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OLA News is a newsletter serving the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and LGBT-affirmative alumni of Oberlin College. OLA News is published twice annually in the spring and fall by the Oberlin Lambda Alumni. Contributions to the OLA News are a collective effort of the Steering Committee members listed above. Design and layout by **HERBERT D. ZEMAN '65**. OLA logo by **PETER NICHOLSON '91**.

# OLA NEWS

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

WINTER/SPRING 2002

THE  
NEWSLETTER  
OF OBERLIN  
LAMBDA  
ALUMNI

VOL. 11, No. 1

## AIDS SPEAK-OUT AND AWARENESS POSTER UNVEILING

April 13, 2002

A new AIDS Awareness Poster conceived of and produced by OLA and funded by the President's Office will have its official unveiling on Saturday, April 13, from 4:00 to 5:00 in front of Wilder Hall. The unveiling will take place as part of a speak-out on AIDS/HIV, coordinated by Roger Goodman '68 and John Young '83, both members of the Steering Committee. An oversized version of the poster will be produced and hung from the overhang of the second floor mid-way down to the front porch of Wilder. The poster consists of photographs of gay male alumni and two female friends who have HIV/AIDS, with a written statement by those photographed beneath each picture. All the photos were professionally done, and the design of the poster, executed by Herb Zeman '65, is striking and powerful in its statement. The posters will be displayed widely across campus and distributed to other college campuses in the area. (The poster is reproduced on the next page of this newsletter.)

We hope to attract students as well as members of the community to speak-out in front of Wilder so that they can express their feelings about the AIDS epidemic. Statistics show that the rate of new infections is increasing rapidly among college-age students all across the country. OLA hopes to raise the consciousness of the student body around the real urgency of the epidemic, which is still devastating people here in the United States. We also hope that there will be student participants at the event who can speak out about AIDS in Africa, where millions of people are dying and are leaving behind millions of orphans. Even though the death rate here in the United States is not like that of the Plague Years of the 80's and 90's, AIDS is still killing people and will continue

to do so until a new awareness of the disease is in the mind of the young. The new triple combination antiretroviral chemotherapy allows people to live longer and fuller lives, but neither a vaccine nor a cure is anywhere in sight. Education is what will save lives. OLA hopes to achieve just that.

## "SEXUAL HEALTH KITS" OFFERED TO INCOMING STUDENTS

For the second year in a row, first-year Oberlin students arriving in the fall of 2001 received a "Sexual Health Kit" in their mailboxes. The kits, the idea for which developed out of OLA Steering Committee meetings, include three condoms, a dental dam, a surgical glove, a bottle of lube, and eight professional pamphlets. The pamphlets contain information on AIDS/HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases, and abstinence, as well as materials from Oberlin's Sexual Assault Support Team, the Wellness Center and other campus and local resources on sexual health. The kits are funded by the office of the Dean of Students with the full support of Dean Peter Goldsmith and President Nancy Dye, whose early enthusiasm for the project has allowed it to become an annual feature of new student orientation at Oberlin. The kits are compiled on campus, with members of the student group Oberlin HIV/AIDS Educators joined by staff and student workers at the Wellness Center (part of Student Health Services) working together to decide on their contents each year, and volunteering the labor to put them together.

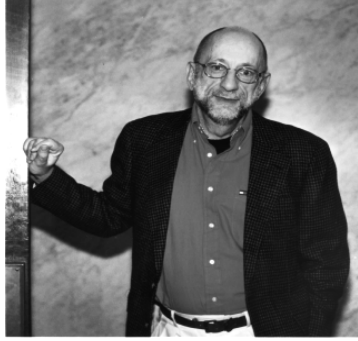
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## AIDS AWARENESS POSTER

Living with this virus, I can't get stressed out. Why get gray hairs and bags under my eyes? Then, I'd need plastic surgery to be looking good and I don't have the money for that!

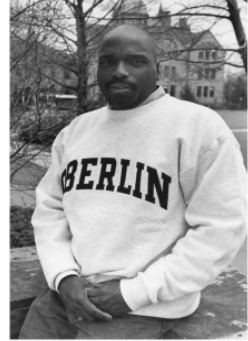


With AIDS I've gained a new appreciation of a simple day without problems, but lost a routine sense of well-being. I value the joys of the moment, but have forgotten the pleasures of making long range plans. My advice is to be smart, play safe, stay healthy.



William Hannan, Oberlin class of 1964

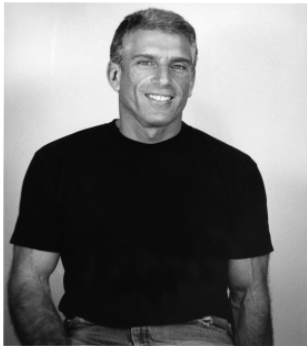
Please remember it only takes one time to catch AIDS. Use protection EVERYTIME!



John Young, Oberlin class of 1983

## HIV Positive Oberlin Alumni and Friends Talk about AIDS

We are all affected by HIV regardless of whether or not we are infected by it. When we label each other as positive or negative, detectable or undetectable, we erect artificial walls and dehumanize each other.

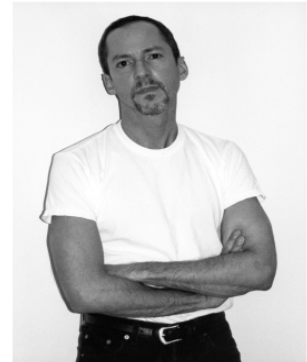


Steven Strickberger, Oberlin class of 1983



This poster is brought to you by the Oberlin Lambda Alumni.

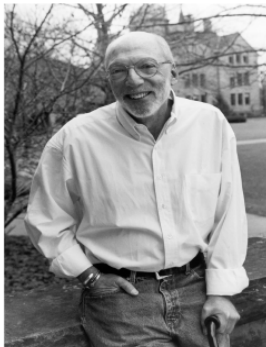
Being HIV positive hurts. Even if you remain healthy, there is an emotional toll. Stay and keep others healthy.



Anthony Levintow, Oberlin class of 1984

## YOU CAN DECIDE WHETHER YOU LIVE OR DIE. TALK ABOUT IT.

Don't let my smile fool you. I was just having a good day with very good friends in a very good place. AIDS can not only destroy your body and mind, it can devour your very soul. I nearly lost mine to the darkness of this evil disease. Unsafe sex is tantamount to murder or suicide. Always practice safer sex. Always!



Roger Goodman, Oberlin class of 1968

I have been very lucky. Living with HIV for 10 years, I have the support of friends and family, and have had lovers who were not scared away by my health issues. I know this is not true for most people. I feel confident that I will live a full lifespan, however long that will be.



Lee Kikuchi, Oberlin class of 1986

I am more than HIV positive. I love to paint, go disco-dancing, play pool and hang out with my friends.



Originally called “Safer Sex Kits,” the kits were intended by OLA to focus student attention on the risk of HIV/AIDS and the importance of practicing safer sex. This has seemed especially important in an era when young gay men increasingly seem willing to take potentially fatal risks by failing to practice safer sex, or by refusing to inform sexual partners of their HIV status. This year, however, student members of Oberlin HIV/AIDS Educators decided to change the name to “Sexual Health Kits” in order to expand the focus to sexual health more generally. The contents of the kits remains largely the same as when they were distributed under the name “Safer Sex Kits” during fall 2000.

Response to the kits among students has been positive. In addition, the active and enthusiastic support and participation from administrative offices and student groups in producing the kits has given HIV/AIDS and other sex and sexuality related issues a higher profile on the Oberlin campus.

## RECENT OLA STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The OLA Steering committee held two meetings in 2001. What follows are a few of the highlights.

### April 20 - 22, 2001

**Meeting with students:** Students met with us to talk about current issues of concern and needs of the LGBT community at Oberlin. There are three new groups on campus: The Trans Group, Gay/Straight Allies, and LGBT Jews. The mission of the Trans Group is to create more awareness of transgender issues in the administration and to provide a safe space for trans students to meet and talk. They sponsor a Trans Awareness Week each year on campus, for which the Gay/Straight Allies group—made up mostly of straight students—has given support as well. In previous years Trans Awareness Week had been organized by just a couple of students. As it is becoming more institutionalized, steps are also being taken to make its activities more inclusive of people of color and bi/trans folks. Students involved in these efforts have expressed

disappointment in the lack of success of these steps to date, and they are looking for more effective ways to be inclusive in the future.

**Conference:** There has been extensive conversations with students about the possibility of OLA supporting a student-led LGBT conference. As yet, no conference has materialized; however, conversations will continue.

**AIDS Poster:** It has taken a lot of time and effort, but the OLA-sponsored AIDS poster, funded by the President’s office, is finally ready and will have its official unveiling on April 13<sup>th</sup> at an AIDS speak-out on the steps of Wilder Hall. (See related article in this issue)

**Mike Muska** (Director of Oberlin’s Athletics Department) met with us to discuss issues related to being an LGBT athlete at Oberlin. No female athletes at Oberlin are out as lesbians. “We need to have more contact with students to be able to encourage this. The irony is that we have hired two lesbian coaches.” Other students, he said, take being ‘out’ for granted.

### September 28-30, 2001

**Michael Hartwyk** is the new LGBT coordinator at Oberlin, having just graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in May 2001 and worked at the LGBT center there. He met with us to talk about his take on the LGBT community at Oberlin.

**Asian Pacific and African American Alumni Associations (OAPAA and AAAA):** OLA met with alumni from these groups and discussed ways that we can collaborate in working toward gaining representation on the board of trustees and the need to make sure that all of our organizations are represented on the various alumni boards.

**HIV/AIDS Specialist:** Peter Meredith has been working in the new student position of HIV/AIDS Specialist in the Wellness Center. He is working to put together a resource list for the local area, and holds office hours to speak with students about

HIV/AIDS. He can be contacted at HIV@oberlin.edu.

**Student Dinner:** Each meeting, we try to meet with students at a dinner to hear their thoughts, concerns, suggestions and questions. This past September we had the best turnout yet, meeting with a large number of students involved in LGBT organizations. Students ranged across all four years. When asked about their issues of concern, students spoke about their perceptions of Oberlin as decreasingly diverse, particularly in terms of race and socio-economic status. They particularly raised concerns about the fact that the administration is taking pride in the lower percentage of applicants to the college who were accepted for admission as compared to previous years.

## OLA REGIONAL EVENTS

Around fifty New York members of OLA gathered in G (The G Lounge) on 19th Street in Chelsea on Sunday, October 21st. The purpose was purely social with no formal program. Doug Cooper ‘50, a member of the OLA Steering Committee, coordinated the efforts of Sam Servello ‘87, and Carol Levine ‘84, without whose invaluable help it would not have been possible. Thanks to them and all who attended for making the event a success.

If you would be interested in volunteering to host or help organize an OLA event in your area, please let us know. Email us at ola\_oberlin@yahoo.com.

## MEET OUR NEWEST STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Stan Kim ’90** majored in Art History at Oberlin, receiving Honors in Art. He received an MBA from the University of Illinois in 1999 and currently works at Microsoft in marketing. Previously he was with the Disney Internet Group doing marketing research and analysis for ESPN.com and ABCNEWS.com. Stan hopes to enrich the Steering Committee with a West Coast and person of color perspective. Stan resides in West Holly-

wood, California, where he keeps abreast of local queer issues and the visual arts community. He hopes to be involved in planning regional activities for Southern California OLA members.



Stan Kim

**Diepiriye S. Kuku '97** came to Oberlin from Louisville, Kentucky after visiting Oberlin during the famed "All Roads Lead to Oberlin" weekend. Viewing Oberlin from Tappan Square, his family felt that he would fit right in; he did, and in fact he says that he had a great time doing it, too! After Oberlin he served in the US Peace Corps Mali as a business advisor. There he organized a village level credit/savings institution which was attached to a museum. After that experience, he wasn't quite ready to go back to school, so he decided to move to Asia where he taught English in Seoul to what he calls "The absolute cutest kids." At present, Diepiriye is completing an MPH at Tulane University focusing on International Health Policy and Advocacy. In his efforts to save the world, he plans to go into a PhD program in Peace Studies and Ethnic Conflict.

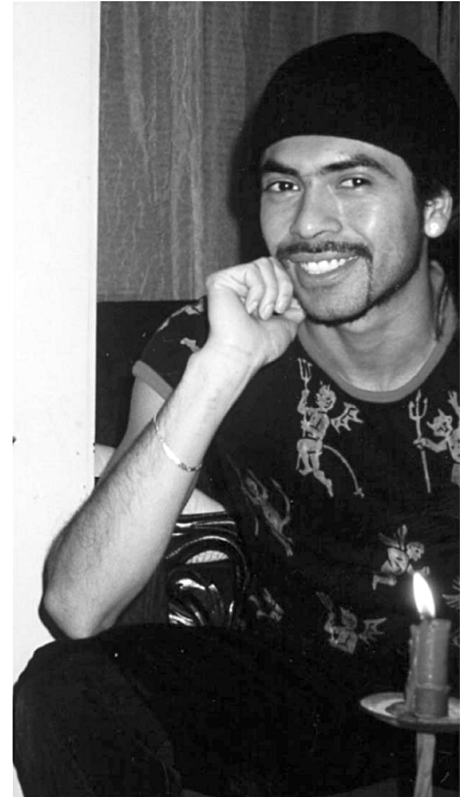
Diepiriye's initial motivation for joining the Oberlin Lambda Association was the

lack of LGBT role models in his life until he met OLA members. He explains that it was only through meeting OLA alumni that he was able to more clearly envision what his gay identity meant after Oberlin. He wishes to offer the same to future generations.



Diepiriye Kuku

**José William Meléndez '01** was born in El Salvador and raised in New York City. José chose to go to Oberlin due to his deep commitment to activism, which began in the mid-90's in New York City where he worked on issues ranging from multi-cultural curricula and HIV/AIDS education and prevention to lobbying for a variety of organizations at the state and national levels. These early experiences allowed him to take full advantage of Oberlin's commitment to diversity and activism. During his four years at Oberlin, José worked for the Multicultural Resource Center and the Drag Ball Committee. He also interned for Congressman Barney Frank in 1998 and La Clínica de la Raza in Oakland, California in 2000. He has spoken and taught on issues of diversity and identity politics for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Diversity in Education Consortium in 2000, was the American Red Cross guest speaker for World AIDS Day 2001 at the national headquarters, and spoke at the Positive Youth Plenary of the Ryan White Youth Conference 2002. As the Midwest Regional Field Manager for *HORIZONTE-S*, at LLEGÓ, José hopes to continue to learn, contribute and challenge the many communities of which he is a part.



Jose Meléndez

#### NEW OLA LISTSERV

In an effort to increase communication with our members, OLA has launched its own listserv. Hosted by the Oberlin College Center for Information Technology, the listserv enables the Steering Committee to send occasional announcements of upcoming events and items of interest via email directly to those members who sign up to receive them. The new list is a moderated, announcement-only format. All members who would like to share announcements and information with the rest of the OLA community may do so by forwarding their messages to the list moderator, who will send approved posts to the entire list membership. Because the listserv is announcement-only, we expect the volume to be fairly low; in other words, if you choose to sign up, you should not have to worry about having your inbox filled with OLA mail on a daily basis.

Here are some basic instructions on using

the list:

To subscribe, send a message in the form: **Subscribe ola\_news** by e-mail to: [majordomo@ocaxpl.cc.oberlin.edu](mailto:majordomo@ocaxpl.cc.oberlin.edu) (Note: in this address, [ocaxpl](mailto:ocaxpl) contains a numeral one [1], not the letter el [l].)

An approval request will be generated by the system so that the moderator can confirm that you are an OLA member. Once that confirmation has been made, you will be subscribed to [ola\\_news](mailto:ola_news) at the address from which you send the request.

Once you subscribe to the list, you will be sent a welcome message that details the list's function as well as instructions for unsubscribing, which you may do at any time.

If you wish to send a message to the moderator for posting to the whole list, use the address: [ola\\_news@oberlin.edu](mailto:ola_news@oberlin.edu). Your message will be automatically forwarded to the list moderator for approval and posting.

**NOTE ON CONFIDENTIALITY:** The list moderator will only approve current OLA members as subscribers to [ola\\_news](mailto:ola_news), and the list of subscribers will not be shared or made public in any way by OLA. However, subscribers should be aware that anyone already subscribed to the list who is familiar with the command system for this listserv software might be able to access email addresses (not names) of subscribers. Because the software is commercially produced and administered by the Oberlin Center for Information Technology, we are unable to change this feature of the program. Since anyone attempting to do this would have to already be an OLA member subscribed to the list, we believe that the risk to members concerned about confidentiality is minimal.

The new listserv replaces an older system of email addresses kept by OLA to which many of you have added your names over the past several years. Because of the different nature of the new list, we will not be automatically transferring names from the old list, but instead request that you follow the simple instructions above for subscribing to the new list. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Elyssa Faison '88 at [efaison@world.oberlin.edu](mailto:efaison@world.oberlin.edu).

## **OLA MOURNS THE DEATH OF BILL HANNAN**

OLA is saddened to announce the passing of William J. Hannan '64, 59, who died September 29, 2001 at his parents' home in East Moline, Illinois, of complications associated with AIDS. Hannan was one of the Oberlin alumni living with AIDS who appears on the new OLA AIDS/HIV awareness poster that makes its debut on the Oberlin campus this spring. (See related article in this issue.)

Bill was born on July 19, 1942 in San Francisco and was raised in Davenport, Iowa. He graduated from Oberlin in 1964 and attended graduate school at Penn State. In the 1970s, the U.S. Department of Transportation employed him as a budget and policy analyst for the federal transit administration in Boston. He was transferred to Washington, D.C. and retired in the mid-1990s. Hannan had been living in Illinois for the past three years taking care of his parents when he became ill.

Hannan was very active in the Oberlin College Alumni Association, serving as class agent and then as president of his class. He enjoyed music, especially Bach. "He found the universe in that music," said his close friend Doug Gold.

In addition to Gold, Hannan is survived by his parents, Jay and Yrsa Hannan of East Moline, and his sister Joan, of Vienna, Virginia; two nieces and a nephew; friends, Greg Chishom of Los Angeles; Fred and Dinah Winston Lovitch '65 of Lawrence, Kansas; Marcia Sprinkle '64, Susan Jensen, Susan Richardson, and Cas Bonkowski, all of Washington, D.C.; and his "beloved cat," Pige.

Funeral services were held October 3, 2001 in Davenport, Iowa. Interment was in East Moline, Illinois. A concert is scheduled in Washington, D.C. on April 28 in memory of Bill. See the D.C. website on [www.oberlin.edu](http://www.oberlin.edu) for details. Donations in Hannan's name may be made to Oberlin College.

## **STEERING COMMITTEE LOOKING FOR MEMBERS OF COLOR, WOMEN, AND TRANS FOLK**

The OLA Steering Committee is actively seeking OLA members of color, women, and transgendered people to serve as committee members. One of the goals of the Steering Committee is to have representation of varied views and opinions which reflect the diversity of the community of Oberlin alumni. So if you are interested in contributing to Oberlin and to being a force within the Oberlin community, **LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!**

This is an exciting time for OLA as we take steps (initiated by members of OAPAA) to strengthen ties with our brother/sister affiliate groups The Oberlin Asian Pacific American Alumni Association (OAPAAA) and The Oberlin Alumni Association of African Ancestry (OAAAA). OLA, OAPAAA and OAAAA had our first joint luncheon last fall, during which we discussed ways our organizations could work together in the future.

We are also pleased to welcome several men of color to the Steering Committee this year, and hope that anyone, whatever your background, who thinks they might like to give some of their time and energy to Oberlin and to OLA will consider applying for a position. Currently we have no trans representation on the committee, and a number of women will be finishing their terms soon. We need you! Steering Committee membership does not require an inordinate amount of time, and it gives you the opportunity to visit your *alma mater* twice each year. If you would like to become a Steering Committee member, send a statement of interest to OLA at [ola\\_oberlin@yahoo.com](mailto:ola_oberlin@yahoo.com).

## OLA NEEDS YOUR DONATION

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Did you know that a contribution to OLA IS a contribution to Oberlin's Annual Fund AND Capital Campaign Fund? So, if you are giving to Oberlin anyway this year, mark that contribution to OLA in the memo of your check. We have over 1300 OLA members. If everyone paid their \$40 yearly contribution we would have enough money to endow both of our student prizes (forever), the Cemelli grant and Robertson Prize. Think about it, and give to OLA today as you give to Oberlin.



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