Winter 2008

Fusion Winter 2008

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[L to R] Laura Fry, Krystle Klink, Tim Magaw, Christina Stavale, Bryan Wroten, Adam Griffiths
The founding editors believe that the university community is composed of people with varying sexual identities who are constantly interacting in classrooms, dorms and other settings.

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Fusion Magazine thanks the Gay Community Endowment Fund of the Akron Community Foundation for its participation in funding this project.
We wanted to do something different this time around. As you might have noticed, or didn’t if our assumptions are correct, we didn’t publish last fall. What you are reading now is the new Winter issue of Fusion.

We held the publication because we wanted to give you a chance to read this. Student Media publications usually come out at the end of the semester, competing with each other and finals week for your attention. By waiting until the beginning of the spring semester, we thought you may actually have a chance to read this.

This is my second time editing this magazine. It is my last time editing this magazine. Other than the Daily Kent Stater, this is the only other Student Media publication I’ve worked for. The focus of this magazine, its edge, its potential for help — that’s what drew me in and kept me here.

I’m constantly impressed by the work of the writers, photographers, editors and designers working for this magazine. I want to thank them all for their hard work and dedication to this magazine. Without them, Fusion would not exist.
It’s all about starting a discussion. So many of the problems in our world are caused by a lack of communication and understanding. That’s why I got involved with student media in the first place, and particularly Fusion.

Chances are when you saw the cover of this issue, you felt compelled to pick it up. You felt some sort of emotion: interest, confusion or maybe even disgust. But whatever your feelings, it got you thinking about something — and that’s the point.

The issues discussed in Fusion aren’t some of the most talked about in campus publications. Often times, we get caught up in the run-of-the-mill campus stories on tuition increases or underage drinking.

But Fusion goes beyond that. Inside you’ll find stories ranging from the cover story on the gay porn industry to some of the presidential candidates’ views on LGBT rights. Obviously, unlike other student publications, Fusion’s mission is slightly more focused.

The founding editors called for the magazine to unify people of different backgrounds through education and awareness. We’re not asking that once the magazine’s been read, we’ll all be transported to a utopian society blossoming with acceptance. But it will at least get people talking. And if we’re not communicating, we’re all failing in this little experiment we call democracy.
FINDING A CURE FOR SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Numerous medical and psychological organizations have agreed homosexuality is not a mental disorder, but some groups continue to counsel men and women to change their sexuality as harmless would lead her parents to take severe action.

“My parents used my camera, and came up to me, and asked if I had something to tell them,” Werstler says. Before she knew it, Werstler was forced to come out as a lesbian to her parents, who were in extreme denial about her sexual orientation.

Her parents took her out of school for a week and said she was just going through a phase.

After she gave them some time to cool down, Werstler returned to school and her girlfriend.

Little did she know on one of her visits home, she would get an unpleasant...

Story by Marchaé Grair

When Amy Werstler’s parents found pictures of her kissing her ex-girlfriend on her digital camera, they were less than thrilled.

Wrestler had just started her first year at The University of Akron. She did not know a picture she deemed
surprise.

Her parents made her an appointment with a psychologist to help change her sexual orientation.

The Psychological Battle

The origin of homosexual behavior has been at the heart of controversial debates since the beginning of the gay liberation movement. Many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people find themselves in the middle of a whirlwind of support or disdain.

Conservatives and religious activists want to heal people from what they believe is mental illness or moral impurity. Psychologists and political leftists maintain that homosexuality is completely natural and healthy.

Sheethla Reddy, assistant clinic director at the Psychological Clinic at Kent State, thinks counseling to change sexual orientation is unethical.

"Generally, most psychologists, as members of the American Psychological Association, have taken a stance that nothing should be done to change sexual orientation," Reddy says.

"Homosexuality used to be seen as something that was dysfunctional," she says. "People who were homosexual were considered to have psychological disorders. Nowadays, it’s something that is completely normal. We generally wouldn’t counsel anyone to change sexual orientation.”

Professional organizations including the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association, the National Association of Social Workers, and the American Psychiatric Association agree homosexuality is not a mental health issue, according to the American Psychiatric Association’s Web site, www.psych.org.

Gay rights supporters typically believe “reparative therapy,” or counseling to change sexual orientation, only works if a person is willing to deny who they really are.

“I believe that you’re born gay,” Werstler says. “You can’t cure something that you’re born with.”

Werstler felt especially pressured to change her behavior in her small hometown of North Canton.

“If people change their minds about being gay, it’s usually because they can’t cope with it,” Werstler says. “In really conservative towns, parents force their kids to go to counseling, and their kids believe they can’t be gay anymore. That bothers me.”

The Moral Battle

Many who praise reparative therapy are associated with the religious right or are politically conservative.

Exodus International, a non-denominational Christian group, is one of the pioneers in reparative therapy. It is the “largest Christian referral and information network dealing with homosexual issues in the world,” according to the group’s Web site, www.exodus-international.org.

More than 150 ministries in 17 countries are part of the Exodus network.

The group offers ministers, counselors, and live-in experiences to those who want to change their sexual orientation.

Professional Counselor Jim Phelan serves the Exodus network out of his office in Columbus. Phelan’s patients want to change their sexual orientation.

“They seek to find a solution to their homosexuality so they can live according to their ideal and desire for heterosexuality and their belief in God’s desire for them,” he says. “That’s why they usually choose a Christian therapist trained in reparative therapy.”

Phelan shares the common
STRIPPERS
Tuesdays & Thursdays
10 p.m. til close

PIANO BAR
Wednesdays & Fridays
9 p.m. til close

THEME PARTIES
every Saturday
with live DJs on
Fridays & Saturdays

DRAG SHOWS
Sundays & Tuesdays
at midnight
Karaoke on Friday

ADAMS STREET

MONDAY–SATURDAY
4:30 p.m. til 2:30 a.m.

SUNDAY
4 p.m. til 2:30 a.m.
belief that homosexuality evolves at a young age; but he credits the behavior to developmental disorders. Many in the LGBT community have had unhealthy relationships to determine their sexual orientation, according to Phelan.

“For many men, developmental issues involve same sex peer wounds, and sexual abuse,” Phelan says. “Sexual abuse is common as boys who were not close to their fathers were therefore unprotected and often vulnerable for older males to sexually take advantage of them.”

“For many females who have been sexually abused by men, they vow to not trust them, therefore lesbianism seemingly, in their minds, becomes their only option,” Phelan says. Until the sexual abuse is addressed and healed, they can not relinquish their homosexuality.”

Opponents of reparative activists believe such therapy is based on scaring one from his or her true identity.

The Parents Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) aim to help people deal with issues concerning their sexual orientation.

Sharon Groh-Wargo, PFLAG Cleveland president, says many people come seeking reconciliation with their religion and their sexual orientation.

“There are many open accepting religious groups, but unfortunately, many religious groups read their interpretation of the Bible as such that [homosexuality] is unacceptable,” she says. “I’m not a Biblical scholar, but the way you interpret the Bible is dependent on the education you have. It’s a very narrow view if you believe in God but don’t understand history.”

A Support System

Both Groh-Wargo and Reddy believe counseling for sexual orientation is only healthy if it aims to promote acceptance.

“Counseling that helps you come out to yourself and love yourself can be helpful,” Groh-Wargo said.

“There are many good psychologists and social workers that help you become who you are to yourself.”

“I think it would have a negative outcome on their self-worth if you tried to convince (LGBT people) what they are doing is wrong,” Reddy says. She believes this type of interference from family or friends can lead to self-esteem problems.

Werstler wishes her family would have handled her coming out differently. Three years after coming out, she still identifies as a lesbian, and is glad she never went to the surprise counseling session. Werstler was 18 when her parents wanted her to seek counseling and refused to go to the appointment. Her parents are learning to deal with her identity.

“My mom is better than my dad, but anything past asking me how me and my girlfriend are doing seems to be a struggle,” Werstler says. “I try to talk to her, but she doesn’t really listen.”

She has never sought counseling for anything concerning her sexual orientation and still hopes for the day her family will accept her life as much more than “just a phase.”
THE FOLLOWING UNIVERSITIES OFFER UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES IN LGBT-RELATED TOPICS:

The University of Chicago (Chicago):
Major and minor offered in Gender Studies
http://genderstudies.uchicago.edu/
Wesleyan University (Middletown, Conn.):
Major offered in Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies
http://www.wesleyan.edu/acaf/dept.html

Hobart and William Smith Colleges (Geneva, N.Y.):
Major offered in Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Studies
http://www.hws.edu/academics/programs/mandm/gayles.asp

Yale University (New Haven, Conn.):
Major offered in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, with a concentration available in LGBT studies
http://www.yale.edu/lesbiangay/Pages/Academic/LGStudies.html

THE FOLLOWING OFFER GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES IN SIMILAR TOPICS:

San Francisco State University (San Francisco):
Master of Arts offered in Human Sexuality Studies
http://www.sfsu.edu/~bulletin/current/programs/humsexst.htm#hmsxma

Yale University:
Offers opportunities to take LGBT studies classes, with admittance to other graduate programs within the university
http://www.yale.edu/lesbiangay/homepage.html
Winner of Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence Region Four Awards:

2003  |  **Honorable Mention:** Best Student Magazine
       | Published once a year

Third Place: Feature Photography, Pat Jarrett, “My (Gay) Fraternity Life”

Second Place: Best Online Magazine
http://fusion.kent.edu

First Place: Photo Illustration, Scott R. Galvin, “Silent Shadows” (Cover Story)

2005  |  **First Place:** Best Student Magazine
       | (published more than once a year)

First Place: Best All-Around Online Student Magazine

2006  |  **First Place:** Photo Illustration,
       | Pat Jarrett, “It Was All a Blur”

2007  |  **First Place:** Best Student Magazine
A Message from the President

Dear Students,

As we launch a new semester, I want to thank you for your many contributions to Kent State’s growing, positive momentum — from winning prestigious scholarships to winning Golden Flash games; from serving as university ambassadors through your work as volunteers and interns, to serving as the conscience of our community by standing up against racism and other forms of intolerance.

A major focus of my presidency continues to be building an environment that supports the success of all students. That means providing you with high-quality academic programs and services; keeping our campuses safe; and working to make every member of our community feel welcome, included and respected. Kent State’s leadership team and I are working diligently on all these fronts. But when it comes to creating an environment in which all students feel free to express their views and to simply “be,” each of you has a critical role to play.

The majority of Kent State community members understand how valuable — and how wonderful — it is that our university comprises a rich diversity of people with a multitude of experiences, talents and beliefs. Yet I want to acknowledge the continuing need to use this understanding to become the best university we can be. As we begin this new year, I ask you and the entire university community to join me in these resolutions: Let’s make a conscious effort to treat everyone with kindness at best and civility at the very least. And let’s support the rights of others in word and deed. Giving lip service to the Golden Rule is one thing. Let’s put it into action every day.

Everyone knows what happens to most resolutions. But knowing the caliber and character of our community — including an accomplished and caring student body — I look forward to significant progress in building a more welcoming and inclusive environment in the months ahead.

In the meantime, I wish you success in completing the semester, and a happy and healthy 2008.

Lester A. Lefton

Lester A. Lefton
President
How to deal:

A friend’s coming out

Story by
Christina Stavale
When freshman Brandon Smith came out, he says his friends’ support meant a lot to him. And when one of his friends came out to him, their mutual support brought them closer together.

For others who may have a friend come out to them, Smith encourages them to give their full support and not let it change anything.

“For individuals coming out, it can be a stressful situation,” she says.

When people come out, they’ve often taken some time to realize their sexual orientation, and they’ve thought long and hard about what they are going to say to friends, family or a significant other when telling them, she says.

But just listening to a person tell his or her story, for example, “saying, ‘We’re still friends — that doesn’t change our relationship,’” can really help comfort the person, Reddy says.

Feeling disappointment because that person may not grow up to raise a traditional family is not uncommon.

“It’s pretty normal to have expectations,” she says. “It’s normal to feel angry, sad or depressed. It doesn’t mean that you’re a bad person.”

If a person does feel negative emotions associated with someone close to them coming out, she suggests talking to others who may have been through the same thing.

When friends and family respond negatively to someone coming out, Reddy says the most common consequence is depression. It may also cause anxiety, and sometimes, even suicide.

“(Suicide) is common enough when people feel rejected,” she says. “We’re not surprised when we see that happen.”

But even when they feel accepted by their group of friends, Reddy says the individual’s social circle may change a bit, to include others who are also lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

“My social circle got bigger,” Smith says. It expanded, he says, to include more people in the LGBT community, but he remained friends with the others.

Reddy says anyone who needs someone to talk to about a friend coming out, or coming out themselves, can call the Psychological Clinic at (330) 672-2372.
The instructions were simple enough: **Screw two people.**

Brandon Hankey, who attended Kent State for one semester last year, made his debut into the world of gay adult entertainment in front of about 80 men of ages ranging from 18 to 70 at a Florida hotel. It was a frat party film, and this scene, his first and the first of actual hardcore sex for the video, was shot outside around the pool.

Brandon Hankey, who's 19, says he's participated in shoots across the country that have contributed to 23 DVDs and more than 45 Web sites.

Whether twinks like Hankey suit your fancy when you unzip and log on to get off, it’s an undeniable fact that people watch adult entertainment. More than 80 people visit a new Web site each minute, according to the 2006 Adult Entertainment in America: A State of the Industry Report released by the Adult Video Network and sponsored by the Free Speech Coalition.

But all those bodies have faces. Hankey’s penis has a daily life, and each model that blows his load on camera for the world to see has

“**I thought it’d be fun to do... I knew it was safe sex, and I’d be getting paid for it.**”

–Brandon Hankey

“I thought it’d be fun to do,” says Hankey, who’s 19. “I knew it was safe sex, and I’d be getting paid for it.”

When it came time to perform for his first shoot, anxiety was warranted. The other actors were watching. His agent was watching. The random men around him were watching.

That hesitation quickly wore off. So fast that since February, Hankey’s done it again almost 100 times, he estimates.

Story by Adam Griffiths
It’s a job. They’re providing a service for very demanding consumers who collectively spend more than $12 billion each year on adult entertainment.

Some do it for the money. Some do it for the fame. Some do it simply because it’s always been something they’ve wanted to try.

Scott Branson, a junior at Indiana University, wanted a little bit of all three. In the second semester of his freshman year, a friend from high school who was already working in the adult entertainment industry suggested they do modeling together.

“I thought about it like we all do when we watch porn and are like, ‘Damn, I want to do it,’ but really didn’t know I could,” Branson says in an online interview.

Hankey also began to consider adult modeling for the first time when a friend who had modeled mentioned the money he made. Brent Longway, a junior at South Plains College in Texas, was contacted directly by a scout from an online adult entertainment company.

From this point on, the stories of all three men follow a parallel path. After working out the logistics of their first video shoots with their respective companies, each boarded a plane to various parts of the country — Branson to Kansas City, Hankey to Fort Lauderdale and Longway to Las Vegas.

Longway says he wasn’t too nervous before his first shoot, but Hankey and Branson both admitted to attending a few industry conventions, no one involved had any filming or adult entertainment experience.

Toby and his partner began their process June 2006. He grew up in Texas, and after attending the California Culinary Academy, he spent four years in the Marine Corps. Afterwards, he moved to Los Angeles, where he works as a hotel doorman.

“We found out that a friend had started doing gay for pay (straight men that perform in gay adult entertainment),” Toby says. “He had told us about different things going on in the business, and it came across as a very shady business.”

Sherman admits that the first thing he and his partner did was hire a “very good lawyer” to ensure everything they were doing was by the books. Since the 2004 update to the 1988 Child Protection and Obscenity Enforcement Act, which was the first legislation to require records of models’ ages, seemingly anyone who touched sexually explicit content in any medium was required to keep strict proof of age records for all mod-
some hesitations.

“It was just nerves about leaving my comfort zone for something new, meeting new people, doing something totally random, not knowing what was the other end,” Branson says. “After a certain point, (turning back) just wasn’t in my mind anymore. I wanted to do it. I said I would do it, and I did.”

The weekend of Branson’s shoot, there were eight models at the chain hotel on the outskirts of Kansas City. The producers had rented a suite and scheduled three days full of scenes.

“The hotel, of course, didn’t know,” Branson adds.

Longway filmed his first scene in a Las Vegas bathroom, “It was nothing like I thought it would be,” he says. “You have to stop and reposition, get different angles. It’s kind of like fake fucking for three hours — fun, but exhausting. I’m always sore after a scene.

So how is it different from real sex?

“Well in real sex, you don’t have to fake it, and it doesn’t last nearly as long,” he explains.

For Hankey, performing was a lot more logistical. He says it took about an hour to shoot a scene, 40 minutes for sex and the rest for foreplay.

“You pretty much follow what they tell you,” he says. “They’ll stop and take breaks. They’ll tell you what they want. ‘I want this position. I need 10 minutes in this position. I want 10 more minutes in that position.’"

But Branson says doing porn is not like a real-life hook-up.

“It’s sex, but it’s totally different,” he says. “I mean, there is an ungodly amount of pressure, especially to cum. Most producers stipulate first thing: no cum, no cash. That right there, for some of the guys, is too much pressure. Poor guys couldn’t even get hard, but the wonder pill is always handy.”

He’s talking, of course, about Viagra, which both he and Longway admit to having used on set. The producers, they say, provided it.
“I only used Viagra once,” Branson says. “I hated it and didn’t need it. Gave me a headache. And, no, I didn’t work with guys that drugged up their boys and took total advantage of them.”

Longway says staying hard is a mental thing for him, and it’s more difficult to make it through a shoot when he doesn’t take some kind of enhancement drug for it. He says Cialis, an alternative to the more popular Viagra, works better for him. While Viagra makes him blush, Cialis increases his ability to perform longer, but over time, though, he’s gotten better at performing without medication.

“I could cum faster, stay harder longer,” Longway says. “I got more professional, knew what I was doing.”

All of Branson, Hankey and Longway’s first shoots lasted anywhere from three to five days. Afterward, they were paid and sent home.

Toby says he and his partner set out “to bring kind of the human aspect back to (porn), if it ever was in it.”

“We set rules going in,” he says. “We were never going to have any kind of sexual contact with our talent. We run the camera. We do the interviews. We make the decision on whom we shoot with. We will never touch the talent. There’s a line that we feel is crossed if that happens.”

To find their first models, Toby and Sherman both posted ads on Web sites such as MySpace and Craigslist. What they want are twinks: 18- to 25-year-olds who are slim, in-shape, with nice bodies and abs, with a skater, surfer, jock or swimmer type of physique.

Sherman did the first shoot for CollegeDudes247 in his living room.

“I think I was more nervous than he was,” Sherman says. “I’m not someone who’s come from a very kinky scene. In my personal life, I’m not one to have strangers over like that. It was...
to their other jobs. Longway waits tables at Chili’s, Hankey cuts hair and Branson works at a major clothing retailer at his local mall.

“If they’re not around it, they’re not going to really understand it.” —Brandon Hankey

So how much is three days of sex worth? Branson says adult models aren’t "whores" and to label them as such is misinterpreting his work.

“It’s not the sex I got paid for,” he says. “I got paid for me being the one having sex. If you subtracted the sex, it was just some pictures of me. What I’m getting paid for is my image, and not only am I paid for my image, but my performance as well. It’s just a niche, kind of like exercise videos.”

When he began to seriously consider modeling, Branson was dating someone who threatened to break up with him if he got into the industry.

Longway and Hankey say they’ve also felt misunderstood for their modeling. Hankey’s parents know he’s gay, but he says he doesn’t "shove (his) lifestyle in their face" and hasn’t told them about his modeling. The teenager’s two blue star tattoos placed above his slim, golden brown hips on opposite sides of his pelvis have come to define him in his now wide range of adult entertainment work.

“I think people haven’t experienced it,” he says. “If they’re not around it, they’re not going to really understand it. It’s fun. Everyone enjoys sex. You get paid, and gay porn is pretty well paid. You get to meet a lot of people. You have fans.”

But all three models don’t look at porn the same way they did before they became involved in the industry. It’s not simply sex for the sake of it. It’s angles...
and shadows and takes and lighting. It’s not getting off at the same time as the model on screen. It’s being the model onscreen and getting off when you’re told to get off.

Hankey, who was never a big fan of porn, says he began watching it only when he became interested in doing it. Longway says he analyzes porn when he watches it now. “I’m like, ‘They’re not really fucking,’ or, ‘He’s not hard. They cut there,’” Longway says. “Now I like to watch straight porn.”

Hankey says he may only stay in the industry until he’s 30, but for now, he’s not changing a thing. “It’s fun for me to fly out to L.A. for the weekend and come back with a couple thousand dollars.”

a pretty simple jerk-off video. I think he didn’t cum, so he came back the next day for the cum shot.”

Toby and his partner also went in cold. The rented a hotel room, set up a shoot date and scheduled a day full of models. The first model they met had previous experience, so they thought he would know what to do. After introducing themselves, the model took about an hour and half to complete the scene.

Both Sherman and Toby says most models are understandably uneasy at the beginning but begin to loosen up throughout the shoot.

“I know it’s got to be nerve wracking to be in front of two guys with a camera jerking off,” Toby says. “It was difficult to meet somebody and, five minutes later, they were stripping down.”

CollegeDudes247 features both solo and action scenes, and Sherman says the scenes he films with one model alone can be the most apprehensive. Thirty percent of his models aren’t even gay, he says, which, depending on the model, can be a catch-up. Nervousness can be a good thing, though, he said.

Sherman says he’s heard stories from models in college about being ostracized when revealing their work. He tells the story of a model that mentioned his adult work while on a date. The guy never called him back. Sherman points out that people who perform in adult entertainment are doing just that — performing. They aren’t prostitutes, and they don’t have morals any looser than many of the people who consume the product he produces.

“People are pretty rude and hypocritical,” Sherman says. “It’s always been shocking to me that people in the gay community who are consumers of adult entertainment are often very unaccepting of adult performers.”

And he contends that it’s just like any other industry.

“It’s not nearly as sleazy as I thought parts of it must be,” he says. “It’s a $10 billion entertainment industry. When you go to conventions, there are people in suits. They’re very professional people who go to work from nine to five that have a family and kids. If it weren’t for the random model walking around in a bikini, it’s just like any other convention.”
This time, four years ago, it was presidential election season and the battle was on for voters. Gay marriage became the phrase exiting everyone’s lips and dominating nightly newscasts.

And rightfully so.

Research from 2006 by the Pew Forum shows that although 56 percent of Americans oppose gay marriage, “those with a high level of religious commitment oppose it by a substantially wider margin.”

Jason MacDonald, an assistant professor of political science who specializes in the presidency, says that margin may be important to campaigns as the 2008 election season heats up.

The publicity of opposing gay marriage became a highlight for the Republicans during the last presidential election, perhaps because it would draw more voters from John Kerry, who supported civil unions, MacDonald says.

“People who are tolerant of an issue typically don’t vote specifically on that issue,” he says, depending on the party nominees, they may play on this issue salience once more.

But will that happen again? It’s hard to tell. “Political science is a lot like meteorology,” MacDonald says. “A meteorologist can’t tell you if it’s going to rain in November, as we can’t really predict who will be president.”

But as the Iraq War, health care and immigration overshadow issues of LGBT civil rights in the current debates and coverage, it’s hard to wade through the jargon to see where the leading candidates stand on this issue.

We thought we’d help.

Fusion compiled a list of highlights from the major presidential campaigns’ stances regarding gay rights. Happy voting!

– Jackie Mantey
Hillary Rodham Clinton
Senator from New York

You may know her for:
Her attempts to revise America’s health care program while her husband, Bill Clinton, was president.

Past record regarding gay rights:
• During Bill’s administration, Hillary supported the Defense of Marriage Act, which stopped federal acknowledgment of gay marriage.
• While serving in the Senate, she opposed amending the Constitution to ban gay marriage.

What she is saying now:
• Clinton opposes same-sex marriage but supports civil unions. Despite this stance, Clinton’s campaign cites prominent support from the LGBT community.

John Edwards
Former Director for the Center on Poverty and a trial lawyer

You may know him tor:
His candidacy as vice president for John Kerry during the 2004 election.

Past record regarding gay rights:
• While running on the presidential ticket with Kerry, Edwards said he opposed gay marriage but supported civil unions, adding that the decision should be left up to the state.

What he is saying now:
• Edwards still holds the same beliefs and supports expanding the federal Hate Crimes Act to encompass sexual orientation.
• He supports the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act.
Barack Obama
Senator from Illinois

You may know him for:
His likability and being the first black candidate to run for president since Jesse Jackson.

Past record regarding gay rights:
• As an Illinois Senator, Obama passed legislation making hate crimes and conspiracy to commit the crimes illegal.
• Obama also supported legislation in the state’s senate to stop sexual orientation discrimination in housing and public accommodation.

What he is saying now:
• He supports civil unions.
• Obama also wants to repeal the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy.

Bill Richardson
Governor of New Mexico

You may know him for:
His work as the 21st United States Ambassador to the United Nations and his popularity with Hispanic voters.

Past record regarding gay rights:
• Richardson made New Mexico history when he passed the state’s first hate crime law and issued an executive order to make health insurance and benefits available to the domestic partners of state employees.
• He extended civil rights to protect those with different sexual orientations and gender identity.

What he is saying now:
• While he opposes gay marriage, he says he would support legislation for national civil unions.
John McCain
Senator from Arizona

You may know him for:
• Being a Vietnam POW veteran and his work on the failed immigration bill from this past summer.

Past record regarding gay rights:
• McCain opposed a federal constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage.
• However, in Arizona he endorsed a ballot initiative that limited marriage to heterosexual relationships.

What he is saying now:
• He believes marriage should be between a man and a woman and think states should be allowed to regulate marriage laws.

Mitt Romney
Former Massachusetts Governor

You may know him for:
• The media hype of his Mormon faith.

Past record regarding gay rights:
• As governor, he opposed the decision by the state’s Supreme Judicial Court to allow same-sex marriage.
• Romney has also supported domestic partner benefits.

What he is saying now:
• He believes marriage should be between a man and a woman, but similar to McCain, Romney says marriage laws should be up to the states.
• He has been quoted as saying “all children deserve a mother and a father.”
Mike Huckabee
Former Arkansas Governor

You may know him for:
Being that guy who lost a lot of weight and who could or could not be obsessed with Chuck Norris

Past record regarding gay rights:
Huckabee has stood staunchly against gay marriage and civil unions, garnering him big vote turnout from the evangelical base.
Throughout the course of his presidential bid, it has been more than apparent how Huckabee feels about this issue. Just take what he said in a recent interview with GQ magazine:
“I don’t think the issue’s about being against gay marriage. It’s about being for traditional marriage and articulating the reason that’s important. You have to have a basic family structure. There’s never been a civilization that has rewritten what marriage and family means and survived.”

What he is saying now:
All of the above

Rudolph (Rudy) Giuliani
Lawyer and former Mayor of New York City

You may know him for:
His rise to fame as mayor during the September 11 attacks.

Past record regarding gay rights:
• While a mayor, he signed legislation that recognized domestic partnerships.
• Despite his belief that marriage should be between a man and a woman, Giuliani is noted by many for his frequent support of gay rights and for having lived with a gay couple during his divorce.

What he is saying now:
• He opposes gay marriage but does not support a federal amendment banning it.

SOURCES: The Pew Forum; Individual candidates’ Web sites.
For an androgynous person, there’s no distinction between gender-specific roles. "There’s a spectrum of gender roles," Merryman says. "Feminine is one of those far ends of the spectrum, and masculine is another one of those ends. Androgyny is in the middle. It isn’t masculine or feminine — it’s a mixture of both."

Androgyny deals nothing with biological sex and nothing with sexual orientation, says Molly Merryman, associate professor of justice studies and an affiliate of the women’s studies and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender studies programs. Instead, it deals with gender recognition and gender roles.

Phil Johnson sees being androgynous as "the best of both worlds."

The 40-year-old business administration major was born male, but identifies with both male and female gender characteristics. This, he says, is typical of someone like him.

"For an androgynous person, there’s no distinction between gender-specific traits," he says.

There is not a direct correlation between people who are androgynous and people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

"Sexual orientation is very distinct and separate from gender identity," she says. "You have gay men and lesbian women that are anywhere on the spectrum, from masculine to androgynous to feminine."

"Someone who is straight can be androgynous. They’re not connected in a behavioral way at all."

In Johnson’s case, he says he tries to apply whichever traits are necessary or more positive in a particular situation. He uses the typically feminine trait of sensitivity and masculine trait of being assertive as an example.

"I don’t necessarily weigh one gender more important than the other," he says. "Being sensitive and assertive go hand in hand."

Johnson says he first real-
He first learned of androgyny and considered the possibility in 2003 when he took a psychology course and the class was discussing gender roles. He found he couldn’t strongly connect to one gender or the other.

He was by myself a lot... I couldn’t get along with the guys’ group, and I couldn’t get into the girls’. —Phil Johnson

“I cried at my grandfather’s funeral,” Johnson says. “My dad choked (his tears) back.”

It was at the age of about 18 when he first became acquainted with the LGBT community, when he met a friend who was gay. He says he was immediately accepting of his friend’s lifestyle, and he wondered how many other people in the world were similar.

So he considered some possibilities. For a while, he says, he thought he could be gay or transgender. But he did not feel like a woman, and for the time being, his sexual preference was, and still is, female.

“All this time, I knew I identified with both genders,” he says.

It wasn’t until 2006 when he realized he was androgynous.

When he told his wife of 14 years, he says she first asked him, “Does that mean you’re going to be cheating with a man someday?”

“No,” he replied. “It means you’ve found a person who’s going to stand up for you, but also a person that’s not going to run away when you start throwing things around the house.”

The two are still married but are now more of best friends than they are lovers. Johnson says he does not think he would want to be in another romantic relationship and does not know whether he would consider a same-sex relationship if he ever did get back into the dating realm.

While he was struggling to find his identity, Johnson says there were a lot of times when he felt alone.

“I was by myself a lot,” he says. “I couldn’t get along with the guys’ group, and I couldn’t get into the girls’.”

While Johnson says he can relate more to the LGBT community’s mindset than the rest of the world’s, he considers androgynous people to be the “ghosts of the LGBT community.”

“We’re not as well-known,” he says. “They talk about androgyny, but to find someone representing that, it’s not as easy.”

But now that he understands who he is, things are different — and better, he says.

“It’s not about being one of the guys or one of the girls,” he says. “I can be myself.”

And because he knows who he is, he doesn’t have to spend time wondering.

“I’ve gotten to the point now where I don’t really think about it as much as I used to,” he says. “How many people can say, ‘I know who I am?’”

express.”
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