

Now What?

By Kate Estrop

The process of realizing I was bisexual – and actually following through on it – commenced in classic Kate fashion. After all, I'm horrible at following through on things. I have two bookshelves full of unused craft materials, at least twenty unread or half-read books, a novel I've been trying to write for three years, and a gym key fob that I've used maybe twice throughout my year-long membership. Half-eaten bags of frozen veggies get tossed years later, half-written short stories litter a folder titled "In Progress," and the same starred email has been sitting in my email folder for months.

Thinking about doing something, on the other hand, is something I'm good at. I run three miles in my head before I go to sleep many nights and appear on talk shows for my bestselling novel while I shower. I make elaborate meals,



publish countless short stories and get hired full-time at a university, all in the realm of imagination. I even think about getting better at following through on things, but

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Born this Gay

By Kristine Meshak

I was straight for 18 and a half years of my life. At least, I thought I was straight.

I was raised in a conservative, Catholic family. Although there were strict definitions of right and wrong, it was a loving household. However, my family's love didn't change the fact that I had always felt different. I had always been mature for my age and people seemed to think I had it all together. I, too, thought I had it all together.

I had my fairy tale life all planned out. I wanted to meet a man who would dazzle me and sweep me off my feet. We would have an unforgettable and romantic wedding. Finally, we would settle down and have four children: two boys and two girls – all while I gracefully managed a successful career. I thought this alone would make me happy and complete. I thought it would also appease my grandchildren-seeking parents. Now, I only had to find the perfect man.

Having found no keepers in high school, I went away to college in hopes of meeting new friends and the man of my dreams. Through trial and error, I found two wonderful friends who carried me through to my sophomore year. I decided to put the manhunt on the back burner in hopes that he would turn up when I least expected him. Instead, I wanted to focus on adding more friends to my friend group.

Shortly after the year began, my two friends and I met a transfer student named Laura who was living in our dorm. The three of us got to know her, slowly, and welcomed her into our group. I was happy to welcome her, and couldn't

help feeling a special force between us. I felt that she completed our friend group. Only later that spring would I realize that she completed more than our friend group. She completed me.

Laura and I began spending more and more time together. We'd stay up late and make up excuses to do things alone so we could flirt with one another. I knew subconsciously that I was falling in love with her, but coming from a conservative household as I did, this scared me. After all, I was supposed to be waiting for the perfect man, not the perfect *woman*. Although I was petrified about what being in love with a woman would do to my and my Catholic family's understanding of the world, I knew that if I walked away from this new person, I would forever regret my actions.

Summer came all too soon and Laura and I were forced to part ways until fall. I had to return to my summer job in my hometown and she had to travel cross-country to hers. Laura's summer job involved working outdoors and she had limited access to technology. Therefore, we swapped addresses and spent the next three and a half months of our relationship communicating primarily by letter. The rest, as they say, is history. We are nearing our two-year anniversary and planning our future together. We've never been happier.

Kristine is currently completing her undergraduate work and living with her partner in western Wisconsin.

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From Your Editor

The theme of the current issue is “What Happens Next” and focuses on the experiences of those who came to bi identity after having first identified as straight. Readers were asked, “So you’ve realized you’re attracted to women, too. What did you do next? Did you look for supportive community? Read books? Try to meet other women loving women? Seek out experience? See a counselor? Look for info on the Internet? Ask friends for advice? Tell us your story, or give advice to other women who might be in this situation now.” We received so many responses that we weren’t able to include all of them, and so we’ve decided to extend this topic to the next issue, which will include both those who come to bi from straight and also those who come to bi from a lesbian identity.

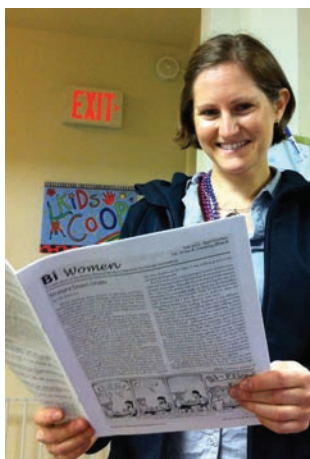
In this issue you’ll find pieces by Kate Estrop, Kristine Meshak, Kitty Kavanaugh, Katrina Chaves, Angel Vail, Chiquita Violette, Laura Berol, Claire Louise Swinford, Amanda Townsell, and Janet W. Hardy. I just wish I’d had access to this issue when I was first coming out as bi, because I had NO idea how to proceed!

And of course, you’ll find Ask Tiggy, News Briefs, Letters and our calendar of events for women in the greater Boston area. Faith Cheltenham tells us about the Creating Change Conference, and Martina Robinson reviews a new book of poetry by Laura Madeline Wiseman. Our Around the World feature will resume in our next issue.

Robyn

**Alison reads
Bi Women.
Send us a
picture of
YOU reading
Bi Women.**

**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. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, bodies, 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 of bisexuals within the LGBTQ community, and to the full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all sexual and gender minorities within the larger society.

Next in *Bi Women*

The theme for the Spring ‘13 issue:

What Happens Next

This is for those who came to bi identity by way of identifying as either lesbian or straight. So you’ve realized you’re bisexual/pansexual/fluid/whatever... not straight or lesbian. What did you do next? Did you look for supportive community? Read books? Seek out experience? See a counselor? Look for information on the Internet? Ask friends for advice? Tell us your story. Or give advice to other women who might be in this situation now. We want to hear from you. Essays, poems, artwork and short stories are welcome.

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

Submission guidelines are at:

<http://biwomenboston.org/newsletter/submission-guidelines/>

Send your submissions and suggestions for future topics to

biwomeneditor@gmail.com

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

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

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

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The Next Step

By Kitty Kavanaugh

After driving to the next city, I hesitantly park my sedan across the street from the coffee shop where we have decided to meet. My mind is racing, wondering what she's expecting of me. I'm not the greatest conversationalist, but know I cannot completely rely on her doing most of the talking. I'm early enough to scope out downtown, get my bearings and hopefully become more comfortable in these unfamiliar surroundings. But it's not really helping. I'm still nervous.

I step out of my car and cross the street through traffic. Inside, I order a coffee and pick a table next to the window in order to watch the traffic and keep an eye on both entrances for her. The door closest to me opens. I see a short-haired, petite curvy girl in running shoes, jeans and a purple blouse. She steps in with a friend with long dark hair and a simple black dress. The short-haired girl smiles at me and I stand to greet her.

"Hi! I'm Ann," she says in an excited, pleasant voice. "This is my friend Julia."

"Hi Julia, I'm Kitty," I politely wave.

"We're just going to grab a coffee and we'll be right over." Ann gives me another of her warm, inviting smiles.

"Okay."

I go back to the table and watch Ann and Julia stand in line quietly talking to each other; I observe their behavior, their closeness. Anyone could sense the intimacy between them.

Julia sits across from me and Ann takes a seat at my side. Julia has very sexy eyes that I have no trouble meeting with my own intrigued gaze.

Ann likes to talk and she laughs often. We spend the better part of an hour easily chatting and getting to know one another. Ann and Julia admit to being intimate with one another on occasion, but they each have partners that they see outside of this friendship. Julia is meeting her boyfriend Luke after our coffee. It isn't very long before we say goodbye to Julia, and Ann and I are alone together.

Ann invites me back to her apartment. It isn't very far away, but we both step into my car for the short drive.

There is a tall staircase outside leading to the front door. Inside, there are several more winding staircases, but her door is at the landing closest to us. Past her door, we are greeted by two playful cats. They belong to one of her three roommates. She shares an apartment with a young bisexual man, a young gay man, and a young lesbian; they are all in their twenties and are all current or recent students now working to support themselves.

After a short tour of the apartment, Ann introduces me to her room. It is painted a dark dusty rose. The ceilings are high with painted exposed pipes. Her bed is soft with many pillows. Ann turns on some music and we sit down and face each other on the bed. We speak softly and tenderly, whispering sweet nothings, each telling the other how beautiful she is and how attracted we are to each other.

She moves closer. With her right hand in my hair and her left hand embracing me, she licks her lips and I lean in to meet her sweet kiss.

All reservations and doubts I have are abolished in that brief and life-changing moment.

Kitty is a nursing student with a background in psychology and creative writing, who lives and studies on the East Coast.



Picket Fences for the Fenceless

By Katrina Chaves

“I mean, I think guys and girls are equally attractive, but I could never fall *in love* with a girl.” Looking back on my 25 years, this assumption strikes me as most ironic.

As a teenager, I described myself as either straight or “bi-curious.” (I now cringe at the memory of those labels). In spite of many same-sex attractions, I claimed to be incapable of gay romance. Fooling around with other girls? Sure. But there was no emotion involved, it was “just” for fun. At least, that is what I told myself, and others. This somehow made me “less gay.”

I never ran out of boys to crush on during my carefree childhood, but from the moment I turned 13, my orientation was quite clearly bisexual. This was, at times, confusing and terrifying. However, I felt “in control” of my life because I was able to separate sex and romance, and in so doing, separate myself from a queer identity. Growing up, this was the crux of my confusion and the bane of my existence. I told myself that I was just overly sentimental, too emotional, too sensitive; my feelings for females were purely platonic, and I was reading “too much” into them. Such is the mentality of a girl growing up in a politically conservative household with a religious mother. Loving my mom as I do, disappointing her has been something I strive to avoid.

Fate had plans that looked quite different from any expectations my family impressed upon me. The night of my thirteenth birthday, my best friend kissed me in my backyard treehouse, creating one of my greatest childhood memories, and setting the stage for my bisexual future. Several classmates had seen *Cruel Intentions* in recent weeks, and decided to imitate the Sarah Michelle Gellar and Selma Blair scene. This seemed like a grand idea, and I was inexplicably ecstatic that my best friend was inspired to “make out” with me, even if it *was* just “to practice for kissing boys.” However, at this stage of life, I was worrying about the latest hairstyle, reading the Bible, discovering the power of strawberry-flavored lip gloss, trying to fit in with middle-school cliques, et cetera. I was not ready to have my life turned upside down. It was not until seven years later, on the Cinco de Mayo before my 20th birthday, that I fully realized romantic love was possible.

The summer of 2007 was my true coming out summer. Between Fall River and Westport, Massachusetts, and the nitty-gritty corners of Providence, Rhode Island, I reshaped my definitions of happiness, love, lust, family, patriotism, and more. I thoroughly enjoyed my first same-sex relationship (and first Gay Pride celebration). It was a life-altering, blissed-out experience, meeting a lesbian soldier who swept me off my feet. We were innocent, young, brave, and hopeful enough to take a chance on love, even when the “temporary” aspect of it became glaringly obvious. Our relationship was short-lived for several reasons, but the biggest was my unshakable fear.

It would be a gross understatement to say that I was overwhelmed. I tried connecting with lesbians in college classrooms, local clubs/bars/events, and the Rainbow Alliance on campus, but finding a supportive community was impossible. I found women less friendly and less open in these circles than in my hetero world. Upon ending my first gay relationship, I saw an amazing psychologist for several months, who helped me work through countless boxes of Kleenex, but she seemed ill-equipped to offer resources/counseling for a young bi woman. Books played a huge role in my pursuit of feeling “understood.” Books from Baumgardner’s rather ego-stroking memoir/manifesto *Look Both Ways*, to Faderman’s much more intellectually stimulating *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold* provided some solace on bad days. I found *Bi Women Boston* online, and several years later, contacted Robyn Ochs to volunteer to work on this newsletter. Since there was no immediately accessible “bi community” greeting me with open arms, I pieced together different resources, patchwork-quilt-style.

I suppose I was lucky on many levels. My younger sister, already an out lesbian, remained my best friend, guidepost and greatest ally. She was unwavering in her commitment to reassuring me, wiping away the tears, encouraging me to break stereotypes and disregard others’ expectations. And I’m sure I’ll never forget the moment when I decided, after a few glasses of Shiraz on a warm August day, to come out to one of my mother’s sisters. Her response?

“I dated a woman once, too.”

As it turns out, I was not alone. Scared, and desperate for a better support network, but not alone.

Nonetheless, my fears tormented me. Coming to terms with my sexual orientation while dating a servicemember under *Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell* symbolized and summarized the complexity of my desire, and the complexity of my circumstances. At 20 years old, I wanted a white picket fence in my future. I wanted a partner to build a home with, kids to bring to soccer practice, a sense of stability, backyard barbecues on the weekend, visits from parents – a predictable suburban life. I did not see myself attaining that ideal with anyone in the military if there was no possibility of tying the knot. Furthermore, being an androgynous bisexual dating lesbians, I resented my perceived pressure to fit a butch-femme lifestyle.

Fast forward six years, and I am in awe of how the “impossible” can be entirely possible, if one follows what comes naturally. My girlfriend, who is also a self-identified androgynous bisexual woman, has been a beautiful surprise in my world. “Coming out” has been a continual process since 2007, but in the end, I didn’t have to choose between a white picket fence and the truth of my identity. I met my Marine when she was getting out of the Corps, and fell deeply in love. I have struggled with the homophobia/biphobia that has continued to plague us, but when you’re happy in your relationship it’s easier to wear a smile in the face of adversarial forces. My one

Katrina, continued on page 11

Thanks to Catherine Zeta Jones

By Angel Vail

Along the way there were several “clues” that I might be bisexual. I credit Catherine Zeta Jones with giving me some of them. I first saw her in a made-for-television mini-series I had to watch for class. I thought she was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen, which was fine; women are allowed to find others attractive. I then saw her in other films, started to feel differently, and wondered why. In high school I had a serious boyfriend, and although there were still signs that I was attracted to women, I dismissed them. I figured I couldn’t be gay because I was very much in love with my boyfriend. If anything, I got nervous, thinking these feelings for women invalidated my love for my boyfriend.

I got to college, and someone suggested that a way to meet a diverse population was to go to our school’s LGBT group. (She was straight, but looking back, I wonder if she suspected.) I kept telling everyone I was going to meet new people, since the group was indeed very straight-inclusive. I went to the group and announced that I was straight probably three times in that first meeting. (“The lady doth protest too

much, methinks.”) It’s funny looking back as to why I did that – I knew what bisexuality was by the time I went to that meeting. I think I just didn’t want to rule out any cute bi guys who might have been there. I met a girl at that meeting and asked her out a little while later. While she said no, I remember thinking how easy it felt. Like there was nothing wrong with it. It just felt right.

It’s been almost 15 years since that meeting. I’ve had gay friends along the way tell me that I am really gay, and I’ve had others try to figure it out. Fortunately, for the past several years, I have been surrounded by people who don’t feel a need to “figure me out.” I don’t even have to state my sexuality anymore (I’ve found I’m personally more comfortable with the word “queer”). I just say who I am attracted to, and my friends don’t flinch. Many of them feel comfortable enough to share with me that they may not be as close to the edges of the Kinsey scale as people think.

Angel lives in New York City and three years ago she finally got to see Catherine Zeta Jones live on Broadway.



BiPassing The Default

By Chiquita Violette



I realized I liked not only boys but also girls when I was very young. I just didn’t have a word for it, nor did I talk about it. As a result, by lack of information, silence and default, I was ‘hetero’ to anyone who knew me, including my questioning self. The first thing I did was seek out books. I figured that the answer to my queer query could be found within bounded pages that would give me a definition, a description, illustration or story.

What I found was the famed anthology, *Bi Any Other Name*, edited by Loraine Hutchins and Lani

Ka’ahumanu, which gave me everything that I was looking for: validation, insight into my feelings and a community. I devoured that book and searched for others like it, but at my local used bookstore, there wasn’t much else. For a kid coming from a low-income household, Internet access was sporadic and was deemed a luxury rather than the necessity it is today.

When I did access the World Wide Web, I sought out both community and women-loving women, dating websites, clubs and groups that were lesbian- or bi-specific.

I remember one time I called a local lesbian hotspot and asked if it was okay for bi women to hang out there because I wasn’t sure and I was so nervous about the whole idea of it all.

I wanted to meet other bi women and make friends, but I was also open to the idea of dating. Thanks to the Internet, I landed an informal date. It was nice to have someone to share experiences, insecurities and questions with, and to talk to about the loneliness and confusion of not having a term to call ourselves and the epiphany once we figured it out. We explored the clubs on their under-21 nights to meet people and try to find dates. We navigated obscure landscapes, negotiating boundaries with each other in the naturally awkward way that we introverts do. While fearing judgment, we still found a way to have fun, never as an official couple but as friends, exploring our bi-ness.

My advice to those who are coming out of the hetero closet is to start with some literature, especially if you’re the reflective, solitary type who needs time to process things before getting social. Do some research on different organizations, groups and/or clubs for resources, support and information. I advise everyone, introverted or not, to do that. For those who prefer a more hands-on approach, attend existing support groups and meet-ups or start your own.

Chiquita is a 27-year-old bi/pan/fluid/queer Person of Color, student, artist and activist living and workin’ it in Dallas, Texas.

Accepting Myself

By Laura Berol

Bisexuality takes myriad forms. Some of us realized early on that our attractions span the gender continuum. Others have been surprised at some point to find ourselves desiring people we never expected to. We previously thought we were gay, or straight... or we didn't know what to think, until bisexuality made our experience understandable. That was what happened to me, at least.

If sexual identity were defined entirely by attraction, I couldn't be anything but a lesbian. My first memories of desiring women date back to when I was twelve. The most passionate attachment of my life so far was formed with another woman when I was nineteen. But I clung to my Evangelical faith, and that commitment precluded choosing a woman as a life partner.

If sexual identity were determined entirely by relationships, I couldn't be anything but straight. At twenty-four, I married a man and never even tested the waters with anyone else. Yet my marriage brought me the strength to step away from my religion and assess for myself what life path would



be best for me. I joined lesbian and bisexual social groups; I told my story and heard others' stories; I flirted with women. When a woman I liked asked me out, I realized how vital my husband was to me and how incredibly attractive any woman would need to be for me to risk my relationship with him for her. I chose to remain monogamous in my marriage, for now, because that emotional bond has become central for me.

And so I embraced a bisexual identity because it allows me to acknowledge and honor all facets of my life, even the conflicting ones. I don't have to deny any of my longings or condemn any of my choices. I don't have to pare down the complexity of my loves to make them fit a recognizable pattern. I don't have to pretend that what I want now is

what I have always wanted or what I will always want. What sustains me is changeable because life is change. Bisexuality means accepting myself.

When she isn't collapsed in a heap from trying to keep up with her three boys, Laura is working to capture the changeability of life in a memoir of bisexuality.

Surprise, I'm Bi!

By Amanda Townsell

My freshman year of college is when my story begins. Deep down, I think I knew that I was attracted to girls as well as guys but I refused to admit it, even to myself. Plus, I grew up in a rather rural area where it was not okay to be gay in any form. So off I went to a private liberal arts college. I had a close female friend that I was crushing on so hard. One night, while we were hanging out, she confessed that she had a crush on me. We started dating and it went well, but I did not want to go public. The thought of telling my friends and family made me break out in a sweat. This led to a very short-lived relationship with hurt feelings on both sides. It made me realize that I needed to come out, but more importantly I needed to find a support system specifically for LGBT people.

I began by joining the LGBT group at my college. I was amazed to discover other people who were bisexual, but who also had different attractions than I did. I learned a lot about self-acceptance and defending myself to people when, for example, I dated a guy and people said that I did not seem gay anymore. I learned over the next few years that I would have to educate people on what bisexuality was for

me and that it is not so black and white. I learned to navigate meeting new potential partners by letting them know that I was bisexual and what role that played in my life.

I also was in counseling for some family issues and had the wonderful fortune to work with a therapist who was in the LGBT community. She got me involved with local LGBT organizations and I expanded my circle of support even further. I also checked out every book from my local library that I could get my hands on to find out more information. I got a subscription to *Curve*, a lesbian magazine. I used the Internet to find forums, websites, blogs and authors. I found friends in the LGBT community who I could rely on for support and for advice with dating situations.

If you are in this situation and do not know where to turn, there are so many resources available: the Internet, books, podcasts, conferences, and groups in many major cities. The best advice I can give is to just be true to yourself and know that you are not alone. There is so much support waiting for you!

Amanda is a queer activist who likes to hula hoop, drink espresso, shoot photos, take her pups to the park, and have adventures.

Twice

By Claire Louise Swinford

The trouble with coming out is that it is a constant process. No matter how visibly and vocally out we are, the process continues with each new interaction. It is easy to get used to that phenomenon, as much as we may dislike it, and easy to become complacent. It was that “done it a thousand times” complacency that led me to great difficulty when I came out as bisexual. You see, my first coming out was in 2009, when I first openly identified as transgender. It was a process that was terrifying and yet much simpler than I expected. Of course there were people in my past who did not accept me, but I found that in the process I gained so much more than I lost. I was fortunate to live in a city with a very strong trans* community, and a great deal of awareness within the larger community. I was safe, mostly accepted, and had the resources to grow and thrive. In retrospect, I could not have asked for a healthier space to embark on such a radical change of life. In that space, my confidence quickly grew, and “being out” became a routine and simple part of life.

It was with that in mind that, after much self-exploration, I came out as bisexual a year later. What I found was a radically different experience. No longer was this a simple matter. People who once offered me affirmation were suddenly confused by my identity and questioning my reality. It seemed as though I had suddenly crossed a threshold into some odd taboo. Actually, that is exactly what I had done. The longstanding argument of the trans* community is that gender has nothing to do with sexuality. This is entirely true, but it ignores the reality that, with the possible exception of the bisexual community, sexuality has everything to do with gender, specifically, the gender of the object of one’s desires and one’s partners. I would never attempt to minimize the negative aspects of gender transition; the oppression and hate are entirely real. There is something to stepping outside of the gender binary that creates a lot of ugly backlash. But when we run afoul of the gender binary, we also run afoul of the sexual binary. After all, if men can have vaginas and women penises, then such iron-clad notions as heterosexuality and homosexuality are challenged. And is a challenge to one’s belief systems not the basis of hatred and oppression of any sort? Differentiation must be condemned because that which is different eliminates the comfort of the tidy little boxes we build for ourselves and for others. This is what all of our life’s learning teaches us, and it seems to remain until we consciously break through it, usually by way of a major life event.

It was that belief in major life events holding the power to shatter stereotypes that led me to presume that I would find acceptance among my transgender friends. This bit of naiveté would leave me horribly disappointed. We are very much a mono-normative society. Yes, I know the current buzz term is hetero-normative, but I find mono-normative

a more accurate phrase, because the gay/lesbian community is often just as fixated as the heterosexual community on the notions of *one* gender, *one* sexual preference, *one* monogamous partner. Even the most allegedly sexually enlightened seem to trip and fall on this piece of socialization. This was not a shocking revelation to me, and I am sure it is not to anyone else in the bi* community either. But, somehow I believed the trans* community would be different. How does one live the reality of being forced into the wrong gender and often the wrong sexuality, at long last overcome it, and not immediately come to the conclusion that all of our gender and sexual stereotypes are insane? That was my journey, not a transition from male to female, but to a point of understanding that male and female are entirely constructed concepts. A journey to an understanding that people matter, individual self-identities matter, and stereotypes do not. It seems many do not take the same journey. In fact, I found many in the trans* community the strictest enforcers of the sexual binary. There were those who said if I did not find a nice guy to settle down with, I could only be a cross-dresser. There were those who said if a straight male enters transition and then identifies as anything but a lesbian, she is denying her past and falling for gender stereotypes. And there were those who excoriated me for even considering being sexually active prior to surgery. With the possible exception of radical fundamentalist evangelicals, I have never seen a community with more sexual hang-ups. None of this resonated or provided me with anything supportive or affirming. No, I am not falling for stereotypes, nor denying my past. No, I am not interested in playing Stepford wife to anyone. No, I am not allowing anyone to use dysphoria as a litmus test for my gender identity. And no, I will not accept that gender and sexuality are wholly divorced concepts when I see such sexual repression in the gender community. I see people trying hard to prove that point, and mostly failing as they suffer. I choose not to suffer. My sexuality is as fluid as my gender; there is nothing at all wrong with that. This is the identity that is purely me: my reality, my healthy space in which to reside.

But even the healthiest of spaces needs a support structure to anchor it. With that in mind, I started reaching out to the bisexual community. This was at first a difficult task because I live in a community with great trans* supporters, a wonderful gay/lesbian community, and virtually no bisexual resources. I had to dig deeply, and ultimately connect on a national level. It was in those connections that I found my place to call home. It was almost stunning to me, connecting to the activist bisexual community, that I was surrounded by people who not only understood my sexuality, but intuitively understood my gender identity as well. In retrospect, it makes perfect sense. If bisexuality is – at least for some bisexuals – the act of being attracted to humans regardless of gender, then who could possibly accept gender fluidity more completely? That being said, I should not have been surprised by the large number of trans* and genderqueer

Claire, continues on page 9

The Twist

By Janet W. Hardy

I turned 40 in 1995. I'd been "out" as a BDSM player for a few years – a move that (as comings-out often do) changed *everything*. I left a long-term, friendly, passionless marriage because my husband couldn't follow me into the tangled jungle of pain and intensity that I needed to explore. I fell in love with the first man who could guide me deep into that jungle; he smiled appreciatively as I hacked my way through its undergrowth, wielding whips and ropes rather than machetes and torches. I moved to the city where he lived, took a new job in my old line of work, then lost that job when my employers listened in on my personal phone calls and decided that they didn't need any perverts working for them.

So I was doing my best to make a living as a freelance writer and editor, and self-publishing a little manual for novice dominant women (a "side project" that was to evolve into my career for the next two decades – but that's a story for a different article).

Of course I'd experimented with women: most women in BDSM do. Early in my explorations, I'd gone out for a beer with Sharon, a friend of a friend – smart, wry, with fine brown hair, owlish glasses and two of the loveliest breasts I've seen then or since – and flirted. The flirtation led to a playdate, the play to sex, and the sex to a steamy, kinky affair lasting several months. It was thrilling at first, then less so, and eventually it reached the point where I dreaded every advance she made.

"I can't do this any more," I told her, finally, sadly. "I think I'm just heterosexual."

"But... you've been enjoying the sex," she said, bewildered, her eyes starting to fill.



"Um, I guess," I shrugged. In fact, I'd found the sex overwhelming and claustrophobic – cunnilingus has never been a favorite of mine as a receiver, and as a giver I found I liked it even less. Sharon's drinking had become an issue, too, as had the fact that she was seriously infatuated with me and I couldn't have the same feelings for her.

"And, you know, really, when I stop to think about it, I've never had crushes on the women in the movies," I added, as though that were the ultimate evidence. "I *like* Susan Sarandon and Sigourney Weaver and Angela Bassett, and they're fun to look at and sometimes I wish I looked like them. But I never imagine touching them or kissing them or, you know, spanking them, not like I do that bad guy from *Die Hard*, or Patrick Stewart, or, you know..."

"I know," she said, and burst into tears. I held her, a stray tear or two trickling down my face as well. I genuinely wanted to feel about her the way she felt about me – I liked her tremendously and wanted her to have everything she wanted. I just couldn't be the one to give it to her.

So that, I thought, was that: I was heterosexual. I wished I weren't. Women had always seemed to find me more attractive than men – my best efforts to look feminine have never fooled anyone. Most people, then and now, read me as a soft butch, and not many men are drawn to that. Besides, most of my best friends throughout my life had been gay, and I wanted to be a part of that world. But, I supposed, if I couldn't, I couldn't.

So I turned down most of the play requests I got from women, and dismissed my occasional fantasies about clothespins on labia and cane marks on soft wide bottoms as statistical outliers. I tried a few more things with a few other women, but nothing seemed to work much better than it had with Sharon. And so it went, until a rainy February afternoon when I decided to blow off the afternoon's work and catch a matinee.

The only movie playing at the right time was a foreign comedy called *French Twist*; I'd never heard of it. Now, before you go running off to see it, I should warn you: it's not much of a movie. It's one of those dumb French farces whose moral seems to be, "We're French and we're much smarter about sex than you are." The plot, such as it is, has to do with an unhappily married woman who one day finds a brightly painted van in her driveway, which turns out to belong to Marijo, an itinerant handywoman.

Marijo was plump, and graying, and wore her hair cropped high over her ears and combed back from her forehead. She had big, soft breasts and a little cupid's-bow mouth, and she wore overalls, and sometimes a man's suit and tie.

I was mesmerized.

Janet, continued on next page

Janet, continued from previous page

Worlds opened up to me with each new scene. What would it feel like, I wondered, to lift those big, warm breasts in my hands? To rest my head on that soft belly? To sink my teeth into the back of one of those plump thighs?

If I sound a little vague about the plot of the movie, it's because I couldn't take my eyes off Marijo, and that made it hard to read the subtitles.

It was an epiphany: I *could* have crushes on women in the movies! The movies just hadn't been showing me the right women!

(To this day, I have a tendency to fall in lust with plump, graying women; and to this day I never see them in the movies. The fact that I *am* a plump graying woman worries me a bit, but not enough to make me stop.)

So that part was taken care of: I was able to perform the essentially meaningless act of lusting after light projected on a screen. Maybe I *was* bi. What, though, was I going to do about the cunnilingus part?

The kink community served me well there. The first time I saw one woman fisting another at a party, I was rapt: a whole hand disappearing between someone's legs – like being born, almost, but in reverse. It seemed fascinatingly perverse and yet completely natural, like the way women were meant to fit together. And I can't imagine anyone in the world being so androphilic that they wouldn't be turned on by the sound of a woman being fisted: if the whole world of sex could be condensed into a single sound, it would be that deep, guttural, wailing belly moan. *Richard Simmons* would be turned on by that sound.

So when I negotiated my first scene with my new friend Dossie – she wanted to be a fiery heiress to my pirate king, a role I knew I could throw myself into with gusto – and she told me that she loved being fisted, I was intrigued. And scared: "I don't know how," I admitted. "I've never fisted anyone before."

"Don't worry," she said. "I'll walk you through it."

I am fairly sure that no fiery heiress in the history of

piracy has ever instructed her abductor in the step-by-step technique of exactly how to ravish her, but that didn't stop Dossie. Skirts up around her chin and legs spread wide, she explained the niceties of hand positioning, when to add each new finger, and when to add yet more lube (the answer to this last, in case you're wondering, is "always"). She told me when to twist and when to push, and explained how the zillions of little nerves in the vagina multiply each tiny motion, so very little goes a very long way. And before I knew it, there I was, wrist deep and having an absolutely wonderful time, wildly turned on, with no claustrophobia, and a glorious, soaring sense of control and competence.

So it turns out that you can have sex with women without putting your mouth anywhere it doesn't want to go! Who knew?

I was running out of "why not's." It was possible, I began to see, that I simply hadn't been all that attracted to *Sharon* (although I did and do love her dearly, and was ecstatic for her when she fell in love with a fabulous woman who loved her back). There were all kinds of women in the world, and a fair number of them seemed to want my fist in them.

And then I met Barbara, who wanted my fist in her. *And* who loved clothespins on her labia and cane marks across her wide soft bottom. *And* who had big soft breasts, and graying hair cropped high over her ears and combed back from her forehead.

"I'm bisexual," I told the world that year.

And I haven't looked back since.

Janet is the author or co-author of eleven books about alternative sexualities, including the bestselling The Ethical Slut. Her most recent book, Girlfag: A Life Told In Sex and Musicals, is a memoir about life as a woman who loves gay men and wishes she could be one.

Claire, continues from page 7

identities that I found in the bi* community. It has become a home for so many of us: the "not trans* enough," the "too trans*," those bold enough to spit in the face of the sexual binary as we did the gender binary. So I remain a fully fluid identity, choosing those stereotypes and trappings I like, denying those I don't, and twisting and turning my way through the rest, mostly for my own amusement. And I do so knowing that I always have a home in a community that gets it, that affirms and encourages me. I am stronger for that affirmation and have learned and grown immensely because of it. We are all stronger in spaces of acceptance. We are all better for the simple act of "getting it."

Claire is an out, loud, proud trans-queer activist, writer, and speaker. Her work has appeared in multiple outlets including Vital Voice magazine and Odyssey Storytellers. Claire works in HIV prevention, focusing on street outreach, and calls Tucson, Arizona, home.

Kate, continued from page 1

of course you can imagine where that goes.

So while I don't remember the first time it hit me that thinking about kissing another woman turned me on, I remember whom I thought about kissing: Tara, the ex-wife of the man I was dating at the time. She was a tall, long-legged, sharp-featured performance artist with a dry wit and unconventional allure. She never shaved her legs or armpits and gave off a strong, almost masculine vibe, but at the same time wore sundresses and funky makeup. Her haircut was asymmetrical, her teeth stuck out a little in a charming way, and her eyes were like cloudy ice. She was probably one of the first women I knew who identified as bisexual at a time when I finally understood what that meant.

Being a girl who frequently fails to filter herself, I told Tara about my attraction. I think I even told her I wanted to kiss her. Though we didn't kiss, I do remember her telling me about the first time she wanted to kiss a girl, too. Aha, I thought, this is something.

I mentioned it to my therapist. She said it might be possible I was attracted to women, but it could also be a manifestation of my attraction to Tara's ex-husband, my then-boyfriend. I'm especially bad at follow-through when someone gives me a loophole to escape through, so I did. Both the object of my attraction and my boyfriend moved away. He and I broke up, and I lost touch with them both. The cozy relationship with my next boyfriend and my contentment with my developing master's degree overshadowed this brief attraction, and it, too faded away.

The next time I confronted my sexuality was a year and a half later, thanks to Noomi Rapace, the actress who played Lisbeth Salander in the Swedish *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* series. I'd already fallen in love with the character after reading Larsen's books and found myself lusting after the actress even though in her day-to-day life she was nothing close to the type that might attract me. I pretended she was more like the punky Lisbeth, that she liked to shed her model persona sometimes and carouse with "normal" people, and that she was my super-secret celebrity girlfriend.

Super secret celebrity *girlfriend*? This was definitely becoming a thing. My boyfriend, understanding and supportive partner that he is, encouraged me to think about it. He bought me the DVD boxed set of Noomi's movies for our anniversary. He frequently prompted me to ask myself the question, *Now what?*

Easing back to my comfort level and lack of follow-through, I thought about it. A lot. But not just about Noomi and other women I'd see on the street or elsewhere (though now there began to be a lot of that too). I thought back to the quirks I had as a child, the things I liked and people I felt close to. And that's what brought me back to the playground in fifth grade, doing flips on the monkey bar before school and waiting for Miss Smith.

Miss Smith was my middle school gym teacher and volleyball coach. She was funny and always joked around with us in an informal manner that my other teachers rarely

had. She had what I would now call a butch style, but back then I didn't really have a word for what I thought of her, other than "my favorite person in the whole wide world."

My attraction to her was never sexual, but I always wanted to be around her. I wrote stories about her and her "roommate," my other volleyball coach. I would wait for her in the morning to drive up in her green Ford Explorer and hope that she'd see my antics on the jungle gym and think, "That Kate Estrop is my favorite student of all time." My friends – my long-suffering friends who I'm sure wanted me to *just shut up* about it – even helped me to prank call her one night. Being the lighthearted person she was, she laughed, called me a "goober," and hung up.

I eventually got over my obsession with Miss Smith when I graduated to a new school and found other, different things to be consumed with (like Helen Hunt in *Twister*). I didn't think of her much over the years, other than to blush when remembering how embarrassing I had probably been as a student. But now that I was thinking about women in a whole new way, sixteen years later, it hit me that what I had had was a crush. I just hadn't recognized it.

I began to recognize more signs of my attraction, like my *Twister* phase, my long standing as a Melissa Etheridge and Indigo Girls fan, and the fascination I'd always had with women I thought might be lesbians. I realized that this couldn't just be one of those things that would fall victim to my horrible follow-through. This had to be something real, something I actually did for myself and *finished*.

So now what? I asked myself. I typed "Boston bisexual women" into Google.

A month later, in May of 2011, I sat in the passenger's seat of my boyfriend's car, finding excuses to stall before going to my first BBWN brunch. "You know you need to do this," he said. I knew I needed to do this. I opened the car door.

What I found at this first brunch was a sense of belonging. Everyone was friendly, welcoming, and supportive. They all had their own stories to tell about coming out, being bi and forming a community to combat bisexual invisibility and erasure. Upon listening to my concerns that I didn't know whether or not I was bi because I didn't have any experience with women, one member told me that I didn't need it; if I was attracted to more than one gender and wanted to identify as bi, I could identify as bi.

That started to solidify it for me. I didn't need to *do* anything to be bisexual. I just needed to *feel* something. In my case, my "now what" was just to internalize it, and it didn't take long after that to come out to myself, then eventually others. Of course, I did eventually end up doing something, but that's a story for another time.

I haven't finished my novel or re-joined the gym yet. I don't know if I'll ever have a full-time job at a university. But I have become very happily involved with bisexual and LGBT communities, made amazing friendships, and hopefully helped to create the kind of belonging for

Kate, continued on next page

Ask Tiggy

Dear Tiggy,

I just got out of a seven-year relationship with a man, in large part because I want to understand my sexuality. I've been madly in love with women, but have never even kissed a girl. I'm quite good at heterosexual relationships but I have never really dated, and certainly have never dated a woman. I am a "girl-virgin" and I don't know a thing about where to start.
—*Nine Candies*

Dear Nine Candies,

Tiggy is playing her trombone, banging her bass drum, and clashing her cymbals in the "Welcome to Bisexuality" one-woman parade in your honor! Whoopie!

Ahem. Those were not euphemisms.

You're in for a lot of fun because if dating is an adventure, then bi dating is a wacky thrill ride of self-exploration and life-changing liaisons.



Because heterosexuality is assumed in most contexts, it's a bit more difficult for folks to make same-sex romantic connections at work, mainstream parties, straight bars, etc. However, there are still lots of venues that facilitate queer dating. If you're in your 20s and

you like the bar and club scene, scope out the Lesbian Nights around town. In a decent-sized city, you'll typically find monthly offerings.

If pumping music and strobe lights aren't your jam, you should join a group of LBT women who are doing something you love, be it reading, discussing travel, watching sci-fi movies, or playing kickball. Start by visiting MeetUp.com. Then, ask a mainstream activity group (like a yoga studio) if there's a meeting night or listserv just for queer women. The more liberal churches (e.g., Unitarian Universalists, UCC, Quakers, Reform Jews) may have LGBT social and support groups to join, or you can go directly to your local LGBT community group or your statewide LGBT advocacy group for volunteer opportunities.

In joining any group, the important thing is to give it time. Expect to become a "regular" before the dating magic happens. You're not just finding one-off activities to connect with women, you're embedding yourself in a new social scene and setting roots within a community. That's why, if possible, finding a queer female roommate will easily triple the size of your lady-lovin' world (and probably quadruple your dyke drama. You've been warned).

Meanwhile, you should also join OKCupid.com and give online dating a whirl. Just filling out the profile can clarify your wants and needs when it comes to the woman of your dreams.

Go on out there and get a bi life, Nine Candies! I suspect you'll be losing your girl virginity before we sweep up the tickertape over here.

—*Tiggy*

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

Katrina, continued from page 4

and only regret, thus far, is that I did not confront these prejudices sooner, and did not take pride in my identity from the very beginning. I wish I could have looked into a crystal ball and seen the support network, unconditional love, and peace that I now enjoy. Making healthy decisions and staying true to one's values and dreams is the key to "coming out" and *living* out. I am out, and oh-so-proud.

Katrina is a feminist bi activist, currently working on her first documentary project, "The Other B Word." When not devoting time to social justice issues, she can be found near the ocean with her girlfriend, hiking, or with a book of Mary Oliver's poetry.

Kate, continued from previous page

others that BBWN originally created for me. I guess that some things, like identity and community and being true to oneself, are worth following through on.

Kate is a Boston-area professor, writer, and editor. She is on the board of the Bisexual Resource Center and organizes Young BLiSS.

Recommended by one of our Readers:

www.welcometopolyville.wordpress.com

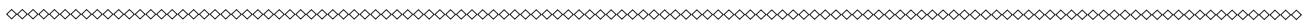
A place to discuss and explore the intersections between being bi and poly.



Bi activists at Creating Change meet with Rea Carey and Stacy Long from the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force



Bi activists at Creating Change meet with Gautam Raghavan, liaison to the LGBT Community from the White House's Office of Public Engagement



***Sprung*, by Laura Madeline Wiseman**

Reviewed by Martina Robinson

As a reader, I appreciate authors who make me work a little to truly understand their material. Drive me to the dictionary to learn an obscure word. Inspire me to use Google to comprehend their reference. I'm one of those women who, instead of saying, "You had me at hello," is more likely to say, "You had me at data acquisition." I don't mind the effort, as long as the work itself is worth my energy expenditure. While reading *Sprung* I gave no thought as to whether the exertion was appropriate.

As a fellow poet, reading *Sprung* was simply a flawless way to spend a few days. I'm not particularly fond of the prose poem as a form, but Wiseman's use of language is just so lovely, I changed my mind. In fact, I'm thinking of turning one of her prose poems into a found poem. According to dictionary.com, found poetry is "a composition made by combining fragments of such printed material as newspapers, signs, or menus, and rearranging them into the form of a poem." Normally, I'd feel too strange reformatting another poet's poem into my own found poem. However, because these pieces of Wiseman's read so like prose to me, I'm less concerned with violating this new to me and much admired in brief encounter poet's own voice by superimposing my own overtop.

I also enjoyed that the poet's seeming obsession with poems formed using the non-traditional, non-rhyming couplet. Couplets don't normally do much for me as a reader, but (as with prose poems) Wiseman illustrates the best the form has to offer. I also enjoyed the juxtaposition between humor and fierce politics. The best example of this is "Dinner for Two," which immediately precedes "After Reading up on genital Cutting or (*Half the Sky*)."

Not many poets can create successful poems in both the humor and political arenas, much less make them blend right next to each other in the same collection. Wiseman does.

As much as I enjoyed this collection and think you will too, I want readers to know that I didn't love every

poem. This is no different than any other book. The biggest issue I had with the whole "my imaginary cock" concept. I was unsure if Wiseman was referring to her imaginary male genitals, her spirit's XY half, or some actual representation of a high school ex-boyfriend she finally let go of when she entered her own self-awareness. The "cock" theme did nothing for me, but someone else might love it.

I rate this book an 8.5/10. Its 58 pages are great for either piecemeal reading or curling up with to devour in a single sitting.

Martina is a 35-year-old poet, disabled, bisexual woman, person of faith and multi-issue activist who ran for Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts on the Green-Rainbow Party ticket in 2006.



Bis in Atlanta at the 2013 Creating Change Conference

By Faith Cheltenham

We arrived at this year's Creating Change completely and utterly exhausted, having made a pit stop in Washington D.C. for the 2nd Inauguration of President Barack Obama. Witnessing such a historic moment was so amazing that despite being dead tired, I was pretty excited to arrive at Creating Change, baby and husband in tow. That's right; I travelled from Los Angeles to D.C. to Atlanta with a ten-month-old teething baby! For bi moms like me and so many others, we gotta do what needs to be done, so I'm very lucky to have a partner who can burp, feed and change when I can't! Luckily, the Creating Change conference provides FREE childcare every day of the conference, so our kid got to have a fun time with other queer babies while his dad took much-needed breaks. Me? I headed over to the first ever Bisexual Leadership Roundtable (BLR) on Thursday for a day-long meeting to strategize how we, as bi leaders, can work together on our many common goals.

First, I had to manage the elevator! On the way down every morning, each elevator became a mini party bus since a full elevator still has to stop at every floor from the 28th to the Lobby. It turns out that elevators are a great place to network, hear new jokes and generally rub up against every type of person imaginable. After many a comforting snuggle from random friendly attendees, I made it to the third floor for our meeting, and what a wonderful meeting it was! The BLR is an idea every bisexual leader has had and shared with each other for years. It makes a lot of sense: many organizations are doing great things but when do we have a chance to sit down and talk about what we do and why? When you're a leader of a bisexual organization on a national or regional scale, there's rarely a dull day, and your opportunities to help move forward a movement for freedom and equality never cease. There will be more said about the BLR in the future, but for now I can tell you it was a historic day for all of us present

and for the many folks who worked so hard for us to get there. Part of our collective challenge is to find new ways to express the same thing, which is that bi folks comprise just over half of all self-identified LGB people (Williams Institute study, 2011), and our needs are important, no matter our relationship status or chosen family. We don't have to be in same-sex relationships to work on marriage equality, nor do we need to prescribe to a life of monogamy to hear our voices ring within the narrative of the queer experience.

Once we finished our BLR session, many of the attendees went on to present extremely successful workshops, some with over 100 attendees. Bisexual Resource Center President Ellyn Ruthstrom (my co-organizer of the BLR meeting this year) ran an amazing discussion on how we identify and why. Of late, there's been some discussion about retiring the label bisexual since so many folks erroneously think it limits our options of attraction (as if!), or the many stereotypes associated with our orientation have become too much for any one bisexual to process. What became clear to me in this session is that all of our ways to describe our love should be treated with equal respect, no matter whether you're pansexually bisexual, a bisexual lesbian, a queer bi, bi dyke, one without labels, bisexually fluid or a bi geek like me. The gay and lesbian movements have had time and money to "re-brand" their identification labels so no one assumes a lesbian wants to be deemed "Sapphic" or that all gay guys are SUPER happy, but many folks assume our label cannot evolve past what it once was. Based on the myriad of bisexuals I saw at this year's Creating Change, soon there will be no choice but to recognize that WE are the many who refuse to be defined by anyone's definition but our own.

Faith is President of BiNet USA. Keep up with BiNet USA at www.binetusa.org or via Facebook, www.facebook.com/groups/binetusa or Twitter, www.twitter.com/binetusa.



First Bisexual Leadership Roundtable. Back row: Sabina Labor, Heidi Bruins Green, Denise Penn, Lauren Beach, Faith Cheltenham, ABilly Jones-Hennin; Front: Chiquita Violette, Robyn Ochs, Ellyn Ruthstrom. Also at the BLR: Luigi Ferrer, Paul Nocera.

Postscript by Robyn: Faith had to leave the conference before the closing plenary and so she missed what was possibly the most bisexual moment of the conference! Singer Frenchie Davis closed out the conference with an amazing set that had the audience dancing in the aisles and even up on the stage. Early in her act she referred to herself as an "LGBT performer." Then a few minutes later, responding to the audience's excitement, she called out, "It's a bisexual's dream – a room full of men and women screaming my name!" I was sitting at a table of mostly bi folks, and we all had enormous smiles on our faces. What a wonderful

The entire closing plenary can be viewed on YouTube at www.youtube.be/XthojbkPtFQ

News Briefs

By Robyn Ochs
and Katrina Chaves



In the last issue of *Bi Women*, we reported on a record number of out bisexual elected officials, as well as the first out pansexual representative. Turns out, there is one more: Representative Joanna Cole (D-Chittenden-6-1).

Calling it "immoral and unnecessary," Roman Catholic Bishop Thomas J. Tobin is urging state lawmakers to reject the latest proposal to legalize same-sex marriage in Rhode Island. Now that the bill has passed the House of Representatives, activists are working to ensure that the bill passes in the Senate. A coalition of progressive, political and religious leaders have announced the formation of Rhode Islanders United for Marriage. "In the coming months, Rhode Islanders United for Marriage will run a campaign unlike any our state has seen before," said Ray Sullivan, executive director of Marriage Equality Rhode Island. For more info, go to: www.riunitedformarriage.org.

As the nation works its way through the debate over vouchers and other alternatives to traditional public education funding, another battle over homosexuality, religious education

and school tax funds has been controversial in Georgia. The debate exists over a popular tax credit program that transforms state money into private school scholarships, some of them used at religious-based schools that prohibit gay, lesbian or bisexual students from attending. The policies at more than 100 such schools are explicit. Public money is being spent by private educational institutions that "punish, denounce and even demonize students in the name of religion solely because they are gay, state that they are homosexual, happen to have same-sex parents or guardians, or express support or tolerance for gay students at school, away from school or at home."

For the first time, leaders from local, regional, and national bi organizations held a Bisexual Leadership Retreat at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Creating Change conference in Atlanta to discuss issues important to the bi rights movement. BLR attendees set out plans for quarterly conference calls and an annual face-to-face meeting at which representatives from national, regional, and local organizations can convene to continue the work. Working groups were established in fundraising strategies, political outreach, people of color and trans community networking, social media skill-building, media and public education, BLR governance, and a national needs assessment project. (See also Faith Cheltenham's article on page 13.)

From our readers

VIA EMAIL:

Thanks very much for the *Bi Women* magazine, Robyn. I have shared this with the Wellington Bisexual Women's Group of New Zealand.

The Group is going through a quiet patch with many members active in other community groups and campaigns at present. Our government is considering a marriage equality bill and the WBW Group, along with 20,000 other groups and individuals, has made a submission on the bill. We have been called to present our verbal testimony in early December.

Some of us have been working with other groups like [The Queer Avengers](#) and [LegaliseLove](#) on a Marriage Equality Conference. The discussions include diversity in the LGBTIQ communities and bisexual woman and men, transgender women and men, and gay, lesbian, and queer activists and straight allies are involved.

And we will try to put our busy lives to one side for a Christmas gathering, as we have done each year since the late 1980s. See an early poster:

<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/sexualities/5/4>

Cheers,

Kay from Wellington, New Zealand

1 December 2012

VIA TWITTER:

@applewriter tweeted: @robynochs I'm trying not to cry at all the heartfelt stories in *Bi Women*. Everyone and everything is just lovely.

VIA FACEBOOK:

Estraven Andrews posted: "Finally, some positive stories about bi relationships to counter all the negativity. AND a good resource section."

VIA POSTAL SERVICE:

On the subscription form that says "*Bi Women* wants you," Loretta from St. Paul wrote "...and I want *Bi Women*. What a coincidence!"

**Write to *Bi Women* at
biwomeneditor@gmail.com.
We welcome your feedback.**

The "Bi Office"

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

Ongoing Events

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

2nd Tuesdays:

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

2nd Mondays:

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

1st Wednesdays, 3rd Thursdays:

BLiSS: Bisexual Social & Support Group.

2nd Thursdays:

Young BLiSS. For bi folks 20s and 30s. 7pm. Info: Kate at youngblissboston@gmail.com.

3rd Saturdays:

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

Boston-area women:

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



CALENDAR

March

1-2 (Fri.-Sat.): Five College Queer Gender & Sexuality Conference at Hampshire College, Amherst, MA. More info: <http://bit.ly/VMf7L2>

11 (Mon.): 7-9 pm, Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. The BRC board holds a meeting on the 2nd Monday of each month (NEW DAY) open to all bi and bi-friendly community members. Info: president@bire-source.net. Meets 4th floor of the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. near Back Bay station, Orange Line.

11 (Mon.): 7pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. A peer-led support group for women in a straight marriage/relationship struggling with sexual orientation or coming out. Meets monthly on 2nd Mon. Info/location: kate.e.flynn@gmail.com.

14 (Th.): 7-9pm, Younger Bi Group. For folks in their 20s or mid-30s (or thereabouts) who identify somewhere along the lines of bisexual/omni/pan/fluid/questioning. Meetings 2nd Thursdays at Eastern Bank's community room, 250 Elm Street, Somerville, on the Red Line. After the meeting, interested folks can head to a local Davis Square establishment for more discus-

sion and/or merriment. All genders welcome! RSVP: Kate at youngblissboston@gmail.com.

16 (Sat.): 11:30am, Bi Brunch (a mixed gender bi group). 3rd Saturdays at Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Sq. in Somerville (Davis stop on the Red Line). Great way to socialize and find out what is going on locally in the bi community.

16 (Sat.): 11am-3pm, BBWN Potluck Brunch at Carla and Megan's in Jamaica Plain. Please bring food and/or drinks to share. Email Carla at Carla@imperial-jewett.com or call 617-522-8819 to RSVP/get directions. A great opportunity to meet other bi and bi-friendly women in the Boston area.

21-23 (Th.-Sat.): True Colors Conference for LGBTQIA Youth on University of Connecticut campus in Storrs, CT. This year's theme is "Celebrating Our Heroes of the Past, Present & Future." Info: www.ourtruecolors.org.

April

3 (Wed.): 7-9pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS) meets monthly 1st Wed. at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope

Calendar, continues next page

Bi Women wants you!!!



SUBSCRIPTION RATE for Bi Women (sliding scale)

- \$0-20: pay what you can
- \$20-39: suggested
- \$30-\$99: Supporter
- \$100 on up: Goddess

Renewal New Subscriber

NAME _____

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EMAIL _____

Please send my **Bi Women** by email ; by postal mail; both ways

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

Calendar, *continued from previous page*

Street, Boston. All bi & bi-friendly people of all genders & orientations welcome. Meetings are peer-facilitated discussion groups, sometimes with a pre-selected topic or presenter. Info: bliss@biresource.net.

16 (Sat.): 6pm-1am, Fenway Health's Women's Dinner Party. Annual women's fundraiser is a great night out in downtown Boston with about 1200 fabulous women. Dinner, dancing and Kate Clinton as emcee. Tix are \$200. www.womensdinnerparty.org.

8 (Mon.): 7-9pm, BRC Board Meeting. (See March 11th)

8 (Mon.): 7pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See March 11th)

11 (Th.): 7-9pm, Young BLiSS. (See March 14th)

18 (Th.): 7pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). The 3rd Thursday meeting for BLiSS meets at 250 Elm St in the Eastern B^oank community room for an hour's discussion and then goes out in Davis Square for food and socializing. RSVP/info: bliss@biresource.net.

20 (Sat.): noon, BBWN Potluck Brunch at Deb and Gina's in Arlington. Please bring food and/or drinks to share. RSVP/directions: Deb at debmo345@gmail.com. A great opportunity to meet other bi and bi-friendly women in the Boston area.

20 (Sat.) 11:30am, Saturday Bi Brunch. (See March 16th)

May

1 (Wed.): 7pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). (See April 3rd)

4 (Sat.): 12-5pm, Northampton Pride March & Festival. Kick off Pride season in Northampton. March goes from town to the Tri-County Fairgrounds for the festival. Info: www.nohopride.org.

5 (Sun.): noon, BBWN Potluck Brunch at Robyn's in Jamaica Plain. Please bring food and/or drinks to share. There are cats in the home. Children welcome. RSVP/directions: Robyn at robyn@robynochs.com. A great opportunity to meet other bi and bi-friendly women in the Boston area.

9 (Th.): 7-9pm, Young BLiSS. (See March 14th)

12 (Sun.): noon, Bi Community Picnic and Walk in Arnold Arboretum on Lilac Sunday. We'll meet inside the main gate on the Jamaicaaway and walk into the park to find a beautiful place to relax and share a picnic together. Bad weather will cancel. RSVP to elruthstrom@comcast.net so we know to wait for you at gate.

13 (Mon.): 7pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See March 11th)

13 (Mon.): 7-9pm, BRC Board Meeting. (See March 11th)

16 (Th.): 7pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). (See April 18th)

19 (Sat.): 11:30am, Saturday Bi Brunch. (See March 16th)

New E-Book Version of *Getting Bi* Available Now!

Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World is the definitive anthology of international voices about bisexuality. Co-edited by Robyn Ochs and Sarah Rowley, *Getting Bi* includes over 220 different narratives from 42 countries. A compelling look at contemporary bisexual, pansexual and fluid experience, *Getting Bi* shares perspectives of teens, parents, elders and everyone in between.

And now this bi **must-have** is available as an e-book for only \$9.99. Visit Amazon.com today and order yours.



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