GLBT History Month
Taken from www.glbthistorymonth.com

In the 1990s, teachers and community leaders believed a month should be dedicated to the celebration and teaching of GLBT history. They selected October because public schools are in session and existing traditions, such as Coming Out Day (October 11), occur then.

GLBT History Month was endorsed by GLAAD, HRC, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and other national organizations. Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber declared October 1995 to be Lesbian and Gay History Month; and in July 1995, the National Education Association voted to support the concept. In 1996, the governors of Massachusetts and Connecticut and the mayors of Boston and Chicago also proclaimed October GLBT History Month.

In 2006, Equality Forum’s Board of Directors and National Board of Governors voted unanimously to coordinate GLBT History Month, modeling it on Black History Month and Women’s History Month.

The goals of GLBT History Month are to teach GLBT history, to provide role models, to build community and to highlight the GLBT community’s important national and international contributions.

Current Safe Spaces
Chi Phi Fraternity - Safe Space and Safe House
Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority
Social Justice Residential College

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Unity Jam: Stop the Hate Rally
By Alex Madsen

On Tuesday, September 25th, over three hundred Bucknell students, community members, and activists rallied to march from Bucknell’s quad down to Hufnagle Park for the Stop the Hate Rally. The rally has been held ever since the 1998 hate crime committed against Matthew Shepard, a gay college student who was beaten to death in Wyoming. It is a rally designed to get the community to take a stand against hate crimes, push for the ideas of peace and build bridges between Bucknell and the community. For many, the rally was a celebration of how far Bucknell and the community have come to Stop the Hate. For others it was a reminder of how much farther there is to go.

At the rally a number of speakers took stage in addition to Melissa Ferrick, a singer-songwriter from Massachusetts. Later in the evening Ferrick performed at UpTown on Bucknell’s upper campus. Her album Everything I Need was named 1999 Album of the Year by the Gay and Lesbian American Music Association, and she has received glowing reviews in the publication “The Advocate.” In October 2006, she released her newest album “In The Eyes of Strangers”. During 2007 Ferrick opened for Indigo Girls and Ani Difranco. She and the fellow speakers at the rally received a warm welcome.

While the FLAG & BT (Friends of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgender) group marched, so did many other Bucknell and community groups. Today, many hate crimes are committed to people who identify as LGBT (Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgender), and many consider the ban on same-sex marriage a hate crime. However, the Stop the Hate rally was designed to target hate crimes of any type to any person. It isn’t a gay issue, it is a community issue. Many expressed their concern and sadness that a day like this was even necessary. They hoped there would come a day when we wouldn’t have to convince people to be understanding and respectful of others. Overall the rally was a success; it ended with a candlelight procession, tears and laughter.

AIDS Walk Update

- Over 300 people participated
- Raised over $6,400 for the AIDS Resource Alliance in Williamsport, PA
- Provost DiCredico opened the walk with a few remarks along with Michelle, a student from Florida
- Michelle gave a presentation on Sunday Sept 16th to a full audience about AIDS and how it has affected her life

About Coming Out as a Straight Supporter

A straight ally is someone who is not gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (GLBT) but personally advocates for GLBT equal rights and fair treatment. Straight allies are some of the most effective and powerful advocates for the GLBT movement. These allies have proven invaluable, personally and politically, and are increasingly important in the fight for GLBT equality. Indeed, their voices often have been heard while those of GLBT people have been ignored.

Coming out as a straight ally may be an extremely challenging experience, but many find that it is unexpectedly rewarding. Some may think that advocating on behalf of GLBT equality is solely the responsibility of those who are affected by the inequality. But as straight ally Caleb Baker has put it: "U.S. Representative John Lewis once said that the next great movement in America would be the gay rights movement. His words make me remember there are white people fighting for black people’s rights in the civil rights movement. There are men fighting for women’s rights in the feminist movement. I would be greatly ashamed if there were no straight people fighting for gay rights in our movement." (GLSEN’s Students and GSA’s Yearbook)

Like GLBT people, straight allies will find that coming out is not a one-time event, but rather a lifelong journey. Opinion polls show that people who know someone who is gay or lesbian are more likely to support equal rights for all gay and lesbian people. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that the same is true for people who know someone who is bisexual or transgender.

- http://www.hrc.org/issues/coming_out/5891.htm
Iowa Permits Same-Sex Marriage for 4 Hours
Triggers Presidential Candidates to Comment

On August 31st, in Des Moines, Iowa, Robert B. Hanson, the county judge, deemed the ban on same-sex marriages unconstitutional. Timothy McQuillan, 21, and Sean Fritz, 24 were married that afternoon. Four hours later the same judge delayed further granting of marriage licenses until the Iowa Supreme Court decided whether to consider an appeal. In the four short hours same-sex marriage was granted only this one couple was able to obtain a license and marry. John Sarcone, the Polk County attorney, who is representing the county recorder’s office in the case, said the marriage could be considered legitimate. Ultimately, though, it too may depend on the decision of a higher court.

Whatever the outcome of this case, it is clear that there are lesbian and gay couples everywhere who would like to get married. The brief four hours it was permitted shows the need of states everywhere to acknowledge same-sex marriage. It still stands that Massachusetts is the lone state that allows same-sex marriage. While others, such as Vermont, New Jersey, and Connecticut allow same-sex civil unions, and a few more, including California, allow legal partnerships.

This rallying cry for same-sex marriage from the conservative middle of the nation, has once again raised the issue of same-sex marriage among the presidential candidates. The two hopeful republican candidates, Sam Brownback and Mott Romney, quickly issued statements opposing Judge Hanson’s decision to deem the ban unconstitutional. Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton’s spokesman, when asked about the ruling, spoke of civil unions, not marriage. So what is the difference? In evaluating presidential candidates we must get informed on what the difference is between civil unions, legal partnerships and reciprocal benefits.


Senate Passage of Hate Crimes Bill Moves Bill Closer Than Ever To Becoming Law

WASHINGTON—In an historic step toward equality for GLBT Americans, the U.S. Senate voted to pass the Matthew Shepard Act, which updates and expands the federal hate crimes laws to include bias motivated violence based on a victim’s sexual orientation, gender identity, gender, and disability, and provides new resources and tools to assist local law enforcement in prosecuting vicious crimes.

“For over a decade our community has worked tirelessly to ensure protections to combat violence motivated by hate and today we are the closest we have ever been to seeing that become a reality,” said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. “Congress has taken an historic step forward and moved our country closer to the realization that all Americans, including the GLBT community, are part of the fabric of our nation. The new leadership in Congress fully understands that for too long our community has been terrorized by hate violence. And today, the US Senate has sent a clear message to every corner of our country that we will no longer turn a blind eye to anti-gay violence in America."

The Senate in a bipartisan vote of 60 to 39 accepted cloture which ended debate on the bill and then moved to approve the Matthew Shepard Act by a voice vote -- attaching it as an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2008 Department of Defense Authorization bill.

On May 3rd, the House of Representatives passed a companion bill, the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act (H.R. 1592), with a strong bipartisan margin of 237 to 180. Twenty-six state Attorneys General, including 23 from states with anti-hate crimes laws already on the books, as well as 230 law enforcement, civil rights, civic and religious organizations support the Matthew Shepard Act and the LLEHCPA because, despite progress toward equality in almost all segments of our society, hate crimes continue to spread fear and violence and local law enforcement often lack the tools and resources to prevent and prosecute these crimes. Some of these supporting organizations include the National Sheriffs Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, 26 state attorneys general, the National District Attorneys Association, the NAACP, the Episcopal Church, the League of Women Voters, the Anti-Defamation League, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the YWCA of the USA and the United Methodist Church.

The President has threatened to veto the legislation, calling it “unnecessary.” According to the FBI, 25 Americans each day are victims of hate crimes—means approximately one hate crime is committed every hour. One in six hate crimes are motivated by the victim’s sexual orientation. It’s time to update the law to protect everyone, and this year marks our best chance yet to get it done.

“Hate crimes terrorize entire communities and violate America’s core democratic principles that all citizens are created equal and are afforded equal protection under the law,” continued Solmonese. “On behalf of the millions of Americans who have waited too long for these critical protections, we urge President Bush to sign the bill when it arrives on his desk.”

The hate crimes amendment was introduced by Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Sen. Gordon Smith (R-OR). It confers authority on the federal government to investigate and prosecute crimes committed against victims solely because of their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and disability when local officials are unwilling or unable to do so. It also expands existing federal hate crimes law to improve prosecution of bias-motivated crimes based on race, religious, national origin and color and provides additional resources to local law enforcement.

- www.hrc.org/7747.htm

Here are some explanations courtesy of FreedomToMarry.org:

CIVIL UNIONS:
- separate but unequal status that often heightens the need for access to both the tangible and intangible protections that only marriage can afford.

No protections out of state and no federal protections

DOMESTIC/LEGAL PARTNERSHIP:
- a form of union in which people can formalize their partnerships.
- benefits awarded to domestic partners fall short of the protections and responsibilities of full legal marriage.
- No protections out of state, and no federal protections.

Many simply serve as a written acknowledgement of a couple’s commitment to each other without protections or rights

RECIProCAL BENeFITS:
- provide limited state rights to couples who are barred by law from marriage.
- benefits include medical visitation and property rights, but are extremely limited compared to the responsibilities and protections that come with marriage.
Myths & Facts about GLBT People
From the HRC “A Straight Guide to GLBT Americans”

It’s a choice
Sexual orientation and gender identity are not choices, any more than being left-handed or having brown eyes or being straight are choices. The choice is in deciding whether or not to live your life openly and honestly with yourself and others.

It’s a lifestyle
It’s sometimes said that GLBT people live a gay “lifestyle.” The problem with that word is that it can trivialize GLBT people and the struggles they face. Being GLBT is no more a lifestyle than being straight – it’s a life, just like anyone else’s.

Same-sex relationships don’t last
Same-sex couples can, and do, form lasting, lifelong, committed relationships – just like any other couple. And just like any other couple, sometimes same-sex relationships end. The primary difference is that same-sex couples have few opportunities to marry or enter into civil unions or domestic partnerships.

GLBT people can’t have families
According to the 2000 Census, more than 1 million children – probably many more – are being raised by same-sex couples nationwide. The American Psychological Association and other major medical and scientific researchers have stated that children of gay and lesbian parents are as mentally healthy as children raised by straight parents.

GLBT people aren’t happy
In 1994, the American Medical Association released a statement saying, “Most of the emotional disturbance experienced by gay men and lesbians around their sexual identity is not based on physiological causes but rather is due more to a sense of alienation in an unaccepting environment.” What that means is that the discrimination and stress that GLBT people face is the root cause of a great deal of pain for many GLBT people. That pain can be alleviated by knowing that there is a vibrant, growing community of GLBT and straight-supportive Americans who know and care about GLBT people and the issues they face.

GLBT people can “change” or be “cured”
No scientifically valid evidence exists that shows that people can change their sexual orientation, although some people do repress it. The most reputable medical and psychotherapeutic groups say you should not try to change your sexual orientation as the process can actually be damaging.

Upcoming Events:
Fall 2007

October 8-11th - LC Mall 11:30-1:30 every day - Sign a postcard to your state senator, encouraging them to include all GLBT people in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act

October 11th – National Coming Out Day—Picture @ noon on Rooke Chemistry Steps

October 26th – Rocky Horror Picture Show – Campus Theater