

## Bis in the Workplace: Just the Facts, Ma'am

By Heidi Bruins Green

I have always been intrigued by statistics. Maybe it is coming from a family of scientists, math whizzes, and other geeks (said with the utmost love and respect), but numbers really speak to me. I find that numbers put information in context, and help explain things that are otherwise fuzzy. Over the last ten years, as I have led workshops on the realities of bisexual lives and the experiences of bisexuals in the workplace, I have always felt frustrated that when people asked questions, I could only give them anecdotal information from things I had read or people I personally had talked to. I couldn't make things concrete and definitive. It never occurred to me that I could do something about that.

Several years ago two events coincided that sent me on this journey. First, my husband Jamison Green developed two surveys on the sexual health of transmen and their partners, ending up with nearly 2000 responses between the two surveys. The second was a conversation with someone in the LGBT community whose firm collects a great deal of statistical information on the community for marketing purposes. He gave a presentation at the Out & Equal Workplace Advocates conference that year citing a

lot of very interesting information they had collected about LGBT people. Statistics! I was excited.

I spoke with him after the presentation and asked if he would be willing to share what he had learned about bisexual people. His response was telling. He said that the responses of bisexuals weren't really relevant for their work so they didn't retain that data. When I questioned why he had used the acronym LGBT instead of LG, or even LGT since he had spoken a bit about transpeople, he said that LGBT is the best known term and that *any bisexual in a same-sex relationship would identify as gay or lesbian in surveys like theirs and those were the only bisexuals they were interested in.*

This made my blood boil. It speaks exactly to the reason I've been giving workshops for ten years, AND to my frustration that so few LG people seem to "get it." I actually decided then and there that it was time for me to do my own survey of bisexual people about the experience of being bisexual in the workplace.

It took another year to figure out the questions, because I wanted to make them as inclusive as possible, as well as get an Institutional Review Board behind the work. An IRB, as they are called, simply helps ensure a survey is done

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## Yes, I Am!

By Mandy Metzger

Out at work? Yes, I am! I'm proud of this fact, however, I am still very surprised that I came out at my interview.

My interview with the University of Wisconsin-Parkside was like many other interviews I had been on. "What is your definition of student development?" "What is your definition of learning style?" I responded with standard student-focused answers.

"What is your definition of diversity?" This one has always been hard for me to answer, since I have been educating on diversity for over 10 years and different institutions define diversity in different ways. As I faced my interviewers, contemplating how I would word this answer, the research that I had done about UW-Parkside came back to me. This



small, urban, four-year institution was very progressive and valued diversity. There were many out and proud administrators, staff and faculty, an LGBT Center and an LGBTQA student alliance. I formed my definition to include all people, no matter their ethnicity, culture or beliefs. I went on to explain that diversity isn't always something you can see. Many people identify with diverse populations that we would never be able to know about if we didn't ask and value their beliefs and identities.

As I looked around the room, I was trying to gauge my audience. One of the academic advisors on the committee looked at me as though my answer was simultaneously strange and delightful. When the committee was done asking the canned questions, this advisor questioned

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## HONOR ROLL

Justin Adkins  
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Jen Bonardi  
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Corina C. Cisneros  
Fennel  
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Megan Jewett  
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And many more  
fabulous people!  
You know who  
you are!

*Bi Women* is  
published quarterly.

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## From your editor

The theme of this issue is “Out at Work.”

I am very pleased with the quality and range of responses to our call for writing. We heard from women in various occupations and at various stages of their careers.

The question of whether – and how – to be out at work is a big one for most of us at some stage in our worklife. I’m as out as one can possibly be *now*, but earlier in my career, I too struggled with this question. In 1984 I began a job at one of Harvard’s residential research centers. During my first week on the job I heard a rumor that the Director was upset because an unmarried man/woman couple were sharing one of our apartments. I decided not to come out at that job. Instead, I transferred to a different position after a year and a half. At my next Harvard job, I waited almost a year before coming out – in a 1987 *Newsweek* article!

In this issue, Heidi Bruins Green gives us an informal sneak peek at some of the findings of the first research study on bisexuals in the workplace.

Mandy Metzger writes about coming out during a job interview, and then later to her campus. Catherine Rock shares with us the script of a skit she wrote for her school’s Safe Zone training. Tracy Nectoux is bi in the library. And Chiquita Violette comes out in her retail job and also to a select few in her other (less LGBT-friendly) part-time job. Martina Robinson discusses coming out as a poet. Daphne Kannelopoulos talks about being bi and looking for work. Tracy shares a short play about one possible effect of homo/biphobia in the workplace.

You will also find poems by Sierra Baker, Janice Josephine Carney and Jennifer Rokakis.

And then there’s our fabulous Calendar, our Ask Tiggy column, News Briefs, a book review and our **NEW** Research Corner, brought to us by Jennifer Taub. Our Bi Women Around the World series will resume with the next issue. You will find other treats scattered throughout.

Enjoy this newsletter, and please consider adding your voice and/or artwork to the next issue of *Bi Women*.

– Robyn

## Next in Bi Women

*The theme for the Winter ‘12 issue:*

## When I Knew

When did you know you were bisexual (or queer, or pansexual, or fluid, or just definitely not straight)? Did you have an “aha!” moment? Was there a pivotal event or conversation after which it all made sense? Or was yours a slow process of discovery? Do you feel that it’s all clear in your head now, or are you resting (or grappling) with the question? Tell us about your experience. You can use prose, images, cartoons, poetry, or a combination of these. Send in something very short, or as long as 1000 words (or a page of images).

**Submissions for the next issue  
must be received by November 5th.**

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

Upcoming themes may include:  
Fantasy; Choice; A Youth Issue, more...

If you wish to use a pseudonym,  
just let us know.

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

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

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

# A Case for Sensitivity Training

By Tracy

*Note: This play is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to actual events may or may not be coincidental.*

## SCENE 1: BOSS'S OFFICE

*The boss is sitting at his desk. Tracy enters.*

**Tracy:** Good morning. I have the status reports ready for you.

**Boss:** Excellent! Thank you for getting them done so quickly.

**Tracy:** You're welcome.

**Boss** (*looks over the papers*): Nice work!

**Tracy:** Thanks!

**Boss:** So...what are your plans for the weekend?

**Tracy:** Not much. How about you?

**Boss:** My wife and I are going to Cape Cod this weekend. I am really looking forward to it!

**Tracy:** That sounds like fun! Which island?

**Boss:** We're going to Nantucket. I've been there many times, and it's my favorite. Martha's Vineyard is OK, too, but I definitely would not go to Provincetown.

**Tracy:** Why not?

**Boss** (*sneering*): I don't like *those people*!

**Tracy** (*to self*): Uh, oh. Provincetown is a famous GLBT spot. I hope he doesn't mean what I think he means!

**Boss:** Those queers flaunt it way too much. They should just shut up and mind their own business.

**Tracy** (*to self*): Uh, oh!

**Tracy** (*out loud*): Uh, huh.

**Boss:** For example, they're demanding the right to get married. That really burns me up! Since their numbers

are so small, we shouldn't have to change the definition of marriage just for them. [actual quote!]

**Tracy** (*to self*): People said the same thing when white people wanted to marry black people!

**Tracy** (*out loud*): Uh, huh.

**Boss:** And it's getting worse all the time! Now, they want to teach queer "tolerance" to kids! And you can't stop it. Believe me – I've tried.

**Tracy** (*to self*): Of course they want to teach tolerance – so that we don't end up with more adults like you!

**Tracy** (*out loud*): Uh, huh.

**Boss:** All right – enough about that. Good job on the status report. Have a nice weekend.

**Tracy:** Thanks. You too.

**Tracy** (*to self*): Good thing I didn't tell him about my weekend plans, when he asked. I'm going out for a romantic dinner with my girlfriend!

## SCENE 2: WATER COOLER, FIVE MONTHS LATER

**Boss:** Hi! What's going on?

**Mark:** Not much. How about you?

**Boss:** Did you hear? Tracy is leaving! She found another job elsewhere!

**Mark:** You're kidding! Do you know why she left?

**Boss:** Not really. I was really surprised when she told me! I thought she was happy here

**Mark:** So did I.

**Boss** (*introspective*): It's a shame to lose her. She was a really valuable employee. I wonder if I did something wrong.

*Tracy works as an engineer in Boston. She is very happy at her new job, which is much more LGBT-friendly than the previous one.*

## Outside This Body

by Sierra Baker

Outside this body  
Cut from here to here  
Listening from ear to ear  
Not me, not in me, not this body.  
He said "Cancer . . ."  
Cancer, did I hear right?  
Correct me, (PLEASE!). Cancer?  
I questioned my being  
I could see it playing in my head.  
Lay on the table  
Cut from here to here  
Then I was there  
"Lay on the table Ms. Baker . . ."



I thought cut from here to here?  
"It's time for anesthesia," I hear  
5 . . . 4 . . . 3 . . . 2 . . . I pass out after I scream,  
"Don't put her next to me, she snores!" . . .  
And I wake up  
I feel the cuts from here to here  
Voices of doctors and nurses I hear  
On morphine, pain unknown I fear  
My new life as a survivor  
No more lies. Come out, no more hiding.  
A bi cancer survivor, I don't hear them anymore,  
No more lies, no more hiding, just me.

*Sierra is a college student in the process of transferring to Middle Tennessee State University, where she will be majoring in Sociology and Women and Gender Studies.*

# Out in the Library

By Tracy Nectoux

I find it necessary to come out as bisexual at least once every few months. Granted, I'm married to a man and I have a big mouth. Eliminate at least one of those things, and I'd not have all of these "necessary" coming out moments. But, alas, my mouth and my determination to not let my "opposite marriage" misrepresent me are stronger than my sense of decorum.

I remember a day when I was working in the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) Library's cataloging department. I'd recently graduated from library school (I received my Masters in Library and Information Sciences in 2006), and they'd kindly kept me on as an academic hourly employee until I could find something permanent. We (current and former) graduate students worked closely together in a kind of cubicle cluster, and one of them asked me if I was attending the upcoming graduation ceremony.

**Me:** No, but I'm attending the Lavender Graduation.

**She:** Lavender Graduation?! But you're not gay.

**Me:** I most certainly am.

**She:** But you're married.

**Me:** Madame, I am bisexual.

**She:** Oh! I have lots of bisexual friends!

**Me:** And now you have another one.

**She:** Score!

Since coming out completely in 2001, I have engaged in many variants of this conversation. They never offend me; they never hurt me; and they never tire me. I know that no matter my activism, no matter my research, no matter my stated ideologies, most straight people—because I've partnered with a man—will assume that I'm straight. And it makes complete sense that they would.

What's also true is that very few gay people assume that I'm straight. And that also makes sense.

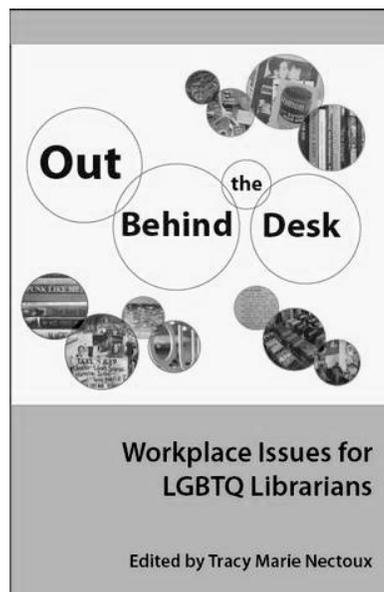
So when I come out to people, I do it in a fun, joking manner, and—out of respect for my spouse—I try not to divulge too much about my personal sex life. And surprisingly enough, coming out at work has been just as easy, though with fewer jokes, and *no* sex talk. Absolutely none (for the most part).

My first library job was a part-time shelver/processor position at Urbana Free Library. At that time I was a volunteer distributor for Illinois' downstate free LGBT newspaper, the *Prairie Flame*, and when I applied for the job, I included this in my resume under "Service and Other Activities." It didn't stop me from getting the job. (In fact, Urbana Free was one of my drop spots for the newspaper.)

When I later began library school at UIUC, while applying for graduate assistantships, I again listed my volunteer work for the *Prairie Flame*—this time as an

interviewer and columnist writing about bisexuality. The original purpose of my column (absurdly titled "Living Bi with a Straight Guy") was to write about my experiences as a bisexual woman. I had fully come out the previous year and I was ready to talk, rant, talk, consider my navel, talk, contemplate the gloriousness of my own existence, and talk some more. I was desperately fascinated with myself. And I did write about myself for a while (and—to his abject horror—occasionally about Straight Guy). But within six months I was sick of myself, and moved on to more interesting topics of culture, politics, and homophobia.

But I digress. Back to the job hunt! Just as with my city's public library, the university from which I needed a job did not bat an eye at anything on my *vitae*. I was granted an assistantship, and after graduating, I was eventually hired full-time.



Since beginning library school, my activism and involvement in social justice and gay rights issues have only increased. Even before I graduated, I'd already joined both the Social Responsibilities Round Table and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table of the American Library Association. It was enormously meaningful to me to find both of these organizations within ALA, and I didn't hesitate to include my memberships in them on my *vitae*. I didn't hesitate because back in 2001 when I came out, I decided that I'd not work for anyone who had issue with what I am. I am out and determined to fight for full civil rights for all,

and I simply will not work for an organization that might be offended by this. It's who I am, and to try to hide it would not only be impossible, but would be detrimental to me. Yes, this has limited my choices, but there is simply no other option for me. I would rather work two, lower-paying part-time labor jobs and be out, than one, high-paying full-time cushy job and be closeted. At the same time, I absolutely understand that my decision is my own, and I neither expect, nor do I suggest that others agree with or emulate either me or my choices.

*Tracy is the editor of Out Behind the Desk: Workplace Issues for LGBTQ Librarians (Library Juice Press, 2011), a new anthology of personal accounts by librarians and library workers relating experiences of being LGBT or Q at work. This piece is an excerpt from this book's introduction.*

# Working It O-U-T

By Chiquita Violette

Ever since I started my coming out process, deciding whether, when, and to whom I come out to at work has been sort of like dipping my foot into the pool to test the waters. The first job I came out at was a retail store that sold music-themed, alternative, Goth-styled and pop-culture referencing clothing. It was very easy for me to come out there, and I actually did it during my interview. My soon-to-be store manager, Jeremy Henry, was openly gay and he let me know up front that this was an LGBT-friendly company. This fact became really clear to me during Pride Season, when all the rainbow and LGBT-themed clothing was put on display. He told me, when I asked about mentioning him for this newsletter, "Yes, of course girl! ... We gotta be proud. We can't hide anymore. That's the environment I want for all of my employees. They shouldn't have to hide themselves in order to make a paycheck. Come as you are." I have so many happy and hilarious memories working at that store – that's my family!

For a couple of seasons, I worked at a tax preparation office and came out to two co-workers, one of whom is now a best friend. The other wasn't so accepting. She was very surprised, and somewhat disapproving. Needless to say, she and I didn't get along quite as well. To clients that happened to be very out and open or talked fondly about LGBT friends or relatives, I shared that I was also "family" and they seemed to be either very accepting or curious about it. A part of me wanted to be fully out, but at the same time, this particular office was overflowing with drama and I didn't care too much to have my sexual orientation be a



Chiquita and Jeremy

part of the gossip. Also, the waters here weren't as welcoming as at my retail job. I decided that there are some instances where I don't have to come out, not because I'm afraid but because I like privacy and I am aware that there are some people who are intolerant and stuck in their ways.

Through these experiences, I learned that picking and choosing seems to be the best way for me to out myself at work. I survey my surroundings to see if there might be out and open members of the LGBT family. I recently took a training class for my new job. On the first day, one woman shared that she was a femme lesbian who loves studs and bois. I almost immediately came out to her. At lunch she and I got together with Paloma, another coworker, and talked about sexual orientation and who else at work is queer-identified. Paloma, a straight ally, told us that her best friend is a pre-op, male-to-female transgender. We also have an openly gay man in our class and everyone seems accepting. As the weeks went on, a few more women in our training class have expressed that they too have had relationships with women, though most of them are currently in relationships with men. So, far there seems to be quite a few of us at this company who are out and the place seems quite LGBT-friendly. I'm very glad about that. Work can be stressful enough without having to worry about being harassed or hated just for being who you are. I prefer and enjoy work more in a "come as you are" setting.

*Chiquita is a working it o-u-t, proud, bi woman in Dallas, TX, a friend of former boss Jeremy Henry, and an avid fan of his Haus of Glitch music.*

## A Revolutionary Poet Talks Work

By Martina Robinson

Being a writer, it's almost impossible to talk about my work, especially my best work, without coming out. Sometimes, especially if I have agreed to work for the day at an event that's in a more conservative area, I consider not putting my exclusively-queer chapbook on display.

So far I haven't given in to the stomach butterflies. Being me, I don't expect to do so anytime soon. At event after event, when I opt to impress my truth, I'm glad I did. By the end of the day, there's always at least one person who comes to my table, fingers the queer book, looks to make sure no one is watching and reads the whole thing before leaving. They almost always give me a donation. Sometimes they even pay the \$3 purchase price and slip the skinny volume into their backpack or pocket.

I smile at them. I autograph the book if they opted to buy one. I hope that my own forthrightness will rub off. I consider it doing my bit to create the world we all want to live in. The kind of world where no one is afraid to tell everyone who they love for any reason. For me, it's all in a day's work!

*Martina is a 33-year-old 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.*

# Acting Out

By Catherine Rock

I live and work in Ohio, one of the most homophobic states in the US. Two years ago my college started a Safe Space program geared not just to students, but also to our faculty and staff, since we have very few “out” people on campus. As part of our training, we cover the coming out process. I decided to write this skit, which we now regularly use to demonstrate the process and to do a bit of biphobia education.

We don't actually perform the skit. It's more of a readers' theater, the actors using scripts and reading dramatically. Overacting in places makes it more entertaining. Although various people play the two roles, I wrote them for myself and for Melanie Carr, Recruitment Counselor and ally. After the skit, Melanie processes what happens, asking people about her character's immediate reaction to the revelation, how she acted later, what she could have done differently, what I must have felt like, etc.

Much of what is in the skit is based on things that have happened to me or to friends. I have been married to a man, Brian, for twenty years. I was recently asked, “If you've been monogamous for that long, how can you know you're still bisexual?” When I wrote this and when we've performed it, I was almost completely closeted. However, because of my participation in the advisor track of the Campus Pride Summer Leadership Camp in July, I have decided that my college's students need role models and my colleagues need to see that they're not alone. When the fall semester starts, I will come out at my college. I know there are risks, but someone has to step forward.

Feel free to use this skit, change it, etc. Changing minds is what we're all about.

## Restaurant Sketch

*Scene: A restaurant. Catherine is sitting at a table. Melanie arrives, remains standing.*

**Mel:** I'm glad you picked Panera for lunch; I'm starving. What do you feel like?

**Cat:** Let's. . . not eat just yet. I'd like to talk to you first.

**Mel:** [sits] Oh? What's up? Are your classes really bad?

**Cat:** No, no, it's not that. It's just that, well, we've been close friends for about three years now, and I need to tell you something.

**Mel:** You're pregnant!

**Cat:** What? Of course not! Where do you get these ideas?

**Mel:** It sounds serious, and what could be more important than that?

**Cat:** Melanie, I'm bisexual.

**Mel:** [scooting chair away] YOU'RE WHAT??

**Cat:** SSHHHH!!!!!!! [loudly whispering] I don't want everybody to know!

**Mel:** But you can't be a lesbian. I mean [grabbing Cat's left wrist and holding it up to show the ring], you're married!  
[Realizing what she's doing, she self-consciously drops the hand.]

**Cat:** I'm not a lesbian; I'm bisexual. There's a difference. I like men and I like women, too. And yes, I'm married. So?

**Mel:** But if you like women, how can you be married to a man? I mean, doesn't that mean you're – what's the word – straight?

**Cat:** You're married, right? Out of all the men in the world, why did you pick Mike? You did eventually pick one and marry him. Does that mean you didn't like others almost enough to marry them? But you didn't, did you? You settled on one, and only one.

**Mel:** But if you're married to a man, that means you're straight now, right?

**Cat:** Well, no. Bisexuals are chameleons. We're often misunderstood because we look like our surroundings. I'm married to a man, so I'm perceived as heterosexual. If I were in a relationship with a woman, people would think I'm a lesbian.

**Mel:** But if you like both men and women, how can you be happy with just one? [whispering loudly] Or are you fooling around on the side?

**Cat:** No, I'm not fooling around. I'm in a monogamous relationship, a monogamous marriage. And besides, sexual orientation isn't just about sex. A big part of it is emotional attachment.

[Mel looks puzzled]

Let me try to explain. You probably feel a certain way about men in general and another certain way about women in general. You don't want to sleep with all men, do you?

**Mel:** Of course not!

**Cat:** But you feel a certain kind of emotional attachment to the one sex and not the other, right?

**Mel:** Well, . . . yeah.

**Cat:** I feel that way toward both sexes.

**Mel:** Isn't that, uh, weird? I mean, doesn't it seem strange to be that way?

**Cat:** It's the way I've always been, so how can it seem weird to me? In fact, it was a surprise when I discovered that not everyone thought that way. THAT was weird. I mean, why limit yourself?

**Mel:** That's an interesting way to look at it. Does your husband know about this? What does he think?

**Cat:** He has mixed feelings about it. On the one hand, it doesn't bother him because it doesn't affect our relationship. On the other hand, he's not sure he really believes it, because it doesn't affect him.

**Mel:** Oh. Um . . .

**Cat:** What are you thinking?

**Mel:** [hesitantly] Are you attracted to me?

**Cat:** I like you as a friend, but to answer the question you're really asking, no, I have no ulterior designs on you. You're safe. Besides, remember that I'm in a monogamous relationship. Just because I'm “differently oriented,” as

some would say, doesn't mean I'm promiscuous. I'm no more likely to have an affair than you are.

**Mel:** Does anybody at school know?

**Cat:** Are you kidding? I value my job. My Chair, I know, would be fine with it, but there are other people to consider.

**Mel:** Why should you care what they think?

**Cat:** Because I have to work with these people [gesturing to audience] every day. My career is in their hands. I could be refused a position on a committee or be denied advancement in rank. Of course that kind of discrimination isn't allowed – on paper – but in real life, it's like any kind of job discrimination; it's next to impossible to prove. No one turns you down because of your sexual orientation; they turn you down because someone else was better, or because you didn't do enough committee work, or your evaluations weren't good enough – any number of reasons are used as excuses by people who object to what you are.

**Mel:** I see what you mean.

**Cat:** That's why, for the time being, anyway, I'm staying in the closet. Things will have to change around that place before I'm willing to come out publicly. Maybe the Safe Space program will help that and will start to change people's attitudes.

**Mel:** I hope so. It must be terrible, having to hide who you really are.

**Cat:** You don't know the half of it. I have to watch everything I say so that I don't slip and reveal my "dark secret" to the wrong people, and I don't even know who the "wrong people" are.

**Mel:** Thank you for trusting me. I won't tell anyone; I promise.

**Cat:** Thanks. I wasn't sure how you'd take it, but I'm glad you're still speaking to me.

**Mel:** What do you mean?

**Cat:** Unfortunately, it's very common for LGBT people who come out to be cut off from their families and friends. Some have been kicked out of their homes. In some cases family members have refused to speak to them for days, years, or forever. It can be very painful for them, I can tell you.

**Mel:** [feelingly] Has this happened to you?

**Cat:** No, but I haven't been brave enough yet to tell my parents, and I don't know if I ever will.

**Mel:** That's sad.

**Cat:** I know, but that's the way it is. . . . Well, we'd better have lunch so we can get back for that meeting.

[Both start to get up.]

**Mel:** I'm starving! What do you feel like, soup or salad?

**Cat:** I don't know – I can go either way.

[Both laugh and they exit stage.]

*Catherine teaches English at Stark State College in North Canton, OH.*

## Bis in the White House

*Bi Women* subscribers Lani Ka'ahumanu, Sheela Lambert and Adrienne Williams were the three bi activists invited to this year's LGBT reception at the White House.



Left to right: Kuwaza Imara, Lani Ka'ahumanu, Adrienne Williams, Sheela Lambert & Paul Nocera

Lani, from the California Bay Area, is co-editor of *Bi Any Other Name*, and the first out bi member to serve on the board of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. She has been an inspiring activist paving the way for decades, helping to form the first national bi rights organization, BiNet USA.

Sheela is a New York City activist who founded the Bi Writers Association and writes a national bisexual column for Examiner.com.

Adrienne, from Chicago, founded the Bi Social Network, an online media network covering entertainment news, social issues, and politics that emphasize bisexuality. They also brought as their guests bi activists Kuwaza Imara from Oakland, CA and Paul Nocera from NYC, NY.

This is the third year the Obama White House has hosted an LGBT reception, the third year bi activists were invited, and the first year we didn't have to *ask* for a last-minute invitation. Past guests invited as bi community representatives: Robyn Ochs (2009); Ellyn Ruthstrom, Faith Cheltenham and A. Billy Jones (2010). Other bi folks have been present at these receptions, but they were there wearing "other hats."



## *Twilight of the Immortal Shines a Clear Light*

by Marilyn Jaye Lewis

Reviewed by MaryBell Austin

Truth is often stranger than fiction – and sometimes more pleasing. If someone had told me a year ago that in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s women dominated the nascent movie industry, I would have suspected them of having a bad case of feminist historical revisionism. But then I read *Women in Hollywood: from Vamp to Studio Head*, a dense non-fiction work that catalogs the careers of dozens of women who dominated every aspect of the field, from screenwriting to directing and editing to running the studios. The facts astounded me; and I hungered for a taste of what that world was like.

Imagine, then, my delight to discover Marilyn Jaye Lewis’ novel, *Twilight of the Immortal!* By using fictional narrator Rosemary McKisco, Lewis immerses the reader in the day-to-day life of a host of real people from the era. Rosemary’s coming-of-age story begins in 1916 New York, where the early ‘flickers’ are scoffed at by serious theatre folk, and ends in 1927 Hollywood. In between, we meet celebrities like Rudolph Valentino and Alla Nazimova (the out Sapphist who ruled Broadway and the early film world).

The novel works brilliantly on three levels. As historical fiction, it is rich with detail and imagery, providing a strong ‘you were there’ experience for the reader. For early cinema buffs, the portraits of well-known and long-forgotten players, with mentions of their films’ releases and reviews, will more than satisfy. (And the brief biographical and bibliographic appendices will lead to more reading.) Finally, as a feminist deconstruction of a time in American history when the life and career choices women enjoyed were constrained in so many ways, the clear voice of young, bi Rosemary McKisco shines a light on the politics of gender and sexuality in a visceral way that non-fiction almost never achieves. For me, the only disappointing part of the reading experience was reaching the end.

Marilyn Jaye Lewis founded the Erotic Authors Association, and has an impressive body of work that explores the intersection of sex, sexuality, love and life. Her most recent novel, *Freak Parade*, won a 2001 Independent Publishers award. To explore her writings, visit [www.marilynjayeewis.com](http://www.marilynjayeewis.com).

*MB Austin is a Bay Area California-based writer working on a contemporary thriller with a bi woman hero, and a genderqueer steampunk series. Her sites can be tracked down via Twitter, where her handles are @steamtour and @bitesizegreen.*



*“Stuff & Stuffs” are events where we enjoy food and each other’s company and also stuff and mail the Bi Women newsletter. At our May Stuff & Stuff, two of our fabulous volunteers apparently became confused. Here they are seen stuffing rice into envelopes. “No, no, no! Let me explain this to you one more time: You put the food into your mouth, and you put the newsletters into the envelopes!” In retrospect, it’s a good thing we didn’t serve soup.*

## Marriage for All

By Jennifer Rokakis

We see it on the evening news.  
That radiant banner behind the president which reads:  
“Marriage for All.”  
I squeeze your hand.  
It’s the happiest day of my life.  
I’m crying the tears of joy because it’s finally here:  
We can get married after all these long years!

The day I’ve been waiting for.  
The sky is the color of faded blue jeans.  
Two dazzling white dresses,  
Red and white roses in hand.  
Our proud fathers each take us down the red carpeted aisle.  
They’re playing our song – Pachelbel’s “Canon in D.”  
I steal a veiled glance at you – you smile.  
You’re more beautiful than the first dusting of shimmering snow.  
The pastor starts talking and our moms weep to see their daughters all grown up.  
I take your hand.  
This is it.  
“Do you take her to be your lawfully wedded wife?”

“Jennie. Jennie? Wake up!”

We never got to say “I do.”

*Jennifer identifies as pansexual, and is currently a junior at Eastern Michigan University where she is studying Women’s and Gender Studies, and Nonprofit Administration.*

# Research Corner:

## How does “outness” relate to mental health for bisexual women?

By Jennifer Taub

*This column begins “Research Corner,” a new Bi Women feature. Each issue I will take a look at research about or of relevance to bi women. Much of the research that includes bisexual women has been in the context of studies looking at “lesbian or bisexual women,” or at women who are not exclusively heterosexual. Some studies ask only for self-identification, others ask women to rate themselves on a Kinsey-type scale, while others look exclusively at sexual history and behavior. Sometimes it’s not easy to tell how a particular issue impacts bi women specifically, but I will do my best to tease out implications.*

*Since the theme of this issue is “Out at Work,” this issue’s column takes a look at “outness” across domains – work, family, friends – and the relationship to mental health.*

Despite the potential negative consequences of being out, it has long been thought that outness is positively correlated to mental health. Twenty years ago, a researcher studying lesbians coming out stated, “The ability to be open about one’s lesbian identity is associated with the integration of personality, psychological health, and authenticity in interpersonal relationships.”<sup>1</sup> Since then, researchers have found that disclosure of lesbian identity (earlier studies did not look at bi women as a separate group) is positively related to self-esteem, perceived social support, positive affect and lower anxiety.<sup>2</sup>

There has certainly been a trend in recent years towards increased visibility in general for queer people (I will use “queer” for denoting non-straight folks of all stripes), and for gays and lesbians in particular. The National Lesbian Health Care Survey (NLHCS)<sup>3</sup>, which surveyed nearly 2000 women, found that 88% were out to all GLB friends, 27% to all family members, 28% to heterosexual friends, and 17% in the workplace. Almost 1 in 5 were not out any family members, and 29% were out to no co-workers. European-American lesbians were more likely to be out than African-Americans or Latinas.

Additional factors that are positively correlated with being out include age and stage of coming out and involvement with queer community. Self-identified

lesbians are more likely to be out than self-identified bisexual women. Reasons for this may include that women who are partnered with men are less likely to receive inquiries about their sexual orientation, and are therefore less likely to disclose. Conversely, those with female partners are more likely to disclose. Therefore, it is probably more accurate to state that women who are partnered with women are more likely to be out than women who are partnered with men.

A comprehensive study of 2400 women<sup>4</sup> (Morris, 2001) looked in detail at mental health and outness across different domains, and looked at lesbians and bisexual women separately. While this study was completed a decade ago, the solid methodology and large sample size makes it notable. Researchers looked at different dimensions of sexual orientation and identity, including self-identification, sexual activity, and current relationship status. Completed just seven years after the NLHCS, this study found 71% of women were out to heterosexual friends vs. 28% in the NLHCS study. Women were out to an average of 65% of family members and 55% of coworkers. Outness differed by ethnicity, with European women and Latinas more out than African-American women, and Jewish women more out than non-Jewish women. Lesbians were more likely to be out than bisexual women. This study also supported the notion that being out was positively related to psychological health, and a lower risk of being suicidal. For bisexual women, the primary factor predicting outness was the number of years since one first identified as bisexual. Sexual activity and current relationship status were not factors related to outness for bisexual women, but were for lesbians.

Given the positive findings for being out and women’s mental health, research findings suggest that, in general, being out to more people, across more areas of one’s life, will have a positive impact on one’s mental health.

1 Kahn, MJ. (1991). Factors affecting the coming out process for lesbians. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 21, 47-70.

2 Jordan, K.M. & Delury, R.H. (1998). Coming out for lesbian women: Its relation to anxiety, positive affectivity, self-esteem and social support. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 35, 1-63.

3 Bradford, J., Ryan, C & Rothblum, ED. (1994). National lesbian health care survey: Implications for mental health. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 62, 228-242.

4 Morris, JF, Waldo, CR & Rothblum, ED. (2001). A model of predictors and outcomes of outness among lesbian and bisexual women. *Amer Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 71, 61-71.



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

in a way that ethically protects the participants, but it is a huge hurdle. I wanted an IRB so that we could publish results in academic journals, which was important to my amazing statistician (a professor of statistics at the University of Cincinnati) who has drawn out correlations that are very exciting, and to my husband who will help me write up the results and is an academic as well.

Once launched, the survey was up for about five months while I asked for help disseminating it as much as possible. Bisexuals are a tough bunch to find, but we ended up with 1560 respondents from 39 countries, though predominantly from the U.S./Canada (71%) and the U.K./Ireland (18%). Interestingly, another 5% came from Spanish-speaking countries, due to the tremendous effort put in by two bi activists I met at BiCon 2010, one of whom, Elena Marcos, was profiled in these pages not long ago.

The purpose of the study was to better understand how bisexuals defined themselves and their levels of satisfaction with various aspects of their lives, as well as three critical areas: work, relationships and community. The survey had 78 questions divided into five sections (Self-Definitions, Relationships, Community, Work Experiences and Demographics). Demographics had the most questions because we wanted to be sure we knew how to slice and dice the data we were seeing. I'm sure survey fatigue was an issue for people going through the survey, and I was really grateful that so many people stuck it out!

I'm excited to share some of my results here in the pages of *Bi Women*. If you want more information, I invite you to attend the Out & Equal Workplace Summit in Dallas, Texas, October 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> where we will present this data. (The Summit, the largest, workplace-focused LGBT conference in the country [www.outandequal.org/summit-2011], will also feature eight workshops on bisexuality.) The most recent issue of the *Journal of Bisexuality* has a review of the preliminary data (first 800 respondents) as one of the presentations at the first international BiReCon in 2010 in London. By early 2012 we plan to have the analysis wrapped up and published or posted on the websites of our three sponsors: the Bisexual Resource Center (www.biresource.net), the American Institute of Bisexuality (www.bisexual.org) and Out & Equal Workplace Summit (www.outandequal.org).

## A QUICK LOOK AT THE FINDINGS

One of our aims was to collect data that any reader would respond to by saying "Duh! We already *knew* that!" A question such as, "Does bisexuality really exist?" is not a serious question in my mind, but people like J. Michael Bailey and his faux research that resulted in the 1995 *New York Times* article titled "Gay, Straight, or Lying?" leave some people wondering, so the question must be pursued. So our first set of findings fit under the header: DUH!

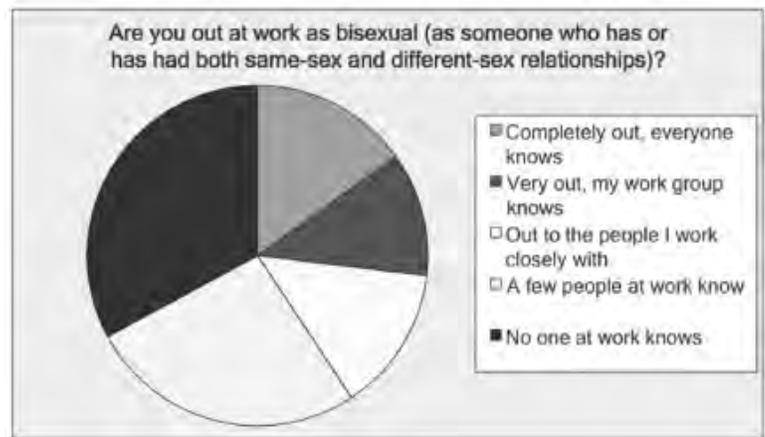
### DUH!

- Bisexuality is a separate, discrete sexual orientation from either of the mono-sexual orientations.
- Sexual orientation (bisexuality, heterosexuality, etc.) is separate and distinct from relational style (polyamory, monogamy, etc.).
- Outness decreases as age increases.
- Transgender people are far more accepting of bisexuals than non-transgender people whether gay, lesbian, or straight.
- People who are attracted to people of more than one sex/gender have some concerns in common with gay/lesbian people as well as concerns unique to bisexuals.
- People who describe their attractions closer to the middle of the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid (i.e., a 4 rather than a 1 or a 7) were more likely to be out as bisexual than someone closer to one end or the other.

There were some findings that were puzzling or simply surprising. Some of them will be discussed in virtual focus groups we plan to run soon that will be made up of respondents who indicated they would be willing to talk with us further. Those findings are listed under the header: HUH?

### HUH?

- 52% of respondents identify as female, 35% as male, and 13% as queer or gender queer.
- 71% of respondents identify as bisexual, though all but a very few people described their behavior and/or attractions as definitely not mono-sexual.
- 15% identified as gay and 12% as lesbian, though fewer than 2% described mono-sexual attractions and/or behavior.
- Quite a few people described their attractions as being same gender, though not necessarily same sex. As one person said, "I'm attracted to male energy regardless of the package it comes in."



Other findings were causes for actual concern and will be discussed in the focus groups as well. Those come under the header: UH-OH...

**UH-OH...**

- Respondents whose score on the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid were closest to the center (meaning those attracted to different and same sex/gender people the most evenly) were the *least* satisfied in their work lives, though their sex lives were great!
- In companies where employees experienced frequent anti-bi comments and joking, there was a higher than normal experience of adverse treatment (e.g. firing, withheld promotions, etc).

There are a number of unique concerns that bisexual people experience at work. Among them are:

- Bisexuals in different sex relationships are treated as allies (at best).
- Bisexuals in same-sex relationships are made invisible by assumptions.
- Out bisexuals are not trusted by lesbian and gay co-workers.
- Polyamorous bisexuals must be closeted, even if their bisexuality is accepted.
- Bisexuals who leave a partner of one sex and then become involved with someone of another sex are gossiped about much more than a mono-sexual going from one relationship to another.
- Bisexuals are often seen as unstable, unreliable, and therefore un-promotable.

And, finally, there were those things that were surprising and exciting and thought-provoking, things that belong under the header: AHA!

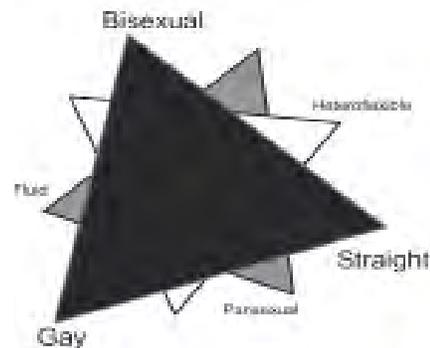
**AHA!**

- Membership in community (bi community or LGBT community) increases outness in the workplace.
- The more out people are the greater their satisfaction on all scales measured: overall, work life, relationships, friendships, community involvement and yes, even your sex life is better when you are out.
- 21% of respondents are currently in polyamorous relationships, while a full 40% identify as polyamorous,

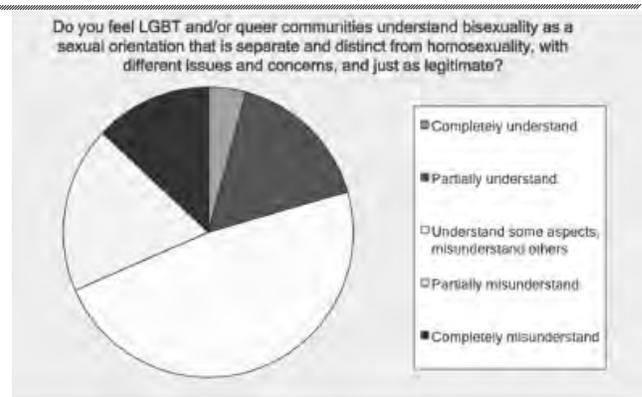
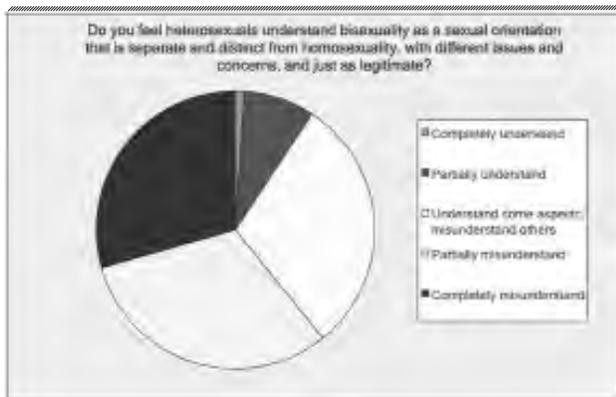
despite currently being single or with only one person..

- Bisexuals are more likely to be out at work in companies that have non-discrimination policies that include BOTH sexual orientation AND gender identity and expression. Sexual orientation ONLY in the policy has the same effect on outness as NO POLICY at all.
- We realized the data was telling us that sexual orientation is not on a continuum like either the Klein or Kinsey scales, but more like a triangle with gay, straight and bi at each apex.

In fact, we decided after reading so many variations that in fact sexual orientation is a sort of ‘infinite polygon’ with unique destinations for all the different variations there are.



*Heidi is a learning and development professional who has enjoyed “data-mining” throughout her career, with 20-plus years in accounting and the past eight years studying, conducting focus groups, and performing surveys and needs assessments to design workshops, training materials, and a variety of learning events. She has delivered workshops on bisexuality in the workplace at the Out & Equal Workplace Summit for 10 years, and is a driving force behind their newly formed Bisexual Advisory Committee (BiAC). Heidi is ecstatically happy living in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband Jamison Green, whom she met at the 2001 Out & Equal Workplace Summit in Cincinnati.*



## Bisexual & Looking for Work

By Daphne L. Kannelopoulos

Like millions of other people, I am unemployed. It is also clear from my resume that I am part of the LGBT community. It's not clearly evident what category I belong to, but I write articles for *Out In Jersey* and that is on my resume. (I am seeking a writing position, after all.) There was one woman who said, "We really like to get to know what the person's interests are outside of work." She then proceeded to ask me about my involvement with an organic foods co-op, but wouldn't touch *Out In Jersey*. If she was so interested in my outside interests, why wasn't she interested in my writing for *Out In Jersey*? Especially since I was applying for a writing position!

I have had many others refuse to ask me about that involvement. I have been advised by a human resources person

who is in to the LGBT community that people may not be asking about my writing for a queer publication because they are afraid of opening themselves up to lawsuits based on how I perceive their reactions to my responses and that I should remove *Out In Jersey* from my resume to increase my chances of getting an interview.

My feeling is that you can Google me and find out anyway. I also would hate to find out six months down the road that I'm working for a company where it could hurt me to be part of the LGBT community. I'd rather never be offered an interview than work in an environment where it would be very uncomfortable for me.

*Daphne runs a bisexual social support group at the Pride Center of New Jersey. She also submits articles to the Pride Center of New Jersey's newsletter and Out in Jersey magazine.*

Yes, I Am!, continued from page 1

me about my experience with LGBTQ students and also my involvement with Safe Zone Training programs. I answered truthfully, but not fully, and explained how I had fallen in love with teaching others about LGBTQ issues at my undergraduate institution. He then gave scenarios to see how I would respond to certain situations that he has had to deal with. I knew he was searching for something, but didn't quite know what. He asked me again how I got involved with the LGBTQ community and it seemed like he was pushing so hard for me to say that I was in the community that I did.

Some people would have warned me against this, but I have been out since I was 18 and it was hard for me to imagine that an institution like Parkside, where diversity is a cornerstone of the institution, would discriminate against me because I was bisexual. I stated that I came out in college as bisexual and got very involved in making campus a safe place for all students.

Well, it must have been okay, since I got the job and have been happily working at UW-Parkside since September of 2010. The first week I was here, I attended a big Coming Out Day celebration in our student union. At that point, the only people that I was out to on this new campus were those who had been present at my interview.

I sat there listening to students, staff, faculty and administration come out and tell their stories. I wanted to say something, but didn't quite know how to say what I wanted to say or if I wanted to come out during my first week of work. I went up to the stage and took the microphone. I introduced myself and said something silly about working with the Alliance at my prior institution and being open and happy to help any student or staff who needed someone to talk to.

I went to sit back down and felt a huge wave of sadness. I couldn't believe that I was afraid to come out. I've been telling my coming out story to student groups for 10 years and now, at the institution that hired me after I had come out in my interview, I couldn't even come out to the small population of

people that were in that room?

After listening to someone come out for the first time and say out loud that she was gay and 45 years old, I decided that I had made a big mistake. If she could be that brave, so could I. I got back up, went to the stage when it was free and took the microphone. I explained what I had felt after sitting down and apologized for not coming out in front of a crowd of people that was so open and willing to listen and care for all people. I came out and felt relief.

I now proudly display my pride flag in my office, along with some other LGBT memorabilia. I help the Rainbow Alliance on campus and also am a facilitator for the Safe Zone Training program here at UW-Parkside.

Being out at work also allowed me to apply and be chosen to participate in the Class of 2013, National Academic Advising Association's Emerging Leaders Program. This program is designed to build leadership for the national organization with academic advisors who identify with a diverse population. I am now providing Safe Zone Trainings and other programs to academic advisors at our regional and national conferences.

I am very happy at UW-Parkside. They have provided me with ways to tie together the different things I love to do – advising and teaching about LGBT issues – and have been very supportive of me and of my goals. I know that I am lucky to be able to talk about my identity at work and to be able to be out in my personal and professional life. I wish acceptance, love and empowerment to anyone struggling with the issue of coming out and hope that everyone can find a way to be their whole self if they choose.

*Mandy is an academic advisor and a licensed health educator, an LGBT issues educator and advocate, and a youth sports coach. She loves being asked how she can still be bisexual after marriage and always explains with a smile on her face.*

# Ask Tiggy



Dear Tiggy,

I've worked for a state agency in New Hampshire for seven years but I'm almost ready to throw in the towel. I've experienced relentless harassment from some of my coworkers regarding my bisexuality. It's mostly just one person, although she gets the others in on it. The harassment is not usually overt, just the constant hammering of snide remarks, day after day. Maybe that doesn't sound so bad, but it's like death by a thousand paper cuts and I can't take it anymore.

I've tried to point out this behavior to my boss a few times; he just denies it. I summoned the courage to complain once through the proper work channels but was met with silence. The worst thing is, I can't face the thought of being out of a job over this, especially in this economy. I'm not sure where to go from here.

-Worked Over

Dear Worked Over,

Contact GLAD, Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, at 617-426-1350. Their website, [www.glad.org](http://www.glad.org), is a fantastic online resource, although I think you should relate your specific situation to a GLAD lawyer. Don't worry—you'll see on their site that they're knowledgeable about laws relating to bis, not just gays and lesbians. The folks at GLAD can tell you what your best legal options are.

You know when you'd tell your mom that someone was ragging on you, she'd say, "They're just jealous"? You know how you thought she didn't know anything, that they obviously weren't jealous at all; they just knew what a dork you were? Well, your mom was right then, and she's right

now. Adult bullying often occurs when the "bully" feels threatened by and inferior to the "victim." The main person bothering you likely thinks that you're a better employee than she, or more in touch with your sexuality. This is her problem and you cannot change it, even if you figure out what trait she's jealous of and try to downplay it. (That will backfire, as she is a bottomless pit of insecurity.)

Confronting her might get to her stop, but don't think of "confrontation" as yelling in her face or telling her to meet you behind the bleachers for a beat-down (although, wouldn't that be awesome? No, seriously, *don't* do that). One way of doing it without getting in trouble at work is to calmly ask her, "Do I make you uncomfortable?" I've seen venerable advice columnist Carolyn Hax recommend this in other circumstances, and I think it's genius.

Brace yourself because this is going to hurt to hear: start looking for a new job if you haven't already. Believe me, I don't take your concerns about the job market lightly, as I was out of work myself in this difficult economy. However, harassment takes a terrible toll on your mental, emotional and even physical health, and making a point is not more important than taking care of yourself. If you leave, your bullies do not "win"; you win the happiness you deserve, and they continue to be their miserable selves. It is horribly unfair for a harasser to drive you out of a job you enjoy, but I believe it's more accurately framed as taking control of your environment and choosing the healthiest situation. I hope you keep this in mind when choosing a plan of action.

-Tiggy

*Are you a bi lady in need of some good advice? Write to Tiggy Upland at [tiggyupland@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.biresource.net).*

## Bi, Trans and All Are Welcome 12-Step meetings

K-Street hosts a number of LGBT-friendly meetings, at 74 Kilmarnock Street (near Fenway) in Boston.  
<http://www.k-street.com/>



## The Raging Bisexual

Check out a BBWNer's blog about her experiences as a bi mom in the dating world. The blog is anonymous, as there is some explicit material. She would love the blog to serve as a space for bi women to share their rants and raves about the dating world. Recent topics have included dating a transwoman, polyamory, menage a trois, and introducing your kids to your dates. You can find Omnivore's Galaxy: The Raging Bisexual at <http://isisgalaxy.wordpress.com>.

## SUPER-POWERFUL BIS

Morgan Goode and Mik Kinkead entered this year's Amazingly Queer Race for Economic Justice as "The Bi-Winners." They raised over \$2,000 for Queers for Economic Justice, a NYC-based non-profit that does vital work advocating and providing educational assistance for LGBT



people in the New York City shelter system. Visit [www.q4ej.org](http://www.q4ej.org) for more information.

## Lilac Sunday Was on Mother's Day This Year

by Janice Josephine Carney

Lilac Sunday at the Arnold Arboretum,  
arrived on Mother's Day this year,  
As I walked through Boston's  
Inner city's Garden of Eden,  
The aroma of lilacs  
Sent me back to fields  
Of New Hampshire.  
Back in another life, I walked those  
Fields near my home  
Holding my daughters' hands  
We picked Lilacs  
Of the bushes  
We picked wild daisies  
We wandered though a field of wild flowers  
Surround by the aroma of lilacs,  
I picked wild flowers and lilacs for my wife,  
My daughters picked lilacs and wild flowers  
For their mother.  
The field of wild flowers and lilacs,  
is gone now, all tar and cement now  
A shopping plaza  
My wife still lives in the same house,  
but with a new husband  
I haven't picked wild flowers  
And fresh lilacs for anyone in a long time.

*Janice has been the subject of two short documentaries "TransJan" and "Finding Peace." She is a co-founder and the first director of TransGender FORGE, a non-profit organization in Florida, and the author of three books: Purple Hearts and Silver Stars, Mantras from the Great Void, and Melodic Poems from the Soul.*



## News Briefs

By Katrina Chaves



In recent uplifting news: New York became the largest state to legalize same-sex marriage, despite much concern over whether the marriage bill would pass in a Republican-controlled Senate. It was approved 33 to 29, and the unanticipated victory seemed quite fitting, given the role New York has already played in LGBT history with the Stonewall riots. New York now joins Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and the District of Columbia as marriage equality states.

In other political news, although DADT has been repealed, this new policy does not go into effect until Sept. 20th, and it does not guarantee an end to anti-gay harassment and discrimination. The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network has asked (once again) that President Obama sign an Executive Order barring all discrimination/harassment based on gender identity and sexual orientation in all branches of the armed forces. The ban on transgender service members has been largely ignored, and it is recommended that gay, lesbian, and bisexual personnel "come out" only after new procedures have been implemented.

The 8th Transcending Boundaries Conference will be held Nov. 11-13 this year in Springfield, Massachusetts at the Mass Mutual Center. This year's conference welcomes Kate Bornstein as the keynote and will focus on the complexity and diversity of sexuality, gender identity, and relationships.

In *Coco Chanel: An Intimate Life*, the famous designer Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel is revealed to be bisexual, having affairs with both women and artists like Salvador Dali. Lisa Chaney used recently discovered letters to demonstrate the fluidity of this aspect of her fascinating life.

Olympic gold medalist and three-time MVP of the Women's National Basketball Association, Sheryl Swoopes has been a recent object of much public harassment for becoming engaged to a man. In 2005, Swoopes came out as a lesbian, becoming the second out lesbian in the WNBA, but is now called a "lie-sexual" by many, regardless of the fact that she has never announced regrets about coming out of the closet and demonstrating once again that biphobia remains potent.

When the Massachusetts congressional delegation put together a new video for the "It Gets Better" project, in response to the recent LGBT youth suicides, it was noted that Senator Scott Brown was not in the video. He was the only one out of twelve to not appear, which is unsurprising, given the homophobic comments he has made in the past.

***Bi Women* is FOR us, BY us and ABOUT us. We are 100% powered by volunteer labor and your donations.**

If you're not yet on our mailing list and would like to sign up, you can do so easily by going to [biwomenboston.org](http://biwomenboston.org), or by sending an email to [editor@biwomenboston.org](mailto:editor@biwomenboston.org). All we need is your name, email address and the city and state in which you reside. You'll also find our calendar there, as well as back issues of *Bi Women*. Oh... and you can make a donation. Any amount is appreciated.



Poetry Brunch at Fennel's

Calendar, continued from page 16

## November

**Monday, October 10, 7 pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning.** (See September 12<sup>th</sup>)

**Tuesday, October 11, 7-9 pm, BRC Board Meeting.** (See September 13<sup>th</sup>)

**Saturday, October 15, 11:30 am, Saturday Bi Brunch.** (See September 17<sup>th</sup>)

**Saturday, October 15, 7pm, Bilicious Boston, Club Café.** Last year was Bilicious Boston's debut (after three years in San Francisco). This year producer Susannah Layton returns with another great selection of bi performers to celebrate our community's creative spirit—comedy, music, poetry and more! Come early or stay late to Club Café and get 20% off your meal if you mention Bilicious. Info: [www.biliciousproductions.com](http://www.biliciousproductions.com).

**Thursday, October 20, 7 pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS).** (See September 15<sup>th</sup>)

**Sunday, October 23, noon, BBWN Potluck Brunch in Arlington at Linda & Maura's.** We will have a Halloween theme this month so people should wear orange or some other costume to commemorate the holiday. Please bring a potluck dish and/or drinks to share. Info/directions: Linda at [lindajblair@msn.com](mailto:lindajblair@msn.com). A great opportunity to meet other bi and bi-friendly women in the Boston area.

**Wednesday, November 2, 7 pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS).** (See September 7<sup>th</sup>)

**Sunday, November 6, noon, BBWN Potluck Brunch in Arlington at Steph's.** Please bring a potluck dish and/or drinks to share. RSVP/directions: Steph at [smiserlis@gmail.com](mailto:smiserlis@gmail.com). A great opportunity to meet other bi and bi-friendly women in the Boston area.

**Monday, November 7, 7 pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning.** (See September 12<sup>th</sup>)

**Tuesday, November 8, 7-9 pm, BRC Board Meeting.** (See September 13<sup>th</sup>)

**Friday, November 11-Sunday, November 13, Transcending Boundaries Conference, Springfield, Massachusetts.**

A weekend of education, social activism, research, and support for persons whose sexual orientation, sexuality, gender identity, sex, or relationship style do not fit within the binary confines of male or female, gay or straight, monogamous or single. Details: [TranscendingBoundaries.org](http://TranscendingBoundaries.org).

**Thursday, November 17, 7 pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS).** (See September 15<sup>th</sup>)

**Saturday, November 19, 11:30 am, Saturday Bi Brunch.** (See September 17<sup>th</sup>)

### 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 \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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](http://www.biwomenboston.org)

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## The "Bi Office"

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

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### Ongoing Events

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

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#### 2nd Tuesdays:

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

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#### 2nd Mondays:

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

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#### 1st Wednesdays, 3rd Thursdays:

**BLISS: Bisexual Social & Support Group**, 7-9pm. Wednesdays, meets at the Bi Office. Thursdays meets at the Community Room of Eastern Bank, 250 Elm St, Somerville. We'll have a one-hour discussion then go out to a local eatery. Email [bliss@biresource.net](mailto:bliss@biresource.net) for info.

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#### 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@yahoogroups.com](mailto:biwomenboston-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)



# CALENDAR

## September

**Wednesday, September 7, 7-9 pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLISS)** meets monthly 1st Wed at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope 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](mailto:bliss@biresource.net).

**Monday, September 12, 7 pm, 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. Location/info: [kate.e.flynn@gmail.com](mailto:kate.e.flynn@gmail.com).

**Tuesday, September 13, 7-9 pm, Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting.** All bi and bi-friendly community members welcome. Info: Ellyn at [president@biresource.net](mailto:president@biresource.net). At the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. near Back Bay station on the Orange Line.

**Thursday, September 15, 7 pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLISS).** Meets at the Community Room of Eastern Bank, 250 Elm St, Somerville. We'll have a one-hour discussion then go out to a local eatery. Email [bliss@biresource.net](mailto:bliss@biresource.net) for info.

**Friday, September 16 and Saturday, September 17, Fenway Health's Helpline Volunteer Training, 1340 Boylston Street, Boston.** If you self-identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer or genderqueer, and have 5 hours per month to spare, then you can join the Peer Listening Line and GLBT Helpline of Fenway Health which provides information, referrals and support to LGBT and questioning callers through its anonymous toll-free line. Email Joanna Wisch at [jwisch@fenwayhealth.org](mailto:jwisch@fenwayhealth.org) for info/ to register.

**Saturday, September 17, 11:30 am, Bi Brunch.** Bi Brunch (a mixed gender bi group) is now always the 3rd Sat. of the month at Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Sq. in

Somerville. The Davis stop on the Red Line is just across the street. Great way to socialize and find out what is going on locally in the bi community.

**Saturday, September 17, Noon-6pm, Connecticut Pride.** Venture over to Bushnell Park in Hartford for a fun afternoon at the last Pride in New England this year. Music from Kristine W. and Sister Funk and some fabulous drag performers. The Bisexual Resource Center will have a booth so come by and say hello! Info: [www.connecticutpride.org](http://www.connecticutpride.org).

**Sunday, September 18, Noon, BBWN Potluck Brunch at Jennifer's at Jamaica Plain CoHousing.** Please bring a potluck dish and/or drinks to share. Easy parking & one block from the T. RSVP/info: [isis.jenn@gmail.com](mailto:isis.jenn@gmail.com) or 857-205-6778. A great opportunity to meet other bi and bi-friendly women in the Boston area.

**Sunday, September 18, Out in the Park, Six Flags in Agawam, Massachusetts.** Have a fabulous outing with the LGBT community in the state's largest amusement park. Besides the usual rollercoasters, rides and games, there will be music, comedy and drag performers including Kitty Litter and JujuBee from *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Info: [outinthepark.info](http://outinthepark.info).

**Friday, September 23, Celebrate Bisexuality Day (CBD).** Celebrate a night of bi culture – music, film, art, literature – with the BRC and the local bi community! Plenty of interactive fun and learning about bi artists of all sorts. For location/details: [www.biresource.net](http://www.biresource.net).

**Saturday, September 24, Rainbow Riverfest at Holyoke Country Club, Holyoke.** Sponsored by the LGBT Coalition of Western Massachusetts, the day's entertainment will include Crystal Waters, Sister Funk, Alix Dobkin and more. Info: [www.rainbowriverfest.org](http://www.rainbowriverfest.org).

## October

**Wednesday, October 5, 7-9 pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLISS),** Bisexual Resource Center, 29 Stanhope Street, Boston. (See September 7th)

Calendar, continues on page 15