

LBQ solves dilemmas, answers questions

By Thomas Lipscomb
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"It's a support group, it's informal, it's just comfortable conversation that women have," says Sarah Orndorff, a fourth year Anthropology major and member of the Lesbian, Bisexual, and Questioning Women (LBQ).

LBQ began four years ago as a small handful of friends, mostly graduate students. Unlike the LGSU, the LBQ's members are women only. Orndorff described the atmosphere as "laid back." Since the LBQ is not a Contracted Independent Organization, it has no officers or budgets, only a weekly discussion topic chosen by the members. "Because it's so unstructured and because it's so informal, it often lasts the whole evening," Orndorff said.

The LBQ emphasizes its role as a support group. Unlike the LSGU, which sponsors events such as "Gay Awareness Week," LBQ is not an organized political pressure group. Members of the LBQ recognize, however, some of the issues facing the U.Va. homosexual community. "The lack of an anti-discrimination clause is a big problem," said fourth year CLAS student Barb Shubinski, who is double majoring in Women's Studies and Anthropology, "because without that we're not guaranteed that we won't be ostracized or discriminated against. We may be

fine as long as sympathetic or understanding people are in positions of power. But we don't have a base of security because as soon as the political climate changes, we're in a real different situation."

"A big problem is that people are really afraid of questioning [their sexual identity]. They think that it's a definite sign that they're gay, and don't want to even think about it," said another LBQ member. " 'I'm attracted to my best friend,' may come across as 'I'm intense friends with her,' not 'I could be having gay feelings.' So it doesn't translate into a greater understanding at all."

Discussion topics range from feminism to various political issues. The "questioning" in LBQ's title "originally meant questioning some of society's values, but has really evolved to mean questioning one's sexual identity," Orndorff explained. "It's in the strictest confidence, because some of the people are still experimenting, and are not 'out.'"

Although the emphasis of LBQ is on homosexual women's concerns, all women are welcome, regardless of sexual orientation. "We'd like to have some more diverse women [at the meetings]," said another member.

*LBQ meets every Friday evening
at the Prism Coffeehouse.*



Journal graphic by Tom Gearty