



BGLAD Newsletter

February, 2001

Bisexuals, Gays, Lesbians, Transgendereds and Allies At DuPont

Contact: BGLAD.BGLAD@usa.DuPont.com See us at www.DuPontbglad.com

Meet Katie and Chris: Lesbian Life at a DuPont Plant



DuPont Offers Long Term Care But Not Partner Benefits

BGLAD members are up in arms about the lack of partner benefits. In conjunction with Met Life, DuPont offered long-term medical insurance this year to U. S. employees. BGLAD members applauded the offer of retirement insurance, but were appalled that DuPont would put energy into long-term care before partner benefits and that gay
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What's it like being gay at a DuPont plant?
The News spoke with Katie -- a chemist at a DuPont plant -- and her partner Chris.

News: Katie, you've worked for DuPont for 17 years, and all at the same plant; how has being a lesbian affected your career at DuPont?

Katie: When I got my PhD from Cornell and accepted DuPont's offer, I was very concerned about living in a rural conservative area. I was still coming to grips with my sexual orientation, and
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DuPont Offers Long Term Care But Not Partner Benefits

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partners were not included in the long-term care offerings. Emails and letters were sent by many BGLAD members to the head of the DuPont U. S. region but so far there has been no response.

A sampling of recent BGLAD member comments on the topic:

Carol Lowrie: I am sure you can understand my extreme disappointment to see that, while employee spouses may obtain LTC insurance under this program, my own partner is not eligible. By not including partners in the plan, DuPont has put me at an economic disadvantage relative to my married coworkers. This only continues the economic disadvantages that I deal with as a lesbian employed at DuPont.

Our Valuing People Principles state that DuPont will:

“Lead in the fair and respectful treatment of employees...in a way that generates among DuPont employees an enriched sense of equal respect and opportunity.”

“View every employee as a total person with responsibilities and life commitments at work, at home, and in the community.”

When we acknowledge and support the families of only some of our people and not of all of them, we are undermining the commitment and spirit of our greatest asset.

Mary Hadley:

I am writing to express my disappointment that the new Long Term Care benefit is another DuPont benefit which specifically excludes the partners and families of DuPont's bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgendered employees. As an ally of BGLAD and a friend to many of the folks hurt emotionally and financially by DuPont's "traditional family" benefit plans, I am saddened that even as new benefits are put in place the families of my BGLT friends continue to be excluded.

I am ever hopeful that Domestic Partner Benefits will become a reality at DuPont. In the meantime, I urge you and the other top management of this company to do whatever is necessary to include *all* employees and *all* their families in new policies and procedures we implement.

Metropolitan Life, the purveyor of the long-term care program, did not include partners and DuPont apparently did not object to exclusion of gay partners and has not asked Met Life to change the program.

A 1999 survey by the Society for Human Resource Management highlighted that long-term disability insurance has become one of the most common benefits, with 86% of its member companies offering coverage. Domestic partner benefits were offered by 9% of companies, up from 7% in 1998.

One study by the Human Rights Campaign estimated that benefits comprise nearly 40 percent of overall compensation. Competitive benefits packages have become a key in attracting the best employees. Many long-standing benefits are based on the institution of marriage, and thus exclude gay and lesbian workers since most states do not recognize same-sex marriages or unions. Without domestic partner benefits, a significant portion of overall compensation is unattainable for gay and lesbian workers.

BISC member Robert Ford has approached regional management to accelerate work on partner benefits but so far the News is not aware of progress. (*Deb Yates*)

How Do We Compare on Partner Benefits?

DuPont regularly compares employee compensation with a group of companies which are viewed as having business similarities and seek to attract employees with characteristics similar to DuPont employees. Here's how DuPont stacks up on partner benefits versus our comparison companies. The names in *italics/bold* offer partner benefits. Companies that do not offer partner benefits are at a disadvantage in hiring and retention of employees. The estimated cost of partner benefits for DuPont gay employees is less than \$.01/share.

Alcoa

BASF

Dow

Kodak

Exxon Mobil

Ford

General Electric

Hewlett-Packard

Honeywell (formerly Allied Signal)*

IBM

ICI

Lucent Technologies

Merck

3M

Pharmacia

Motorola

Procter & Gamble

United Technologies

* integrating with GE

Lesbian Life at a DuPont Plant

(Continued from Page 1)

external hostility and fear would have added to the emotional strain. On the other hand, I liked the idea of being out in the country and being able to enjoy the woods and mountains and clean air. Chris grew up in Hong Kong and in New York City's Chinatown. She likes the city, but love persuaded her to move to the rural area where the plant is located.



News: Were you "out" at the plant?

Katie: For the first few years at the plant, I was the only woman scientist in R&D and one of the few women exempts on the site. I felt isolated and doubly in the closet: for my gender and my sexual orientation. Chris and I were afraid of the reaction of the local people, so we really didn't mix socially with the community, preferring to drive New York on the weekends to socialize in the more liberal environment there. By the early 1990s, there were between 25 and 30 women exempts on the site and a community of women was coming into existence, so I felt much safer and supported

as a woman. This gave me the courage to come out at work.

The first time I came out was to a female colleague who verbalized receptivity to gays and lesbians. That first "I have something to tell you" was terrifying: I told her and nothing (bad) happened. After that, I told another person and pretty soon I stopped worrying about who knew and who didn't. But even today I am careful about telling people. I recently started to work for a new boss. I've let him know about my involvement in BGLAD, but we haven't discussed it yet and I don't know what his reaction is.

News: Are there other lesbians/gays/transgendereds/bi's at the plant?

Katie: You know, there probably are other gay people, but there are none "out" on site. You can't be out at work without being out in town and the area still has substantial prejudice. A football player at a local high school attempted suicide a couple years ago. When the town learned from a person involved with treating the young man that he was gay, it caused such a hostile reaction that the teenager withdrew from school and completed his high school diploma through home schooling.

News: Did you experience discrimination in town or on the plant?

Katie: When I first started working at the plant, I heard a few snide remarks (even though I wasn't officially "out"!). I've never experienced the tire slashing and nasty notes

that people in Wilmington and other sites report. I've had a number of respectful discussions on morality with strongly religious people on plant, which I welcome. I've heard about many gay family members as a result of these and other discussions and it's been a source of strength that people share their stories and acceptance of family members.

News: Is the plant committed to providing a safe work place for you and others?

Katie: Definitely. We have had diversity training in the past and we're doing the CREW (Creating a Respectful Environment at Work) training for the entire plant over the next couple years. We did not shy away from the sexual orientation CREW vignette, which will be presented in March, 2001. Some of the facilitators are uncomfortable with the material, but we've strengthened our collective understanding and we're ready to engage the whole plant. The plant manager and HR manager are ally members of BGLAD, as are several of the CREW facilitators.

News: Chris, what do you think about living in a rural plant town?

Chris: I was born in Hong Kong after my parents fled Guong Dong (Canton) in the early 50's. We emigrated to the U. S. in 1970 and landed in New York after a great trip on a PAM AM 747. We moved into by grandfather's tiny one-bedroom apartment in Chinatown and went to school and work. My mom was a seamstress and dad pressed garments: both were paid a few cents per garment. My siblings and I went to American school in the daytime, Chinese school in the late afternoon, and then worked bagging finished garments, arriving home after midnight. I didn't need to learn

English, since my world was almost 100% Chinese. Eventually I got a waitress job in a Greek donut shop and worked there for many years. When I was about to graduate from high school, a friend told me about her sister who was studying at Cornell, and so I applied there and to four other schools. I went to Cornell and got a BA in social work. At Cornell, I met Katie at the local community center where she was volunteering and I was doing community service, and we fell instantly in love.

News: When did you realize you were a lesbian?

Chris: Every morning on my way to school I saw the posters advertising Chinese movies. In those days, the posters always had pictures of a naked lady (with appropriate parts covered up by black tape). I was more attracted to the shapes of the ladies than the guys or the guns and swords they had on the poster. I didn't date anyone in high school: I was too busy! In college I had a relationship with a man for three years. He was a wonderful, intimate friend, but we knew we would never marry each other. He knew I was attracted to women. It was wonderful to have him alongside me while I was still trying to explore my sexual identity. Whenever I visited him while he was a law student in San Francisco, we went to gay bars so we could gawk at the beautiful women. Our first lesbian movie was "Entre Nous," a truly gorgeous French film about two married women who fell in love with each other. I lucked out seeing that as my first lesbian flick, even though the movie's ending is depressing. At least there was wondrous beauty portrayed in their love for each other.

News: How does the Chinese culture deal with lesbianism?

Chris: We never talk about the kinds of deeply personal things like relationships, emotions, feelings and sex. I knew at age 15 or so that I was different, and by Cornell I could put a name on my feelings: lesbian. In Chinatown and at Cornell, I was beginning to wonder if I was the only gay Chinese woman in the world! When I joined a gay students network in the early 80's, I met women whom I could relate to but no lesbian Asians until the 1993 Gay Rights March on Washington.

At home, my family was curious about Katie but it took years before my mom finally asked: "Are you going to be with that "Baht Guai" forever?" (In Chinese, white people are called "white ghosts"). In spite of my family's attempt to dissuade me from living with her, Katie was gradually accepted. My mom calls her by her real name now, and gives us blessings on holidays with the traditional Chinese red envelopes containing a small amount of money.

News: How are gays viewed at your company?

Chris: I've worked for a local company for 12 years. Even though the firm is on the New York Stock Exchange, in many ways it still has the mindset of a family-held small company. We make systems for the apparel industry. In the beginning, there were whispers about my being a lesbian, but when I came out to everyone, the whispers stopped and people pretty much treat me as just another employee. The division where I work has 250 really great people; to my knowledge, I'm the only openly gay person.

News: Katie and Chris, now that you're out at work and in the community, how has it changed your lives?

Katie: While we still go up to Cornell sometimes, our social interactions are now centered around the local Unitarian Universalist church and the various local social action groups we work in. Last August 29th, we received our legal civil union in Vermont (see BGLAD News October, 2000) on our sixteenth anniversary. When we got home, our friends decided that there should be some kind of wedding reception. They organized everything, and I remember looking around at the 50 guests and realizing that almost everyone was straight! So our social circle is now local. Since we came out, we don't have to spend all the energy pretending our relationship doesn't exist by day and trying to live as a couple by night. We're more comfortable in the community, but we still keenly feel the lack of civil rights, medical benefits, federal and state benefits, and other things that heterosexual couples take for granted.

News: What gives you the most satisfaction and what's next for your family?

Chris and Katie: Our friends tell us that our relationship is a role model. It's not that we're women or lesbians that matters -- it's that we love each other, work things out, and have fun together. We built a passive-solar home on 50 acres and we love the biking and hiking and skiing here. We talk about children but for now the three cats are all we can manage. We are very secure in our church, happy at work, and involved in the community. So, life looks pretty good from here. (*Michael Leach*)

Why Can't I Own Canadians?

Laura Schlessinger is a US radio personality who dispenses advice to people who call in to her radio show. Recently, she said that to an observant Orthodox Jew, homosexuality is an abomination according to Leviticus and cannot be condoned in any circumstance. The following is an open letter to Dr. Laura penned by a US resident, which was posted on the Internet.

Dear Dr. Laura

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's Law. I have learned a great deal from your show, and I try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind them that Leviticus 18:22 clearly states it to be an abomination. End of debate. I do need some advice from you, however, regarding some of the specific laws and how to follow them:

- When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odour for the Lord (Lev. 1:9). The problem is my neighbors. They claim the odor is not pleasing to them. Should I smite them?
- I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her?
- I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of uncleanness (Lev. 15:19-24). The problem is, how do I tell? I have tried asking, but most women take offence.
- Lev. 25:44 states that I may indeed possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighboring nations. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not Canadians. Can you clarify? Why can't I own Canadians?
- I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obliged to kill him myself?
- A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination (Lev. 11:10), it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. Can you settle this?
- Lev. 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle room here?
- Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed, including the hair around their temples, even though this is expressly forbidden by Lev.19:27. How should they die?

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- I know from Lev. 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?
- My uncle has a farm. He violates Lev. 19:19 by planting two different crops in the same field, as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend). He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary that we go to all the trouble of getting the whole town together to stone them? (Lev.24:10-16) Couldn't we just burn them to death at a private family affair like we do with people who sleep with their in-laws? (Lev. 20:14)

I know you have studied these things extensively, so I am confident you can help. Thank you again for reminding us that God's word is eternal and unchanging. Your devoted disciple and adoring fan.

BGLAD Member News

Bglad Connects with Notary -- DuPonter's Domestic Partner Registers at DaimlerChrysler

I just wanted to thank the BGLAD network for putting me in touch with Mary, late last year. My domestic partner & I needed to have an affidavit notarized to enable him to have my name listed as his "Domestic Partner" on his medical insurance. My partner was uneasy with the whole process. I thought if I could at least get a 'BGLAD-sanctioned' notary, I could lessen his anxieties somewhat, and Carol Lowrie delivered! Mary was very forthcoming and friendly. My partner was very happy that at least the affidavit notarizing aspect was a positive experience. This year, I can now begin receiving medical benefits on my partner's insurance. I must give a heartfelt "thank you" also to DaimlerChrysler for their progressive policies. I can get coverage where DuPont's benefits fall short, or do not exist (hearing aid coverage!). Incidentally, the whole process was relatively uneventful (as it should be!). The employee relations personnel at DaimlerChrysler and Blue Cross/Blue Shield were quite friendly.

Steve

BGLAD Ally Leads Six Sigma Triumph

Successes continue in DuPont Performance Coatings as a result of Six Sigma becoming a part of our everyday lives! The setting for this DPC success story is in the United States region and is titled *Reduction of Alternate Shipments*. The Black Belt leading this effort was BGLAD ally Jayne.

The intent of this Six Sigma study was to investigate why the Refinish Business was spending approximately \$50,000/month on 'illogical shipments', defined as:

- a. Shipments made from somewhere other than the original specified warehouse, and
- b. Minimum freight backorders being held and later shipped to the customer causing more than one shipment.

In both cases, additional freight expenses are incurred and the customer is greatly inconvenienced. Utilizing a variety of Six Sigma tools, the team learned that there were two key contributing factors:

1. *Product Family* – By developing a methodology to narrow down the contributing product families, the team was able to correct demand in the system so that it adjusts to the proper warehouse. As a result, the inventory levels are restored such that the cycle is broken and the 'illogical shipments' will not repeat themselves every month.
2. *Customer Group* – Through a similar methodology, it is now possible to determine which customers are repeatedly in need of illogical shipments, and appropriate action to break this cycle can then be initiated. This includes actions such as adjusting the inventory, enforcing business policy, and training.

Process corrections have resulted in average monthly savings of \$25,000! In addition to the financial gain and the increase in customer satisfaction, a key benefit of this Six Sigma study was the process and structure it gives the organization. The ongoing monthly and quarterly audits will enable the business to ensure they hold the gain, and will also allow for self-checks to block the problem in the future should the significant factors shift and other causes become predominant. Lastly, the reports developed in SAP became critical in other Six Sigma projects as well as in other functional areas. These reports have been key to improving work processes and would not likely have been developed were it not for the project.

Congratulations to Jayne and other members of this Six Sigma team that have worked to enable DPC to earn USD 300,000 in annual pre-tax operating income (PTOI) beginning in 2001.

GAY WORLD NEWS

Gay Anti-Discrimination Bill Introduced in Delaware: Would it Force DuPont to Offer Partner Benefits?

House Bill (HB) 99 was introduced in the Delaware State House of Representatives on January 25, 2001. The bill seeks to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in the areas of employment, housing, equal accomodation, insurance and public works contracts. HB99 was introduced by Rep. Bill Oberle and was co-sponsored by Reps. Dennis Williams and Joseph DiPinto and Senators Margaret Rose Henry and George Bunting. HB99 is currently with the House Labor Committee for review. This initiative is broader than the employment-only HB11 that was defeated by a 18-15 vote in 1999, and failed the three previous years.

"We have a good chance this year", said Peter Medwick when we spoke with him recently. Peter leads the ACLU Lesbian and Gay Rights Project in Delaware. He feels that the wider outreach in the last year and advances in public understanding have created a more fertile climate. The bill contains a provision that does not require employers to offer partner benefits. Peter indicated that the benefits exemption was needed to garner sufficient support for the bill: "It got a lot of discussion last year and was a sticking point".

In an effort to support HB99, the ACLU-DE Lesbian & Gay Civil Rights Project is pleased to announce its 3rd Annual Lobby Day, Tuesday, April 10, 10:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at Legislative Hall in Dover. Lobby Day will include a lobbying workshop, meetings with state legislators and a reception. A good turnout is crucial to showing our state officials that our community wants and needs this type of legislation. Mark the date on your calendar.

For more information about HB99 or Lobby Day, please contact Peter Medwick at 302-655-9453 or medwicpe@mail.wesley.edu . A summary of the bill is at <http://aosta.state.de.us/Legislature.nsf/?Opendatabase> (fill in type="House Bill" and number = "99")

Reform Judaism Parts with Scouts: Policy Banning Gays called 'Inconsistent With Our Values'

by Rhonda Smith Copyright © 2001 The Washington Blade Inc. January 12, 2001

Leaders of Reform Judaism, the oldest and largest Jewish movement in North America, issued a strongly worded statement Jan. 5 encouraging its rabbis and congregations nationwide to sever ties with the Boy Scouts of America because the Scouts prohibit gay people from the organization.

"We're mindful of the important contribution that scouting has made to so many and, in particular, to many of our congregations that have sponsored and hosted Boy Scout troops," said Mark J. Pelavin, associate director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism. "At the same time, it's becoming increasingly clear that the Boy Scouts of America views discrimination against Gay men as a central tenet in its organizational life." As a result, Pelavin told the Blade, "we rather sadly reached the conclusion that maintaining and supporting troops is inconsistent with our values."

A spokesperson for the Texas-based Boy Scouts of America did not return a call from the Blade for comment.

A growing number of local governments, corporations, and school districts have taken similar steps in the past six months, in reaction against a U.S. Supreme Court ruling last summer upholding the Boy Scouts of America's policy banning Gay people.

The Reform Jewish movement represents 900 congregations, 1,800 rabbis, and 1.5 million members in North America. The other three main branches of Judaism are Orthodox, Conservative, and Reconstructionist, and the latter also has been supportive of equal rights for Gay people. The latest action by the Joint Commission on Social Action, on behalf of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, which represent Reform Jewish congregations and rabbis, respectively, marks the largest step any religious group has taken on this issue.

"It's a wonderful example of the moral leadership we are seeing around the country as non-Gay parents, funders, and corporations move to disassociate themselves from the Boy Scouts' discriminatory policy," said Evan Wolfson, senior staff attorney at the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.

Wolfson was the lead counsel for James Dale, the openly Gay man and former scoutmaster who sued the Boy Scouts after they expelled him from the organization in 1990 because he is Gay. In *Boy Scouts of America v. James Dale*, Dale sued the Monmouth Council of the BSA under New Jersey's Law Against Discrimination, which includes protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation. The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in Dale's favor but the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the ruling last June in a vote of 5 to 4.

Rabbi Dan Polish, director of the Commission on Social Action, and Judge David Davidson, chair of the Commission on Social Action, issued the memo to UAHC congregations Friday, Jan. 5 (available online at www.uahc.org/new). In it, they recommend that congregations sponsoring or housing Boy Scout troops or Cub Scout packs withdraw sponsorship or stop housing them.

"If a congregation or congregational affiliate that sponsors or houses a Boy Scout troop/Cub Scout pack shares our conclusion that working from within the Boy Scouts of America is no longer a viable or productive option," they said, "it may wish to sever those ties as incompatible with our consistent belief that every individual — regardless of his or her sexual orientation — is created in the image of God and is deserving of equal treatment."

The Joint Commission on Social Action recommended several options for "those who are not yet able or willing to withdraw from the BSA." They included publicly amending local charters by adding a non-discrimination clause "to clarify its openness to all members, regardless of sexual orientation."

Other suggestions included withdrawing financial support of the Boy Scouts, continuing official protests or personal protests of the organization, by writing letters, making telephone calls, or visiting local, regional or national Boy Scout offices. They also suggested creating programs to combat the message sent by the Boy Scouts, and working within coalitions opposed to the policy, such as Scouting for All, a group that supports allowing Gay people in the Boy Scouts. "As religious groups are generally considered to be moral leaders, taking a vocal role in coordinating efforts to fight this discrimination could make a real difference," they wrote.

A final suggestion was to encourage participation in other similar groups, such as 4-H Clubs, the Boys and Girls Club of America, and Campfire Girls and Boys.

Paul Greenberg, the openly Gay president of Temple Micah, a Reform synagogue in Washington, D.C., applauded the memo. "This is consistent with repeated policy statements of Reform Jewish lay and clergy organizations that Gays and Lesbians are included in Jewish life," he said.

Milton E. Stern, president-elect of Bet Mishpachah, a predominantly Gay synagogue in Washington, D.C., agreed. "I would expect it of the Reform movement," he said, noting that Bet Mishpachah is not affiliated with any Jewish movement and that its members represent different branches of Judaism. "I applaud what they've done," he added. "I feel that any faith-based organization should sever ties with any other organization that practices any kind of discrimination. I wish the Conservative and Orthodox movements would follow suit."

Help For Gay Families -- www.familieslikeours.org

By Robert DiGiacomo - Philadelphia Gay News January 12-18,2001 ©

It took David Kovarik-Wing and his partner, Conrad, seven years of being unofficial foster parents of the children of a friend, serious consideration and legal research before they were ready to adopt a child in metropolitan Phoenix. Then they moved to the Seattle area for Conrad's job change, and were faced with having to start the whole legal process over again.

Their experiences inspired them to launch in November a non-profit Web site, www.familieslikeours.org, to serve as an information clearinghouse and resource for other gay and lesbian would-be and actual parents. "Eight years ago, there was one book on the shelf," said David Kovarik-Wing. "You couldn't turn to the Internet except for a lot of stuff you didn't want to see. At that time, most stuff was the negative aspects ... "The world is going to come to an end if those people have children." "Throughout this whole process, we were irritated, because there was nothing we could turn to that said 'Step 1, Step 2, Step 3.' It took a lot of time discovering the process and learning the facts instead of the myths."

The facts include the high cost of adoption (an estimated \$3,000 to \$6,000 through a state foster-care system, \$10,000 to \$50,000 for private or international adoptions) and the potential for legal wrangling (rules on adoptions by same-sex couples vary widely by state; three states still prohibit gays and lesbians from adopting. A recent Pennsylvania court ruling prohibits gays and lesbians from adopting their partners' children.) "One of the outreach programs we're developing is a means of working with adoption agencies, case workers, social workers, judges and attorneys, letting them know ... the real facts when you're looking at placement and looking to expand your parent base," Kovarik-Wing said. "Here's some information you need to know that is the truth. We want to make sure we're not an adoption agency, not a legal firm, not a political group, not a religious group. If you decide to become a parent, here's a resource for you."

These resources extend beyond the legal to the practical. The site is building a collection of personal anecdotes from gay and lesbian parents and a supportive online community of peers who can offer "We've been there" advice. "Raising a family is raising a family," Kovarik-Wing said, "but then you have things like my kid is having a field trip. Should I be one of the parents who goes? ... Another issue could be my daughter wants to have a sleepover. Her friends' parents maybe don't know she has two mothers or two fathers. How do we handle this?"

But there is another aspect that's often overlooked in our struggle just to become parents: the reality of being a straight child reared by a gay or lesbian. Another site, www.familieslikemine.com, based on the experiences of Minneapolis-based writer and lecturer Abigail Garner, represents this important perspective. "My Web site speaks ... especially to grown children whose opinions are often overlooked," said Garner, whose father is gay. "There's a gap in the discussions around g/l/b/t families about what happens when kids grow up, how they identify with and relate to the community in which they grew up and raised them - not just in terms of sexual orientation - but in terms of the culture."

After making such an effort to have a child or adopt, and then finding themselves immersed in the all-consuming task of parenting, many gays and lesbian don't stop to consider the impact of rearing a future adult heterosexual. "What I have found as an adult ... is that the very community that raised me is saying, 'What are you still doing here?' " Garner said. "You have heterosexual privilege. Yet, I was raised with the feeling that the

heterosexual world was what was making my life difficult. It's hard for me to identify with 'those people' because that's what I saw them as - those people." Through her Web site, a syndicated newspaper column and frequent lectures on college campuses, Garner has chosen to remain a part of the gay and lesbian community. "When adult children e-mail me, the most common things I hear are: 'I had no idea I wasn't the only one' and 'Thanks for helping me find the words,' " Garner said. "I am so proud to contribute to that network because so many of us were floating around as young people, really thinking we were the only ones.

"It's like we're rewriting our histories together to compare notes about where we were when - what we remember from Anita Bryant - we had no peers who had a point of reference of that. Yet we had a shared history together even though we didn't know each other as children."

We're All Created Female

In the development of the human fetus everyone begins as a female. Then, under the normal influence of hormones and genetics the fetus either remains female or becomes male. It develops with both the brain and physical body of a female or, with the brain and body of a male. Accordingly, the fetus is born with 1) an in-bred sense of sexual identity: "I am a boy." or "I am a girl." and 2) a body with appropriate genitals and, later, sexual characteristics development.

However, in 1 in 10,000 male bodies and 1 in 30,000 female bodies, the hormones, which literally create and "hard-wire" either a female or male brain, act abnormally and a differently-gendered brain gets created. The genes produce either a male body or a female body in their normal way. But, with the brain wired for the opposite sex, the child is born with a serious birth defect. It is called gender dysphoria. The child *knows*, because of the way the brain functions, that he or she has the wrong body. However, no child has either the ability to understand such a significant difference or the vocabulary to question it. Gender dysphoria is so rare that it is never checked for. Instead, the child is *labeled* as male or female by means of their external genitalia. The label is correct *except for the 1 in 30,000 female-bodied males and 1 in 10,000 male-bodied females like me.*

When the child begins to wonder out-loud about being a boy or girl, he or she sounds crazy. The child is corrected: "Look between your legs. That's what you are!" The correction, however well-meaning, does not make either the birth defect or the child's sense of its reality go away. It only causes the child to grow up trying to hide a terrifying sense of being physically different in some undefinably wrong way. Many manage to live in denial for a long time, but not forever. Even though married, often more than once, and successful in one or more careers, the gender identity conflict remains and intensifies. Psychologically, this identity conflict is called

"Gender Identity Disorder" (GID). Until it is openly addressed, it results in depression and self-hatred.

As soon as one begins to face GID, the old fears surface and new fears are added. Trust in a skilled therapist is needed lest the several fears become overwhelming. The male-bodied female is confronted with the choices and consequences of becoming trans-sexual (TS) or making a male-to-female (MTF) identity change, while the female-bodied male does the same with female-to-male (FTM) identity change. The change entails a legal name change and medical correction of the body through hormone treatment and sexual reassignment surgery (SRS). MTFs undertake an anti-testosterone and estrogen regimen with penile inversion and, often, breast implantation surgeries. FTM's undertake testosterone treatment and radical breast reduction surgery. They may also undergo hysterectomy and penile constructive surgeries. Some individuals chose to change names and have hormone therapy without surgery, and live as cross-dressers; remaining legally the gender of their birth. In this latter case, fear of exposure is always present. With SRS one is eligible for a new corrected-gender birth certificate and all other gender-identified documents like driver's license.

Regardless of the option(s) chosen, one faces a high probability of the loss of spouse, children and grandchildren, parents and members of the extended family; friends, peers, and co-workers; employment (and benefits) and residence; as well as loss of membership/welcome in social, fraternal, service, and even religious organizations. As a trans-sexual (TS) or cross-dresser (CD) one loses all legal protection from discrimination and, as well, hate crimes. The social irony is that one is acceptable when severely depressed and suicidal with GID but becomes a dangerous oxymoron as a healthy trans-sexual.

Because of this awareness, at some point, a person with GID sees no hope of ever being normal...of ever living with a body that matches the inner "hard-wired" truth of who they are, *and* being accepted intimately and socially as such. Almost all become suicidal. I did as well, but my attempts failed.

True sanity and wholeness are only possible when the GID issues are resolved in conformance with one's true sense of self. This is because it is impossible to un-wire and re-wire the brain. We are forever what our brain has been built to tell us we are. Our inner gender identity is determined before we are born. It is not something any kind of counseling, therapy, or change in lifestyle can remove.

For myself, as for others, born with gender dysphoria, the decision to undertake physical correction of the body is made neither lightly nor quickly. The losses and hostility I will face are real. But, I also know that the only way to lasting inner peace and physical-psychic-spiritual wholeness is though choosing to own my true self and *claim* my true gender, not change it. Owning who I am is the only way I can end a life of unimaginable fear and emotional pain. After a long process of therapy I am choosing to proceed with medical correction. I will, as a consequence, eventually become physically the female I am. It is a process and will take many months.

I hope this will help you to understand that I am choosing to correct a birth-defect with which I can no longer live. It was no one's fault that my brain developed as it did, making me a female literally in a wrong body. No one could have changed the way my hormones worked before I was born. No one knew something was different and no one understood, back then, how it could be possible. Today we know.

With today's knowledge, I am not choosing to be a freak or an embarrassment. But making a physical

correction, albeit a radical one. That, really, is all anyone else needs to know. I am not ashamed that I am doing it. Nor should you, if you know me. I, obviously, can not keep it a secret. Nor should you. My essential spirit will not change. Becoming more open to and loving of myself is what is allowing me to celebrate and embrace myself as I *finally* become one whole and complete person. I hope a better understanding of my medical problem, my fears, and my options, will allow you to both celebrate with me my recovery from GID and embrace me as a healthy woman.

Grace N.

[Grace is a retired, single writer, poet, educator, and public speaker, a volunteer counselor/advocate at both a woman's resource center/ shelter, and a local AIDS project. She is active with a university GLBT hotline, PFLAG, and the diversity task force at her Unitarian Fellowship.]

White Pigments -- Journey of Understanding

The White Pigments Leadership Team met recently with Brian McNaught (see below) to continue the journey of understanding sexual orientation. The business team had conducted a Sexual Orientation workshop in 1999 with Alter & Assoc. The previous session was well received and seen as a basic awareness workshop. The team was looking for deeper education for themselves as they learn to lead the organization. Brian's workshop got the unofficial name of "Sexual Orientation 201". He was able to help the 25 attendees identify where they were uncomfortable with sexual orientation and stay engaged to think about how they could lead to include all employees and make the environment safe for everyone. Thirteen of the 25 attendees returned the post-session quality survey and rated the session very positively (9 "extremely valuable" and 4 "very valuable").

Rosemary, HR manager, comments: "We are all on a journey, and one thing Brian suggested was to leave his book out on our desk and see what

conversation gets started. One of the plant managers told me he did that as soon as he got back to his plant, and it did in fact create a lot of good conversation about sexual orientation and their work place."

The business team sent a note to all the HR managers in DuPont sharing their feedback, in hope they too will engage their leadership on the subject of sexual orientation and use Brian's workshop. Rosemary: "I think members of my leadership are

ready to make the next step, like be a support or advocate for BGLAD."

[Brian McNaught is the author of On Being Gay: Thoughts on Family, Faith, and Love and Gay Issues in the Workplace and is featured in several popular educational videos. He has received numerous public citations for his educational efforts and has been profiled, in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and the Boston Globe, among other publications. He was the Mayor of Boston's Liaison to the Gay and Lesbian Community and has hosted three PBS specials. He pioneered diversity training on gay issues in corporate America including Xerox, and lectures widely to professional organizations.]

BREEDING TIME AT THE GAY ZOO

Paul Clements; British Airways "High Life" magazine (January 2001)

Birds do it, bees do it, even educated fleas do it. That much we know. But in the Netherlands, a country renowned for its enlightened attitudes, beasts of the same sex do it, too. Last year, the Artis Zoo in Amsterdam, one of the world's oldest public menageries and mere skipping distance from the city's red-light district, began offering guided tours of the gayest species in its cages. People think homosexuality does not exist in the animal kingdom and is therefore unnatural," says zoo director Maarten Frankenhuis. "But to everyone's surprise, it is very popular among animals."

His "Gayded Tour" takes visitors around a dozen species known by zoologists to display homosexual behaviour. Feathers fly at the flamingo lake, where birds engage in same-sex orgies, while at the parrot house, the psittacines, a breed confused by the absence of external sex organs, often preen and attempt to mate with their own sex. The gay bestiary also includes a lesbian chimp called Pippi, a 'pink' elephant (a gift from Nehru in the 1950s who remains a confirmed bachelor), and penguins who only mate in cordial, non-gender specific groups of more than 12.

That not all animals are created equally heterosexual was revealed in 1930, when a study of the king penguins at Edinburgh Zoo showed that sexing the birds on the basis of bedroom behaviour had thrown up embarrassing anomalies. Keepers were forced to rechristen Bertha penguin as Bertrand, and Andrew as Ann. In all, only one bird's gender had been correctly identified. At the Artis Zoo, the androgynous psittacine parrots have since had endoscopies to check their internal sex organs.

And who goes on this tour of the gay animal kingdom? "Gays, obviously, but we get many heterosexuals, too," says Frankenhuis. "We also get a lot of mothers with boys who are beginning to notice they are different from other boys in their football team. "The love lives of our animals are far more complex than my own simple heterosexual love life," he says, before adding; "I do hope my wife doesn't read this."

The Artis Zoo's Gayded Tours are organised on request. For information, call the education department: +31 20 523 3400

Gay Men's TV Preferences Charted For First Time In New Study

By CANDICE CHOI ©2000 DiversityInc.com Nov. 27, 2000

Gay and bisexual men have unique viewing habits that are not similar to any currently measured demographic group, a new study shows. These habits need to be explored by companies that are looking to market to this demographic, said Les Pappas, president of Better World Advertising (BWA), the social marketing company that conducted the study.

The study found that the three genres most watched by gay and bisexual men, other than primetime, are local news, syndicated shows and morning news.

Gay and bisexual men and transgenders should be considered in their own category of television viewing habits and should be further researched, the study found. In addition, the survey concluded that "Will & Grace is by far the most watched show among this demographic." "Ally McBeal," "The Simpsons," "Star Trek: Voyager" and "ER" were also amongst the five most frequently viewed shows among gay and bisexual men, according to the study.

To date, sexual orientation has not been used as a defining demographic in television viewing measurements, Pappas said. It's not necessarily that marketers are unaware of the awesome buying power gay men wield, he said, but that they are wary of openly pursuing gay men in their advertising. "They don't want to hurt relations with their non-gay market," Pappas said. "For instance, Disney wouldn't want to be known for targeting gay men."

In addition, Pappas said Nielsen, a TV ratings company, refuses to ask viewers about their sexual orientation. "That would be seen as intrusive," he said. Pappas said there was a long period in the United States when individuals weren't supposed to talk about their sexual orientation. "It's only just starting to change. But there's still a lot of sensitivity around the issue," he said. "People are kind of afraid."

However, companies that continue to ignore this demographic will end up falling behind the competition, Pappas said. "It's a significant business, and there's a lot of money to be made," Pappas said. "I think that more and more companies are going to be left out if they don't pursue this market."

The BWA study used online surveys from 200 gay and bisexual men from the San Francisco Bay Area online between April 1 and Aug. 22.

It's My Turn

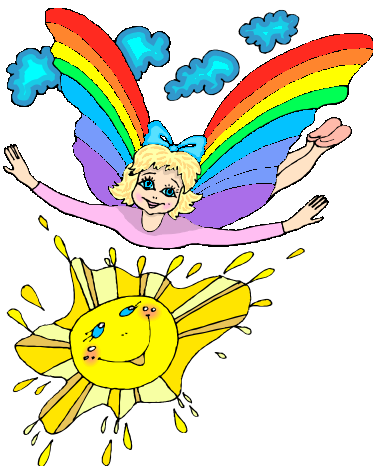
I can't cover up my feelings in the name of love;
Or play it safe - for a while that was easy.
And if living for myself is what I'm guilty of,
Go on and sentence me - I'll still be free.
It's my turn to see what I can see;
I hope you'll understand, this time's just for me;
Because it's my turn, with no apologies;
I've given up the truth to those I've tried to please;
But now it's my turn - if I don't have all the answers,
At least I know I'll take my share of chances;
Ain't no use of holding of when nothing stays the same.
So I'll let it rain 'cause the rain ain't gonna hurt me
And I'll let you go 'though I know it won't be easy
It's my turn - with no more room for lies;
For years I've seen my life through someone else's eyes;

And now it's my turn to try and find my way;
And if I should get lost at least I'll own today....

....And there ain't no use in holding on when nothing stays the same;
So I'll let it rain, 'cause the rain ain't gonna hurt me;
And I'll let you go 'though I know it won't be easy;
It's my turn to see what I can see;
I hope you'll understand, this time's just for me;
Because it's my turn to turn and say goodbye;
I sure would like to know that you're still on my side.

Because it's my turn
To start from number one;
Trying to undo some damage that's been done;
But now it's my turn, to reach and touch the sky;
No one's gonna say At least I didn't try!

- as sung by Diana Ross
(Michael Masser/C. B. Sager)



Remember that you can stay connected to BGLAD after you retire if you can receive email at home! Just send us your address!

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Want information on BGL events in the Delaware Valley area? You should be on the Mid-Atlantic Chapter's mailing list. The contact is Elizabeth.A.Oneal@usa.dupont.com
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