyone attracted to more than one gender, regardless of what labels they use. An umbrella that makes room for everyone’s unique identities and experiences is the best tool for increasing our community’s wellness.

You can participate by posting online using #BiHealthMonth, hosting community events in your area, donating to the Bisexual Resource Center, and more. Visit [BiHealthMonth.org](http://BiHealthMonth.org) and email us at [bham@biresource.org](mailto:bham@biresource.org).

Members of the Bisexual Resource Center Board gathered from around the country at the Dallas Creating Change Conference. (L to R) Megan Weireter, Brooke Lindley, Sandra Luo, Gabi Blonder, Kate Estrop. As the largest LGBTQ+ activist conference in the country, *Creating Change* is an annual opportunity to gather, strategize, and support each other. See page 16 for impressions from the Bi+ Institute at the conference.



Calendar, continued from page 24

**18 (Saturday) 11:30am, Biversity Brunch.** (See Mar. 21st)

**19 (Sunday) 12-3pm, Women’s Brunch at Marya’s in Allston.** Please bring a potluck dish and come socialize! We welcome all women (trans & cis) and nonbinary folks of any orientation. Dog in home. RSVP: [maryamtshali@gmail.com](mailto:maryamtshali@gmail.com).

### May

**6 (Wednesday) 7-9pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS).** (See Mar. 4th)

**11 (Monday) 7-9pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning.** (See Mar. 9th)

**14 (Thursday) 7-9pm, Young Bisexual Social and Support Group (Young BLiSS).** (See Mar. 12th)

**16 (Saturday) 11:30am, Biversity Brunch.** (See Mar. 21st)

**17 (Sunday) 2-4pm, Tea with Bisexual Women Partnered with Men (BWPM).** (See Mar. 15th)

**17 (Sunday) 2-4pm, Bi+ Women of Worcester.** (See Mar. 15th)

**23 (Sat) 12-3pm, Bi Women’s Brunch at Robyn’s in Jamaica Plain.** Please bring a potluck dish and come socialize! We welcome all women (trans & cis) and nonbinary folks of any orientation. Cats in home, 10 steps at entrance. RSVP: [robyn@robynochs.com](mailto:robyn@robynochs.com).

**31 (Sunday) 4-7pm, Stuff-n-Stuff at Robyn’s in Jamaica Plain.** Help mail *Bi Women Quarterly* and share a meal. RSVP: [robyn@robynochs.com](mailto:robyn@robynochs.com).



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## The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center. Check [www.biresource.org](http://www.biresource.org) for address.

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### Ongoing Events

**Come to our monthly bi+ women's brunch! See calendar for dates.**

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#### 2nd Mondays:

**Straight Marriage, Still Questioning.** 7pm.  
Info: [kate.e.flynn@gmail.com](mailto:kate.e.flynn@gmail.com)

**Tea with Bi Women Partnered with Men.** 7pm. Info: [kate.e.flynn@gmail.com](mailto:kate.e.flynn@gmail.com).

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#### 1st Wednesdays:

**BLiSS (Bisexual Social and Support Group).** 7pm at the Boston Public Library. Info: [bliss@biresource.org](mailto:bliss@biresource.org)

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#### 2nd Thursdays:

**Young BLiSS Group. (20s & 30s)** 7pm. For bi folks 20-29. Info: Gabby at [youngblissboston@gmail.com](mailto:youngblissboston@gmail.com).

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#### 3rd Saturdays:

**Biversity Brunch.** 11:30am at The Foundry, 255 Elm Street, Davis Square, Somerville.

More about Boston-area groups [biresource.org/boston-groups/](http://biresource.org/boston-groups/)

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**Metro-Boston women: Keep up with local events by subscribing to our Google group: [tinyurl.com/Join-Bi-WomenBoston](http://tinyurl.com/Join-Bi-WomenBoston).**

**We offer FREE electronic subscriptions to this publication. Sign up at [www.biwomen-boston.org](http://www.biwomen-boston.org).**

# CALENDAR

## March

**1-31: March is Bisexual Health Awareness Month!**

The Bisexual Resource Center presents this social media campaign every year to boost awareness of our community's physical, mental, and social health needs and experiences. This year's theme is "Resilience." Visit [BiHealthMonth.org](http://BiHealthMonth.org) for more details.



**1 (Sunday) 4-7pm, Stuff-n-Stuff at Robyn's in Jamaica Plain.** Come join us as we mail *Bi Women Quarterly* and share a meal. There are two cats in the home. There are about 10 steps to the entrance. RSVP: [robyn@robynochs.com](mailto:robyn@robynochs.com).

**4 (Wednesday) 7-9pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS).** All bi and bi-friendly people of all genders and orientations welcome to attend. Meetings are peer-facilitated discussion groups, sometimes with a pre-selected topic or presenter. Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesdays. Info: [bliss@biresource.org](mailto:bliss@biresource.org).

**8 (Sunday) 12-3pm, Women's Brunch at Bailey and Lark's in Roxbury.** Please bring a potluck dish and come socialize! We welcome all women (trans & cis) and nonbinary folks of any orientation. No avocados at this brunch. RSVP: [bailey.a.merlin@gmail.com](mailto:bailey.a.merlin@gmail.com).

**9 (Monday) 7-9pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning.** A peer-led support group for women in a straight marriage/relationship struggling with sexual orientation or coming out. Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays. RSVP/Info: [kate.e.flynn@gmail.com](mailto:kate.e.flynn@gmail.com).

**12 (Thursday) 7-9pm, Young Bisexual Social and Support Group (Young BLiSS).** If you are in your 20s or mid-30s (or thereabouts) and identify somewhere along the lines of bisexual/omni/pan/fluid (or are questioning in that direction), please join us 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays for a few hours of discussion, support, and/or the eating and drinking of delicious things. Info/RSVP: [youngblissboston@gmail.com](mailto:youngblissboston@gmail.com).

**15 (Sunday), 2-4pm, Tea with Bisexual Women Partnered with Men (BWPM).** A peer-led support meetup co-hosted by BI-WOC and the BRC. We will discuss a wide range of issues related to attraction, sexuality, and gender in a supportive safe space for only trans and cis women and non-binary folks of all races and ethnic backgrounds. RSVP: <https://www.meetup.com/Bi-Community-Activities/events/266768550/>.

**15 (Sunday) 2-4pm, Bi+ Women of Worcester.** A peer-led social support group for bi-sexual, pansexual, queer or fluid women and non-binary folks in Central Mass. We will discuss a wide range of issues related to attraction, sexuality, and gender in a supportive safe space for folks of all races and ethnic backgrounds. Info/RSVP: <https://www.meetup.com/Bi-Community-Activities/events/zwgfmryb-cfbtb/>.

**21 (Saturday) 11:30am, Biversity Brunch.** This mixed-gender bi group brunches at Foundry on Elm St. in Davis Sq., Somerville. Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays. Info: <http://www.biversity.org>.

## April

**1 (Wednesday) 7-9pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS).** (See Mar. 4th)

**2-12 (Thursday-Sunday), Wicked Queer**

**WICKEDQUEER**

**Film Festival.** Find the complete schedule of films that will be shown in several different venues around Boston and Cambridge at [wickedqueer.org](http://wickedqueer.org).

**9 (Thursday) 7-9pm, Young Bisexual Social and Support Group (Young BLiSS).** (See Mar. 12th)

**13 (Monday), 7-9pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning.** (See Mar. 9th)

*Calendar, continues on page 23*