Fall 2003

Fusion Fall 2003

Paul Bucalo
Megan Burgasser
Michael Collins
Steven Harbaugh
Andrea Reynolds

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.kent.edu/fusion

Part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
Bucalo, Paul; Burgasser, Megan; Collins, Michael; Harbaugh, Steven; Reynolds, Andrea; Schomer, Matthew; Schooley, Jeff; and Youhana, Jaclyn, "Fusion Fall 2003" (2003). Fusion. Book 1.
http://digitalcommons.kent.edu/fusion/1

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Media at Digital Commons @ Kent State University Libraries. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fusion by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Kent State University Libraries. For more information, please contact earicha1@kent.edu, tlk@kent.edu.
Authors
Paul Bucalo, Megan Burgasser, Michael Collins, Steven Harbaugh, Andrea Reynolds, Matthew Schomer, Jeff Schooley, and Jaclyn Youhana
Editor
Mandy Jenkins

Copy Desk Chief
Grace Dobush

Copy Editors
Shannon Quinn
Rachael Carromagno

Writers
Paul Bucalo
Megan Burgasser
Michael Collins
Steven Harbaugh
Andrea Reynolds
Matthew Schomer
Jeff Schooley
Jaclyn Youhana

Student Media Manager
Lori Cantor

Fusion Advisor
Kathryn A. Common

Student Media Advertising Manager
Russ Lynn

Fusion Advertising Manager
Steven Harbaugh

Visual Editor/Art Director
Marie B. Ho

Photo Editor
Samara Peddle

Designer
Paul Bucalo

Ad Designer
Lindsay O'Connell

Photographers
Scott R. Galvin
Pat Jarrett

Fusion
101 Taylor Hall
Kent State University
Kent, Ohio 44242

Phone: 330.672.0886
Fax: 330.672.4880

Cover Photo by Scott R. Galvin
Fusion magazine logo by Lindsay O’Connell

www.studentmedia.kent.edu/fusion

Fusion magazine is produced by students at Kent State University twice per academic year. No part of Fusion may be reprinted without permission. Readers are encouraged to send letters and feature articles to the staff at the address above.

Copyright © 2003 Fusion magazine

2 Editor’s Notes

4 Tracing Our Roots
A historical perspective on the more than 30 years of LGBT organizations at Kent State.

8 Of “Sinners” and Saints
Homosexual Christians find sanctuary at open and affirming churches.

14 In Sickness and in Health...
Partner benefits could even ground between LGBT and heterosexual couples at Kent State.

18 Dual Minorities, Double Identities
Three people tell their stories of being both gay and another minority.
24 Fighting Homophobia on the Field
LGBT athletes do exist in the straight world of the NCAA.

30 My (Gay) Fraternity Life
One reporter experiences rush with the Delta Lambda Phi fraternity.

36 Shared Experiences, Opened Channels
Local outlets provide counseling for LGBT individuals.

40 Q&A with Carol Cartwright
Carol Cartwright discusses diversity and tolerance at Kent State.
Editor's Note

Guilty by Association

"But aren't you afraid people will think you're... you know...?"

Gay? Go on, you can say it.
To quote a T-shirt I once saw on a Delta Lambda Phi member: "You say 'gay' as if that's a bad thing." But no, I'm not worried — and neither is my staff. We know what and who we are and if someone assumes otherwise, it isn't that bad.

From my own family to the president of the university, the question hangs:

"Why?"

Because it seems no one else will go there.
In my first five years at Kent State, many of my gay and lesbian friends pointed out the lack of coverage on sexual minority issues. Outside of "Coming Out Week" coverage and the occasional discrimination story, one would never even imagine that a population of gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender students exists on this campus.

Oh no, the gays are among us!

Well get used to it, because "they" don't live as apart from "us" as everyone thinks.
Think about them. The guy next to you on the bus. The girl you swap notes with in psych class. Your teammate. Your professor. Your brother. Your friend.
These are real people — not statistics — and it is time everyone got to know each other a little bit better. It's time you knew more.
And if you aren't getting the whole story, you need a new news outlet. Enter the journalists.
This mission brought together a mixed staff of homosexuals and heterosexuals — some with writing experience, some without — but all ready to learn and teach together.
We sent these writers and photographers out to find a little bit of truth. What they came back with was a product of cooperation and investigation.
Some had to move beyond their own boundaries to explore issues they had never known before. Others found an opportunity to discover themselves a little bit more.
Hopefully the same will go for you, the first Fusion readers. Whether you're gay or straight, we've got something to show you.
So, turn the page. Come on in... the fun is just starting.

Mandy Jenkins
Editor
Looking through Keyholes

It is easier to remain behind a locked door than to be brave and open about overwhelming personal fears.

When we fail to question ourselves; when we fail to question others; we limit our knowledge and often make drastic, sometimes fatal assumptions. When we fail to answer questions honestly; when we fail to end the silence between our own selves and others; we give everyone and anyone permission to draw their own fateful conclusions about our lives.

It has taken me a long time to admit that I am often afraid of speaking about my own truths. Truth is sometimes suppressed by wanting to be right at all times. I do not want to be guilty of misunderstanding or being misunderstood by someone, yet it happens frequently in my life.

It doesn’t happen when I am frequently called a lesbian, a dyke, a queer, a bisexual, or a homosexual. At least someone has made an effort, though clumsily, to partly understand my existence.

I am greatly misunderstood when nothing is said. Words, certain pronouns or names, are purposely left out of conversations. The question (you know which one) is totally avoided, ignored, bypassed, or just placed neatly out of mind and into the silent shadows of the individual’s thoughts.

I was once completely misunderstood when an academic advisor, while showing great compassion, automatically assumed that I was struggling in a class because I had just broken off a two-year engagement to “him.” It was my own repetitive silence, submission to the “normal, expected” pronoun, which made me feel ashamed. Every time I see this caring advisor I am reminded of my unintentional dishonesty.

The institution of heterosexuality has forced the lesbian to dissemble, or be labeled a pervert, a criminal, a sick or dangerous woman, etc., etc. The lesbian, then, has often been forced to lie, like the prostitute or the married woman.

Does a life “in the closet”—lying, perhaps of necessity, about ourselves to bosses, landlords, clients, colleagues, family, because the law and public opinion are founded on a lie—does this, can it, spread into private life, so that lying (described as discretion) becomes an easy way to avoid conflict or complication? Can it become a strategy so ingrained that it is used with close friends and lovers?


It is hard to speak out in uncomfortable situations and “come out” to every single person I meet. However, I have learned through many years of journalism experience how much more powerful the living truth is over silence and censorship.

Thank you to all individuals, for using their voices, including activists and interviewees. Hopefully, they will continue to unlock doors for sexual minorities and provide an important means of sociopolitical access and participation. And a special thanks to the readers taking a chance and beginning to peek through the keyholes of their locked doors.

Photo by Sarah McCrae

Photo by Elizabeth Russell

Marie B. Ho
Visual Editor/Art Director
Tracing our roots

Exploring more than 30 years of LGBT organizations at Kent State

You come out 'til the day you die

Vicky Dickinson, 22, was born in Cleveland, where she lived with her mother and sister. Her parents divorced when she was two and her father subsequently died while she was in grade school.

Jerry Hall, 25, is a former theater major and current sociology major specializing in corrections from Portsmouth, Ohio. His family consists of his parents, three sisters and three brothers.

Vicky: Did they break it off specifically or do you think they found an excuse?
JERRY: They found an excuse. Now we're working over in Akron for a place called Opportunities Unlimited which is just loving women.

Imagine yourself as a newly minted freshman at Kent State in 1970. The campus is filled with outrage over the events of May 4. You are 19, which means you can drink alcohol but you can't vote. Feminism has entered its second wave and radical feminists are everywhere. This is a time of turmoil and social upheaval. But to make matters worse, you are also gay.

The Stonewall Riots of just one year ago have drawn national attention to people like you. Homosexuality is still listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, which means that you officially have a mental illness. Where do you go? How do you connect with other people like you? How do you find people to date?

Today, Kent State has organizations like PRIDE! Kent and Delta Lambda Phi, which provide a social environment for the LGBT community. But in 1970, these groups didn't exist. There was no organization for students in sexual minorities to build a sense of community.

But that all changed in December 1971, when the Kent Gay Liberation Front (KGLF) held its first official meeting.
"We told the students that anyone who tells gay jokes and makes fun of gay people is usually unsure of his own sexuality."
Kathy Bellnap, Stater photos

"How can we sit back and allow our students who have less job security or freedom from parental restrictions than we, to fight the battle of liberation for us?"

"It is generally more difficult for men to understand and cope with homosexuality than women. I suppose gayness confronts a man's masculinity."

--- Dr. Dolores Noll

**We're going through a period where our identity is tested.**
--- Jerry

**We have no time in our life to mock other people**
--- Larraine

About 65 people attended that first meeting and began what would become one of the oldest campus-based LGBT organizations in the country.

The group got off to an active start. Founding advisor Dr. Dolores Noll and founding co-chairs Bill Hoover and Gail Pertz created an organization which held activities nearly every night of the week. Separate men's and women's "rap sessions" were held on different nights.

The KGLF Steering Committee met on still another night. The group even formed an intramural basketball team.

"We decided that we would join the men's intramural," Noll says. "We only played one game. I remember I made two baskets."

During its early years, KGLF began some of the programming that PRIDE! Kent continues today. One of the first programs implemented by KGLF was the speaker's bureau program — a panel of LGBT individuals who would speak to various classes about their lives. KGLF also started what would eventually become one of the most well-known social events on campus — the annual Halloween ball.
Gay community unites in Washington

Pride Kent members greatly affected by D.C. March

By Andy Netzel
POLITICAL AFFAIRS REPORTER

WASHINGTON: "I've never seen so many gay people in my life," said Pride Kent's Susan Sours as she looked out over 300,000 marchers in Washington Sunday.

"I just never imagined there were so many of us.

Six students from Kent State's gay support and activist group made the eight-hour drive by van to the nation's capital to participate in the Millennium March. The members said they were greatly affected by the event.

The Millennium March is held about every seven years in support of gay rights.

Many of the members said the number of people at the march has given them a sense of belonging.

"I've seen this many people in one spot before, but not this many that are all 'family,'" said Michael Collins, executive director of Pride Kent. "This is like Cleveland Pride March times ten.

Collins said that the group that he was happiest to see large numbers in was Parents, Friends and Families of Lesbian and Gays.

"They are our favorites," Collins said. "They represent what all of us wish our parents could be.

About half of the members of Pride Kent are also members of the national gay fraternity Delta Lambda Phi. While they have been members for most of the year, the Millennium March was the first time they were able to meet face to face.

"This is the first time I've had contact with any of the other brothers," Pride Kent member

Gay haters and celebrities show up for Sunday's March

By Andy Netzel
POLITICAL AFFAIRS REPORTER

WASHINGTON: The Millennium March drew a wide variety of people from varying groups to the nation's capital.

Some came to show their dislike of the gay community while others flew in from far-off places just for the day. Others came because they heard the event was supposed to draw an interesting crowd.

Celebrities also scared the crowd.

They all were in Washington D.C. They all had to share the same space.

ABOVE: Members of Delta Lambda Phi, a gay fraternity, march down Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C. Members of Kent State's Pride Kent organization marched with the fraternity.

RIGHT: Steve Massey, left, and his boyfriend Bob Pleissinger, both of Washington, share an intimate moment before participating in the Millennium March Sunday afternoon.

Alex Capaldi/DSR

GAY HATERS
Friends don't let friends be homosexuals.
God hates fags.
Got AIDS yet?
Signs displaying these phrases and others were proudly displayed by protesters of the event. They stood in groups of about 25 and were scattered throughout the path of the marchers.

"If you are gay, you are a castoff in the eyes of God," a protestor yelled into a bullhorn, Bible in hand. "The only one who can save you is the Lord Jesus Christ. God can't stand faggoes!"

The marchers responded by singing: "Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so."

See MARCH on page 11

But from the very beginning, KGLF had continual problems with the conservative side of campus.

Shortly after they were founded, the Daily Kent Stater began running letters to the editor condemning the group. But the group was not afraid of media attention — letters to the editor were met with responses from the organizers of KGLF. In 1973, NBC filmed a week-long series on homosexuality that included interviews with members of the group, including Noll.

Much of the group's focus at this time was on political activism. During the 1970s, members of KGLF could often be seen distributing flyers and leaflets, and picketing bars, police stations and radio stations. The presence of a former member of Students for a Democratic Society (a campus group associated with the anti-war movement) led to the organization being tracked by the FBI.

"My phone was tapped at that time, you could tell," Noll says.

The 1980s brought dramatic change for the group. The group changed its name in October of 1981. While still retaining the letters KGLF, they were now known as the Kent Gay and Lesbian Foundation. Noll says, "the letters were well-known, but they wanted something that sounded less activist. I didn't want the name change."

The 1980s were a difficult time for the gay rights movement as a whole, and KGLF wasn't spared.

Assaults from the "new right" and the beginning of the AIDS epidemic had a powerful effect on the group. But the organization didn't disappear, or even dwindle. In fact, KGLF reached its largest membership to date in the late 1980s.
The late 1970s and early 1980s were dominated by Anita Bryant and the Orange Juice Boycott. Religious conservatives began an assault on the gay community. Letters to the editor in the Daily Kent Stater were evident of the religious backlash against homosexuality.

Even on campus there was a physical attack on the gay community in 1981, when the annual Halloween ball was gassed.

"We were there, there was a band and lights and everything," Noll says. "All of a sudden there was this foggy stuff. We didn't think it was part of the show. I went over and I could tell that it was tear gas."

The room was evacuated, but not before part of the crowd was affected by the gas.

"People were lying around on the ground," Noll says. "One person went into cardiac arrest."

When the perpetrators were caught, it was found that the instigators were reserve Marines.

"They were discharged from the Marines," Noll said. "The people from campus didn't get very strong discipline."

But probably the most devastating blow to LGBT people in the 1980s was the beginning of the AIDS epidemic.

"The first person I knew who had AIDS was a friend of mine who died in 1985," Noll says. "Those were rough years. They still are. But with the new (drug) cocktails, it's less visible now."

KGLF didn't have an organized response to AIDS until later.

"Everyone was stunned, we didn't quite know what to do about this," Noll adds.

In the spring of 1992, KGLF changed its name yet again, to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Union (LGBU). This name change came about for two reasons. First, as the bisexual community became more visible, the group felt the need to add the word to their name.

Eric S. Van Sant, a former political affairs coordinator of LGBU and Kent resident, says they wanted to fall in line with a lot of the schools across the country that were going to that format. Van Sant says they also wanted to "distance themselves from the history of KGLF" and its more activist activities of the past.

Continued on page 42
Of "Sinners" and Saints
Homosexual Christians find sanctuary in open and affirming churches

Story by Jaclyn Youhana  Photos by Samara Peddle
It is a little white house out of a story book about Dick and Jane and Spot. Ordinary, simple, just like the others next to it. Except it has stained glass windows and a sign on the front gate reading: "Emmanuel Fellowship Church, Pastor Linda Meredith."

I walk in with Samara, the photographer, and we are hugged by two women. "Welcome! Is this your first time here?"

Yes.

"Please, sign our guest book."

The congregation might be that in any other Christian church. Except the women vastly out-populate the men. And I am one of two women with long hair.

And I am one of a very small minority of heterosexuals.

Emmanuel Fellowship Church is an open and affirming church located in Akron. This Sunday’s congregation — 30, no more than 35 people — sings just like the people in my Catholic church growing up — with conviction, feeling and tone-deafness.

But there is no altar, just a raised, stage-like area. No cross hangs on the back wall, but a painting of Jesus kneeling by a rock does. He is looking up into a light coming from the sky. To the painting’s right hangs an American flag. And a rainbow flag.

"Good morning!" deacon Tee Hines greets the congregation.

"Good morning!" the congregation responds.

"It’s a beautiful morning!" Hines says.

"Yes, it is a bee-U-ti-ful morning," a woman says back.

"Welcome, everyone, guests," Hines trails off. "Are there any first-timers here?"

I keep my hand down, and Hines continues to make small talk.

"If there are no further announcements, we’ll start to worship God."

Linda Meredith didn’t know she was applying to be a minister at an open and affirming church, she was just looking for a job.

"I responded to a blind ad when I applied for this job," Meredith says, meaning there was no church name and no address on the ad. "I came as a minister. I didn’t come as a gay person looking for a place to work."

If she had, she probably would have chosen a place a little closer to home — Meredith commutes from Columbus every Sunday.

"We tried my being here three days a week," she says. But that didn’t work so well, as the other four days a week she works in a Columbus funeral home.

"It’s been an interesting travel, and I love these people," Meredith says.

Though the church is open to all people, Meredith estimates about 90 percent of the congregation to be gay, bisexual or transgender.

"We had a man here because he attempted suicide and his church didn’t welcome him," she says. "How stupid is that?"

Emmanuel Fellowship Church is one of four open and affirming churches in the Akron/Canton area. Meredith says. She wants to be sure everyone is completely comfortable at the church. At the same time, she strives to keep the congregation traditional, though very few things about her are traditional.
Indeed, upon entering the church, the atmosphere is 100 percent welcoming, from the hugs waiting for you when you walk in the front door to the encouragement to speak during the service.

"Please be seated for the first reading," the woman who hugged me says.

"I can't hear you," someone from the congregation calls out.

"I don't think anyone has ever told me that before," someone from the congregation calls out.

Scattered "amens" sound around the room, and a man — with cowboy boots, shades propped on his head and a dark mustache — laughs deep and heartily.

"I will be reading chapters one to seven," the reader continues, and Hines interrupts.

"Verses," Hines says. "We don't want to scare them."

"Excuse me?"

"Verses," Hines repeats. "You said 'chapters one to seven.'"

It takes the congregation a few minutes to settle down and stop giggling, and then it's business as usual.

"I want you all to think about your first love," Hines says, starting out her homily. "Maybe you're with your first love now. Maybe some of you haven't had first loves yet. Maybe some of you shouldn't," and she raises her eyebrow to the preteens seated in the row behind me.

First loves are a time when you want to be together all the time, she says. You write letters. You want to get into each other's skin.

"It's like that when you first discover God, too," she says. "I think we're missing the spark. I think the honeymoon's over in this church. I think we've forgotten our first love in this church. We need to get the life back."

"The thing about coming here was I could claim all my selves freely."

Mary Standiford, who has attended the church since 1999, says, "I believe with all my heart that God and Jesus are not at all against homosexuality. Jesus loves me for who I am and for who I love. He has no problem with that."

The 60-year-old woman with silver hair cut short has old-fashioned movie-star beauty, a love for Jesus and no qualms about being a religious lesbian.

"People either hate or are afraid of what they don't understand," Standiford says.

Take the issue of gays raising children. Standiford was with her first partner for 25 years. They raised her partner's daughter from the time the girl was 2, and Standiford says some were worried they would raise the daughter to be gay.

"Why would we raise them to be gay? Why raise them to be ridiculed?" she asks. "We would joke that we did our best to raise her gay, but she was hopelessly heterosexual."
Emmanuel Fellowship Church was founded in 1986. “Who’s been around since the 80s?” Meredith asks. One person raises her hand.
“Since the 90s?” A majority of the congregation raises their hands, Standiford among them. “I loved it here instantly,” she tells the congregation, “the warmth, the love, the non-judgmental attitudes of everyone.” She used to attend an open and affirming church in Akron, she says, but stopped because of the politics. She was reluctant to join another church afterwards.
“I had visited here, and when I really decided I needed to get back in the church, this is where I came,” she says later. “I need to be involved with a body of believers.”
A man volunteers his testimony. “I was an openly gay man, but I was a closeted Christian,” he says. “It’s like being a gay Republican. How could you?”
A number of parishioners share their sentiments.
“The thing about coming here was I could claim all my selves freely,” another man says.
“If someone wanted to know what a gay Christian was like, they could talk to everybody in this room and still not know,” Meredith says. “We’re all different.” She tries to explain anyway.
“The challenge of being gay and Christian is you can be a very active church member,” she says, “and as soon as people find out you’re gay, a lot of that seems to get negated.”
Meredith says her family was quick to judge her when she found out she was bisexual — though it took her a bit of time to find out.

(Above) A couple prays together, bowing their heads before receiving Communion.
"I grew up in a conservative church," she says. "I didn't know homosexuality existed. If someone would have told me, a lot more things would have made more sense to me."

Meredith didn't learn about homosexuality until college. Finally, something clicked. When she told her family, they weren't exactly supportive.

"My mom told me, 'If you're bisexual, you can choose to be straight.' My sister said, 'If you're gay, I can't love you anymore,'" Meredith says, and she smiles. "That changed real quick."

Standiford, too, didn't know she was a lesbian right away. She grew up in the suburbs of Cincinnati in the 50s and married a man when she was 18 years old. The two remained married for 13 years.

"At the end of that marriage," she says, "I realized that I was falling in love with a dear friend of mine who happened to be a woman. When I found out that I was, I didn't have any issues myself. I worried, 'What would my family think? What would my employer think?'"

Growing up, she had two brothers, one of whom was 17 years older and also gay.

"He never became comfortable with his sexuality and his religion," Standiford says of her brother, who has since passed away. "He always felt a conflict."

A few minutes and a few questions later, the positions switch.

"Now I have a question for you," Standiford says.

Alright.
"Gay or straight?"
Straight.
She smiles and nods.
"And Jesus loves you."
In Sickness and in Health...

Story by Jeff Schooley  Photos by Samara Peddle
Partner benefits could even ground between LGBT and heterosexual couples. Only problem is, few employers offer them.

If Bob Johnson's spouse got sick, it would cause him much grief, potentially more than it would to many of his friends if they were in the same situation. Why?

Because Johnson, professor and chair of the Department of Sociology at Kent State University, is in a same-sex domestic partnership and his spouse isn't covered by the benefits he receives from the university.

"In addition to all the stress of getting better, you also worry about how to pay for it," Johnson says. "With some illnesses, it can be devastating emotionally and financially."

The issue of same-sex partner benefits, sometimes called domestic partner benefits, is an issue facing all employers, at the government level, in the private sector and even at colleges and universities around the nation.

Same-sex partner benefits, such as health insurance, have previously been reserved for heterosexual married couples.

Domestic partner benefits are often exactly the same as the benefits given to heterosexual couples and can include health, dental, vision insurance and tuition waivers. "Soft benefits," such as life insurance, childcare, sick leave and bereavement leave, are sometimes made available to domestic partners.

The Human Rights Campaign currently lists 188 colleges and universities that offer these benefits, including eight universities in Ohio.

Kenyon College, a small, private liberal arts college in Gambier, Ohio, is one of those eight schools and decided to offer these benefits as an incentive.

"It's a recruiting technique," says Shawn Presley, director of public affairs at Kenyon College. "It revolves, of course, around being fair and equitable. But as more and more universities offer it, it helps to get people here."

The benefits issue for colleges and universities is multifaceted. Some schools use these benefits to recruit qualified faculty, but there are also ethical concerns around offering same-sex benefits, mainly whether it should be done strictly for financial reasons or to better society.

Purdue University, with 10,500 faculty and staff members and 39,000 students, is one of the largest schools to offer same-sex partner benefits, it says it was an ethical decision.

"It's not a financial issue," says Brent Bowditch, assistant director of Human
Resource Services at Purdue University. "The costs are the same as the general population. It was more about what's right to do."

Johnson offers his explanation as to why more and more universities are offering these benefits.

"There's a growing recognition that the forms of families include LGBT families and their children," he says. "Businesses and universities that have family-friendly outlooks are being more inclusive."

**Soft benefits to start**

The Ohio State University, the largest university in Ohio, began offering soft benefits in July 2002. These benefits include Dependent Group Life Insurance and GlobalCare, which are provided exclusively for same-sex partners.

Dependent Group Life Insurance covers a faculty or staff member's same-sex domestic partner and his or her dependent children. GlobalCare provides medical referrals when faculty and staff are traveling outside of Ohio or internationally.

In Ohio State's Human Resources News, Larry Lewellen, associate vice president of Human Resources, said, "...we are focusing on those who do not have the right to get married. We are standing with our peer institutions who have implemented domestic partner benefits in this choice."

Lewellen says the university is in a tough spot politically.

"Frankly, we're trying to do everything we can to support LGBT faculty and staff, short of what the state legislature would not support," he says. "Our understanding is the hard benefits, especially those subsidized by state funds, would not be allowed."

**Waiting for the state**

Many universities, municipalities and businesses in Ohio are waiting around for a state decision on domestic partner benefits.

In 2001, H.B. 234 would have barred the state from recognizing same-sex unions, saying the state would not give married benefits to unwed couples, gay or straight. The bill passed the Ohio House of Representatives and ended the session locked up in the state Senate.

It was because of this particular bill that Ohio State University, for instance, could only offer soft benefits to its employees. The university's Board of Trustees, which would decide on other benefits, wanted to wait for a state decision.

The current session of the Legislature however, has bills in both the House and the Senate, known as the Defense of Marriage Act, which, if passed, would define marriage in Ohio as a union between one man and one woman, and would state that same-sex marriages are against the "strong public policy" of Ohio. In addition, this bill would prevent the state from recognizing or extending the benefits of marriage, including partner benefits, to "non-marital relationships." If this bill is passed, domestic partner benefits already offered could be overturned and new benefit plans could not be created.

Kent State is one of the many state-funded universities waiting for the state to make a decision before taking action. After a decision is made, the Board of Trustees will decide on possible hard or soft benefits for the university's faculty and staff members who are in domestic partnerships.

"In our judgment, it's an issue that must be resolved first at the state level," says Carol Cartwright, president of Kent State University. Cartwright says a state decision is vital to determining the boundaries and definitions of domestic partnerships in general.

"We've talked with faculty and staff groups who have approached us about how they might deal with it," Cartwright says. "We are working first at the state level, so that there's a clear statement of definition and a clear statement about what we are able to do."

For now, faculty and staff members seeking domestic partner benefits at Kent State must make their cases on an individual basis.

In 1992 Johnson filed a grievance with Kent State to try to secure benefits for his domestic partner. The grievance went to arbitration and Johnson lost. Currently he's trying to work through "more informal back channels," but he says he's "making very slow progress."

Depending on what action Ohio, and eventually Kent State, takes, those "back channels" may be all faculty members like Johnson will have to rely on.

**Additional reporting by Mandy Jenkins**
Get into the swing of things....

GayWebMonkey.com

...like

gaywired.com

Entertainment, personals, chat and more!

...where the action is at.
Dual Minorities
Double Identities
It's hard to fit in as a member of two communities

Story by Steven Harbaugh
Photos by Samara Peddle

Facing a homophobic society is difficult enough for many LGBT people, but to face that society as a double minority is sometimes even more difficult. Three unique individuals with three unique experiences explain how they face being a member of both the LGBT community and another minority.

Silent Battle

John Krueger is the strong, silent type.

"I don't think being deaf and gay is more difficult," he says. "I usually have to break the ice first."

Krueger, 39 and originally from California, was born deaf due to rubella, a virus that causes birth defects and sometimes death.

Krueger's parents were unable to deal with the fact that their son was deaf and put him up for adoption at age 7. After moving through a series of foster homes, a deaf couple finally adopted him. After encountering some difficulty with his biological parents signing the release forms, Krueger entered his new home, where he learned sign language.

He later attended high school at the California School for the Deaf and graduated in 1983. He went on to spend several years in college at Gallaudet University, a college for the deaf and hard of hearing.

He says he believes he was born gay, just as he was born deaf.

"I came out of the closet at age 13 to my parents and my friends," he says. "I have always been attracted to the same sex. It feels natural with men."

In 1993 he moved to Cleveland after receiving a job as a translator for the Ohio Relay Service, a local communication service for the hearing- and speech-impaired. After working there for five years, he was laid off.

This is his second year at Kent State, where he is working on a degree in deaf education.

Krueger said he doesn't feel his life has been any more difficult than anyone else's.

"I think it depends on whom I am with at the moment," he explains. "For example, whenever I am with hearing people, they perceive my deafness first before they realize I am gay. Whenever I am with deaf people, they perceive my homosexuality first and being deaf is a given."

Krueger says he has more in common with the deaf community because lines of communication are easier if they know sign language. In the gay community he must converse with his friends through paper and his disability is apparent first, he said.

"My deafness seems to be more problematic for hearing people [than] the fact that I am gay," Krueger says.

Despite not feeling that his life is difficult because of his minority status, there have been some significant hardships along the way.

"One situation that I will never forget was when I was in a relationship with a hearing partner," Krueger says. "One day, he said that he was worried about me being able to support myself as a deaf man, such as being able to get a good paying job with benefits. I was flabbergasted when he told me that, and I was not able to make a snappy comeback. I thought it was sad, considering I earned three times more than he did."

For example, whenever I am with hearing people, they perceive my deafness first before they realize I am gay. Whenever I am with deaf people, they perceive my homosexuality first and being deaf is a given."

Krueger says he has more in common with the deaf community because lines of communication are easier if they know sign language. In the gay community he must converse with his friends through paper and his disability is apparent first, he said.

"My deafness seems to be more problematic for hearing people [than] the fact that I am gay," Krueger says.

Despite not feeling that his life is difficult because of his minority status, there have been some significant hardships along the way.

"One situation that I will never forget was when I was in a relationship with a hearing partner," Krueger says. "One day, he said that he was worried about me being able to support myself as a deaf man, such as being able to get a good paying job with benefits. I was flabbergasted when he told me that, and I was not able to make a snappy comeback. I thought it was sad, considering I earned three times more than he did."
John Krueger, 39, was born deaf and gay, but he doesn't let discrimination or his double minority status interfere with his life.
He adds that his biggest pet peeve is when hearing people shout at him once they realize he is deaf.

"Since I was born deaf, I do not understand the concept of sounds," he says, "so increasing the volume won't clear things up."

Krueger is active in PRIDE! Kent and is one of the newest brothers of Delta Lambda Phi.

In order to facilitate communication among his fraternity brothers, one of the members of the fraternity is planning on getting registered as a translator.

Krueger holds the newest addition to his life in the highest regard, he says.

This new addition is a blind Pomeranian puppy that he acquired at the pet adoption table at the Cleveland Gay Pride Festival.

"He is fabulous," he says. "His name is Sunny and it describes him perfectly."

Krueger added that he doesn't let any discrimination he faces upset him.

"It is on an individual basis that I have to deal with being deaf and gay," he says. "I have a clique of friends. If an individual is not comfortable with who I am, then we won't be friends. I won't lose sleep over that."
Changing Times

Dolores Noll is an unlikely fixture at Kent State. She is an out, lesbian 73-year-old who believes very strongly in religion. She is a unique figure that many don't get to see — an older generation of LGBT people.

Dolores says that she is a minority but she doesn't feel any discrimination in the gay community, the community that she associates with the most.

She worked for Kent State as an English professor for 23 years and, in 1971, founded the second-oldest student organization for LGBT people in the country — the Kent Gay Liberation Front, now known as PRIDE! Kent. She served as faculty adviser for the group for 15 years.

Dolores came out in her late 30s after she realized she had to be open with who she was.

"I wasn't getting much out of life," she says. "When I finally accepted my lesbianism, it was like a religious conversion."

She felt the need for a support system for LGBT people at Kent State after reading an article on a gay rights group in Denmark.

"All you could do back then was find a bar and those were hard to find," she says.

She formed the Kent Gay Liberation Front (KGLF) and meetings were usually well attended. However, there were still the hardships of dealing with those who weren't accepting of a new, progressive organization on campus.

The group used to have a glassed-in office in the Student Center that faced outside (now the current office for the All-Campus Programming Board), and students threw rocks at the windows, shattering the glass.

Some closed-minded students were hostile towards the members quite often. Many people picketed their events and meetings.

Over the course of her lifetime, she said social progress has definitely been made for the LGBT community.

"I am really amazed at how open PRIDE! Kent is now," she says.

"The one thing that hits me about the meetings now is how open kids are, even in high school, and how strong they are."

After leaving the university, she began to actively pursue an interest in religion and joined the Liberation United Church of Christ in Lakewood, an open and affirming congregation for LGBT people.

Dolores said that becoming religious came from being "burned out on activism" but that she is still very much an activist.

Now, Dolores is back on the campus to inform students that they can be a sexual minority and also be spiritually strong.

"I'm not trying to convert people," she says. "I just want students to find the Christian church as a spiritual home. Especially for college students who are so rejected, and rejected by their churches, I think they will be pleased to find that there is support."

She is working alongside United Christian Ministries in Kent to form an open and affirming Christian group for LGBT people.

Dolores said those who use the Bible against LGBT people really saddened her.

"I just don't believe they are reading the Bible very carefully," she says. "I've always believed Jesus was a radical. He always favored the outcasts. If Jesus was standing here with us, he would still be part of our family."
Terrell Carr, a senior Pan-African studies major and former member of Black United Students, says he feels more accepted within the gay community than within the African-American community.

He is an out, gay, black man.

"There is no support in the black community," he says. "I think it goes beyond our cultural norm. I think they feel it is a disgrace to be a black, gay male."

Racial minorities constitute about 10 percent of Kent State's student population, according to the Kent State Admissions Office. An even smaller percentage are double minorities.

"It's definitely harder to be both minorities," Carr says. "I'm facing twice the stigma. On one hand, the black man is trying to steer himself from being perceived as a thug and an unfit father and the gay community is trying to steer itself away from negative stereotypes too. It's harder for me to find a place to fit in."

Carr recalled an instance when he performed in a predominantly African-American play on campus and was insulted by a fellow black cast member.

The student told him he was wrong to be the way he was because he should "procreate for heritage's sake."

"At first, I was very angry," Carr says. "He made me feel like my life was worthless as a gay male. Luckily, I got support afterwards by other cast members. One of the guys on the cast told me just to forget about it and that he was on an ego trip."

Even though Carr is out to both friends and family, he says coming out is never over.

"Coming out is a continual process," Carr explained. "Some people say, 'Oh, you're out.' It's not that simple. In job promotions and the workplace in general, for instance, you're always having to come out in every new situation you're in."

Despite the lack of a good support system for gay, black men in the African-American community, Carr said he thinks society is changing for the better.

"I think the African-American community is coming around slowly," he says. "I think they realize we need to reach out to young brothers and sisters who are gay."

Carr said he read a novel this summer that helped to lift his spirits in regards to being a dual minority. The book, Just As I Am by E. Lynn Harris, is an autobiography of a black, gay male who is raised in an all-black community and overcomes prejudices and learns to pursue his dreams.

"The book really showed me that I have to be strong," he says. "You can make a way out of no way. You can't let discrimination get you down."

Although Carr feels more support from the gay community, he also added that he has a dual obligation to offer support to both oppressed communities.

"We need to use all of our resources and reach out to all minorities," he says.

"There is no support in the black community," he says.

"I think it goes beyond our cultural norm. I think they feel it is a disgrace to be a black, gay, male."

Over the summer, Carr met a gay Chinese man who has become his good friend and helped him to value the importance of a strong support system.

"He has taught me a lot about myself," he says. "He has taught me how to be more diverse and respectful."

Carr stresses that the African-American and gay communities should learn to work together more often.

"Both groups are fighting the same struggle," he says. "One is based on heritage and the other is based on sexual orientation. We're both striving for a life away from oppression and rationalizing where we fit in society."
Proudly meeting the needs of the GLBT community for over 20 years

The News & Photo Shop
407 East Main Street Kent, Ohio 44240
330 678 5499
Fighting homophobia on the field
LGBT athletes in the straight world of the NCAA

Story by Paul Bucalo

To the most dedicated athletes, the sport is life and the team is family. On a team, the family is there seven days a week and 24 hours a day, and most teams spend at least as much time on the road as they do playing at home. The closeness of a team determines how much members can rely on one another, both on and off the field.

Coach Rob Mariano knows that wins and teamwork go hand-in-hand for the 22 “sisters” on Kent State’s soccer team.

“This is one year I can say that part of our success is due to the fact that this is a very cohesive unit,” Mariano says.

Of course, like any family, everyone is different.
There are always differences teammates must accept, such as differences in backgrounds, nationalities or sexual orientations.

Mariano says that like any other diversity issue, a difference such as sexual orientation wouldn’t be an issue for a “family” like his. He isn’t certain if there are any sexual minorities on his team, and he doesn’t think it’s his business to know.

“Obviously, I don’t know anything concrete, but I think we have had sexual minorities on the team in the past,” he says. “We’ve always had to explain that we need to embrace each other’s differences and still understand we are teammates. When it comes to the kids, they are here to experience college and we aren’t here to pry.”

The NCAA News calls revealing sexuality a private issue that serves only to force athletes to conform or risk spending all their time as the “black sheep” in the family.

But coaches and players alike may have a difficult time keeping their personal lives out of the team environment, considering the amount of time sacrificed for practices, games and team activities.

“It is difficult to totally separate your personal life from your professional life,” Laurie Priester, an openly gay athletics director at Mount Holyoke College, told NCAA News in 2001. “A typical week (for a coach or administrator in athletics) is 60 to 70 hours and often much more. It would be much easier to compartmentalize a 9-to-5 job than it is coaching or administration.”

**Fighting stereotypes**

A catcher and a captain for Kent State’s softball team, Carrie Eneix stands just over five-feet tall with close-cropped blond hair, parted down the middle. The bangs sit behind her ears until she moves her head, then they come forward and are just long enough to cover her left eye.

And people have asked her if she is a lesbian.

“It’s a stereotype,” she says.

Eneix says people first stereotype women athletes as lesbians, especially softball and basketball. Then, when people see her short hair and broad shoulders, they become convinced the stereotype is true.

“It’s all physical appearance,” Eneix says.

Her teammate Abby Molnar, a junior zoology major who plays outfield, sounds exasperated when she reveals, “I get asked a lot.”

“Yeah, but when people ask you they are joking around,” says Eneix, senior integrated language arts major, referring to Molnar’s longer hair that reaches past her chin in the front.

Molnar and Eneix agreed that in softball and basketball there is an advantage to being larger and more muscular — even if that makes them “look lesbian.”

“Honestly,” Molnar says, “In our sport, it benefits you to be stronger and bigger. People equate that with being gay.”

**Sexual minorities on the team**

Molnar and Eneix admit it could be very difficult for some NCAA athletes and their teams to cope with such a diversity issue.

“They’re not facing any of this,” Eneix says. “They’re having their freshman year, and they’re trying to get into their own lifestyles and trying to get into their own sport.”

But Molnar says this year’s softball team is such a close-knit group, that it would be more accepting of differences than other teams.

“It’s easier to be on our team and admit to being gay,” Molnar says.

Mora Kanim, head volleyball coach at Kent State, feels that her team’s climate would also be receptive to sexual minority members.

“As a team, we spend a lot of time discussing how we’re different,” she says. “[Sexual orientation] is just another way two people might be different.”

Although Kanim believes a player could be honest about themselves, she would not expect the student to tell her or the team.

“It’s their personal preference. It’s completely up to them,” she says. She believes she would react no differently if a student came out to her than if they were talking to her about anything else.

Because a team may have both LGBT students and heterosexual students, teammates need to find a way to respect differences and discover commonalities between each other. Kanim says the best way to do this is to simply keep communication lines open.

“As far as I’m concerned, our team is our team and whoever is on it is on it,” Kanim says. “We talk a lot about how people are individuals and how we need to respect individuality.”

A former Kent State athlete and sexual minority who has chosen to remain anonymous says she never felt ostracized on her team because of such openness.

“While playing, I never felt left out or as an outcast to the rest of the team,” she says. “I suppose that would have to do with the number of athletes on the team that had been around it before.”

The former player credits coaches who set a tolerant and understanding tone for the team to follow.

“I respect coaches that have the guts to not get caught up in the fear of association thing,” she says. “If they respect the lifestyle and acknowledge it as reality, then the rest of the team does the same. It is reality, so they should deal with it in a respectful and adult-like manner to set the right examples for the young adults playing for them.”

**Confronting homophobia at Kent State**

Both the NCAA and the Kent State Athletic Department condemn prejudice, but neither places concrete repercussions on homosexuality.

“The (Kent State Athletic) Department has guidelines and policies concerning the code of conduct based on individual conduct,” head softball coach Karen Linda says.

The department’s mission statement includes a bullet point: “Achieve gender equity and be proactive regarding the intent of affirmative action in the recruitment and retention of student athletes and the hiring of coaches and athletic staff.”

The guidelines leave judgment and punishment up to the coach, Linda says.

Assistant track coach Elizabeth Zimney says her standards include any disrespectful language, including homophobic language.
Facing Reality

Kent State Athletics checks in with anti-discrimination policy

by Andrea Reynolds

Based on statistics alone, homosexual athletes do exist. While their coaches and teammates may or may not know, there is likely to be at least one sexual minority on a team at any given time.

"Many false assumptions are made that non-heterosexual athletes do not exist," says Paul Farber, the chairman of Penn's Athletics and Allies Tackling Homophobia and Heterosexism. Farber explained in a column in the Daily Pennsylvanian that "gays and lesbians thrive in athletics — just because they may not publicly be 'out' does not mean they don’t exist."

When these athletes do reveal themselves, they can be met with hostility and homophobia. Kent State University has many policies in place to try and combat unfair treatment of sexual minorities.

"It's a non-issue," says Laing Kennedy, Director of Athletics at Kent State. "It has to be a non-issue in our coaching and hiring practices, and our administrative and day-to-day practices."

According to Kennedy, Kent State's Athletics Department has a "zero tolerance" policy regarding harassment. "You cannot discriminate against administrators, coaching staff or student athletes based on gender, race or sexual orientation," Kennedy says.

This policy seems to be effective at Kent State. Kennedy says, to date, there have been no complaints brought to his attention by student athletes regarding harassment because of sexual orientation.

Similar policies did not seem to be enough at other schools, however. For this reason, the NCAA held a convention in January 2002 to address the issue of homophobia in intercollegiate athletics.

Panelists at the convention included two athletics directors, a coach and a former Division I-A football player. The athletics directors gave their views on how to accept the diversity in an athletics program and the coach explained how to educate athletes about the subject. The former football player spoke about the problems he faced as a gay student athlete. They all agreed that collegiate athletics environments need to be more accepting of sexual minority student-athletes.

Kennedy says for this reason, Kent State coaches and administrators go to mandatory seminars where issues such as harassment are discussed. However, head volleyball coach Mora Kanim says the harassment of sexual minority students has never been a topic at these seminars.

Kennedy says the coaching staff attends all-coaches meetings once a month, where the code of expected behavior is explained.

If harassment of any kind is reported by a student-athlete, Kennedy says he is prepared to deal with the matter personally.

Kennedy says the student-athlete's coach would be notified of the allegation and appropriate steps would be taken from there. "Ultimately, if the student's concerns are not addressed appropriately, there will be serious consequences," he says.
Coaching diversity

Head baseball coach Rick Rembielak says he hasn’t come across any athletes who are sexual minorities or any cases of homophobia in the 16 years he’s worked at Kent State.

“Not one,” Rembielak says. “Not one case of misconduct with our guys in any area. I’ve never even known that there’s a case of someone being...”

Rembielak leaned so far back in his chair so only his head was visible above the large wooden desk and he stretched out one of his massive hands, palm up.

“You are talking about...” Rembielak paused, “homosexuality, right?”

Although he has never dealt with the situation, but Rembielak says he’d have no trouble offering an ear to a player who wants to “come out” to him.

“I can relate that to guys who come on and might drink while others don’t,” he says. “It doesn’t matter whether you do or don’t respect the guy. We all have different preferences.”

While he knows he, as a coach, would be sensitive to a sexual minority player’s needs, he realizes the team would need a little adjustment.

“If it happened, it would take time to get used to,” Rembielak says. “There would be an adjusting period, but it comes down to respecting the opinion of another person.”

One of his players, pitcher and senior marketing major Josh Mayle, believes that sexual preference should not stand in the way of teamwork.

“Once we put those uniforms on, we all have the same goals,” Mayle says. “We’re all teammates.”

Matt Sega, senior physical education major, agrees.

“We have guys from all over with different backgrounds,” he says. While neither player has had a gay teammate, they both feel they are open-minded.

“From my standpoint,” Mayle says. “I’m not gay and it doesn’t bother me, it’s an everyday issue and a lot of people don’t address it. Human sexuality (class) was prep enough for me.”

Mayle says he has a cousin and friends who are gay.

Sega admits he has never dealt with the issue, but his years at Kent State have taught him to be accepting.

“Freshmen come in with their own train of thought, but as you find out about it, you find ways to deal with it,” he says.

While Sega and Mayle may feel as if they are open-minded, the rest of their team, like Rembielak says, will take some getting used to the idea.

Thirty feet away from Mayle and Sega, their teammates were posing for group pictures on the bleachers. As the two took their place, someone yelled out in a lisping, stereotypically “gay” voice, “Ohhh, stop.”

Additional reporting by Andrea Reynolds
One reporter’s story:
A day at Sports Information

by Paul Bucalo

I have to admit that I was a bit intimidated by the whole prospect of approaching coaches and asking them questions about homophobia. I had e-mailed or called most of them, but that elicited no response. I had to go down to the MAC Center and find someone who would talk to me.

My fears were allayed after talking to the coaches of women’s teams. Everyone I spoke to, including the track coach (who is responsible for both male and female teams), was frank and polite.

However, not all of the coaches were as forthcoming or as comfortable talking about the issue of homophobia.

I was still nervous about approaching the coach of an all-male team. I mean, the very thought of a gay athlete was probably anathema to the egotistical, male role model held on a pedestal by the media.

Head wrestling coach Jim Andrassy referred questions instead to the department’s information officer to get an interview, which the other coaches did not.

When I asked him to talk about issues of homophobia on his team he jumped out of his chair, followed his finger along a list of departmental numbers and picked up the telephone receiver.

“You have to go through the Sports Information Office,” Andrassy said. “Will Roleson is whom you want to speak to, I’ll just see if he’s in,” Andrassy said as he leapt out of his office and down the hallway. “Wait here, I’ll be right back.”

After about five minutes, Andrassy returned and said, “I am brand new on the job and I am just following procedures.”

Roleson, director of the Sports Information Office, was then contacted as a go-between, but said Andrassy never returned his call requesting an interview with Fusion.

Liberation United Church of Christ

A mainline LGBT church with a special outreach to the LGBT students of Kent State University

Services; Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

13714 Madison Avenue
Lakewood, Ohio 44107
216.521.5556
www.liberationucc.org

Do you know about Townhall II?

We offer:
- Counseling
- Victim Advocacy Services
- A free medical clinic for uninsured adults
- 24 hour Helpline
- A halfway house for drug dependent women
- Mediation
- A remedial driving program
- A DUI school for first-time offenders
- Community education and prevention programs
- Training on various topics for your agency or business
- A Crisis Response Team

Call 330-678-3006 for further information

Townhall II is a member of the Mental Health and Recovery Network of Portage County and the Volunteer Administrators Network.
My (Gay) Fraternity Life
Experiencing rush with Delta Lambda Phi

Story by Megan Burgasser
Photos by Pat Jarrett

Sunday
When I met the president of the fraternity, I wasn’t too sure if I wanted to date to join the ranks of Fraternity Life.

“We don’t judge who they are,” he told me.

Tuesday
Rushee Mark Marsh, senior geography major, is congratulated by a sea of crossed arms after he scored a strike at Kent Lanes during a rush event for Delta Lambda Phi.
In October 1986, three men in Washington, D.C. established a trust for the creation of a fraternity that would not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, wishing that such an alternative social organization had existed during their younger years. In April of the following year, 24 men were initiated into the brotherhood of Delta Lambda Phi (DLP) National Social Fraternity for Gay, Bisexual and Progressive Men.

The Alpha Psi chapter at Kent State University was founded in 2000 by Todd Mashlan, currently a post-undergraduate ethnic heritage and religion studies major.

The brothers of DLP allowed me to observe fraternity activities from an outside perspective. Over the course of three weeks in September, I became an unofficial member as I “shushed” DLP. I didn’t know what to expect as I walked to my first fraternity meeting. After all, it’s not every day a female gets to step inside a fraternity, especially this fraternity...

Sunday, Sept. 7 (past 8:30 p.m.) — The first time I met the brothers was at one of their weekly meetings. President Joshua Dudeck opened it by reprimanding the fraternity’s five active members, saying tardiness is not favored. One item on the agenda was voting on a date to take a brotherhood trip to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

When Dudeck, a senior photo illustration major, added, “We can take a look at the dresses, see if we can try them on...” It was the first time I realized that the tables were turned and I was now in the sexual minority.

Tuesday, Sept. 9 (around 10 p.m.) — I met two of the rushees under the glow of multicolored disco balls during Moon Rock Bowling at Kent Lanes.

The brothers cheered and clapped for each other, even when Griffin Parsons, sophomore musical theatre major, repeatedly watched his ball find the gutter. Kenny Manns, junior music major, claimed the floor was slanted, but that didn’t stop the group from dancing to the “Cha-Cha Slide.”

Rushee Mark Marsh, senior geography major, said that he met brothers of DLP last semester through PRIDE! Kent, but it was too late to rush then. For him, rush is like hanging out with friends. “They are very accepting,” he said. “There is no pressure about a bid.”

Rushee John Krueger, junior deaf education major, said, “I hope they will ask me to join Delta Lambda Phi.”

Krueger, a non-traditional student, added, “I am 39 years old. [It’s] never too late.”

Kenny Manns, junior music major, embraces Griffin Parsons, sophomore musical theatre major, during a Delta Lambda Phi rush event at Kent Lanes. Though there is a policy in the fraternity’s charter about contact between brothers, after a period of time, relations are permitted.
Friday, Sept. 12 (8 p.m.) — Eric Van Sant, founding member and fraternity advisor, was a gracious host and greeted all of us at the door for a potluck dinner by saying, “Welcome to my humble abode.”

We congregated on the deck in his backyard. I was impressed by the green and gold plates, a nod to the fraternity’s colors, and the tea lights that dotted the tables and railings. Van Sant told me that every gay man needs an industrial-sized bag of tea lights. The evening air was thick with bugs and we swatted voraciously. Someone was sent to buy Off! bug repellent. Van Sant asked, “How come a gay man can’t use the phrase, ‘I need to get Off!’ without problems?”

The brothers built a bonfire, which curbed the bug infestation. Van Sant doused the pile of kindling with lighter fluid and lit it. Dudeck and Bryan Guffey, sophomore musical theatre major, danced around it and chanted nonsensically.

“Josh thinks he’s at a club,” Van Sant said, commenting on Dudeck’s dancing ability.

Unlike most sophomores in college, I have never been to a fraternity party. I do not know what “normal” fraternity men do or say. But Guffey, vice president and rush chair, did tell me, “We’re not your father’s fraternity.”
A photo on the wall at Van Sant's house. Many of the brothers dress in drag and go to clubs. Andrew Caruso was joking about dressing as a straight man for Halloween. "That would be scary," he said.

Dudeck beats on his chest after tackling Guffey in Van Sant's backyard. After much of this yelling and roughhousing, Van Sant reminded the group, "I have neighbors, you know, with kids."

Guffey lets Joe Podojil talk on the phone to one of his ex-boyfriends at a rush barbecue at Van Sant's house. Guffey is "having drama" on this night because the ex-boyfriend on the phone has started dating somebody else.

Dudeck and Van Sant (right) sing the Delphi — something of a theme song for the fraternity — at the closing of the formal rush party. The song has an added cheer at the end, making it unique to the Kent State chapter.
Friday, Sept. 19 (promptly 8 p.m.) — The only time I felt out of place was on Formal Rush night and not because I was the only female. Not even because I could have been the only heterosexual in the room. I showed up in pink velour pants and a Suicide Machines hoodie. I was reassured that the dress code did not apply to me because, as rushee Andrew Caruso said, I was the “token girl.”

Once again there were lots of candles, which I learned is customary. But the mood was different on this night. The dressy clothes everyone was sporting, the Cher mood music, and the grapes, cheese and Triscuits offered certainly contributed.

Van Sant played grandma and showed the rushees photos of fraternity events, which spurred memories of the brothers’ trip in July to the National Conference in Las Vegas.

When the brothers politely asked the rushees (and me) to leave so that they could mutually decide who would be receiving a bid, I understood why this night was unlike the others.

“We’re not looking for flakes,” Guffey said later when describing qualities that the fraternity looks for and doesn’t look for in pledges.

Tuesday, Sept. 23 (evening) — I was keyed up to go with the brothers to deliver bid extensions. Five rushees would be surprised with a visit.

The first person we popped in on was Drew Danals, a freshman fashion design major. A random resident of Terrace Hall let us into the building.

After Guffey announced, “The brothers of Delta Lambda Phi would cordially like to extend a bid to you,” Danals apologized for the trash in his room. In shock, he asked me if he should call someone.

“Maybe I’ll call my dad, he was in a frat,” Danals said.

Next we surprised Marsh as he came out of class.

His response: “Thank you.”

There were hugs all around. He said he didn’t expect the “mob” that greeted him, but was excited.

Caruso, a junior hospitality management major, was met by the brothers at the fraternity rock on Front Campus, which I thought was especially fitting.

The brothers officially extended a bid to him and asked to accept or reject by 5 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 26.

Caruso said he was blown away when he saw the mob. Krueger was also extended a bid. He gave two thumbs up and said he planned to accept.

Lastly, we walked to Harbourt Hall where the brothers offered a bid extension to Clifford Mason, freshman special education major.

Mason was quiet.

He told me that he has been going back and forth about joining DLP as it is family tradition to be part of Omega Phi Psi.

Caruso had told me at the potluck dinner he probably would say no thanks to a bid. He said, “I’m not really Greek material.”

So maybe no one was more surprised than me (and him) when he accepted his bid to join within hours after it was offered. Krueger also accepted the bid to become a DLP pledge.

“We’re really excited to have these two guys pick up their bids,” Guffey said. “They are outstanding individuals and we sincerely believe they have excellent potential to make wonderful brothers.”

Guffey holds a bid that will be extended to a rush later in the night. The active members are surprising rushes with the bids to join the fraternity in an effort to keep the decisions secret.

(Above, extending bids and congratulations.)
Donny Cole and Andrew Garuso (far right) embrace after his bid was extended near the rock on front campus. All the brothers waited to hug Caruso and congratulate him on his achievement.

Guffey extends the bid to freshman Drew Danals. He was surprised with the extension, he was told in a phone call to be in his dorm at this particular time and nothing else.

During the time I spent with DLP, I grew to adore all of the brothers that I met. I also managed to receive quite an education. For instance, the brothers tactfully explained to me the many uses of a dental dam. And here I thought safe sex ended at the condom!

So when the rushees accepted their bids and the pledge period began, truly, I was disappointed that my brief membership in DLP would have to end. Now, whenever I see one of the members around campus, I always receive an amiable greeting and smile and I fondly remember the three weeks I spent as a DLP “brother.”

Mark Marsh’s pocket possessions sit on a table in the back room at the News & Photo Shop among coffee and magazine clippings. The News & Photo Shop in Kent is a popular hang out for the Delta Lambda Phi brothers. Van Sant is the manager of part of the store and Marsh has worked there for several months.

(Above) Van Sant’s refrigerator displays magnets and bumper stickers supporting equal rights and homosexuality.

(Above) Mark Marsh's pocket possessions sit on a table in the back room at the News & Photo Shop among coffee and magazine clippings. The News & Photo Shop in Kent is a popular hang out for the Delta Lambda Phi brothers. Van Sant is the manager of part of the store and Marsh has worked there for several months.
Shared experiences, opened channels

Local outlets provide counseling for LGBT community

Story by Matthew Schomer

If society treats members of the LGBT community differently than it treats heterosexuals, why should they undergo the same counseling?

That's the theory of Dr. Dennis Reitenbach, a counselor at Coleman Professional Services in Ravenna, who started a group discussion session for sexual minorities in 2002.

"My original intention was to provide a professional setting in which gay, lesbian and bisexual persons could release their tension," Reitenbach says.

While many sexual minorities come to him for individual and couples counseling, Reitenbach says the sessions are more often run by the participants.

"I'm not on some podium and they're just waiting for my answer," he says.

"I encourage the group to be an interactive experience with each other. My role in the group is really to connect people with similar roles to each other. Their role is to solve or accept — since some problems can't be solved — by dialogue with one another."

He says the biggest reward he gets is observing the creativity of the group's problem solving.

"They come up with all sorts of fantastic solutions that really do mimic heterosexual lifestyle," he says.

Reitenbach says bringing together people of the same sexual orientation is important because it allows them to gives them someone to whom they can relate. The current group, which is composed of six members, Reitenbach and his intern, discusses a number of issues facing the LGBT community.

Topics of discussion have involved religion, politics, violence, personal health, stigmatization, oppression, identity development and relationship building. However, Reitenbach says building relationships is his primary concern in the group.

"Human development is a story of how we make connections," he says. "We're here to create a connection between people because, really, isn't that what life's all about?"

Careers, religion, family and self-expectations all have to do with relationships, he says.

However, society can also impose problems particularly on members of sexual minorities. Because society is not fully accepting of sexual minorities, many people of LGBT lifestyles conceal their identities. Reitenbach says this can cause severe problems in a person's socialization.

"Concealment automatically puts one in an isolated position so they isolate themselves from other people," he says.

Even after coming to terms with their sexuality, socialization of norms can affect a person's ability to act intimately with his or her partner. Reitenbach calls this concept developmental delay of intimacy.

"It refers to men and women who have difficulty expressing emotion to one another because society won't permit it," he says.

Developmental delay of intimacy often happens in the younger LGBT population, and particularly in schools, Reitenbach says.

"LGBT students don't have parents teaching John how to be intimate with Matthew," he says.

"The needs of lesbians, gays and bisexuals are often invisible to people who are unfamiliar with their norms." — Dr. Dennis Reitenbach
The group is a natural setting for people coming to terms with their sexuality, Reitenbach says. “Some, for a while, will choose to immerse themselves in just that community,” he says. “That tends to be phasic. As they realize sexual orientation isn’t the only important thing about them, they tend to widen their scope.”

Some, however, choose to stay isolated from people of different sexual orientation. While Reitenbach says a diverse culture is usually desirable, there are cases in which he would encourage isolation, especially in “hostile communities and states” such as Texas and Wyoming.

“It depends on their history and their life experiences,” he says. “I can definitely see cases where someone would want to isolate themselves, but I couldn’t say it’s pandemic to every gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender person by any means.”

Sexual minorities around Kent State University have other outlets for counseling, though Reitenbach’s group is the only one specifically tailored to discussion of LGBT issues.

Townhall II, which generally deals

**Group therapy designed with sexual minorities in mind**

by Marie B. Ho

Large urban areas often create centers and offer services molded to the needs of sexual minorities, Reitenbach said. Cleveland has the Lesbian and Gay Center in Lakewood at 6200 Detroit Ave.; Akron has the Akron Pride Center at 71 N. Adams St.; while Youngstown also has a Pride Center.

Reitenbach has studied and worked with gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals, couples and families for more than 18 years, and designed the group based on his experience with the gay population.

“Sexual minorities have suffered a history of isolation in all areas of rural America,” Reitenbach said. Reitenbach said same-sex group therapy isn’t offered in many rural settings because many homosexuals or bisexuals are worried about protecting their identity and may even fear for their personal safety.

He said the group is geared toward sexual minorities of all age groups with a strong sense of their sexual identity. The therapy caters to lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals wanting to:

- Be “out” and address their personal, cultural concerns and problems in a safe and therapeutic environment.
- Learn from other homosexual or bisexual people facing common cultural issues.
- Develop and maintain intimate relationships, while managing problems associated with minority group status.
- Respond to the loss or death of a partner or stay focused in maintaining sobriety.
- Adjust and cope with being more open about their sexuality to a community, family or co-workers.

“This is a population that doesn’t get recognized by every mental health professional,” he said. “The needs of lesbians, gays and bisexuals are often invisible to people who are unfamiliar with their norms.”

Defined and set gender norms are often used as a fundamental tool for examining the world people live in.

**Continued on next page**
Continued from last page

Reitenbach said, and many homosexuals or bisexuals may bend the gender rules set by society today.

A language barrier is often created between a health professional and patient, when a professional doesn’t know how to speak about same-sex partnerships.

"Many professionals, such as doctors, psychiatrists or counselors, may not know what words to use when speaking to a client who has a different sexual orientation," he said.

A participant’s private health insurance may pay for the group therapy and diagnostic intake required by Coleman’s mental health services. A health insurance company can use the information obtained during the diagnostic intake and process it as a patient’s claim for service. Self-payment, Medicare and Medicaid are also accepted as forms of payment. Coleman also offers a sliding-scale fee for eligible Portage County residents.

"To avoid the fear factor involved in running this group," Reitenbach said. "We ensure hyper-anonymity, have security guards walk guests to their car in our well-lit parking lot and talk to people about their fears."
Strippers
Tuesdays & Thursdays
10pm till close

Theme Parties
every Saturday
with Live DJ's
Fridays & Saturdays

77 N Adams St
Akron, OH 44305
330.434.9794
www.adamsstreetbar.com
Mondays
Thru Saturdays
4:30pm till 2:30am
Sundays
9pm till 2:30am

Piano Bar
every Wednesday &
Friday 9pm till Midnight

Drag Shows
every Friday & Sunday
at Midnight
Kent State and Sexual Minorities: An interview with Carol Cartwright

Editor Mandy Jenkins sat down with Kent State University President Carol Cartwright earlier this semester to discuss the climate at Kent State for sexual minority issues — and a few other burning questions.

MJ: Would you say Kent State is a liberal school, as everyone says?

CC: I think if you had to choose a label, all things considered it would be more conservative than liberal here, but we are very much labeled by the outside world as liberal.

MJ: Would you say that Kent State is more tolerant of diversity issues now than in the past?

CC: Yes. I know from a lot of conversations with students, they tell us one of the things that attracts them to Kent State is a lot of difference and a sense that you don’t have to be like everyone else to find your place here. We have students go look at schools that convey an image to them of being very homogenous. Students will say, “they dress alike, they have same interests, they come from the same kinds of families.”

MJ: A few people we spoke to said the campus has not gotten more tolerant towards sexual minorities since the 70s. What do you think?

CC: I don’t really have any evidence of that, but do you think there’s just more public discussion of different points of view today? That the public may be talking more openly about these issues now than they were 20 years ago? So that it may have seemed more tolerant then, but there’s really no difference because now there’s just more willingness to present a contrary point of view...

MJ: That’s a possibility. So, here’s a for instance... what would happen if a faculty, staff or an administration person were to publicly express homosexual views within their position? Could anything be done about it?

CC: Individual faculty members certainly have every right to make their personal decision about how much their personal life they want to make public.

MJ: What about administration?

CC: At a level beyond faculty, where you might think of a management responsibility, it is very important to take the university’s official position of neutrality. A department chair or a vice president has the same kind of university responsibilities I have — they must assure that nondiscrimination policies are taken seriously, that people have an environment to express their opinions and make sure there’s an appropriate array of opportunities and activities for everyone, of all points of view.
MJ: In the 1970s, a meeting of that era's PRIDE! Kent group had an event that was tear-gassed. What would happen if a discrimination crime such as that happened on campus today?

CC: Two things would happen. First, there would be an opportunity for the individual who believed they had been hurt to pursue a course of action. And also, depending on the type of issue, there would be an opportunity for a university officer to speak out about the incident. And we have a history of that and it is often speaking about the right to free expression, the right to having different viewpoints and the university's need to ensure the environment that allows those viewpoints to come out.

Now, if it's a violent act, a university officer speaks about the abhorrence of violence, the need for a civil environment in which to exchange views and sometimes will note the university providing that environment.

Sometimes it's an issue that has to be investigated by the police and, in that case, the university officer would make it clear the police are going to take it seriously. That would be the general approach to issues.

MJ: Now, I know you're familiar with the Safe Zone project. Is there any pressure for campus departments, advising offices, etc. to provide a Safe Zone?

CC: I come at that issue from the perspective of what the Safe Zone is designed to do. It's my understanding that it is designed to provide a safe place where the individual in that office commits personally to being a counselor. And because that is the purpose, I believe that must be an individual decision.

I don't believe that we can impose a requirement that people become a counselor in areas where they are not comfortable being a counselor. I've taken a public opinion on this in the past because I was challenged about why this office would not be a Safe Zone.

MJ: Why isn't your office a Safe Zone?

CC: We cannot meet the requirements. We cannot commit to having a counselor here who can provide the kind of advice and counsel that a student coming to a Safe Zone is seeking. So I'm driven by the purpose of the project and whether or not an office can truly serve that purpose. And I don't believe you can unless you're ready to make that personal commitment to being available and being the counselor. I'm using that not in the sense of a professional degree, but just knowing enough about the issues.

---

United Christian Ministries
Progressive - Spiritual - Personal - Welcoming - Affirming
Dolores Noll, GLBT Intern

Providing a variety of opportunities to help you connect with God:
“Celebration!” Student Service and lunch, Sundays, 1 p.m.
“Lunch Brunch” Tuesdays, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
“Midway” Wednesdays, 9 p.m.
“SpiritWhisper” every week and MORE!

673-5687 UCM@kent.edu
Housed at Kent United Methodist Church, across from Music & Speech and BP

Welcome AJ: Connected with and formed by:
United Church of Christ, Christian (Disciples of Christ), Episcopal, Presbyterian, United Methodist, American Baptist, Brethren, Friends (Quakers)
Continued from page 7

Though LGBU still felt the effects of the AIDS epidemic during the first part of the decade, new treatments began to move the disease out of the spotlight. LGBU did consider affiliating themselves with Queer Nation, a radical activist group born out of the AIDS epidemic.

Van Sant says LGBU felt that working with Queer Nation would take away from the other two missions the organization had tried to maintain.

“If they became a Queer Nation group, they would be primarily be doing activism, and that would have take away from the social and support aspects of the organization,” Van Sant says.

LGBU adopted its own version of the Safe Zone program. This program provided students with an easy way to identify gay-supportive faculty. Participants were given a sign to hang on their door, and training in LGBT issues.

While the Safe Zone program helped with the support mission, and the speakers’ bureaus and other activist activities took care of the political mission, the general meetings tended to take a more social role. Though the standard business issues were still addressed, the detail work was done in committee. The actual meetings of the organizations revolved around building the community and discussing relevant issues.

Beginning in the spring of 1999, a few members of LGBU began to work to bring another organization to campus. They formed an interest group that would become a colony, and eventually a full chapter, of Delta Lambda Phi, the national fraternity for gay, bisexual, and progressive men.

The group became the Alpha Psi chapter of the fraternity in April 2001. Since receiving their charter, they have begun interacting with the rest of the Greek community, and plan on eventually becoming full members of the Inter-Fraternity Council.

In April 2000, the LGBU changed its name yet another time and the group became known as PRIDE! Kent. The name change came about because of the expanding diversity of the community. Rather than add more words to accommodate the sexual minorities the group represented, they decided to remove the acronym altogether.

Other organizations for the LGBT community have also appeared on campus over the past 30 years. In the early years of KGLF, a group separated themselves from the organization and became the Kent Gay Activists Alliance.

Later, a group calling itself BAGEL was formed to be a LGBT organization for graduate students. Other attempts to start an LGBT alumni association have also met with failure.

Today, PRIDE! Kent continues to work for change. Though other groups have come and gone, KGLF and all of its incarnations have lasted more than 30 years at Kent State as the primary organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning students.

Van Sant says that although the groups’ membership have changed, the mission of on-campus LGBT groups is the same.

“It’s still not a discrimination-free campus,” Van Sant says. “We still have [residence hall] doors being marked or carved with the words ‘fag’ or ‘faggot.’”

Note: All facts and dates are from the archives of the Daily Kent Stater.
Browse, search, look, email and chat all you want absolutely free.

HOT GUY LOOKING FOR FRIENDS, A DATE OR JUST LOADS OF FUN
(meet me on www.QGuys.com)

Free GOLD membership for 3 months only with this promo code: KENT
(Offer valid for new members only)
## LGBT Studies Minor

*One of only a dozen in the country*

### Academic Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;S 22069</td>
<td>Introduction to LGBT Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;S 30196</td>
<td>Individual Investigation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Block A - Select 3 courses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCLS 30376</td>
<td>The Novels of Pierre Loti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 32565</td>
<td>Sociology of Gays and Lesbians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA 41114</td>
<td>Gay and Lesbian Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;S 40095**</td>
<td>Special Topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 42315</td>
<td>Sociology of Changing Gender Roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Development of Gender Role and Identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Block B - Select 2 courses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMST 10001</td>
<td>Introduction to American Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTH 48830</td>
<td>Human Behavioral Ecology and Evolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HED 32544</td>
<td>Human Sexuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HED 47070</td>
<td>AIDS: Issues, Education and Prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUS 27311</td>
<td>Victimology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POL 40820</td>
<td>Politics of Social Movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 22778</td>
<td>Social Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 32560</td>
<td>Family and Other Intimate Lifestyles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 32570</td>
<td>Inequality in Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 42359</td>
<td>Social Movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 42400</td>
<td>Self and Identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minimum cumulative 2.00 GPA required.
Any Block A course can be used to fill the Block B requirement.

---

**Enroll in A&S Intro to LGBT Studies this spring!**
You say “religion.”
We say “tolerance.”

Kent NeoPagan Coalition
meetings Tuesdays 8:30pm in the KSC
www.kNPC.org  330-672-3767

Make a stand against the
ordinary... start a

RE VOLUTION
-Sophisticated-Eclectic-Inviting-
Nightclub-Lounge-Billiards

We proudly support Fusion in it's
efforts to promote and encourage
diversity

117 east market street  akron, ohio 44308  330.374.7830
www.REvolutionDotCom.

Find what you're
looking for

- Personals
- Nightlife
- Latest News
- Movies
- Political Action
- Web Directory

http://www.gayapolis.com/fusion

gayapolis
Your Hometown on the Internet
Fusion magazine’s Mission Statement:

The chosen title of the magazine best describes the magazine’s purpose. According to Webster’s Dictionary, “fusion is a merging of diverse elements into a unified whole.”

The founding editors believe that the university community is composed of people with varying sexual identities constantly interacting in classrooms, dorms, or other settings. Fusion will address sexual minority issues within the general university population. The magazine will strive to unify people of different backgrounds through education and awareness.