



Out On Campus

A Publication of The Committee On Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Concerns

Spring 2002

WELCOME BACK!

An Editorial From The Committee

Finally a newsletter that we can critique, argue about, and celebrate! For several years an adhoc group of various people across campus has been meeting over lunch to talk about "issues" at RIC. We have been wondering how we can take small steps toward creating a more inclusive, visible, and supportive community at Rhode Island College for all of the members who fit the various categories of "hidden" minorities. A newsletter was one of the ways we envisioned doing this. We hoped to have one published by National Coming Out Day, October 11, 2001. Instead, the events of September 11th required our attention. Then came the chalking of the quad and the amazing fallout from this effort that left many of us riveted to The Anchor week to week, talking about the attitudes and issues in print. This was the first time a sustained public dialogue about any gay issues had transpired at RIC. However, if you were interested enough to get this far in the newsletter, you probably know that the level of discourse fell far below what we would have hoped for. This newsletter is another effort to create opportunities for people to engage about the status of "affectional" minorities on campus.

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First Issue of "Out On Campus" Flies Off Newstand Shelves! Breaks All Records!

Compiled by Jan Park & Daniel Scott

The Dialogue Diversity Committee of Rhode Island College is sponsoring Anthony D. Romero, the first Latino and openly gay man to head the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union). He will speak at the Spring Colloquium on Wed. April 24th at 12:30 p.m. in Gaige Hall Auditorium. Mr. Romero has held positions at the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations respectively, before he was voted unanimously by the National Board of the American Civil Liberties Union to head the ACLU. He was born in the Bronx of immigrant Puerto Rican parents and is fluent in Spanish. He graduated from Stanford Law School and Princeton University. The 35-year old Romero has stated his "overarching goal is to promote a new generation of committed civil libertarians and civil rights activists."

In a press release he was quoted as saying, "From my work in coun-

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Interview With An Ally

Adapted from:

<http://www.hrc.org/ncop/allies/table.asp>

In his or her most general sense, an Ally is "a person who is a member of the dominant or majority group who works to end oppression in his or her personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate for, the oppressed population" (Washington and Evans, *Becoming an Ally*). Allies to racial, religious and ethnic minorities have been remarkably effective in promoting positive change in the dominant culture, and only recently has their instrumental position been ex-

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Out On Campus is produced to further the educational mission of Rhode Island College and support all members of our community.

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We Are Here (Continued)

In this first newsletter we hope to achieve a few simple goals. For starters, we want readers to know that there are now, and has been for several years, dedicated individuals on this campus who care about educating people on issues related to sexual orientation, oppression, and civil rights. The following is not an exhaustive list by any means, but represents the kinds of activities that promote our collective educational goals. There have been on-campus public forums over the past decade where speakers have addressed LGBT-related concerns, organized by people from across campus. Programs in the residence halls were designed to increase awareness about gay life, safer sex, and respect for differences. Leadership training has been offered for student leaders concerned about homophobia. There have been active student groups (GLOBE, Rainbow) and their faculty advisors who have become progressively more visible and active. Students struggled to secure a place for Rainbow on par with other active student organizations, with a space, phone, books, films, and funding. From drag shows, dances, and film nights, to Coming Out days- the students have spoken out about their needs. Faculty have developed diverse courses that weave “gay issues” into the curriculum for early childhood and elementary educators, social workers, psychology majors, and students of other disciplines. Articles in the student paper have been written, support groups have been offered, relevant videos, journals, and books have been ordered for our library. Allies have been



working alongside those who identify as “minorities” with respect to identity, to help us take our “place at the table”, such as in the Dialogue on Diversity Committee. In sum, almost every relevant function in a campus community has been impacted by people who care about these concerns.

You may wonder why this work has not been better promoted or the members of this group named. There are many brands and flavors of activism, spanning the past decades. Some of us have been fairly public about the work we are doing on campus, while others have not. We think it is very important for our community to be aware of the obvious- any time people fighting for civil rights move explicitly into the public limelight, we risk being the targets of bigots and hatemongers. Violence is a real potential, whenever we step out around controversial or “political” issues. Being LGBT on this campus, in this

country, in this world, is in and of itself a political act requiring psychic energy to maintain daily sanity. To work alongside LGBT people as an ally, is, at times, to take the same risks as they do. We have recently experienced hate speech as real and evident on our campus this year with the chalking and in the residence halls. We dare say Rhode Island College is not on the cutting edge with respect to confronting homophobia. Small steps are being taken on many fronts and we will continue our individual and collective journeys toward greater inclusion on campus. We know that students and all of us benefit from visibility about GLBT concerns, yet it is still hard at times to stand up for posi-

tions that are viewed as unpopular, to be identified as a single issue person, or to chose which oppression to confront and when. In fact, some of the biggest strides have been made by people who go about this work behind the scenes offering support, guidance, and teach by personal example how to live with dignity. Yet there comes a point too where “silence = death”.

Our goal at this point is to acknowledge to the greater community that we are here and here to stay.

Wait a minute! Why the Rainbow Flag?

The Alyson Almanac: A Treasury of Information for the Gay and Lesbian Community describes the origin of the Rainbow Flag as follows:

In 1978, Gilbert Baker of San Francisco designed and made a flag with six stripes representing the six colors of the rainbow as a symbol of gay and lesbian community pride. Slowly the flag took hold, offering a colorful and optimistic alternative to the more common pink triangle symbol. Today it is recognized by the International Congress of Flag Makers, and is flown in lesbian and gay pride marches worldwide. In 1989, the rainbow flag received nationwide attention after John Stout successfully sued his landlords in West Hollywood, when they prohibited him from displaying the flag from his apartment balcony. Meanwhile, Baker is still in San Francisco, and still making more flags.

Common



Ground

Listed Below are common words and phrases associated with members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Community and their supports. In the next issue of *Out On Campus* we will explore a number of pride symbols. (Definitions adapted from listing at <http://www.hrc.org>)

Homosexual: A person who is emotionally, physically and/or sexually attracted to a person of the same sex.

Gay: A common and acceptable term for male homosexuals, but also used when referring to both men and women.

Lesbian: A common and acceptable term for female homosexuals.

Bisexual: A person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to both men and women.

Transgender: An umbrella term for individuals who blur the lines of traditional gender expression. It sometimes refers to crossdressers and transsexuals. It also reflects recent scholarship which suggests gender to be socially constructed. Transgendered individuals recognize the social construction of their genders and thus do not fit neatly within societally-prescribed gender roles determined by biological sex.

Queer: In the past, this term was a derogatory word for gay men and lesbians. It has been reclaimed by more radical LGBT activists during the 1980s and used in the slogans of ACT UP and Queer Nation (We're here, we're queer, get used to it!). Considered a more inclusive term than gay, queer also sometimes refers to a more radical and confrontational type of activism.

Heterosexual: A person who is emotionally, physically and/or sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex.

Homophobia: The irrational fear of homosexuals, homosexuality or any behavior, belief or attitude of self or others which does not conform to rigid sex and gender-role stereotypes. The extreme behavior of homophobia is violence against gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender persons.

Heterosexism: Evidenced by the assumption that everyone is heterosexual. The systematic oppression of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons that is directly linked to sexism.

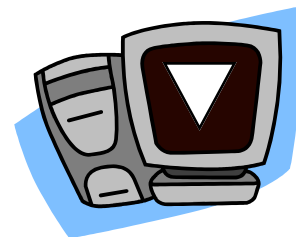
Internalized Oppression: The process by which a member of an oppressed group comes to accept and live out the inaccurate myths and stereotypes applied to the group.

Ally: Any non-lesbian, non-gay, non-bisexual or non-transgendered person whose attitudes and behavior are both anti-homophobic and anti-heterosexist and who works toward combating homophobia and heterosexism on a personal and professional level.

Coming Out: To publicly declare and affirm one's homosexuality to oneself or to others.

In the Closet: To hide one's homosexuality in order to maintain one's job, housing situation, friends, family or in some other way to survive life in a heterosexist culture. Many LGBT persons are out in some circumstances, but closeted in others.

Net Query



LGBT Resources On The World Wide Web

Human Rights Campaign

Action group working for LGBT equal rights

[Http://www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)

National Gay & Lesbian Task Force

National political organization.

[Http://www.nglftf.org](http://www.nglftf.org)

The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)

Mission includes creating safe schools for all LGBT individuals

[Http://www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)

National and local support network

[Http://www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)

Media watchdog group

[Http://www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)

The Advocate

National Gay & Lesbian news magazine

[Http://www.advocate.com](http://www.advocate.com)

Safe Zone Syllabus

The courses listed below have been identified as containing LGBT issue related materials. For some courses these topics may be the main focus and for some just a small portion. Consult your course bulletin and the course instructors for more detailed information.

English 262:
Women, Crime, and Representation -summer and fall 2002

English 324:
Literature by Women - spring 2002

English 336:
Culture/ Gender/ Sexuality and the Non-Western Text - summer 2002



English 434:
Queer Theory - spring 2002
Health Education 101:
Human Sexuality- summer and fall 2002

Health Education 102:
Personal Health - summer and fall 2002

Women's Studies 200:
Women in Society - fall 2002

Art 461:
Seminar in Art History/
4 Gender and Art - spring 2003

OutSourcing

Your Guide To LGBT Resources On RIC's Campus
And Our Surrounding Area

On Campus People & Places

- (1) Rainbow Alliance
x8491 SU 313
Faculty Advisor:
Mary Ball Howkins
x8054
- (2) Counseling Center
x8094 CL 130
- (3) Student Life
x 8061 CL 127
- (4) Residence Life
Sweet Hall
Contact: Mike Gorman
x8240
- (5) Elementary
Education
Department
Contact: Liz Rowell
x8016 HM 208
- (6) Office of
Affirmative Action
Contact: Pat Giammarco
x8218 R 314

Local Resources

- (1) Options Magazine
www.optionsri.org
401-781-1193
This volunteer-run,
monthly publication
covers local news and
lists multiple local
resources.
- (2) RI Alliance for
Lesbian and Gay
Civil Rights
401-521-4297
RIAlliance@aol.com
- (3) Youth Pride Inc.
Serves youth and young
adults ages 13-23.
401-421-5626
youth_pride@yahoo.com

- (4) SAGE/RI
(Senior Action in a Gay
Environment)
Intergenerational
outreach to LGBT elders.
401-751-1487

On Campus Video Resources

Contact AV Services at x8020 to reserve one of these educational videos.

- (1) Coming Out
Dr. Christine Brown
summarizes popular litera-
ture on this topic.
- (2) Gay Rights
Legislation
Discussion of specific bills
and current issues about
gay rights legislation.
- (3) It's Elementary
A great look at talking
about LGBT issues in
schools. Real situations
and individuals are
presented.
- (4) Pink Triangles
A study of prejudice
against gay men and
lesbians. Includes both a
historical and
contemporary perspective.
- (5) Rumor Has It
Dramatic film. Young
woman questions her
sexual identity.

Coming Soon

In the next edition we will explore campus library resources amongst other additions. If you would like to be listed in this resource section or know of a suggested resource please contact the newsletter .
(Contact info on the last page)

In's & Out's (Continued)

tended to the area of sexual orientation. The past few years have witnessed the development of heterosexual Ally organizations which have attempted to make the culture of a campus or workplace more aware and accepting of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals.

As important as it is to define what an Ally is in a positive sense, it is also helpful to understand the boundaries of an Ally's role.



An Ally Strives To...

- be a friend
- be a listener
- be open-minded
- have his or her own opinions
- be willing to talk
- commit him or herself to personal growth in spite of the discomfort it may sometimes cause
- recognize his or her personal boundaries
- recognize when to refer an individual to additional resources
- confront his or her own prejudices
- join others with a common purpose
- believe that all persons regardless of age, sex, race, gender, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation should be treated with dignity and respect
- engage in the process of developing a culture free of homophobia and heterosexism
- recognize his or her mistakes, but not use them as an excuse for inaction
- be responsible for empowering his or her role in a community, particularly as it relates to responding to homophobia
- recognize the legal powers and privileges that heterosexuals have and which GLBT people are denied
- support the Ally program of his or her university or workplace

An Ally Is NOT...

- someone with ready-made answers
- necessarily a counselor, nor is he or she necessarily trained to deal with crisis situations
- expected to proceed with an interaction if levels of comfort or personal safety have been violated

Ways Allies Can Combat Heterosexism...

- Assume that whatever groups you are a part of contain LGBT individuals wondering how safe the environment is for them. Be visible in your support.
- Don't assume that everyone is straight.
- Challenge Heterosexism and Homophobia whether or not you know there are LGBT individuals present.
- Remember that silence is complicity.
- When speaking of your heterosexual lover, point out that he or she is of the opposite sex, implying that he or she may not have to be.
- Confront your own fear, memories, and bad feelings about LGBT individuals. Recall and release those feelings, thereby diminishing their hold on you.
- Do not assume that an LGBT person of the same gender is automatically attracted to you.
- Change your use of language from "Do you have a girl/boy-friend?" to "Are you seeing anyone?" for example. Heterosexism is powerfully maintained through language.
- Keep your mind open and speak from your heart.

ACLU Exec. Dir. Speaks (continued.)

tries such as China and Kenya, I have come to appreciate the central role of free speech in securing other civil rights and civil liberties," he said. "This is a core ACLU issue that will require continued advocacy and vigilance."

But he added that the other core ACLU issues -- including religious liberty, reproductive freedom and women's rights, racial justice, immigrants' rights and lesbian and gay equality -- will also require increased attention and resources.

Romero said that his commitment to civil rights, civil liberties and social justice comes from his life experience. "My memories of discrimination, homophobia and poverty stand in sharp contrast to the dignity and love I got from my family," he said.

Why RIC Was So Quiet Last Wednesday

Article reprinted from the GLSEN website.

NEW YORK, NY -- Students in over sixteen hundred high schools and colleges, representing 49 states, will be participating in the April 10 Day of Silence -- an effort aimed at drawing attention to the discrimination and harassment faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth in schools. According to the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), the record level of participation marks an 800% increase over last year.

"We are inspired by the incredible number of students who will be silently yet powerfully standing up for themselves, their friends, and the ideals of safety and respect for all," said GLSEN Deputy Executive Director Eliza Byard. "For many schools, students will be offering a first-ever lesson on the toll harassment takes -- and we hope their administrators and classmates listen closely."

The Day of Silence Project, the largest student-led action on LGBT issues in the country, is a day on which participants take a vow of silence to peacefully protest the discrimination and harassment faced by LGBT people. Instead of speaking, participants hand out speaking cards printed with a message that explains why they have chosen not to talk. The event originated at the University of Virginia in 1996, after then-18-year-old student and Day of Silence founder Maria Pulzetti wrote a paper on non-violent protest. This year, 80% of participating students are in high schools.

"Students have used the Day for a number of years to draw attention to a serious school safety issue that schools have been slow to address," continued Byard, noting GLSEN's 2001 National School Climate Survey, which found that 4 out of 5 LGBT students report verbal, sexual or physical harassment at school. In the same study, 30% reported missing at least one day of school in the past month due to fear for their physical safety.

We're Out of Here...



If you have questions, comments or feedback of any kind on our first issue please feel free to email us at OutOnCampus@hotmail.com

If you would like to be involved with the production of our next issue or the Committee on LGBT Concerns please join us at our next meeting on

May 3, 2002, 11:30am to 12:30pm in the

6 Unity Center, See you there!

...For Now!

Rhode Island Legislative Update on LGBT Concerns

Compiled by Jan Park

Two pieces of legislation have been passed this year that are positive steps for the community. Closest to home, on 11/29/01 Maggie Sullivan, Assistant Director of Human Resources at RIC sent a memo informing the campus community that the RI General Assembly passed "legislation adding domestic partners of state employees who meet specific criteria for certain state employment benefits including medical, dental and vision insurance". The legislation was signed by the governor on 6/09/01. To determine if the law can apply to you, contact Maggie Sullivan at x8442 or call the State Employee Benefits Office at 222-3160. As with all things legal for GLBT people, applying for these entitlements requires some effort and carries an added burden of sorts, but the results are worth it in terms of security it offers families.

On July 17, RI became the second state after Minnesota to pass a non-discrimination law prohibiting discrimination against transgender people in employment, housing, credit and public accommodations. People who have been discriminated against can seek redress in the form of injunctive relief and damages according to Options News-magazine (August, 2001).

