

# Lambda

## AU's GLBTA Resource Center Alumni Newsletter

Greetings AU Alum!

The Spring 2009 semester is coming to a close and we've been busy in the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Ally Resource Center! This month brings the 2009 Annual Award Ceremony and honoring the 2009 Richard L. Schlegel National Legion of Honor Award Recipients.

We are also welcoming the Resource Center our newest staff person, Matthew Bruno. Matt will be starting with us at the end of April as our new Programming Coordinator. Matt comes to us from George Mason University where he worked as the Program Coordinator of GMU's LGBT Center and as an advisor in New Century College. We are extremely excited to have Matt join us and we hope you all get the chance to meet Matt soon. We are hosting a welcome event on Monday, April 27, 2009, from 3-5pm in the Resource Center if anyone would like to stop by and say hi.

You will find lots of information in this newsletter about events and programs since the last edition as well as

a listing of some of our events for the semester. Our events are always free and open to students, faculty, staff, alumni and the community! Our office endeavors to find new ways to bring educational and entertaining speakers and films to campus. The success we are experiencing today is rooted in the actions of our alumni. We are proud of our past and look forward to continuing to make AU a safe, inclusive place for everyone.

We hope you're finding ways to endure tax season and we to hear from you all soon. For more information about the Center or any of our programs, please contact the GLBTA Resource Center at 202-885-3347.

All the best.

Sara Bendoraitis



### Our Mission

The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Ally (GLBTA) Resource Center works to strengthen and sustain an inclusive campus community that welcomes people of all sexual orientations and gender identities by providing support, educational resources, and advocacy.

### Contact US

Hours of Operation  
Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Phone: 202-885-3347  
Fax: 202-885-1883

E-mail: [glbta@american.edu](mailto:glbta@american.edu)  
Website: [www.american.edu/glbta/](http://www.american.edu/glbta/)

# A New Era: Obama on LGBT issues

On January 20th, Barack Obama became the 44th president of the United States of America. This event was truly a milestone in American history. It showed how far we have come in terms of civil rights and equality. However, President Obama believes that we can progress even further. LGBT rights have longed been overlooked by our society and Obama feels now's the time for us to combat America's new fight for equality.

Same sex marriage has been one of the biggest issues in the LGBT community. Currently in the US same sex marriage can only be performed in two states, Connecticut and Massachusetts, and recently California citizens lost the right to be able to marry as a result of Proposition 8. Although Mr. Obama wants to respect the church definition of marriage, he believes that same sex-couples should have the same privileges as married couples, which is why he is in full support of same sex civil unions. The President believes that by repealing the Defense Against Marriage Act (DOMA) same sex civil unions will receive the same legal rights that are given on the basis of marital status. Adoption is another issue that hits home for the LGBT community. In the United States adoption by LGBT families is determined by the states. Currently adoption by LGBT families is illegal in five states, Mississippi, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Michigan, and Utah. Mr. Obama wants to provide adoption rights for all parts of America. He also believes that one's sexual orientation should not determine their eligibility to adopt a child. Everyone should be entitled the right to adopt.

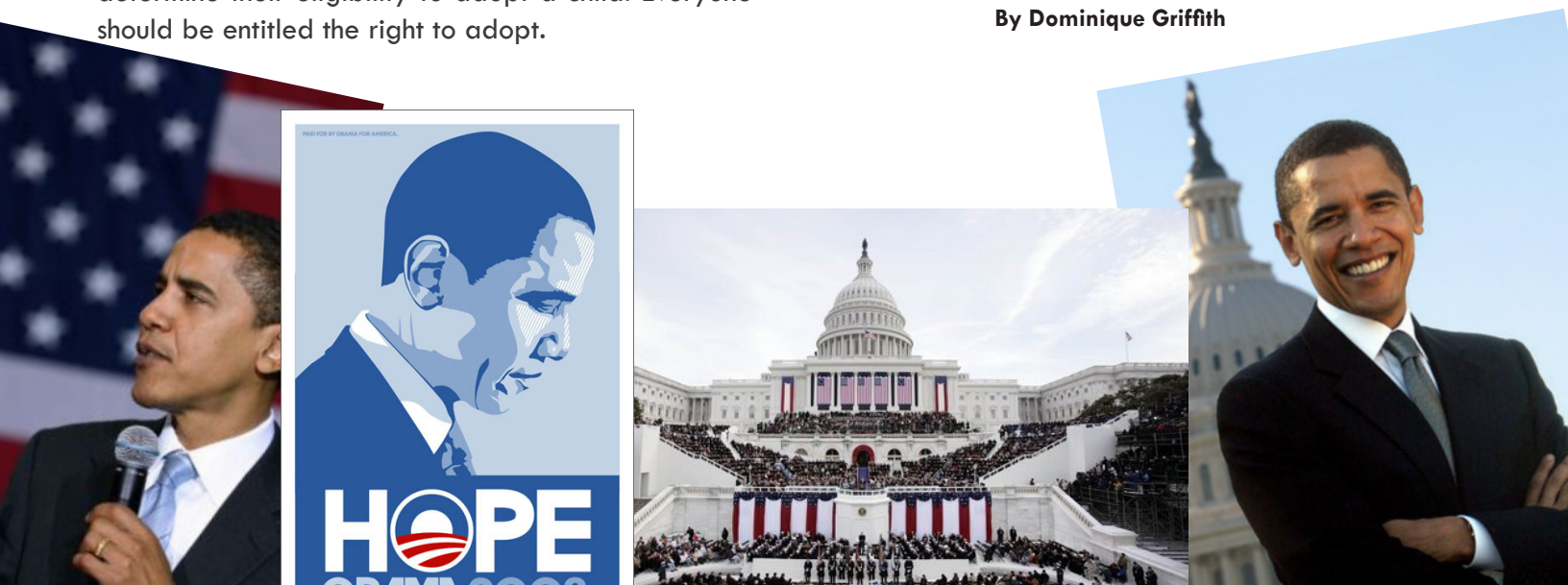
Discrimination in the workplace has also long been a topic of discussion for the LGBT community. While we have laws today that prohibit discrimination based on ethnicity and race, Mr. Obama wants those laws to be inclusive of the LGBT community. The president believes by doing that we can get rid of the hidden discrimination towards LGBT people.

One very important issue that President Obama would like to address is the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Issues dealing with HIV/AIDS have always been very important to the LGBT community, partially because of the large amount of LGBT people infected with the virus. Mr. Obama would like to develop a strategy that reduces the infection rate of the HIV virus. He believes that the main preventative of spreading infection is through education of the proper uses of contraception. Moreover, Obama believes that the stigma of HIV/AIDS only being a "gay virus" is still an issue that needs to be addressed. HIV/AIDS does not only affect gay people, it affects everyone.

"While we have come a long way since the Stonewall riots in 1969, we still have a lot of work to do. Too often, the issue of LGBT rights is exploited by those seeking to divide us. But at its core, this issue is about who we are as Americans. It's about whether this nation is going to live up to its founding promise of equality by treating all its citizens with dignity and respect."

-- Barack Obama, June 1, 2007

By Dominique Griffith



# Action on and off Campus: Rainbow Speakers Bureau

The Rainbow Speakers Bureau is the Resource Center's fabulous group of student speakers who go to classrooms and into the greater D.C. community to educate about GLBT issues. Our rainbow speakers are unique and diverse; from a Trans woman, to a gay male of color, to a female bisexual, to an activist lesbian, and of course a supportive ally, the RSB program is really benefiting from a diverse and amazing group of speakers this year. In 2008 the Rainbow Speakers Bureau was especially fortunate to have all six student staff members of the GLBTA Resource Center trained as RSB speakers. This additional staff support for the RSB program has been a major asset to the program this year!

In the 2008-2009 school year, the Rainbow Speakers Bureau has had a lot of amazing opportunities to reach out to the campus community, as well as the greater D.C. community. In the fall nearly a dozen RSBs were held, and RSB requests for the spring semester are still pouring in daily. In February, four rainbow speakers had

a great opportunity to reach out to D.C. youth, when we were invited to speak to the 8th grade class River Road Unitarian Universalist Church. The "Our Whole Lives" (OWL) class was focusing on sexuality education, and invited the Rainbow Speakers Bureau to come to speak about GLBT issues with these amazing eighth graders. The rainbow speakers had a great time, discussing GLBT topics and answering their questions about GLBT issues, sexuality, and gender. Later this spring, rainbow speakers will be traveling to speak at a group home to African American males about GLBT topics and then again to another Unitarian Universalist Church OWL class.

In October we trained eight new speakers in our semester training. Our next training will take place in March and we look forward to training many new rainbow speakers!

By Amanda Schaeffer

To contact Amanda e-mail at [as8325a@american.edu](mailto:as8325a@american.edu)

## Lavender Languages and Linguistics Conferences

On February 13th through February 15th the Lavender Languages and Linguistics conference was held at American University. The main topic of Lavender Languages was the role of the LGBT community in society. However, what sets the Lavender Languages Conference from other forums is that the Lavender Languages conference is one of oldest LGBT conferences in the United States. In addition, Lavender Languages is designed to be more discussion based. One of the most important aspects for the panel was to create a dialogue with the audience on the topics that were presented.

One of the most interesting segments of the conference was held on Friday. The topic of discussion was President Obama and his advocacy or lack thereof for the LGBT community. This subject was deliberated by a very colorful panel. This included President Obama's Deputy Regional Field Director for West Broward County Florida, Matt Adler; community organizer with the DC Trans Coalition, Sadie Baker; LGBT studies professor, Loraine Hutchins, Senior Research Manager of the Center for the Study of Equality at the Human

Rights Campaign, Che Juan Gonzales Ruddell-Tabisola, and former Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) employee, Cathy Renna.

By looking at President Obama's plans for his presidency on the WhiteHouse.gov, you could see Mr. Obama's agenda for the LGBT community. The question that was presented in the conference was, is Obama really going to stand by his promises for LGBT right? Moreover, is The President really advocating T (Trans) rights or is he just for LGB (Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual) rights? These questions sparked a good discussion between the audience and the panel, which led to the conclusion that better LGBT rights are increasingly more obtainable now because of Mr. Obama's presidency. However, the panel believed that President Obama still has a very long way to go. He needs to stick to his promises to the LGBT community.

by Dominique Griffith

# The Mixer...

## The GLBTA Resource Center's Spring Social

The annual GLBTA Spring Mixer was a fantastic way to make new friends, meet up with old ones, and grab some delicious free food! The GLBTA Resource Center (GLBTARC) faculty and staff hosted the mixer on January 15th in Mary Graydon Center. Fresh fruit, crackers with hummus, and hot pizza was served as Beyonce was pumped through the speakers. An impromptu dance contest fueled the festivities. Everyone was welcomed! Information packets, brochures, internship opportunities, and upcoming event pamphlets were

distributed as resources. The Resource Center staff introduced themselves and imparted fun facts about the Resource Center, helping guests put a face to the GLBTARC. Active Queers & Allies members also introduced themselves to provide additional resources for interested AU students and alumni. The mixer was a celebration among gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender people, and allies on campus that provided a safe space to come as who you are!

By Anthony Jafari

## *The GLBTA Studies Academic Colloquium*

On November 1, 2008, the GLBTA Resource Center with cosponsors the Department of Anthropology and the Women & Gender Studies Program sponsored the Third Annual GLBTA Studies Academic Colloquium. This colloquium brought together AU students, faculty, staff and the greater DC area through presentations on campus life and community projects.

After a coffee and continental breakfast, Professor Polikoff of the American University Washington College of Law presented her new book "Beyond (Straight and gay) Marriage." The Department of Public Safety and Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit (Metropolitan Police Department) presented a workshop on harassment and hate crimes at universities and in DC. The third presentation was Professors Helen Langa, Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, Bill Leap & Sara Bendoraitis presenting Queer Studies and the changing academic focus from the 80's to the 90's. For the next segment professor and student paired up to present 'Stepford Wives' and exploration of gender and sexuality in culture. After

a short break, the student staff workers of the GLBTA Resource Center presented a panel on 'Going Abroad Queer', an investigation of popular study abroad destinations and their policies on the GLBT community. Professor Bill Leap and doctoral students Elijah Edelman and Rafael Lainez presented a look at the DC area and analyzed what areas gay residents targeted as 'gay spaces'. Professor Arin Mason followed up with a student lead panel discussing work in the broader sense of GLBT Studies. Finishing the day off, John Marzabadi, Lacey Stewart & Resident Director Leah Kreimer presented Intersections of Gender, Sexuality, and Culture" residential community cluster, a new on campus living community available Fall 2009.

This day-long event brought together many facets of the GLBT community and provided interesting insight into the work of various groups on and off campus.

By Rachel Lachenauer



# Check Up on Alumni

## What Are They Up to Now?

By Matthew Stewart

Beth A. Parker

Beth Parker, M.S., LICSW (Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker) ('00) received her Master's in Social Work in 2005 and currently works as a psychotherapist specializing in GLBT needs, stress, anxiety, and wellness. She is in private practice in DC and also shares her time working at Whitman-Walker Clinic, a DC medical center that specializes in GLBT health care and support services. Thanks to her MS in Biology from AU, Beth is able to appreciate the connections between the mind and body in assisting people to achieve greater overall health and wellness.

Vincent Villano

Vincent Villano graduated from American University in May '08 with a bachelor's degree in Political Science. He also minored in Educational Studies. Vincent currently works for Campus Progress, the youth outreach arm for the Center for American Progress. As the previous coordinator for the GLBTA Resource Center's Rainbow Speakers Bureau (RSB), Vincent finds the skills he learned in engaging others in dialogue to be a major asset to his job. The former SPA student asserts that his degree is not the only thing that helps him out at work. Vincent stated that his extracurricular activities at AU are what influence his job the most. Vincent is able to integrate GLBT issues into his job at the Center for American Progress, since it is a think tank that stands for progressivism that will improve the lives of Americans through ideas and action. Sounds like AU, don't you think?



## An Update Letter From: Queers and Allies

### GREETINGS ALUMNI!

Hello again from Queers and Allies, the LGBT and allied student group at AU! Last semester was amazing -- we helped bring Judy Shepard, had a great National Coming Out Week and produced a FABULOUS drag show to end the semester. This semester is shaping up to be great as well and we hope to see you all at some of our events! In February, we hosted a forum with the Servicemember's Legal Defense Network (SLDN) on the controversial practice of "Don't Ask, Don't tell" in the US military. Next month, we will be hosting Freedom to Marry Day, complete with marriage ceremonies on the Quad and a sumptuous banquet in the evening.

Additionally, we are piloting a "small groups" initiative to provide a safe, empowering space for LGBTQ people of various backgrounds to be involved in the movement. Groups like Queer People of Color (QPOC), Queer Women's Advocacy Committee (QWAC), and the Transgender Advocacy Project (TAP) seek to build community and raise awareness within on campus at large.

Hope to see you soon!

- John Marzabadi  
Exec. Dir. Queers & Allies

# DC Diamond Circulate

The DC Diamond Circulate has finally hit AU. Now the question is; what is the DC Diamond Circulate (DCDC)? At 9:00 am on Easter Sunday, dozens upon dozens will descend the American University Freidman Quadrangle to square dance. Yes, square dance! DCDC as they like to call themselves, whose primary goal is to promote square dancing as a form of recreational activity. Mainly supporting the queer community, DCDC has an annual convention in Washington, DC each year supporting their goal. Apart of each annual event, the DCDC make a hit-and-run dance fest on the Sunday morning of the conference. At 9:00 am they travel to various sites in Washington, jump out of their vans and busses and then break out in festive dance. This year, working with the GLBTA Resource Center, DCDC is going to hit-and-run the university's Freidman Quadrangle. How many will show up? How crazy will it get? We have no idea. What we do know is that we aren't breaking any laws and that it will be incredibly fun. Cheers to square dancing! At 9:00 am on Easter Sunday, dozens upon dozens if not dozens more will descend the American University Freidman Quadrangle to square dance.

By Jeremy Koss

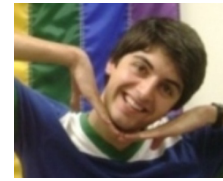


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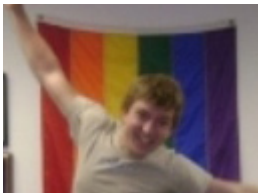
# Meet the Staff



**Rachel Lachenauer, a proud New Yorker, is thrilled to be a part of the resource Center team! She is in SPA and a Public Administration/ Women and Gender Studies Major. At the Center, Rachel works on the weekly newsletter, The Gay Gab, organizes tabling and supports general events. She is also one of the founding members of Queer Women's Advocacy Committee (QWAC) in Queers & Allies.**



**Anthony Jafari is a School of Public Affairs junior from Martinsburg, West Virginia. He is majoring in Political Science. In High School, Anthony was co-founder and vice president of Young Democrats, vice president of Key Club, and very active in SGA. At the GLBTA RC, he is the coordinator of the Library, Website, and helps organize other GLBTA RC events.**



**Cody Steele is a School of International Service Freshman interested in Spanish Studies. He is planning on a major in International Studies with possible interest in Spanish and Japanese. He has a good deal of volunteer experience with Rotary International. Cody is originally from a small town in South Jersey, and he cannot wait to study abroad. He is the Safe Space Coordinator for the Center.**



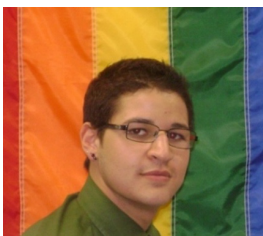
**Amanda Schaeffer is a School of International Service senior from Fleetwood, Pennsylvania. She is a double major in International Studies and German Studies. She spent her junior year abroad, studying and working in Mannheim, Germany. She loves traveling, speaking German, musical theatre, and promoting organ donor awareness. At the GLBTA RC, she is the coordinator of the Rainbow Speakers Program and helps organize other GLBTA RC events.**



**Mathew Stewart is from Virginia Beach, Virginia. His main interest is the French language and culture, and he is a self-described "language geek". He is also very interested in GLBT issues, including queer activism and safe sex awareness. Matthew is planning to major in Sociology. You will usually find Matthew on campus in the GLBTA Resource Center or in the library, reading more than is humanly possible. He is happy to have the opportunity to work with prospective students through the Spectrum Project.**



**Dominique Griffith was born and raised in Philadelphia, PA. He is currently a freshman, with the intended study of International Relations. Other areas of study that Dominique is interested in are the Spanish and French Languages. Dominique has obtained a great deal of leadership experience from his high school Student Council President position. Dominique loves to talk about music, movies, and current events.**



**Jeremy Koss started as Programming Assistant for the GLBTA Resource Center in September of 2008. He has been working for the resource center in different capacities since his freshman year of college at American. He graduated with a Bachelors of Science in Business Administration and a minor in Communications. His interests include springboard diving, graphic design, biking, dancing, and chocolate. With extensive experience in programming and a passion for identity development, Jeremy is ecstatic to help the resource center grow in its programming and resources for students, staff, faculty, alumni and community members.**

# GLBTA Resource Center Spring Events

**March 20 NYU Meet and Greet**

**March 21 DC Tour**

**March 31- April 1 Grad Fair 12-6PM**

**April 1 Paris is Burning**

**April 13 GLBTA Awards Ceremony**

**April 17 National Day of Silence**



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