



# OUTlines

What's IN for those who are OUT (or not) at Penn December 2006 ~ Vol. 17, No. 2

## DIVERSITY IS FUNDAMENTAL

This November, at the University Council (UC) meeting, Penn Athletes and Allies Tackling Homophobia (PATH) presented a proposal for educational diversity training within the athletic department. The goal



was to create a program incorporating issues of race, gender, and sexual orientation and to implement it by next school year. Ideally, student representatives from each team, along with their coaches, and administrative staff would participate in training sessions to help improve the athletic atmosphere and nurture the diversity already present.

The specific plan PATH promoted was developed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and is entitled "fundamental diversity training." As stated in the program description, "this new workshop effectively teaches individuals how to manage working relationships with student-athletes, coaches, athletics administrators, faculty and staff at institutions and conference offices through knowledge, awareness, cultural competence, and practice and application to college sports."



At the UC meeting, we were informed that Penn Athletics had applied for this programming as an individual institution, which both surprised and pleased us. It is the first step, but what happens now? We must wait for the NCAA decision.

Our chances of being approved by the NCAA are heightened by the fact that St. Joseph's, Temple, and Villanova applied as a consortium. This means Penn and the other three universities have asked for facilitators to run the programming around the same time. Thus, if the consortium is approved there will be a facilitator in the Philadelphia area, and it will hopefully be convenient for them to come to Penn. On the other hand, considering the amount of time involved in the programming, if time becomes an issue the NCAA might choose the consortium over Penn.

What if we are not approved? Hopefully, the University Council will not let the issue drop. PATH has offered time and resources to help develop another form of diversity training. We have also found experienced facilitators who would be willing to help, some at little to no cost. There are

many options and we shall not give up.

Something has to be done to improve the nature of Penn's athletic environment. Let's face it, Penn is not perfect nor is it separate from the rest of society in terms of problems we face. There are issues of homophobia, sexism, and even racism within the athletic department (as well as the rest of the University) and while the levels for each vary, a small amount of any can deeply af-

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# Using Technology... To Our Advantage

Starting in the spring 2007 semester, closeted and questioning Penn students will have an anonymous, confidential outlet to ask questions and share their feelings. The LGBT Center will debut a chat program to offer support and guidance to students navigating the questioning and coming out processes.

The chat program, tentatively titled "Qspace," will provide an anonymous space, moderated by Penn graduate students, for students who wish to ask questions or learn more about sexual orientation and gender identity. "Questioning and closeted students often do not seek

resources at the LGBT Center, so the chat program directly addresses their needs," said Qspace coordinator Jennifer Kaminski.

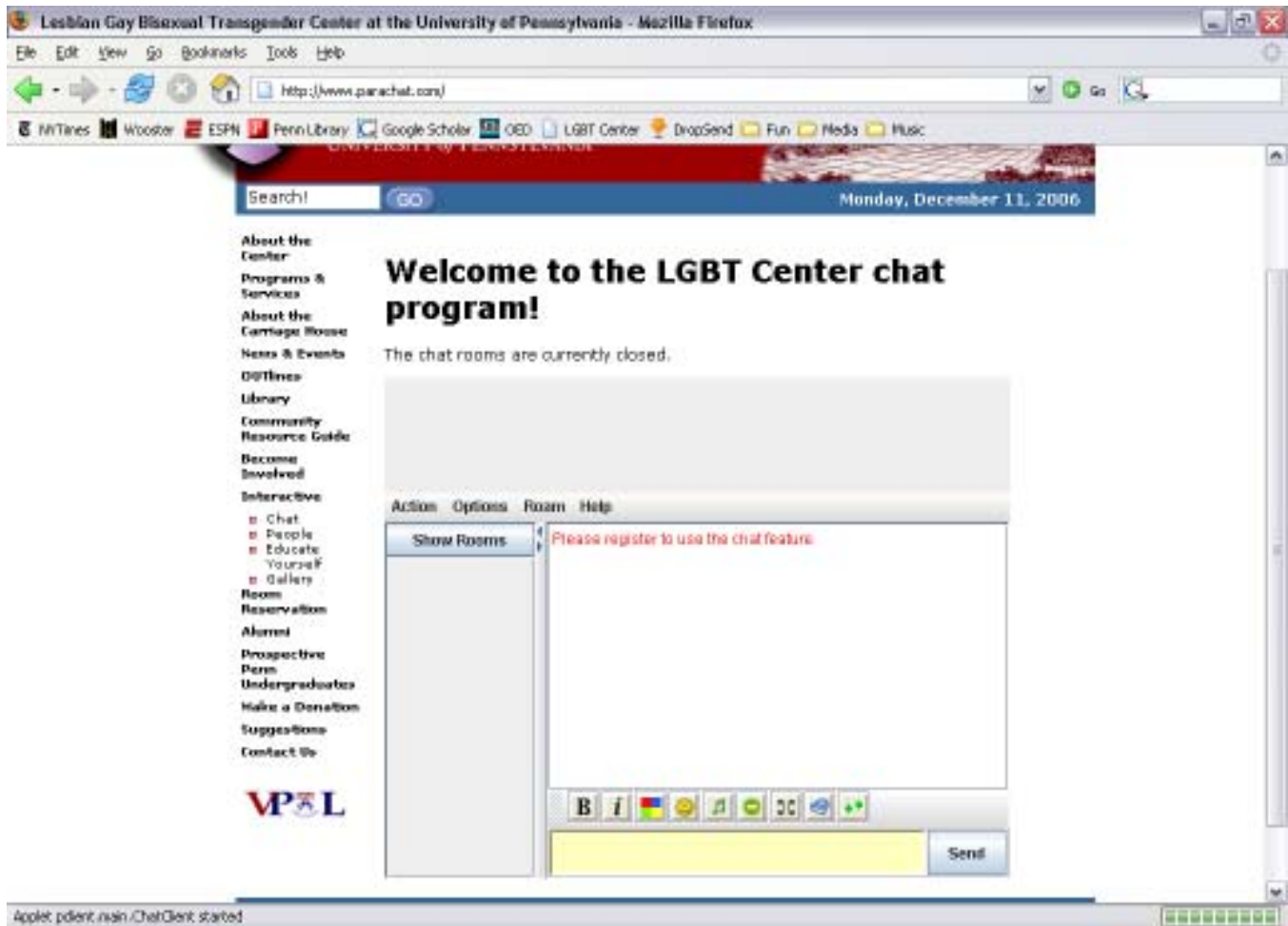
Qspace was made possible by the Center's grant from the David Bohnett Foundation, which also funded the new CyberCenter and wireless technology in the Carriage House. Qspace will operate within the LGBT Center's website, <www.vpul.upenn.edu/lgbtc>.

Qspace will be a completely anonymous space, as it does not require PennKey authentication to log-in. Users only have to register with the

chat software, associating their account with the email address of their choice. Users also have the ability to create their username and avatar.

Two-hour long chat sessions will be held once a week at the onset of the program; additional chat sessions may be added if deemed necessary. The chat sessions will be moderated by graduate students, hired by the LGBT Center, to act as a resource to users, but by no means are the moderators a summative guide to LGBT life. "The moderators will speak from their own experiences," said Bob Schoenberg, LGBT Center director.

*-Jennifer Kaminski*

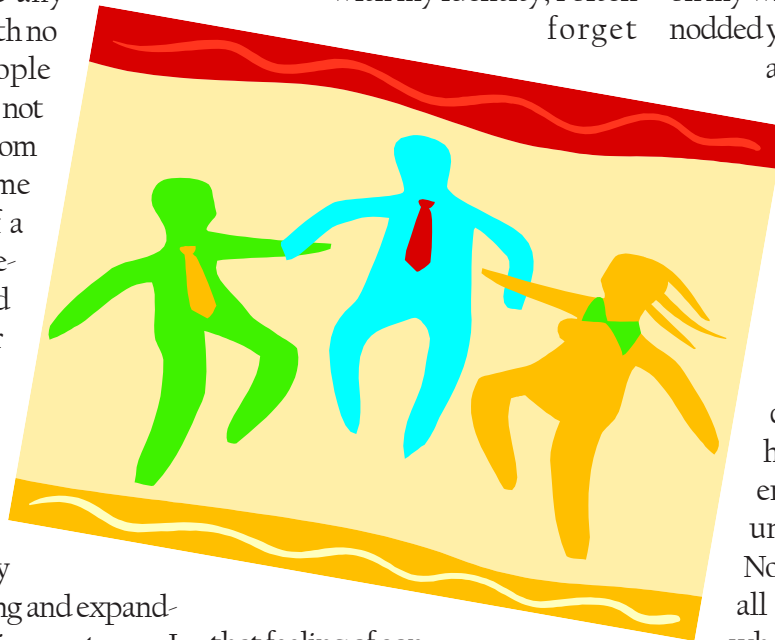


# Family: Not the Other 'F' Word

As we settle into another holiday season, I can't help escape thoughts of family. And not just my personal relations, but the very concept of family, everything it means and everything for which it stands. I love that I come from a big family. I am the oldest of six, having lived around and grown up with literally dozens of cousins, aunts and uncles to boot. At any given time, I lived with no less than eight people under one roof. It was not uncommon for my mom to have taken in some abandoned child of a various community relation. That created mixed emotions for me, but what won out in the end was the notion that *family* was a breathable entity that extended beyond any blood ties, contracting and expanding with time and circumstance. I came to feel for them the way I did my siblings. Hating them and loving them one way or another, but also realizing we wanted the same thing - to be loved and nurtured, from each other and my mom, our mom. Many of the kids she took in have long moved on but in some way she would always belong to them. They would always be family.

This experience became a nurturing example for me during my coming out process. The fact that *family* was a euphemism for queer was a

powerful notion. I looked for my family where I could find them. The people who silently and completely understood me and shared my needs and desires. People who could embrace me and make me feel loved. In many ways, my *family* expanded as a result of my coming out. My family served a different need for me at that time, but being at comfortable place with my identity, I often forget



that feeling of connecting with someone when you feel so alone. I was reminded of this during my Thanksgiving visit to my *biological* family.

It was a typical holiday day. The home was overflowing with people, friends, significant others, cousins, etc. There was one lonely looking young woman who caught my eye. She sat silently among the buzzing and sipped her drink, which I wasn't sure she was old enough to drink. I was going to ask my mother about her. In the midst of the shuffle of

people, I suddenly found myself standing next to her. As our eyes met, almost under her breath she asked, "Are you *family*?" I chuckled snidely and replied, "Of course I'm family." She shook off my rude response, gestured toward my hands and repeated, "No. Are you family?" I looked down and saw the rainbow friendship bracelet loosely hanging on my wrist. I lowered my eyes and nodded yes, "I'm family." She smiled and walked away, finding a quiet spot to finish her drink and relax amidst the excitement, looking a little more content and slightly less lonely.

My wish to you this holiday season is that you find home in your family; that you embrace the privilege and uniqueness of queer family. No matter what our stories, we all have characters in them who have seen us through our lows, who've taken us in when we were rejected, who have brought out the best in us, and taught us how to love. When and where our biological families have fallen short in meeting our deepest needs, there is someone with whom we connect who becomes no less than family; even if only for a moment's time. And far too often, a family that is forgotten and in the eyes of many, is not acknowledged at all. As you feast, drink, and play, celebrate the ones you love and who love you for being you queer self.

-Ninah Harris

## Would it...

Would it be so bad?  
Would it be so wrong to...  
to...to touch you?  
Would you notice?  
I only want to brush my lithe fingers across your creamy skin  
I know I should not but the desire is so strong.  
I think you might actually want my touch.  
I do not think you would deny it, could deny it.  
You would fall under my sway.  
Unable to free yourself from my gaze.

Will you revoke me?  
Will you strike me like a ruby flame?  
I can wait no longer.

My hand extends, slowly,  
I am so close,  
so very close.  
Don't move, just a little bit farther.  
I should stop.  
Please, won't someone stop me?

Oh, I'm so sorry.  
You don't know what it is do you?  
It lies within me. Most times it slumbers peacefully beside my heart.  
It is my lust, my need for love given corporal form.  
I prayed that it would remain dormant  
But now it has awoken.

I must get away,  
I...I must run, hide,  
cower in the dark where I belong  
In that grim sanctuary. Only there will I be safe.

This temptation must be ripped from my glistening orbs.  
Then maybe,  
just maybe I will be safe from it.  
I do not want you to fear me.  
May that never happen.

Someday we may have a chance.  
For my sight pierces your clever mask.  
I see it in you too,  
I see what even you do not.  
It radiates from you, a beauty and brutality that most are blind to.

I have won, but at what price.  
For I feel no glory  
I feel only loneliness and pain as it claws a worn path back to its hovel.  
Slowly returning to the shade of my soul.  
It awaits you or someone like you to bring it freedom.

So I will leave you,  
I will watch from afar.  
Until you are ready for my love...

~ Malek H. Lewis

Am I evil?

Am I evil?

Hmmmm, how can something that seems so right be so wrong.  
Alas, I am Eve and you are the object of my desire, an apple forbidden by God.  
Alas, I am Odysseus trying valiantly to reach you,  
get the gods and goddesses keep me away.  
Alas, I am Romeo and you are my love, all I desire, all that I wish to have.  
Oh darling, you are not meant for me, our families, our society and our world will not let us be. Does destiny  
have such hold on me?  
Has fate chosen a different path, one that is a way from me?  
I do not know and I do not care.  
Your blue eyes consume me, they pierce my long forgotten heart.  
Is this right?  
Should I do what should not be done,  
Should I take you away from what you know  
Is it for the better or the worse?, ad maiorem ad peior,  
the inner battle wages between my heart and my mind, reason against love, truth against blind ambition.  
Which shall win?  
Does it really matter?  
Is not this poem a feeble attempt at fighting your fate?  
After all I will be dead where I started slowly being eaten alive by one single question.  
Am I evil?  
~ Malek H. Lewis

Another...

# Outstanding Homecoming

PennGALA (the LGBT alumni association) and the LGBT Center celebrated Homecoming 2006 October 27-28. And there was much to celebrate.

On Friday evening, Joan Lau, former co-chair of PennGALA and an ardent LGBT Center supporter, was honored at the University Museum with the Young Alumni Award of Merit. One Penn alum is chosen annually to receive this honor. In her remarks, Joan found the perfect words with which to both thank the University for what has been done for women, people of color, and members of the LGBT community, at the same time as she outlined how much more is yet to be accomplished. Joan's partner, Brook, Joan's father and his wife, and many friends shared in Joan's pride.

Saturday morning, there was a brunch at the Carriage House at which about 40 people saw the premiere of a video commissioned by PennGALA in honor of the organization's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Directed by local videographer Gail Lloyd, the thirty-minute video features interviews with several alumni sharing their perspectives about PennGALA and the LGBT Center as they grew up side by side. After minor revisions, the video will be made available for screenings.

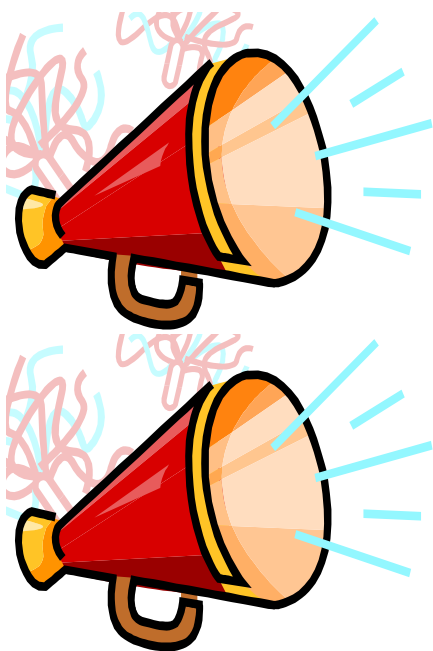
For the third year in a row, PennGALA also sponsored a mentoring event for current students. Although the number of mentors outnumbered current students at the event, everyone present enjoyed a stimulating discussion regarding choosing and developing careers,

focused on concerns of particular relevance to the LGBT community.

Dozens of PennGALA members and current LGBT students attended the semi-annual "Taste of Penn" event which this year was held in a tent in the newly refurbished Warden Garden at the west entrance to the University Museum. Foods were selected to complement the diverse alumni affinity groups. This included cookies topped with M&Ms of various hues and small servings of Jell-O in all the colors of the rainbow. Seems it's easier to define ethnic food than LGBT food. A merry time was had by all.

The next major gathering of alumni on campus will be on Alumni Weekend, May 11-13, 2007.

-Bob Schoenberg



## Need a work-study job?

**The LGBT Center currently is hiring!**

As a Center staff member you would: plan and implement programs and services; greet visitors and answer telephones; assist in preparation of written and electronic publications; work with student groups and College Houses; and perform general office duties. We want students familiar and comfortable with the LGBT and allied community; who have excellent written and oral communication skills; a high-level of accountability and follow through; attention to detail; and an ability to work cooperatively with a team. Specific duties assigned if hired.

Most hours during conventional workday, some evening and weekend hours available. Position(s) available for the 2007 spring semester.

For more information or to apply, e-mail Erin <[ecross@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:ecross@pobox.upenn.edu)>.

# As an Ally...

When asked to write on an issue of importance for *OUTlines*, I struggled to find a suitable topic, and one that others would find interesting and would have meaning for myself. I decided to write briefly on a topic with which I have much experience; being an ally. Throughout my many years as an ally I have experienced a plethora of emotions ranging from

recognized. In a sense, allies are an untapped resource for the community. We provide yet another vehicle to educate the public about LGBT and related issues. I think, as an ally, I cannot possibly understand the experience of being LGB or T. Although there is a part of me who truly feels I am integrated in the community, I must also acknowledge there

is a part of this experience which I will never truly understand.

I have found the model below to be an accurate description of my ally experience. I am not advocating for increased visibility of allies on the

front lines, however, a more internalized sense of respect for allies and all that we do and represent would be appreciated. This model could be applied to almost all communities, and those who are considered to be on their fringes. The role of ally is an extremely difficult, yet necessary one, and I am honored to call myself a part of the LGBT community.

## Heterosexual Ally Development Model:\*

This is a model of the typical five stages of development LGBTQQ allies go through during their lifetimes. There is no set amount of time for each stage. It's different for all people. What was your life like in these different stages? In which stage do you identify yourself now?

### Stage I. Innocence

Typically until approximately the age of four, prior to any social consciousness, individuals have no assumptions about sexual or gender appropriate behaviors.

### Stage 2. Ignorance

Misinformation about LGBT people is learned from family members, peers, faith communities, schools, the media, etc. and is accepted without question.

### Stage 3. Resistance

Individuals become aware of the oppression of LGBT people. Feelings of guilt, shame, and anger often accompany this awareness and may lead some individuals to become overwhelmed and shut down. Others may feel motivated to confront societal oppression actively.

### Stage 4. Redefinition

Individuals become aware of their privilege as heterosexuals. They band together with other people to end anti-LGBT oppression and understand how heterosexism is related to other forms of societal oppression, such as sexism.

### Stage 5. Internalization

Individuals identify as heterosexual allies. This identity becomes an integrated part of the self, co-existing without tension among a variety of other identities.

-Katie Schoen

\*On *Being an Ally*, adapted by GLSEN from original work by Tanya Smolinsky.

**“In a sense, allies are an untapped resource for the community. We provide yet another vehicle to educate the public about LGBT and related issues.”**

utter exhaustion to sheer delight. I feel as though it is unfair to categorize all LGBT organizations, or members of the community, but I feel secure in stating this has not been an easy road.

Often, allies are judged harshly. Sometimes we are resented because we are not “technically” part of the community, and therefore cannot possibly understand true LGBT experiences. Other times we are looked at as the enemy as we represent all that is unfair about heterosexual privilege and are therefore seen as ‘the other.’ This is not to compare the oppression faced by the LGBT community, nor is to delegitimize the LGBT experience, however I feel our role needs to be

# The Never-ending Story

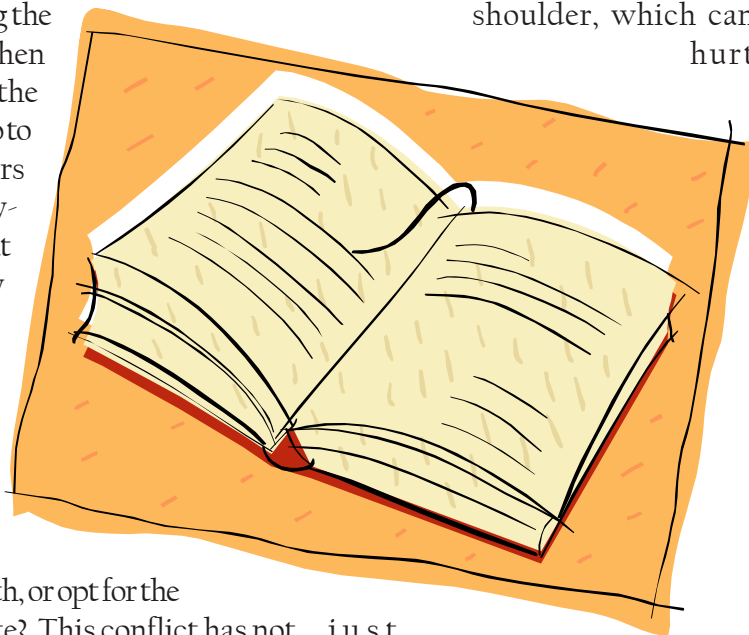
I came out in October 2005—well, at least I thought I did. On that night when I first let my secret out, or when my secret was forced out (that’s a story for another time), I figured, “whew, what a relief, now all I have to do is tell my mom and my family and I’ll be done with it.” However, I was completely wrong. I came out to my mother that Christmas (Merry Christmas, Mom!) and to the rest of my family the following spring. But my coming out story has not ended there, as was brought to my attention this past Thanksgiving.

My cousins and I were sitting around the “under 40” table and somehow the issue of sexuality popped up. My (male) cousin and I were recounting past experiences; next thing you know we’re talking about one night we were watching “Saturday Night Live,” “SNL” cartoon sketches, and then the Ambiguously Gay Duo. Finally, he just pops out with, “Who doesn’t like women anyway?” I raised my hand, in my mind, to remind him of my sexual orientation. To the contrary, he has a confused look and asks me, “Why did you raise your hand?” I became confused myself because I had assumed everybody in my family knew. The feeling felt somewhat familiar; I knew there were a number of other instances where I also had to inform people who weren’t privy to my situation. At that moment, I realized the thought crossing my mind that October night was only the very beginnings of my never-ending story.

This is certainly not the first time this topic has been addressed. Indeed, I have heard a number of times from other openly gay people that the coming out process never ends. In “Instinct,” a gay male magazine, I read an article about a British pop star who just came out publicly, and he said something along the lines of, when he goes to the flower shop to buy flowers for his boyfriend, what does he say when the cashier asks him who they are for—does he tell the truth, or opt for the easier route? This conflict has not really been an issue I have felt or had to confront. However, now I realize there are a number of times I have had to make the same choice as the British pop star.

The innumerable instances for me have been as simple as a guy asking me what I “think” about a particular woman, or a woman showing some unwanted interest, or someone asking me about my love life, or an adult wondering if I have a girlfriend. Occasions could even include those times when I express interest in a guy and the person I am with becomes suddenly wide-eyed. Nevertheless, these instances usually end

in me breaking the news to the particular individual or group of individuals, sometimes being answered with indifference, and other times with dismay. And that is precisely what makes coming out so hard—the uncertainty. You never know whether you are going to be met with, a smile, a fist, or simply a cold shoulder, which can hurt



just as much if not more. Thus, this never-ending story can be quite an undertaking, and certainly not just for me, but also for all the gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people of the world.

Let me extend my kudos to my fellow homosexuals and transgender people for coping with your own never-ending plight. I pose a question to you, how are we dealing with this situation? Are we hiding? And if so, is it because we are forced to? And for those waiting for a time to start their never-ending journey, I say the holidays are a great choice!

~ Terrence Green

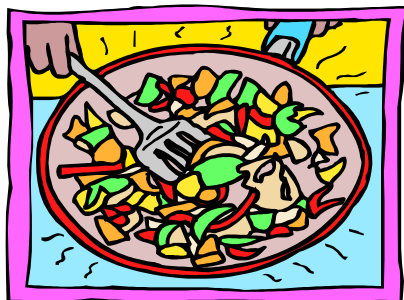
# A Night In: I-Links Style!

Intergenerational Links (I-Links) creates a forum for queer women of all ages to exchange stories, find informal mentors, and network – all in a relaxed atmosphere. On November 6, 2006, the group hosted an evening of mixing and mingling for Penn women and their friends. Although I-Links has been going strong since 1999, this was the first event I attended. I wanted to go to find more friends or acquaintances in Penn's LBQ community. It was successful! I was able to see plenty of new faces and exchange contact information with several women as well.

About 25 women were in attendance, ranging from first-year undergraduates to women who had been at their jobs for over 20 years. The evening began with prepping the vegetables for the stir fry: carrots, broccoli, onions, and peppers. Although we all helped with the cutting and chopping, five of the women, including two graduate students, cooked the vegetables, chicken, and rice to present to the rest of the group. Once the cooking was done, each item was set out and the women combined what they pleased for their individualized stir fry – mine consisted of brown rice, carrots, and broccoli.

Once everybody was done eating, we played a get-to-know-you game where we circled the room to find out

who had knowledge of events such as the Center's opening and facts about famous queer women. After the game, Ninah brought out the chocolate-chip and sugar cookie dough, chopped-up Snickers bars, M&M's, sprinkles, and more for everybody to make personally decorated cookies. I made three cookies – chocolate chip topped with Snickers bits and nuts. We anxiously waited for the cookies to finish baking and devoured them as soon as they came out of the oven. Yummy!



Throughout the night as we talked among ourselves, our age differences were not an issue. We discussed jobs, school work, relationships, hobbies, interests, and the one thing we all had in common – our affiliation with Penn.

The I-Links organizing committee is comprised of Elise Betz, Erin Cross, Ninah Harris, and Jeanne Stanley. Before the dinner, I-Links hosted a mocktails mixer in the spring of 2006 and many other events. In spring 2007, you may see an L-Word screening and an evening of billiards and bowling. If you want to be involved with programming, want to be invited to the next event, or want more information, please contact Ninah at the LGBT Center or by email at <ninah@pobox.upenn.edu>.

-Dionne Long

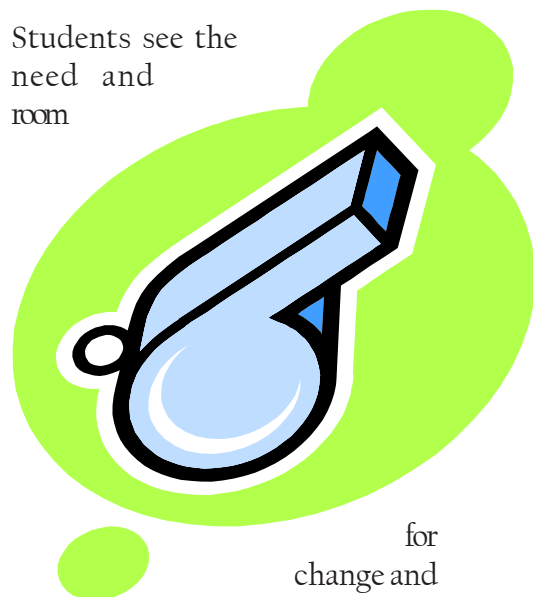
## DIVERSITY IS FUNDAMENTAL

...from p.1

fect anybody – from the entire department down to individual student-athletes. In either case, it is a problem.

We are not the only ones who realize this problem; PATH has the support of many others. The Student Athletic Advisory Committee recognizes the need for, and benefits from, such programming. The Undergraduate Assembly also has acknowledged its support publicly and members from various university coalitions have also showed their support.

Students see the need and room



for change and improvement. Let's hope the leaders of the University will help bring diversity training to Penn Athletics.

-KeAndra Dodds

For more information about PATH and its initiatives, please contact Yana via the LGBT Center or e-mail her at <sysigal@nursing.upenn.edu>.

# ALLIES in Action



Positive. We can no longer view this word with a favorable outlook. Now it is linked intricately to the global epidemic of HIV/AIDS. How can we, as allies and members of the LGBT community, mobilize for change and awareness? For the week of November 27 to December 1, the Penn AIDS Coalition organized events for World AIDS Week. As ALLIES, the gay and straight alliance at the University of Penn-

LGBT and allied community as well as various student performing arts groups who helped the cause by performing during the benefit, including, but not limited to: Ben Alisuag of the Excelano Project, Dischord, Penn-Chants, ChordBlues,

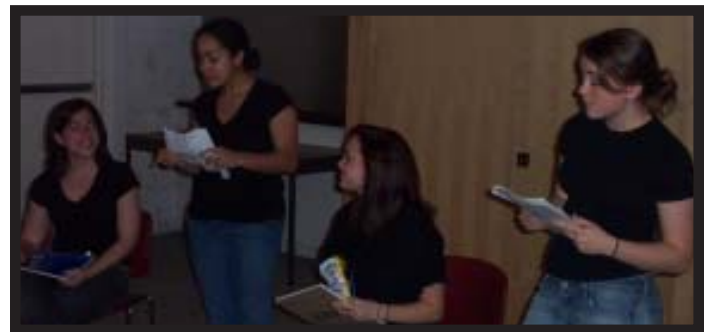
“An estimated one million people are currently living with HIV in the United States, with approximately 40,000 new infections occurring each year.” The disease continues to spread, especially among people 25 years or younger—including college students. As the HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to grow in Philadelphia, the United States, and abroad, we need



sylvania, we took the initiative to organize the second annual AIDS Awareness Coffeehouse on November 29, 2006.

Beat, and Bloomers. Neighboring businesses, including Starbucks, Izzy and Zoe’s, and the Penn 1920 Commons, provided food donations.

Freaks of the



Our AIDS/HIV awareness benefit donated its proceeds to Philadelphia FIGHT, a local AIDS awareness and educational service organization. We received support from the Penn

HIV/AIDS does not discriminate against anyone and we must acknowledge this fact. Until There’s A Cure, a non-profit organization, states that

to act up for AIDS awareness and prevention.

~Sheyla Medina

The editorial staff of *OUTlines* seeks submissions from all members of the Penn community. Poetry, stories, essays, artwork, and articles are welcome. Inquiries and/or submissions should be sent to:

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