

OUTWRITE

Totally Gay and then some

Issue 8 — April 2009

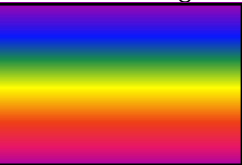
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10 Years of Promoting Diversity

The Evolution of Ohio University's LGBT Center

OU's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Center celebrated its 10th anniversary this year! It's taken a lot of work this past decade to develop an LGBT presence on campus. Now, it's easy to take this common space for granted, but "we" haven't always had such positive recognition on campus. Today's LGBT Center exists only because of the cumulative efforts by many individuals who attempted to bridge ignorance and cultural difference in the past.

The first step occurred in May of 1994, when Ohio University's Division of Student Affairs adopted a new mission statement with a keen commitment to diversity. In part, it stated, "Ohio University is comprised of individuals with varied social and cultural backgrounds and experience." The University's inclusive efforts manifested in extended programs and spaces dedicated to minority students. The DSA's new policy became known as the "Just and Diverse Community Statement" because of its focus on representation within the University setting.

As part of the process to implement the DSA's new policy, a cultural audit was conducted in 1997 to discern the social climate. The audit reported a lack of organized LGBT representation.

For example, OU lacked facilities and student services that other, similarly sized and funded Mid-American Conference schools maintained. OU was behind in providing the apparatuses for fostering cultural diversity, like offices, programs, and student organizations for the LGBT community.

Following the audit, the Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Student Needs Task Force painted a more descriptive portrait of the LGBT profile and experience at OU. The committee of 12 faculty and student staff members published their report in March 1998, that cited specific incidents of discrimination reported by students and staff. As a means to this end, program funds and staff support was the priority recommendation in the Task Force's report.

What is now the "LGBT Center" was established as The GLBT Student Programming Office. It was headed by Laura Harrison, a Resident Director who worked 10 hours a week overseeing the center.

SafeZone was developed cooperatively by Harrison and practicum student Demisia Razo-Jackson. The purpose of the workshop then, as now, is to inform about LGBT life. The program was successful according to the *Gay People's Chronicle*, and *The Athens*



Meet the LGBT Center staff from Fall 2005



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OUTWRITE

OUTwrite is the LGBTA journal and newsletter for students, faculty, and staff at Ohio University.

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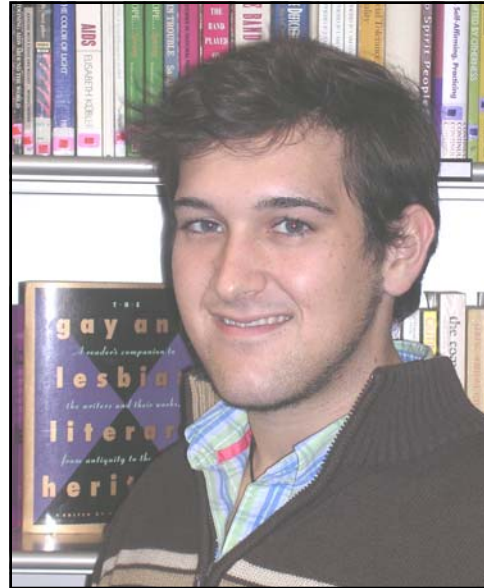
OUTwrite accepts submissions in the form of letters, features, reviews and poetry. Letters should be no more than 250 words. Features and reviews should be no more than 750 words. Poetry should be less than 20 lines. All submissions are subject to editing for length, content and clarity. OUTwrite reserves the right to deny inclusion of any submission at the discretion of the editor and/or publisher.

LGBT Center Mission:

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Center advances the diversity mission of Ohio University by creating a campus environment inclusive and supportive of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. We focus on the unique academic, cultural, and social needs of LGBT students, and strive to enhance these students' learning and engagement as well as increase their retention. Our broader influence emerges from providing resources, educational opportunities, and social justice initiatives to all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members at Ohio University and beyond.

Letter from the editor

Mickey and I conferred the other day about OUTwrite. The long and short of our meeting is that we are likely not doing a Spring Quarter issue of OUTwrite. With time crunches and the nature of the center, it's been difficult to realize a well-planned and planned publication. As much as I've enjoyed editing and the shared responsibilities of production, I'm a student with many other responsibilities. As such,



instead of doing an issue this quarter, we may fine tune a specific feature or two that will be uploaded to our website. That's not to say this is OUTwrite's swan song. In future years the LGBT Center might reopen the idea of producing a quarterly journal.

I want to thank the LGBT Center staff. I appreciate your hard work and thoughtfulness. You produced quality pieces, and should be

proud of yourselves. I especially thank Bobby Landers, whose work on layout and finalizing really brought stuff together. I know you put a lot of effort into it. We couldn't have done it without you. Finally, I want to thank Mickey for giving me this editing opportunity, even if it has to end so soon. It's been a valuable learning experience, to say the least. I know that I will take these lessons wherever I go.

And now, to all our readers, however few or numerous they may be, thanks a bunch! If just a handful of people read the publication, then it's all been worthwhile. I hope you've gleaned something valuable from the pages. When I got this position, my biggest concern was trying to make it accessible and representative of your interests.

Sean Flynn
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Check Out These Upcoming Events!

April 24th—April 30th:

Athens 2009 International Film and Video Festival
Various Locations and Times
For Schedule/Info: www.athensfest.org

Thursday, May 7th

SafeZone Workshop
Baker Center 229
2pm-4pm
For More Info: www.ohio.edu/lgbt

Sunday, May 3rd:

Pride Graduation
Baker University Center Ballroom
6:30PM—9:30PM

Wednesday, May 13th

SafeZone Workshop
Baker Center 341
10am—12pm
For More Info: www.ohio.edu/lgbt

A Homecoming Queen with 'Tran' tastic Appeal

The Patriot Center at George Mason University was sold-out for a Saturday Homecoming game against Northwestern. The students cheering in the stands quieted themselves at halftime for the announcement of the Homecoming King and Queen. They had always considered the pageant a competition for "pretty blondes and fraternity boys," but that was about to change. That is, it did when Ryan Allen proudly accepted the title of Homecoming Queen, receiving more votes than his two female competitors.

Ryan performs at popular local gay clubs as a drag queen. He won his title of "Ms. Mason" in the pageant with an excellent lip-synch performance of Britney Spears' single 'Womanizer'. The university openly supports Ryan saying that, "the school does not require participants to compete

along precise gender lines."

However, apparently some students are not so accepting. One student expressed that Allen was embarrassing the university: Grant Bollinger for one said, "The game was on TV. Everyone was there. All eyes were on us. And we do something like this? It's just stupid." Allen, however, was enthralled with all the support he received from his fellow students and is proud to represent his university as their elected Homecoming Queen.

For a full version of this news brief, see the original source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/02/19/AR2009021901780.html?hpid=>

Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Get Caught: Gay Freshman Booted from ROTC Program at GWU

Todd Belok, a gay freshman at George Washington University, was dismissed from the school's Navy ROTC program after two other NROTC members saw him kiss his boyfriend at a party. The other students felt compelled to report him due to the federal "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which prohibits kissing another of the same sex as "actively engaging in homosexual conduct."

Belok's commanding officer gave him two choices: either quietly withdraw from the program and re-enter the Navy after college through the Officers Candidates School, or face a Performance Review Board (PRB). Todd chose to go in front of the PRB. They recommended him for disenrollment and dismissed him from his battalion the next month.

Belok does not resent any of the members of his battalion, "after all they were just carrying out a Department of Defense policy." He knows that he must fight for legislative change in order to fulfill his dreams of serving in the Navy, and that is exactly what he plans to do. On March 13th, he attended the "Freedom to Serve Rally" held on Capitol Hill. The rally is part of an effort to repeal the "don't ask, don't tell policy" that Bill Clinton instated as part of his campaign promise to redress LGBT intolerance in the military.

For a full version of this news brief, see the original source: <http://www.thehoya.com/node/17948>

Court Upholds Two Universities' Refusal to Fund Faith-Based, LGBT Un-Friendly Student Group

Every Nation Campus Ministries was a university funded student group at San Diego State University and California State University—that is, until they made a change to their organization's constitution. In 2005, their amendment required that all members be Christians. It went further to ban any members who "believe they are innately homosexual, or advocate that homosexuality is a part of God's created order."

Because of the exclusionary change in membership criteria, the group was denied official recognition and funding by both institutions. The organization's exclusion of LGBT members violated the schools' respective non-discrimination poli-

cies. In response, Every Nation Campus Ministries sued.

Earlier this month the court ruled in favor of the universities, claiming that the institutions intervened on the grounds that student groups are "a limited public forum." The state sets these limits, as long as the restrictions are reasonable and viewpoint-neutral.

For a full version of this news brief, see the original source: <http://chronicle.com/news/article/5944/judge-says-colleges-bias-policy-does-not-impede-rights-of-christian-student-groups?>

Discrimination Still an Issue for LGBT People in Workforce

So, your time at Ohio University is about to come to an end. Soon you will be moving on into the “real world,” searching for a career. As if the search weren’t hard enough as it is, if you are an LGBT person, it can be downright treacherous. If you are an ally, perhaps you have been thinking about what the work environment is like for your LGBT friends. As career interviews, “professional attire,” and applications loom ever closer on the horizon, you start to consider how identifying as an LGBT person might affect your career possibilities. Out of this consideration arises a slew of questions and concerns about possible prejudices. Unfortunately the answer to these questions is not so simple. Discrimination depends a great deal on where you live, and where you may work.

You might be surprised to learn that there is no federal law in the United States that protects LGBT individuals from work place discrimination. This means that, barring any local laws, ordinances, or internal company policies, it is legal for an employer to refuse to hire, or fire you, solely on the basis of your real or perceived sexual orientation. Furthermore, you can be denied housing and public accommodation for these same reasons.

After spending the last four to six years of your life in a supportive establishment, like Ohio University, it might be difficult to even think about finding yourself in a less receptive work place environment when you

graduate. How will you face the possibility of being legally discriminated against because of your sexual orientation? Should you be open about your sexual orientation

during the interview process? When and how should you come out to co-workers? Are you willing to go back into the closet in order to secure a good job?

These are all very important questions to ask yourself when transitioning into the workforce. And, as much as I wish I had the answers for you, I don’t. All of these questions depend a great deal on your own personal feelings and the workplace environment that you find yourself in. But don’t let the uncertainty get you down; there are some increasing legislative efforts to create LGBT friendly (or at least protected) work environments.

Twenty-one states have employment and housing anti-discrimination laws that apply to LGBT individuals on the

books. Furthermore, the federal, as well as several state governments, do have policies that protect many government employees. According to the United States Code of Prohibited Personnel Practices, federal civil service law contains a section that bars discrimination based on “conduct which does not adversely affect the performance of the employee or applicant or the performance of others.” Though this policy does not specifically mention sexual orientation, it has been interpreted to protect against this form of discrimination.

*Josh Bodnar, LGBT Affairs Commissioner For Graduate Student Senate
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Many LGBT people are still discriminated against in the workplace

For More Information...

For more information on what constitutes discrimination in the workplace for LGBT people, or in order to find out what you should do if you’re being discriminated against, visit the Human Rights Campaign website at HRC.org, or the American Civil Liberties Union website at ACLU.org

Speaking up and Speaking OUT!

Reflections From SpeakOUT! Coordinator Jason Porter

During my stint as coordinator of the SpeakOUT program thus far, I've noticed a trend among my peers and fellow community members. Many of us are concerned about the same social issues, and we share similar past experiences because of our sexual identities. Stigma and unacceptability is our shared knowledge. As cultural concepts of LGBT sexuality are often alienating, it is truly a blessing to be in an environment as accepting and open-minded as Ohio University.

Yet, before we "come out," our main concern is the fear of rejection, a human fear of isolation from our peers, parents, and colleagues. LGBT college students in particular are faced with a vast array of concerns that come colliding into our lives once we come to terms with our sexual identity. A number of social issues for the LGBT community at large directly impact our daily lives. For instance, "in the closet," one seems to share a fear of loneliness that occupies all of our cognitive activity concerning LGBT life. So after one comes out, what is the next step? What issues lie ahead for us after we take the plunge and find others like ourselves? What are they and where do we stand in relation?

For one, legal discrimination manifests in policies on LGBT marriage equality, adoption, hate-crime concerns, and service in the armed forces. But these are only a few examples of the rights and social privileges that heterosexuals enjoy, and most LGBT counterparts do not. Coming to terms with this realization can be quite a shock after coming out and settling into your niche as a student. However, in spite of these evident discriminations it is important to not let your fellow open-minded community members give you false ideas about the rest of the world out there. There are some monstrous forces working against us and legalities that prevent us from realizing our fundamental rights. Yet, at the root of it all is our culture's ignorance and naïveté. Legal discrimination is only part of the parcel. It is the prevailing cultural unacceptability of LGBT identities that precludes full citizenship and social recognition.

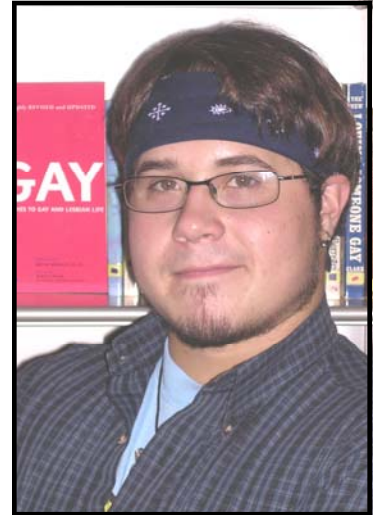
The matter begs the question: what can we do to change it? Which causes are worth fighting for? Will time alone fix these injustices, or should we actively seek what we feel is denied to us? Facing these dilemmas after coming out, we are confronted with only one plausible question: *What can we do?*

The LGBT Center at Ohio University offers at least one oppor-

tunity for any who seek the answer to this daunting question. It's an informative program called SpeakOUT! Through sharing their personal experiences as LGBT people in a hetero-normative society, volunteer panelists provide classes with insights into identifying as LGBT.

The program works like this: a diverse panel of LGBT individuals visits various classes and organizations by request. Their personal stories inform the listeners of the reality of day-to-day living as an LGBT person in Athens, and the world. Typically, a panel of 4-5 people will show up and each panelist will take a turn sharing their personal coming out story. Volunteers recall their first LGBT inclinations; they detail their struggle for self-acceptance, their coming out process, and conclude with where they stand now in comparison to before "coming out." These stories comprise aspects of our personal opinions, thoughts and life experiences. The panelists give the listeners a real-life look into the lives of LGBT people.

Following this, the panel turns the discussion over to the audience as an open Q&A forum for discussion. This is where the audience has the opportunity to ask anything they wish of the panelists. These questions are usually directed towards specific panelists as further inquiries into their personal story, or sometimes as open questions to the entire panel. They might be asked their two cents worth on common LGBT concerns, like the role(s) that stereotypes and other cultural misconceptions play in discrimination. It is during this Q&A period that one truly starts to see the goal that the program aims to accomplish. Many people ask questions that ill-informed heterosexuals would rightfully ask. They do so out of curiosity, usually, and without malice.



SpeakOUT Coordinator
Jason Porter

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LGBT Center Celebrates 10 Years

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News.

The second coordinator of the LGBT center was Jenny Hall-Jones, an RD from South Green. Hall-Jones is a passionate ally who helped to expand programs and outreach from 2000 to mid-2001. Mickey Hart, the current director of the Center, took over the position as coordinator in 2001.

In 2004, OU upgraded Hart's position and the Center's funding from "1/4 time" to full-time. The Center now had 40 hours a week of operating office time to advocate, organize, and adequately serve OU's LGBT population. The increase in programs and office productivity since 2004's funding decision improved the LGBT profile on campus. Never before had the Center's importance been so clearly upheld by the institution. More time and money meant better services, and better services attracted more recognition from outside.

What is now the annual Pride Graduation and Community Celebration began informally in 2000, when Mickey Hart personally organized a small gathering of graduating students and friends in the basement of the UCM. The LGBT Center officially facilitated the first formal Pride Graduation in 2001, and it has since grown in meaning and popularity.



Attendees at the 2003 Pride Graduation held in Bromley Hall

Though it's been hosted at varying locations over the years, the celebration always commemorates LGBT graduates' success and their ambitions for the future.

The Faces of Pride poster campaign started in 2002. The initiative was started in order to publicize the existence (and contributions) of LGBT students, professors, staff, and community members. Then as now, students and staff voluntarily put themselves out there to help destigmatize LGBT people. The hope was that stereotypes and assumptions about LGBT life would be challenged, lending a voice and image to the growing acknowledgment of OU's LGBT population.

In 2001, the LGBT Center went digital. The Center's e-



Student leaders dining and discussing with Transgender Activist Leslie Feinbeg at Lui Lui prior to a 2003 Pride Week event

FEATURES

OUTWRITE

Totally Gay and then some

News list was first activated, and the first version of the Center's website debuted. The website is a virtual hub through which students can get involved with programs like SpeakOUT!, SafeZone, OUT Grads and Non-Trads, and more. The site even features a transgender resource guide to help students adjust to campus life.

Another element of the Center's initiative to foster a "Just and Diverse Community" involves bringing guest speakers to campus. The LGBT Center orchestrates visits from notable lecturers and performers commenting on the topic of LGBT life. One such speaker was Judy Shepard, who spoke at OU in 2004 on hate crimes and the unique prejudices facing LGBT youths. In 1998, her son Matthew's death as the victim of a hate crime called national attention to violence and other forms of discrimination targeting LGBT people. OU has kept up with the national scope of LGBT issues and politics thanks to other speakers like Staceyann Chin, Robyn Ochs, Leslie Feinberg, Candice Gingrich, and Mandy Carter. By helping to bring these voices and faces to OU, the LGBT Center hoped to make LGBT life more accessible and comprehensible to the university at large.

As a result of the LGBT Center's work to create an LGBT friendly institution of academic excellence, The Advocate named OU one of the top 100 universities for LGBT students in the US in 2006. In *The Advocate's College Guide for LGBT Students*, OU scored an exceptional 17 out of 20 on the checklist of criteria for an LGBT friendly campus.

The LGBT Center's commitment to realizing the "Just and Diverse Community" envisioned in 1994 was tangibly acknowledged again in 2007 by OU, when the LGBT Center was incorporated into the offices of Diversity, Access, and Equity. Along with the new change of classification, Hart's position was re-titled "director."

Through the last decade, the LGBT Center, and everyone involved in establishing its presence, has worked assiduously to make OU a more welcoming place for people of all colors, genders, and sexualities. The fact that the Center was incorporated into the offices of Diversity, Access, and Equity proves how important the Center has been in developing an inclusive campus. A "Just and Diverse Community" would simply be a myth without recognizing the importance and contributions of LGBT individuals.

Sean Flynn
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College gate banner promoting Judy Shepard's 2004 OUT Week visit



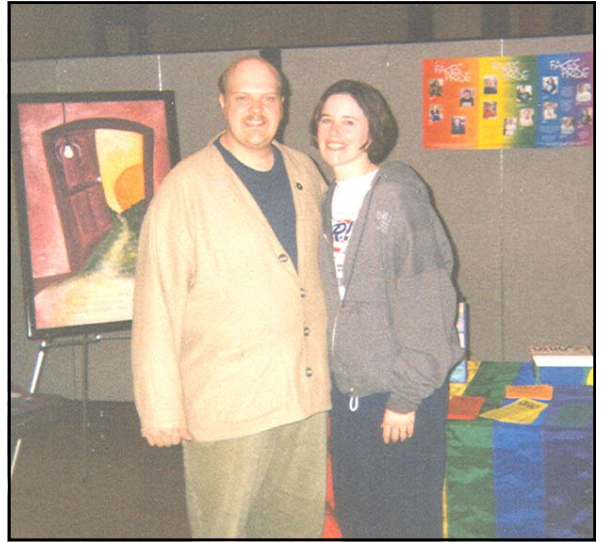
SafeZone facilitators being recognized at the 2006 Pride Graduation



The new LGBT center features a large lending library



Students hanging out in the lounge of the old LGBT center



Mickey Hart and Jenny Hall-Jones at "What is Marriage For" in Old Baker Center Ballroom, Fall 2001



Students Celebrate the opening of the new LGBT Center



Judy Shepard with students and staff at Memorial Auditorium, Fall 2004



Participants in the Genie Gender Workshop hosted by One, Fall 2001



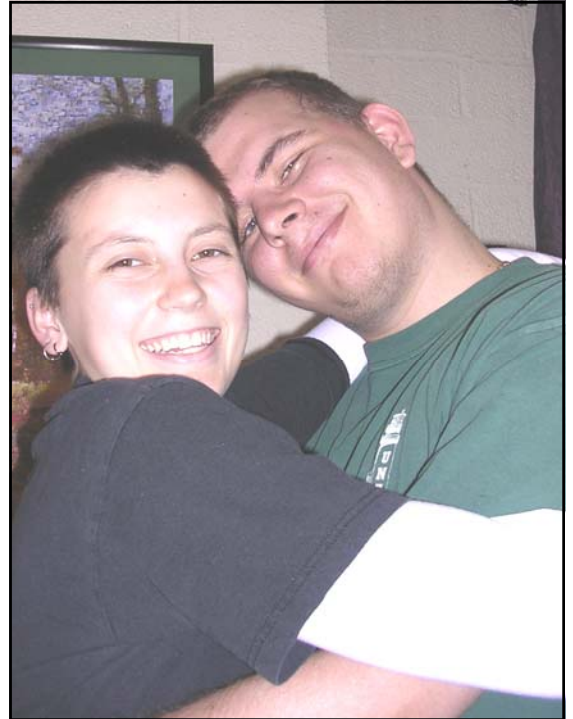
Mom's Weekend Tea and Social at UCM, Spring 2006



Participants in the 2008 MBLGTA College Conference... who plans a February conference in the Mid-West? Queers!



Mickey Hart and students after the 2003 Pride Week Rally at Memorial Auditorium. Got Pride?



The LGBT Center's first GA Jon Connary and long-time website assistant Sara Mosher



Students in the old LGBT Center's main office
(Yes, that is Stephanie Thompson)

Freshmen LGBT Scholarship Recipients

Every year, there are a new handful of Freshmen LGBT students that roam Ohio University's main campus. Among these freshman, scholarships are divided based on academic merit, as well as financial needs of each student. Due to current economic conditions making the cost of post-secondary education more expensive than ever, we were interested in finding out what scholarships were being offered to LGBT freshmen.

Michael Lupsa

What scholarship(s) did you receive from Ohio University?

- 1) Gateway Scholarship
- 2) OU Bobcat Award

How did you learn about these scholarship opportunities?

All of the scholarships came either directly from the university, or were a result of applying to the FAFSA [Free Application for Federal Student Aid]. I learned about all of my scholarships as I received them.

What was filling out the application like? Did you have any reactions when you found out you had received this aid?

I didn't apply specifically to any of them, but I received them either because of my academic performance in High School, or my financial situation at home. I was still very excited to hear that I received the scholarships — some of which had to do with my own work. I hope I can maintain them for the next 4 years.

What other schools were you considering attending?

Ohio State and Kent State

Gabriel Carnick



Gabriel Carnick

What scholarship(s) did you receive from Ohio University?

Gateway Scholarship

How did you learn about these scholarship opportunities?

OU gave it to me after I applied for admission.

What was filling out the application like? Did you have any

reactions when you found out you had received this aid?

I didn't apply, OU gave it to me.

What other schools were you considering attending?

The University of Southern California

Ryan Womack

What scholarship(s) did you receive from Ohio University?

I received The King-Chavez Parks Award Program and The George Womack Grant (no relation, but it's still really weird).

How did you learn about these scholarship opportunities?

I automatically applied for it when I applied to OU.

What was filling out the application like? Did you have any reactions when you found out you had received this aid?

I was stoked. It was the deciding factor for why I chose OU.

What other schools were you considering attending?

Ohio State, The University of Dayton, and Xavier.

Anything else you would like to say about your scholarships?

In order to keep the scholarship I have to be in the LINKS program, which includes going to LINKS meetings. The program is basically like a peer mentorship. I meet with my advisor every week and she checks up on stuff and makes me set goals for the week. I also have to complete 8 hours of community service in Athens before the end of my first year.



Ryan Womack

Tim Williams

What scholarship(s) did you receive from Ohio University?

- 1) Gateway Scholarship
- 2) Choose Ohio First for Bioinformatics Scholarship

How did you learn about these scholarship opportunities?

Ohio University gave me the Gateway Scholarship based on my standardized test scores. Anyone applying to OU gets considered for it

The "Choose Ohio First For Bioinformatics Scholarship" was



Tim Williams

What was filling out the application like? Did you have any reactions when you found out you had received this aid?

I was surprised that the scholarship existed—the opportunity came out of the blue. The application itself was pretty easy. As a result, I have to take at least one Plant Bio class every quarter to maintain the scholarship. It isn't a problem for me, because that's the subject I already have interest in.

What other schools were you considering attending?

Miami University of Ohio.

Anything else you would like to say about your scholarships?

Application Deadlines are really important. Make sure to turn all materials in on time.

Nathan Parsons

What scholarship(s) did you receive from Ohio University?

- 1) Gateway Scholarship
- 2) The Leah G. Featherston Endowment Scholarship,
- 3) William B. Barker Memorial Scholarship



Nathan Parsons

How did you learn about these scholarship opportunities?

I got higher than a 32 on the ACT, and then I was notified through my letter of acceptance.

I also live in Athens, and it goes to residents of Appalachian counties. In high school, I had a high GPA and good test scores.

What was filling out the application like? Did you have any reactions when you found out you had received this aid?

I was excited to know I wasn't going to pay for college. It is not as intimidating as it looks. OU Financial Aid did it all for me.

What other schools were you considering attending?

George Washington University and American University in Washington, D.C.

Interviews conducted by Jackie Price
jp227206@ohio.edu

SpeakOUT!

Continued from page 6

One might ask, "What is your stance on marriage equality and same-sex adoption?" Another, "What sort of persecution and alienation have you experienced?" Or even, "Do you feel the LGBT community is represented appropriately in the media?" And from the boldest, perhaps, "How does gay sex really work?"

The SpeakOUT program is run on the principle that no question is too taboo to be answered. However, panelists always reserve the right to not answer any question. Many of the ideas that heterosexuals hold about members of the LGBT community are strongly based on stereotypes and we feel it is important to correct these by providing feedback on any topic.

Panelists are chosen on a first-come, first-serve basis. Each volunteer must go through a one-time, two hour training session in which they will learn about the program, shape their personal story and learn how to answer questions in the most helpful manner. Once trained, the panelists are entered into a listserv that sends a bi-monthly e-mail with all the open panels for the month ahead. Panelists are asked to respond with their availability for all the panels, and are placed into the timeslots accordingly. After that, they are informed of their assigned dates, followed by a reminder sent the day before each panel meets.

Each SpeakOUT! experience is different. Women's and Gender Studies courses, Communications classes, Greek Life and Resident Halls are just a few of the audiences to whom we have spoken. Audience sizes range from a handful to a hundred, with varying ratios of genders and ethnicities. The personal stories shared by the panelists also affect the mood of the Speak. Coming out stories range from the highest of highs to the lowest of lows. I have seen panelists laugh and I've seen them cry. Nothing is off limits.

Despite, or perhaps *because of* the emotional experience of sharing their stories, panelists tend to leave in very high spirits. There is an indefinable sense of pride as we conclude each Speak. It is a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction that stays with you for a while. Honestly, it's a remarkable experience to share your life with people who are willing to listen. That willingness is so rare that we must seize every opportunity we can get to share our thoughts and our lessons. I believe this program is shaping the views of Ohio University students and helping them become more aware, accepting, and educated on LGBT issues.

If you want to get involved in the SpeakOUT program, email Jason Porter at jp193206@ohio.edu or visit ohio.edu/lgbt. Training sessions are done bi-quarterly in groups or one-on-one sessions can be arranged alternatively.

Jason Porter
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The Look Into Hollywood's "Queer" History

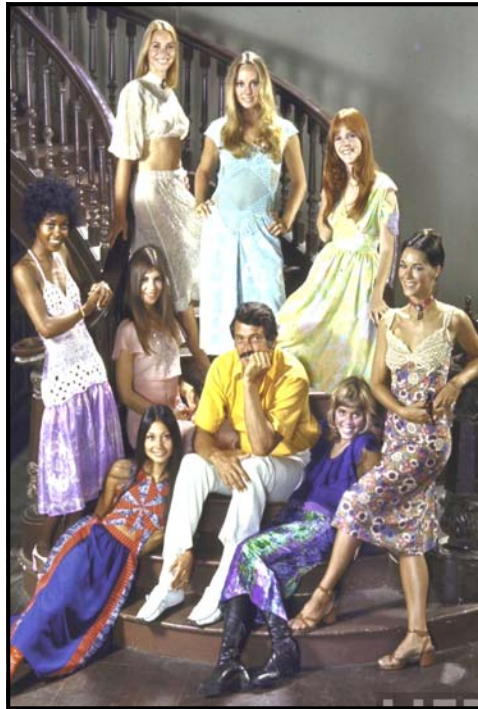
In 2008, *Milk* – a film about California's first openly gay elected official, Harvey Milk – was released and has since received great recognition for honoring the influential politician. To date, the film has been nominated for an Oscar for "Movie Of The Year", and Sean Penn (portraying Harvey Milk) was nominated and won the Oscar for "Lead Role In A Film". As the Oscars might attest, the film was masterful in accurately portraying Milk and does justice to the legacy of his politics.

Although recent films like *Milk* and 2005's *Brokeback Mountain* were box-office hits and gained a large amount of notoriety, having a positive queer presence in Hollywood is only a recent accomplishment in the LGBT community. Since the beginning of film, it has been a struggle for LGBT individuals to gain acceptance in the medium.

At the beginning of the 20th century, many movies relied on homosexuality as a source of humor in film. Silent films would portray such characters as eccentric and overzealous.

The first gay "stock character" [character in a film or play based on a particular stereotype] was referred to in Hollywood as "The Sissy." Hollywood portrayed "The Sissy" as an effeminate man, one whose sexual orientation was *alluded* to, but never quite explicitly revealed. Movies that used these stock characters were sure never to disclose that "The Sissy" was in fact a homosexual, lest the taboo subject should arise and turn off "moral" audiences. As long as he was effeminate, but not visibly sexual, then his orientation was safely a matter of speculation and humor. The gay figure in Hollywood at this time was a foppish, neutered buffoon at the butt of every joke.

In the 1940s and 1950s, homosexuals took on an unusual role in cinema. "The



Rock Hudson starred in dozens of films, and played the love interest of dozens of women between the 1950s-1970s.

Sissy" had evolved, and into a much more sinister misconception indeed. "The Villain" was the new queer stock character for this time period. Alfred Hitchcock is known for using LGBT villains in a few of his movies, with Norman Bates as the cross-dressing serial killing *Psycho* -- perhaps one of the most memorable commercial films that used queerness to thrill and disgust audiences in equal measure. As "The Villian" in Hollywood plots, homosexuals were portrayed as perverts, pedophiles, and psychopaths.

It wasn't long after this that there was another radical change in Hollywood's portrayal of the LGBT community. With the political rise and acknowledgement of LGBT issues in the 1970s, Hollywood slowly began portraying homosexuals in a slightly more positive, realistic light.

The first movie to actually feature a homosexual lead role was 1981's "Making Love", marking a new era in

Gay Hollywood. The contemporary stance in Hollywood is a Liberal one. The LGBT community is, in many instances, tastefully and accurately depicted in film. That isn't to say that "The Sissy" comedic character of yore is in any way dead and gone. Queerness can still be turned to the disadvantage of LGBT people. However, there is today an unprecedented number of LGBT individuals, (like actors, producers, directors, designers, writers, etc.) who work behind the scenes to gay up Hollywood for everyone's entertainment. Also, some of today's most successful actors and celebrities, like Neil Patrick Harris, are openly gay without fearing stigmatization or negative impact on their career. This is something that never could have been in Rock Hudson's 1950's. Then, the heartthrob consistently turned it out at the box-office while keeping his homosexuality under wraps for fear of scandal in such a conservative time.

It's interesting to note the changes occurring in film history in just the past 110 years involving the LGBT community. When film first began, actors hid their sexuality to prevent scrutiny and scandal, and filmmakers were afraid to represent gays on screen in a positive or realistic manner. Any queer presence had to be consistently negative. Fast-forwarding to the twenty-first century, when top-dollar actors are out and films with positive gay themes are winning Oscars, one notices the difference. Strides have been made toward acknowledging and accepting the LGBT community in Hollywood. Increasingly, the gay presence is more visible and more humanely rendered. We still have more ground to make up, but at least Hollywood is now headed in a positive direction.

Bobby Landers
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4 OUR HEALTH:

Since a central theme of this issue of *OUTwrite* is the celebration of the work of LGBT individuals in the past, we have decided that we should pay homage to past writers for this very publication.

4 Our Health started as it's own publication, and has

since merged with *OUTwrite*, having it's own portion of the publication ever since.

These two *4 Our Health* articles, although written in the past, are on the topic of timeless issues that are still relevant today.

Mental Health Issues in the LGBT Community

Mental health continues to have a stigma of weakness in American society. Add to that the stigma of being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender and the issue becomes even more urgent. Depression and suicide rates among LGBT youth are difficult to measure but some estimates claim that nearly a third of youth suicides are LGBT related.

Being LGBT used to be considered a mental illness in itself and treatment of LGBT individuals centered on "conversion therapy" or other similar methods. The American Psychological Association has denounced such treatment and many psychologists agree that it can cause severe damage to those who undergo it. However, the realization that LGBT issues do not cause mental illness is only the starting point.



LGBT people share the same obstacles to mental health as the rest of the population. They struggle with aging, relationships, and disease in much the same way as the rest of society. Diseases like depression and anxiety appear in every part of society but homophobia and societal pressures create a more intense environment of dysfunction in the LGBT community. There are of course other issues that are unique to the LGBT community. Processes like coming out and gender transition can make things even more difficult.

Many people are concerned at the implications of admit-

ting that there is a higher incidence of mental illness in the LGBT community. There is a notion that having higher rates of mental illness would somehow make us unhealthy people. The study of statistics, however, will tell you that correlation does not necessarily indicate causation. There is no evidence to suggest that being LGBT is in any way related to mental illness. It is far more likely that such a connection would be caused by homophobia and societal pressures.

If our community is to continue to move forward in our fight for equality, we must face the mental health issue with full knowledge and humility. Most of the mental health community stands behind LGBT people in their quest to lead authentic, happy, and free lives. We have the tools, but we still need the courage to use them.

Psychologists and Psychiatrists do business everywhere across the country. If you are lucky enough to attend Ohio University, you have access to free sessions with highly qualified mental health professionals. You can even ask for someone who specializes in LGBT issues in your area. Getting help does not make you weak, it makes you stronger. Counseling and Psychological services are located on the third floor of the Hudson Health Center and can be reached at 593-1616.

Doug Cloud

So, You Want to Have a More Positive Relationship?

In the movies, it seems that couples always know exactly what each other need. In reality, such an ideal doesn't exist. No one is psychic and expecting someone to be is simply over-demanding and unrealistic. Understanding this fact is the beginning of building healthy communication in relationships.

However, there is a difference between healthy communication and being confrontational. There is more than one way to attract someone's attention, and becoming angry and flustered hardly ever produces a positive response. Rather than accusing your partner of moving your books from where you intentionally left them, why not calmly ask, "Have you seen my books?" By consciously changing the way you communicate your desires, you can receive much better results.

Not all communication, though, is done verbally. Non-verbal communication, such as facial expression and

body language, can say more than a few words. For example, if you ask your partner, "How are you?" and he/she responds, "Fine!" with a pained look, then it is obvious that he/she doesn't really mean it. If a person's body language doesn't match what he/she is saying, then it never hurts to ask if something is wrong.

One should also strive to become a more active listener rather than zoning out or only thinking of a way to retort when there is a break in the conversation. Being an active listener requires a person to focus on what is being said and to restate it to the person speaking to show that you understand. Eye contact and listening body language also helps show your partner that you really care about what he/she has to say. Being able to effectively communicate can make a huge difference in keeping a relationship more stable.

Elliot Long

OUTWRITE

Totally Gay and then some

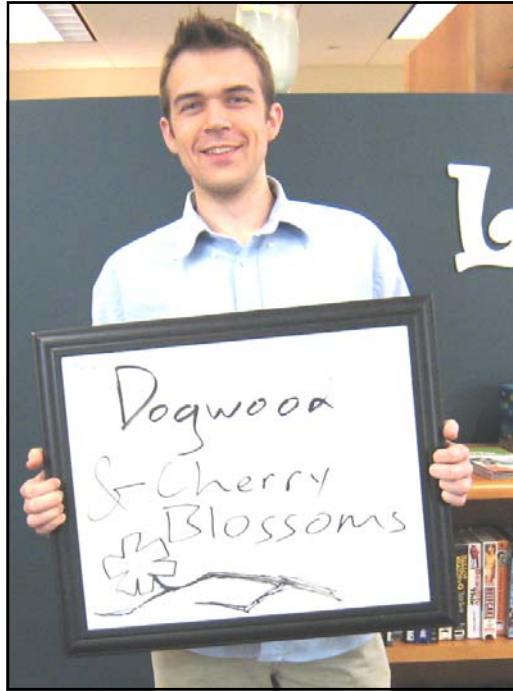
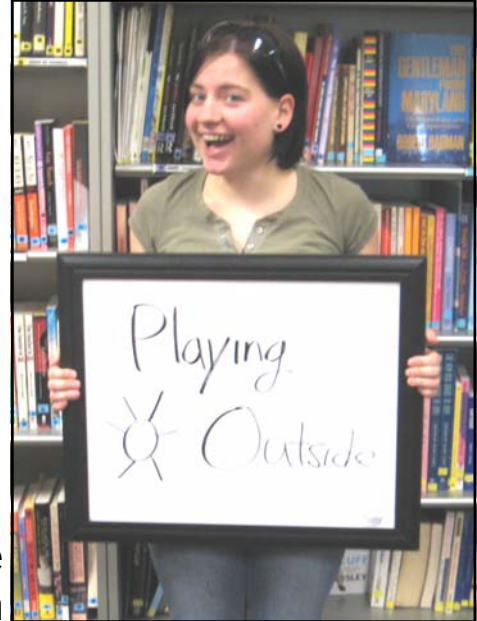
WRITEOUT
students speak

Q:

What is your favorite thing about Spring?

Kate Steven
Sophomore
Community Health

COMMUNITY



Holly Greenawalt
Sophomore
Dietetics



Paul Fetherolf
Senior
Journalism

GET INVOLVED!

OPEN DOORS

Meetings Wednesdays at 8p.m. at
United Campus Ministry (U.C.M.)

SHADES

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EMPOWERING WOMEN OF OHIO

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