

Tunnel gets a new face

RALEIGH — The Free Expression Tunnel at North Carolina State University has recently been given a fresh coat of white paint, with the exception of an area devoted to Marvin Malecha, dean of the College of Design, in a mural motif.

The Andy Warhol-inspired creation took seven hours to complete and entailed a stencil effect to create all of the necessary colors used.

The refresher to the Tunnel took place after an Oct. 12 defacing of the GLBT Center's "I am..." statements with derogatory terms to describe gays, said the school's *Technician*.

The Tunnel was in the public light in 2008 when messages of threat aimed at then President-elect Barak Obama were found there.

The main concern is the issue of freedom of speech. A staff news editorial stated, "While no one is suggesting the University shut down the Free Expression Tunnel, anyone who paints it must remember it is a privilege. For anyone who wants to paint the tunnel, do so with thought."

The university tries to provide a discrimination-free climate with healthy communications. But the reality of that may not be certain for everyone.

Jessica Moore, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the Department of Communication, has called for more tolerance on campus in order to become a stronger Wolfpack. She said, "We must demand an environment where everyone is personally and intellectually protected to participate in course dialogue." She wants LGBT faculty and staff to be afforded the same rights and benefits as those of the straight ones. At this time, she feels that the school's Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy and its efforts "fall considerably short." She does not see students free from intolerance either. An ROTC student was outed by his classmates and he was discharged and lost his scholarship.

—L.M.

National

Gay adoption now legal in Fla.

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida Attorney General Bill McCollum announced Oct. 22 that he would not appeal the landmark ruling by the Third District Court of Appeal striking down the state's anti-gay adoption ban as unconstitutional. Gov. Charlie Crist and the Florida Department of Children and Families had already announced that they would not appeal the decision. The ruling is binding on courts across the state.

In a statement, Kate Kendell, executive director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, said, "It is truly heartening that Florida's elected leaders have stepped up to the plate and finally agreed to put this offensive law to rest once and for all. We are thrilled that the Florida Department of Children and Families will never again have to waste its time rooting out 'homosexual' and bisexual people who apply to become adoptive parents — instead, it can now focus on making sure that children who desperately need homes can find the very best loving, devoted parents to adopt them. This is a great day for the state of Florida and for LGBT families everywhere."

—D.S.

Effort mobilizes 1000s of students

NEW YORK, N.Y. — Thousands of students from more than 1,000 middle and high schools across the country participated in GLSEN's

Ally Week Oct. 18-22 to identify, encourage and support allies in addressing anti-LGBT bullying in schools.

A student-led and student-created event, Ally Week is a way to build upon the unifying work of Gay-Straight Alliance student clubs by encouraging people to be allies against anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment in schools.

Students participate in a number of ways but usually encourage their peers to take the Ally Week pledge, which students and adults sign either through pledge cards in school or online at allyweek.org. The pledge reads:

I believe all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression deserve to feel safe and supported.

That means I pledge to:

Not use anti-LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) language or slurs.

Intervene, if I safely can, in situations where students are being harassed.

Support efforts to end bullying and harassment.

—D.S.

Lambda seeks to defend DP law

MADISON, Wisc. — In court papers filed earlier this month, Lambda Legal asked to intervene on behalf of Fair Wisconsin and five same-sex couples in a lawsuit brought by an anti-gay group attempting to strip away critical domestic partnership protections for same-sex couples and their families. This is the second time Wisconsin Family Action has asked a court to overturn the domestic partner law Gov. Jim Doyle signed last year. Domestic partnerships grant limited, but important legal protections to same-sex couples, including hospital visitation and family medical leave to care for a sick or injured partner.

Wisconsin Family Action says the domestic partnership law violates the anti-gay constitutional amendment passed in 2006 that bars marriage equality and recognition of any legal status that is "substantially similar" to marriage.

—D.S.

Global

LGBT youth expert touring China

CHINA — At press time, Dr. Caitlin Ryan, a leading researcher on acceptance of LGBT youth by their families, is presenting her research and new family support model in China. Her tour began Oct. 24 and continues through Nov. 5. She is speaking at various conferences, universities and community agencies on the importance of family acceptance for the well-being and health of LGBT youth and their families.

Dr. Ryan's itinerary includes presentations at Renmin University in Guangzhou and Beijing; a conference in Beijing for parents of LGBT children; meetings with Beijing's Anti-Domestic Violence Network and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); and a presentation at Hong Kong University, "The Critical Role of Families in Reducing Risk & Promoting Well-being for LGBT Youth & Young Adults."

Throughout her trip, Dr. Ryan, who is traveling with Shannon Minter, Legal Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and Luis Perelman, sexuality educator and founder of the Asociación Internacional de Familias por la Diversidad Sexual, has been posting her travel experiences on bilerico.com.

—D.S.



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Crowne Plaza, 201 S. McDowell St.
Time: Cash Bar Social/Heavy Hors d'oeuvres @ 5:30 pm
Program starts @ 6:45 pm
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Friday, November 12, 2010
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