PORTRAITS

Sketches of the faces and the places of our community

ON CAMPUS

Lesbian/gay students on visible, empowering course

By Shawn Moore

I don't know how old most of you are, (Brandon, my son thinks I am so old that Christopher Columbus was Homecoming King at my school).....however, thinking back on my journey through college I do not remember being blessed with the support organizations that are present today. I can only imagine how much easier it would have been to have an entire organization that was not only present on campus...but one that was vocally and visually supportive. As I walked around these institutions of higher learning looking at the faces, the old buildings, students sitting in the grass studying together, the football stadiums and the bulletin boards packed full of opportunities I could feel that a kind of spring in your step I once had returning and the memories of my years at college beginning to rush back.

I traveled from Arlington to Fort Worth and on to Denton and discovered there is an abundance of young people who have decided to step out and make a difference in the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Community. They belong to organizations that are all basically dedicated to the same four goals: **1)** to Support each other **2)** to Educate others and themselves, **3)** to provide help and Service when necessary and **4)** to have some Fun along the way. From looking at the 1995 calendars of each group I can see they have put a great deal of effort into accomplishing all of them. They have activities planned from marching in the Alan Ross Freedom Parade to Dance Lessons along with speakers planning to discuss topics such as: Gays in the Military, Breaking Stereotypes & Building Communities, and Homosexuality & Religion.

Here is a small taste of what is out there for students in the Tarrant & Denton County Area:

1. **TCU TRIANGLE**
   Facility Advisor,
   Priscilla Tate (817) 921-7160

I met with Priscilla Tate, what a gift she is to this group....she says what a gift this group is to me. Priscilla is totally convinced in the commitment, from the Chancellor to every Staff member, to make this university a safe place for every student to thrive emotionally as well as scholastically. To help accomplish just that, this group provides a panel to train members of two other organizations, Facility/ Staff Allies and Student Allies.

The Facility/Staff Allies are not only interested in learning about Gay & Lesbian issues, they are willing to put it all on the line by making their membership list available. Wouldn't it have been a wonderful feeling to know who was and was not Gay & Lesbian Friendly at the university you attended?

Meetings are held at 5:00 p.m. every Sunday. Contact Priscilla Tate for the location.

2. **UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS....COURAGE**
   Hotline Number
   (817)565-6110

I met with Scot Maitlan, Vice President, and Kelly Briley, Treasurer....the excitement and dedication they have to make this group successful is inspirational. Their first big fundraiser is set for October 21...The Fall Follies, which will benefit not only the Courage Organization but also AIDS Interfaith. Diane Hardy-Garcia has been scheduled to speak on Wednesday, November 15 ....anyone needing additional information on either is asked to call the Hotline.

Both Scott and Kelly are dedicated to making this organization, a safe place for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexuals to experience all the diversity we as a community have to offer. Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. every Wednesday on the UNT Campus..in room 223 of the Art Building.

3. **TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY.....SALGA**
   (Spanish for Come out)
   Staff Advisor Deb McBee
   (817) 898-3784

I was quite surprised, when I spoke to advisor Deb McBee, that a university which gave our community people like...Kay Christian, Publisher of the Lambda Pages, and Daune' Littlefield, President of the TCLGA, does not have a powerful organization. As a matter of fact, Deb is not even sure if they will have an organization this year. She told me that the majority of active members have graduated and as of now there have not been any inquiries into the organization's existence at all.

I was fortunate enough to get Deb together with Kelly Briley, of UNT COURAGE, and they are going to try to combine groups, hopefully this will draw out a few that were reluctant in stepping forward before. As you know, security in our community comes in numbers.

No meetings are scheduled as of today.

4. **TARRANT COUNTY JUNIOR COLLEGE-NE CAMPUS ....GLA**
   Faculty Advisors Bob Downtain & Ann Rye
   (817) 281-7860

I spoke with John Muir, President of GLA, he is one man on a mission. Being his last semester at TCJC he wants to get this group really rolling along so that the new President will be able to take the ball and run with it. Their special project is for National Coming Out Day, the film Straight from the Heart will run all day in the Student Union and Red Ribbons will be placed on Campus representing the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual population estimated attending TCJC.

John's passion for the group is to gain respectability, I want people to learn who they are and feel comfortable. When they learn self acceptance they gain self confidence and that in turns brings respect.

Meetings are every Tuesday in the Student Union from 4-6 p.m.

5. **TEXAS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY**
   Student Development
   (817) 531-4444

I searched and searched for information on this campus and was told, by a rather annoyed young woman, that there was no such group on the TWU Campus. Anyone having any more information please let me know.

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