

# Unity Wrap-Up

Notes from Director Trevor Hoppe

This year's conference boasted 120 registrants from 15 communities and 11 campuses in North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

"The 2004 Conference was very successful. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive due to a well-planned event that ran smoothly. The Conference is always a learning experience. I think that's been the most exciting aspect of planning the event the past two years. Each year we can expand and be a bit more innovative. Also important, for me, has been the tremendous appreciation and gratitude attendees have shown me for the work that I put into Unity. That's been especially true this year.

We've already begun planning the 2005 event. For 2005 we have lined up Suzanne Pharr, author of "Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism" and bisexual Asian-American performing artist Magdalen Hsu-Li. We encourage anyone who attended the 2004 event and has suggestions for 2005 to get in touch with us at [ncunity@unc.edu](mailto:ncunity@unc.edu). We also have a new website up ([www.unc.edu/glbtsa/unity](http://www.unc.edu/glbtsa/unity)) that has a great deal of information about past conferences and the upcoming 2005 event."

## "Burroughs" from page 5

submitted manuscripts in which he capitalized words like *chocolate cake* and *penis*, achieved a successful career in copy-writing for an advertiser.

Around this same time he began another dangerous relationship. This time his love was alcohol.

The addiction eventually reached an extreme; Burroughs could see his liver when standing in front of a mirror and put cologne on his tongue to hide the smell of alcohol. This portion of his life is chronicled in "Dry."

"After sleeping with or dating nearly every single guy in Manhattan, I decided to get sober," he said. "I also had the epiphany that I couldn't die until I tried to write."

Seven days and 150 pages later, Burroughs explained, he had written what would become his first novel, "Sellevision."

The rest of his discussions were mottled with explanations through similes - "Being gay is as normal as any Tuesday" or "Beating writer's block is like stretching for a bodybuilder."

The moral of his life story, which he hopes has been conveyed in his writing, is that you can get through anything no matter how hard it is.

In the question and answer portion of the lecture - his favorite part - an audience member asked the burning question: "Would you change anything in your life?"

"I don't regret any of it," he said. "All of those experiences made me stronger. I survived by adapting."

Audience members applauded at the end of the speech, discussing the different ways they relate to what Burroughs told in his stories. People always feel as if they know him after reading or hearing his tales, he said.


"I'm sure many members of the audience found his speech compelling and inspiring," said junior Eric Blue. "It reinforced the idea that with motivation and determination, you can ... become anything you want to be."

As Burroughs waved before stepping out for the book signing, you could see a gold band around his left ring finger - a symbol of personal commitment to his partner, Dennis. He and Dennis live together in Manhattan and plan to wed in Massachusetts as soon as they can.

"I am certain that marriage is a basic human right, something that should be available to every couple," Burroughs said.

Although you won't see him fighting

"Faith" from page 6 them as individuals and not simply as an objectified group. Rivero's own frustration at seeing her deeply devoted stepdaughter being unable to become a minister in the Methodist faith has reaffirmed her commitment to accepting LGBTIQ people. She hopes that everyone can be positively affected by knowing someone in their own lives who is LGBTIQ and by understanding their struggles.


Cook asked the panelists what message they had for LGBTIQ folks struggling with issues of faith. Father Phillip said, "You are a precious child of God. God loves you as God loves your enemy." 

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the issue in a courtroom, keep an eye on his battleground of choice: the page. It might appear in his next Details column or in a future book.

Burroughs' latest memoir, "Magical Thinking: True Stories," is his personal favorite. It includes tales ranging from a post-"Scissors" childhood to living the single life in New York. The book ends with the introduction of Dennis and the story of how he and Burroughs fall in love. It hits shelves Oct. 5 nationwide.

Burroughs left campus in a hurry to make his next speech but wishes he could have stayed for more of Celebration Week.

"There's much to celebrate," he said. "Not just this week but every week. True, there are challenges and there are mindsets that need to be reversed. But day in and day out, (people) can just be themselves. And they can love whom they choose. And they don't have to be afraid." 

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