



# GLBTA Pride Center Fall 2009 Newsletter

Fall 2009  
Bridgewater State College—2009-2010

## Bisexuality: Myths and Facts Compiled by Hannah Johnson



### Inside this issue:

Bisexuality	1
Campus Pride Leadership Camp	2
Barney Frank Equality Scholarship	3
October is LGBT History Month	4

### Some things to think and talk about:

- Do you know BSC has a scholarship for GLBTA students? See pg.3
- What are your professors' attitudes like regarding GLBT people? Are they getting their facts straight?
- Do you feel that BSC is doing everything possible to accommodate GLBT folks on campus? What can we do to improve?

Many people have misunderstandings about bisexuality and therefore may not distinguish between the myths and facts surrounding this stable and real sexual orientation.

We've compiled a few of the more common myths about bisexuality and set the record straight, so to speak.

#### Myth #1: Bisexuality is just a phase. Nobody stays bisexual.

Sexual orientation is not defined by a person's actions but rather by their feelings. Many people believe that if a bisexual is in a straight relationship, they become straight and vice versa. Bisexuals are not straight half the time and gay half the time; they are bisexual *all* the time. Even if a bisexual ends up in a monogamous, straight relationship for the rest of their life, they may remain attracted to men and women.

#### Myth #2: Bisexuality is only a transitional label used by those who aren't fully out of the closet.

It's true that some people who are still exploring their sexual identity temporarily label themselves "bisexual" before they come out, but many people remain attracted to men and women for their entire lives. Because some use "bisexual" as a transitional label, real bisexuals feel as though no one believes that a person can be truly bisexual. In fact, research involving bisexual women (Diamond, 2008) shows that although partners may change, a bisexual woman's capacity for attraction to men and women remains stable throughout their lives.

#### Myth #3: Bisexuals are promiscuous.

Bisexuals are no more likely to cheat, have one-night stands, or have multiple partners at a time than gay men, lesbian women, or heterosexuals. Although the media, certain celebrities, and pornography would

have us believe that bisexuals are prone to promiscuity, many bisexuals strive for committed, monogamous, stable relationships the same way gay, lesbian, and straight couples do.

#### Myth #4 Bisexuals need to be with both a man and a woman in order to be happy.

As stated above, bisexuals are no more likely to cheat on their partners than anyone else is. The capacity to form attractions to two genders does not equal a need for two partners at once.

#### Myth #5 People only say they're bisexual to double their chances for a date.

Not only is this not true, but coming out as bisexual may have the opposite effect. Due to stereotypes and myths about bisexuality, many people don't trust bisexuals to remain monogamous and won't date them. People who do end up dating bisexuals often have the fear that their partner will suddenly and without warning leave them for someone of another gender.

#### Myth #6: Bisexuals caused AIDS to be transmitted to the straight population.

In reality, unsafe sexual practices and needle-sharing spread AIDS, not bisexuals. There is no research supporting the idea that bisexuals are to blame for bringing AIDS to the straight community. The reality is that HIV does not discriminate based on sexual orientation.

#### References:

- The Bisexual Resource Center ([biresource.net](http://biresource.net))
- The American Institute of Bisexuality ([bisexual.org](http://bisexual.org))
- Bisexual Index ([bisexualindex.org.uk](http://bisexualindex.org.uk))
- Diamond, Lisa M. (2008) *Female Bisexuality From Adolescence to Adulthood: Results From a 10-Year Longitudinal Study*. *Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 44 (No. 1). Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/releases/bisexuality108.html>

Hannah Johnson is a sophomore majoring in Art.

## What I Did This Summer by Kate Hayes-Huer

I gladly accepted the chance to go to [Campus Pride Leadership Camp](#) this summer, not quite knowing what I was in for. This past year has been my first being so involved in school, and I'm happy with the opportunities I've been offered since becoming a student worker, and eventually Student Ambassador, at the GLBTA Pride Center. When I first arrived at Camp, I was more than a little apprehensive. I felt better, however, when I met Leslie, my roommate for the next five days. She was from Duxbury, literally five minutes away from me in Marshfield. That evening we met our Dens (subgroups for activities, workshops, and general support throughout camp). Everyone in our den was coming from a different place, literally and metaphorically, and our Den Leaders, Raja and Laura, were wonderful. We had to choose a name for ourselves, and came up with "In Living Color." I almost immediately became friends with Ash, a fellow artist (printmaker and fiber artist) who, like me, identified as genderqueer. Ash helped me feel at ease through most of the camp.

During the next few days, we heard a number of speakers—activists, writers, and corporate representatives. My favorite speaker probably was Mara Keisling, Executive Director of the National Center for Transgender Equality. She was well-spoken, and at times hilarious, but the thing I loved the most is that she drove home the need for grassroots organization and an emphasis on social justice issues in the GLBT community. She was also the only presenter who was vegan and mentioned animal rights—I, too, feel very strongly that all forms of oppression are interrelated and should be tackled equally.

We also had entertainment, and capped off one of the final nights with an excellent ("No Talent Required") talent show. I loved Emmanuel Xavier, a poet and powerful spoken word artist, who gave an excellent performance and inspired several "Happy Campers" to come forth with their own work as well.

Another opportunity to get to know other Campers was the formation of Caucuses—exclusive

groups of people who identify similarly, mainly to have a safe space for discussion and sharing without having to provide basic information about our lives to allies. I greatly enjoyed "Caucus Time" with the folks in what began as the Genderqueer Caucus and quickly grew to become the Genderqueer and Transgender Caucus. In our limited time, we got to know each other, and I looked forward to the change of pace from workshops and lectures to just chilling out with awesome folks with shared experiences. This gave me the idea to bring something similar to BSC—a confidential group for gender-variant folks only, with no particular agenda. This has become one of my Student Ambassador goals for Fall 2009.

All in all, I enjoyed Campus Pride and I got a lot out of it. I would highly recommend it to any college student looking for the tools and connections needed to implement positive change on their campus, workplace, or the world at large. I had different opinions on certain ideas than some of the speakers, but the point at Camp was not to always agree but to learn and talk to people with different opinions. Campus Pride was a transformative experience for me. Through Camp I came up with some concrete goals for my work as a Student Ambassador, met amazing people from around the country, and felt the optimism and possibility of a unified movement of (mostly!) young GLBT activists.

*Kate Hayes-Huer is a senior majoring in Art. Zie attended Camp Pride in July 2009.*

*For details on how the GLBTA Pride Center can sponsor you to attend Camp Pride, visit [www.bridgew.edu/GLBTA/campuspride.cfm](http://www.bridgew.edu/GLBTA/campuspride.cfm)*



## Recipient of the Barney Frank Equality Scholarship Speaks Out by Tom Gordon

It took a long time for me to get to college. At twenty-five I was the oldest student in all of my classes, thrown into a mix of younger minds. My life experience was so different from everyone that surrounded me. Not only was I older, but I was also a veteran, grew up in foster care, and gay- a strange amalgamation of minority. My first year at Bridgewater State College was a hectic one. I could not afford housing on campus, and so I commuted nearly two hours every day. Rent, utilities, car insurance, and health insurance bore down on my bank accounts throughout the year. It got so bad that by the time the first semester ended, I was unable to pay the school, and they dropped my registration. I was just barely able to come up with the 4,200 dollars to reenroll two days before classes started. I had to go classroom to classroom begging to be allowed to the classes with my add/drop slips- begging to be taught.

I think this struggle was the reason I did so well. I had to fight for every inch of my life, as very little was ever given to me. I had done so well my first semester that I was tutoring in my second. In between classes I would work in the Academic Achievement Center and return home to work as a waiter and bartender. As I wrapped up my academic year, I had a 4.0 GPA. All of my savings had been depleted, to such an extent that I barely had enough gasoline in my car to make it home the last day of classes, and almost no money to purchase more. This reality of my education had to change, and it did.

I applied to every scholarship that I was eligible for. I knew that without them, I would probably not be able to afford to continue my education. One such scholarship was the Barney Frank Equality

Scholarship. I remember being very nervous for my interview and I wore the very best clothes I owned. To me, winning this scholarship would determine if next year would be another struggle to have food on my table and textbooks upon my shelf. I remember telling the scholarship committee my financial story, but the only words I specifically remember is that I told them "I want this scholarship so I will have to work less, so that I can work more." Meaning I won't have to wait tables as often, and work as a bartender, but work more as a student.

On April 21<sup>st</sup>, I found out I had been awarded the scholarship. Also, as fate would have it, I turned twenty-six on that very same day. The summer passed, and I worked my fingers to the bone, to make money for the upcoming school year. Now my situation last year seems distant. I live on campus and work as an RA. I became active as part of the Ambassador program for the Pride Center. I write for the school newspaper. I'm running for Senator of the school of Arts and Sciences for the class of 2012. I can afford not to work as a waiter throughout the school year. I can afford to get involved with my campus and classmates. The scholarship did not simply give me the money to buy my textbooks and help pay for housing. The scholarship awarded me with the time I needed to keep my promise to the people who interviewed me for the Barney Frank Equality Scholarship. I work less now as a waiter, and work more than ever as a student.

*The Barney Frank Equality Scholarship provides financial assistance to students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender and who have lost financial assistance from their parents upon disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity. Details at [www.bridgew.edu/GLBTA/scholarship.cfm](http://www.bridgew.edu/GLBTA/scholarship.cfm).*

*Tom Gordon is a sophomore majoring in Economics and Mathematics.*

### BSC Now Offers a Minor in GLBT Studies

The GLBT minor, available beginning Fall 2009, is designed to allow students to explore sexuality and sexual diversity by examining the history and present conditions of sexual and gender formation, as well as ideologies of sexuality, from a range of disciplinary perspectives. Specific courses focus on politics, cultures, representations and literature of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, as well as ways to analyze and address issues of homophobia, heterosexism, and other intersecting forms of oppression.



Check us out online at [bridgew.edu/GLBTA](http://bridgew.edu/GLBTA)

## GLBTA Pride Center

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Whether you're looking to hang out or come out, the GLBTA Pride Center is here for you.

We offer a variety of services and resources to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community and their allies that promote student learning and development. The GLBTA Pride Center is also committed to fostering a safe and affirming environment in which to work and learn.

## October is LGBT History Month!

### **Muxes: Authentic, Intrepid Seekers of Danger** (film and discussion)

A lively and surprising portrait of a group of homosexuals, who defend their sexual diversity while preserving their identity as Zapotec Indians in the "queer paradise" of Juchitan, Mexico.

October 1, 11:00 - 12:30 pm, Moakley Auditorium

### **Robyn Ochs**, Keynote Address

**Robyn Ochs, nationally acclaimed speaker and bisexuality educator will present:**

"Beyond Binaries: Identity and the Sexuality Spectrum"

How do we assign labels to our complicated and unique experiences? What relationship exists between experience and self-identity, and between our self-identity and the way others see us? Is identity fixed, or do some individuals experience change over time?

October 6, 2:00 - 3:30 pm, In the RCC Ballroom, 3rd floor

Classes welcome. For details and to register, visit [RobynOchs.cfm](http://RobynOchs.cfm).

**Food for Thought:** Dr. Sandra Faiman-Silva, professor of Anthropology, will lead a discussion on Native American Two-Spirits, a gender category that transcends the gender binary.

October 7, 12 - 1 pm, In 1 Park Ave of the Campus Center (next to the Pride Center)

Lunch provided

### **Safe Zone Training**

Learn about the issues facing GLBT students and how you can be an effective ally. October 13, 12 - 2 pm, Rondileau Campus Center, Room 209

Snacks provided

**Coming Out Discussion Group** A monthly discussion group for students thinking about coming out, those who are coming out, and people who wish to support them.

October 14, 6 - 7 pm, In One Park Ave, next door to the Pride Center.

Dinner provided

### **Movie Night**

Thursday, October 15, 5 - 7 pm, In the GLBTA Pride Center

Snacks provided

### **Coming Out Discussion Group "Field Trip" to First Parish Church**

Each year, our Unitarian Universalist neighbors have extended a warm invitation to GLBTA students, staff, and faculty for a potluck dinner followed by a lively discussion. The congregation members have generously provided all the food and beverage, and they are sensitive to vegetarian, vegan, and other dietary restrictions. This year, they have once again invited us and we are connecting the event to the Coming Out discussion group.

October 28, 6 - 8 pm, First Parish Church, Bridgewater (Meet first in the Pride Center)

