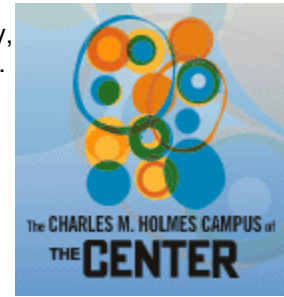


Bi and For the People

By Amy Andre

The bisexual community in San Francisco got a jolt of energy on Saturday, March 9th, when we were treated to an all-out gala at the new [Charles M. Holmes Campus of the] San Francisco LGBT Community Center. This fete, entitled "Bi and For the People" was organized by one of San Francisco's most visible bi couples, the inimitable Drs. Carol Queen and Robert Lawrence Morgan. The good doctors gathered several of their finest performer-friends for the evening's entertainment, which took place on two whole floors of the Center.



The turnout was better than expected, with over 1500 bisexuals and our allies and admirers in attendance. Performers included: Annie Sprinkle, who did two fabulous shows during the evening; Circo Zero, providing the evening's circus-style gymnastic entertainment to the sound of live vocals and wild applause; Ouchy the Clown, with his Porn Clown Posse; and live djs on the 3rd floor, where much dancing was taking place. There were people from local organizations and businesses from Good Vibrations to Curve Magazine to the Center's Board of Directors, manning tables in the lobby and 4th level to provide info and free goodies (hand mirrors, magazines, Hershey's Kisses, and more). The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence also graced us with their presence, and Mark Leno was spotted in the crowd.

In speaking with Bi and For the People party organizer Dr. Queen recently, I learned that the ball got rolling on throwing this ball when Drs. Queen and Morgan received a call from the Center. "Folks at the Center, [who were] in the process of planning the many parties that [happened during the] opening week, wanted us to take on the bisexual community's celebration... which, of course, we are honored to do!" Dr. Queen explained. "There's nothing like a fabulous party to help the community celebrate itself and ... celebrate being part of a project as significant as the new Center."

She and her co-organizers had some difficulty in coming up with the name for the event. "Of course, the bisexual community has this tradition of using cute puns on everything, and I was also trying to make the event seem really fancy and fabulous. The names just got out of control," she said. "Then Sister Kitty Catalyst saved the day and came up with the perfect title... Bi and For the People! Very populist!"

Drs. Queen and Morgan organized the fete, with the help of 40 to 50 volunteers, in their capacities as founders of the Center for Sex & Culture, an newly established organization dedicated to provided sex-positive sex education and support to sexually diverse populations. (For more info on this organization, contact mail@carolqueen.com.)

During the celebration, about 250 people received formal recognition, in the form of certificates, for their contributions to and for the bi community. As one of those who received a certificate that night, I have to say that this part of the evening was a personal highlight and honor! Dr. Queen summed up the motivation for giving out these certificates when she told me, "We [used] the event as an opportunity to give certificates of appreciation to individuals who have contributed to the bisexual community here and beyond. Not organizations, because organizations are nothing without the people who make things happen. [Instead,] people [were] recognized for the efforts they've made."

The Bi Party wasn't the only thing happening in the Center that night; Jordy Jones produced "Some Kind of Queer", which was a party for trans and gender-queer folks and their allies that took place on the top floor of the building. Admission to one party got you into the other, and visa versa. Admission was both sliding scale and "no one turned away for lack of funds", which seemed more than reasonable to several observers.

This event was the first of its kind at the Center, which had its official grand opening during the prior week. It is my hope that the Center becomes a home and haven to LGBTs of every stripe, including, of course, bisexuals; and I am excited to announce that the Bi and For the People party

raised funds in part for the Center to use in future bisexual programming. (The rest of the money raised at the celebration went towards paying off party expenses and reimbursing the American Institute of Bisexuality, whose generous loan helped make the party possible. For more information on this organization, check out www.bisexual.org.)

This event was a significant one for me, as a bisexual, because of its positive impact on the current state of bi visibility (or lack thereof) in the larger LGBT community. Dr. Queen explained this sentiment best when she told me about her initial impressions of LGBT politics in San Francisco. "When I got to SF [in the late 80s,] there was so much more bi community than I'd ever known, but it was like pulling teeth, usually, to get included in larger queer community things. Many hours of politicking had to happen to get the larger community ready to be inclusive. Throwing a bi party at the Center [was] fun and fabulous, but the larger implications are really important. [T]he Center's presence can only help organizing in all corners of the queer community, [and] will further mix us all up, which is a good way to help non-bisexuals know us and understand our issues."

Fabulous entertainment and community recognition at a low cost -- what more could one desire in one evening! It is my sincere hope that this event turn into an annual happening.

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