

Bi Conferences: You Can't Have Just One...

By Ellyn Ruthstrom



In August, with 450 attendees from 28 countries, the 10th International Conference on Bisexuality in London was certainly an eclectic place to be. As everyone soon agreed, some of the most eye-opening moments for attendees were occurring not in the workshop sessions, but rather in one-on-one interchanges or group conversations in the hallways and at the pub. Personal connections and political networking abounded as most of the attendees spent several days sharing space, meals, and bodily fluids (come on, it's a bi conference—let me make a joke!) Here are just a few impressions shared by some attendees:

Bi Conferences Are Like Crack: It Just Takes Once to Get Hooked!

By Heidi Bruins

I was a bi conference virgin when I arrived in London at the combined BiReCon/BiCon 2010/10 ICB in August of this year. I had attended many LGBT conferences over the years (Out & Equal Workplace Summit, Creating Change, Southern Comfort, Fantasia Fair, and many more) and I wondered if/how this experience would be any different. After all, for the first time ever, people who share my sexual orientation would be in the majority!

Experiencing three conferences at once can be confusing, especially if you have not been to any of them before, but by the end I felt I could tell the difference, at least some of the time. The first day of the gathering was BiReCon, the first international Bisexual Research Conference, which involved scholarly, research-based presentations. The other two events took

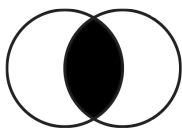


Spanish activists hold impromptu gathering.

IBC, continues on page 5

Room

By Dari



"It's like there's only enough room for me." I held my hands up to make a roughshod Venn diagram with my fingers. "I'm a Black, Christian, bisexual professional. The place where these identities overlap seems so small, it's like there's only enough room for me." I noticed my counselor's eyes shrink to a squint as she nodded her head (and seemingly her soul) with understanding. A slow, epiphanous, compassionate nod. And though I knew she would never *really* understand, for a moment, I felt like she did.

If I am honest, I'm not sure I fully understand. The only thing I know for sure is that I am torn. Usually intersections mean connections. Streets intersect to form corners. Threads intersect to form covers. Fingers intersect and form lovers. But my identities intersect and fray me.

As a Black person, I am expected to be a Christian. And I am. But I'm also expected to be a certain kind of Christian. You know, a Baptist who goes to one of those churches with gospel music, people shouting "Amen!", church ladies wearing fancy hats, and so forth. Incidentally, I have attended mostly White churches in my 12 years as a Christian. And as of late, I find myself interested in Celtic devotions and attracted to the stoic, contemplative spiritual traditions not typically associated with the heritage of the Black church. I sit in pews of Black churches and simmer with pride and frustration over the simultaneous fortitude and shallowness all around me. I want to stand up and shout, "Stop with the fanfare and deal with your hearts!" I want to stand up and shout, "What about right now?!" For too long, my people have been socially paralyzed and pacified by a religious tradition that focuses on the afterlife. What about right now? I want to shout in White churches too. "Do you realize that you are oppressors?!" I am so sick of hearing about Jesus but

Dari, continues on page 7

HONOR ROLL

Justin Adkins
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Lynne Levine
Robyn Ochs
Karen Oil
Faith Onyimbo
N.P.
Ellyn Ruthstrom
Toni T
Jennifer Taub
Helen Thorington
Laurie Wolfe
and
Gail Zacharias

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

Bi Women is
published quarterly.

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From your editor

The theme of this issue is “Intersections.” Readers were invited to discuss intersectionality—how our various identities (race, age, gender, class, cultural background, etc.) affect one another and shape our varied and unique experiences.

I am pleased to report that submissions came pouring in!

This issue includes three essays on this theme: From Atlanta, 26-year-old Dari writes from the perspective of a Black, Christian, bisexual professional. From Toronto, 24-year-old Sarah Volumnia Fox writes about being bi and polyamorous. And from Hawaii, 73-year-old Robyn Walters discusses numerous intersections in her life. We include poems by Jan Steckel and Jane Barnes, two poets who have been published previously in *Bi Women*.

And I am delighted to introduce you to the work of Jess Wells, a writer I have long admired who has shared with us a nine-part story about her journey from a lesbian to a bi identity and her experiences as a parent. The first of these is included in this issue, and the rest will appear in future issues.

We hope you enjoy our extensive coverage of the recent 10th International Conference on Bisexuality which took place late August in London. Ellyn Ruthstrom, Heidi Bruins Green, Vicky Rosa, Shiri Eisner and Steph Miserlis offer varied and interesting perspectives on their experiences at this conference, and Robyn and Ellyn’s photos provide a visual record.

Two book reviews, our ubiquitous calendar and a *Bi Women* Around the World interview with Elena Marcos from Alcalá de Henares round out the issue.

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

—Robyn

Next in *Bi Women*

The theme for the Spring ‘11 issue:

People Say the Strangest Things

What are some of the strangest, funniest, most outrageous, heartwarming or interesting things people have said to you in reaction to your coming out to them as bisexual? Make us laugh. Make us cry. Make us nod our heads in recognition. Tell us via essay, poem, short story or cartoon about your experiences.

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

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

Upcoming themes may include:

In/Visibility; Out at Work;

Faith & Spirit; another Youth issue, 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.**

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

The Boston Bisexual Women’s Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, 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: Elena Marcos, Alcalá de Henares, Spain

By Robyn Ochs

I met Elena in August at the International Conference on Bisexuality. In her 20s, friendly and with an easy smile, Elena combines enthusiasm and a strong sense of purpose with intelligence and calm attentiveness.

Robyn Ochs: Elena, please tell us a little bit about your background.

Elena Marcos: I was born in a small village in Extremadura, a rural area in the west of Spain. It's an area where the old values are deeply rooted so I never felt that I fit in.

When I was 13, my parents moved us to the suburbs of Madrid. It's incredible how in a medium-sized country like Spain, it can be completely different to live in one place or another.

I've been living in Alcalá de Henares for the past three years, studying architecture in Alcalá de Henares University, one of Europe's oldest universities.

RO: How did you come to identify as bi?

EM: I have been aware of bisexuality for as long as I can remember, but not that I myself was bisexual. Everyone around me was heterosexual and my only exposure to LGTB community was "gay issues" on television, so I assumed that I was heterosexual. However, no one ever told me what it meant "to be heterosexual," so I assumed everyone was like me. When I talked with my friends about this and they told me that they only liked boys, I thought they just didn't want to admit liking girls.

When I came to the university I met a bisexual guy (who is now my boyfriend). We shared experiences and opinions, and I came to identify as bi.

RO: Do you come from a religious background?

EM: Traditionally, Spain has been a Catholic society, especially in rural areas, like mine, where machismo and LGTB-phobia is still rooted. However, in the last 30 years the country has advanced. But religion has not affected me, nor my relationship with my family.

RO: When I met you and your sweetheart Xur at ICB, I was deeply impressed by both of you. Tell us about him and about your relationship.

EM: When I came to University we lived nearby and we were studying for the same degree so we spent a lot of time together working, sharing our life stories, and realizing how much we had in common.



At the end of the first year we decided to move together to a flat near our department and then we started our relationship. At first I thought it was going to be hard because we spend a lot of time together but it was not.

We became involved in Arcópoli, the LGTBQ+H [Heterosexual] organization of two of Madrid's largest universities, and we decided to create the same organization in our university.

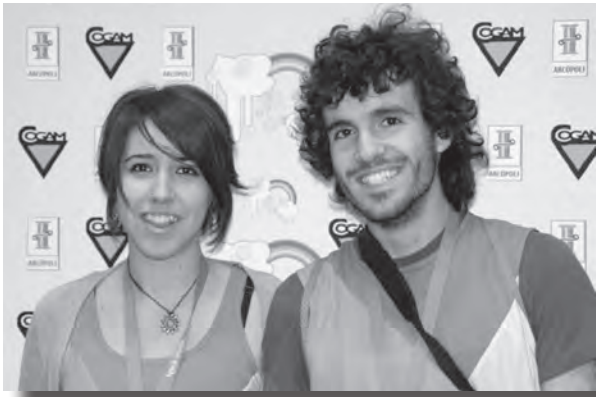
RO: You and Xur were key organizers of Primeros Encuentros Sobre Bisexualidad (First Bisexual Encounters), the first Spanish conference on bisexuality that took place September 24-26. How did this conference come to be? And how did it go? Tell us about it!

EM: In Spain, the bi movement barely exists. When we started our activism we had no bi bibliography, bi resources, bi groups, bi visibility... so during this last year we have tried to jumpstart the bi movement in our country.

We decided that first step was to create a community, a space where we could meet each other and we said, "Why not to do it ourselves?"

We started this project with no funding or grants, no support from the large organizations and with just around ten people involved. It has been really hard to pull together, but we took for granted that it would be successful because even if it had turned out awful, it would still have been a starting point.

Elena, continues on next page



Elena and Xurxo

In the end, everything turned out great and we received financial support from CANAE (Confederation of Students' Organizations of Spain) and help from the City Hall of Getafe, the city near Madrid where the conference was held. People came from all over the country, even people who had become aware of and identified with bisexuality through seeing our posters or our website. It was such a great event that I think we will organize one again next year, and we hope to get the support of the FELGTB (Spanish Federation of LGBT Organizations) to create this desired community.

RO: Do any bi organizations exist in Spain?

EM: As far as I know there are no bi organizations in Spain, there are just bi groups within LGBT ones. In Spain the "B" was introduced to "LGT" just three years ago, although there had been bi activists before then. My experiences show me that there are still some challenges to introducing bi reality into manifestos and missions. However, day by day we're getting all of the LGTB organizations to start acknowledging us. The Spanish conference gave us the opportunity to meet each other and show the public that we are many, and we want to be listened to. Nowadays FELGTB is restarting the Bisexual Space (bisexual group), which Xurxo leads.

RO: What connections do you have with bi and/or LGT activists in other countries? Does your knowledge of, or contacts with bi or LGBT activism in other countries influence your activism in Spain?

EM: Attending the ICB in London helped me decide what should be my focus in Spain. Also, I realized that to achieve our goals, it is important to be connected to the rest of Europe and the world. I got ideas from the UK, the USA, Denmark, Holland, Germany and our neighbor Portugal. It gave me the opportunity to meet bi Spanish activists who live abroad and gave me ideas about what might work here in Spain. International contact has definitely changed my activist life.

Robyn is the editor of the 42-country anthology Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World and of Bi Women.

Two Poems by Jane Barnes

GUESS WHO ELSE WAS BISEXUAL?

Shakespeare that's who but he shouldn't have gone
around flaunting it with those poems we don't have
time to figure out all those pronouns so OK men had to

play women at the Globe the real ones were home
dying of childbirth maybe it was just a little playing
around (you know artists) or a phase or something

probably they didn't call it that probably didn't call it
anything there weren't even any bi clubs in London yet
for him to join

Jane is a poet who lives in New York City and has taught English at NYU and at CUNY. One of her poems appears in the Getting Bi anthology.

MY BOYFRIEND

young sometimes shy no beard
soft spoken fierce with ideas
some would say like a boy
he eats books all day long and sings

so sweetly some say he's girlish being so
blond enlightened fist rarely
shook in front of anybody's face
though my boyfriend could

eat your heart and spit out
the tough parts (if she wanted to)

IBC, continued from p. 1

more time, but I eventually discerned that BiCon (28th UK National Bisexual Conference) contributed the fun, sexy workshops like *Cuddle Party*, *Naked Lunch* and *CoverBis*, while 10 ICB (the 10th International Bisexual Conference) brought with it more serious workshops such as *Love, Rage and the Occupation: Bisexual Politics in Israel/Palestine* and *Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World*. Ultimately, it didn't matter which workshops were from which conference, since they all contributed to the wonderfully unique and powerful event I simply called BiCon.

While many of the workshops were mind-boggling and thought-provoking, fully half of the BiCon experience for me was the people I met. I flew in on a red eye from San Francisco (after hooking up with Mikey, my brother-of-the-heart in Chicago) and got to campus around lunch time. We were determined to stay awake so we could sleep all night, but in our groggy state, didn't think to buy food to have in our flat for breakfast the next morning. On the newcomers list-serv, people had discussed this issue and made arrangements with each other. At it turns out, we had the loveliest flatmates, experienced BiCon goers, who, as I discovered the next morning, had brought everything imaginable to eat with them and laid it all out on the counters with signs encouraging us to help ourselves! They were lifesavers, and we had a number of delightful conversations with them during BiCon week.

Our flatmates were not the only amazing people we met. Every workshop, every meal either introduced us to new friends or deepened connections to people we had already met. I met Xurxo, an activist from Spain who had taken on himself to distribute my survey on the experiences of bisexuals in the workplace to all the Spanish-speaking countries in the world. I met someone I had connected with on the newcomer's list prior to the conference, a woman from the US who lives in London, and we really hit it off. And I got to meet face-to-face Denise Penn from the American Institute of Bisexuality, the gang from the Bisexual Resource Center, and the wonderful Robyn Ochs.

The wry humor and endless good will of the BiCon and BiReCon staff, and the other people from around the world filled me with warm feelings. This is a community that likes to have fun, to share, to think, and to go deep. I may have been a bi conference virgin when I arrived at BiCon, but I'm a bi conference addict from here on out.

An added attraction of attending an international bi conference is getting perspectives from people whose lives were very similar to mine, though they lived in other parts of the world. Then there were other people whose lives and interests did not seem to intersect with mine in the slightest. I haven't been truly surprised by a conference in many years, but BiCon 28 /10 ICB/BiReCon definitely broadened my horizons.

I would love to see the ICB and maybe the BiReCon conferences brought to the U.S. again in the near future.



Apphia K. (India) and Robyn Ochs (US)

(Of the ten international conferences, three have been in the US: New York, 1994; Boston, 1998; Minneapolis, 2004.) If anyone out there is thinking about making that happen, I would be happy to be on an exploratory team for it, and if it comes together, to be part of the planning team. I like to think these international conferences can help expose the greater LGBT community to bisexuality and make the B even more visible within the movement.

Heidi lives in California, USA. She is a researcher studying bisexuals in the workplace.

Never In My Wildest Dreams

By Vicky Rosa

Being at BiCon for me was like walking through town and watching people—except they were all bisexual (or most of them were!) People were actually much more diverse than you would see on your average stroll. There were differently-abled people of every kind, older people, strikingly young people, people of color, all types of transgender and genderqueers, people dressed as Goths, in latex, or resembling the cast of 'Grease,' plenty of internationals. Seeing them was a great reminder of the diversity of our community, which I generally don't get to see. I found it amazing that all those people had the same identity, albeit interwoven with plenty of other identities. It was very inspiring to see how people interconnected their identities and activisms—poly, BDSM, trade unions, LGBT, etc. Everyone was different and everyone was respectful. At the closing plenary I was told there were over 400 attendees. Never in my wildest dreams did I think so many people would attend a bisexual conference. So, in a way, it was like a dream come true.

Vicky is a bisexual and polyamory activist from Madrid, Spain.

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By Shiri Eisner

BiCon was absolutely awesome. I had never witnessed a well-based bisexual community, have never been to a bisexual event that I didn't organize myself. Being able to experience a space dedicated to the bisexual community, full of bisexual, pansexual and queer people was deeply heartening for me, and gave me hope for my local community.

However, it was also a complex experience for me. BiCon was also the first time I experienced being a person of color from a country perceived as "backward," within a community of white people in a country that once colonized the place where I now live (before the founding of the state of Israel, the occupation, the Nakba, and the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians). It's hard to describe racism so imbued within a culture—in Israel, as a Mizrahi person, I am a person of color as well—and the culture is imbued with it. But at BiCon (in the UK), I sensed a sort of white cultural supremacy that I have never felt in my life—after all, this was the culture that had mastered colonialism.

Other problems were also present in BiCon. I was disheartened by this bisexual community's liberal assimilationism, marking the struggle for marriage equality as its most central one, in lieu of burning issues such as housing, health, mental health and suicidality, work discrimination, rape, violence, and many other issues with particular (and high) effect on bisexual people (and especially those of color, transgenders and genderqueers, youth, women, differently abled people, working class people, etc.). In fact, as working class transgender/genderqueer people of color traveling from a different country, my girlfriend and I could not afford the expensive food provided at the bar and often went hungry during the day. I feel that this would not have happened had the organizers made themselves aware and committed to addressing such issues.

However, despite all these problems, I did find a community: I found the radicals, the transgenders, the genderqueers, the feminists, the vegans, the anarchists, and the people of color—the community's delightful fringes.



The Getting Bi panel

Within that circle, I found friendship, politics, solidarity and hope. After returning home, we started a small mailing list for the radical BPQ's (bisexuals, pansexuals and queers) and are now working on writing a new, radical bisexual manifesto. Now, I feel, the revolution is closer at hand.

Shiri is a bisexual, anarchafeminist and political activist in Tel Aviv, Israel.

Beyond the Conference

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

This was my third international conference and I got a kick out of traveling across an ocean to meet other North American activists—even people from my own Boston community I hadn't met before. I'm hopeful that some of the people I met during the conference I'll be seeing again within the bi community and beyond.

I enjoyed presenting two workshops at the conference. Two other Bisexual Resource Center board members and I detailed what the organization does while also swapping stories about what is going on within the attendees' own communities. Steph Miserlis and I facilitated another workshop exploring the variety of identifiers that the bi community uses to name ourselves. From bi, fluid, pansexual, omnisexual, pomosexual and more, the group discussed their reasoning for each and whether we can work together politically if our word choices are different.

I was also honored to participate in Robyn Ochs' panel of international contributors from *Getting Bi: Voices From Around the World*, which truly did offer an amazing array of experiences from very diverse parts of the world: Denmark, Finland, India, Israel, Portugal, Spain, the UK, and the US.

One of the highlights for me was hearing the preliminary findings that Heidi Bruins Green and Nick Payne were discovering from their internet Bis in the Workplace survey. The discussion among the participants was really compelling and the researchers earnestly accepted the feedback to keep refining the examination of the data. I'm sure you will see mention of their final results in this newsletter.

As a bi activist, it's exciting to gather together with others who share commonalities, but also to be open to learning from our differences. These international spaces are so worthwhile for those experiences that change one's perspective, not necessarily overnight, but as part of one's entire journey.

Ellyn is the President of the Bisexual Resource Center.

A Favorite Moment

By Steph Miserlis

Though asked to sum up my conference experience with one favorite thing, I have to say there wasn't one. It was a mix. I'd never been to England before and that alone

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was my favorite thing about BiCon. Big Ben looked big. So did purses. There were pointier shoes, stylish untucked shirttails, fabulous Indian food, and very polite Underground (subway) announcements. And the bi conference itself was just as impressionable in its mix of moments and emotion—political workshops, nudist lunches, earnest explorations of sexuality, politics and meaning, and a sea of purple and pinks.

It was a kaleidoscope of people, cultures, ideas, and expectations. Just like our community. Nothing homogeneous. There was the wonderful breakfast chat with a Dutch man about musical overtones, the Sri Lankan's passion about being bi and visible in an activist workshop, the curvy English woman at the dance moving like wheat in the wind, and the tearful trans woman telling me how freeing it was to finally be wholly herself at the conference.

So, I felt right at home and in community. And I saw myself in so many of the attendees; it didn't matter the culture or country. I recognized myself in the young Israeli radical, maybe about 20 years ago. I saw myself in the overwhelmed woman hiding in the corner of the dining room. I emotionally resonated with a man's complete frustration with yet another bisexual discussion about making sure we include, identify, and isolate "bisexuality" instead of just moving forward already. I felt connected to it all, and the messy blend of moments caught in between workshops, on the tube with fellow Boston bis, on late night strolls by the bar, and in political chats over muffins and coffee. BiCon has already become one of my life's own favorite moments.

Steph is on the Board of the Bisexual Resource Center.



Ellyn and Steph outside the conference venue, happy about something or other.

Dari, continued from p. 1

not about justice. Hearing about piety but not about privilege. I am never fully in either place. I am torn.

I came out to one of my best friends about a year ago. We first met in a conservative, college campus ministry some years ago, both serving on the leadership committee. We have been close ever since. I told her via email that I was dating a girl and that I was bisexual. "The devil is deceiving you... This is not who you are... I thought we had the same beliefs... This doesn't make sense..." and so on. She could not wrap her mind around the possibility that I do indeed love Jesus... and sometimes women. Every shocked and shocking statement she made perforated me right along the line where my faith and sexuality met. Most of the women I have dated are totally put off by Christianity. It seems there is a vast chasm of mutually reinforcing ignorance and intolerance between these two communities. And though I try to stand in that gap, I fear my arms cannot reach both sides. But even if they did, I suspect I would be torn asunder by the pulling in opposite directions. I will not forsake my Savior for the next pretty gal who touches the small of my back and winks at me. And I'm tired of hiding my Bible when my latest love interest comes over to cook for me and kiss me under the moon. Yet, I'm beginning to think that the loneliness of a celibate life would make my heart very unlike the heart of Jesus. I am torn.

Today, my friend called me a "strong Black woman." The moment she said it, I looked down at my coffee with envy. It is strong and black. I don't know if I am. Maybe others think so. I have a dear friend who fits the description quite well, more so than I do. We are the only ones we let see each other's weaknesses and vulnerabilities. We entrust each other with our public reputations and our private conversations. This is the privilege and pleasure of Black female friendship. She does not know, though. She does not know that I am bi. My race and my sexuality intersect to form a corner in which I crouch down and hide from the person I most want to see me as I am. But I feel like a betrayer. We have shared beds, shared clothes, and shared hopes. We have shared food and memories and liquor. We are like sisters. But I cannot tell her. It feels like an egregious violation of some unspoken agreement between strong, Black women. A disclosure that invites the kind of judgment we willingly suspend. A disclosure that jeopardizes a sisterhood we cannot afford to relinquish.

DuBois said it best: double consciousness. But what happens when that double consciousness is multiplied times two or three or ten? At every point of intersection, I am split. Torn. Frayed. Where can I go to keep myself together? "You've got to find community," my counselor said. "But which community do I choose?" I asked. "You can be all of these things at the same time, you know." I want to believe her. I think she is right. But for now, I find it hard to ever fully be everything, because in that space where every part of my identity collides, it seems there's only room enough for me.

Dari is a 26-year-old, bisexual university instructor and aspiring writer from Atlanta, GA.

Tuxedo Shirts

By Jess Wells

I was standing on a street corner when I felt the tilting and, though it might have been someone's brakes or the door to the diner behind me, it sounded like the screech of old metal pressed into service. Two dapper young lesbians walked by in perfectly pressed tuxedo shirts and short hair, dressed for night though it was early morning, striding in that way that my sisters walk, but even in San Francisco discreetly not holding hands. For 23 years of my lesbianism, dapper butches had been my favorite. A woman in slacks. Cognac, the New York Times, erudition.

But today, as a single lesbian mother, I clutched my son's hand tighter and felt chilled by how remote they seemed. I had left yet another relationship but this break-up was more devastating, more profound. Three years of cautious weekends and separate arrangements only to hear "Gosh, I don't really want to be in a family."

I had been an idiot, I see that now: I thought we could win her over, that time would draw her to this marvelous life spent raising kids, and to my incredible child.

After she left I started dating, but was told by my beautiful, witty artist that she "didn't want kids." And not knowing any better, telling her that I didn't want her to discipline my child or cover my finances, that I could keep my family life separate. How deluded was that? She knew better, and disappeared.

No, separate wasn't going to work. It was family or celibacy and my friends point out that I'm really not built for celibacy.

Searching the internet, this time for lesbians who clearly stated a desire to be in a family, I found only femmes. Any woman who checked the box "would consider it" was ruled out. "Yeah, I like kids," they'd say, and it sounded like "Sure, I like...dogs." I wasn't going through that again, have some woman exercise her right to change her mind, or become involved only to reject us.

It was a slow, cautious business. You can't move too quickly when kids are involved, you can't have flings, or give it a try. They take it personally. They believe in happily-ever-after. They want and need things settled, and they're incredibly traditional about parents. Serve them a sippy cup you're a parent in their eyes. But I'm not a woman to be alone. I didn't know what to do.

Taking one last look at the lesbian night owls, I saw a man coming up the walk, pushing a stroller with another kid in a shoulder pack. He was in his early thirties, though sleep-deprivation made him look older. He schlumped down the street, his socks mismatched and his bed-head hair ignored. The stroller rider had a bottle and was well-tucked into blankets and the backpack rider was bouncing up and down on the lumbar rung in that giddy callisthenic that makes a parent seem to be

trudging through sand. You could tell he was tired, that his needs came second, that someone was at home reaping the rewards of his generosity. And that he was happy about that. He had the strength and self-confidence to live in the wrinkled world of parenting. Believe me, it takes a lot of confidence and exhaustion (or is it good values and clear priorities?) to make you not care if your clothes match.

And that, it turns out, was the crux of my becoming bisexual, to jumping the fence, or deserting the flock, or throwing in the towel: The sexual allure of nurturance drew me in. There's nothing sexier to me than evidence of generosity.

There is a sensuality to parenting. It sure isn't dapper, but it's very sexy.

People will grant you that parenting is a different world, but I've never heard that it's got a really hot streak to it. That care of children is a parent's foreplay. And I hadn't expected that a rumped dad with happy kids would be way more attractive to me than a dapper someone focused on themselves.

I knew that family life was a different world, but I didn't know that the world of good parenting is so all-consuming, so entirely defining, that it can transcend the confines of gender, orientation, and social definition. It's not just that you spend all your time with parents, it's that the ability to focus on someone else is an indicator of a heart that's open and giving. And that's about as hot as it gets.

It was a surprise to me that it would be easier to find a man willing to put someone else first, to devote himself to nurturing, than a woman. It was a surprise to me that it was damn hard to find a lesbian who didn't lean back and proclaim to be "too selfish for kids." And so began the journey of discovering that some of our lesbian mainstays just weren't true for me anymore.

Editor's note: This is the first part of a nine-part story called "The See-Saw Family." The rest of the story will appear in future issues of Bi Women, as will an interview with the author.

Jess is the author/editor of a dozen volumes of work, including the novels The Mandrake Broom (historical fiction), The Price of Passion (lesbian erotica), and AfterShocks (modern drama). She is the recipient of a San Francisco Arts Commission Grant for Literature and a four-time finalist for the Lambda Literary Award. Her work and workshops can be found at www.jesswells.com.

Intersections

By Robyn Walters

There are many intersections in our lives at which we pause, look around, and pick a direction. Sometimes, there is no conscious decision as we turn one way or the other or keep plowing on straight ahead.

There are many other intersections we may have heard of but at which we never arrive.

For one, there is the intersection between gay and straight. Many people never see this intersection in their lives as anything but a topic at which to hurl insults, threats, inanities, and religious or political posturing. It is an intersection that most people pass straight on through without a thought if it should even appear on their route in life. For others, it is an automatic turn without any conscious decision but, perhaps, with some guilt or fear of rejection attached—rejection by friends, family, church, employer. There seems little evidence that many pause at the intersection, ponder the directions, and say, “I think I’ll choose to be gay.” Life happens.

The intersection between gay and bi is one I never thought much about before today. But I have met gays and lesbians who have gone on to experience encounters or relationships with opposite sex partners. Some have seemed puzzled at what has befallen them. Others have found it to be entirely natural.

The intersection between straight and bi was a problem for me for many years. To me it seemed that someone on the “down low,” who professed to be straight but who had same sex experiences was, in reality, gay. But I think I have come to understand bisexuality a bit better as I have grown older and been through some other intersections.

There is the intersection of man and woman, for example. This is one that caught me by surprise in my late 50s. This is one that I had avoided at all costs from the age of nine when I was almost caught in my mother’s dress. This is one that was half hidden in the stash of lingerie that I purged and rebuilt from age twelve on. This is the one that the intersection of my new spiritual path and the Internet led to typing the words “cross dresser” into a search engine. So that’s who I was, a heterosexual cross dresser. It was a reasonable hypothesis, a workable solution that led to the intersection of marriage and divorce. That intersection was more a traffic circle with one exit being separation. Separation offered a route to another intersection of reconciliation and divorce, an intersection that could be approached from more than one direction.

While looking for the intersection of reconciliation and divorce, intent on turning to reconciliation, I came to the intersection of male and female. Now here, I did pause and seek professional assistance. After several sessions with a PhD gender counselor, I received a not very gentle nudge: “You are transsexual, what are you going to do about it?”

In turn, my minister said, “Robyn, you don’t get to choose God’s challenge. All you get to do is to choose when you will accept it.”

I accepted the challenge God placed before me and turned toward female. Along that highway, I passed through hormone-induced re-puberty, hundreds of hours of electrolysis, divorce, remarriage, and hours of surgery both for me and for my husband, who had passed through the intersection of female and male and turned toward male.

On my journey to woman and female, I came, at last, to the intersection of straight and bi. Hmmm. Doesn’t that man look sexy? OhmyGod, Robyn; what are you thinking? Another challenge, God? Okay, okay, but let me get the plumbing changed, all right?

That one came as a mental challenge. At my age, and given my monogamous relationship with my female-to-male husband, I won’t be experiencing any sexy looking older fellas other than as eye candy. So I admit to being a non-practicing bisexual. Life happens.

At 73, I think I’m nearing another intersection, that between young and old. I still think young, but the state now requires driver’s license renewal every two years. They, at least, want to see when I make the turn to old.

And eventually, I could reach the intersection of life and death. That’s one at which most people don’t make a choice. Some do, but most just get pushed around the corner. I would want to arrive there battered and worn out, saying, “What a ride this has been.” I have chosen a route to a different intersection, though.

Here, I have made a choice. At about age 120, I will drive myself (Take that, DMV!) to the intersection of life and forever. When I take the turn to forever, I will find it true that we are not humans seeking a spiritual experience but eternal spirits who seek an earthly experience, and I will shout, “What a ride this has been.”

Robyn is a U.S. Naval Academy graduate with a PhD in Naval Engineering from MIT. Sometimes, her right brain becomes more engaged than the left brain, such as when she writes, and definitely when she transitioned from male to female. She and her author husband live and play in Hawaii.



A Breath of Fresh Air

By Sara Volumnia Fox

At a table in a crowded restaurant in downtown Toronto one cool Autumnal day, my friend and I were discussing the time of our lives during which I had decided to cut off all contact with him. The reason for this drastic decision would be the entry point to my first coming out experience as identifying as polyamorous. In some ways coming out as poly feels like a “third” coming out to me. The first coming out entailed admitting I was bisexual, the second as being kinky and now as polyamorous.

But my story didn't start on that Autumnal day. The actual starting place for my coming out as poly-identified is as elusive as trying to pinpoint when I first realized I was bisexual. Of course I have memories I piece together to make my life more understandable to others. I have always been the person I am today, but only in the last two years have I learned the language of polyamory, and that has enabled me to come out to myself.

Although I have several close poly-identified friends whom I have always accepted, I never considered myself open to polyamory until this summer. Perhaps open isn't the right word, considering my realization that I could indeed have the capacity to develop feelings for multiple people had left me quite closed. The internal struggle I faced upon realizing that I had been repressing my feelings because of social scripts rendered me more vulnerable and left me silent. This silence would lead me to push away those I cared about because I was too afraid to admit to myself that I was poly.

I remember the first time I had heard the word “poly.” It was uttered from the lips of someone I was interested in. He thought I might have feelings for his ex-girlfriend who had introduced the two of us years earlier at her birthday party. I remember that party so well. He would have a lasting impression on me as someone whom I admired as a free spirit; someone whom I could have sworn would be open to being poly himself. I recall feeling so offended and dumbfounded when he asked me if I considered myself to be monogamous or open to being polyamorous. The sole reason for my shock at being asked was because I considered myself monogamous at the time. The mere question felt like a threat to my selfhood. But, I would never forget being asked this question as it opened the door to my own self-questioning a year later. A question I would reveal the answer to on that Autumnal evening with my friend.

The restaurant was crowded and warm. Couples sat around us eating their cheesecake and coffee. Students marked papers and the air was saturated and the room grew stuffy. I needed to get air so I spoke.

“So, the reason we stopped talking wasn't anything bad really...” I said to Griffin (name changed to protect his identity) with a rather hurried and uncensored pace.

“Ok...” he replied with a tone of confusion.

“I was just confused. I was dating François and I wanted

to pursue a relationship with him. But, I knew that I had feelings for you despite it all. I thought it was best to get distance from you,” I said, feeling ashamed and like a weight was slowly lifting off my back.

“I knew it. I thought something was off.” He replied with a tone of vindication but added that he wanted to give me my space.

“So, I basically realized something. I...ummm...well...I think I'm open to being poly. I mean I realize that this isn't the first time I have liked two guys at once. I want to explore this part of myself and stop denying it, I know it was the reason for my break-up and well, that's it.” I sighed, I had said it. Spat it out and no holds barred. We sat in silence for a while.

“Actually I have been thinking about it too. I mean I've gone to the 519 [Toronto's LGBT Centre] myself and, well, I think I'm probably not monogamous, either,” he replied.

Wait, this seemed too good to be true. The last time I came out to a close friend as being bisexual years earlier the same thing happened. I had a friend for whom I had feelings but whom I avoided telling because I was in a monogamous relationship at the time. Now that I disclosed these feelings to him, he admitted to being open to polyamory as well! I was floored, to say the least. I felt simultaneously accepted and shocked.

But getting to the point of being OK with even thinking about the possibility of being polyamorous has taken a very long time. A year earlier I was thinking of breaking up with my then-partner because I had developed an emotional connection to a close friend who was in a relationship. My partner knew something was wrong and when the break-up was approaching he asked me directly if I had been cheating on him. Although I did not sexually cheat on him I felt I had emotionally cheated on him because I thought I wasn't allowed to have extraneous emotional connections with other guys aside from my boyfriend at the time. This isn't my only memory of developing strong romantic or loving connections with multiple people simultaneously. All the people whom I found myself attracted and connected with, in hindsight, I would have considered dating had I been able to come out to myself earlier as polyamorous. Until I was able to come out to myself the feelings I had towards multiple people just ended up as feelings of guilt and shame rather than sources of positivity and joy.

As a newly out poly person who is currently dating, as I am putting more effort into practicing radical honesty and clear communication. By radical honesty I mean exposing my innermost feelings and thoughts without an internal censor. It isn't easy to do this in a society where we are taught to hide that which makes us vulnerable through numbing or self-repression. What would the daily lives of folks look like if they were given the self-allowance to tell their bosses how they really felt? Radical honesty entails the willingness to put one's inner truth before the desire to remain silent and keep things “the way they are” to prevent change. Changing

Sara, continues on next page

Sara, continued from previous page

the dynamics of any relationship/friendship is risky and disclosing how you really feel towards someone (whether it occurred in the past or was occurring today) can alter the trajectory of that relationship, for better or worse.

This brings me to my last point regarding dating as a poly-person who lives a busy life. Time, honesty and communication are cornerstones to any fulfilling relationship. I am learning that being poly doesn't guarantee that I will have the ability to always be able to balance these facets but that I am aware of their importance. Recently, I decided to tell a close friend that I felt neglected in our friendship. She said it wasn't personal and that she had been "quite busy." "Busy" to me meant she wasn't prioritizing our friendship and needless to say I told her it was a "lame excuse." Normally, I would have kept silent and accepted "busy" as a valid excuse. But, today I was turning over a new leaf. She ended up apologizing (this was occurred via text messages) and accepted that she had slipped up. The importance of this example is that if you are going to call yourself poly (as she does) then finding a way to make time for friends, partners, partners of partners, etc., will mean you make less time for others who in turn can feel hurt. Although you aren't responsible for anyone's feelings aside from your own, you have to at least respectfully and honestly acknowledge when you make mistakes in the area of time management.

Dating is a way to learn what you value and how you want to grow as a person in relation to others. Although I have no intention to marry for at least another ten years, I realize that my relationships will not all last. I want to be able to date multiple people with the intention that each relationship will enrich my life; that we will help one another grow; that we have a strong connection and communication and that we have fun and laugh together. Relationships aren't something I want to jump into and taking the time to get to know someone without making a sexual commitment can mean all the difference. Casual sex and polyamory aren't the same thing for me. In fact, it has become increasingly difficult for me to engage in casual sex now that I have come out as polyamorous. The temptation is always there, but I know that having a fuck buddy just doesn't cut it for me. It is much more of a turn-on to have a meaningful, deep, emotional connection to me than to have sex only with someone I'm attracted and interested in.

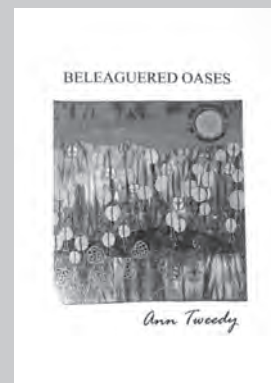
If you have questioned your dating history and found yourself being drawn to two or more people, then perhaps you might want to question your ideas on monogamy. In the very least, you might try attending a discussion group on polyamory. This is what I intend to do next this month in the hopes of learning from the experiences of others and deepening my own understanding of the type of polyamory I am developing through dating.

Sara is a 24-year-old queer feminist from Toronto, Ontario, who actively participates in her local anti-violence movement.

Book Review: *Beleaguered Oases* by Ann Tweedy

By Lena Judith Drake

When I received my review copy of Ann Tweedy's *Beleaguered Oases*, I sincerely hoped that I would enjoy the poetry, because did not want to write a scathing critique. I was not disappointed. In fact, I devoured these beleaguered poems while furiously taking notes about my future review on the back of the oversized index card sent with the copy of the book.



These are good poems. Very, very good poems. Divided into three sections, "The Body," "Many Oases," and "Immersed," these poems describe bodies and landscapes in complex relationships through honest details. Yes, some of these are nature poems, but not maudlin depictions of grassy knolls and birds twittering. This is nature—more like human nature, which just might be animal nature. This is clear in the depictions of small moments in sexuality, like in "Newts" and "Licking the Glue."

The poems are a much-needed addition to the community of bisexual/fluid-sexual writing. The poem "Fruit" speaks of marginalized people, hopeless things, and mundane miracles—and who better to understand margins than those in between them? "Lit Rooms" talks of the desire of small creatures—insects, arachnids, humans. "Word Games" encompasses polyamorous talk in hindsight, complexly and without shock value. "Kilter" celebrates the body of a lover, celebrates sex as abundance: "... the jut / of my pelvis like the current-scoured / stone you palmed before we met..." (44). "A Few Minutes at the Beach" is my favorite, with sad and visceral details, mastectomy, suicide, the things that tear us apart in life, the same things that make us want to cling together.

Tweedy asks a question to which many readers, bisexual and otherwise, may relate: "do you think I could write myself back into / the hewn dimensions of any single space?" (42). Tweedy's writing, encompassing of many places and feelings, cannot, but I would never ask it to.

Beleaguered Oases can be ordered at www.anntweedypoetry.com.

Lena is the editor-in-chief of Breadcrumb Scabs magazine (www.breadcrumbscabs.com). For personal information, or her own poetry, visit her at lenajudith.sedentarygecko.com.

A Raging Buddhist

By Dillan DiGiovanni

I became an activist in 2003. Or at least that's when I began identifying as one. Prior to that, I hadn't necessarily cared about one cause more than another, and I certainly didn't invest my time, energy or voice into advocating for change.

Upon joining a progressive spiritual community, I became champion for anti-racism and anti-oppression—speaking to white privilege and against all the -isms of American society. Like many white people, I went through many phases of understanding racism and oppression before arriving at what Beverly Daniel Tatum refers to as the autonomy phase of white identity development, where “a person incorporates the newly defined view of Whiteness as part of a personal identity.” Each day I struggle to be a good ally to those who are discriminated against for their age, religion, skin color, ethnicity and physical abilities. As a person living in the LGBTQ community, I suffer daily prejudice and discrimination myself. This makes me angry. And anger makes me tired. Fatigue makes for more anger, which sometimes comes out in my personal and professional life. And all of this shows up in my Buddhist practice.

Around the same time I became an activist, I also became keenly interested in Tibetan Buddhism. I became a devout reader of the Buddhist nun, Pema Chodron, and I listen to her books on CD as part of my regular spiritual practice. On one entitled “Getting Unstuck,” she gives advice during a Q & A session about how to be both an activist and *bodhisattva*, a spiritual warrior and seeker of enlightenment. This continues to inspire me each time I hear it.

With our recent election results and the many injustices in our world, there is no shortage of reasons to get dismayed, frustrated or even enraged. Before I heard Pema's advice, I thought it wasn't possible to be so angry and still be the compassionate spiritual being I sought to become. I also didn't think I would be a good activist if I wasn't angrily protesting at rallies and demonstrations. Even the discursive

thoughts, I felt, were full of too much resentment to attain enlightenment. What was a young activist to do?

Then I listened to Pema. And I also lived my life a little bit more. Pema says that there are many *bodhisattvas* who are also activists. The difference, she says, is the intention and the actions. We can contribute our anger to the injustice of any cause, but it only begets more anger. We can make a true difference when we breathe light and love into the experience. When we bring balance, understanding and compassion, we move beyond being “hooked” by the “right/wrong way of looking at things.” She encourages *bodhisattvas*, spiritual warriors, to see clearly what will escalate the aggression and what will diminish it. I think of this when someone labels me or assumes an identity that doesn't match what I claim. Sometimes it happens in innocent conversation, sometimes it comes angrily from a passing car. Whenever I want to respond in anger, I think of Pema.

In my early years as an activist, I was angry from years of confusion and feelings of betrayal from adults and mentors around me. I took cues from my peers and thought the more anger I presented, the “more authentic” was my devotion to the cause.

Now, having met many different activists outside that small community I first encountered, I see there are many ways to speak up and work for justice. Listening to Pema, I understand that when I get angry only my rage is contagious. The suffering is not lessened. Instead, I meditate and breathe into those feelings that accompany injustice with an understanding that I can create change by being the opposite energy of all that fear, sadness and ignorance. By reflecting the future I wish to see, I am a raging Buddhist.

Dillan is a certified holistic health coach, trained at the Institute for Integrative Nutrition in New York City and is grateful for the many things that a Buddhist practice, albeit inconsistent, has provided. Dillan can be reached at dillan@savoryourexistence.com.



BBWN's brunches: Special moments from Jen's brunch in September and Steph's brunch in October.

Book Review:

Border Sexualities, Border Families in School

by Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli

Reviewed by Lisa Keele

Border Sexualities, Border Families in Schools is a timely publication, given the recent press attention given to teenage suicides as a direct result of homophobic bullying—mistreatment by their peers relating to perceived or actual sexual orientation. No doubt some school administrators are wondering what they can do to help create a safe school environment for all of their children. Indeed, there is much that schools can do to help eliminate bullying and to support children who themselves identify as non-heterosexual, or who come from homes with non-heterosexual parents.

This book argues that even in schools where such diversity is acknowledged and policies are created to foster the best learning environment for all, students are sorted into the “straight” filing cabinet or the “gay” filing cabinet, by virtue of their own orientation or that of their family members. Missing from much of the discussion is the border group: students who identify as something other than heterosexual or homosexual, and students who come from family structures where parents are bisexual, of mixed sexual orientations, and/or in polyamorous or multi-partner relationships. Such students often feel invisible or overlooked even in such diversity-friendly environments. The authors of this book call these students “the X-files”; their file belongs neither in the “heterosexual” nor the “homosexual” filing cabinets. This book examines the school experience of these borderland children, and makes specific recommendations for the best ways to include them.

The book is a first of its kind, and as such, takes great pains to do background work and to share first-hand experience by students and their parents. Thus, the first chapter, “Messing Up the School Sex Filing Cabinet,” defines terms such as bisexual, multisexual, polyamorous, queerly mixed families, etc., and summarizes research on borderland students and their families. Chapter 2 is almost entirely theoretical in nature. It delves into detail on the flavors of polyamory, for example, and discusses how varying definitions can affect research. It examines the nature of human dichotomies and various ways in which humans can break these dichotomies, “messing up” the filing cabinets created by society to easily categorize something that is in fact complex. Chapters 3 and 4 examine the experience of borderland children in schools, and present overviews on the available literature, as well as the author’s own empirical research, with Chapter 3 dedicated to bisexuality of the student

and/or their parent(s), and Chapter 4 dedicated to polyamorous, multi-partnered, or multisexual families. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings of the author’s research and calls for schools “to move from models of difference and dichotomy to models of diversity and multiplicity” (27).

Concrete recommendations to schools include: incorporating books and visual resources about bisexuality and polyamory; incorporating bisexual or polyamorous historical figures into the curriculum; explicitly including bisexual and polyamorous discussions/speakers during Diversity Awareness Week; professional development for staff on X-files issues; and effective anti-harassment and antidiscrimination policies and staff training.

The best part of this book is the inclusion of many quotations from students interviewed, who speak candidly, sometimes harrowingly, and often charmingly about their own experiences. A couple of my favorites are from seventeen-year-old Marita: “I’m an anonymous random. I like being a random, but it’s being anonymous that’s crap” (221), and fifteen-year-old Wendy: “The world isn’t heterosexual or homosexual, it’s lotsasexuals” (3). Seventeen-year old Linda underlines the need for just such research to be done, when she writes: “I got thrown downstairs, punched and threatened with rape by boys for coming out as bi. They said raping me would take away the lesbian parts. I’d tried several times to complain to the principal. I reported what these guys were doing, but all he said all the time was that since I’d done this foolish thing and come out, he could guarantee no protection; I’d brought it on myself” (99-100).

This book is not one I would recommend directly to educators; it is fairly dense and theoretical, heavy on the research and relatively light on concrete recommendations. I can imagine a high school math teacher, worried about the bullying of a bisexual student in her class, encountering a sentence like, “Ironically, my very constructions of ‘border family’ and ‘border sexuality’ are a reflection of hierarchical dualisms and models of difference and dichotomy that uphold the Center and perpetuate panopticonic fear



Border Sexualities, continued on p. 15

Intersection

By Jan Steckel

When I help a woman on with her jacket,
My sexuality grabs my gender identity
and waltzes it around the room.

I'm a woman, but there's a man in me.
He's a bit of a fop, sort of a pansy.
He might be a fag.

Why shouldn't everything about me be fluid?
I'm a squishy skin-bag of water and salt,
ocean inside and out.

As a child, I was sure I was a boy.
The heroes of all the best books were boys.
I pretty much lived in my head, what I read.

Now I feel more like a woman –
except around straight women.
Then I feel like a butch lunk.

My husband thinks I'm a femme
because I wear lavender, (color and scent),
and ask him to open jars.

All roads meet in me:
Butch when I wake up,
femme at lunch.


Androgynous at dinner,
totally trans all night.
Can I get that door for you?


*Jan is an Oakland, California, writer, a bisexual activist and a former pediatrician who has published a chapbook of poetry, *The Underwater Hospital* (Zeitgeist Press, 2006) and another of fiction, *Mixing Tracks* (Gertrude Press, 2009). Her writing has appeared in *Bi Women*, *Anything That Moves*, *Bi Magazine*, *Bi Tribune* and elsewhere.*


News Briefs


By Katrina Chaves





 A Memphis, Tennessee, teen says he was harassed and beaten by a gang in October, simply because he is bisexual. Sharon Poindexter, who witnessed the attack, was visibly angry when she discussed her attempts to stop the assault. After the boys initially ignored her, she said she was calling the police, which made them finally run from the scene of the crime. The 16-year-old victim was treated for minor injuries.

 In September another student, Andy Ruiz, decided to join UC Riverside's local Lambda Theta Phi chapter, but was harassed and hazed because he identified as bisexual. He is trying to transfer to a different campus due to the biphobic and homophobic abuse he endured in this fraternity. This incident is extremely disturbing, given the number of recent suicides in our community (more than 10 since early September). America's youth have been collectively pushed to a breaking point, but their cries for help are not unheard. Visit thetrevorproject.org or call 1-866-4-U-TREVOR, if you or someone you know feels desperate or confused.

 On a lighter note, we DO have reason to be politically proud and loud, here and very queer, with the 2010 midterm election results! Two openly bi candidates won in their districts: Kyrsten Sinema, a bi-identified State Rep, (who was recently named one of Time Magazine's "40 Under 40"), was the Democrat to win Arizona's State Senate seat. Also, New York's Micah Kellner (another openly bisexual Democrat) was re-elected to serve in the NY State Assembly. Nov. 2 was an amazing day for our community, as 106 BLGT candidates were elected to public office—the highest number of queer victories in any race in U.S. history.

 November also brought us the "I Am Visible" PSA Campaign! Founded by Adrienne Williams, it is a positive space for all bi and pansexual people who have felt "misrepresented, miscounted and ignored." (Visit <http://visible.bisocialnetwork.com>)

 While many celebrities have gotten involved in the *It Gets Better* campaign, and gay & lesbian bullying has become an issue discussed in mainstream media as of late, we are still finding bisexual, pansexual, and transgendered folks left out of public discourse. The bullying and harassment plaguing younger generations is not a problem unique to gay and lesbian communities. Gender role non-conformity, bisexuality, intersexuality, and pansexuality are left out of most discussions. Dan Savage is one popular figure who promotes this invisibility; while discussing "gay and lesbian" bullying, he ignores the fact that bi and trans teenagers struggle with the same fears.

 In other news, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" has not yet been repealed, and two more challenges have been filed to DOMA: one in Connecticut by Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders challenging DOMA's Section 3, which defines "marriage" and "spouse" in federal law as being limited only to opposite-sex couples, and another in NYC by the American Civil Liberties Union and a law firm on behalf of Edith Windsor, the 81-year old widow of Thea Spyer. Windsor was forced to pay a \$350,000 estate bill because of the federal government's refusal to recognize Windsor's marriage. The couple's 2007 wedding in Toronto was featured in *The New York Times*, and they were the subject of a documentary, *Edie & Thea: A Very Long Engagement*.

January

Wednesday, January 5, 7-8:45pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS), Bisexual Resource Center, 29 Stanhope Street, Boston. (See December 1st)

Sunday, January 9, noon, Bis and Allies Bowling. Meet at Lanes & Games on Rt 2 in Cambridge for a couple of strings of bowling. Afterwards, those who want to will go to a local eatery for a late lunch. RSVP to Ellyn at brc@biresource.net.

Monday, January 10, 7pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See December 13th)

Tuesday, January 11, 7-9pm, BRC Board Meeting. (See December 14th)

Saturday, January 15, 11:30am, Saturday Bi Brunch. (See December 18th)

Thursday, January 20, 7pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). (See December 1st)

Sunday, January 23, noon, BBWN Brunch in Stoneham at Carolyn's. Please bring a potluck dish and/or drinks to share. A great opportunity to meet other bi and bi-friendly women in the Boston area. Please note that there are two cats in the household. Also, this is not a child-appropriate brunch. Email Carolyn at cataylor12@hotmail.com to RSVP/get directions. If you are interested in trying to share a ride, please RSVP well in advance to see if it can be arranged.

February

Wednesday, February 2-Sunday, February 6, Creating Change Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force convenes the nation's pre-eminent political, leadership and skills-building conference for the LGBT social justice movement. Visit www.creatingchange.org to find out how you can join hundreds of other queer activists to help change the world.

Wednesday, February 2, 7pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). (See December 1st)

Tuesday, February 8, 7-9pm, BRC Board Meeting. (See January 11th)

Monday, February 14, 7pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See December 13th)

Thursday, February 17, 7pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). (See December 1st)

Saturday, February 19, 11:30am, Saturday Bi Brunch. (See December 18th)

Sunday, February 20, noon, BBWN Potluck Brunch at Jennifer's in Cambridge for President's Day. Please bring a potluck dish and/or drinks to share. A great opportunity to meet other bi and bi-friendly women in the Boston area. Email Jennifer at jbonardi@hotmail.com to RSVP/get directions.

Are you 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.

Border Sexualities, continued from p. 13

and regulation for those in the Margins" (222). However, educators are not the main audience here; queer theorists are. If one wished to write a book, or a training curriculum, which could help that high school math teacher, and her principal, and the school board in her district (and I dearly hope that someone does), and one wished to write it in such a way as to respect and celebrate true diversity, grounded in theory and understanding of the experiences of those who live their lives in this borderland area between dichotomy, this would be thorough and very useful starting point for just such a project.

Border Sexualities, Border Families in School by Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli was published in 2010 by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Australia.

Lisa was born in Utah, and has seen much of the world, but not quite enough of it yet. Somewhere along the way she managed to pick up her PhD in philosophy, and raise three outstanding sons.

Get your
Bi Pride on
this holiday season!

NOW is the time to purchase unique bi-friendly gifts for your loved ones...

Or how about for yourself!



- Help someone understand bisexuality or help celebrate our community's diversity by giving a copy of **Getting Bi: Voices from Bisexuals Around the World**.

- Be a sassy, proud bisexual in a "It's Not a Phase, It's My Life" T-shirts! Available in black or white, sizes S-XXL.

- Or choose from the wide selection of **buttons and jewelry** that can make fun stocking stuffers.

Order early to make sure you get your goodies in time for your holiday celebrations!!

brc
Bisexual Resource Center

Visit
www.biresource.net/catalog.shtml
to find your bi-friendly holiday gear!

The "Bi Office"

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

Ongoing Events

2nd Tuesdays

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting 7-9pm. at 29 Stanhope Street, 4th floor, in Boston.

2nd Mondays:

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

1st Wednesdays, 3rd Thursdays:

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

3rd Saturdays:

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

Sign up for our new email list!

Send an email to: biwomenboston-subscribe@yahoogroups.com



HEY, YOU! YES, YOU.

Do you value *Bi Women*? Think of the support that *Bi Women* has provided to you, and please consider supporting our important work. Help us send *Bi Women* to you, to other women, and also to community centers, youth and campus LGBT groups. It only takes a minute and you will make a difference. It costs \$5000 to keep *Bi Women* and BBWN going for one year. No donation is too small (and none too large). Make your checks payable to BBWN, PO Box 301727, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130. Or donate online via paypal to biwomenboston@gmail.com.

CALENDAR

December

Wednesday, December 1, 7-8:45pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLISS) meets monthly 1st Wed & 3rd Thurs at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope Street, Boston. All bi & bi-friendly people of all genders & orientations welcome. 1st Wed mtgs are peer-facilitated discussion groups, sometimes w/ a pre-selected topic/presenter. 3rd Thurs mtgs are 7-8pm check-ins, discussion, & announcements followed by social time at a nearby restaurant. Only want to socialize? Meet the group at or shortly after 8pm in the lobby of the BLC. Info: brc@biresource.net.

Friday, December 3-Sunday, December 5, Holly Folly Weekend in Provincetown. The perfect weekend to get away and enjoy some pre-holiday shopping, a walk on the beach, a raucous sing-along at the Crown & Anchor, the Gay Men's Chorus concert and much more. Visit www.HollyFolly.com for more info.

Saturday, December 4, 7pm, madFemmePride presents: **BUST*OUT 2010** at Club Cafe, 209 Columbus Ave, Boston. In true madFemme fashion, Bust*Out is 100% welcoming, 100% butch&trans&lesbian friendly. 100% everybody friendly, especially to **FIRST-TIME** attendees! There'll be folks who are single, married, dating, big flirts, permanently coupled, just looking for friends, & everything in between! madFemmePride luv's and values diversity of all kinds, and this social in particular is designed to celebrate sexual

diversity & gender diversity! 21+/\$5-10 cover. Email madfemmepride@yahoo.com for more info.

Monday, December 13, 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 Mons. Info: kate.e.flynn@gmail.com.

Tuesday, December 14, 6-9pm Bisexual Resource Center Annual Open Board Meeting. The December board meeting is the annual meeting of the BRC where all bi and bi-friendly community members are invited to attend. We'll acknowledge the work of the past year, vote on the board members for next year, and start planning ahead for 2011. Dinner and socializing 6-7:00 pm, meeting 7-9:00 pm. Email Ellyn at president@biresource.net for more info. The meeting is at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. near Back Bay station on the Orange Line.

Thursday, December 16, 7pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLISS). Tonight we will have a holiday social gathering at the Bertucci's at the Alewife T stop on the Red Line. Because it is a busy time of year, we will need to make a reservation, so please RSVP to bliss@biresource.net to let us know you are coming. RSVP by Monday, December 13.

Saturday, December 18, 11:30am, Bi Brunch. Bi Brunch (a mixed gender bi group) meets the 3rd Sat 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