

## No such thing

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to your bisexuality article and particularly in response to Linda Shirley's comment that "There is no such thing [as bisexuality]..." and that "whoever you're sleeping with now, that's what you are."

Who I sleep with is certainly part of my being a lesbian, but my lesbian identity is larger than that, including being woman-identified, my culture, perspective, psycho-social factors, etc.

While I have much in common with some heterosexuals, I am not "just like" them, except for who I sleep with. I resent and resist such glossing over of other parts of me, my identity, community and culture.

I am not a bisexual and would not presume to speak for them or for lesbians who have chosen to become involved with men. I do know, though, that historically and even now, lesbians have lived with/slept with and even loved men while retaining a lesbian identity — maybe it was a route to having children, security or family acceptance. I don't call a lesbian "straight" based on who she is sleeping with anymore than I assume a woman is a lesbian just because she is having sex with women.

I admit to sometimes feeling threatened by, abandoned by, or mistrustful of women who've previously identified as lesbians and who later became involved with men (whether they call themselves straight now or bisexual.) But if a woman in that place, or one who just calls herself bi, seems to be being honest with herself, treats me with respect, and continues to be gay-positive and gay-supportive, I'll try to not judge her, to respect that she is on her path, and I'll try to stick to working on my own fears, insecurities and other issues.

There's my two cents. I hope I speak for other lesbians, too.

Gilah Tenenbaum  
Portland.

## Out of the closet

To the Editor:

thank you for printing Lisa Loving's article on the Bisexual Dilemma. I have been, to emulate the author's terminology, a gay identified man for my entire adulthood. during high school, however, I was what my gay friends might call "confused." it is a common sentiment, especially well-developed within the gay alter-culture, that to be bisexual is actually only a "phase" of confusion. the mere mention of the term is reacted against by such discounting gestures as a bored rolling of the eyes or a cynical smirk. this sort of reaction only intensifies the confusion that most sexually active persons are trying to see beyond. my situation is probably more similar to gays and straights than either community would like to admit: I am strongly attracted to one sex, yet the other sex elicits an engaging attraction of an entirely different nature. now, I am certainly aware that ambiguity can be disconcerting and annoying, but what are we to do with those of us who defy strict categorization? if we are the champions of diversity that we pride ourselves to be then I hope we can learn to approach this situation with more integrity. we can never afford to treat oppression like a well-deserved sentence or like a friend! let's get this problem out of the closet.

mychael webb  
Portland

## Making mention of race

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to your request for feedback on whether or not race should be mentioned in the personals advertisements. I am one person who adamantly refused to run an advertisement that wouldn't allow me to mention my race. I happen to be a gay, black, female. My girlfriends have been black, white and Hispanic. I have been fortunate enough to have met a lot of great people from many different countries. I am very proud of my nationality and my heritage. When I became involved with my various girlfriends, it was because both she and I "hit it off" personality-wise, physically, intellectually etc...and not because we were looking for someone in a particular race. I would never advertise looking for a particular race because I have no preference. There is however an unwritten code with most newspapers in which you can usually assume that if a person's race is not mentioned, the person is white. In my advertisement I wanted to eliminate having to deal with any racists which, yes, I was shocked to learn, exist even in the gay community. I was also hoping to encourage other women of color to respond to my advertisement which stated "age or race not important." In my day-to-day living I deal with people who discriminate against me because I am female, black, gay, in a nontraditional career, and a little younger than most of my fellow workers. I don't want to have to wade through that same garbage when I am looking for companionship. I hope you will take these things into consideration when rewriting your policies.

P.S. I think your newspaper is a very positive asset of our community.

Helen Ford  
Portland

Editors note: Thank you for your input, a new policy is under construction.

## Conflicting opinions

To the Editor:

I found Lena Kinsley's letter in the November issue to be an outrageous plea for appeasement of straight bigotry. She refers to "opinions [in these pages] about age-of-consent laws and underage sex." But, since she offers no specific references and I know of none, nor can I imagine that anything has been printed in your pages directly defending sexual abuse of children - (or anyone) - I can only assume that her complaint is that you ever print any "articles, letters, Just Briefs or anything favorable" about adult-child sexual activity.

Ms. Kinsley seems to acknowledge that those people who work to repress her sexuality are the same ones who "will exploit to the fullest any indication that [a male child raper] ever had a homosexual experience." But she doesn't use that awareness to strengthen her resolve to oppose arbitrary restrictions on sexuality nor to question who is really exploiting children.

I agree that "we need to take care to avoid the appearance of promoting exploitation or abuse," but I think it's more "important to support the right of people of any age to explore their sexuality."

Everett Jaros  
Portland



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