

# Coming out loud and strong

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Holding someone's hand doesn't seem like much: such a simple token of affection can easily be taken for granted. Unless you, too, are a man. Then a pleasant stroll around the block becomes, for some, an exercise in caution.

Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Awareness and History month, occurring this October, is an effort performed across the world to help end homophobia, instill pride in gays, lesbians and bisexuals, and bring communities together. Guilford plays its own role in this global spectacle, lead by our student Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Alliance.

GLBA has a whole host of activities and events planned for this month, including poetry readings, lectures, a Halloween drag-theme, and the infamous Coming Out Day Ball, where you, your friends and loved ones can swap clothes and good times.

Begun eight years ago, GLBA has undergone several transformations, but has finally found a working identity. They hold a regular working meeting in the resource center located in Dana.

"The center . . . is a space to work, play, and communicate in without being afraid of homophobic attitudes. It's a confidential referral service for students who are questioning their sexuality or need information about AIDS or STD's," said Jenny Crane, the manager of the resource center, the secretary of GLBA.

"This is an issue very close to my heart," she continued. "I don't want my children to be taken away because of who I have sex with. I want my relationships to be valid." Crane, who has been "out" as a lesbian for three years, is unashamed of her orientation and wants everyone to know it, a sentiment shared by most of GLBA's leaders. "I'm out to every professor and administrator it comes to. If it comes up, I'm out, in every facet of my life," she affirmed.

"I'd like to see GLBA more active, somewhat political, somewhat activist. I'd also like to see more people concerned with gay rights," said Aimee Caron, the organization's president.

Not all of the members of GLBA are gay or bisexual, of course. There are many supportive, straight individuals involved in the club, including its treasurer, Jeremy Sebens. "I'm a sympathetic straight who has been involved since I was a kid. Its a question of unity for me," he said.

"Its because of the shit these people have to go through

that I'm involved. No decent person can sit back and watch it happen," added Chris Murry, another straight supporter.

One of the sources through which GLB hopes to gain more active supporters is the club newsletter, edited by Biz Harrison. "My dream is to have it become more like a newspaper. I hope that when people attend GLB month activities, they'll write stories for me," she expressed.

Jessie White, a sophomore from Philadelphia, is the first to hold a brand-new position in Senate, the gay, lesbian and bisexual representative.

"When I came to Guilford I was excited about the very strong queer community. But with a school this diverse, there are going to be people who anti-gay," she related.

"When I came to college I realized there are people here who need my help, who had questions and were late-bloomers. I see myself in Senate as being the voice for a community that doesn't always have the strength

to speak and bring GLB into the body of discussion on campus," White explained.

Being such a public figure for so controversial a group has its inherent problems, however. One night while she was out, someone set fire to a collage of articles on White's door, which created enough smoke to set off Binford's fire alarm. Fortunately such acts of hostility are rare at Guilford, but they attest to the presence of prejudice within our community.

"I think as a whole Guilford is supportive of gay, lesbian, and bisexual relationships, but there are still those opposed to homosexuals," stated Roy Jessup, a senior who is gay. Few of the members of GLBA are gay males: most are still in the closet.

While Guilford is supportive of its GLB community, there are some noticeable signs that they have yet to become, in the eyes of the administration, completely mainstream. Members in GLBA pointed to a significant lack of exposure in Guilford's literature last year, and most importantly their domestic-partner benefits for anyone on campus.

"It's been brought up several times but died because of money issues. It's time to come into our own and to be recognized as valid by everyone on campus," Crane insisted.

Nevertheless, gays, lesbians and bisexuals feel safer at Guilford than in the "real world," and many thank GLBA for helping them become secure in their own sexuality.

"I encourage people who are interested in GLB issues to attend the events this month. The people in GLBA are friendly and helpful folks, so if anyone ever has any issues they need to deal with it would be a good place to start," urged Jessup.

*Its time to come into our own and to be recognized as valid by everyone on campus.*

*-Jenny Crane*



Jessie White getting aesthetic



A rather unheated discussion in the GLB Resource Center

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### October 3

7:00 pm—Gay, lesbian & bisexual poetry reading. The GLB Resource Center

### October 5

9:00 pm—National Coming Out Day Ball. Dana Auditorium lobby.

### October 8

8:00 pm—Safer sex workshop with Triad Health Project. GLB Resource Center.

### October 10

8:00 pm—Piedmont Friends for Lesbian and Gay concerns discussion on religion and homosexuality. Gallery.

### October 11

NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY

### October 12

8:30 pm—GLB Coffeehouse. The Underground.

### October 15

8:00 pm—Cindy Abel, co-director of NC Mobilization '96 (campaign to retire Jesse Helms) speaks on the GLB civil rights movement. Dana Auditorium

### October 30

8:30 pm—Ed Burroughs, Guilford professor of History Emeritus, speaks on the history of GLB groups at Guilford. The Gallery.

### October 31

\*\*Dress in drag for Halloween and in support of gay, lesbian and bisexual civil rights\*\*