



# BGLAD Newsletter

August, 2001

**Bisexuals, Gays, Lesbians, Transgenders and Allies At DuPont**

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## BGLAD TURNS TEN



On the evening of June 6, 1991, about twenty DuPont employees gathered at the Shipley Grille in Wilmington. It was the first time that so many bisexual, gay, and lesbian DuPonters and their heterosexual supporters had met together. They had come to affirm that they were not alone and to talk about how they could connect with other employees who are gay or who care about gay people.

And so BGLAD was conceived. The fledgling network didn't have a name yet, nor official recognition from DuPont. The group began meeting once or twice a month at a downtown Wilmington church. "We met at the church for a long time," founding member Tim Koob recalls. "The meetings were held outside of work hours.

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## October 11 is Coming Out Day!

Are you out? Whatever your orientation, are you out? Homosexual or ally, are you out?

The first step on the road to freedom is, of course, your personal stop of understanding. What is your orientation? Not what others think...what do you think about yourself? Where on the continuum from 100% straight to 100% gay/lesbian are you in

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## **COMING OUT** (continued from page 1)

self-understanding? Are you ready to confront your views of yourself and deepen your understanding?

The BGLAD News did a number of interviews with gay/lesbian/transgender couples during the last two years. There were some startling common threads:

### **“I knew I was different” from an early age**

Every person we interviewed recognized that they were not like the majority in some way. “I was a tomboy”; “other boys didn’t play with dolls”; “I had boy friends, but kept falling in love with my best girlfriend”. Often the parents explained away the “different” feelings. It was socially harmful to be different. Deep repression of “different characteristics” was and is the norm. The perception of “I’m different” was usually latent but still a powerful influence on behavior and emotional health. Most of the couples we talked with grew up in the 60’s and 70’s – gay liberation was just beginning to provide information and role models.

### **“It hit me like a ton of bricks: I was gay!”**

For a BGLT person, the day came when they had received enough education to know themselves and when they had developed enough awareness of themselves that they reached an epiphany of understanding about their sexual orientation. They could not only put a name on their feelings, but they suddenly were confronted with a horrible decision: whom could they tell? Most deeply buried their awareness, attempted to live two lives, or undertook to become “normal”. A few, a very few found themselves in supportive environments and had the luxury of accepting themselves. Hopefully today’s kids are finding self-acceptance a little less emotionally expensive.

### **“My parents hated me”**

Confronted with a heretical child, many parents, siblings and friends reacted with horror, often mis-inspired by religious convictions. That was the moment when that other person started their own journey of self-awareness, doubt, education and perhaps acceptance. Like their BGLT child, most are still in the closet – aware of the conflict between their feelings for their children, friends, and church, but either unsure how to deal with it or deeply afraid of doing so. Living with unresolved conflict is debilitating at best and an illness at worst.

### **“I found others like me”**

Each person found others like them, usually classmates or teammates. Rarely they found a person not like them who supported them for their intrinsic worth. These rare people are allies in life or in BGLAD. They operate from a different paradigm: unconditional love and respect. Oh, they’re not saints – but they are OUT – they have been on the journey and passed the stop of “self understanding”. They are reasonably sure of their orientation and feel sufficiently safe in person that they can promote understanding and safety for others. An intellectual commitment to equality is important but not sufficient – you have to walk the talk.

### **“Now I understand”**

They’re OUT. They’re giving brown bag lunches and facilitating CREW sessions, and educating others and writing articles and taking a stand. You’ve reached the point where you understand yourself and your personality drives you to reach out. It’s a process – it’s a flow from a state of unconscious feeling and uncertain knowledge to a conscious reasoned state that you can communicate, to yourself and others.

And most of all, they’re “being there”, often quietly, one to one, helping, listening, supporting.

COME ON OUT!

So start now to celebrate October. Are you ready to come out? It’s just as important for you as an ally as it for you as a lesbian. Are you gay and can you come out now? Are you a DuPont leader who has mustered your strength and understanding to a critical mass? Come on out – it’s both scary and liberating!

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### **TEN YEARS OF BGLAD (Continued from p. 1)**

Meetings were the primary means of communication. We weren’t sure whether we could use company time and resources to communicate via email.”

Gay employees were very fearful in the early days. No one was “out” to more than a few people at work. Jackie, one of the first ally members, remembers that some would attend the “gay-only” part of the monthly network meetings and would leave before the allies arrived for the open session. Others would not attend meetings at all.

Concerns about privacy led to the institution of a confidentiality agreement in January, 1992. When email communication was formalized, a blind distribution list was established so that all members could maintain anonymity. BGLAD still uses a blind distribution list today.

As the group got better established, it began to focus on working for change within DuPont. Goals included adding sexual orientation to the non-discrimination statement, getting official sanction as an employee network, and including sexual orientation in discussions of diversity.

#### **The importance of allies**

According to Tim Koob, allies played key roles in achieving these goals. Because most gay employees were afraid to be “out,” especially before sexual orientation was added to the non-discrimination statement, heterosexual allies were the group’s voice in public forums. Allies like Jackie helped put together the case for changing the non-discrimination statement; that goal was achieved on July 26, 1992.

Faith Wohl, who was Director of Work Force Partnering from 1989 until her retirement in 1993, was instrumental in getting “official status” for the BGLAD network. In her famous “dandelion” speech, given in March, 1991, to the Extended IS Leadership Team, Faith called for the inclusion of gay employees in the non-discrimination policy and benefit programs. In a follow-up article in the November, 1991, issue of “SuperVision” newsletter, she announced that a gay and lesbian employee network had been formed.

Faith recruited June Cohen to help support the new network. “At that time, I didn’t even know that BGLAD existed,” June recalls. “In the early ‘80’s I had become close friends with a lesbian couple. I had gotten to know a lot of gay people through them and had a very positive image of the gay community.” When Faith retired in 1993, June got more involved with BGLAD, and she continues to serve as Network Advisor. In November, 1995, June received a Work/Life Award for helping Tim Arnold obtain a transfer to Wilmington so that he could be with his partner.

### **Network leaders**

Leadership of the network was informal at first. Responsibility for meetings rotated among a few members. After several months, however, one person decided to take charge. Bob Hill remembers having an epiphany at 3:00 A.M. “I woke up and realized that I needed to take a leadership role in this group. I wanted to use my skills to pull things together.” The first official BGLAD International Steering Committee (BISC) was announced in May, 1993, and the Constitution and Bylaws were published in December of that year.

Besides the change in the non-discrimination statement, Bob is proud of the sexual orientation workshops that he and co-worker Vicki developed and led. The fact that work groups requested these workshops was gratifying and showed that people were interested in talking and learning more about the subject.

For the enormous amount of time and energy he devoted to BGLAD, Bob Hill was honored with an accomplishment award in June, 1996. Looking back on his four years as Network Liaison, Bob says, “I was very proud to work with some great people – people who were on the front lines trying to make a difference.”

Bob resigned from BISC at the end of 1995 and moved from Wilmington to Northampton, MA. Tim Arnold stepped into the leadership position and served as liaison until February, 1999. Tim cites the initiation of the speaker events as one of the most important network accomplishments during his tenure. “It was good to see so many people come to hear Dave Pallone [the first speaker in 1997]. The Nemours Auditorium was packed. This event instilled pride in BGLAD.”

Tim notes that, during this time period, BGLAD was increasingly sought out as a resource by work groups who were looking for someone to represent the gay community in their diversity discussions. BGLAD was also consulted on the development of the sexual orientation vignette for the CREW program.

Of his time on the BISC, Tim says, “Many people don’t realize how important and how difficult BISC’s role is. BISC sets the direction for the network, drives projects, and is the voice of the BGLT community to management. Serving on BISC can take its toll, both personally and professionally.”

### **We’ve come a long way, baby**

When we think about the progress we’ve made in the last ten years, it’s tempting to dwell on the progress we haven’t made. The issue of benefits for partners of BGL employees was brought up early in BGLAD’s history; Domestic partner benefits were expected to be the logical next step after the change in the non-discrimination policy. A formal position paper was prepared by a team of BGLAD members and was presented to corporate leadership in September, 1997. Four years later, the word “partner” is still absent from our corporate vocabulary.

Other struggles tax our energy. Carol Lowrie, who has served as Network Liaison since February, 1999, believes the network is still feeling the negative effects of the responses to the Barney Frank event announcement in 1999. The addition this year of transgendered issues to BGLAD's focus has been a boon to transgendered employees, but the tremendous amount of work that needs to be done in this area is daunting.

Nevertheless, in many ways BGLAD has come a long way since the covert meetings held off-site ten years ago. Carol is proud of the fact that we have collectively increased our visibility and numbers. BGLAD membership has doubled in the last five years and now stands at 320. An appeal to members to "spread the word" resulted in a 25% increase in membership in the months following Betty DeGeneres's talk last fall.

Increased participation of members in "grass roots" activities is another positive change, according to Carol. "People are feeling more empowered," she says, citing the speaker team, brown bag lunches, and individuals' work within their SBU's. Carol also points to VPGM sponsorship and a face-to-face meeting with Chad Holliday as milestones.

Other members agree that a lot of progress has been made. High on the list of accomplishments is the annual BGLAD speaker event, which last year drew an audience of over 300 at the Country Club and at least 100 more via audio bridge.

Steve Spangler praises our totally awesome newsletter, which is proudly displayed (without confidential information) on our most excellent website, [www.dupontbglad.com](http://www.dupontbglad.com). He also notes that hundreds of Safe Space™ magnets have been distributed (and, we hope, displayed).

Some accomplishments are less tangible but no less important. Jackie believes "more people are out and I hope more comfortable." While change takes place painfully slowly at the corporate level, Jackie says, "each one of us can touch one other person and make it easier for BGLT people at DuPont."

Congratulations, BGLAD, on ten years of making DuPont a better place

### **BGLAD's TEN YEARS – SOME KEY EVENTS**

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 06-JUN-91        | A meeting is held at the Shipley Grille in Wilmington, Delaware. This first meeting included gay and non-gay employees. |
| 09-JUL-91        | The first semi-monthly meeting is held in a local church.   |
| NOV-91           | Faith Wohl's speech published in DIS "SuperVision" newsletter recognizes the existence and support of BGLAD.            |
| NOV-91           | Work Force Partnering supports the cost of meeting space for BGLAD.   |
| <b>26-JUL-92</b> | <b>"Sexual orientation" is added to DuPont &amp; Conoco nondiscrimination statements.</b>                               |
| 27-JAN-93        | At VP Mike Emery's request, members of BGLAD make a presentation to the DuPont US Valuing People Team.                  |

- 12-FEB-93 Bob Hill is interviewed on WILM Newsradio about BGLAD.
- 16-JUN-93 DuPont Merck Pharmaceuticals Co. adds "sexual orientation" to its non-discrimination statement.
- 04-JUN-96 Bob Hill is presented with a monetary accomplishment award for his efforts in organizing and leading the BGLAD network. The award luncheon, hosted by VP Cinda Hallman, is attended by VPs Bill Kirk and Mike Emery, as well as five BGLAD members and Bob's partner.
- 31-MAR-97 Pilot sexual orientation training sessions begin with Alter & Associates.
- 10-APR-97 Human Resources begins offering sexual orientation training sessions company-wide.
- 05-SEP-97 Formal roll-out of the Domestic Partner Benefits Position Paper to HR leadership.
- 13-OCT-97 Dave Pallone, gay man and former major league umpire, speaks to packed auditoriums at Barley Mill Plaza and Nemours. Financial and vocal support for this event are provided by VP's Gary Pfeiffer and Kurt Landgraf.
- 09-MAR-98 BISC meets with Bill Madison, new VP of Human Resources.
- 22-JUN-98 BGLAD sponsors presentations by Col. Margarethe Cammermeyer at Nemours and the Experimental Station.
- 10-AUG-98 Members of BGLAD meet with Company President Chad Holliday to discuss workplace issues and Domestic Partner Benefits.
- 04-OCT-99 Barney Frank, ten-term US Congressman from Massachusetts, speaks to an audience at Nemours auditorium. This talk, BGLAD's third annual speaker event, is made accessible to all DuPont sites via audio bridge; twelve sites call in. One hundred and twenty-five hate mail messages are received from inside DuPont in response to the advertisement for the talk.
- 16-FEB-00 BISC meets with VP Tom Connelly, who agreed to become the network sponsor.
- FALL-01 Fourth annual speaker event is cancelled due to poor business conditions.

## **Multiculturalism and Partner Benefits in DuPont?**

Michael B. Leach

*This is my last issue of the BGLAD Newsletter. As I hand the pen to others, I reflected on the twenty years of progress in multiculturalism in DuPont and wonder if the pace will change in the future – it's up to you. mbl*

The ten-year anniversary of the formal inclusion of homosexuals in DuPont's diversity program will coincide with the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Company. Like women...like racial minorities...like muslims or jews or any other religious group, homosexuals in the early nineties began to enjoy official protection from discrimination in DuPont. But have we in DuPont "walked the talk?"

In the mid-1990s, DuPont measured progress on multi-culturalism with a "learning curve" model by Bailey Jackson and Rita Hardiman ("Assessing Organizational Diversity" New Perspectives, Inc. ©1990):

### Stages

- **I. Exclusionary Organization:** openly devoted to maintaining the majority group's dominance and privilege
- **II. The Club:** allows a limited number of people from other social identity groups into the organization provided they have the *right* perspective and credentials
- **III. Compliance Organization:** committed to removing some of the discrimination inherent in The Club but without disturbing the structure, mission and culture of the organization; the organization is careful to not create "too many waves" or to offend or challenge its "majority" employees' or customers' bigoted attitudes or behaviors.
- **IV. Affirmative Action:** actively recruits and promotes members of those social groups typically denied access to the organization; awareness programs
- **V. Redefining Organization:** not satisfied with just being "non-oppressive"; transitioning to an organizational culture with values for and capitalizes on diversity
- **VI. Multicultural Organization:** reflects the contributions and interests of diverse cultural and social groups in its mission, operations, and products; eradicates social oppression in all forms; includes all as full participants, especially in decisions that shape the organization.

Regarding sexual orientation, in what stage would you put DuPont? My estimate is that in nine years of work we've moved, on average, from stage II to III -- from The Club to Compliance. Yet there are large pockets of DuPont where The Club is still the norm and there are examples of stage V organizations too.

For other social groups, I feel DuPont to be at least one stage and potentially two stages further advanced. As part of DuPont's multicultural education program, sexual orientation education began later and has been given neither the support nor the leadership given to race and gender.

### Turn The Calendar Back to the Year 1815

When DuPont began offering worker's compensation and survivor benefits in the early 1800's, many thought the concept crazy: why would a company pay someone who did not work? I believe the commitment DuPont made to workers was returned many-fold in the productivity and loyalty workers gave DuPont. Offering medical benefits to the only disenfranchised group in DuPont would pay these same sorts of dividends.

Religious non-discrimination is about protecting people's beliefs: a cornerstone of freedom. Partner benefits and sexual orientation non-discrimination are about protecting people from adverse treatment because of an *inherent* physical, mental, and emotional attribute. If we protect the freedom to believe, we must surely be willing and able to protect and support our 3,000-4,000 employees who are homosexual – they're great people, great employees, and have just as real families and obligations as the rest of DuPont's 84,000 workers.

To compete for top-flight employees, DuPont needs to attract the best and brightest. Being a strong multicultural company is one key to retaining and attracting the most talented people in the world.

In the summer of 2002, it would be wonderful if we could all celebrate 200 years of DuPont AND the birth of medical benefits for the families of our homosexual employees.

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## BGLAD MEMBER NEWS

### DIVERSITY SPEAKER CANCELLED

The talk by Faith Wohl, scheduled for this fall, has been cancelled to conserve cash and permit all of us to focus on DuPont's urgent business needs.

"The worst business conditions in 20 years" have caused DuPont to forego business activities including a number of diversity meetings and initiatives. It is tempting to conclude that training and education plans are the first to be dropped. It makes sense to defer discretionary activities of all sorts and to do so without lessening our commitment to the need behind the activity.

"These actions in no way diminish our commitment for and support of employee diversity networks or the developmental experiences they offer," said Mathieu Vrijssen, interim leader of Global Human Resources for DuPont to the Wilmington newspaper.

### BGLAD RESOURCES AND UPCOMING EVENTS

A great discussion developed at the last Wilmington-area Brown Bag Lunch around a number of topics: Partner Benefits; Mobile/Exxon Boycott; Home Depot Issue; Recommendations for Reading and Educational Purposes; Pride Month; and National Coming Out in October. A brief summary follows:

#### Educational Purposes

Try linking on the various sites for informative reading and raised levels of awareness

[www.dupontbglad.com](http://www.dupontbglad.com)  
[www.diversityinc.com](http://www.diversityinc.com)  
[www.gay.com](http://www.gay.com)  
[www.inthelife.org](http://www.inthelife.org)  
[www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)

**PBS** has been running a number of series for Gay Pride Month (After Stonewall; Our House (Kids of Gays and Lesbians), as well as **A&E Network** for coming out week (Celluloid Closet). Tune in to WYBE (Philly Station) on Wednesday evenings at 9:00PM or WHYI on Fridays (check the listings for Rocky Horror Show and Making Waves).

#### Education Network

It was noted that Mary Hadley and Joy Schroeder are the key contacts for the BLGAD education.

Check out the Corporate HR Web Page for "Sexual Orientation Awareness" diversity training. The goal of the workshop is to enlighten all of us on the issue of sexual orientation. Through education and exposure we can create a more positive workplace for everyone where differences become a benefit and not a deterrent to productive working relationships. This ½ day workshop/seminar is given by an outside consulting firm (Alter & Associates. To schedule, call Bernie Scales.

The CREW series of programs is another excellent way to educate. More information on diversity education is available to users of the DuPont private network at:

<http://www1.lvs.dupont.com/gsb/pmp/diversity/>

#### BGLAD Library

Contact **Maria Marchegiano** for excellent resources on a diverse array of topics and books such as . . .

**"As Nature Made Him"** (gender identity issues in raising a male as a female). It depicts the fact that one can not be shaped by the Environment.

**"Can Homophobia Be Cured"** (an interesting look at homophobia and the church).

**"Biological Exuberance"**

**"Joining The Trip"** (a look at teenage homosexuals)

**National Coming Out -- October 11th**

The plan is to utilize part of the July and September brown bag meetings to discuss what can be done around Gay History Month, and NCOD (National Coming Out Day).

There is a scheduled event to take place on October 11th at Rodney Square in Wilmington.

**Possible Items of Interest???**

Is there an interest in the network for having tables set up at the various cafeterias (BMP, CRP, XSTA) with handouts, i.e., Safe Zone Pamphlets and Magnets (which are easily available) and sign-ups for the network?

**Future Suggestions**

**TOPICS OF INTEREST** are needed on those issues you all would encourage addressing at any future brown bag luncheon meetings.

**OUT TO DINNER**

Ever want to spend a few hours relaxing at dinner, feeling at ease with supportive friends, engaging in jovial conversation? Join the Wilmington "Out-To-Dinner" group, a mixed bag of BGLAD members and friends who love to eat, travel and talk. Every six weeks or so you can indulge in this experience. Simply send your interest in being on the distribution list via e-mail to the BGLAD email account.

By the way did you know..... according to a 1989 report from the US Dept of Health and Human Services

- 500,000 young people attempt suicide annually
- Gay youth are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide
- Suicide is the leading cause of death among gay and lesbian youth
- 30% of completed youth suicides are by gay youth
- The majority of suicide attempts by homosexuals take place at age 20 or younger with nearly a third before age 17.
- 28% of gay youth are high school dropouts
- 26% of gay young gays and lesbians are forced to leave home because of conflicts over their sexual identity
- 30 % of all youth living on the streets in the U. S. are BGLT persons

## OUR GAY CHILDREN

*(New book in the BGLAD library)*

It is very inspiring to read the coming out stories of persons and the struggles they have overcome to be who they are today. One person's coming out that was quite public is that of Chastity Bono, daughter of Sonny and Cher.

Her book **Family Outing** has recently been donated to the BGLAD library. If you are interested in learning more about the process the gay and

lesbians go through in the coming out process this is a great book.

*"This is an eloquent account of the pain that young gay and lesbian people experience, and how love and courage can lead them and their families to overcome homophobia. It is impossible for any sensible person to read this book and still hold to the notion that the young people who deal with this terrible prejudice do so voluntarily by 'choosing' their sexual orientation."* - Congressman Barney Frank

## OPERATIONS NETWORK – SEXUAL ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

March and May, 2001

The Corporate Operations Network is composed of the Operations leaders from each strategic business unit, and the Vice Presidents of each function. The network meets once per month. Semiannually, the meeting is focused on people – personnel, staffing, development and work environment. The group assesses its progress against goals and uses “learning pauses” to broaden the perspectives of each ON member. This note summarizes the recent ON Learning Pause and follow-up meeting on Sexual Orientation.

In March of this year, the Operations Network spent four hours with Brian McNaught, a well known teacher in this area, in order to learn more how sexual orientation affects business, the kinds of issues our organizations are dealing with, and to discover what are some needed next steps.

Brian explained the definitions around the following terms: homophobia, heterosexism, gay, lesbian, bisexual, homosexual, sexual orientation vs. preference, choice, lifestyle, admitted transgender.

He then went on to discuss the concepts of orientation, behavior and identity, and how those could manifest differently in individuals. The group talked about the differences in workplace behavior and beliefs. For example, in our workplaces, we are not trying to change individuals' beliefs; however, we are obligated to address poor behaviors. Brian also explained the concept of the Kinsey Scale, and that all people were on a continuum between “exclusively heterosexual” to “exclusively homosexual.”

He asked the group of 22 to put forth their burning question or concern. Questions like those shown below filled the flipchart:

- How best respond to openly hostile people?
- Explain about the degrees of ‘coming out’?
- Is it a choice?
- What are the right words to use?
- Domestic Partner Benefits

After a four-hour dialogue around these questions and others, the key meeting outcomes centered around these key areas: education, leadership and next steps.

We universally agreed that more education and experience is needed for all operations leaders. The ON continued to see their 1998 commitment to complete all vignettes of CREW in the US Region to be an integral part of the path forward. There was also dialogue to setup a similar “Crew-like” process in the regions outside the USA. One person offered that Brian or his video tape may be good background/training for our CREW sexual orientation facilitators.

We talked about the personal leadership required to better verbalize the issue with more people, and that we needed to stay connected to our organizations to understand reality. We reflected that each leader can engage in a learn-teach-learn process, grounded in business reality,

It is leadership’s accountability to put a face on this issue, and the group commissioned the ON People Team to continue to work with BGLAD to define more actions.

The ON revisited these reflections again in May, 2001, to cover the ON members that were unable to attend the March session. The follow up consisted of a review of the reflections and agreement to report on this meeting in the BGLAD newsletter.

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## **LEACH RETIRES**

*Editor’s Note: Michael Leach became a BGLAD ally member in 1995 and has been on the BGLAD Steering Committee since 1999. Introduced to BGLAD by fellow ally John O’Neil, Michael says he progressed from ignorance and bigotry on gay issues to speaking his conscience in support of equality and respect.*

Effective September 4, 2001, Michael B. Leach, Manager, DuPont Information Security, DuPont Corporate-IT, will retire after more than 34 years of service. Michael has accepted a position with our alliance partner, Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC), as Director, Commercial Information Security.

Michael has had a distinguished career at DuPont, starting in 1967 as a programmer in Wilmington. He held numerous systems positions, including managing planning and architecture of information systems functions in DuPont, supporting development of corporate strategies that integrate the automated computerization and telecommunications of DuPont's worldwide operations, and most recently responsibility for information security, information privacy and disaster recovery for DuPont worldwide. Michael spent five years in Geneva, Switzerland, as Manager Technical Services of DuPont International S.A., responsible for information technology planning, development and support for Europe, Mid East and Africa, four years planning systems strategy of Asia/Pacific and was CIO of DuPont Latin America from 1990-2000. Michael has been active in promoting a multi-cultural community at DuPont.

Michael's leadership in information technology and his genuine care and concern for people will be missed. While his contributions have been many, his worldwide industry knowledge, dedication, creativity and global focus in the area of technical information and technology, information security and privacy, and disaster recovery for DuPont worldwide have been particularly valuable.

We thank Michael for his many years of outstanding service to the Company.

## **GAY WORLD NEWS**

### **CENSUS FIGURES FOR DELAWARE AND VERMONT SHOW DRAMATIC INCREASE IN SAME-SEX PARTNER HOUSEHOLDS**

**Human Rights Campaign -- June 13, 2001**

**Increase Due to More Couples Willing to Self-Identify In Federal Survey, HRC Says**

WASHINGTON - Census figures released recently for Vermont and Delaware show a dramatic increase in the number of households that comprise same-sex partners, but continue to undercount the actual number due to continued anti-gay bias, the Human Rights Campaign said today.

"These figures represent a very positive trend for Delaware and Vermont," said David M. Smith, HRC's communications director and senior strategist. "In our opinion, the increase reveals more and more couples are willing to identify themselves as same-sex partners in a federal survey, but many continue to fear a backlash from anti-gay policies at the federal level, and continued societal anti-gay bias."

In Vermont, the total number of households comprising same-sex partners was 1,933, a 422 percent increase from 1990. A total of 762 households were comprised of male couples, and 1,171 were comprised of female couples. The total number of same-sex partner households was 10.7 percent of all unmarried partner households, including male-female couples. The census counted 240,634 total households in Vermont, which included 18,079 total unmarried partner households.

In Delaware, the total number of households comprising same-sex partners was 1,868, a 781 percent increase from 1990. This number represents 10.2 percent of all unmarried partner households. The census counted 298,736 total households in Delaware, with a total of 18,298 unmarried partner households.

"As more gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender families feel comfortable about identifying themselves, the American people will become aware that public policy does not treat them equally and will seek to rectify this injustice," said Lisa Bennett, deputy director for HRC FamilyNet, HRC's web channel for families.

The census will be releasing data for other states in batches to be completed by mid-August, according to census officials. The Human Rights Campaign is working with the Urban Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based think tank specializing in statistical analysis, on a special project to analyze same-sex partner household data.

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## **The Growing Gay Workforce**

*Gays and lesbian workers make up an increasing percentage of the Information Technology population - some say the largest percentage of any industry. This poses no special challenges to the IT manager, as long as they are fostering a sense of safe harbor.*

Bob is a great IT manager: He's creative and decisive and has a nice way with co-workers. The other day, he was regaling his team with funny stories about his weekend getaway with Dale. Everyone's met Dale. And it's obvious that Bob and Dale are a devoted couple. They still hold hands at the holiday party. A director-level post will be opening soon, and everyone expects that it's Bob's for the asking. After that, the sky's the limit. By the way, Bob and Dale are gay.

If that fact would affect the way this scenario would play in your IT workplace, read on.

Some say sexual orientation isn't a workplace issue. But gay people say there's always been sexuality in the workplace: heterosexuality. "All gay people want is to be treated the same way—allowed to be who we are, just as straight people are," explains Philip Calderon, a senior program analyst who's been working at American Express Co. in Phoenix since 1986. "You can't separate who you are from what you do," says Eric Griggs, webmaster at LabBoss.com, online marketplace for scientific equipment in Belmont, N.C. "Putting the whole person to work is more productive."

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) IT employees are a rich talent pool you can't afford to ignore. The most successful companies already know this. According to the Washington-based Human Rights Campaign, just over half of the Fortune 500 companies include sexual orientation in nondiscrimination policies. Seventy-seven percent of the Fortune 100 do so, as do 82% of the Fortune 50.

And GLBT issues are especially important in IT because anecdotal evidence suggests that gays are disproportionately represented in the high-tech industry. Many gay people feel that the focus on performance in IT creates an intrinsically attractive environment. "People look for experience and ability to perform the function," says Kathryn Holden, CIO at Multi-Media in Los Angeles. "As long as you're good, you could be a blobular purple thing, and they couldn't care less." In fact, technology vendors have taken the lead in building environments welcoming to GLBT, offering plenty of alternatives if your gay employees decide to leave. But when GLBT people feel included and valued, they tend to stay. To attract and retain talent, you need to build a welcoming and inclusive environment. Computerworld asked GLBT IT workers what's important to them, and the first things on everybody's lists were mentioning sexual orientation in equal employment opportunity statements and offering domestic partner benefits. **Those get you in the game.** But you need to go beyond a paper commitment.

"You cannot assume that just because policies are in place, it's supported at the grassroots level. It has to be something that everybody buys into," says Rick Urban, a user interface prototyper at Lucent Technologies Inc. in Columbus, Ohio. Urban has worked at Lucent for 18 years, starting before the firm was spun off from AT&T Corp.

You need a GLBT network to support gay employees, educate the mainstream and serve as consultants to management, says Marjorie Meyer, a software engineer at Eastman Kodak Co. in Rochester, N.Y., and president of Kodak's Lambda Network, which supports GLBT employees. "People are afraid to ask. We let them say the words, ask the questions, get a GLBT perspective," says Meyer, who has been at Kodak since 1979. Your culture should look diverse in terms of race, gender and ethnicity, and it should nurture individuality. "Do you have to wear a navy suit every day except for Fridays, when you can wear a gray suit?" asks Joe Carlin, a programmer analyst at American Express in Minneapolis. The environment should also sound inclusive, from official communications to everyday language. Partner or significant other are more inclusive terms than husband or wife. You can't assume that everybody's like you. "People always asked if I

was single," says Helen McCarthy, a senior systems and network administrator at PlanetOut Corp. in San Francisco. "At one job, I even wore a wedding ring just so I wouldn't be asked."



Employers should encourage diversity of thought and style among employees in the workplace. "Have you ever walked into a place and seen everybody's walking to the same tune, following the same unwritten rules?" asks Queta Gonzalez, project manager in the diversity and talent pipeline office at Shell Services International in Houston. "I like visible evidence that different ways of thinking and doing are valued."

One visible sign of inclusion is the Safe Space program initiated by Equal, an organization at Lucent that supports GLBT workers. Employees post small Safe Space magnets on their doors or cubicles to indicate that GLBT people can be themselves there. (*editor's note: magnets are available from BGLAD at [www.dupontbglad.com](http://www.dupontbglad.com)*) "Sometimes, co-workers want to be inclusive, but they don't want to bring up the issue because they never hear gays and lesbians bring it up," explains David Lari, a programming consultant for the government of Mecklenburg County, N.C. "Safe Space can be an icebreaker."

You'll need visible support from top executives; a corporate champion can personify a company's commitment. Steve Sunshine, a technical consultant in El Segundo, Calif., who has worked at Xerox Corp. for 12 years, recalls that CEO Paul Allaire spoke at the first conference of Galexe, the GLBT group. Allaire's commitment was unmistakable, says Sunshine: "He said, 'Do not tolerate intolerance. Any act, any word - you tell us, because it won't be tolerated.'" When GLBT people are accepted among their co-workers, it frees them to put their energy into their work rather than negotiating difficulties. "I don't go up and say, 'I'm Brad; I'm gay.' But I answer truthfully when I'm asked how my weekend was," says Brad Peloquin, a technical manager in Boston who has worked at Xerox for more than a decade. "I talk about my partner, and people ask me how he's doing. I've brought my partner to celebrations. I've never run into any problems, never felt excluded."

But even in the best of environments, incidents happen, and a company's response is the test of its commitment. "When we started doing educational stuff, I got nasty notes and death threats. But the company was very supportive and handled it. That shows real support," says Jane Icenogle, a software engineer in Naperville, Ill., who has worked at AT&T and Lucent since 1982. "They made it easier for me to report it as a hate crime," Icenogle says of the incident. "They called in the Naperville police and made sure that I felt comfortable reporting it. Then the ombudsperson followed up to make sure I felt OK and wasn't paranoid about being at the workplace. They didn't make a general announcement about what had happened and reinforce that it wouldn't be tolerated. Today, I'd probably ask for that, but this was a long time ago, and the time, I think they were very supportive."

Incidents are one thing; a bad environment is something else. GLBT workers who have found themselves in unwelcoming workplaces say such environments tend to be homogeneous, authoritarian and inflexible. They tolerate antigay and other biased humor and ignore people's input. Judy Masseth, a systems engineer in Webster, N.Y., who has been at Xerox since 1984, says she has seen other places where employees literally turn their backs on gay colleagues. But, she says, bias is usually more subtle. "You just walk into a place and immediately feel very uncomfortable," she says. Gonzalez notes that because tolerance varies around the country, moving to a new location can be a big deal for GLBT folks. "In a place where people are homophobic, it feels dangerous," she says. Beverly Mitzel says she knows what a dangerous place looks like. Mitzel, head of

media services at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, says her supportive UNC campus is an island in a different kind of cultural sea. "We live in the buckle of the Bible Belt," she explains. "We have a preacher who comes to the campus and preaches hatred." For Mitzel, danger was palpable at a county commissioners' meeting about ceasing arts funding in Charlotte because of the play *Angels in America*, which is about AIDS in the gay community. "It was so heated and ugly," she recalls. Similarly, a recent fast-food stop was painful. "My partner and I have two African-American children," she says. "We went into a Wendy's, and it was like that E.F. Hutton commercial: Everybody stopped and looked at us." In contrast, when Mitzel and her partner announced the recent adoption of their son in the campus newspaper, the response of colleagues was unanimously supportive.

GLBT people in supportive IT environments say bias doesn't impede their careers. Still, none could name a GLBT person in the executive ranks of their companies. That doesn't mean gays aren't there, but many apparently choose to be invisible. "There are quite a few gays [in upper management] who don't feel comfortable to come out, because they're not ready to risk it," Icenogle says. "We've even seen people promoted to the director level go sort of back into the closet. They no longer come to meetings and don't talk about their partners."

Icenogle calls this phenomenon the "lavender ceiling." That ceiling is self-perpetuating. "You need one brave person to step out and have everybody see that nothing bad happens," Urban says. "We're still waiting for that person." Being yourself at any level is what inclusion is all about, and co-workers facilitate that by treating GLBT people the same as anyone else. "We talk; we kid," Sunshine says. "I feel I'm appreciated and acknowledged just as a human being."

But don't try too hard, says Breanna Anderson, an IT program manager who has been at Microsoft Corp. for five years. "I like to have a good relationship with co-workers, but for most part, I'm here to work," says Anderson. "I'm just looking to be treated as equal in the company and not have a tremendously big deal made out of it."

## **Where There's Technology, There Are Gay Workers**

Study links large gay populations to nation's high-tech centers

The leading indicator of a city's status as a high-tech center is a large gay population.

That's the conclusion of a study based on the 1990 census data. It was conducted by Richard Florida, a professor at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, and Gary Gates, a research associate at the Urban Institute in Washington ([www.brookings.edu](http://www.brookings.edu)). The study, called "Technology and Tolerance: The Importance of Diversity to High-Technology Growth," found that 11 of the top 15 high-tech metropolitan areas in the U.S. also are among the top 15 in relative concentration of gays in the community.

The study also found that gays and lesbians are nearly twice as likely as the general population to work in the computer services industry. There were also correlations between high-tech success and other diversity indicators such as concentration of "bohemians"—artists, writers, musicians or actors, for example—and foreign-born residents, but the gay correlation was the strongest. "The Gay Index does better than other individual measures as a predictor of high-tech location," Gates said. The study doesn't imply that a large gay

population causes the development of a high-tech center, but rather that people in technology are drawn to places known for diversity.

— Kathleen Melymuka

**Top Cities for Techies and Gays**

<b>TECH RANKING</b>	<b>METROPOLITAN AREA</b>	<b>GAY INDEX RANKING</b>
1	San Francisco	1
2	Boston	8
3	Seattle	6
4	Washington	2
5	Dallas	19
6	Los Angeles	7
7	Chicago	15
8	Atlanta	4
9	Phoenix	22
10	New York	14
11	Philadelphia	36
12	San Diego	5
13	Denver	10
14	Austin, Texas	3
15	Houston	2

[note: the table indicates a tie for second rank in the gay index]

## **HB 99 STALLED IN COMMITTEE UNTIL 2002**

ACLU-DE Lesbian & Gay Civil Rights Project

Delaware's House Bill 99 -- a comprehensive non-discrimination bill that has been stalled in the Senate Small Business Committee -- will receive a committee hearing in January next year. A compromise was reached between the bill's primary sponsor, Rep. William Oberle (R) and Committee Chairman Sen. Robert Venables (D) that would allow a hearing for the bill but not until after the 2001 calendar year. HB99 passed the Delaware House on March 27.

Delaware residents who have been the target of sexual orientation-based discrimination are encouraged to contact Peter Medwick, Statewide Coordinator of the ACLU-DE Lesbian & Gay Civil Rights Project, or Drew Fennell, Executive Director of the ACLU-Delaware. Personal stories of discrimination in employment, housing and/or public accommodations are crucial for preparations for the January hearing. Peter and Drew can be reached by calling 302-654-5326.

Peter Medwick -- Statewide Coordinator  
ACLU-DE Lesbian & Gay Civil Rights Project

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## **Rhode Island Adopts Transgender-Inclusive Non-Discrimination Law**

The Rhode Island Alliance for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights

On July 17, 2001 Rhode Island became the second state in the nation -- following Minnesota in 1993 -- to adopt a non-discrimination law that clearly prohibits discrimination against transgender people in employment, housing, credit and public accommodations. The law amends all of the state's non-discrimination laws to ensure that transgender people who face discrimination may seek redress in the form of injunctive relief and damages.

Kate Monteiro, the president of the Rhode Island Alliance for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights, the statewide political organization which was a driving force behind the law's passage, said, "The passage of this long overdue law is a crucial step in the struggle to make clear that discrimination based on gender difference and stereotypes is wrong. We're proud of the Rhode Island legislature's continuing commitment to assure all Rhode Islanders are afforded basic human rights and treated with dignity and respect."

The statute (which passed the legislature as "2001 - House 5920 Substitute A") adds the phrase "gender identity or expression" to Rhode Island's non-discrimination laws. It defines "gender identity or expression" as including "a person's actual or perceived gender, as well as a person's gender identity, gender-related self image, gender-related appearance, or gender-related expression; whether or not that gender identity, gender-related self image, gender-related appearance, or gender-related expression is different from that traditionally associated with the person's sex at birth."

The law protects a wide range of people, broadly referred to as transgender, who face discrimination in many different contexts. The law will protect, among others, individuals who are transsexual and those who cross-dress, as well as anyone who does not fit widely-held stereotypes of what it means to look like a man or a woman. For example, it will ensure that employers do not take adverse action against an employee simply for

being transgender. Similarly, it will ensure that an otherwise exemplary employee is not disciplined or terminated if the employer learns that the employee intends to undergo sex-reassignment surgery. So too will it protect the housing applicant who gets denied an apartment because the landlord prefers not to rent to a man who appears feminine or a woman who appears masculine.

"This is a tremendously important law that will ensure the protection of transgender people's basic rights. Far too often, we have seen courts exclude transgender people from protections under existing laws for unprincipled reasons. No more will this be the case in Rhode Island," remarked Jennifer Levi, staff attorney at Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, who was instrumental in helping to draft the language of the bill. Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) is New England's leading legal rights organization dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation, HIV status and gender identity and expression.

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## **Stereotypes, Tolerance and Acceptance: Gay Rights in Courts of Law and Public Opinion**

By Marc Wolinsky

*(This is the third of three excerpts from Marc Wolinsky's excellent long article on the connections of Delaware and gay and lesbian issues. The complete article is on [www.dupontbglad.com](http://www.dupontbglad.com))*

**Children raised by gay parents are as likely to be well-adjusted, content, and socially equipped as children raised by heterosexual parents**

### **Gay families**

The final frontier of the gay rights movement is in the area of family relations. Gay people have children — from previous marriages, through adoption, or through natural or artificial insemination. As gay people have become increasingly open in society, they have sought to protect their parental relationships in the courts. Just as with other areas of the law, stereotypes have stood in their way.

In a number of states, the common law provided that a gay parent was presumptively unfit to have custody of a child following a divorce. Even as that presumption has generally been abandoned in favor of a best-interest-of-the-child standard, recent state court decisions in Mississippi, Alabama, North Carolina and Virginia have denied a parent custody on the basis of the parent being gay. The degree to which courts have allowed their prejudices to blind themselves to the best interests of children is illustrated by the decisions of the Mississippi courts in *Weigand v. Houghton*.

In that case, the lower court denied a gay father's petition for custody of Paul, his thirteen year old son. The father held a good job and maintained a stable home with his partner of eight years, and planned to put Paul in a private school that would be more academically challenging to Paul than his public school. In denying the father's petition, the court left the boy in the home of his mother, whose then-husband was a jobless and violent convicted felon, drinker, drug user, adulterer, and wife beater who had threatened to kill Paul during one of his repeated violent episodes. The lower court made clear that its decision to leave the child in the home of a husband and wife who had been evicted from their prior residence because of domestic violence was based on its belief that a gay person in a committed relationship is a criminal: "The conscience of this Court is shocked by the audacity and brashness of an individual to come into this court, openly and freely admit to engaging in

felonious conduct on a regular basis” — referring to the fact that the father acknowledged having sex in the privacy of his bedroom with his partner of eight years — “and expect the Court to find such conduct acceptable.” The Mississippi Supreme Court affirmed, holding that the lower court could reasonably conclude that the father was not “morally fit” to raise his own son and that the child was better left in the home of a wife beater.

Social science has decisively shown that the stereotypes and empty moral judgments that lead to this type of irrational decision have no basis, and that gay people can and do make fine parents. Children raised by gay parents are as likely to be well-adjusted, content, and socially equipped as children raised by heterosexual parents. Children raised by gay parents are also no more likely to grow up to be gay themselves and are at less risk of being sexually abused than children raised by heterosexual parents. An increasing number of courts, including courts in Maryland and Pennsylvania, have recognized this fact — that loving gay parents raise children as well as loving heterosexual parents — and have insisted that decisions regarding custody be made on the basis of individualized determinations regarding the child’s interests rather than blanket stereotypes.

Adapting to the realities of modern family life and remaining true to their mission of protecting the best interests of children, courts and state legislatures have also become more receptive to approving adoptions by gay parents. While a number of states, including Utah and Arkansas, have recently adopted statutes or regulations prohibiting gay people from adopting, there has been an equal trend, in states like Vermont and New Hampshire, of removing legislative impediments to gay adoptions.

### **Second Parent Adoptions**

An issue that has come before many state courts is whether adoption statutes permit second parent adoptions of children being raised by same-sex couples. This issue typically arises where one member of a same-sex couple has a child (either naturally or through adoption) and his or her same-sex partner seeks to obtain parental rights as well. This can be critically important to protect the best interest of a child. For example, if the legal parent dies or is incapacitated, it protects the child from being removed from the only other person that was responsible for the child’s upbringing. It also ensures that the two people who are most invested in the child’s development are able to make, and legally responsible for, important decisions regarding that child’s welfare. One of the first cases construing a state’s domestic relations law to permit second parent adoptions was in New York in 1992. Since then, most of the state appeals courts that have considered this issue — including in New York, New Jersey, Vermont, Massachusetts, Illinois, and the District of Columbia — have directed trial judges to grant second parent adoptions under the same best interest of the child standard used in single parent adoptions.

**Delaware apparently has never presumed that gay people can not make good parents.** No Delaware statute prohibits adoptions by gay people, and the Delaware Family Court has granted them. And while no there is no reported case approving one, Delaware’s Domestic Relations Law and the cases construing it would appear to authorize second parent adoptions. The Code authorizes “stepparent adoptions,” thereby contemplating that a child with a legal parent can be adopted by a second person without terminating the parental rights of the first parent. The term “stepparent” is not defined in the Code. However, the Code does provide that the provisions governing adoption are “designed to achieve without undue delay the paramount objectives of the best interests of the child, and all questions of interpretation shall be resolved with that objective in mind.”

Relying on this Legislative command, the Delaware Family Court has held that a divorced husband who continued to act as a parent of his former wife's child from a prior marriage was entitled to seek a second parent adoption. The Family Court reasoned that a "stepparent" could include an adult that was the "*de facto*" parent of a child, and held that the best interests of the child could be served by permitting a loving adult who functioned as a parent to establish a legal paternal relationship. Similarly, the Delaware Supreme Court has construed the Code broadly in a decision upholding a Family Court order granting visitation rights to a non-parent couple that had raised a child as their own, concluding that "the welfare of the child is the single most important factor in determining visitation rights and must not be subordinated to any other interests."

When the issue is decided, the Delaware courts will have a choice. They can join the courts of Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Vermont, Massachusetts, Illinois, and the District of Columbia and reject the stereotypes and preconceptions that have stood in the way of protecting the best interests of children when gay parents are involved. Or they can follow in the steps of the courts of Mississippi, Alabama, North Carolina and Virginia, which have ignored social science studies and injected moral views that have been rejected by broad segments of our society in deciding individual cases. The traditions of the Delaware courts, the statutory language of the Domestic Relations Law and prior precedents suggest that the Delaware Family and Supreme Courts will follow the weight of modern authorities and recognize that the best interests of a child can be served by granting second parent adoptions.

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## Membership Update

Aug. 13, 2001      Katie Replogle

We extend a warm welcome to six new members who have joined since the last newsletter was published:

Total membership is now 325...I think. As we all know, a lot of people have left DuPont in the last few months. If you know of a BGLAD member who has left recently, please let me (Katie Replogle) know so that I can update the database. And consider inviting someone who's not a member to join BGLAD. Even with all of the downsizing, there are still thousands of potential members!

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 BGLT 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](mailto:Elizabeth.A.Oneal@usa.dupont.com)