

## Train of Thought

By Anna Chase

The train is hot and crowded. I find a seat next to an elderly white man in a black pea coat, cross my legs and place my brown leather purse on my lap. My phone vibrates against my thigh: a text from her. *We're at Central bar! Come find us.* I notice the absence of excitement, but I do want to see her. I envision us sitting at the bar with our Manhattans, speculating as to whether or not the couple to our left is on a blind date.

I wonder if we will kiss tonight. Last time I saw her she revealed her bisexuality and her hiatus from men, "until they grow out of this frat bro phase." She already knew I was interested in women. Now the possibility of an attraction between us is in the open, and we both know it. Has she been asking me *out* this whole time? I've been dating women for a few years and I still struggle with discerning between friendliness and flirtation. (I find that men's intentions are often more obvious.) I'm unsure of my own feelings for her. But she is beautiful to me and has full smiling lips that seem like they would kiss well.

We reach Harvard Square. A man walks on, thirtyish, boyishly handsome. He's tall with dark brown hair and wears a simple blue zip-up fleece that looks like it's from L.L.Bean. I stare at him in that way you can stare at someone on the train and get away with it. His eyes are directed at the MBTA map above the door. He doesn't appear to be studying it so much as resting his eyes on the familiar graph. I decide he's a law student, a 2L, on his way to meet a friend after spending the day in the library. He looks at me, holds my eyes for a moment

longer than a glance. He gives an acknowledging smile. I recall an article I read recently about signals the right sides of our brains send to one another when we make eye contact. We are not entirely conscious of these signals, but they give us an instinctual, underlying feeling about the other, whether it be fear, dislike or attraction. I return the slight smile and fix my eyes on the red leather boots of the woman next to him.

We ride on. I begin conducting a silent survey of which gender of those around me attracts me more, a habit I've found hard to shake since I realized a few years ago I may be bisexual. I had hoped these surveys would determine if I were straight or gay, yet the results consistently revealed that I would not be content excluding either gender. I wanted to be firmly on one side of the dichotomy I knew was false. If I were certain of who I desired, life would just be *easier*. But after deconstructing my own attractions (*ad nauseum*) and dating both men and women, I've accepted and embraced my bisexuality. I see now that having a fluid sexuality doesn't mean I have to choose a side. It means I don't have to.

The train eases into the Central Square platform. I don't look back at the man when I step through the parted doors into the sweaty station. I walk forward, up the narrow stairs and onto the street where she waits for me to find her.

*Anna, 23, is a social work student living in Boston and currently interning at BBWN.*

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## Hot Chocolate & Sex Workshops: Origin Story & Looking Forward

By Ludi Valentine

I realized I was bi at 19, during my university's LGBT Awareness Week (of all things!). I had not thought much about my sexuality before then. I came out immediately. At the time, I was two years into my first relationship: a long-term, monogamous, vanilla pairing with a man. Despite this, I was completely welcomed into the queer and questioning women's group: there was nothing but complete friendliness and support for my coming out. Weekly coffee meets with a large bunch of young, queer women became a staple of my university life: whipped cream piled high on thick hot chocolate in the local Italian cafe, loud and raucous discussions about sex toys and feminism, groups perusing *Diva* (Europe's leading lesbian and bi women's magazine). I took on running the coffee meets during holidays, and often ended up chatting one-on-one with first-timers just coming out, or having just moved to the city.



Photo by Jelena Alekic

**Hot Chocolate**, continues on page 10

## HONOR ROLL

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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

Dearest Reader,  
We are delighted to present this “Voices of Youth” issue, featuring the voices of women, the youngest of whom is 16, all of whom are first-time contributors.

Readers were asked: “What is it like to be you? How did you come to identify as bi, pansexual or fluid? Where did you learn about bisexuality? Was there a Gay/ Straight Alliance in your high school? Are your friends accepting of your identity? What about your family? Do you have any role models? Are you a role model? Where do you get support? Are you an activist? What advice would you give to other young people who think they might be bi, pansexual or fluid?”

Our regular feature “Bisexual Women Around the World” includes two stories this time: Menon from India and Mel from Singapore.

Anna Chase, Ludi Valentine, Mel McConachie, Lyndsie Bennett and Jessica G. provide the core of this issue, with their personal perspectives.

Faith Cheltenham reflects upon *A Year Straight: Confessions of a Boy-Crazy Lesbian Beauty Queen* by Elena Azzoni. There’s also an article from college student Bridget Siegel about her experience of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force’s annual activism conference, Creating Change, an extended News Briefs column, and Tiggy’s advice column. And the newsletter, as always, completes the newsletter with a jam-packed calendar of upcoming events in Boston and beyond.

In our Summer 2012 issue, expect the return of Jennifer Taub’s Bi Research Corner, and the final installment of Jess Wells’ “The See-Saw Family.”

Enjoy this newsletter, and please consider adding your voice and/or artwork to the next issue of *Bi Women*. And if you are in or near the Boston area, we hope you will join us at one of our brunches on March 25, April 22 and/or May 5.

– Robyn

## Next in *Bi Women*

The theme for the Summer ‘12 issue:

### THEN AND NOW

In honor of the upcoming 30th anniversary of the Boston Bisexual Women’s Network and *Bi Women*, our next issue will focus on transformation and the passage of time. Please feel to decide for yourself the time frame in question (thirty years, one month...) and the particular changes on which you wish to focus.

We welcome news articles about current issues and events, creative writing, musings, book reviews, calendar listings, letters to the editor, visual art (photos and drawings), poetry, and more.

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

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

Upcoming themes may include:

Choice; Moms & Mentors; Bi & Single; In  
the Mirror; more...

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

***Bi Women* is online at  
[biwomenboston.org](http://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](mailto:biwomeneditor@gmail.com)).

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

# Bi Women Around the World: Menon's Coming Out Story (Delhi, India)

By Menon

I am not a person who finds it easy to express myself. I was since my earliest days a distant kid. I didn't like to be held or hugged and I definitely did not voice my thoughts. To make matters worse, I realized I was different. So, instead of questioning myself or trying to understand what I was feeling, I threw myself into reading novels and a million other articles until the time I gathered the courage to guiltily start collecting pictures of women from various magazines and newspapers. Since I collected pictures of men too, I thought that meant I was not gay. I was so ignorant at that time that I believed that there was only homosexuality and heterosexuality.

Then in college I met a woman and we fell in love. It was more than love and friendship. She opened me up to myself. I realized that I was bisexual ("Duh!" I thought to myself at that time), like her. I was newly 18, madly in love and I couldn't share my joy, sudden fear and confusion that came from facing my emotions. As usual, I locked it up in me until I thought was going to burst a vein in my head if I didn't die first of a heart attack. I became moody, sullen and withdrawn and that scared my mom who knew that as usual I was terribly bothered by something but not talking. She asked me many times at various occasions if there was something I wanted to talk about but I always said no.

One late night when my sis was asleep (my dad, an army officer, was posted to north-east at that time), she called me, asked me to sit in the dining room and there, in front of me, she began sobbing. "What's bothering you? For god's sake, confide in someone!! If you don't wish to tell me, talk to your dad. Just talk! It's impossible for me to watch you like this, and to top it all you don't even talk. Tell me or talk



Photo: Kareem

Bi visibility at the Fourth Bangalore Pride March, November 2011

to Dad now. Call him up. He'll listen. Don't keep it in you. Whatever you have to say, say it. Don't let it eat you up."

Watching her tears of frustration, I broke down and came out to her. Watching me cry (I don't cry in front of people, not even my parents), she was shaken up. She hugged me and rubbed my back while I poured my heart out to her. I told her everything. I told her that I was in love with a woman. She held me tight and said it was okay and that everything was going to be all right and that she loved me no matter what. I felt strangely light as the burden lifted from my heart. She wiped her tears and said: "Growing up, kids often feel like you do. It is not something new. All you have to do is to stay away from girls for some time. Don't hold hands. Don't sit too close to them and do not give them a lift on your Scooty and you'll be fine. You must not tell your husband about it once you get married. Men don't take such news well." I couldn't believe my ears! All of my coming out and confessing was a complete waste of time. I was fortunately too exhausted (physically, mentally and emotionally) to kill myself out of utter frustration, so I wept some more and then slept. But now I feel coming out to her was not a complete waste. She was right about loving me no matter but she was still bothered about my attraction to girls.

And of course, there was an issue she couldn't face – my girlfriend. For years we tiptoed around the subject until this year when I was going to stay at her house in Hyderabad with my girlfriend. We had a heart-to-heart exchange of letters. Anger, fear, pleading, frustration flowed from both sides and then she wrote: "If you are going to that girl's place [note the lack of word girlfriend or lover or even her name], don't get physical." I snapped back with: "My bedroom life is nobody's business but mine." And then she stopped. She didn't talk to me for several days but now she seems more accepting. Baby steps are okay as long she is moving toward acceptance.

Then there's my younger sister to whom I wished to come out. She was worried that I had no love life because I was shy. I came out to her on Instant Messenger because I knew I wasn't going to see her for a long time (she's studying in Hyderabad and I work in Delhi):

Me: I got to tell u something really personal...

Sis: ya. Tell.

Me: remember u told me that I should go out on dates and meet ppl and to allow romance into my life?

Sis: ya

Me: I didn't have guts to tell u then but I have been dating mostly girls usee...

Menon, continues on next page



**Menon**, *continued from previous page*

Sis: that's gr8! Double dates make things more comfortable for some

Me: I don't think u read it right. I said I DATED GIRLS...

Sis: OMG!!

Me: er...ya

Sis: are u a lesbian?

Me: bisexual is more like it.

Sis: all these years I knew u were not str8

Me: ridiculous!! U never knew a thing

Sis: I do observe u know.

(Lots of conversation and details better left censored here.)

Sis: u think u cud get married and...er...u know, do the married stuff?

Me: I'm attracted to men too. I will manage a marriage if I do get married in the first place. For now I wanted to come out to you. U seem ok with the news. I'm surprised.

Sis: lol...I'm not a kid anymore. I'm fine with the news. I have many gay friends so I know how it must be for you.

I am happy to say that my sis has been an amazing (and a surprisingly strong) supporter ever since.

Then of course there's Dad to whom I have not yet come out. But I have a feeling that he either knows (through Mom) or suspects. He did ask me once, "so, how's life without a wife?" but then maybe it's wishful thinking that

he just knows about it already and will save me the trouble of coming out to him. I know I'll break his heart with the news that his darling first-born is queer (when my mom was pregnant with me, my parents went to holy places asking for a daughter because my dad wanted one. At least his first one, he prayed). I'll need strength to break this news to Dad. I wonder when my next breakdown is going to be. Soon I think. Soon.

I read somewhere that coming out is a continuous process. It never really stops. I am out to all my friends and I keep meeting newer people to whom I reveal the fact once they become good friends. Coming out has been liberating on so many different levels. I now quite like being myself though not everybody accepts or understands. I just go on being myself and 'educate' straight friends about homosexuality and bisexuality along the way.

*Menon is a 29-year-old woman who has never let her sexuality be her identity. She works in publishing. In her off-work hours, she forms multiple crushes every other day and like any girl, dreams that one of these crushes leads to a happy long-term relationship.*

*This story first appeared on <http://orinam.net/menons-coming-out-story/>. Orinam.net is a bilingual website (Tamil and English), with information on alternate sexualities and gender identities. It is reprinted, with minor edits, with permission of the author.*

## Bi Women Around the World: The Poser (Singapore)

*By Mel*

I grew up in an affluent, privileged, Chinese family in Singapore, complete with enrichment classes and Sunday school. I loved Barbie and Pokémon with equal intensity, and I would try to fit in with the girls, while having no qualms about hitting a boy. I often thought about death when I was a child, but I suppose I had most of it figured out: eternity was taken care of by faith, and I would try to be a clever girl, marry a boy who would think my fat body beautiful, never have children, and die happy.

By the time I was sixteen, the issue of sexuality was on my mind, though I did not doubt that I was straight. Some of my closest friends weren't straight, and I would not accept that they were going to hell because they weren't sorry about their sexualities. Then I fell silent about that which I used to protest with a vengeance, because I feared damnation for

challenging the authority of the Bible, yet the taste of bigotry in my mouth was that of remorse, resentment and a deepest sense of shame. In my own small ways I was still questioning the legitimacy of heterosexism, like when I challenged my mom to consider the hurtful implications of 1 Corinthians 6:9-10<sup>1</sup>, or when I spoke against the use of "gay" as a term of ridicule in class. I dare not say that I was an ally then, neither was I familiar with the LGBT community, but I suppose it was then that I started to discard my prejudice.

At the end of my junior year in high school, however, I made a most unusual observation: I, a hitherto straight girl, was attracted to my butch-identified soccer teammate. For all the months I spent scouring Google, however, I found no answer that hit home, being unable to trace any "classic" signs. There were no childhood crushes on older girls, no lack of attraction

**Mel**, *continues on next page*

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to boys. Nor was I able to identify with any of the “butch,” “femme,” or “andro” (androgynous) labels, further frustrating my novice attempt to find my place in the world of lesbian attraction. I was therefore ashamed to take on the identity “gay,” “bi” or “queer,” because those were for self-assured individuals who could be detected on “gaydar.” Not I. I was in question, a poser.

I picked up Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando: A Biography* while searching for answers and for any literature portraying queer people, even remotely. What initially drew me to the novel was how Orlando changes seamlessly from an Elizabethan man to a woman, with no perturbation or ceremony. But what did Orlando have to do with me at seventeen years of age, wondering if my attraction to my teammate was as innate as the crushes I had ever had on boys; and if I was innately feminine or masculine? At the core of Orlando were loves, for beasts, life and literature, but Orlando also had a multitude of selves that were hardly innate, but organic: Lord Orlando’s change of sex as if it were a costume defies its biological basis, just as I had inexplicably realized an attraction to butch women; and while a biological woman Orlando played the parts of Masculine and Feminine wherever convenient, and loved a man who had the same queerness of gender, just as I was often both, neither, or either masculine and feminine in expression.

I felt vindicated by the idea that identity may actually be performance, and that it may be neither consistent nor monolithic. The futility of my search for an innate gayness and gender expression was also hardly surprising or relevant to expressing my gender and sexuality as, say, an androgynous-lesbian, or butch-pansexual, or simply queer (they vary, and I do not mind). It was entirely possible for me to be comfortable with my identity without feeling that I had to justify it. A week later I participated alone in a local Pride event, Pink Dot, and, as a symbolic gesture, I had my picture taken while holding up a message in chalk, “I AM FREE TO LOVE.”

I then made what felt like a remarkably risky move, coming out to friends both in school, and on Twitter and Facebook. I studied and shared Judith Butler’s insights on gender fluidity with reference to the texts we were studying in Literature. I tweeted and re-tweeted news in the queer community, whether it was to triumph or to rage. I called people out for heterosexism, cissexism and that which was closest to my heart, monosexism. I got involved in a local organization for queer women, and joined a queer book club.



And my peculiar change, and pride in its peculiarity, has in turn brought my closest friends and allies into my life: my first straight ally is also now my best friend. It has, however, cost me some dear friends, and a strained relationship with my parents. I lost my childhood best friends who could only “love the sinner and not the sin.” My dad disapproved vehemently when I came out to him. As for my mom, she told my Sunday school teacher the last time she caught me watching a sex scene on “The L

Word,” therefore the process of coming out to my mom (and the church) remains unresolved, in fear of rejection, and in wait of financial and emotional independence.

To anyone reading this who is in the process of questioning: I encourage you to be bold, both in your communities and to yourself. Being bold in your community may mean putting yourself on the line, especially if your community is far from friendly, but it was because I put myself out there on Facebook that a closeted friend from church found me and finally started coming out. And sometimes we look for labels because it shows us that there are people just like us. It validates our identities and shows us that we are real. But being bold to yourself means that even when you fall outside of every label, or identify with none, you know in your heart that your identity is an experience that is yours alone. It may never be consistent or monolithic, but make no mistake that it is real.

Recently another teammate of mine said to me, “I think you really are just straight, but you’re a poser.” I was slightly shaken, her remarks reprising the struggle of just a year ago. I replied, however, with a grin, “Maybe I pretend, but I love to play the part.”

*Mel, 18, a resident of Singapore, never tires of running in the rain and discussing heteronormativity and the performativity of gender.*

<sup>1</sup>Corinthians 6:9-10: “...Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men[a] 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

# Growing Up Bi in Texas

By Mel McConachie

Before the fifth grade, most of my friends were girls. I was always a tomboy, but somehow the other girls and I got along. I liked games involving imagination, but I got stuck with stereotypical girl toys and tried my best with them. I remember crying at a birthday party because someone gave me a Barbie. I identified with gender-neutral stuffed animals. I had a dinosaur collection. Pteranodons were my favorite, along with a plastic triceratops I named Fred. Those and Legos were as gender neutral as I could get. The youngest of three girls, I inherited a lot of “girly” things that I never wanted.

In fifth grade, all the elementary schools in the neighborhood funneled into one middle school, so the kids I had known since preschool were suddenly diluted among the new population of students. For some reason my fifth grade class was very close. We all spent time with one another both inside and outside of school. I discovered, in contrast to my own experience, others had dated in elementary school. In my school, it had been taboo even to talk to someone of a different gender. I remember for years I was the only girl at my friend Blake’s parties.

My friends started dating boys, so I did as well. I really got along better with guys anyway. In middle school, the transition from all girl friends to boy friends began. I thought everybody saw everyone as attractive. I did not realize that my feelings were unusual. I was probably in the eighth grade when I saw “But I’m a Cheerleader” late one night on HBO or Showtime. The main character is forced to attend a camp that “fixed” homosexuals. She does not see herself as a lesbian, until someone points out to her that not everyone has the same thoughts about women that she does. This hit me like a ton of bricks. Not everyone looked at women and men like I did. I had never tried to pursue a girlfriend, as I understood that was not considered acceptable. At that age, my relationships with boys were not serious anyway, so overall it did not seem to make much of a difference. Whoever I was dating was like a best friend with whom to be preoccupied and kiss. But wanting to kiss both boys

and girls was not universal. Feeling both liberated and scared, I confided in my best friend at the time that I thought I was bisexual. She proceeded to tell many, many people, and people started asking me if it was true. Boys suddenly wanted



to watch me with other women, and I was mortified at what other women might think. What if they think I’m eyeing them in the locker room or in other situations? I immediately denied everything.

Years passed and, feeling stifled by the lack of diversity in the student population, I slowly began to disengage from my school. I joined a local Rocky Horror Picture Show shadow cast and found a world outside of the neighborhood I grew up in. Having a sense of belonging outside of school gave me the confidence to join with my openly gay friend David and his friend Emma to work with GLSEN to bring a GSA to our high school. We officially formed it at the end my sophomore year. That summer, there was an editorial battle in the local newspaper between members of the community who supported or opposed the formation of the GSA. It got pretty ugly, with adults attacking David and his family in the newspaper. Throughout all of this I had the impression that my parents were all right with the gay community as long as I was not a part of it. Neither ever asked, and I never told. I know my dad assumed I was straight due to all of my “boy toys.”

To date, I have slept with women, but only dated men. I have never had a serious girlfriend and I feel inexperienced dealing with them. I am suddenly in middle school hoping to pass over a note that says, “Do you like me? Yes/No.” I have few women friends, and I’m terrible at conflict resolution with women. I feel I can relate better to men. Recently this thought has brought me to the idea of the gender binary. Maybe I’m genderqueer/fluid? I don’t know. I was lobbying for gay rights in high school at the state capital when I met my first person who did not identify in the gender binary. It was eye opening.

When I was 18, I got a bi-pride flag star tattoo on my hip. Now that I understand more, I say I’m pansexual, but I identify as bisexual. I continued my advocacy and activism into college, where I became the vice president of my university’s GSA. I began to study bisexuality and the invisibility of the community on my own. I am guilty of keeping it hidden, as I am not more open. I am still not out to my parents. I feel lesser somehow for still not having anything beyond one-night stands with women. I want to have a girlfriend, or someone who identifies as something other than a man by my side to take home to the parents. I want to show the world that this is who I am and that this is not temporary, a phase, or something I am not serious about. I feel that it is really important to come out to my family and co-workers, but I am so scared to do it by myself. I want someone by my side when I do, to tell me: “See, it wasn’t as bad as you thought it’d be.”

*Mel, 26, grew up in Dallas, Texas and lived briefly in Florida. Now she is enjoying herself in Washington state and looking forward to the future.*

# Coming to Terms With It All

By Lyndsie Bennett

What is it like to be me? That's a rather broad question, and it would take far more than a 1500-word submission to explain. But in the context of my sexual identity, I can tell you that I consider myself to be fluidly bisexual. This is because my sexuality has changed over the years: I used to like guys more, then it was equal, and now I find my attraction to the other sex dwindling rapidly. However, I do still find men attractive, and could see myself in a relationship with a man at some point in time, if not now.

I'm 19 now, and I did not start coming out to others until four years ago; however, I acknowledged my orientation at the age of 11. Looking back, I'm sure I've always subconsciously known I was bisexual. For example, I have always found women more attractive, and in high school, I found it easier and more pleasing to flirt with a woman.

I learned the word "bisexual" when I was twelve, from a friend who identified this way. Finally, I now had a word with which to identify my feelings. However, because of all of the stigma attached to our orientation, it was extremely hard to accept that I could like both genders. I had to convince myself that I need not choose one or the other. Luckily, in high school, I was close to two bisexual girls, and with their help I was able to come to terms with myself. So I suppose I learned the most about what being bisexual really means from them.

The vast majority of my friends showed acceptance, though there were a few who were reluctant at first to accept it, including my best friend, who is gay himself. But he came to me later, after he'd thought about it, and he said that he hadn't been fair before; since he isn't bisexual, it was wrong for him to question me when I never questioned him. Since his apology he has been extremely supportive and we are closer than we used to be. I have only lost one friend as a result of being honest. Unfortunately, she was a friend I'd had since I was little. However, she is extremely religious,

so I found it unsurprising, if hypocritical.

As for family, I've still got one foot in the closet. So far, I've told my mom and brother. My mother is in the denial stage. As for my extended family, I'm unsure of when to tell them, if ever. While I believe my grandfathers would accept me, I'm doubtful about my grandmothers, aunt, and uncle. I know they'd still love me, but acceptance is harder.

I have many role models, and hope to be one myself. Once I've told my father, I'll be out to all my nuclear family. At that point, I would like to become an activist and make myself available to others, especially teens and 20-somethings who are having trouble coming to terms with themselves like I was. I also want to see gay marriage legalized nationwide during my lifetime. Right now, I do what I can to help out, but I really want to become more involved in gay rights. Some of my straight friends have said that I have helped them to become accepting of bisexuals because I disprove certain stigmas. I would like to continue doing that on a wider scale, so that the LGBTQ community recognizes bisexuals more as part of the community. For my own support, I turn to my friends, whatever their orientation, and also to the bisexual and gay friends I've made through Tumblr and Pride events.

To any person who thinks they might have an interest in more than one gender, I would say don't doubt how you feel. Find support and be honest with yourself. Think of your happiness before you think of the approval of others. Just be careful if you think your parents are the kind of people who wouldn't support you if they knew. In that case, don't come out to them until you are independent. Don't come out just because someone thinks you should. Do it when you're ready. I mean, you'll never really be ready, but you'll know when the right moment is. Don't get concerned over labels. Just be you. And most importantly, be brave.

*My name is Lyndsie, and I'm from Georgia. I am a student of Photography.*

## Still Discovering

By Jessica G.

### ***What is it like to be you?***

It's kind of hard. Senior year is tough, especially with my tendency toward procrastination. In addition, I've got a lot of idiots in my classes. My sisters are usually pretty cool (except when they steal my donuts!), but my parents are... old-fashioned, to put it politely. Racist, homophobic, transphobic, Islamophobic, excessively hetero/cisnormative, subtly sexist and misogynistic, to put it bluntly. Not to mention my mother's emotional abusiveness, which has more than once led to my self-harm relapse.

Oh, that makes my life sound awful. It's not, really, I promise. I have lots of friends, online and off, and my sister and I don't fight nearly as often as we used to. I can bike to the local library in the summer, and that's wonderful for me. I'm a huge nerd (I like calling myself that because, for me, it feels just as reclaimed as queer is) who reads all the time. Not just books, but fanfiction, too. I am a crazy fangirl shipper with fandoms in which I participate.

### ***How did you come to identify as bi, pansexual or fluid?***

You know what, I don't quite remember. It must not have been a sudden realization. It definitely started late in my sophomore year of high school with the usual, "Oh god, I can't be gay, can I?" followed by "Why is this happening to

*Jessica, continues on next page*



Jessica, *continues from previous page*

me?” and then moving quickly through the next three stages of loss of my heterosexual identity. Surprisingly, considering how conservative my parents are, I didn’t actually have a whole lot of internalized homophobia to work through. I credit that to the fact that they never talked about gay people at all, thus allowing me to make my own (thankfully positive) opinions about gay people from Wikipedia and the school library.

**Where did you learn about bisexuality?**

Probably the Internet. Mostly Wikipedia.

**Is there a Gay/Straight Alliance in your high school?**

Ha, I wish! I tried to start one this year. Although I’ve got a lot of support, I couldn’t find a teacher who I was certain was both gay-friendly and had the free time to advise it.

**Are your friends accepting of your identity?**

Super-mega-definitely! I hang out with the nerds and the theatre kids. The nerds know what it’s like to be marginalized and pushed around, and the theatre department at my school is (just like TV and movies would have you believe, ha-ha) really gay-friendly.

**What about your family?**

Sisters, yes; parents, hell no. I’ll tell my parents when I’m out of college, employed, and living far, FAR away.

**Do you have any role models?**

Dealing specifically with my bisexuality? No. In general, however, I’d have to say my friend Kylie. She’s like the big sister I never had.

**Are you a role model for others?**

I don’t know. I’m lazy and I procrastinate, but I like helping people and I always speak up when someone is using bigoted speech or actions.

**Where do you get support?**

Tumblr, mostly. It’s really got the sweetest, most helpful, most kindhearted people you’ll ever meet.

**Do you consider yourself an activist?**

I am as much of one as I can possibly be. I have no way to get anywhere, and I’m still not out to my parents, which means my activism is limited to scathing responses to articles and re-blogging petitions on Tumblr.

**What advice would you give to other young people who think they might be bi, pansexual or fluid?**

Find support. Find someone who understands what it’s like and what you’re going through. Compassionpit.com is terrific for that. It’s like Omegle, except people go there specifically to listen and offer advice. Educate yourself. Start with sites like Sex Etc., Scarleteen, and fuckyeahsexeducation.tumblr.com. And most of all, keep calm. Even if you are bi/pan/fluid/queer, that doesn’t have to mean anything more than you want it to mean. It’s your sexual orientation; it’s your right to define it how you see fit.

*Jessica is a 16-year-old high school senior at a public school in Ohio. She is passionate about reading, writing, and genetics, and hopes to be either a novelist or a geneticist.*

## New Boston-Area Groups & Opportunities

### New Meet Up Group For Bis Of All Ages & Genders

The Bisexual Resource Center understands the bi community needs an easy way to organize activities to connect more people in the greater community. Result? A new meetup group – providing a safe and supportive space for bi-identified people, their partners, interested allies, and those who wish to socialize in an inclusive LGBT community. You’ll find mixed events open to everyone on the gender spectrum, as well as specifically women-only & men-only events. Join up for the inside scoop on upcoming activities you can attend! Here’s the link: <http://www.meetup.com/Bi-Community-Activities>.

### New Bi Group In Boston For Younger Bi/Pan/Fluid Folks

Let’s face it: our twenties can be terrifying *and* exciting. There’s something unique about the issues faced by this twenty-something generation, and who better to create more support and community than our contemporaries? If you’re somewhere in the vicinity of 20-29 identify as bi/pan/fluid or questioning in that direction, BRC’s Younger Bi Support and Social Group welcomes you. Meetings will be held on the second Thursdays of each month at Eastern Bank’s community room, 250 Elm Street, Somerville, on the Red Line. We’ll meet from 7-8 pm and then head to a local Davis Square establishment for more discussion, food, and/or merriment. Please contact Kate at [thewriterkate@gmail.com](mailto:thewriterkate@gmail.com) to RSVP.

### Boston-Area LGBT Seniors

LGBT Seniors Lifelong Learning courses held in Arlington on Tuesdays starting March 13. We offer stimulating Courses for only \$15.00 each, as well as a FREE Brown Bag speaker series. For more information visit [www.RainbowLLIBoston.org](http://www.RainbowLLIBoston.org).



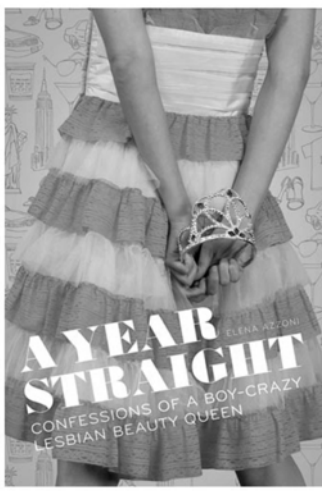
# Bending the Limit

By Faith Cheltenham

While reading *A Year Straight: Confessions of a Boy-Crazy Lesbian Beauty Queen* by Elena Azzoni, I kept wishing I had read it a decade ago when I began college. Like Elena, I was originally socialized into lesbian culture though I was unsure what exact slot I fit into. With my desire for comfortable shoes and workout gear I was too sporty to be a lipstick lesbian, but my gauzy hippy skirts and peasant blouses made me too fem to be a butch stud. I read book after book looking for my definition, assured by my new peers and my lady-friend that my attraction to men was just a residual effect of my religious upbringing: once I fully committed to pussy patrol it would simply float away on the wings of my newfound freedom. Even though the word lesbian did not fly easily off my lips, my girlfriend had much experience shepherding the formerly straight into LaLaLez land; as long as I read some books we figured everything would eventually feel right.

The sex felt right, the love did too but not being able to even appreciate the hotness of men felt like an unbearable weight of wrongness. It turned out my girlfriend and I didn't have enough in common anyways. She said she was fine breaking up with me, since she knew I was just one of those straight "girls who went gay for college," an incredibly hurtful statement I took to heart and carried about like a personal designation. How many of us bi, pan, fluid, queer and label-less women have felt so similarly misunderstood? *A Year Straight* was just the book I needed to make me laugh out loud at how strange my past insecurities now seem.

Back then I looked for love like a lighthouse searching the sea for fish, but I often threw people back because they didn't fit what I *thought* should fit an undefined self. I spent a lot of time looking for the Jerry Maguire moment, someone to "complete me" and therefore ID who I was



and was supposed to be. In retrospect, I was shackled by inexperience reinforced by internalized biphobia. I had to let go of the idea that someone else could define me. Unchaining myself was just the first step. Accepting that love doesn't – and probably shouldn't – look like what you expect was another. If my identity had broad boundaries, my heart could too. Any limitation of my ability to love was only a self-drawn line.

That's one of the more important messages the author of *A Year Straight* relayed when we spoke this past December over Skype, both rubbing pregnant bellies. "Passing up potentially loving relationships" is something Elena

was risking by saying to herself that love could only come in one form. It's not just about sex or gender, our choices are too often based on fear of what others think. Someone can be too old, too young, too broke or too fun. Someone else can be too vanilla or even too together for us to consider. Even we bisexuals who battle invisibility with every breath, can risk letting love pass us by if we prioritize definitions before ourselves. The fight for acceptance is only strengthened by happiness and hearts fully satisfied. When I asked Elena what she would say to a young person today on her own journey, she replied: "Be true to yourself. It's the hardest thing to do in this life, and we need to support each other's missions." Elena Azzoni's book, *A Year Straight*, does a remarkably funny job of showing us how to live wildly beyond our own previously undefined expectations.

*Faith is the current president of BiNet USA, a bi advocacy, networking and outreach non-profit. Currently pregnant with her first child, she works as a social media and web consultant.*

Purchase *A Year Straight: Confessions of a Boy-Crazy Lesbian Beauty Queen* on Amazon.com. For more Faith's conversation with the author check out the BiNet USA blog interview: <http://binetusa.blogspot.com/2011/12/living-bi-thoughts-on-year-straight.html>.

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## Rose By Any Other Name

We recommend that you check out the very bi series "Rose By Any Other Name" on YouTube. Seasons One and Two are both available at no cost on YouTube: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_EW2qH1w8GU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_EW2qH1w8GU).



## Hot Chocolate, *continued from page 1*

Two years later, and that partner long gone, a friend took me to my first BiCon. Now, the UK in general isn't very big on conventions: BiCon is one of the few alternative sexuality conventions that exists, and may be the largest. It's been running for nearly 30 years and routinely brings in up to 500 attendees for a long weekend of workshops, discussions and socializing, and it is well-known in LGBT groups all over the UK. I knew none of this back then: I went in to find an absolute feast of alternative sexuality and relationship styles, and I attended every single sexuality-related workshop going. I learned about BDSM and ethical non-monogamy, as well as meeting more bisexuals than I ever had before. Many, like me, were relatively young and with little dating experience.

As well as fueling my thirst for knowing everything there is to know about alternative sexualities, BiCon was a gateway to my attending, and later organising, other events. The UK polyamory scene grew out of BiCon almost ten years ago, growing from an annual poly lunch to a PolyDay to an entire weekend unconference. Later that year, I attended my first PolyDay, and I recently took on running OpenCon. OpenCon is a weekend in the beautiful English countryside with an organic, participant-led programme that provides a space to discuss non-monogamy in more depth than is possible at shorter events, and it is an absolute joy to run. Last year saw people coming from Switzerland, Germany, Catalonia and all over the UK: it's exhilarating and hugely rewarding to recreate the feeling of community and understanding that's so familiar at BiCon in this new space.

Last year's Bisexual Invisibility Report highlighted the dismal state of bisexual mental health, as well as discussing physical health and economic oppression. Other activists have pointed out the huge lack of bi-specific support among LGBT organisations, and virtually no state funding for bi-specific organisations. I've seen first-hand the importance of the support network provided by a thriving bi community, and I hope to help support the community through organising events and teaching. This year, I'm running the UK's first poly speed dating event (it's queer-inclusive too, and a large bi contingent are attending) and the first BiFest in Cambridge, UK, a one-day event

of bi-focused workshops and socialising. It'll be in our local Quaker meeting house, in recognition of forty years of bi organising since an impromptu workshop on bisexuality at a Quaker AGM spilled into five rooms over two days and produced the Ithaca Statement On Bisexuality.

My bisexuality informs and motivates a huge amount of my work. I'm interested in sexuality education, in providing safer spaces in which alternative sexualities can exist and be discussed, and in educating professionals in providing more inclusive work. Last year, I worked in a female-focused, queer-friendly sex toy shop, where I particularly valued being able to talk het couples through opening their sex life to queerer kinds of sex: it always made my day when they left with a new strap-on! I also taught workshops there, routinely amazed that straight-laced, middle-aged het couples would come and pay to listen to this young, short-haired, anti-capitalist queer sex geek talk about the G-spot, impact play or anal sex.

Recently, I taught students about queer-positivity and was delighted to see that many of them already understood concepts such as bisexual erasure and non-binary gender, having read queer and feminist blogs. This year, I've started facilitating a five-week discussion course on sexuality for queer women, and was pleased to find in the first session that the majority of the group describe themselves as not monosexual. Bisexual identities and experiences are everywhere, and it's clear that they must be acknowledged as such to provide more useful and relevant services.

I also write about dating, sex toys and feminism. I call myself queer, and bi, and I'm openly non-monogamous and kinky. I've found that my cheerful noisiness around sexuality prompts strangers and acquaintances to open up, tell me things about their experiences and ask my advice, and that's quite amazing and humbling. I feel very trusted, and it's a reminder that, as well as organising events, writing and teaching, an extremely important part of my activism is simply being out, open, and acting as a listening and conversational ear to questioning people. That's a fundamental, and it's a piece of wisdom I hope to remember.

*Ludi Valentine runs things and then writes about them. She lives in London and at [siliconevalley.tumblr.com](http://siliconevalley.tumblr.com).*



*Bi/Pan/Fluid Caucus participants at the Creating Change Conference broke into several small workgroups to create visibility campaigns. Each group recorded a short video.*

# Creating Change 2012

The 24th National Conference on LGBT Equality: Creating Change took place in Baltimore, Maryland, January 25–29. With more than 2,700 people present from all over the United States, this five-day program featured over 350 workshops and training sessions, as well as plenary sessions, dances and networking opportunities.

We also had the most visible bi presence to date. The conference program included a statement on Bisexual/Pansexual/Fluid Etiquette. We had a full-day Bi/Pan/Fluid Organizing Institute that drew 46 activists from 17 states, the District of Columbia and Canada.

In addition to the institute, we had a Bi/Pan/Fluid hospitality suite that was open throughout the conference and served as safe space for all who identify outside the confines of cis-, hetero- and homo-normativity. Organized by a small team of amazing volunteers, the suite also provided meals for low-income folks across our spectrum.

Bi-focused workshops at the conference included: *Bi Compared to Mono: What We Can Do About Bisexual Health Disparities* (Amy Andre); *Understanding Bisexuality* (Robyn Ochs & Paul Nocera); *Beyond Binaries: Identity, Sexuality and Movement Building* (Robyn Ochs); *Make the Invisible Visible: How Your Group Can Become Bi Inclusive* (Ellyn Ruthstrom) and a well-attended *Bi/Pan/Fluid Caucus*, brilliantly facilitated by Ellyn.

Here's one participant's take away from the Conference:

## Creating Change One Letter at a Time

By Bridget Siegel

**C**reating a community that never in my life did I expect that I needed or even wanted to create.

**R**eaching out to people who have reshaped my outlook on life, especially being a part of the Bi/Pan/Fluid institute on Thursday, and feeling my life change without even having to open up my mouth. There is so much I could say about how wonderful this Institute was: It changed me and how much I accept myself and others. I was able to hear stories, and find strength in the entire community. It was an honor to be able to feel so comfortable with a group of strangers who are now my friends.

**E**xperiencing and learning new things, like what it truly means to fall *outside* of a binary, and embracing them as a valid part of my identity.

**A**ccepting myself and others for exactly who they are, and who they want to be.

**T**hree thousand people, from different walks of life, all with one purpose: to change the word and make it a better place.

**I**ntertwining our lives at the bi/pan/fluid institute by making a web of yarn to show how much we learned from each other and just how much we care.

**N**ever feeling the need to walk out of the room because there was so much love and acceptance everywhere.

**G**oing to workshops on the intersection of faith and sexuality, and learning strategies for making my campus more LGBT friendly.



Chiquita Violette, Paul Nocera, Robyn Ochs, Amy Andre & Ellyn Ruthstrom, this year's Bi Institute faculty

**C**apitalizing on my time and taking every moment to do something I wanted to do, not what I thought people from home wanted me to do.

**H**appiness coming from everyone.

**A**lways saying "Yes, I will go do something with you!" because whatever new experience that brought was bound to be good and exciting. Advance planning was never really in the cards for me at Creating Change. I preferred the thrill of walking into a room and learning about something new.

**N**oticing the things going on around me, and taking them in. Being able to have amazing conversations with people, that lead to being a part of communities I hadn't known existed!

**G**orging on cake, because it was always a dream of mine to eat a piece of cake from Charm City Cakes!

**E**ngaging in conversations that have opened my eyes and showed me that be both a Rabbi and an activist at the same time, fighting for the same cause and same rights that I have longed to fight for since I jumped out of the closet.

*Bridget is 20 years old and attends the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida.*



# Ask Tiggy

Dear Tiggy,

I'm a bisexual woman in college "dating" (read: hooking up with) this guy I'll call "Dan." He's in a fraternity with "Michael" who's dating (read: going on dates with) my good friend, "Mary." Mary and I met in our university queer group.

Mary identifies as a lesbian but she genuinely likes Michael as a person and is dating him to see if there's some chemistry there. Although she's out, she hasn't yet mentioned to him that she's queer and somehow he doesn't know. She's going to tell him soon, before they even kiss. So that's all good.

Dan knows who Mary is because they're from the same town. He knows that she and I are friends because he's seen us together. I'm pretty sure he knows I'm bi; like Mary, I'm out but it hasn't come up.

The problem? Dan keeps asking me: "So, how do you know Mary?" I think he knows that I know her from the queer group and is trying to get me to say it. I don't want him to tell his frat brother that she's a lesbian before she does because: DRAMA. On top of that, I don't even feel like I can out myself to him now because he'll assume that I know Mary from the queer group and go running to Michael. So what do I say to him when he asks me that?

-Lambda Gamma Beta Tau

Dear Lambda,

The next time he asks, look him in the eye and say, "Why do you keep asking?" If he gives a sort of non-committal, "I don't know" response, don't let him off the hook right away. Say, "But this is, like, the fourth time you've asked me that. Why?" You're essentially calling his bluff and he's likely to back down.

On the odd chance that he directly asks if Mary is a lesbian or if you know her from the queer group, ask him, "Why aren't you asking Mary this?" If he doesn't know her well enough to ask, then he doesn't need to know.

Keep in mind that he might actually be asking this to because he wants to know more about you. For that, go easy on him because he's not sure how to broach the subject. Let him know that you're happy to talk about yourself with him but you have a policy of not talking about other people's personal business.

And for future reference, if you can't say you know someone from the queer group because you don't want to out them (or yourself), always use the ol' "we met through mutual friends" gambit. It's hard to prove false and just vague enough to sound real.

-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).*

## Letters

Dear Robyn!

I work at an LGBT information and activity center in Estonia, Tallinn. A fellow activist of mine, Janika, who once heard you speak at a conference, recommended I write you. We would like to make Bi Women available for the visitors of our center. Janika sent me two back issues of the magazine but I was wondering if it would be possible to also receive earlier issues and to subscribe to the ones coming out.

Bisexuality is very seldom discussed in our center and there is no visibility for bi people in the queer-community in Tallinn. I'm hoping to start with creating a welcoming environment for bi women in our center by having this material available for them.

All the best,

Hanna Kannelmäe (Tallinn, Estonia)

**Editor's Response:** So good to hear from you. We've signed you up!

Hi Robyn & the *Bi Women* team,

Your fundraising email was perfectly timed for me. After the BBWN brunch on Sunday I was thinking of giving a small donation and then after I watched the Bisexual Resource Center video response to Molly's YouTube video last night, it really hit me how important the work and presence of both BBWN and the BRC are. Thanks so very much for all that you do to make bi resources and community available! It means a lot to me and I know it does to lots of other people.

Laurie (Belmont, MA, USA)

**To our readers: Send in a photo of yourself reading this new issue of *Bi Women* so we include it in a future issue of *Bi Women* or put it up on our website. Mail to: [biwomeneditor@gmail.com](mailto:biwomeneditor@gmail.com). Thanks!**

# News Briefs

By Robyn Ochs



## “Gay Rights Are Human Rights”

In her December 6, 2011 speech before the United Nations Human Rights Council, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton delivered the most expansive statement framing LGBT rights as human rights ever made by a high-ranking American official. Her 30-minute speech (available online), included the following:

Like being a woman, like being a racial, religious, tribal, or ethnic minority, being LGBT does not make you less human. And that is why gay rights are human rights, and human rights are gay rights. It is violation of human rights when people are beaten or killed because of their sexual orientation, or because they do not conform to cultural norms about how men and women should look or behave. It is a violation of human rights when governments declare it illegal to be gay, or allow those who harm gay people to go unpunished. It is a violation of human rights when lesbian or transgendered women are subjected to so-called corrective rape, or forcibly subjected to hormone treatments, or when people are murdered after public calls for violence toward gays, or when they are forced to flee their nations and seek asylum in other lands to save their lives. And it is a violation of human rights when life-saving care is withheld from people because they are gay, or equal access to justice is denied to people because they are gay, or public spaces are out of bounds to people because they are gay. No matter what we look like, where we come from, or who we are, we are all equally entitled to our human rights and dignity.

## Do Tell!

On September 20th of this year, the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell went into effect. And on this same day, Norwich University, a military college in Northfield, VT, officially recognized and held its first-ever LGBTQA Club meeting. This club is the first ever of its kind at a military college, and was long overdue.

At the Creating Change Conference in Baltimore, MD from January 25-29, four of the club's officers were present and proudly visible, one of whom participated in the day-long Bi Institute and three in the conference's bi-related workshops. In March, the group is planning to host a Pride Week with numerous guest speakers and events, as well as a “Free Love Dance” as the finale. What does the future hold for this lively bunch? To contact the group concerning their Pride Week or any other inquiries, email the club President Joshua Fontanez at [jfontane@student.norwich.edu](mailto:jfontane@student.norwich.edu).

## Bi Teen Confronts Rick Perry

On December 18, in Decorah, Iowa, Republican presidential contender Rick Perry was confronted by bi teen Rebecka Green and her father, Todd, as Perry was shaking hands after his speech. The 14-year-old girl asked Perry, “I just want to know why you're so opposed to gays serving openly in the military, why you want to deny them that freedom when they're fighting and dying for your right to run for president.” Perry hid behind his faith, throwing out terms like “hate the sin, love the sinner.” And he actually told this 14-year-old girl that Don't Ask, Don't Tell had been working just fine and “I don't believe that openly gays should be serving in the military. Don't Ask, Don't Tell was working.” After the exchange, Green told reporters, “I'm openly bisexual and I didn't want to be told that if I wanted to serve in the military that I couldn't, and I just think the [DADT] policy is completely ridiculous. Nobody should be able to tell somebody who they can or cannot love. I just don't agree with it.”

Her father, Todd Green, a professor at Luther College, took issue with Perry's ad that questions why gays can serve openly in the military but “our kids can't openly celebrate Christmas or pray in school.” He commented, “He [Perry] seemed to get that backward. Christians are not being persecuted in the United States of America. They've been in a position of dominance and power and privilege throughout the history of the United States of America. LGBT persons have not.”

## We Count

The Department of Health and Human Services has announced it will begin to collect and include health questions relating to sexual orientation, as well as begin a process to collect information on gender identity, under the Affordable Care Act in 2013. Such data collection has been done for other minority populations, but never before for LGBT people.

Data from the 2010 US Census revealed that 132,000 (20%) of the nearly 650,000 same-sex couples in the U.S. identified

*News Briefs, continues on next page*



Norwich University students at Creating Change with Katie O'Malley, wife of Maryland's Governor.

**News Briefs**, *continued from previous page*

as spouses. More than one in six same-sex couples (17%) were raising children, but childrearing was more common among couples who identified as spouses (31%) compared to unmarried partners (14%).

## **BOP Awarded \$5G Grant**

Congratulations to the Minnesota bisexual group Bisexual Organizing Project-BOP who will be receiving a \$5K grant for “Creating Power through Community” from the PFund Foundation.

## **Bis in Office**

Kyrsten Sinema, an out bi woman who has been endorsed by the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund in past state legislative races, announced today that she will be running for Congress in the new 9th congressional district in Arizona. If elected, she will be the first out bi member of Congress. And in California, Planning Commission President Christina Olague, a bisexual Latina who grew up in the San Joaquin Valley, was sworn in by Mayor Ed Lee to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

## **Robyn Ochs Receives Brenda Howard Memorial Award from PFLAG Queens**

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, the Queens, NY chapter of PFLAG made Robyn the seventh recipient of the Brenda Howard Memorial Award. Given annually, this award “recognizes an individual or organization whose work on behalf of the Bisexual Community and greater LGBT Community best exemplifies the vision, principles and community service exemplified by the late bisexual rights activist Brenda Howard and who serves as a positive and visible role model for the entire LGBT Community.” A number of NY area bi activists attended the event, and Estraven Andrews presented Robyn with the award.



*Estraven Andrews presents Brenda Howard award to Robyn Ochs*

Photo: Efrain Gonzalez



## **From India, a First...**

For the first time ever, bisexuals came out on a national television in India. You can watch the show at <http://khabar.ibnlive.in.com/news/66743/7/10>.

## **Cynthia Nixon Storm Center**

Former Sex and the City co-star Cynthia Nixon was in a 15-year relationship with a man with whom she had two children and is now partnered with a woman. In January, speaking of her relationship with Christine Marinoni, with whom she has a child and is planning to marry, she said: “For me, it is a choice.” This statement that was interpreted as meaning that she saw sexual orientation as a choice. The resulting controversy was complicated and loud and included no small amount of biphobia.

Subsequently, Nixon issued a statement to the Advocate:

“My recent comments in The New York Times were about me and my personal story of being gay. I believe we all have different ways we came to the gay community and we can’t and shouldn’t be pigeon-holed into one cultural narrative which can be uninclusive and disempowering. However, to the extent that anyone wishes to interpret my words in a strictly legal context I would like to clarify:

“While I don’t often use the word, the technically precise term for my orientation is bisexual. I believe bisexuality is not a choice, it is a fact. What I have ‘chosen’ is to be in a gay relationship.

“As I said in the Times and will say again here, I do, however, believe that most members of our community – as well as the majority of heterosexuals – cannot and do not choose the gender of the persons with whom they seek to have intimate relationships because, unlike me, they are only attracted to one sex.

“Our community is not a monolith, thank goodness, any more than America itself is. I look forward to and will continue to work toward the day when America recognizes all of us as full and equal citizens.” (*Advocate*, 1/30/12)



## Calendar, *continued from page 16*

**Friday, March 23, 7pm, BAGLY's Out for Youth event,** New England Aquarium. Celebrating 32 years of Queer Youth Movement. Details at [bagly.org/outforyouth](http://bagly.org/outforyouth).

**Sunday, March 25, noon, BBWN Potluck Brunch at Bitty's in Jamaica Plain.** Please bring a potluck dish and/or drinks to share. RSVP/directions: Bitty at [brunch@ramkosch.net](mailto:brunch@ramkosch.net). A great opportunity to meet other bi and bi-friendly women in the Boston area.

**Saturday, March 31, 6pm-1am, Fenway Health's Women's Dinner Party.** Fenway Health's 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, so it's not a cheap night out, but supports a great resource. Info: [womensdinnerparty.org](http://womensdinnerparty.org).

**Saturday, March 31, all day:** 3rd Annual Five College Queer Gender and Sexuality Conference at Hampshire College. For info: [tinyurl.com/queerconf](http://tinyurl.com/queerconf).

## April

**Wednesday, April 4, 7-8:45pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS),** Bisexual Resource Center, 29 Stanhope Street, Boston. (See March 7<sup>th</sup>)

**Monday, April 9, 7pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning.** (See March 12<sup>th</sup>)

**Tuesday, April 10, 7-9pm, BRC Board Meeting.** (See March 13<sup>th</sup>)

**Thursday, April 12, 7-9pm, Younger Bi Group.** (See March 8<sup>th</sup>)

**Thursday, April 19, 7pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS).** (See March 15<sup>th</sup>)

**Thursday, April 19, Paint the Town (La) Red.** Join The Network/La Red for their annual gala fundraiser to celebrate survival and to end LGBTQ partner abuse. Dinner, amazing performances, silent auction, and DANCING! Info: [tnlr.org](http://tnlr.org).

**Saturday, April 21, 11:30am, Saturday Bi Brunch.** (See March 17<sup>th</sup>)

**Sunday, April 22, noon, BBWN Potluck Brunch at Denise's in Shrewsbury.** It's Earth Day so let's think about, "What have we done for the Earth lately?" The brunch will be about being green. Please bring a potluck dish and/or drinks to share. RSVP/directions: Denise at [drdenisepruitt@](mailto:drdenisepruitt@)



Photo: Eilyn Ruthstrom

*January brunch at Melissa's. Yes, she has a rope swing in her loft!*

gmail.com. A great opportunity to meet other bi and bi-friendly women in the Boston area.

## May

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

**Saturday, May 5, noon. BBWN's Potluck Brunch at Robyn's in Jamaica Plain.** Please bring a potluck dish and/or drinks to share. There are cats in the home. Children welcome. RSVP/directions: Email Robyn at [robyn@robynochs.com](mailto:robyn@robynochs.com). Weather permitting, a walk in the Arboretum may follow for those interested. A great opportunity to meet other bi and bi-friendly women in the Boston area.

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

**Thursday, May 10, 7-9pm, Younger Bi Group.** (See March 8<sup>th</sup>)

**Saturday, May 12, Northampton Pride March and Festival.** Head out to western Massachusetts for the first New England Pride of the season. New venue this year is at the Tri County Fairgrounds. Info: [nohopride.org](http://nohopride.org).

**Monday, May 14, 7pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning.** (See March 12<sup>th</sup>)

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

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

**Interested in hosting one of our fabulous BBWN brunches at your place?** If you would like to host and want more information, email [elruthstrom@comcast.net](mailto:elruthstrom@comcast.net).

## 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](mailto:kate.e.flynn@gmail.com) for more info.

### 1st Wednesdays, 3rd Thursdays:

**BLISS: Bisexual Social & Support Group.** 7-9pm. Wednesdays, meets at the Eastern Bank at 250 Elm Street in Davis Square in Somerville.

### 2nd Thursdays:

**Younger Bi Group.** For bi folks 20-29. 7-9pm. Info; Kate at [thewriterkate@gmail.com](mailto:thewriterkate@gmail.com).

### 3rd Saturdays:

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

#### **Boston-area women:**

*Keep up with local events. Sign up for our email list! Send an email to: [biwomenboston-subscribe@yahooogroups.com](mailto:biwomenboston-subscribe@yahooogroups.com)*



## 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)

# CALENDAR

## March

**Wednesday, March 7, 7-9pm, 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. First Wednesday meetings are peer-facilitated discussion groups, sometimes with a pre-selected topic or presenter. Info: [bliss@biresource.net](mailto:bliss@biresource.net).

**Thursday, March 8, 7-9pm, Younger Bi Group.** If you are between the ages of 20-29 (or thereabouts) and identify somewhere along the lines of bisexual/omni/pan/fluid (or are questioning in that direction), please join us once a month for discussion and support. Meet at the Eastern Bank's community room at 250 Elm Street, Somerville, on the Red Line. We'll meet from 7-9pm and then, if people are interested, we can head to a local Davis Square establishment for more discussion and/or merriment. All genders welcome! Info: [thewriterkate@gmail.com](mailto:thewriterkate@gmail.com).

**Monday, March 12, 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: [kate.e.flynn@gmail.com](mailto:kate.e.flynn@gmail.com).

**Tuesday, March 13, 7-9pm Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting.** All bi and bi-friendly community members are invited to attend. The board goes over essential BRC information for the month. Info: Ellyn at [president@biresource.net](mailto:president@biresource.net). The meeting is at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. near Back Bay station on the Orange Line.

**Thursday, March 15, 7pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS).** The 3rd Thursday meeting for BLiSS meets in the community room of Eastern Bank at 250 Elm Street in Davis Square in Somerville. It starts with a one-hour check-in and discussion followed by an outing to a local eatery. Info: [bliss@biresource.net](mailto:bliss@biresource.net).

**Friday-Saturday, March 16-17, True Colors Conference for LGBTQIA Youth** on University of Connecticut's campus in Storrs. This year's theme: Celebrating Our Allies. Info: [Ourtruecolors.org](http://Ourtruecolors.org).

**Saturday, March 17, 11:30am, Bi Brunch.** Bi Brunch (a mixed gender bi group) meets the 3rd Saturday each month at Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Sq, Somerville just across from the T. Meet near the bar to be seated together.

**Calendar,** *continues on page 15*