

Bye Bi Labels

by B.J. Epstein

“I’m...” And it’s here in the sentence that I freeze. I am something, but what?

I am a woman who has loved women, a woman who has loved men. I am a person who sometimes feels, dresses, and acts butch, and sometimes feels, dresses, and acts femme. I am someone who enjoys being in-between, who wants to live in and explore the gray areas.

Is bisexual the best word to use to describe myself? I can’t think of anything better, at least not now, so I use it. I introduce myself as bisexual, because I am attracted to people, across gender lines, and “bisexual” comes closest to explaining that. Similarly, I can call myself bilingual, because I am a translator who uses two languages on a daily basis. And yet I never feel fully bilingual; I know that my skills in one language will always be better than those in the other. Also, I strive to be bicultural, because I live outside my native country and must understand

B.J. continues on page 12

Not Bisexual Enough?

by Tracy

I have a confession to make. I need to come out of yet another closet. Presently, I identify as bisexual. Yet... I feel that my identity as such is a technicality. This is because while my attraction to men is present, most of the time I am much more attracted to women. In reality, I lean way toward the lesbian end of the Kinsey scale. I wonder if a different label would be a better fit for me. There. I said it. Shall I turn in my bisexual membership card now, along with the bi pride flag and other memorabilia? Am I bisexual enough?

Allow me to tell my story. One fine autumn, when I recognized the beginnings of yet another “intense friendship” with a girl, I decided that it was time to settle the question of my sexual orientation once and for all. (I assumed, in my arrogance, that such a thing

Tracy continues on page 12

BECAUSE We Said So

by Ellyn Ruthstrom

Why do bisexuals like to gather together and discuss issues about our identity, culture, families, activism, sex and more? BECAUSE!

The Bisexual Empowerment Conference: A Uniting Supportive Experience was held April 17-19 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. At the 15th such gathering (it hasn’t been held in 15 consecutive years so it’s not the 15th annual), organizers reported that this year’s 200 attendees made for the largest BECAUSE so far. Besides a wonderful group of Minnesota folks, there were participants from Wisconsin, the Dakotas, California, Illinois, Montana, New York and more. Plus, Steph Miserlis and I represented the Bisexual Resource Center, and Robyn Ochs was the keynote speaker on Friday, so Massachusetts was in the house as well.

Robyn’s speech on Friday night kicked off the weekend with a great spirit of sharing and pride. After discussing the importance of being visible and constructively engaging the negative ways that bisexuals are still portrayed, Robyn opened up the floor to the audience to talk to each other about personal ways they can claim positive space for bisexuals and work together. It was a very moving and creative exchange that enabled the group to get a sense of who they’d be sharing workshop and food-line conversations with over the following few days.

It’s always difficult to assess an entire conference because everyone’s experience can be so different, depending on what

BECAUSE continues on page 14



Hanging out at BECAUSE. Goup includes conference chairs Kim Jorgensen (top left) and Becky Saltzman (bottom right).

HONOR ROLL

*Deb Morley,
Ellyn Ruthstrom,
Lisa Silveria,
Tracy,
Peg Preble,
Cynthia Connors,
Emily Meghan
Morrow Howe,
Gail Zacharias,
Robyn Ochs,
Katelynn Bishop
& immeasurable
amount of thanks
to Justin Adkins
for designing the
Bi WomenBoston
website
(biwomenboston.
org) for us!*

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

Bi Women
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From your editor

The theme of this issue is "LABELS" The explosion in recent years of different labels onto the identity scene has been both a challenge and a delight. Ellyn's list on page 5 contains enough of these to give you a taste of some of the labels that are out there. Accompanying this explosion of labels – and in part causing it – has been more critical attention paid to older labels: first the Big Binary: straight and gay; then later the Big Four: lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.

When all this started happening, I first felt annoyed. How could this be happening?—I sometimes felt—after so many of us have worked so hard to make it POSSIBLE to identify as bisexual. Why don't people just call themselves bi? I mean, come ON! Step over here into OUR box, darn it! But the bottom line is this: It's not ours to control anyway. We don't have the power or the right to control what other people do or don't decide to call themselves. Rather, it's incumbent upon us to listen to what other people are saying and to enter into respectful dialogue, to figure out what are our common goals, and to move forward TOGETHER into the future and to the next level of liberation.

We offer five pieces about labels in this issue, written by Ellyn, Tracy, B.J., Lindsay and Cara.

In addition, we offer other delights: a beautiful poem by N.K., interviews with two bi-identified writers, news in brief and a write-up of the BECAUSE Conference which took place in Minneapolis. Our "Bis Around the World" column takes us to Pune, India, and of course we offer our fabulous calendar of events in the Boston area.

Remember, ladies: this is YOUR newsletter. Please consider supporting us with your dollars (if you have any), and please consider writing something for the next issue!

Bi for now,
Robyn

Next in Bi Women

The theme for the Fall 2009 issue:

VISIBILITY

What are the benefits and costs of being visible as bisexual? How are we made (in)visible in the media? through language? through assumptions? How do you make personal decisions about when it matters to be visible, and when it doesn't. How can we be visible?

Let's talk about VISIBILITY.

Deadline: August 10, 2009

Upcoming themes will include:

The Youth Issue; Trans/Gender; Fantasy; Choice; Out at Work; and more.

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

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Send articles, calendar entries,
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If you do not want your name published,
or wish to use a pseudonym, please tell us.

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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.

Bis Around the World: Apphia K. in Pune, India

by Robyn Ochs

Apphia is one of the amazing individuals who responded to a call for writing for the second edition of *Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World*. If, after reading this interview, you are as impressed by Apphia as I am, you can read more about her in *Getting Bi*.

Robyn Ochs: Apphia, please tell us about yourself.

Apphia K: My name is Apphia, I was born in Dubai raised between there and mostly in India. I have just moved back home to live closer to my parents. I work in the music retail industry, currently as a manager. My passions are music, literature, cooking, driving, exploring cultures and doing quite a few things I don't seem to have the time to do. I mostly network with local musicians and performers and put business and the art together on different levels. I'd love any job in the music field. The industry in India is growing fast and I'm right where it's happening and loving every minute of it! I write in my spare time, though I usually just keep my compositions to myself or show them only to close friends. I intend on someday putting my works together and publishing it. Let's see how that goes.

RO: Tell briefly the story of your coming out as bi. How did you become aware that you were bi? How old were you?



Who did you tell? What happened?

AK: It was actually very accidental. No one but my first girlfriend knew that I was queer. Christmas of '07 I let it slip in front of my sister, her husband and a couple of cousins that I am bisexual. Unlike my cousins, my sister was very cool about it—I guess on some level she must've already known. She is supportive of me, although she did double check to make sure that this wasn't "just a phase." We're closer now. I came out to my mother for the second time last year. I had told her I was gay when I was 17, but she was in denial and I just let that slip. Now that I just turned 24, which is "coming of age" in Indian society, my mum has started talking about me settling down. It's a slow process of allowing her into my life again as a bisexual, letting her know that I'm still the same person she's come to know me to be, and being clear that I don't need a man to make me want to settle down. It might even be a woman and that it would be okay. Not easy, but okay. Our relationship is much better now, with all the honesty going around. Its brilliant!! I still have to come all the way out to my father, although I think on some level, he knows. I'm out to my friends, many of them left but some stayed. Its not the easiest, but the ones who have stuck with me have made it a little bit easier.

RO: What is your religious background, and what impact does this have on your life, and particularly on your comfort/discomfort with coming out and being out?

AK: I was brought up in a family of staunch Christians. I studied a lot of Wicca, and learned that spirituality is a learning experience that never

ends. Wicca actually helped me understand myself as a woman and come to terms with my sexuality. Now, I just go with the flow and feel what I feel, bad or good, and trust that no matter what I will always have the strength to deal with whatever comes my way in this life. And above all, unconditional love is divine. Right now, that fits perfectly with the "Love knows no Gender" part of being me!

RO: When did you first become a bisexual/gay rights activist, and what caused you to get involved?

AK: Coming out! I didn't know that it was important, I didn't know it was something that had to be done. I just wanted other women in my circle, in my community to know that there's always someone to come talk to, even if its only myself.

RO: What resources are available for bisexuals in India (or specifically around Bangalore)?

AK: There are e-groups, and Bangalore, Bombay and Delhi have communities where people come together in person. These are mostly for gay men and/or lesbians and transgendered people. I haven't yet found a community mainly for bisexuals. We're usually bundled up with the queens or the dykes. I know of four bisexuals in the whole country..

RO: You recently went to your first pride parade, which was the first ever in Bangalore. What was it like?

Apphia K., continues on page 12

A Resistance to Labels

by Lindsay Maddox Pratt

I am not a lesbian. I repeat: I am not a lesbian. This fact, however, is apparently difficult to understand. People are continually referring to me as a lesbian however often I tell them that is not how I identify. I understand that I look like a typical San Francisco lesbian—if there is such a thing as a typical San Francisco anything—with short hair, hipsterish men's clothes, tattoos and piercings. So for people who are accustomed to having their perceptions of things be a reliable way to categorize, I can see why I might cause confusion. Personally, I do not believe in making assumptions about people's identities based on what we perceive. And indeed, I enjoy pushing people to question this habit that we all unfortunately have. I am not a fan of clear-cut categories or boxes, and I do my best to live outside of them. I'm the type that checks "other" and fills in the "please clarify" space on nearly every form that I encounter. Yes, statisticians—I am your worst nightmare. But most people will come to conclusions about my identity before I have a chance to even say "hello," let alone share with them the nuances of my unique sexual identity. Besides, the majority of people like labels; they give a feeling of familiarity. We have a sense that we know what a lesbian is, or what a gay man is, or even what

a man or woman is and therefore if we know that, we then know something about the person. So here I am, someone who can't stand labels in a world that likes to label, trying to find a way to explain who and what I am without giving a lecture every time someone asks. So what label would work for label-resistant me?

As I said before, I am not a lesbian. It's true that I date women (mostly) and am female-bodied, but in order for me to be a lesbian I would also have to identify as female, which I do not. So yeah, a big X crossing out that choice. But since I don't really identify as male, "straight" doesn't describe me either. What about when I am dating a boy, am I then a gay boi? Since I don't believe that there are only two genders, and have been in relationships with more than two, the label "bisexual" doesn't fit either. And "omnisexual" sounds a bit too scientific for my taste. So this leaves me with the choice that I so often choose: queer.

I love this word: queer. I use it all the time, and, after its long history of being used as a slur, I am more than happy to give it a loving home in my lexicon. Queer. Say it again: queer. It just sounds so sexy to me. It is a label that I can embrace fully, with no qualms. While most people confuse it with being synonymous with gay/lesbian, a common definition is simply "not straight." Which is exactly what I am—not straight. Some people take it even further and say that it means

"not hetero," implying not belonging to the hetero-normative. It is the label for those who dislike labels. Queer.

Yet, as with every label, it is imperfect. The problem with "queer" is that I still end up having to explain myself. I will tell people, "I'm queer," and then they invariably end up referring to me as a lesbian. And we are back at square one, with me exclaiming: "No, I'm not a lesbian; I'm queer." They get glazed looks on their faces, and depending on my energy level and the aptitude of the individuals in question, I explain my identity and what queer means to me.

What queer means to me. Perhaps this is the key. Maybe labels are as fluid and changing as the identities that they attempt to classify; only we fail to see this because we neglect to ask. What if instead of accepting our own understanding of the meaning of a word, we inquired into another person's experience of it? How much would we learn about each other? About ourselves? What if the feeling of familiarity that labels lend is just an illusion? Maybe it is not even about asking, but about actually listening and being flexible when we discover that our definition of something may not be universal. And maybe if we realized this, I would stop having to repeat myself so often and could move on to sharing other aspects of my fabulous, unique self. So what does your identity mean to you?

Lindsay lives in San Francisco and studies Psychology and Queer Studies at City College of San Francisco. Ze has many interests, including acting and poetry.

Brunch Coordinator Invites You to Host

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at debmo345@gmail.com if you are interested in hosting a brunch. And check out the calendar on pages 15-16 for upcoming activities. We hope you can join us.

Do You Know Web Design?

We're looking for someone to get biwomenboston.org, our new website, up and running. If you are interested, please contact Robyn: biwomeneditor@gmail.com. It's the perfect volunteer job, as you can do it from home, in your pajamas, or even in your birthday suit.

What's in a Name: Call Me Bisexual or Call Me...

by Ellyn Ruthstrom

As the current President of an organization that identifies itself with the b-word, the Bisexual Resource Center, I've been becoming increasingly aware of the fact that the word bisexual is not the descriptor of choice of many people whose experiences are similar to people who do identify as bisexual. So I took the opportunity to ask a whole bunch of people who went to a conference with bisexual in the title (BECAUSE, see article on page 1) to ask them more about how they identify and see if we can all work together even if we call ourselves different things. The title of the workshop was the same as the title of this article. It turned into a fascinating discussion.

Something that I have found to be true of many bisexuals is that we hate to be labeled. Yeah, I know, everybody says they hate labels, but bisexuals really seem to have a deep aversion to the whole concept. Being boxed into a word is as fear provoking as being boxed into a monosexual world. A label suggests that what you are describing is static enough to enable you to determine its characteristics and it won't change enough to merit another label. How could that be true... or even desired...of your sexuality? How could you know who in your lifetime will turn you on, will open you up to true intimacy, will be able to understand you and all your flaws? There is something about a bisexual mindset that resists prediction of cause and effect, and immediately senses the inadequacy of any word to simultaneously explain something and allow ambiguity to persist.

Wow, that was a little off the track of where I was going, but I kind of agree with myself so I'll leave it at that.

I kicked off the workshop by having the 30 or so people there shout out the various words they use to describe their sexuality.

95/5 girl ~ lesbian-identified bisexual ~ genderqueer ~ ambisexual ~ sexual ~ no label ~ AC/DC ~ pomosexual ~ trans ~ heterosexual ~ homoflexible ~ queer ~ pansexual ~ fembi ~ bisexual ~ tomboy ~ open ~ heteroflexible ~ trysexual ~ omniseual

It was interesting to see the variety of terms mentioned. Some people shared their identity paths, noting that different experiences in their lives prompted them to need a different word to describe themselves. Sometimes the way they defined themselves was determined by whom they were talking to, depending on what the other person understood and how much educating they felt like doing at that moment.

One person brought up how she had become uncomfortable describing herself as bisexual after having a relationship with a transgender person and coming to a different understanding of sex and gender. If she didn't believe there were only two sexes, how could she use a term that has "bi" or "two" in it? Several folks nodded in agreement.

This was finally what I was hoping to get at. In the last few years a schism has developed—especially between younger people and with those who have identified as bisexual for a number of years—about how "bi" does not encompass the reality of there being more than two sexes. An awareness of transgender issues has become much more prevalent all around, but especially with younger people, and they want to reflect that different understanding in their choice of language.

Here's one of the issues that I brought into our discussion: Older

bisexuals followed their own paths of discovery and found comfort and passion for a term that opened up a supportive community with which to identify. It's difficult to use a term to describe yourself for a long time and then be told you really should call yourself something else. (I'm simplifying this, but it can feel that way.)

Meanwhile, it's a very "natural" (using the term lightly) thing for younger people to want to find their own language to describe their experiences and to want to distinguish themselves from the older generations. New information and experiences inform their identity development and they come up with different choices of words and meaning. They aren't attached to the same words, so they can come up with something fresh and exciting.

Both of these perspectives were present in the room that day and are very much a part of our community discussions right now. Both perspectives are valid. So then the next question is, if we call ourselves by different names can we still build a movement together? If an organization such as the Bisexual Resource Center uses the term bisexual in its name will it turn people who use different identity labels off to it?

Tenured activist bis definitely hope that we can successfully build the bridge to unite us all. We've worked for over 25 years to create organizations, community, and culture that nurtures and respects the types of lives we choose to live. We really want to pass along the structures that we have built up to

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Words Matter: An Interview with Author Beth Wylde

by Lara Zielinsky

Words matter. Writing our stories and putting them out there for others to read builds bridges of understanding. Exceptional authors open doors and windows, inviting in the wider community to see our lives.

Beth Wylde is such a writer. She lives in the “Wylde’s” of Virginia with her husband and three young children. During the day she’s a mild mannered mother and housewife but at night she lets her imagination take flight. Beth can usually be found in front of her computer, doing promo, chatting or typing away on her next story in genres that range from paranormal romance to lesbian erotica and beyond. She’s been writing for years but only recently decided to submit her stories to be published. Her first release was in April of 2006, so she’s fairly new to the business, but her reviews have been top notch. She received Romance Erotica Connection’s 2008 F/F Author of the Year award, one of the few times it has gone to a writer of lesbian or bi-women stories.

Beth and I met through the online group Sapphic Planet and were crazy enough to go in together on editing an anthology project. Between our busy schedules, I recently spoke with Beth to discover what makes her tick, what brings her to write about women loving women, the politics of bisexuality and beyond.

Lara Zielinsky: How long have you been writing? How long did you write before you found publication? What got you started?

Beth Wylde: I’ve been writing for as long as I can remember. My first love was poetry and then I moved on to song lyrics in junior high and then short stories by the time I was in high school. Literature was my favorite subject and I never fussed about having to read a book or do a report. I’m a bit of a nerd. ^_^ I got serious with my writing while I was pregnant with my first daughter, it became a way to

pass the time when I got put on bed rest for preterm labor. After the birth, things got put on hold for a bit but on a whim I sent off the story to a friend of mine and she said, “You should send this in to a publisher,” and gave me a few recommendations. It took about a year once I started submitting to get my first acceptance letter and the book came out six months later, in early 2006. I write daily now, even if it’s just for ten or fifteen minutes.

LZ: What genres do you write, and do you have a preference?

BW: I write what I like to read, which is a little bit of everything. Most of my books are either contemporary or paranormal in genre. I love sci-fi and fantasy too. They all contain erotic content and the pairings can vary as well. I’ve written a bit of it all.

LZ: What comes first for you? Character or plot? How do you build a story?

BW: Character is always first, without knowing my characters’ descriptions and names my story goes nowhere. Then I usually get the idea for the beginning of the story and the rest

unfolds as I write. I cannot plot or outline: my storyline always veers off track when I try. My characters are as stubborn as I am and that’s really saying something.

LZ: What from your own life makes it most often into your stories?

BW: Lots of my characters are based on people I know and most of my lead female characters tend to get a lot of my own personality traits, especially the stubbornness and the independence. In this day and age women have to be able to handle anything that comes their way. Women do not have to be wimpy. A strong female is a big turn on.

LZ: What’s your experience of being a B in the GLBT community?

BW: There is just so much prejudice in the world. Why shouldn’t we all be free to love who we want to? I just don’t understand it. Slowly and surely changes are being made, some for the good and some for the bad. It’s a constant struggle.

LZ: Most writers are voracious readers. Introduce us to a few of your favorites.

Wylde continues on next page



BW: OMG! Where should I start? My bedroom looks more like a library than a place to sleep and I'm quickly running out of space for any more bookshelves. I like anything with a bit of paranormal and erotic flavor to it, especially the vamps and the shifters. Pairing doesn't matter. I'll read it all. Laurell K. Hamilton, Kim Harrison, Cassandra Gold (who also co writes the Shaun and Adam stories and critiques for me), Syd McGinley, Mychael Black, D. L. King, Jolie du Pre, I'm sure I've left out at least a hundred or more names but this is what came to me off the top of my head.

LZ: What three words do you think describe you as a human being?

BW: Outgoing, compassionate, hardworking.

LZ: How do you think others would describe you?

BW: My closest friends would tell you I'm the person that always tries to cheer them up and make them laugh. I hate to see people when they are sad.

LZ: What you are most passionate about outside of writing?

BW: My children. They mean the world to me.

LZ: How does your family react to your writing? Are they supportive? What about friends?

BW: My family is clueless and that's probably for the best. I get my support for my writing from my friends. My critique partner is also fabulous too. My friends always ask me when the next book is coming out and they are online to order it on release day. Several of them have already promised

me a trip to the bookstore in February when my first print book comes out. It should be fun but probably a bit of a scene too. My best friend wants to give her girlfriend a signed copy of one of my books for Christmas. You can't ask for better support than that.

LZ: Tell us about your family situation. Why is it "for the best" they don't know what you write?

BW: Yes, they know I write, and to some extent they know that the subject matter is adult in nature but that's as far as it goes. S-E-X was a dirty word in my house growing up so the less my parents – especially my mom – knows about my books, the better off I am. My husband takes it in stride, he's not thrilled about it but he sees it as my hobby so he deals with it. My kids are too young to understand. It's my friends that give me the support I need to continue reaching for my goal of one day making a living off my writing.

LZ: What's coming up from you? Describe new projects or recent releases.

BW: 2009 is going to be a big year for me and I'm so excited about each and every project in the works that I'm not sure where to start. 2009 marks the release of my first ever print book, coming from Phaze, in early February. It's a four author erotic lesbian anthology. I'm also working on assembling a BDSM GLBT-themed series of books with some of the best BDSM GLBT authors in the business. (These books are going to be huge!!) My most recent release, *A Little Taste of Red*, is a werewolf themed novella and my first release so far that is straight het in pairing.

I run several yahoo groups, one is a critique group for authors of any genre or pairing, another (Sapphic



Planet) is strictly for lesbian fiction authors and then my own personal group (bethwyldede) is for both readers and authors of everything under the sun! It seems like I'm constantly working on something and that's good I think because a bored writer is a jobless writer.

Beth's stories with bisexual women and bisexuality themes:

** *The Big 4-OH!* The lead female character and her best friend are bi.

** "Caught in the Act," part of the *Swing!* anthology from *Logical Lust* and edited by Jolie du Pre. "My main female character is bi and refuses to admit the truth to herself and her husband until he makes her come to terms with her own desires and needs."

For more information on Beth and her writings, visit Beth's website: www.bethwyldede.com

Lara Zielinsky is the author of "Turning Point", and a 2007 Golden Crown Literary Society Finalist for Debut Author. Her latest project is "Readings in Les and Bi Women's Erotic Fiction" airing bi-weekly on Blog Talk Radio. For more information visit her website, www.lzfiction.net

BECAUSE, continued from page 1

workshops you go to and who you engage with. From my own experience and from the reactions of those I spoke to, there were many epiphanies and uplifting moments going on all over the Student Union at the University of Minnesota that weekend.

One of my own highlights was learning more about the Bi Cities cable television program that is produced in Minneapolis/St. Paul. Just a few talented folks have kept this bi-centered program on the air for seven years. The all-volunteer crew discussed how they produce the show and shared some video with the audience, which highlighted the tremendous array of guests they have interviewed over the years. Check them out at bicities.org.

All work and no play? Never at a bi conference. For lunch on Saturday, we were entertained by a one-woman performance of Fluid: a personal exploration of “bi”-sexuality. Performed by Erika Kate MacDonald,

the short piece delved into a personal odyssey of discovery through short vignettes and music. And for the evening’s entertainment, the lovely Janessa Jaye Champagne of Grand Forks, ND held court for the open mike. From light acoustic rock to drag kings and queens to bellydancing, the stage was a constant source of amusement. I doubt that I will ever again see a drag king singing to a hand puppet...to Meatloaf’s “Paradise by the Dashboard Light”!!



Janessa Jaye Champaign and Robyn Ochs

Sunday was the time to say our goodbyes and thank all the volunteers for the tremendous work they put into making BECAUSE a lively success. The group was treated to a showing of the documentary Bi the Way and the director Josephine Decker talked to the audience afterwards. The film offers

some great slices of life about current bi identity and Decker announced that it will be showing on Logo in the near future. Check out bitheWaymovie.com for more deets.

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it didn’t matter. Whereas in the 70s, people just assumed a male gender for a space ship captain, for instance, and said, “oh, he must be gay”, without really reading the text.

But I didn’t sit down and say, “What activist necessity should drive my fiction today?” That’s where the “no” part of the answer comes in. I think we have to be very careful not to sit down with a primary agenda of activism when writing fiction and poetry. These are associative not prescriptive art forms, and the activism in them comes from the author’s implanted worldview.

In a Robert McKee Story Workshop I attended, he said, “Theme is the writerly perspective on the significance of the story.” I use this quote with my writing students to explain why they

should ignore the idea of “thinking of a theme,” but should concentrate on the people in the story, and the story they are living. Whatever we believe will come out in our writing, and we don’t have to belabour the point and impoverish the writing by doing so. It is probably better to operate as a fiction writer and/or a poet from a place of passion rather than a place of reason. And I will add: as soon as I make a categorical statement like this someone comes along to refute it with a great piece of writing, so take that into consideration too as you consider this conversation!

MM: Thanks, Candas, for your time and your thought-provoking responses. I wish I had more space: there’s so much more to talk about!

Monica Meneghetti is a poly-genre writer who recently added literary translation to her repertoire. She is an MFA candidate in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia. Visit Monica at www.monicameneghetti.com.



NEWS BRIEFS

Majority of Mass. Legislators Co-sponsor An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes

104 of 200 Massachusetts legislators have signed on as co-sponsors of this bill which will prohibit gender-based discrimination and protect transgender people in Massachusetts. Please go to www.masstpc.org, find out how your legislator voted, thank them if they have signed on as sponsors, and ask them to vote for the bill if they have not. Help make Massachusetts a full equality state.

MARRIAGE!

Here's where we are: Six months ago, Massachusetts was the *only* U.S. state with marriage equality. As of May 2009, there are 5: MA, CT, VT, IA, and ME. NH is poised to be come the 6th. A tipping point, perhaps?

And in case you're feeling lonely: Norway and Sweden have joined the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Canada, and South Africa as marriage equality countries, bringing that total to 7.



Tracy, continued from page 13

girl-on-girl porn, people who are mostly attracted to the same sex, people who are mostly attracted to the opposite sex, those who are attracted to people "regardless of gender," and so many more. Clearly, there is a demand for many more labels, but what do we do until then?

Perhaps it would be best if we all followed the advice of my father: "Stop worrying about what to label yourself. Just do what makes you happy!"

Now, if only I could believe that!

Tracy works as an engineer near Boston. Her hobbies include reading, performing in a local concert band, surfing the Internet, and cooking.

THE POWER OF THE PRESS

Has anyone noticed that Rachel Maddow, Keith Olbermann, Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert have been championing our causes? They've taken on Don't Ask Don't Tell, marriage equality and more.

One of my favorite clips was Stephen Colbert's send-off of the National Organization for Marriage's "A Storm is Coming" anti-equality ad that hired paid [very bad!] actors to woodenly predict that gay marriage is threatening Christian values. Colbert described the original ad as "like watching the 700 Club and the Weather Channel at the same time."

And Rachel Maddow has taken full aim at Don't Ask Don't Tell, with poignant interviews of individuals who have been discharged from the military for coming out as gay.



For those of you who are not already hooked, Rachel Maddow and Keith Olbermann have shows on MSNBC; and Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert are on Comedy Central. Maddow is an out and proud--and VERY, VERY hot--lesbian.

Please send in news stories

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING THAT YOU THINK IS BI-NEWSWORTHY, PLEASE WRITE ABOUT IT AND SEND IT IN!

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN DOING A QUARTERLY COLUMN FOR BI WOMEN, WRITE TO ROBYN AT BIWOMENEDITOR@GMAIL.COM.

Candas Jane Dorsey: Sexuality, Life & Literature

by *Monica Menighetti*



Photo by Beth Gwinn

Candas Jane Dorsey

Integrating one's sexual identity with a writing life has its challenges. So, I thought I'd seek the wisdom of other bi writers, starting with Candas Jane Dorsey.

Candas is an award-winning, multi-genre writer from Edmonton, Canada. She is also an educator, editor, and past publisher of *The Books Collective*, *River Books*, and *Tesseract Books*. She contributes to her community as a member of the Advisory Committee to the Edmonton Police Service, which addresses the issue of hate and bias crimes. She's served on the executive of the Writers' Guild of Alberta and SF Canada, too. I met Candas about fifteen years ago at The Banff Centre for the Arts. Her mentorship has been life-altering for me. She is outspoken and generous. Her finely-honed bullshit detector and wicked sense of humour are invaluable. She plays a mean Scrabble. She loves Pomeranians. If you bump into her at dim sum, buy her some egg tarts.

Monica Menighetti: What was your coming out process like? What are your thoughts on the process generally?

Candas Jane Dorsey: I came of age in the late sixties and early seventies, when there was much more fluidity than there was earlier -- or later. It was almost the duty of any young free spirit (a.k.a. hippie) to experiment with sexuality and drugs. I didn't like drugs, so...! So the sexual understanding came early and without a great deal of angst. Of course I've had the ongoing question of what data to reveal to whom, but there was never really a problem with who I was. I just was—and am—who I am. Perhaps I got good advice from Popeye the Sailor Man: "I yam who I yam and that's all that I am..."! Whatever the reason, I felt and feel quite centred in my identity as a bisexual.

The polyamory thing (I never called it that, just "non-exclusive") was more of a problem, not in coming out but in the pressures I got from various partners. For their sake, I tried to be exclusive, but it wasn't logical to me. However, I don't have any issues like that with my bi partner of almost 18 years, who is non-exclusive also, although we define our relationship as primary and central. We shared a boyfriend for a while, but he was unwilling to commit fully, so we broke up with him, probably just before he broke up with us.

For some people, being queer is the first time they've been beyond the white picket fence that defines hetero-normative monogamy. So they have to make it a central organising principle in their lives. They "come out" with a flourish and much fallout in the intolerance of family or community or

church or all three, or they hide miserably in the closet with much suicidal angst and then come out to save their lives. They "learn to be gay" as one young man told me he was doing, transforming himself from a Newfie roughneck from the oil patch into a swish young tipped-hair queen. They define themselves by their attire and another, equally rigid set of subcultural norms: lesbians dress thus, gay men decorate their houses so, bisexuals haven't made up their minds yet, etc. These subcultural norms replace the majority culture and are as rigidly enforced and adhered to.

Now, I am not belittling the emotional struggle, because I know a lot of the reason why this didn't happen to me is just luck. But a lot of isolating, interesting, difficult things happened to me—and before I was a sexually active being at that—so I was used to being a solitary and making my own decisions, not going with the cultural norms. Those norms hadn't helped me as a child or as a teen, so they weren't likely to attract me as an adult, especially given the attractive alternative of hippie ideology, with its emphasis on freedom, exploration and discovery, self-realisation and self-definition.

MM: Your novel, *Black Wine*, won the James Tiptree, Jr. Award—the literary prize for science fiction or fantasy that expands or explores our understanding of gender. And many of your short stories leave characters' genders unspecified. What are some of your thoughts on gender?

CJD: Writing about gender has, by and large, been an accident of my worldview getting into my writing. Gender appears to be a primary datum for most people, queer as well as straight. But it isn't for me, and that was reflected in the relative lack of importance I gave to providing that datum about my characters to my readers. This led to characters with no gender pronouns, and that led to people reading gender and sex issues into stories about other things. Eventually, that led to some people thinking of me as a radical writer, and in that sense I guess I am. But from my point of view, this is just part of what I write. I'm glad it has swiveled so many people's minds 180 degrees away from preconceptions, even if only for long enough to know how it feels not to have them! Writers like to have made a difference with their writing.

MM: Your novel, *A Paradigm of Earth*, was shortlisted for the Spectrum Award and for Canada's Sunburst Award. In it, an infant alien learns what it is to be human through being raised by a human who happens to be a bisexual, polyamorous woman. So it's a queering and pacifying of the archetypal "first contact" story. Did you deliberately create a bi/poly protagonist?

CJD: Bi/poly protagonists are the default character for me. I have to think in a very different way to create other

Dorsey, continues on next page

Dorsey, continued from previous page

characters—heterosexual, monogamous for instance! So the character Morgan arose naturally. The book grew out of my dream about her and the alien.

MM: As the head of a Canadian small press, you fought a censorship battle that followed the publication of *Neurotic Erotica* by Timothy J. Anderson. How has that experience affected your writing life?

CJD: I wouldn't say it affected my writing life, but it made me a great deal more cynical, and tried my patience, and made publishing just that little bit harder. It made me more aware of the forces ranged against freedom of expression. Also, I learned that people will lie and cheat and twist and misquote in order to support bigoted positions, and insistently reject learning and changing their minds. This is not always true of liberal thinkers, though all humans are prone to the error of self-referential stubbornness.

It shocks me that many people were more willing to disseminate and believe lies than to look at the facts. We still hear astonishing distortions of truth coming back to us about that controversy. Lastly, it also shocked me that people were willing to make actionable personal libels and slanders without a second thought and without any pretensions of civility.

There's that expression "Sadder but wiser." The problem is, so many of these learnings are repeated. So in the end, one gets sadder and sadder rather than wiser. It's discouraging to imagine that after all the great ethical thinkers and freedom fighters, the noisiest results are still achieved by the barbarians. What does that say about us as human beings?

MM: Do you view "out" writing as a form of activism?

CJD: Yes and no.

Yes, because every piece of writing changes the reader's world view a tiny bit anyway. So if the writing presents an alternative to the mainstream way of thinking of people, culture, the family, this will make the reader think about their own assumptions and preconceptions.

However this can happen just as easily when not intended. For instance, as you mentioned earlier, I left genders unspecified in some of my short stories. This was not done to be political as such, but merely because it seemed an interesting thing to do on the side, as a kind of enrichment of the story milieu. I wrote these stories in the 70s and 80s and actually got a certain amount of flak and lack of understanding at first. Then suddenly, ten or fifteen years later, people were saying how radical this was. I had readers saying that this was the most profound insight about the stories for them: the fact that a person could be a lover of either gender, for instance, and it didn't matter. Or that a person could be conducting their life activities while not primarily identified by gender, and

Dorsey, continued on page 8

Women's Nightlife in the Boston Area

THURSDAYS

Women's Dance Night at the Midway Café
3496 Washington St, Jamaica Plain
617-524-9038
www.myspace.com/wonkyproductions

FRIDAYS

Dance night at PURE
10 pm - 2 am
75 Warrenton St, Boston
617-417-0186

SATURDAYS

Second Saturdays at Machine Nightclub
1254 Boylston St, Boston, 21+, \$10
www.dykenight.com

Every Saturday at Randolph Country Club
New look. New atmosphere. Everybody welcome.
RCC, 44 Mazzeo Dr., Randolph
10 pm - 2 am. 21+, \$5
www.myspace.com/peachesrcc

SUNDAYS

Women's night every Sunday. Doors open at 7, The L Word at 9.
DJ msladyj with an eclectic mix from house to jazz.
No cover, complimentary appetizers, 21+
STIX Restaurant & Lounge, 35 Stanhope Street, Boston
857-233-6032

**And then, of course, there are always
BBWN's fabulous potluck brunches for bi
women and our friends. Our brunches are
held in women's homes, and ALL women are
welcome. See our calendar
(pp. 15 and 16) for details.**



Apphia K., *continued from page 3*

AK: Liberating! I loved everything about being out, proud and loud about it! I can't wait for pride this year. It was so comforting to be amidst people just like me, who have in their own way experienced what I have, if not more. It felt reassuring to know that there was someone out there that I could turn to. Bisexuals didn't really have a prominent place in Pride, but I guess first we get our discriminatory law repealed and then we celebrate Pride.

RO: Since this experience, have you stayed involved? What has that been like?

AK: I've had to move back to my hometown (Pune) because of circumstances that needed me to be closer to my parents. It feels like coming back to closet-town. I will be traveling to Delhi and Bangalore on occasion to meet with friends and be reminded of the community out there. Mumbai is closer and I have yet to take a drive down and meet with the women there. I have otherwise been unable to actually do something drastic, which is something I would love to get involved in.

RO: What value, if any, do you see in international activism, in keeping in touch with bi activists in other countries? Do you think the movement in India is/was inspired/influenced

by movements in other countries, or has been an inspiration/influence on others?

AK: I think everything affects each other. Of course, if it weren't for the community in San Francisco coming out in a big way, none of us would be where we are today. In this same way, once we get our law repealed, other countries will be brave enough to fight for their equal rights.

RESOURCES IN INDIA

Rainbow Pride Connexion: you can join this group through invite only. You have to know a dyke who can get you in. Their screening process ensures that only women get in, which, honestly.. is a relief!!

Good as You Bangalore: www.geocities.com/goodasyoubangalore

On Facebook: Queer Desis; Pink Delhi; LABIA

Queer Azaadi (Mumbai Based): queerazaadi.wordpress.com

B.J., *continued from page 1*

the customs and opinions of other nations in order to survive. And yet there are times when I miss a joke or an allusion, or when I do something that makes people laugh and remember that I am foreign. As it is with bilingual and bicultural, so it is with bisexual. The "bi"ness is true to an extent, but it always creates an awareness of a divide even as it purports to be smoothing over strict separations. I am not with both men and women at the same time and in the same way, so calling myself "bisexual" can highlight a lack, an absence of pure grayness, just as using the word "bilingual" or "bicultural" might make people think of all the languages and cultures I don't know, all the language skills and cultural knowledge I lack. Bi bridges, even as it shows the swift currents flowing under the bridge.

Maybe one day we will just all call ourselves sexual. We will get rid of modifiers and recognize that they don't matter so much. We will learn other languages and be lingual, we will live in other countries and be cultural, we will enjoy our fellow humans and be sexual.

We will say good-bye to bi. We won't need it. It's been serving us well in that we bis have made the gray space more acceptable. But I can only hope that in the near future, we won't be bi. We'll just be.

B.J. Epstein is a writer, editor and translator in Wales. She is currently finishing her PhD in translation studies. She can be contacted via her website, www.awaywithwords.se/.



was possible!) Late one night after a party, I summoned all the courage I possessed, and confessed to my best friend, "I think that I might be lesbian, bisexual, or something like it." Her response: "Okay!" Whew!

The sky did not fall. The earth kept spinning. And I was out of the closet at last.

Well, sort of. I still didn't know what to call myself. So, I called the GLBT National Hotline.¹ The friendly, young gay man who answered informed me that one's attraction to both genders does not have to be equal in order to "count" as bisexual. It is surprisingly common to have a strong preference for one gender, while still having feelings for the other. That revelation was a major turning point. The next thing I knew, I was attending every GLBT social event I could find, and managed to find my way toward the local bisexual support group. I found a wonderfully understanding, supportive group of people who identified as bisexual. I was out and proud as ...something, but what?

I was out of the dark, lonely closet at last, but still I felt lost. Could this wonderful, supportive group of bisexuals possibly relate to my dateless adolescence? In high school, I had not been able to find a single boy in my school of 900 attractive, or at least attractive enough to date. Sure, there were a few candidates, such as Alan², who seemed nice, and Andy, who was sort of cute. But that nowhere near compared to the way I felt about my friend Beth. I thought she was breathtakingly beautiful, even if she didn't feel that way about herself. I thought about her constantly, and longed to be with her all the time. If we were supposed to hang out, and she had to cancel, you would think that the world was about to come to an end. She was far from the only one about whom I felt that way. There was also Jillian, a quiet, bookish, extremely bright girl who knew more physics than most college professors. I looked forward enormously to our daily walks home from school, where together we would solve all the world's problems. (I later found out that she was bisexual, too. If only I had known!) Later, there was Elizabeth. And Kerry. And countless others, including an embarrassing crush on a popular girl who was well out of the league of a science geek like me.

Also, could bisexuals relate to the vast difference between my attractions to women and to men? One telling example of this is how I prepared for my first date with a woman. I, a feminist who refused to wear makeup, stunned my family and friends by going on a shopping spree for the perfect outfit, shoes, and pocketbook to match. A pocketbook! Wasn't that an unnecessary burden created by the fashion industry to keep women down? I certainly didn't need to carry one, let alone get one to match my outfit! Yet somehow I found myself in Ann Taylor Loft, agonizing over which thimble-sized, overpriced pocketbook matched one of the several new outfits I had just bought. On the big day, I spent the entire morning getting ready. I changed clothes many times before finally settling on the perfect outfit. By contrast,

here was my routine to get ready for a date with a guy: pick out a nice T-shirt and jeans, comb my hair. Done. Did this great difference in motivation somehow make me a lesbian?

But even as I didn't feel "bisexual enough," I found to my surprise that I didn't fit into the lesbian identity, either. My feelings for boys may have been extremely rare, but they did occur. For example, in my mid-twenties, I developed a huge crush on Adam, a close male friend of mine. Ironically, I recognized the feelings as such, because it was the same way I had felt about girls! Just as with Beth, I thought about Adam constantly. I wanted to be around him all the time. I fantasized repeatedly about us kissing, among other things. At work, I made many lame excuses to stop by his office. He loved to eat, so I would always bring him snacks. I suppose he could blame me for any weight gain... if there was any on his tall, slender frame. We decided that we were better off as friends (long story), and continue to be close to this day. However, there was no way that I could fit into the lesbian category after that experience. Using that label would discount the reality of my prior feelings for Adam, in addition to a handful of other men in my past.

Finally, in the interest of coming out as "something" in this label-happy world, I settled on the term "bisexual". Personally, it is because it acknowledges my attraction to men as well as women. Politically, it is because I feel that bisexual visibility is extremely important.

However, I continue to long for a label that describes more accurately the reality of my feelings. But, what am I "really?" I change my mind almost daily. So far, I have gone through the following: mostly lesbian, lesbian-identified bisexual (too wordy), queer, Kinsey 5, fluid, pansexual, and even "unlabeled." I rejected "queer" because even though I feel there is a serious need for an all-inclusive term, I dislike the word's negative history. I considered "Kinsey 5," but even though the mathematician in me loves numbers, how can you put a number on human feelings? Just imagine if you had to quantify how much you love your mother! I also discarded the term "fluid," because it just doesn't feel right. I don't know why not. Maybe it's because my feelings are not "fluid," but fixed towards women most of the time. I suppose I like "mostly lesbian" the best... except in those rare moments when I fall in love with a guy, and then somehow it doesn't fit.

It seems to me that the labels have not kept up with the reality of sexual orientation. It is as if someone decided that the only shoe sizes that exist are 3 and 12. Anyone whose feet do not fit is a size "medium." However, lumping together people whose feet are as small as size 4 with those who are as big as size 10 is absurd. Similarly, the following people, while one could technically label them as "bisexual," have vastly diverse experiences that need to be acknowledged: "lesbians" who have sex with men, "straight women" who are turned on by

1 GLBT National Hotline: 1-888-THE-GLNH (1-888-843-4564)

2 Names have been changed to protect the innocent and otherwise.

We know that the wheel isn't the same shape or texture anymore and we need help in figuring out how to keep the wheel moving, but whether we call ourselves bisexual or queer or omnisexual or any other word, we hope to keep our community strong and vibrant for many years to come.

I was very cheered by the discussion in the workshop and the way that people expressed feeling a connection to each other, despite the different terms. I think it's important to have these dialogues so that we can understand differing perspectives and still appreciate the overriding issues that unite our understanding of the world.

Another tenured activist at the conference told me that he had been envious of the younger generation that is getting a reputation for being much more accepting of GLBT people now. But then he went to a workshop where there were a lot of young bisexuals describing experiences of the same types of discrimination and biphobia that he had been fighting for the last 25 years. He wasn't envious any more, just sad that these same issues will continue to bind us no matter what we call ourselves.

HELLO my name is

I am fluid. I am flowing. I am strong and deep and rolling and curvy. I am sexual. I am both yet neither. I am dichotomous, androgynous, ambiguous, and balanced. I am outgoing and shy, sensible and silly, brazen and scared, I am his and hers. I am a Christian. I am an ally. I am me.

I am a student and a friend and a daughter and a realist. I am scared from accidents and biopsies. I am addicted to reality TV, new purses, and Indian food. I am late to the game. I am logical. I am resilient, sensitive, and complex. I am me.

At any given chance, I am checking out your butt. I am your pin-up model and your Prince Charming. I am willing to try what makes you happy. I am your permission slip, your rational thought, your cheerleader. I am me.

According to my butch lesbian friends, I am femme because I like makeup, skirts, and high heels. According to my straight guy friends, I am one of the boys because I like fast cars, beer, and boxing. If you listen to my gay guy friends, I am a drag queen waiting to happen. My straight chick friends say I am loud and funny. All of them are right.

I am unconcerned with whatever you want to call me. Because I am okay with me.

Cari is a 32-year-old Master's Student at the University of Kentucky, who was finally honest with herself 3 months ago.

unforgettable

by N. K.

i'm that girl, you know?

the kind they sing songs about
write poetry to
fall in love with
and spend their whole lives looking for.

i'm that girl, you know?

the kind that dances until morning
hair loose and shirt tight
with a closet full of little black dresses
and broken hearts to match.

i'm that girl, you know?

the kind the boys can't get enough of
(and the girls too)
and they say, you know, they can't tell
which they prefer--my bark or my bite

i'm that girl, you know?

i mean, i was that girl... until the day you stepped
on my stars
and into my life.

NK was born and raised in California. She is a 20-year-old Muslim woman of Korean descent, and a recent NYU graduate.

B-Girls Reading List

At the most recent BBWN brunch, everyone was asked to recommend a book to the group. Below is an amazing genre-hopping list of some very interesting fiction and nonfiction books. Happy summer reading!

- *** *Life is Friends: A Complete Guide to the Lost Art of Connecting in Person*, by Jeanne Martinet
- *** *Unaccustomed Earth: Stories*, by Jhumpa Lahiri
- *** *Chains*, by Laurie Halse Anderson
- *** *Elements of Murder: A History of Poison*, by John Emsley
- *** *How to Grow More Vegetables and Fruits (and Nuts, Berries, Grains, and Other Crops) Than You Ever Thought Possible on Less Land Than You Can Imagine*, by John Jeavons
- *** *The Eyre Affair: A Thursday Next Series*, by Jasper Fforde
- *** *The Company*, by Robert Littell
- *** *Case Histories: A Novel*, by Kate Atkinson
- *** *Fun Home: a family tragicomedy*, by Alison Bechdel
- *** *The Time Traveler's Wife*, by Audrey Niffenegger
- *** *Words Under the Words: Selected Poems*, by Naomi Shihab Nye
- *** *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*, by Alexander McCall Smith
- *** *Are You My Mother?*, by P.D. Eastman
- *** *Life & Fate*, by Vasily Grossman

And of course... the second edition of ***Getting Bi: Voices from Around the World***, edited by Robyn Ochs and Sarah Rowley, which is due out in June and can be ordered at biresource.net.

Calendar, continued from page 16

June 26 to June 29. BiCamp 2009

Join your fellow bisexuals and friends in a beautiful country setting near Northampton, MA (Lesbianville USA) Campers must provide their own tent, food, and transportation (sharing is encouraged). BiCamp includes showers and flush toilets. And we have the space all to ourselves! Basically, what you get is a place to pitch your tent, a fire pit, fresh water, beautiful wilderness, and the company of a few dozen bisexual and bi-friendly people for a fun summer weekend. Clothing-optional swimming is just a short walk through the woods. BiCamp is open to all bisexuals and friends at least 18 years of age (or accompanied by a parent or guardian). For more information contact bicamp.reg@gmail.com or visit biversity.org/bicamp.html.

JULY

Wednesday, July 1, 6:30-9 pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS) (See June 3rd)

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

Monday, July 13, 7 pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See June 8th)

Thursday, July 16, 7 pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). (See June 3rd)

Saturday, July 18, 11:30 am, Saturday Bi Brunch. (See June 20th)

Sunday, July 19, 1:00 pm, BBWN Book Swap and Potluck BBQ in Brockton at Ellyn's. Yes, it's a mouthful, but the swap is really worth the trip down to the lovely South Shore. We'll fire up the grill and supply all the condiments. We will have veggie burgers, some side salads, and some drinks. Just as we do at the brunches, the idea is to bring a dish and drinks to share with the group. Please bring any meat that you wish to grill, none will be supplied. Bring a few books to swap with others (not required to attend the BBQ) and take home

a few for your summer reading. Contact Ellyn at nellythrustmor@comcast.net for directions and to let her know you'll be attending.

AUGUST

Wednesday, August 5, 7 pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). (See June 3rd)

Monday, August 10, 7 pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See June 8th)

Tuesday, August 11, 7-9 pm, BRC Board Meeting. (See June 9th)

August 14-18, Bi Health Summit, Chicago. As part of the LGBTI Health Summit. For more info visit www.2009lgbthealth.org.

Saturday, August 15, 11:30 am, Saturday Bi Brunch. (See June 20th)

August 16-22, Carnival Week in Provincetown. A week of festive activities including Drag Bingo, the absolutely fabulous Carnival Parade on Thursday and much more. Bring your beads, bathing suit and sunscreen! More info at www.ptown.org/Carnival.asp.

Thursday, August 20, 7 pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). (See June 3rd)

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

The "Bi Office"

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

Ongoing Events

Last Fridays:

Bi Women's Rap, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

2nd Mondays:

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

1st Wednesdays, 3rd Thursdays:

BLISS: Bisexual Support & Social Group, 7-8:45 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

3rd Saturdays:

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. at Johnny D's, Davis Square, Somerville.

Sign up for our new email list! Send an email to: biwomenboston-subscribe@yahoogroups.com



CALENDAR

JUNE

Wednesday, June 3, 7-8:45 pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLISS). Meets on the 1st Wednesday and 3rd Thursday of each month at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope Street, Boston. All bi and bi-friendly people of all genders and orientations are welcome to attend. First Wednesday meetings are peer facilitated discussion groups, sometimes with a pre-selected topic or presenter. Third Thursday meetings are 7-8 pm check-ins, discussion, and announcements followed by social time at a nearby restaurant. Only want to socialize? Meet the group at or shortly after 8 pm in the lobby of the Living Center.

Sunday, June 7, AIDS Walk Boston. The 6.2-mile walk starts at the Hatch Shell at 7:30 am in Boston's Back Bay to raise money and awareness for HIV prevention, advocacy and service. For more info, visit www.aac.org.

Sunday, June 7, Unity at Sea Sunset Women's T-Dance and Boat Cruise. Board at 3:30 pm at Rowes Wharf for a 4-7 pm cruise. \$20 tix. For more info and to order tickets go to www.dykenight.com/unity.html.

Monday, June 8, 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. For more info: contact kate.e.flynn@gmail.com. Meets on the second Monday of each month.

Tuesday, June 9, 7:00-9:00 pm, Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. All bi and bi-friendly community members welcome to attend. Email Ellyn at brc@biresource.net for more info. At the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. near Back Bay station on the Orange Line.

Friday, June 12, 6:00 pm, Boston's Dyke March. Gather at the Boston Common

Gazebo at 6:00 for a night of frolicking and marching with the queerest women in town.

Saturday, June 13, Pride Day in Boston.

This year's theme: Trans-forming Our Community. Kicking off from the South End on Tremont Street, the parade will wind its way down Tremont, up Beacon Street and down the other side of Beacon Hill into Government Center. There will be a bi contingent marching together. Look for the BRC banner. We will post the exact place to meet up by email and on the Facebook page. Join the BRC Yahoo group ([biresourcecenter](http://biresourcecenter.com)) to make sure you get the email. Want to help volunteer at the BRC booth at the Pride Festival? Email brc@biresource.net to get involved.

Saturday, June 13, Dyke Night's LUSH Pride Party, at Machine Nightclub, 1254 Boylston St, Boston. Comedy show 9-10 pm, Dance Party 10 pm-2 am. \$20 tickets. For more info and to order tickets go to www.dykenight.com/lush.html.

Sunday, June 14, Heat on the Street: Perkins Street Block Party, noon-7 pm. Keep on dancing at the hottest women's block party the day after Pride. Details: www.bostonpride.org/jpbp.php.

Thursday, June 18, 7 pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLISS). (See June 3rd)

Saturday, June 20, 11:30 am, Bi Brunch. This mixed-gender bi group now meets monthly on 3rd Saturdays at Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Sq. in Somerville, across the street from the Davis stop on the Red Line.

Friday, June 26, Dyke Night's Fourth Fridays at Milky Way. NEW Location: 284 Amory St, Jamaica Plain. Doors open at 9:00 pm, DJ 10 pm-1 am.

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