



The Fourth Wall

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Campus celebrates diversity on MLK Jr. Day

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On January 19, as the first African American president of the United States, Barack Hussein Obama, prepared himself to take office in less than 24 hours, Penn State Mont Alto celebrated Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

The event, "A tribute to MLK Jr." focused on diversity, respect for one another, and being you, was opened to students, faculty and staff, and community members. The tribute was organized by the Black and Latino Association (BALA), an active student organization on campus that gets to put together a tribute to MLK Jr. every year.

Stan Pearson II, introduced by BALA representatives Sophomore Jeremy Jones and Sophomore Alejandra Santamaria, was the guest speaker of the night. Pearson, originally from Chicago, Illinois, is a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Inc., and is fluent in Spanish. He has been speaking about diversity since 2002, and he has given presentations not only around the US, but also in countries such as Mexico and Spain.

As part of his keynote "just because I am, doesn't mean that I'm..." he shared with the audience personal experiences and opinions about what diversity meant to him.

"Diversity is knowing that words don't make perception reality, and I want to educate people on that. I speak for words unspoken and thoughts without illustration," Pearson said.

The attendees got to participate

and express their own thoughts on the different topics that were brought up such as culture, race, religion, and sexual orientation.

"Just because I am Christian doesn't mean I don't struggle like everyone else," "just because I am older doesn't mean I don't like rap and R&B," and "just because I am African American does not mean I am uneducated," were some of the thoughts spoken out loud by the several people in the audience.

Pearson made the audience comfortable enough not to be afraid that after they expressed what we felt, someone in the audience might laugh at what they just said. He encouraged the attendees to respect each other, and to understand that not everyone has the same opinion. Through his words he "hit home" as Sophomore Kevin Irvin put it. He made the audience remember personal experiences that shocked them, that changed them in one way or another. "I am sure everyone has gone through something that left you speechless. In that moment of your life, you couldn't laugh, you couldn't cry, you were just stuck," Pearson said.

Some students were put on the spotlight, and some were really comfortable and open-minded.

"I loved it. It made me focus more in depth about other people's cultures and expanded my knowledge on diversity," said Sophomore Matt Yearwood, and Senior Jon Lewis thought it was "deep and inspiring."

Stan Pearson the II touched the audience that night one way or another. Whether his speech made them understand themselves a little



Submitted by Alejandra Santamaria

bit more, or it made them appreciate about cultures outside of their community, it made us "a little bit better today than we were yesterday," as he said.

To end the night, Pearson taught what he calls "Salsa 101," a really basic salsa lesson, where everyone who wanted to learn about this Spanish dance, got to interact more up-close with the guest speaker. "I loved the way he interacted with us. It was really fun," Freshman Ashleigh Hector said.

Overall, the program was energizing, entertaining, and enlightening. It opened the audience's eyes in many different ways. It was a positive, engaging experience for everyone who attended the event, and this quote by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. should enlighten your soul and bring the message of the tribute to life, "We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fool."

Elvis impersonator at Mont Alto?

BY SHARIYF GOLDSTEIN
Staff Writer

On February 3, Eric Wagner shared with the class a speech a significant event in his life, and the most interesting part was his Elvis Presley impersonation. During his speech, he also shared how Presley was one of his favorite idols of all time. He even did his own rendition of "Hound Dog."

When asked if he had done any types of shows Wagner said he has preformed on television, telethons, schools, as well as church functions. He also said he started in the seventh grade when he was about 12 years old. In high school, he was such a huge Presley fan that he would wear his hair and sideburns just like "the king." As a kid, he would dress up as Presley for Halloween and other special occasions.

Wagner's top two favorite songs include "Can't Help Falling In Love" and "All Shook Up." His favorite movies of Presley include "Loving You" and "Blue Hawaii." Lastly, when asked if Elvis were here today what would he say to him, Wagner replied "I would be speechless."

