

BEYOND MONOGAMY

Published by Beyond Monogamy, Inc., a non-profit educational, social and support organization dedicated to exploring and facilitating alternatives to traditional monogamous relationships.

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P. O. Box 6877, Denver, CO 80206 (303) 399-3326
Subscription rate: \$9.00 per year (6 issues)

Volume III, Number 6

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July-August 1982

SOME THOUGHTS ON INTIMATE FRIENDSHIPS

by James W. Ramey

Those who read *Intimate Friendships* may not have read any of the professional papers I've published about intimate networks. Since the book focused on options (the choices we can make about the lifestyle we prefer at the moment) and not on networks of intimate friends, many of the results of my studies of such networks remain unknown to these readers.

We found couples whose sexually open relationships had lasted as long as 44 years. The average for all respondents was a bit over 15 years. We had deliberately sought out long-term open relationships because we were specifically interested in the long-term impact of sexual openness on a primary relationship. To the degree that staying together is any measure of this, sexually open relationships worked for these people. Notice I said relationships—not marriages. Only two-thirds of our sample was married, although all were in intimate relationships, including gay relationships. Many of the "significant others" were single, rather than married.

Bisexuality doesn't get much play in discussions of sexually open relating. People seem uncomfortable with the idea, probably because most of them try to identify as either one of us or one of them (straight or gay) and bisexuals have a foot in both camps. Thus, the gays are upset because they see the need to close ranks against the straights and accuse bisexuals of being closet gays. The straights are likely to react to bisexuals on the basis of sex—i.e., it's fine for women because the guys can watch them getting it on and get it up again quicker. But, if a guy gives any indication of being bi, he's really a homosexual.

Given this kind of social climate, it is perhaps surprising to find both female and male bisexuals in intimate networks, and among the intimate friends of sexually open couples. The very first intimate network I discovered, in Houston, Texas way back in 1952, involved mostly gay men, plus several bisexual men and some straight women, not all of whom were married or in a primary relationship.

Sexually open couples involving one bisexual partner appear to work as well as those in which both partners are bisexual. It is not at all



James Ramey, Ph.D.
Author of
Intimate Friendships

unusual for both partners to share one "significant other," whether they see that person separately or sometimes together. This is apparently as true in situations in which the male is the bisexual partner as in those in which the female is bi. Such friendships are the most likely to develop into long-lasting group marriages, since group marriage is most likely to last if there is a primary bond between each of the participants. Threesomes are the most prevalent type of group marriage. Unfortunately, they are often situations in which two people each relate to the third—a partner of the opposite sex. Such a group carries with it the seeds of its own destruction, because one person gets 200% attention while the other two must make do with 50% each.

Many people who have bisexually open relationships report that they have the best possible sexual situation. Not only are they sexually open, but they do not have 50% of the population "off limits," thus doubling their potential for intimate friendships. Networks that include some bisexuals or both bisexuals and gays report all members of the network, straight, gay or bi, find their world view enlarged and enriched by their interaction with friends who have different perspectives on intimacy.

Some sexually open couples in which one or both are bi are part of more than one intimate network. George and Jenny have 23 straight intimate friends in the network of which they are both a part, but in addition George is in a gay intimate network that also has three other bi members. One of these bi friends joins George and Jenny in bed from time to time but there is no other overlapping between these networks. Nancy and her husband Harry have been married

for 51 years. When they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, the house overflowed with guests from the three separate intimate networks they belong to--his, hers, and theirs! It was the only occasion on which members of these three networks had come together. Neither Harry nor Nancy let on to the members of each network that the other guests were not simply other friends and relatives.

The last example in an unusual one. Most often, people who tie intimate friendship networks together act as bridges between networks. It has been said that if anyone bothered to do the work, they would be able to connect a sizeable portion of the population of the Western world together into one huge intimate network. I believe it. My own work barely scratched the surface and found connections between U.S. networks in Geneva, London, Paris, Amsterdam, Toronto, Vancouver, and Mexico City. There were about 12 or 14 networks in my study, but by the time it was published, I had run across another two dozen intimate networks.

One area I did not cover in my initial study was the breakup of sexually open relationships, since my focus was on longevity of such relationships. Subsequently I have done some informal note keeping on this matter and have found an interesting pattern. It appears that when a sexually open relationship breaks up (assuming that sexual openness had something to do with the breakup), it is usually the woman who has been forced by the man to choose between being together and being open. In every situation that I know about, the woman chose being open over being married! We already knew that sexually open relating was a woman's game (i.e., the man usually suggests it but the woman usually moves first, and subsequently has twice as many outside contacts and is twice as active with them). It would appear, on the basis of my admittedly unscientific ad hoc check that this finding is confirmed by these breakups in which the women have stuck by their guns even if it meant giving up the primary relationship.

Of course many people who try sexually open relating give it up without breaking up their relationship. This is to be expected, for two reasons. First, many people who try it had no business doing so in the first place. They chose to be open out of weakness rather than out of strength, or were doing it because it was faddish without thought for the consequences. It should be very apparent that only those with a strong self concept and a strong primary relationship should attempt to open their relationship sexually.

Others close their relationship because it is the appropriate thing to do at a certain time. This may happen because of childbirth, or when starting a new primary relationship and wanting to solidify it before opening it up. I know of couples who have been open or closed at several different times over the past fifteen years, but I must admit they are in the minority. Most have been consistently open for a decade or two or three.

OPEN RELATIONSHIPS:
THEORY & PRACTICE

Part VI--Loving, Losing and Growth:
A Personal Account

by Will Mahoney

In the May-June issue of *Beyond Monogamy*, we promised that in this issue Genie Whitaker and Will Mahoney would address the questions most commonly asked about their relationship and how it works. We also said there would be a review of *Breaking the Bonds* including comments from readers on the book. Well, we still need more comments on *Breaking the Bonds*, and the rush of events over the last two months has made other books and another topic more personally relevant to Will Mahoney at present.

The date: Saturday, July 4, 1981. The place: Snow Mountain Ranch at the foot of the Williams Fork Mountains near Fraser, Colorado. The event: "Exploring Intimacy," a retreat sponsored by the Colorado Chapter of the Association for Humanistic Psychology.

The program began on Friday night with experimental exercises led by internationally known psychologist, Will Schutz. Saturday featured a round of workshops including one that I facilitated on friendship networks.

Late Saturday evening, I was standing around in the lobby of the lodge where I was staying. A large group of conference participants were drinking wine and socializing. I spotted Phyllis. She and I had been in a couple of workshops together earlier that day. She was medium height, with a trim figure, pretty smile, cute freckles, and long curly auburn hair that seemed to go everywhere. We started talking and quickly moved from the weather to more serious topics. I learned that she was 25, single, an astrologist but earning her living in sales, and was thinking about moving to San Francisco in the fall to get a Master's in Psychology. She was tired of dating single guys who wanted to get heavily involved, and seemed intrigued with my lifestyle. The conversation went on for over an hour and became increasingly personal. She began looking at me with her intense brown eyes that seemed to penetrate to the depths of my soul. It was getting late, but before we decided to call it a night, I told her I wanted to go somewhere private so we could kiss. We found a deserted stairway and kissed and kissed ... and life has not been the same since.

The next nine months included many beautiful days and nights together characterized by love and laughter. We seemed to get along so well. I don't remember any bad times, but the good times are permanently etched on my mind: a walk around Washington Park while she talked about her past lovers and crazy family back in Ohio; sharing nutty cheesy salads at Zach's Restaurant; frantically and unsuccessfully driving around Boulder Canyon looking for a private place where we could park and make love; listening to

Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony at a University of Denver concert; potluck dinners at my house with other friends; running a hot tub party together dressed only in "happy coats" she had brought back from a trip to Japan; a picnic and hike near Mt. Evans; on-ing on Sunday mornings at the offbeat metaphysical church she attended; the great conversations about philosophy, metaphysics, career, relationships and life in general. And, our lovemaking was superb: a profound fusion of emotions, sexuality and spirituality.

Initially, my primary partner, Genie, felt understandably threatened by my intense new love affair. But, she and Phyllis got to know each other and became good friends. Phyllis and Genie's lover, Richard, also liked each other. I was hopeful that the four of us could become an expanded family of sorts.

Phyllis and I were great teachers for each other in a number of areas. Most of all, we learned about giving and receiving unconditional love. Each of us gave the other so much, yet for her it was eventually not enough. She soon discovered that deep down she really wanted to live with someone in a primary and monogamous relationship.

Her colorful personality, sense of humor and emotional intensity were such a joy. I loved her so much, and I suppose I always will. However, I had my doubts about whether the relationship would last, and concentrated on enjoying our moments together without thinking too much about the future. I eventually realized that she really wasn't very interested in open relationships. We didn't seem to have a shared vision of life like I had with Genie. We had some things in common, but probably not enough to form a primary bond. Because of our differences, it seemed more appropriate to me for our lives to touch but not fuse. So, I was content to see her a couple of times a week. It never occurred to me to give up Genie, Mary Ann (my other lover of four years) or my lifestyle to enter a full-time monogamous relationship with her.

In some ways, I held back emotionally and almost pushed her away. I didn't want her to become a lonely mistress. Deep down, I wanted to have the kind of relationship she sought and was willing to give her up if necessary in order for her to be happy. I knew that someday she

would find someone else and that would be the end of us (unless she got into a non-monogamous arrangement, which I doubted she would). One morning last winter, I even remember leaving her house thinking, "If this relationship were to end today, I would be sad. But, it's been a beautiful experience, and I guess it will be okay if it ends."

Then it happened--almost as fast as our relationship had begun. She met a single and very monogamous guy and very quickly fell in love. When she told me that she didn't want to be lovers with me anymore, I felt as if I'd been hit by a truck. I had never realized how much the loss would hurt--how much I really cared for her.

Of course our relationship went beyond being lovers. We were very close friends as well. Phyllis wanted to maintain our friendship and wondered if I would be willing to see her platonically. For the next month, I tried seeing her a few times. Each time I enjoyed being with her as much as before. However, the next day I would find myself plunging into a deep depression. After one particularly painful phone conversation with Phyllis, I actually cried for the first time since age fourteen (a major accomplishment). It wasn't only the sex that I missed. I was aware that she had taken all of the love she used to pour out to me and was now giving it to this new guy. I became increasingly aware that, for my own emotional good, I had to let go of her.

I found two books which were quite helpful: Letting Go by Zev Wanderer and Tracy Cabot (Warner Books, 1978) and Rebuilding When Your Relationship Ends by Bruce Fisher (Impact Publishers, 1981). Although both books are mainly directed toward people who are coping with the break up of marriages, I found they applied quite well to my situation.

Letting Go explains a twelve week self-help program to overcome a broken heart. I did have some skepticism that people suffering from the break up of a long term marriage can put their lives back together after only twelve weeks. Nevertheless, I found some of the suggestions in Letting Go quite useful. For example, I took all of Phyllis' love notes and the other relationship memorabilia and hid it in a box in the basement (constantly looking at such things only serves to repeatedly bring up the pain). I typed a set of three by five cards with all the things I didn't like about Phyllis and the relationship (every time I found myself pining away for this "perfect" person I had lost, I ran through the cards and faced up to the reality that she had her faults). One piece of advice in Letting Go that I did not initially follow was the authors' recommendation that I stop communicating with my lost love until after the pain had healed. Then after one sleepless night, I started to read Fisher's book and found he said the same thing. Phyllis and I sadly agreed that we needed to minimize our contact for awhile. I found this helped. Both books gave me the confidence that with time and work, I could get through this experience.

Will Mahoney
Co-editor of
Beyond Monogamy



In the meantime, however, I felt so depressed over the loss of Phyllis that I began questioning everything in my life. For awhile I wondered if all was meaningless without her. Due to my non-monogamous value system and my other relationships, I felt I had lost the great love of my life. This emotional feeling was enhanced by what seemed to be the collapse of everything around me.

The Denver BMI group was falling apart due to lack of interest. I found few people in the group I could relate to anymore, whereas two or three years ago, BMI had formed the major support system for my life. I saw that open relationships were not working for some of my friends. One couple decided they no longer wanted the same things from their relationship and split up after twenty-five years of marriage. Another couple felt they wanted to continue living together, but no longer desired to have a sexual relationship with each other. And, a good friend of mine seemed to be losing a very important four-year relationship with a lover who decided she really wanted to find a full-time monogamous husband.

On the national scene, the number of new Beyond Monogamy subscriptions seemed to be falling off. I was running out of new places to advertise and promote the publication without a large capital investment. I finally admitted to myself that Beyond Monogamy might never be able to support itself and me financially. I wondered if I should give up and go find a "strait" job out in the "real world."

I looked at a number of issues that Genie and I had with each other. I questioned whether we would be better off living apart. In addition, I doubted whether I could ever have the emotional intensity with Genie, Mary Ann or any other non-monogamous lover that I had had with Phyllis. My interest in new relationships had faded. Women just didn't seem to be as attractive anymore. All I could think of were those auburn curls and intense brown eyes which I had come to take for granted a couple of months earlier.

About two weeks ago, I went to see a psychotherapist—an old friend who has had a successful open marriage for many years. Even though I was questioning all my values, I wanted the guidance of someone who believed in my philosophy. In addition, I knew that she had been through traumatic losses of love similar to what I was experiencing. I spent the first twenty minutes of our first session pouring out my tale of woe to Linda while she listened carefully. When it appeared that I had finished my story, she finally made a comment: "Gee, Will, it seems as if your whole life is falling apart." I quickly replied, "No shit, Linda!" She pointed out that the crisis I was going through gave me a golden opportunity to find out what I really want from life. If I allowed myself to experience my emotions, I could get to the core of my being and discover who I really am. Linda felt this would be much more valuable than simply learning to cope with or avoid the pain. Sudden-

ly I felt much better. She left me with the feeling that I was going through a valuable learning experience and would emerge from it with more confidence in myself and more depth as an individual. Whether I kept or abandoned my old lifestyle and values, I would be left with much stronger personal convictions.

Two days later Genie left on an eight day vacation (the longest period we've been separated for almost a year). I spent a good deal of time taking long walks or sitting around by myself and getting into my feelings. In addition, I continued having numerous conversations with supportive friends and shared with them what I was experiencing.

I soon realized that, deep down, I truly value the love, companionship, freedom, support, history and shared vision of life that Genie and I have. We seem to be communicating better than we did in the past so there is no reason why we cannot work out minor disagreements when we are in agreement on important things. Furthermore, I decided that the advantages of living alone are outweighed by the disadvantages.

I've rediscovered that my belief in open relationships goes beyond intellectual acceptance of the philosophy. There is a fundamental part of me which emotionally and spiritually has felt for years that this lifestyle is right for me. The experience with Phyllis has shown me that I want more emotional closeness in my relationships. Perhaps I haven't gotten that in the past because I was afraid of it. And, I probably never would have learned this had I gotten into a monogamous relationship in my twenties and become stuck in unconscious patterns of relating. I feel that monogamy would stifle my growth as a loving person. Serial monogamy (having several intimate relationships throughout one's life, but only one at a time) would require me to give up valuable but less than perfect relationships in order to pursue new infatuations. I know how much I thrive on the exquisite joy of becoming intimately involved with a new love. To lose this opportunity in order to commit myself to long-term monogamy would take away one of the greatest pleasures of my life. But, throwing away old relationships in order to become involved in new ones feels like crass consumerism to me. I refuse to join the trend to treat lovers like automobiles, trading in the old one when a shiny new model comes out! I really do believe it is possible and growth enhancing for me to love more than one person at a time—especially if I don't use multiple relating as an excuse to avoid deep intimacy with each partner or as an excuse to avoid facing up to problems in an old relationship.

Because open relationships have done so much for my own personal growth and enjoyment of life, I also still see great value in getting others to evaluate the possibilities of this lifestyle. I realize that there are no easy formulas for making intimate relationships work in the complex society in which we live. People need to examine intimacy options just as they would give careful

A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON NON-MONOGRAMY

by Illijana Asara

consideration to the choice of a career. Therefore, despite the many frustrations and setbacks with Beyond Monogamy, Inc., and our publication, I feel a desire to keep all of this going at some level. Of course, there is no doubt in my mind that some changes are needed, but our message is still valid and should be heard.

The reexamination of my life is by no means completely over. However, I'm beginning to put more trust in my own feelings and sense that I am becoming a stronger person as a result of the experience. I am pleased that I have been able to take an honest look at myself. I am also very appreciative of the many friends who have supported me in this process, and I would like to acknowledge them for assisting me: Alice, Allen, Barry, Bill, John, Jean (who showed me three years ago that I could lose a lover but still keep a very close and valuable friendship), Kathy, Lee, Linda, Mary Ann, Richard, Susan, and yes, even Phyllis, and most of all, Genie (who has put up with an incredible amount of shit as a result of being around me during the past two months).

I still feel some pain over Phyllis. A couple of nights ago I was talking with my good friend, Richard, about this. Richard is a teacher with a religio-educational organization called the Prosperos. He reminded me of a technique called Releasing the Hidden Splendor which I learned at a Prosperos workshop last fall. Richard suggested that I use the technique to help me get through the pain and anger I was feeling about Phyllis. So, I put a Steve Halpern tape on the stereo, sat back, and relived the relationship and break up. Next, I blamed Phyllis for my suffering and wished her all the ill-will I could muster up. Finally, I stood back as an uninvolved observer and released everyone from blame for the situation including Phyllis and even more importantly, myself. The process was not merely an intellectual exercise as it took me through all my emotional highs and love of the past few months. I am now able to look upon the relationship more philosophically. Just because I lost a lover, the beautiful experience I had during those nine months is not invalidated. I know that life will give me new loves and new adventures.

Last night I was sitting with a group of friends next to Sloan's Lake in northwest Denver, listening to a Denver Symphony summer parks concert. I was becoming slightly tipsy from reeling wine so I put my head back in Mary Ann's lap while Genie put her arms around my legs and engaged in animated conversation with Mary Ann's husband, Bill. As the sun set over the Continental Divide and the full moon rose over the Great Plains, I began to feel like Harry Schacht, one of Robert Rimmer's characters in The Harrad Experiment. ("Mostly, I think I am a very lucky Beast.")

The relationship with Phyllis has brought me so much joy, so much sorrow, and, most importantly, it has acted as a catalyst for a deeper understanding of myself. It's been a very good year.

My primary motive for choosing an open relationship is my belief that human beings are inherently non-monogamous. I know this is true for me when I am able to allow myself to be in touch with attractions toward others. I also find that my open relationship is a direct route back to the power I have lost because of sexism. As I regain my power, the freedom I have felt within myself for brief moments brings me an ecstasy I have rarely experienced. Those moments are still brief, because I am dealing with the chains which hold the very roots of my power as a person. I can feel the pressure of the entire culture against me as I strain to break free. But these moments offer me clear visions of freedom coupled with commitment.

The risks of non-monogamy are great. It is always possible that by consciously opening ourselves to other people (instead of semi-consciously shutting down our feelings for others) Jim or I will find someone who meets more of our needs, or appeals to us more as a partner. A brave part of me believes that if this happens, it is appropriate for us to separate for the ultimate benefit of all concerned. And, we have a written contract to help us deal with that tough issue. I sense that with the freedom we can provide each other, we won't split up. Over time, we will share a valuable history of adventure in our relationship.

It is becoming increasingly clear to me that it takes no more energy to be non-monogamous than monogamous. It is simply more comfortable to be monogamous in the short term. In the long run, the benefits of creating a truly free space for myself while building a committed and nurturing relationship far outweigh my fears.

The roadblocks are many. Each time Jim approaches a sexual relationship with another woman, I am terrified. (He hasn't started a sexual relationship with another man yet, but to my own chagrin, I find that less threatening). The terror is profound and dramatic. As a child, I learned not to show certain feelings, so I hold onto the terror for a long time, and then it explodes. It lives in my upper back, shutting down my heart chakra until my muscles scream in pain and my back shudders from unreleased tension. I get distant, and then go out of control. The terror demands my total focus so that every time Jim spends the night with another woman, my ability to focus on anything else is seriously diminished for twenty-four hours.

The first time Jim spent the night with someone else, I huddled in a friend's arms, crying and moaning and screaming. The words were, "Don't leave me!" "Take care of me!" and "Hold me!" I was almost dysfunctional for two weeks, screaming and crying regularly, blaming Jim for my feelings, and clinging desperately to him. He was unable to give me the nurturing I needed because he was overloaded coping with his own feelings about his new relationship and about my upset.

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That was ten months ago, and we have come a long way in our understanding of how to take care of each other. Emerging from my jealousy are previously unrecognized demons: lack of faith in the continuity of love in my intimate relationships, fear that my partner will leave me, and terror of taking responsibility for my own life. These basic issues stand in the way of my wholeness as a person. They are far more related to my emotional security needs than to my sexuality. Yet, they are triggered by sexuality. I am beginning to understand why.

When I cry, "Hold me!" to Jim, I flip directly back to an image of my mother holding my brother while I was emotionally needy and trapped in my crib. When I cry "Don't leave me!", I am looking at a closed door in the dark, alone at night without anyone to soothe my childhood fears. Jealousy of Jim's attentions to other women translate into sibling rivalry and a deep early sense of loss: loss of touching, stroking, holding. Although Jim's return eases my terror, his attentions are not the real answer to my needs. The emotional issues which must be addressed if I am to be successfully non-monogamous are fundamental security issues dating back to infancy.

The connections were not initially obvious. I have had over thirty years to bury my needs and absorb the cultural propaganda that scarcity is a fact of life. It has taken hours and hours of screaming, anger and desperate tears to get back to the childhood hurts which lie beyond the sexual masquerade. It has taken long hours of anger, tears, cuddling and discussion for Jim and me to begin to understand the ways in which we each entered our relationship expecting the other to be a parent and relieve those childhood hurts.

I can see the light at the end of the tunnel. There have been a few times in the last year when I have felt satiated enough myself to send Jim off to another woman with some joy and sense of my own balance. But mostly not yet. The scars are too deep to be healed even with a year of work. And, my parents are not to be blamed for the scars. They had limits, as we all do, in what they could give to their children. But, unfortunately the nuclear family provides children with little access to other sources of nurturing; few tools and lessons in how to reach out from their own power and find what they need. On the contrary, it is a powerful model of scarcity and of hopelessness for finding outside support. In addition, it teaches women that their survival depends on one other person's power--not on their own.

It has been easier for Jim than for me to be aggressive in seeking out secondary relationships. Among the reasons for this are his male training to be sexually aggressive, my focus on other priorities in my life, and the smaller number of eligible feminist men available to me than feminist women available to him. Recently, as I contemplated going to a swing club to meet part of my sexual needs, I stumbled onto another reason: I still believe, at some level, that Jim owns my body. Whew!

I have had sexual relationships with other women, but those don't feel so threatening to either Jim or me. Unfortunately, I think that is because we both have cultural "tapes" playing which say that same sex relationships are less important.

The myth about non-monogamy is that sexual jealousy is the insurmountable problem. However, I've discovered that the hardest questions are not about sex. They are about goals, commitment, tools, and time. Jim and I have entered our relationship with deeply held shared goals about having an open relationship and in the long run a bisexual, non-monogamous expanded family. We also had many growth and communication skills. Practicing non-monogamy has stretched our love, commitment and skills to the limit. We have had to create a support system around us which shares an understanding of our goals if not our directions. We have had to teach our immediate peers to reach beyond incredulity and cautious optimism about what we are attempting toward active support. With all our creativity, it is hard work.

I am not a chauvinist about non-monogamy, despite what I see as its implicit advantages for women. Non-monogamy is not for everyone. But not because there is something inherently "natural" about monogamy. Rather, because it takes a lot of time and energy to create your own reality in any area, and this is one of the toughest. In the end, choosing to have multiple sexual relationships and simultaneously maintain a primary relationship is a simple question of priorities. Are you willing to put out the energy it takes to be successful at it? Are you willing to look directly at the traumas that stand in the way of your power as an individual?

Much as I have often craved emotional monogamy, I have never felt sexually monogamous. To be monogamous would impose values and rules on myself which would run counter to my natural tendencies and to my belief about how I can most effectively combat my sexual conditioning. Eventually monogamy would cause my relationship to break apart because it could not support my other searches for personal power. There is, of course, a long distance between what is "natural" and what is possible amidst the pressures of our monogamous and sexist culture. In a relationship, what is possible comes down to honesty: clarity about goals and real appraisals of how much energy each partner is willing to put out to get to them. Jim and I have chosen to put out a lot of energy to get to a place few people have reached successfully in this culture. In the middle of the process, as I whimsically ponder my sexuality, I have often looked at the continuum of touching and wondered about the real difference between shaking hands and sexual relationships. I think I am beginning to understand: one involves more touching--at a lot of levels.

Illijana Asara, 32, lives in Santa Cruz, California with her partner, Jim. They are interested in forming a bisexual family (see their ad in this month's personals).

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PLEASE READ THIS IF YOU WANT US TO FORWARD YOUR LETTERS! A few people responding to coded ads do not put stamps on letters to be forwarded or do not enclose \$1.00 per letter. Make sure you have read the above instructions under "Answering Ads." Forwarding mail takes time--we are NOT going to do it for free!

BRITISH COLUMBIA Attractive, intelligent, healthy Vancouver male (mid-Forties) seeks tolerant, uninhibited female/couple for genuine sharing of physical and mental vibrations. I enjoy mellow music, stimulating conversation, dancing, a social drink, the outdoors. All replies welcome and will be answered. Write 1301.

CALIFORNIA Five friends (including couples) in Los Angeles area expanding network and co-living group. Our vision is to demonstrate, teach, learn and share New Age spirituality, holistic health, dreamwork, parapsychology, body energies, bodywork and other growth areas. We see you responding if, like us, you have a successful and powerful life and are seeking to go beyond that to live the possible dream. Write 0901.

CALIFORNIA (Bay Area) Professional/academic couple, in our early 40's and committed to each other, hoping to meet another couple to explore a relationship built on mutual trust and affection that could include sharing sensual as well as intellectual and cultural pleasures. Write 1302.

CALIFORNIA As a couple, both 32, we are committed to creating a group marriage and are looking for others to join and/or help us. Our shared ideals include a strong commitment to emotional release work and clarity in our relationships (we use counseling extensively as well as radical therapy). We are both bisexual, anti-sexist, food conscious, on positive spiritual magical paths, and filled with joyous humor. The vision includes an eventual 6-8 adult bisexual family, land and appropriate technology based, with shared parenting as well as shared financial, sexual, emotional, intellectual and spiritual experience. Correspondence welcomed and visits can be arranged. Contact "Solstice," Ilijana or Jim, 401 Redwood Dr., Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (408) 427-3475.

CALIFORNIA Educated and sensitive, emotionally healthy and politically aware bi-sexual couple, mid 30's, desires to meet bi-sexual couple or woman for sharing on all levels, spiritual and mundane, serious and silly, in egalitarian extended family relationship. Could successful courtship lead to group marriage? P.O.B. 34, Albion, CA 95410 (Mendocino Coast).

CALIFORNIA San Diego (North County) Petite, charming, shapely female, sensual, loving, secure, enjoys music, dancing, nature, reading, beach, boating, flying, science, seeks intelligent, attractive, professional male, age 50-68, healthy, active, sincere, amorous to take up much of my time in intimate, nurturing relationship, sharing good times, travel, personal growth. Write 1303.

CALIFORNIA Grad student (Human Relations) needs detailed (explicit?) documentation of experiences with bi or homosexual triads, expanded families, group marriages, long or short term. Especially accounts of first experiences, group activities, hierarchies within the group, sexual roles, aggressive/passive roles, sexual dynamics, sexual methodology. Anonymity and confidentiality assured. Respond P.O.B. 324, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

CARIBBEAN ADVENTURE Wanted person(s) to share cost of 4 weeks sailing on a Morgan 46 from St. Martin to Grenada in the Caribbean leaving October 20th. We would love to have a boat full of people from Beyond Monogamy for MORE fun in the sun. Sailing experience is not necessary. Cost of the boat should be about \$675, plus food and flying there. Write Fred Richman, for more information, Box 2271, California City, CA 93505.

COLORADO Tall, good-looking male, 32, with feminist philosophy, seeks woman who has daytime hours for secondary relationship to share massages, racquetball, bike riding and brunches. Bob, ph: 441-0813.

COLORADO Educated, healthy, attractive, self-employed professional man in late forties seeks compatible woman as primary partner in permanent open marriage, preferably in intimate friendship with sincere loving couples or individuals. Two beautiful friends--a married couple in late thirties--wish to begin this intimate network; other outstanding couples and individuals are welcome to respond. Write 1102.

COLORADO Creative, professional male, 37, seeks lady non-smoker for friendship and good conversation. I enjoy natural foods, camping, hiking, massage, folk dancing, gardening, and cross-country skiing. Mine is an open relationship lifestyle, and I'm a non-parent by choice. Write 1315.

FLORIDA Earth couple seeking female helmate with woods, gardens, non-electric and smokefree living conditions. I enjoy natural foods, camping, hiking, massage, folk dancing, gardening, and cross-country skiing. Mine is an open relationship lifestyle, and I'm a non-parent by choice. Write 1315.

FLORIDA Professional male, 42, with Ph.D. and M.B.A., would like to meet intelligent woman, preferably between 25-33, for long-term relationship. Very interested in open marriage concept. Prefer a woman with her own career. Bisexual woman ok. I like intellectual discussions (philosophy, history, science, etc.), films, theater, hiking, bicycling, going to the beach, enjoying nature, reading poetry aloud. I do not smoke (except grass occasionally). Interested in nutrition and good water. Write Kirk Bonner, 878 Johnathan Way, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701. (305) 339-9221.

FRANCE Are you coming to Europe this summer? If you're a single woman or a couple endowed with imagination and sensuality, let an American journalist who lives here show you "off the beaten spots." Write what "your thing is"--nudist beaches, uninhibited discos, restaurants, etc. ... and who you are. Dr. Starr, 97 Ave. Henri Dunant, 06, Nice, France.

ILLINOIS Couple, early 30's, two children, wish to meet others interested in fidelitous group marriage. Prefer health conscious, warm, intelligent, communicative, non-cigarette smoker. His interests include organic gardening, fishing, bee-keeping, small livestock, herbal medicine. Her interests are holistic health, massage, therapeutic touch, gardening, and forming or joining an informal social/discussion group for persons interested in alternative relationships. We may one day move to a rural environment to build a more self-reliant lifestyle, and seek others interested in land based businesses, alternative energy, gardening, disaster preparedness, cooperative living, etc. Pat, P.O. Box 83, West Chicago, IL 60185.

ILLINOIS Stable couple, non-smoking, non-religious, Democratic Socialist, scientifically oriented, seeking another couple or woman with whom to share our lives. Chemistry, psychology, computers, environment and language background. Own house with plenty of space near city with much to offer. Write 1306.

ILLINOIS Hopelessly romantic, creative, feminist male near Chicago, 54, slim, attractive, seeks similar sensuous lady to share some or all of my life which includes frequent travel, solar energy development, world peace, playing and loving, open relationships, possibly communal living. A woman between 30 and 45 preferred. Let's exchange photos. Write Box 341, Wheeling, IL 60090, or call (312) 459-0710.

ILLINOIS Slim, attractive, achievement oriented, sensitive, married professional man, age 43, good body, good mind, seeks sweet, intimate, non-possessive relationship with single or married female any age. Mutual respect, decency and egalitarianism are given. Write 1104.

KANSAS Attractive, well-educated, professional couple in thirties practicing open marriage looking for social, educational, philosophical and sexual peers. Interests include tennis, books, humor, parenting, music and careers. Would like to establish friendship with singles or couples. Write 1305.

MARYLAND Washington, D.C. metro area. Happy WMC, mid-30's, non-smokers, seeking other couples for open, honest sharing of intimate friendship. Varied interests: music, gardening, theatre, children and computers. Bi-sexual couples especially welcomed. Photo and phone, please. Write 1306.

MASSACHUSETTS Married professional couple, 53, who are cautiously interested in developing long term intimate relationship with Boston area couple. Like to share lake cottage and travel experiences. Need couple willing to take time and be patient. P. O. Box 541, Gloucester, MA 01930.

MINNESOTA Married woman, 31, seeks friendship with man, 25-40. Interests include psychology, progressive politics, meditation, massage. Write 1307.

NEVADA Very attractive, well educated, young couple, early 30's, wish to meet a young, attractive woman to share interests and companionship. E & C Adams, P.O. Box 12283, Reno, NV 89510.

NEW JERSEY (Central) Male, 64, is interested in establishing female friendships. I especially enjoy art, movies, photography, investing, gardening, cooking, wine, and intimate companionship. Seeing old movies and visiting NYC art galleries are especially interesting. Write 1308.

NEW MEXICO Heterosexual, dual career, Albuquerque couple, 30's, excellent relationship discussion skills, not swimmers, want to cautiously develop an exceptionally warm caring relationship with one similar couple. Enjoy interesting food, mountains, psychology workshops. We definitely prefer slow motion beginnings. Write 1309.

NEW YORK Gentle, alive Northern Westchester couple, married and happy, with great children 9 and 6, seek each other couple for open, sharing relationship. Ed and Adele, P.O. Box 255, Shrub Oak, NY 10588.

NEW YORK Varied, accomplished, vital middle-aged married professional man would like to meet attractive woman, 30-45, interested in BMI ideals. I enjoy dining, dancing, and romancing, and especially talking, sharing, befriending. Shy, passionate, gentle, I love poetry, jazz, psychology, and the challenge of relationship. Write 1310.

NEW YORK Single, white male, a mere 65, tall, slim, bearded and distinguished-looking. Great sense of humor, offbeat and irreverent, up for whatever. Long Island area preferred. Strong BMI interest. Will answer all. Bill, Box 533, Patchogue, NY 11772.

NEW YORK Male, 50, seeks sensitive relationship with one or two women who are independent, sensitive, sincere and honest. At home in country or city living, enjoy closeness, good food, the arts as well as everyday living. Explorative and willing to learn, teach. Write 1311.

NORTH DAKOTA Liberal couple wishes to correspond and get acquainted with other BMIs. We are heterosexual, having open relationship. Middle aged, socially active, discreet. Write 1312.

OKLAHOMA (N.E.) Couple, early fifties, active in business and "creative" community, seek couples and singles with a warm and intelligent and loving BMI approach to life! Chief objective: intellectual, spiritual, sensual interplay and growth. Non-smokers; social drinkers (dry martinis at sunset); readers; people watchers (and appreciators!); sun worshippers; very well educated; believers in tactility as a highly pleasurable and efficient mode of communication. Particularly like people who have high standards and put them to use in the selection of friends. Spiritually, mentally, sensually adventurous human beings in NE Oklahoma, SW Missouri, NW Arkansas, SE Kansas, we invite you to write. A photo would be appreciated and promptly returned. Almost forgot ... Bixexual couples and individuals especially welcomed to write! Life is short. Let us hear from you today, please. What is there to lose but boredom? Write 1209.

OKLAHOMA Professional, caucasian male, 57, divorced, sensuous, affectionate, romantic, Gemini. Love touching, total massage and fantasies. Desire correspondence with uninhibited heterosexual or bisexual female. RRL, P.O. Box 53072, Oklahoma City, OK 73152.

OREGON Responsive, egalitarian, people-oriented, attractive Scorpio female, 36, who plays pool, loves animals, wilderness and many kinds of music and thinks left politically, would like to form relationship with egalitarian male who could share some of these interests--and some of his own--and who is also looking for friendship and intimacy. Write 1313.

PENNSYLVANIA Are there any groups or communities in the Philadelphia area who practice an alternative lifestyle? Professional woman, 34, seeks contact, support, intimacy. Write 1316.

TEXAS Couple wishes to form a suburban commune on our several acres near Houston, and would like to meet others who relate to "Beyond Monogamy." We are humanists. Write 1109.

TEXAS Bixexual woman, 48, bright, cheerful, outgoing, full of energy, love to talk, walk, play, want to meet others for conversating, dining, travel, friendships and lovers. Dorothy, Houston, TX. Write 0813.

TEXAS Quiet, stable, affectionate writer, 37, interested in art, science, nature, would like to meet unencumbered partnesque women, 20's, well educated, sensitive, attractive, who wants permanent open marriage, including children. OFW area. Write 1314.

TEXAS Houston, Galveston, USA. Underwater lifestyle will, by necessity, be communal. Help build forced air ventilated, shallow, sheltered reef residence, duration: decades, for dolphin contact (performed music), subsistence mariculture, social/ecological studies, extraterrestrial travel/contact preparation. Oilfield diver (32, MS, Peace Corps, humanitarian, heterosexual) seeks technical, material support. Box 7211, Pasadena, TX 77505. Mersaid write, so alone tonight.

VIRGINIA Richmond area. Attractive, intelligent, somewhat shy bachelor, 32, seeks non-possessive friendship with woman about same age. Interested in history and languages (I wear a lot), swimming, sun bathing, hiking. Hates to read cat and tie. Self-sufficient but not materially ambitious. Involved in anti-war and anti-nuclear movement. A good cook. Call Richard (804) 233-3184.

WASHINGTON Couple, 30's, w/children and open lifestyle seek couple or W/F singles for communal living. Persons answering must be pioneer type, like outdoors, farm life and children. Only persons not afraid of hard work and close relationship need answer. We offer honesty, trust and love in exchange for the same. Let's make a life together. Jiy/Becky, P.O. Box 1801, Tacoma, WA 98401

SERVICES AND PRODUCTS

EXQUISITE MUSIC THAT NURTURES MIND AND BODY composed by Steve Halpern, enhances and supports sensuality and intimacy. Free brochure describes his best-selling long playing tapes and records. Great for massage, candlelight dinners, and lovemaking. Halpern Sounds (dept. BMI), 1775 Old County Road #9, Belmont, CA 94002.

BEYOND MONOBOOKS BY MAIL!

The following books may be ordered directly from BMI using the order form on the back of this sheet:

NON-FICTION:

Adultery and Other Private Matters, L. Myers & H. Leggett. \$15.95 (cl)
Alternative Relationships Songbook, D. Levin. \$2.50
Breaking the Bonds, M. Watson & F. Whitlock. \$4.95
Brief Encounters, E. Coleman & B. Edwards. \$7.95
The Civilized Couple's Guide to Extramarital Adventure, A. Ellis. \$2.50
Intimate Friendships, J. Ramey. \$4.95
Jealousy, G. Clanton & L. Smith, eds. \$5.95 (cl)
Marriage and Alternatives, R. Libby & R. Whitehurst, eds. \$14.95
Marriage and Morals, B. Russell. \$6.95
More Than Just a Friend, T. McGinnis. \$5.95

The New Intimacy, R. Mazur. \$3.50
Onelda, M. Carden. \$5.95
Options, M. Seligson. \$1.95

FICTION:

Come Live My Life, R. Rimmer. \$2.25
The Love Explosion, R. Rimmer. \$2.75
Love Me Tomorrow, R. Rimmer. \$2.50
The Premar Experiments, R. Rimmer. \$2.50
Proposition 31, R. Rimmer. \$1.95
Stranger in a Strange Land, R. Heinlein. \$2.75

cl: cloth; all other books are paperback

Classified Advertising Policies -- Please read carefully!

Content: In addition to your message, you may include an address and/or phone number. Anonymous ads o.k. or list your first and/or last name(s). If concerned about confidentiality, place a coded ad--we forward letters to you (see coded ad rate below). We accept ads in the following categories:

Non-profit Organizations--ads from alternative relationships organizations publicizing classes, workshops, conferences, seeking members or promoting publications. People wanting to start new alternative relationship discussion groups, organizations or social clubs in their area may also advertise in this section. Ads from personal growth/human potential non-profit organizations which are supportive of alternative relationships are also welcome.

Personals--ads specifying an interest in alternative relationships (e.g. open relationships, intimate friendship networks, expanded families, group marriage or similar lifestyles). Ads from singles, couples or intimate groups; heterosexuals, bisexuals or homosexuals are welcome.

Services and Products--ads from individuals or businesses supportive of alternative relationships and offering relationship counseling, personal growth workshops, publications, etc.

Swingers' ads not accepted! We will not accept ads for individuals, organizations or businesses primarily interested in swinging (sexual mate-swapping and sex orgies). We will also not accept predominantly sexual ads. This is not a moral judgment--we merely want to provide an alternative to the many swingers' magazines already available.

Ads for secret affairs not accepted! These are outside the scope of an open relationships publication.

Who may advertise: We only accept personal ads from BMI members and Beyond Monogamy subscribers.

Rates (per insertion):

Personals and Non-profit Organizations--\$3.00 (up to 40 words) and \$.05/word over 40 words.

Services and Products--\$5.00 (up to 40 words) and \$.10/word over 40 words.

Coded ads--\$1.00 extra per insertion. We will assign a number to your ad and forward mail to you unopened. People answering your ad will send us \$1 plus postage.

Deadline: First of the month preceding date of issue (e.g. August 1 for the September-October issue).

Beyond Monogamy Classified Ad Form

Name(s) _____

Address (including ZIP code) _____

The following ad is to be placed under (check one) Personals _____ Non-profit Organizations _____
Services and Products _____ (type or print neatly exactly as you want the ad to appear):

Enclosed is \$ _____ for _____ insertions and \$ _____ for coding and forwarding (if applicable).

I/we hereby give my/our permission to print the above ad in Beyond Monogamy. I/we agree not to hold Beyond Monogamy, Inc. or its staff responsible for any actions which occur as a result of this ad.

Signature(s) _____

All ads must be paid for in advance. Mail to BMI, Box 6877, Denver, CO 80206.

THE BISEXUAL WINDOW

A Bimonthly Column by Barry Kohn

Many bisexual people I meet are very confused about their sexual and emotional feelings toward other people. This confusion is not surprising since there is little support in this culture for either having or expressing feelings for both sexes. However, the gay rights movement of the 70's and the changes in the roles of men and women that have been taking place over the last twenty years, have resulted in experimentation by many people, both male and female, into heretofore uncharted territory in relationships and sexuality. In the United States there is, for the first time, a growing number of people who are willing to admit they are bisexual.

Two and a half years ago, my wife, Alice Matusow, and I wrote a book entitled Barry and Alice: Portrait of a Bisexual Marriage (Prentice Hall, 1980). We traveled cross-country on an authors' tour, appearing in eighty-five television, radio and newspaper interviews. We also spoke to four bisexual groups in New York, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

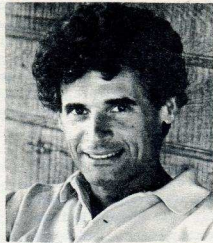
Most of our appearances before the "straight media" were met with hostile hosts who claimed that they needed to play the devil's advocate in order to have a fair airing of the subject. Many times television or radio audiences chimed in with loaded questions and critical comments about our bisexual and open-marriage lifestyle. For the most part we were characterized as a "normal looking couple with a very unusual marriage."

We were told by some hosts and audience participants that we didn't know what love was, that we were amoral, self-indulgent, that we were only appearing on shows to sell our book and that our child would suffer. One psychoanalyst in Philadelphia compared bisexuality to having sex with cats, snakes, and children under three years old.

It was only when we appeared before the bisexual groups that we received true understanding and support for what we were saying. These were small groups of twenty to thirty people, who, like us, were dealing with the issues and problems created by a bisexual lifestyle.

We live in a society which seems to prefer to label people, to pigeonhole a person by race, ethnic background, religion, liberal or conservative, gay or straight, thereby trying to make it easier to draw certain conclusions about how that person will act or who he or she is. We Americans are very uncomfortable with the "grey" areas. And yet as we have seen time after time, stereotypes are inaccurate and have little basis in fact. In Sexual Behavior in the Human Male, Alfred Kinsey wrote:

The world is not to be divided into sheep and goats. Not all things are black—not all things white. It is a fundamental of taxonomy that nature rarely deals with discreet categories.



Barry Kohn
Co-author of
Barry and Alice:
Portrait of a
Bisexual Marriage

Only the human mind invents categories and tries to force facts into separated pigeonholes. The living world is a continuum in each and every one of its aspects. The sooner we learn this concerning human sexual behavior, the sooner we shall reach a sound understanding of the realities of sex.

Yet, even though Kinsey's studies were done thirty years ago, they continue to be ignored by many psychiatrists, marriage counselors and other people in the counseling field.

As a counselor, one major fear that I hear from people who are considering acting on same sex feelings is that they will become totally gay or lesbian after one experience. This fear is based on the mistaken premise that one can only be gay or straight and that there is nothing in between and with no recognition that individuals change and develop over a lifetime. Others take it one step further; if they have sex with someone of the same sex they will become a "flaming effeminate faggot" if a man or a "bull dyke" if a woman. This might seem strange or far-fetched except that I know that this was a major fear of mine only eleven years ago when I was coming out. In fact, at the time, I didn't know that there was anything such as bisexuality or that all gay men were not effeminate.

At this point, I feel it necessary to point out that I now find nothing offensive about effeminate men or "masculine" women. But at an earlier time, I feared these people; their behavior seemed bizarre and unnatural. Of course, I didn't know any personally. I, therefore, drew all sorts of negative assumptions and judgments about who they were and why they acted that way. The truth is that many of these people bore the brunt of criticism and harassment by society for being gay while many other "straight looking" gay or bisexual people went about their lives unnoticed or bothered by people about them. It is important as bisexuals to realize how we judge others, which is the same way that we are judged. Basically, we all fear that which is different and unknown.

Many of us have been told that there is no such thing as bisexuality. Heterosexuals tell us that it is just a phase; gays tell us we are somewhere along the route toward becoming gay. However, in my opinion, the great majority of

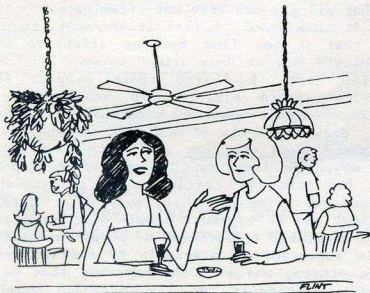
people are bisexual, and most of us repress our same sex feelings because of strong negative stereotypes about homosexuality. Certainly, this view is supported by the Kinsey statistics of 1948 and 1953 and by other research on the subject since that time. In an article entitled "Bisexuality: What's It All About?", Margaret Mead states:

Even a superficial look at other societies and some groups in our own society should be enough to convince us that a very large number of human beings --probably a majority--are bisexual in their potential capacity for love. Whether they will become exclusively heterosexual or exclusively homosexual for all their lives and in all circumstances or whether they will be able to enter into sexual and love relationships with members of both sexes is, in fact, a consequence of the way they have been brought up, of the particular beliefs and prejudices of the society they live in and, to some extent, of their own life history.

With all this evidence, it is amazing that only four books have been written on bisexuality and that until 1976, the Library of Congress did not even have a listing under "Bisexuality."

During the next year, I will be exploring and discussing various aspects of bisexuality. I will also share some letters that people have written to me dealing with their bisexual feelings as well as my answer to them.

Barry Kohn is an author, alternative lifestyles counselor, bisexual activist and former attorney. We are very grateful that he has agreed to write a regular column for *Beyond Monogamy*. You may reach him directly by writing Barry Kohn, Box 941, Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464.



"They've all got the same line these days--It's okay, I'm in an open marriage."

By Flint Whitlock from *Breaking the Bonds* by Watson and Whitlock.

A DISCUSSION OF UTOPIAN SWINGING -- Part I

edited by Jacqueline Weller

In March of this year, two Denver BMI members, Larry and Sue, presented a seminar on utopian swinging.¹ They are a married couple, and both have been married before--Larry in an open marriage of five years and Sue in a more traditional monogamous relationship. For the past three years, they have been involved, as a couple, in utopian swinging.

SUE: When Larry and I first joined BMI, we found a lot of misconceptions about swinging. I'd like people to know that there is no stereotyped swinger. There are a lot of different swinging styles. Lots of BMI people seem to think swinging is obscene. That really disturbs us.

LARRY: The reason we came tonight is to talk about open relationships in a couple-to-couple situation, as opposed to separate one-to-one relationships.

There are many couples who share our beliefs. They're not interested in going out behind each other's backs. That's one of the basic commitments: they will not do anything separately.

The people we've met who are doing this have very strong marriages. They seem to be very committed to each other.

SUE: We've only seen one couple get divorced during the three years we've been swinging, and swinging wasn't the reason for the breakup.

LARRY: Swinging doesn't lead to the breakup of marriages. In fact, it seems to reinforce relationships.

I think BMI should have a broader perspective in order to bring new blood into the organization. When you talk only about separate involvements, you're keeping people with couple-oriented open relationships from having any interest in your group.

AUDIENCE COMMENT: I think it's important to make a distinction between hardcore [or recreational] swingers and utopian swingers.

¹In the February 1982 issue of *Beyond Monogamy* (p. 6), Will Mahoney differentiated between two types of swinging: recreational and utopian. He explained that "recreational swingers are people who see sexual exchange of partners as an end in itself. They usually know their swinging partners' first names only and often swing with each couple only once. They feel that swinging is less threatening to their committed relationship if they do not become intellectually, socially or emotionally involved with their swinging partners. Utopian swingers participate in much the same activities as the recreational types. However, they see swinging as a vehicle for meeting people with whom they can potentially develop close friendships without the sexual fantasy tension that characterizes so many couple relationships in our society. Some utopians eventually move out of swinging and into intimate friendship networks or expanded families. A few may even form group marriages."

SUE: Yes. Hardcore swingers will jump into bed with anybody at anytime, anywhere. They don't care what you look like as long as you've got the necessary equipment.

In Denver, the Golden Circle organization is probably the best way to break into swinging. Golden Circle is a swing club that meets in public places for social events. For example, they might meet in a hotel party room for dancing and conversation. It's a good place to meet a lot of people when you're first starting out.

LARRY: And there's nothing sexual going on at the social.

SUE: The Golden Circle attracts people experimenting with alternative lifestyles. They are beginners. They don't know whether they can handle non-monogamy. A lot of them will come two or three times and find they can't handle the jealousy. Or, they find out that one member wants to swing and the other doesn't.

No more than thirty percent of the Golden Circle members are hardcore. The hardcore were the ones we couldn't get along with, and we finally decided it wasn't worth the hassle trying to do so.

But, like many, it's where Larry and I began. At the Golden Circle, we discovered that swingers were, indeed, normal people. We met a banker and a man running a plumbing business. We remained members for two years. However, we got a reputation of being too selective. Couples began to avoid us. Our philosophy was that we had been selective when we were single; why should we be any less selective after marriage?

We did form a good network of friends, but we were criticized for our philosophy.

We then tried L'Eglise, a swingers' club based in a house in Lakewood [a Denver suburb]. The environment is nice, with a hot-tub and fireplace pit, but it was too sexually open for our taste. We went five times over a two year period. It was totally useless in terms of meeting the kind of people we wanted to meet.

So we decided to try advertising in *Odyssey*, a national swingers' magazine published in Denver. The magazine contains personal ads, many of which are coded. They have a mail forwarding system that costs a dollar. If someone is really interested in meeting you, they'll send the dollar.

We try to pre-screen our responses with our advertisement. Then we turn down eighty percent of the letters that come in. We've had our share of strange letters--they're a lot of fun, very entertaining. We demand pictures. We won't answer a letter without pictures, because that's important to us, as well. I don't like to meet people without knowing what they look like ahead of time. It makes it very uncomfortable.

LARRY: Particularly if he's 4'8" and 350 pounds!

SUE: If we find an attraction and some compatibility, we arrange a meeting in a neutral location. We tried meeting at one of the couple's homes, but it puts the guests at a disadvantage. We have a drink or two and get to

know the people. Then Larry and I go home and decide whether we'd like to get involved.

It's not strictly a sexual thing. Our main interest is friendship. We find we don't have any straight friends, except through work. We've discovered that people who share the same philosophy--politically, socially, intellectually--turn us on more than anything else.

What we've accomplished is finding compatible people. We don't have to worry about touching our friends.

LARRY: When Sue and I first got together, we found we had a lot in common. While growing up, most of my friends were women. In Sue's case, most of her friends were men. We're both highly sexed, compared to other people. We enjoy variety, as well as each other.

When we're involved with a couple we like, one we've known for awhile, it improves our own sex life. So it's a very positive thing for us.

SUE: It has improved our marriage. We're a lot closer. We're able to share an experience that a lot of husbands and wives can't handle. If you get involved separately, you lose a lot of what you gain from non-monogamy. I've seen my husband in a way that most wives couldn't conceive. I've learned to appreciate what I've got, and not be jealous.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: What percentage of swingers are hardcore?

LARRY: L'Eglise claims 250-300 couples as members. Golden Circle has about 350 couples. Those are people who go often enough to want to join the organization. Many more have dabbled with alternative sexual lifestyles.

L'Eglise has a much higher percentage of those who are interested in getting it on within the next ten minutes--maybe ninety percent. These hardcore swingers would not want to waste time going to the Golden Circle functions.

Although there are far fewer hardcore swingers at the Golden Circle, it is difficult for newcomers there. The mean age at the Golden Circle is probably 45 or 50. Those are the people who control the organization. Newcomers often told us that nobody there talked to them. They didn't know how to be aggressive enough to talk to other people, let alone be sexually aggressive. It was all brand new to them.

The hardcores have it down pat. As soon as they see a couple they are physically attracted to--woosh!--they're over there within twenty seconds. They monopolize them, making it hard for anyone else to join the conversation.

SUE: The low-key or utopian swinger does not stay with Golden Circle very long because they get lost there. Then they try L'Eglise, and it's even worse. So they either try the *Odyssey* route or drop out completely.

Very few of the people who advertise through *Odyssey* are hardcore swingers. It costs \$6 to buy the magazine. It takes time to carefully read through it and to write a well-thought-out letter. That's too much effort for the hardcore swinger, too much delay between seeing the picture and getting it on.

AUDIENCE COMMENT: You're talking about the couples who advertise. There are also a lot of single guys who run pictures of their penises.

LARRY: Sure, but the guys who run ads are a lot less successful than the couples.

SUE: The *Odyssey* gives a bad impression at first. If you take time to critically read it, you'll find a lot of couples who want to meet people they can befriend.

I'm not saying the *Odyssey* is perfect. But it's the best swingers' publication currently available.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Have you ever responded to other ads?

SUE: Yes, that's how we started. We met three or four really great couples, most of whom we're still in contact with.

LARRY: We're looking for people we can do things with--camping, skiing, etc.--without the artificial sexual barriers that are such a pain for me. But at the same time, I'm not looking for another couple to be married to.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: What if you meet a couple where only one of the partners appeals to you? Does that exclude them?

SUE: Yes. We are looking for couples. And if we're unsure about one partner, we don't get involved.

LARRY: That is one of the ground rules in our relationship.

SUE: When we tried recreational swinging at large parties, we found it was dissatisfying because often one of us was left out.

LARRY: If one of us is unhappy with the situation, it's better not to get involved. After all, we're primarily committed to each other.

WILL: When Genie and I were involved in swinging a long time ago, we found it hard to meet couples who appealed to both of us. Is this a problem for you?

LARRY: Yes. When seeking normal, straight friends, we also go through a lot of people before meeting a couple we like.

SUE: What we do is unusual only because we have the sexual aspect in addition to the friendship. We screen people the same way.

AUDIENCE COMMENT: It almost seems mathematically impossible to find four people who are compatible as friends and sexual partners.

SUE: But we've been able to do it.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: What are those ingredients you look for?

SUE: We both know what we like and what we're looking for. We like reasonable intelligent, reasonably well educated people. We each know what the other likes physically and emotionally--temperament, sociability. These are things you can sense after talking to someone for a period of time.

If you're in tune with each other, you can read each other's responses. Often at a meeting with a new couple, we'll look at each other and know that they won't work out.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Have your percentages of success improved with time?

SUE: Yes. In the beginning it was more difficult.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Are you always looking for new people, or are you having relationships with couples over long periods of time?

LARRY: We're always looking for new people. I get intellectually stimulated by talking to people with different outlooks and ideas. At the same time, we've had three relationships for over a year.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Where do people tend to be sexually?

SUE: It varies. In a few cases, one of the partners has been previously involved with open relationships. In some cases the couple feels something is missing in their sexual lives, and would like to expand a little bit. We've run into a lot of couples who started swinging before they were married, like Larry and I.

(continued in the next issue)

Jackie Weller is looking for "secondary partners" to interview for a future *Beyond Monogamy* feature story. If you are interested, please call the *Beyond Monogamy* office, 399-3326.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Letters Policy: We do not print full names and addresses of authors of letters unless requested in writing to do so. We reserve the right to edit letters, but we try not to pull quotations out of context.

We especially like letters which discuss your personal experiences. We also encourage you to express your feelings about ideas and questions raised by articles or other letters.

Deadline is one month prior to issue date. We cannot guarantee that your letter will be used.

THE FRUSTRATIONS OF TRIAD-SEEKERS

Dear Will and BMI People:

My wife and I have been looking for a co-wife or another female to form an extended family for over three years now. We're having a hard time, and find people are running away from their problems and themselves. We ask only one thing: honesty. Now our lifestyle is a little different than most, but we love it and want to share it with someone. We're "back to the landers," farm with draft horses, love the outdoors and the land, milk a few cows, raise a pig or two, plant a big garden, forage in the woods for berries and mushrooms, and look for game. We live in an underground house (which really saves on heating costs) in our own woods.

We work hard, play hard and feel we really enjoy life. In the future, we might extend our family to include others, but right now we're looking for a female to join us. We've unsuccessfully run ads in several publications

although we have discovered that there are a lot of other couples looking for the same thing. We haven't given up and will succeed! Modern marriage isn't working, jobs are hard to find, it costs more to live and people are becoming more dependant on others. Sooner or later, someone will understand us and our lifestyle and will want to share it with us.

Gary & Marge
Southern Minnesota

Dear Will:

I'm glad to see you're finally telling us HOW to meet other people when you're already married with an open relationship. Please elaborate a bit more if you could. You see, we've tried many personal ads in all kinds of publications--well over \$100 worth! Ouch! The worst mistake was The Mother Earth News. Besides being costly, all we got were headaches and heartaches. Several letters came in from nosy individuals just wanting to know what we had in mind and seeking answers to petty questions like, "Who's going to sleep with whom?" We got two replies from what we were led to believe were women very eager to join my husband and I as a second wife. One turned out to be an unemployed man just filling his time, and the other was an unexplainable scam. Neither asked for money, but one did keep concentrating on the sexual aspects no matter how much we diverted to goats, gardening, bread baking, etc. We spent several months corresponding with these two people and poured out our hearts and souls in those letters! We are now giving up on personal ads entirely since we've tried so many varied publications with nothing. So now how do we go ahead?

My husband and I are up to our ears in "enlightening and growth enhancing" books on beyond monogamous relationships--we don't need to be convinced--we're ready and anxious! But, how do you find people? We've approached a good girl friend of mine and an old girl friend of my husband, and the way they react is really disappointing. Why are single girls so hard to come by AND close-minded? They all say they can't share and they want their "own" husband. The possessiveness about it is frightening.

Please, please, if you can, shed some light on HOW else we can meet our lifemate. We've been looking for a long time and are sooo frustrated.

Becky
Ohio

Reply from Will: I can hear the desperation and feel these people at least need other friends who are supportive of their lifestyle preferences. Since Becky and her husband don't live far from Ann Arbor, Michigan, I recommend they contact Bob and Margaret Blood, 2005 Penncraft Ct., Ann Arbor, MI 48103. The Bloods are therapists who have been running multiple relationships workshops for couples and individuals for several years. I would think that some of the

people who have attended these workshops would have formed or would be interested in forming a support group or network of people interested in non-monogamy. Unfortunately, I know of no resource people like the Bloods in Minnesota. However, if there is no non-monogamy support network in Minnesota, there should be judging by the relatively large number of subscriptions we get from that state. Maybe someone in the Twin Cities area could start a group by offering a class on non-monogamy through Minnesota Free University. You don't need to be an expert to start groups like this. You just need a willingness to share and listen. Now I'm not promising that forming a support group or network will necessarily result in finding a lifemate. But, it sure beats the hell out of social isolation.

I guess I always wonder why so many couples are looking for single women rather than another couple. True, it's easier to find one compatible person than two, but experience has shown me that there are simply not very many single women out there who are interested in committed non-monogamous relationships. This judgment is based on five years of teaching open relationships classes and facilitating Beyond Monogamy activities. Although I feel many young single women are deluding themselves with expectations of meeting "the perfect man of their dreams," I can understand their skepticism about triads. Why would someone intentionally want to get involved with a couple and assume the role of second fiddle, as they see it (the situation would be somewhat different if the same-sex partner were bisexual). I have a feeling that single women may be more receptive to triads if they evolve from a close friendship with a couple which did not start out with the intention of becoming a triad. (Marcia Seligson talks about one such successful arrangement between Sara, Karen and Lloyd in her book, Options, which is available from BMI).

More Pros and Cons on Our Ad Policies

Editors' note: Maybe some of you are getting tired of hearing about this issue, but we feel it makes for an interesting dialogue.

Dear Will:

It is heartening and a source of great satisfaction to me to observe someone so valiantly fighting for principles and causes that I believe in. I am glad that you are able to deal with rejection of Beyond Monogamy ads by Mother Earth News and UU World in such a conscious and precise manner without giving way to frustration and anger. It seems that these people are acting out of fear and are feeling very threatened by ideas differing from their own.

Personally, I don't feel that the same principle is involved in Beyond Monogamy refusing "secret affair" or "swinger" ads. Exclusion of ads for secret affairs clearly has to do with a commitment to truth and a refusal to be an in-

strument in hurting other people, and I think it is morally proper. To me, refusal of swinger ads is based on the fact that the philosophical focus of BMI is on meaningful multiple intimate relationships which go beyond the province of mere recreational sex. I think that to include such ads would dilute and compromise the purpose of BMI.

Dick
Boulder, Colorado

Hi Will,

Just read your May-June issue ... interesting and splendidly done as usual. Like the larger size.

The article by Genie Whitaker is outstanding. What a perfect example of growth in spirit and mind. How lucky you are. People like her are as rare as hen's teeth, I fear. I wonder if others, like Genie, who once tried swinging might not turn to BMI ideals of long term relationships. This might be a reason to take ANY ads for swingers or other relationships. They would be interesting reading even if their approach was different from most of your readers. The income from the ads might help finance costs and in the long run prove a good investment. I do not think it would turn off readers who do not think likewise. I don't drink or smoke myself, but do not for that reason stop reading magazines that flaunt the ads that one must smoke XXX or ZZZ brand to be popular with the opposite sex or must drink YYY brand of wine, champagne or beer!

The angle of social nudity among triads, foursomes, etc. seems to be neglected (overlooked?). To me, this seems to bring people closer together--perhaps as much as sex (more so?). The body taboo is a factor in preventing "togetherness."

Enclosed is an order for still more books.

L. B.
Upstate New York

Reply from Will: L.B. is 81, has read practically every book on the Beyond Monogamy list, writes me very interesting letters, and enjoys skinny dipping in the pond on his farm. One of the pleasures of being an editor is hearing from delightful characters like L.B.!

Unitarian Universalists Strike Back

In the last issue we printed a letter from the director of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) refusing to publish an ad for Beyond Monogamy in their national publication, UU World. We have received copies of several angry letters sent by Unitarian Universalist Beyond Monogamy readers to UUA.

Ronald E. Davis, 425 Virginia NE, Albuquerque, NM 87108 writes: "I am a member of the Unitarian Church of Albuquerque. As a sexually

liberal Unitarian, I am angry that you are unwilling to negotiate the publication of any ad by BMI." Julie, a member of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield, New Jersey writes, "Since when is UUA closed to other opinions? Since when do UU's refuse to COMMUNICATE about these differences? Isn't that the big idea in our denomination--to communicate our differences? Since when does the WORLD refuse advertisement to a highly respectable, intellectual, eminently helpful group and its publication?" And, Robert, a Lay Minister with the Prairie Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship in Madison, Wisconsin says: "I was surprised by your refusal to give Mr. Mahoney any reason for rejecting the ad. Perhaps you don't have to account to him for this action, but I believe you owe an explanation to me, as well as to the thousands of other UU's who are concerned with and working on the problem of monogamy and its alternatives." Thus far, to our knowledge, none of these readers have received a response from UUA to their letters.

We thank those of you who have come to our defense. In addition, we'd like to suggest you Unitarian Universalists follow the lead of Robert from the Madison fellowship. He got our permission to make photocopies of the UUA's letter of refusal and my response to it. He distributed the copies to members of his congregation one Sunday morning which precipitated a lively discussion on censorship and on open relationships. If more of you can do something similar, the refusal of the ad may have a greater impact on Unitarian Universalists than if the ad would have been published with no hassle. We grant blanket permission to make copies of this page and of page 8 of the May-June issue of Beyond Monogamy for distribution to Unitarian-Universalist congregations. By the way, the ad I submitted to UU World was worded: "BEYOND MONOGAMY, open relationships newsletter and networking facilitator. Includes interviews, letters from readers and personal ads."

CO-LIVING NETWORK

Family Synergy, a nationwide group which includes co-living among its interests, has formed a network called "Communal Living Clearing Center" ("CLCC"). The purpose is to network people interested in (1) offering space to share, (2) finding space to rent, or (3) dialogue and support group purposes. CLCC is oriented toward co-living, from co-op through more intimate or growth-oriented purposes.

The network contacts include Lyn and Phyllis Ehrnstein, at (213) 275-3730 (ring patiently for their answering machine), and others in Orange County, California, and Oregon, who are listed on the short participation questionnaire which is the basis for matching you with others having similar interests.