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OLA NEWS

*Serving lesbian, gay, bisexual and
LGBT-affirmative alumni of Oberlin College*

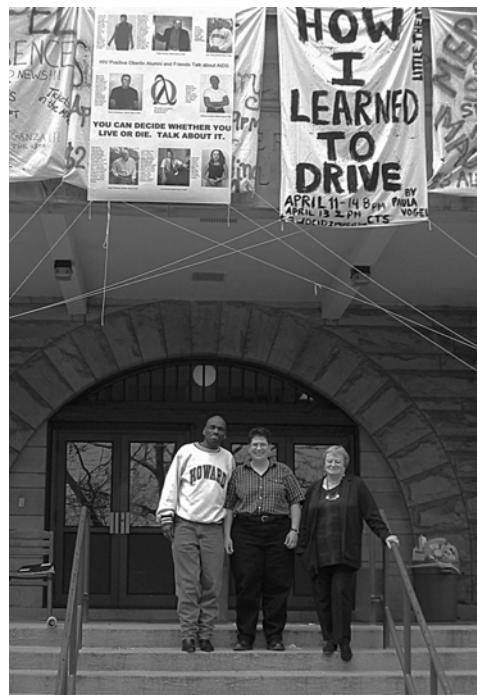
SUMMER 2002

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ON CAMPUS, April 12-14, 2002

The OLA Steering Committee met in Oberlin April 12-14, 2002. The topic that dominated the weekend and our meetings with students, faculty and administrators, was President Nancy Dye's announcement earlier in the week of a decision to cut non-permanent intern positions across campus starting next academic year. These cuts were to be part of a larger strategy to combat a two million dollar budget deficit caused by spiraling health care costs and an under-performing endowment. Of greatest concern to students was the impact this proposal would have on the Multicultural Resources Center. The MRC is currently run by one professional staff and four interns representing the Asian Pacific American, African American, Latino/a and LGBT communities respectively. Among the students OLA members met with at a lunch to which we were invited by members of Third World Co-op, and at a reception following the AIDS/HIV speak-out (see related article in this issue), rumors abounded about administration proposals to use the cuts as an opportunity to reduce the staff of the MRC and thereby eliminate the community-based representation approach that the four internship positions have provided. Our meeting with Dean Peter Goldsmith (Nancy Dye was out of town for the weekend) made it clear that no decisions had yet been made with regard to how the MRC might be restructured in the wake of these cuts. The OLA Steering Committee voiced our concerns to Dean Goldsmith about the importance of having staff members from within the LGBT community in the MRC as part of the college's infrastructure of student services. Students mobilized quickly throughout the weekend to protest the MRC intern cuts. Finally, during a student senate meeting on Monday, April 15 (the day after the OLA SC members had left campus),

Dean Goldsmith announced that the administration had reconsidered its approach to the MRC intern positions, promising that those positions will continue to exist for the 2002/2003 academic year. By the end of that year, during which input will be solicited from across campus, a plan for restructuring the MRC will be put in place.



John Young '83, Zoe Sherinian '84, and Midge Brittingham '60 at the Speak-Out.

SPEAK-OUT GETS THE WORD OUT

On Saturday, April 13, 2002 the official unveiling of the new HIV/AIDS Awareness Poster took place on the steps of Wilder Main in conjunction with a speak-out organized to remind the Oberlin community of the continuing seriousness of this disease

(See the last issue of the Newsletter for an article on and reproduction of the poster). Speakers included OLA Steering Committee members Midge Brittingham '60, John Young '83, Zoe Sherinian '84, Diepiriye Kuku '97, and current students Peter Meredith '03, and Heather Griffin '04. John Young, who is living with AIDS and is pictured on the poster, spoke about his experiences as a Same Gender Loving (SGL) African American man at Oberlin during the early '80s, and about his daily experiences living with the disease. He told the crowd how AIDS affected two of the Oberlin alums pictured on the poster: Roger Goodman '68 was also supposed to address the audience at the speak-out but was unable to make the trip to Oberlin at the last minute because of illness caused by HIV infection; Bill Hannon '64 passed away earlier this year. Many who were gathered were extremely moved by the testimonies given and left the event thinking about how HIV and AIDS had impacted their lives. Editor's note: Look for an article about this speak-out scheduled to appear in the fall issue of the OC alumni magazine.

OPENLY GAY MAN ON BALLOT FOR ALUMNI-ELECTED TRUSTEE

Many of you may know that in recent years OLA has been advocating for (openly) LGBT representation on the Oberlin College Board of Trustees. We now have the opportunity to see such representation become a reality with the candidacy of Raymond Harvey for an alumni-elected trustee position. We have asked Mr. Harvey to provide a statement for this Newsletter, which is followed by the biographical sketch that will accompany ballots sent to all alumni this fall. Please don't forget to vote!

TO THE OLA MEMBERSHIP:

Several years ago I served on the Steering Committee of what was then called the OLGBA (Oberlin Lesbian Gay Bisexual Alumni). It was a terrific way for me to re-connect with Oberlin. Our meetings on

campus were enlightening. We interacted with faculty, administrators, and students. I found myself counseling the young and the confused about what life would be like outside the nest we call Oberlin College. For all its admirable qualities, Oberlin can certainly be insular. I also participated in the oral history of gay life at Oberlin that later was published as "In the Pink." It was fascinating to take the five years I had spent at Oberlin and put them in a larger context. Older and younger alumni helped me understand what contributed to the atmosphere I found during my freshmen year, and where Oberlin was heading after my graduation.

Although I now have a busy professional life as a symphonic conductor, being elected would allow me the chance to lend a unique perspective to the Board of Trustees. As a gay, black, professional musician I'm a triple threat to the status quo. Maybe I can help the Board reflect the great diversity that Oberlin is really all about.

--Raymond Harvey
Kalamazoo, MI



Raymond Harvey, an openly gay candidate for an alumni-elected Oberlin College Trustee position.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Concurrently holding posts as Music

Director of the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra and the El Paso Opera, RAYMOND HARVEY has been called "one of a welcome new breed of American-born and -trained conductors currently enriching our national musical scene." After receiving bachelor's and master's degrees from Oberlin, Harvey became the first African-American to receive the Doctor of Musical Arts in orchestral conducting from Yale University. He served as Choral Director of the Northfield Mount Hermon School, and later as Music Director of the symphonies of Springfield and Fresno. He has conducted the New York Philharmonic, Boston Pops, Detroit Symphony, and Philadelphia Orchestra, among many others. Harvey has considerable experience working with non-profit organizations to raise funds, expand outreach, and improve quality. He has also frequently served as an adjudicator for the National Endowment for the Arts. Strongly committed to education, he has given numerous choral workshops, master classes, lectures, and solo piano performances for people of all ages. Last year, the Raymond Harvey Fund was established in Fresno, offering scholarship aid to high school music students and music scores for the Fresno State University Library. Oberlin invited Harvey to conduct the Oberlin College Orchestra and the Oberlin Alumni Orchestra on their 150th anniversary celebration. He also served on the Oberlin Gay and Lesbian Alumni Steering Committee, contributing to the book *Into the Pink*. An avid theater-goer and exercise enthusiast, Harvey lives in Kalamazoo with Michael Werden, his partner of 21 years. No dogs, no cats. Just plenty of good food and good music.

NEW FACES ON THE OLA STEERING COMMITTEE

OLA welcomes two new members to its Steering Committee. Both Matthew Bribitzer-Stull '94 and Carol Levine '84 will begin their terms with the Committee's September meetings in Oberlin. A biographical sketch of Matthew follows. Please watch for a bio of Carol in the next

issue of the Newsletter. If you are interested in becoming an SC member or would like more information, please write to us at ola_oberlin@yahoo.com. Matthew Bribitzer-Stull attended Oberlin College and Conservatory from 1990 to 1995, earning both a B.A. in History and a B.Mus. in horn performance. After completing his Ph.D. in Music Theory at Eastman, Matthew taught at Penn State University. He is currently back in the Twin Cities where he grew up, serving as Assistant Professor of Music Theory at the University of Minnesota. Both Matthew and his husband, Jason Bribitzer-Stull '94, care deeply about the future of Oberlin. Matthew and Jason have both served as Class Agents for the Conservatory and Matthew was recently appointed to the Conservatory Committee. Matthew feels particularly rewarded to be a member of the OLA Steering Committee. Oberlin helped shape him into the out-and-proud individual he is, and he looks forward to giving back to the institution in its continuing support of LGBT students, faculty, staff, and alumni.



Matthew Bribitzer-Stull '94 is joining the OLA Steering Committee in September.

OLA ELECTRONICA

It's music to our ears: Notes on the *ola_news* listserv, and the OLA website. Those of you who have an email address

on file with the Alumni Office should have received a message in June from Elyssa Faison '88 inviting you to join OLA's new listserv. Please note that receipt of that invitation does not mean that you are on any OLA email list. Rather, the Alumni Office did a one-time-only emailing at our request using their own database and sorting so that only OLA members would receive the message. To join the new listserv, which is the best way to keep up-to-date about regional events and other happenings (and a good way to communicate news about your own happenings to fellow OLA members), please send a message to majordomo@venus.cc.oberlin.edu with the following command in the body of the email: `Subscribe ola_news <your email address>`. Your request will be automatically forwarded to the list administrator (currently Elyssa Faison, efaison@world.oberlin.edu) for verification, after which you will be added to the list. As for OLA's website, many of you may have noticed that the OLA website has not been updated in some time. Since its inception, the website has been administered in a way that makes it difficult for OLA to make changes and update the content of the site. The College is in the process of contracting with a new vendor who will provide a more usable system that will allow OLA (and all other affiliate groups) to post directly the most up-to-date information about the organization and its activities. We expect the new-improved OLA website to be rolled out later this summer. You can find it by going to www.oberlin.edu, clicking on Alumni, and then clicking on Affiliate Groups. Once it's up and running, you will be able to access back-issues of the Newsletter in PDF format; an up-to-date list of Steering Committee members; information on how to become an SC member and what the job entails; and news about regional events and ongoing OLA projects. If you are on the *ola_news* listserv, you will receive a notice once the website has been updated. As always, if you would like to get in touch with the Steering Committee you can send an email to ola_oberlin@yahoo.com, or directly to any of the members listed on the masthead of

the Newsletter.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

by Stan Kim '90

When looking over each month's credit card statement, I often review how my "disposable" income is spent. Museum memberships and dining out with friends are some of the many expenses that are part of living in Los Angeles. We all know that money can be used for enriching our own lives, and also the lives of others. We pay a price for indulging in the offerings of this consumer society, and for our support of charitable, political and cultural organizations. One often forgets, though, in the day-to-day living of our lives, that even a noble cause such as OLA needs funding as well. One might ask, "Why does OLA need funding?" You all know that it takes funds to produce the Newsletter, organize regional events, cover operating expenses and fund our two student grants. In the coming months, OLA will be announcing the kick-off of a \$100,000 capital campaign in order to more permanently fund these activities. One might also ask, "What do I get out of it, other than the act of giving itself?" For one thing, networking. We all know that people who went to Oberlin tend to speak a different language. At a wedding party in St. Louis a few years ago I met an alum from a class in the 70's. We immediately plunged into a discussion of the potential effects of taking his adopted Chinese daughter to see the Disney film Mulan, and how that might affect her nascent cultural identity. "How Obie-dobie," a friend remarked while rolling her eyes. This special language is even more pronounced when it comes to LGBT alums. Yet outside our immediate class years we tend not to meet other alums, leaving a truly valuable, untapped resource. With greater funding for regional and on-campus events, meeting other LGBT alums becomes possible. Scholarships and grants can also benefit alumni. OLA already has two scholarships-the Cemelli Grant and the Robertson Prize-that are awarded each year to current Oberlin students working

CEMELLI GRANT AND ROBERTSON PRIZE

on LGBT-related projects. We are also in the process of developing an arts grant specifically for alumni. (Keep reading the Newsletter for further updates.) I am proud to be a member of the first officially recognized LGBT alumni group in the nation, and have benefitted from meeting others who share this bond. If you already give \$40 annually to OLA, I hope you will consider \$50 or \$100 next time. If you haven't been giving regularly, this is a great time to start! Remember that your contribution earmarked for OLA counts as a contribution to the Oberlin Fund. Where

I live, \$40.00 will get you a great dinner out. That same \$40.00 can cover your membership contribution to OLA for the entire year. Think about it. And please join me in making a difference in the world, for others and for ourselves.

CEMELLI GRANT AND ROBERT- SON PRIZE

Congratulations to the winners of this year's Cemelli Grant and Robertson Prize,

who were honored at Lavender Celebration this May. The winners of the Cemelli Grant are Jessica Rosenberg '03, for her project "Speak-truth.com," and Yvonne Etaghene '02, whose project is titled, "The Resistance Black Dykes Manifest Through Performance Poetry and the Written Word." This year's Robertson Prize winner is Christie Sprowles '03, for "The Drag Kings." Look for full descriptions of their projects in the next issue of the Newsletter.



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