

Out and About

news from and for Colgate's LGBTQ Community

Issue No. 3

March 2006

"When someone with the authority of a teacher describes the world, and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing." Adrienne Rich, 1986

Politics, Drama, and Well Being

by Juan Amaya '06

For my Sociology senior thesis, I decided to undertake a study on LGBTQ professors and staff at Colgate University, primarily to answer the following question: Why would LGBTQ professors and staff remain on Colgate's campus where one could easily say that the LGBTQ community is basically nonexistent?

LGBTQ faculty and staff face political, social, and personal issues in their everyday lives at Colgate. This is even more true if one has disclosed his or her sexual orientation. For my study, I interviewed 13 self-identified LGBTQ faculty and staff at Colgate and discussed the various social and political aspects of being a member of Colgate's LGBTQ community.

Most of the participants were "out." While these participants fully realize the potential for negative repercussions and they understand that the local environment is not the most accepting of LGBTQ people, nevertheless they stay. Why?

Integrity, self-respect, and - most importantly - honest engagement with students and other colleagues. This honest engagement is a source of social relationship, or fictive kinships. They are not linked by blood, but they are strong enough to create an atmosphere of community and family that leads them to remain at Colgate. "Carla" is a professor who recently announced that she will be leaving the Colgate community. "*Knowing that Carla won't be here next year makes me question my decision to stay. She's a very great friend of mine, and it will be very difficult not having her around next year,*" was a response from another Colgate professor.

Clearly, many LGBTQ faculty and staff on campus have strong bonds with each other. However, the relationship between students and professors was even

stronger in the case of fictive kinships. Many of my participants revealed that they are determined to stay in order to make the atmosphere for LGBTQ students more comfortable.

For this, I say thank you.

The Secret Love Affair of Herman and Nathaniel

by Joe Madres, '08

In the study of influential literature, the life of the writer is often overlooked. Many times a work will be analyzed with its historical context in mind and the characteristics of the ones perceiving and interpreting the context are forgotten. Simply put, if one doesn't know the creator, one cannot gain a complete understanding of the creation and its impact on society. This general rule applies specifically to the little known story of the great American novelists, Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Few people are aware that these two giants of modern American literature were allegedly involved in a secret love affair, the inspiration of which is obvious in their most well known works: Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* and Melville's *Moby Dick*. The guilt-ridden affair between Hester Prynne and Dimmesdale in Hawthorne's novel and the homoerotic undertones, some more overt than others, of many of Melville's works including *Moby Dick*, *Billy Budd*, and *Typee*, among others, are only a few examples of how their relationship made their work more dynamic, psychologically intriguing, and socially impactful.

Little is known of how Hawthorne viewed his relationship with Melville and most of his letters were lost or destroyed, leading some to believe they were simply good friends. Yet many of Melville's letters to

continued on page 3

What's On the Other Side

by Vanessa Persico, '09

This year, Jake Gyllenhaal and Heath Ledger took one small step for mainstream American film and one giant leap for the LGBTQ community. According to its number of Oscar nominations, *Brokeback Mountain* was the most popular film featuring an LGBTQ theme to come out in recent years. Its brutally real treatment of societal attitudes marked an “outing” of the general public. The bittersweet story of Jack Twist and Ennis Del Mar forced many to come out of their closets of convention and face the fact that homosexual men are men, and homosexual love is love.

But the leap was not as monumental as many seem to think. We are not at the finish line by any means. What we have today in *Brokeback Mountain*, *Rent*, and the like is art that imitates life, in all of its bitterness. It does precisely what Shakespeare insisted that theatre should do: hold a mirror up to reality so the world must confront its own, often disturbing, visage. Is this shock of seeing itself as it really is enough to create a large-scale change in the world?

I doubt it... very much.

Oscar Wilde's aphorism, “Life imitates art far more than art imitates life,” applies all too well to this scenario. A film that details a horrible hate crime makes all of the smaller, but still deeply wounding, harassments seem negligible. The woman in tears over being called a dyke is seen as overreacting, the man is told to get a thicker skin when he gets defensive about the term ‘faggot,’ and an advocate of the LGBTQ community is considered to be splitting hairs when she or he corrects a heterosexist statement. At least nobody's getting worked over with a tire iron...right?

The fact is that “at least” is poison. At least, everyone should be able to live a life without derogatory words, be they attacks on gender, ethnicity, sexual preference, or anything else. At least, boyfriends should not have to worry about upsetting anyone by holding hands in public. At least, a person should never feel that who they are is somehow to be feared, hated, or hidden.

Books, films, television, music videos, and advertisement have tremendous power over how people view life. If anyone believes they are not influenced by the media, they have much to learn. Life *does* imitate art, more than many are willing to admit, and it's about time art started acting imitable.

When the protagonist of a teen epic goes over to his friend's house and just happens to say ‘hi’ to both of

her moms, when a romantic comedy stars a homosexual couple going through no more than the usual tragedy of love, when Will and Jack being attracted to other men isn't a groundbreaking, earth-shattering moment for television...that is when we, or our children, or our children's children, will know that the fight has been fought. That, my friends, is the finish line.

Don't Ask Policy Hurting Military Readiness, Costing U.S. Taxpayers

The American Progress Action Fund reports that “The financial costs to the U.S. military for discharging and replacing gay service members under the nation's ‘don't ask, don't tell’ policy are nearly twice what the government estimated last year, with taxpayers covering at least \$364 million in associated funds over the policy's first decade.”

A University of California Blue Ribbon Commission (see report from the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military at <http://www.gaymilitary.ucsb.edu/>), headed by former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry and other military experts, conducted the study after the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a February 2005 report that was based on questionable data and methodology. GAO's estimate, the Commission found, was 91 percent too low. “The real issue here is that you have a policy that is costing us money, hurting readiness and is really not fulfilling any national security objective,” said Lawrence Korb, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and a member of the commission. “It just doesn't make sense now, particularly when you're having such a hard time getting people to join the military and retaining them in the right skills.”

Rice takes heat over anti-gay vote at U.N.

Forty-five members of Congress are demanding answers from Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice about the U.S. vote that prevented two LGBT organizations from participating in the U.N. Economic and Social Council. Members of the House of Representatives called the Jan. 23 anti-gay vote at the United Nations a “drastic reversal” of Washington's previous stand on the issue.

In voting to block the gay groups from the U.N. panel, “the United States joined some of the world's most oppressive regimes, among them China, Cuba, Sudan and Zimbabwe,” and demonstrated “a reprehensible inconsistency” in protecting LGBT individuals.

from PlanetOut Network (Christopher Curtis)

Herman and Nathaniel

(continued from page 1)

Hawthorne survive and his words are filled with sexual passion and romantic frustration.

*“A man of deep and noble nature seized me in this seclusion... The soft ravishments of the man spun me around in a web of dreams... But already I feel that this Hawthorne has dropped germanous seeds into my soul. He expands and deepens down, the more I contemplate him: and further and further shoots his strong New England roots into the hot soil of my Southern soul.”*¹ – wrote Melville in a letter supposedly critiquing one of Hawthorne’s works in the guise of a Virginian in the north for the summer. The sexual allusions are unmistakable and inspired.

Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville are only two of many known writers documented as being homosexual or taking part in homosexual activity. Yet, they offer a unique tale that allows us to better understand the impact of American society on the lives of homosexual men and, more importantly, the substantial impact homosexual men had on American literature and American history.

¹ Bronski, Michael. “When Nathaniel Met Herman,” *Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide*. (2004): 23-26.

2006 Seniors: Consult HRC’s *Best Places to Work for GLBT Equality* before you make job decisions this year. This is an easy, and important, way to consciously promote equality and fairness in the workplace.

HRC Releases “Best Places to Work” Report

In late January, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation released *Best Places to Work for GLBT Equality*, a new online source that gives job seekers the information they need to find out which employers support gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender employees and consumers.

The list of more than 100 companies is based on data from the HRC Foundation’s 2005 Corporate Equality Index, an annual report card on corporate America’s treatment of GLBT employees, consumers, and investors. Corporations are rated on a scale from zero to 100 on key criteria, including, among others, protection against discrimination based on

sexual orientation and gender identity and parity of health care benefits for domestic partners.

More than 100 companies reached perfect scores this year, with Whole Foods Market being the most recent addition to the list and the only supermarket chain to score 100 percent.

The report can be viewed online at <http://www.hrc.org/placestowork>.

Poll: High school seniors favor gay rights

The latest in a series of youth opinion polls conducted by Hamilton College students and faculty reveals overwhelming support for same-sex marriage and other rights for gay people among the nation’s high school seniors. According to the poll, members of the high school class of 2006 are twice as likely as adults to support legal recognition of same-sex marriages.

Hamilton College sociology professor Dennis Gilbert and his students collaborated with the polling firm Zogby International to conduct the national Youth Hot Button Issues Poll. High school seniors were selected for this eighth in the Hamilton Youth Poll series as representatives of a rising generation of Americans and potential voters in November 2006. One thousand high school seniors from across the United States were contacted by phone for the study.

Among the poll’s findings: Three quarters of this year’s high school seniors favor legal recognition of same-sex relationships, either as marriage or civil union; three in four seniors oppose a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage; and 63% support adoptions by gay couples.

Original at http://www.advocate.com/news_detail_ektid24097.asp

HRC Workplace Project Looking for Research Participants

The Level Playing Institute is conducting a groundbreaking study on why employees - including LGBT workers - leave corporate and professional workplaces, where they go afterwards, and what employers can do to create inclusive workplaces and increase their retention rates. The information gathered will be of great help to HRC as they work to make corporate America a more inclusive place for LGBT Americans.

For more details or to participate in the study, email researcher Mary Kate Stimmler at [mkstimmler@lpfi.org](mailto:mkstimmer@lpfi.org).

Religious Conflicts???

Announcing the Human Rights Campaign's New Religion Council

For years, LGBTQ rights have been attacked by conservative clergy all over the country. For as many years, responses have often been delivered by secular voices with little sway in religious communities. No more. HRC has created a new Religion Council, comprised of 10 national spokespeople who can speak about and advocate for LGBT equality from within their faith traditions and change the dialogue on LGBT equality among faithful Americans. Learn more at the Religion and Faith Program website at <http://www.hrc.org>.

Report touts religion in gay rights cause

by Jen Christensen, PlanetOut Network

Original at <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2006/02/01/4>

A first-of-its-kind study details religious groups that are not part of the religious right and seeks to mobilize those groups to flex their muscles for progressive change. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's National Religious Leadership Roundtable released a comprehensive inventory of the religious groups that are LGBT-friendly, providing what could be a vital road map to help the LGBT community tap into this underutilized source of power.

In *David v. Goliath: A Report on Faith Groups Working for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equality (and What They're up Against)*, co-authors Richard Lindsay and Jessica Stern suggest that society is at a turning point: A number of large religious organizations are now supportive of the gay rights movement, but are still being overlooked as a resource.

The report documents the forces that are working for and against the LGBT community within the mainline denominations. While the study finds gay-positive groups within these denominations have an 8-to-1 disadvantage in funding compared to anti-LGBT organizations, there are still structures that have been around for several decades that could help the gay rights movement. It encourages liberal foundations to ally themselves with these groups or even help them with funding, as conservative foundations support their ideologically similar groups in religious institutions.

Other obstacles to involvement include spiritual leaders who may be reluctant to jump into this particular civil rights struggle for fear of alienating their diverse membership, and religious leaders who may shy away

from "overt political expression as unspiritual." "

The report reminds church leaders that it's not enough just to be welcoming to their gay and lesbian members. To be truly inclusive, they've also got to act to improve social conditions for their members who are being treated like second-class citizens under the law, the authors say.

But there's work to be done from the LGBT community's part as well, the report warns: Gay leaders have got to let go of their stereotypes about religious organizations being homophobic. The report claims that getting rid of the old attitudes about religion and having LGBT community leaders and religious leaders combine forces could create an unstoppable movement.

Did you know?

The United Church of Christ was the first American mainline Christian church to ordain an openly gay man (1972) and an openly lesbian woman (1977), and was the first major Christian denomination in the US to promote same-gender marriage.

The Episcopal Church first ordained an openly gay priest in 1989, and in 2003 the Reverend Eugene Robinson was elected and confirmed as the first openly gay bishop.

Additional Resources and Information

Coalition Against Religious Discrimination - a group of religious, civil rights, labor, education, health, and advocacy organizations who believe in defending the First Amendment and religious liberty for all Americans

<http://www.stopreligiousdiscrimination.com/index.php>

Integrity - leading grassroots voice for the full inclusion of LGBTQ people in the Episcopal Church

<http://www.integrityusa.org>

"Whom God Has Joined Together" - an article by the Rev. Bill Sinkford on marriage equality, from a forthcoming collection to be published by Beacon Press entitled *Getting on Message: Challenging the Christian Right from the Heart of the Gospel*. Sinkford is president of the Unitarian Universalist Association and a longtime supporter of marriage equality.

World Religions and the Struggle for Equality, by Harry Knox and Sharon Groves, director and manager of HRC Foundation's Religion and Faith Program, published in Conscience magazine, and available online at www.hrc.org.

Major Upcoming Event:
**The Rainbow Connection -
Colgate's Big Gay Weekend!!**

Friday and Saturday, April 14th and 15th

Join us for two days of workshops, networking with other regional colleges and universities, social events, and, most of all, **FUN!**

Friday: Welcome Party at the Colgate Inn, *Brokeback Mountain* showing, Open Mic Night at The Barge

Saturday: Workshops on various LGBTQ issues, including training future Safe Zone trainers, a panel discussion on coming out, networking meetings

Saturday Lunch: Barbeque on the Quad

Saturday afternoon: Keynote talk by actor B.D. Wong (*Father of the Bride*, *And the Band Played On*, *Law and Order SVU*).

Saturday Night - Second Annual Drag Ball

A detailed schedule will be posted by Friday, March 10, on the LGBTQ page at www.colgate.edu (under Offices and Services).

For more information, contact:

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Nominations Requested

Each year Colgate awards honorary degrees to a selection of exceptional persons who are chosen for their contributions to society. Some Supporters and members of the LGBTQ community at Colgate would like to nominate a person with a widely recognized commitment to furthering LGBTQ concerns to receive an honorary degree at the 2007 Commencement. Anyone with a suggestion for such a nominee should contact Prof. Ken Valente at kvalente@mail.colgate.edu.

LGBTQ Film in February

Ang Lee's award-winning and groundbreaking *Brokeback Mountain*, at the downtown Hamilton Theater, thanks to Raj Bellani, Dean of the Sophomore Year Experience, who underwrote the costs, and to Chuck Fox, manager of the theater, who worked diligently to bring this film to us quickly and hold it over for two weeks. The February 2nd showing was attended by more than 75 students, faculty, and staff. A subsequent showing on campus was attended by over 200 people.

Tarnation, both a record of and the instrument of John Caouette's survival as a young gay man coming of age in suburban red-state America. He reimagines the whole idea of what a documentary can be and weaves a psychedelic whirlwind of snapshots, Super-8 home movies, answering machine messages, video diaries, early short films, snippets of 80s pop culture, and dramatic reenactments to create one of the most unforgettable and interesting films of the year. Sponsored by Take Two.

Rent - Members of the original 1996 Broadway cast star in Chris Columbus' adaptation of the award-winning musical set in New York's East Village. Based on Puccini's *La Boheme*, the story follows a group of bohemians through life's ups and downs as they face true love, broken hearts, HIV, drug addiction, and, of course, paying the rent. Sponsored by Take Two.

LGBTQ Alumni Dinner Series

On February 16, **Kyle Button '84** and **Jeff McMorris '84** visited campus for dinner, socializing, and talks with the LGBTQ community. **Kyle** was a member of Konosioni, an RA, President of Advocates, a Student Theater Director, and a Psychology/English double major during his time at Colgate. For the past 10 years he has served as the Vice President for Institutional Advancement at California State University at Los Angeles. **Jeff** was in the marching band and orchestra at Colgate, and majored in History. He went on to get his J.D. from Albany Law School, and was in the middle of a murder trial in Syracuse when he visited campus.

Mark Your Calendars:

Thursday, March 23rd - 6:30 pm - ALANA Cultural Center
Reverend Sue Phillips '88 and Dean Keppler '92

On the horizon: A group of Colgate faculty who are also LGBTQ Supporters has just circulated an electronic questionnaire to the classes of 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009 to gauge the interest in establishing an LGBTQ Studies minor at Colgate. Stay tuned for the results.

Look for details in the next issue concerning the *2006 Lav Grad Ceremony and Celebration*.

A plea to the world

by Dan Baker and Chuck Wolfe

It's time to turn our attention to the plight of our LGBT brothers and sisters in other countries and demand an end of human rights violations.

History is replete with examples of concerned citizens, including members of the LGBT community, taking action when they saw injustice in the world. They were not always able to change the policy of governments at the time, but they were always part of the dialogue.

When the Iron Curtain descended on Eastern Europe, they demanded that the wall be torn down. As South Africa's minority white government clung to a system of apartheid, they protested and said it was wrong. They cried out for action during the Rwanda genocide and still wonder why more couldn't have been done to stop it.

Perhaps you were a part of these earlier struggles, in addition to your LGBT activism. But maybe you felt fighting for LGBT rights here in the United States took precedence over international issues. Or, like so many of us, you may have just been too busy to pay much attention to the news in other countries. Whatever the case, now is the time to turn our attention to the plight of our LGBT brothers and sisters in other countries and demand an end to human rights violations.

Recently, LGBT elected leaders and appointed officials from around the world met in Seattle to call for the end of sodomy laws and other restrictions that criminalize consensual same-sex sexual relations. Delegates to the conference, held by the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Institute and the International Network of Lesbian and Gay Officials, believe gays and lesbians in every corner of the world deserve basic protections. In the United States, the 2003 Lawrence v. Texas decision of the Supreme Court set out a broad constitutional right to sexual privacy. Federal courts in other countries such as South Africa and Fiji have also affirmed this right to privacy.

However, other countries exhibit a horrific record on these issues.

The exiled Iranian LGBT rights group Homan reports that in Iran more than 4,000 citizens have been executed since 1979 because they are gay or lesbian. In Malaysia "carnal intercourse against the order of nature" is punishable by whipping and imprisonment of up to 20 years. Being gay in

Saudi Arabia can lead to a jail term or even beheading. In the United Arab Emirates in 2005, authorities arrested 26 gay men, 22 of them U.A.E. citizens. Pending the outcome of their sentencing, the men could face hormone treatments, lashings, and/or five years in jail.

How can we, as LGBT citizens of the world, turn our backs on these injustices? Many countries, including our own, are currently engaged in a healthy debate about marriage equality for gays and lesbians. That debate will continue at all levels of government. All sides will be heard. Arguments will be made. But no one in this debate has ever suggested that beheading is the answer.

It's time we stopped letting some in the world think our silence means that we approve of the heinous actions of nations that oppress and persecute LGBT citizens. We need to talk about these abuses with our neighbors, families, and friends. We need to engage with organizations that fight for international rights. We need to sensitize members of Congress who sit on committees that deal with international issues.

Ultimately, we need to muster our own energy and strength to help elect more LGBT members of Congress as well as representatives at all levels of government. The solution begins with ensuring we have voices at the table when lawmakers are discussing foreign policy, including how the United States will deal with heinous international behavior and what kind of pressure it can put on the United Nations. 2006 is an important election year, and there is no better time than now to start.

Baker is a three-term member of the Long Beach, Calif., city council. He is also president of the International Network of Lesbian and Gay Officials, a professional association and forum for LGBT elected and appointed officials, which copresents the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Conference annually in November.

Wolfe is the president and CEO of the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Institute, the nation's leading organization that identifies, trains, and supports LGBT candidates, campaign staff, and officials. He has also served as an aide to former Florida governor Lawton Chiles. For more information, visit www.victoryinstitute.org.

Original at http://www.advocate.com/exclusive_detail_ektid24145.asp
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Bisexual and Questioning Support Group

sponsored by Counseling and Psychological Services

A new support group at Colgate to help participants explore a variety of issues related to sexual orientation.

Topics will include same-sex attractions, issues of self esteem, multiple identities, and coming out to self, friends, and family, as well as other topics related to these issues. *Students* of all nationalities, races/ethnicities, genders, and religions are welcome.

To register:

Email Hsiao-wen Lo at hlo@colgate.edu or call Rose Novak at 228-7385 to schedule a brief individual meeting.

LGBTQ Alumni Network

If you are a Colgate alum who would like to receive information about joining our LGBTQ Alumni Network, please email rsummers@mail.colgate.edu and ask us to add you to our mailing list. We are currently 200+ alumni strong and always welcome new members.

We are also one of 64 alumni associations listed on the National LGBT Alumni Association organized through Princeton University's LGBT Alumni.

You can check out the website at <http://alumni.princeton.edu/~ffr-gala/>. Once on the website, click on events for current events and links for the listing of college alumni associations.

Outreach

Members of **Hamilton Central School Advocates** are planning to attend the 2006 Gender Public Advocacy Coalition's Gender Youth Leadership Summit in May. The conference program includes activist training sessions and workshops to end violence and discrimination caused by gender stereotyping. In addition, there will be a showing of the film "Straightlaced," created to broaden awareness among teens and the adults who work with them about how anti-gay prejudice and its link to rigid gender roles takes a toll on everyone, not just the LGBTQ population. For more information on the film, visit www.womedia.org. For more information on the conference, visit www.gpac.org.

Get Informed!

Human Rights Campaign Foundation - works for LGBT equal rights - <http://www.hrc.org>

PFLAG - Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Persons - promotes the health and wellbeing of LGBT persons, their families, and friends through support, education, and advocacy - www.pflag.org

GLAAD - Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation - promotes and ensures fair, accurate, and inclusive representation of gay and lesbian people and events in the media as a means of eliminating homophobia and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation - <http://www.glaad.org>

GLBT Historical Society - <http://www.glbthistory.org>

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Other Campus Resources:

Counseling & Psychological Services - 7385

Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Alliance - 7863

Sexual Crisis Resource Center - 7070

Dr. Merrill Miller - 7750

Blackboard - LGBTQ Supporters

Article submissions from students, alumni, faculty, and staff are welcome! If you have something to say that would benefit Colgate's LGBTQ community, and would serve our educational and outreach efforts, please email Chris Hoffman at choffman@mail.colgate.edu.