

Events give new voice to LGBTQA

By Meghan Gaffney
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The sky was gray Friday afternoon, but rainbows brightened Old Main steps as National Coming Out Day was celebrated by members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) and ally community.

Kelly Ross, co-president of Allies, an alliance of LGBT and straight people, brought the crowd of about 150 to life at noon as she announced the beginning of the NCOD rally.

"It's so great to see so many faces here, breaking rainbow-colored rays of light through the clouds," she said.

Todd Nowlin (junior-biochemistry and molecular biology) spoke about coming out at his fraternity, Sigma Nu, 340 N. Burrowes Rd.

Nowlin said he spent years trying to hide his sexuality because he thought he was supposed to be heterosexual.

Nowlin came out to his family members and friends at home first, then struggled with the idea of keeping a secret from members of his fraternity.

"I was living in the fraternity house when I finally got up the courage to make the big announcement at our weekly chapter meeting," he said. "I thought that I would receive an immense amount of awkwardness from the people I call my brothers."

The crowd cheered as Nowlin said he received a round of applause, a standing ovation and a congratulatory handshake from every member of the fraternity.

Aaronette White, professor of African American and women's studies, received an equal amount of cheering from the crowd when she announced that her classroom would always be a "safe space."

Laughter filled the air as she criticized men's views on mutual friendships between women.

"You think I'm a lesbian?" she taunted the crowd. "I will neither affirm nor deny it."

The tone changed when other speakers took the podium.

Matt Zielinski, president of Association for Residence Hall Students, spoke about how "easy" his life is.

"I feel that I have a very easy life, because I am a white, heterosexual male," Zielinski said. "That's all I will ever be and I thought that it was all I would ever know."

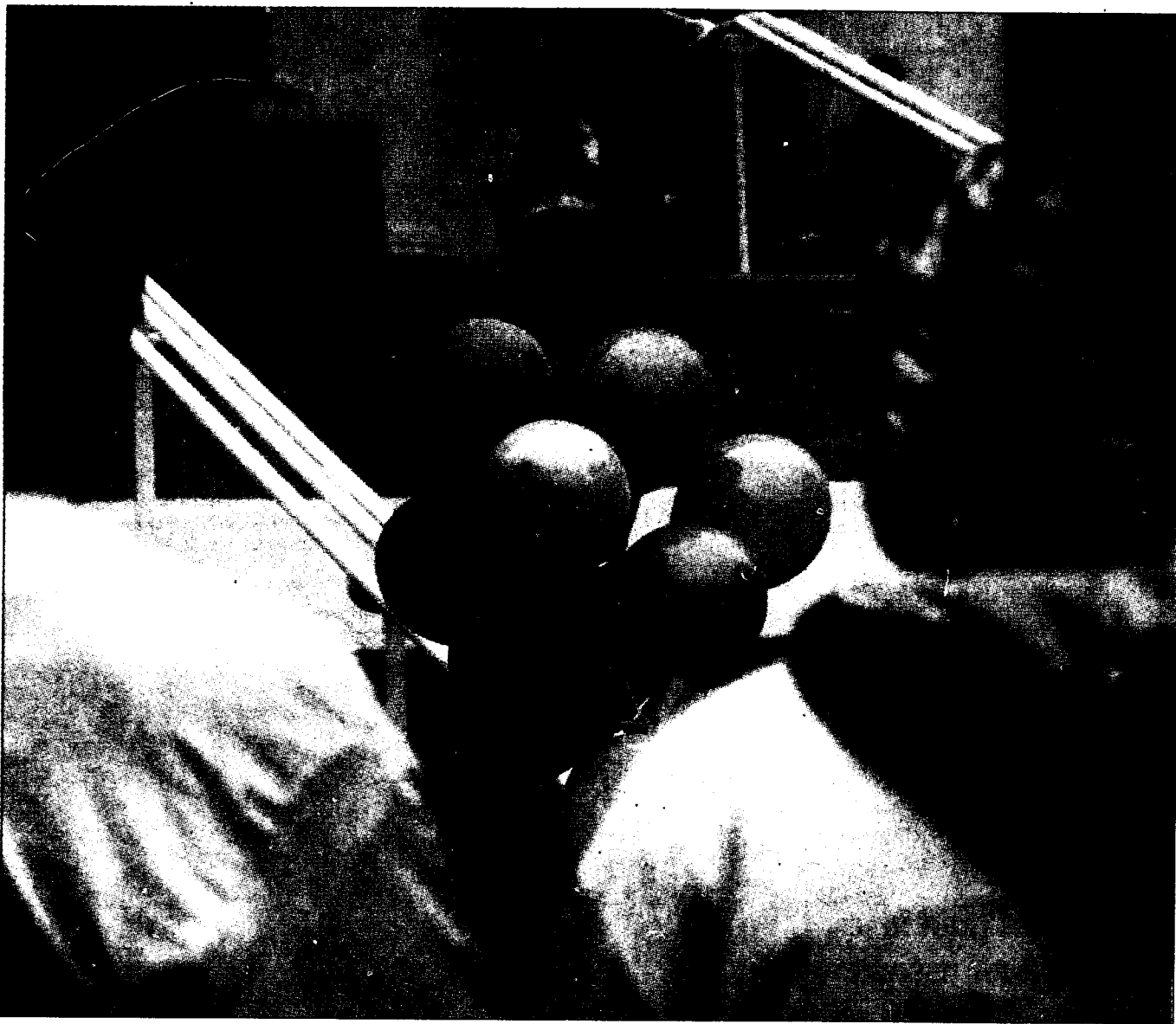
Zielinski said his experiences with the LGBT community have raised his awareness.

"What kind of world do we live in where people can't say who they are without ridicule?" he asked. "I have it easy today and I hope that someday we can all have it easy together."

When an open-mic session invited students to come out, the crowd became more emotional.

Jason Lally (junior-information sciences and technology) came out last year during spring break to his friends. He said coming out to his family was more difficult because of his Catholic upbringing.

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Michelena E. Smith/Collegian

The National Coming Out Day rally helps to brighten a cloudy afternoon for members of the LGBT and ally community.

Opening doors

One of many rally speakers tells coming out experience

By Colleen Freyvogel
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Along with the usual qualms of freshman year, one student has recently struggled with his newfound freedoms and self-determination to express his sexuality.

Fernando Guerrero (freshman-archaeology) said Friday's National Coming Out Day, at which he spoke, was just another step in his life as an announced gay man.

"I knew that I was gay when I was 12 or 13 but I kept it to myself," Guerrero said. Before coming to Penn State, he researched the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender community and its allies (LGBTQA) and knew he wanted to get involved.

"It was a big step for me to even come in [the office]," he said. "I felt like everyone was watching me."

Since joining the organization, Guerrero has made many friendships and taken part in events that make him feel confident.

"I have always felt comfortable but getting more involved has been a really positive experience for myself," he said. "Meeting new people is cool because I can see that I am not alone and there are more people for me to talk to."

Talking to other students in Penn State's gay community and hearing their stories has been a good experience for him as well.

"For a lot of LGBTQA students, it is a lot

"Accepting who you are is different for every type of person."

Fernando Guerrero
freshman-archaeology

easier to come out once they go to a college away from home because they can reinvent themselves," said Sara Ryan, co-president of Allies. "But it doesn't make it that much easier in their lives alone, because even when they come out on campus they don't always come out to their family and friends at home."

Guerrero was nervous about speaking at the rally because although he has come out on campus, he has not told everyone from home.

"State College is a very isolated area," he said. "So, it is good to find people who are like me and people who are not hiding their sexuality."

Brian Keating (sophomore-English) agreed.

"I thought this [event] was flaunting or seeking attention but now I know it's seeking unity," he said at the rally.

After Friday's event, Guerrero said he now sees he is not the only one in State College who is gay.

"Accepting who you are is different for every type of person," Guerrero said. "I would tell people that the first thing you should do is admit [your sexuality] to



Julee Jarrett/Collegian

Fernando Guerrero spoke at the rally.

yourself and then tell your parents because that is the hardest thing but the most important."

The first person he told was his best friend, who had come out to Guerrero earlier this summer.

"I was prepping myself to tell him that I was gay," he said. "He wanted me to tell him from my own words, but it was hard."

Guerrero spent many hours talking on

See GUERRERO, Page 2.

Urban Village plans forming

■ The borough Planning Commission hopes to link the neighborhood to Penn State's West Campus.

By Brian Malasics
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The Urban Village is neither urban nor a village.

The State College Planning Commission is pondering how to make the Urban Village area west of Atherton Street and south of Penn State's West Campus live up to its name.

Some are now envisioning a downtown area connected with pedestrian walkways and bike paths to the currently developing West Campus of University Park.

However, business owners have expressed concern that the new campus will have its own businesses and hinder entrepreneurs in the village.

Planning Commission Director Carl Hess urged residents and property owners to attend the State College Borough Council's public hearing tonight and give suggestions on possible plans.

The meeting will take place at 7:30 tonight in council chambers at the State College Municipal Building, 243 S. Allen St.

One of the original purposes of creating the zone was to provide a mix of residential, commercial and office uses.

Instead, it has become, as many put it, "student-ville." There are very few businesses that could cater to a student clientele, such as coffee shops, restaurants or small grocery stores.

Entrepreneurs said fear of competition from any new business that might set up shop on West Campus is a deterrent to the overall plan of the Urban Village.

But Douglas Wenger, university planner, said the master plan for West Campus does not include any new restaurants or cafes.

"We're not in the business of competing with private enterprises," Wenger said.

However, Urban Village property owners remained skeptical. They said it is often very hard to be sure of what the university will ultimately do.

"Penn State's that 500-pound gorilla that sits wherever it wants," said Pat Vernon, who rents to many students in the area.

Hess said it's up to the community to provide students with the services they need so the university does not have to.

"[Penn State] will respond to the demands of people on West Campus," Hess said. "If it isn't provided, they will meet that demand."

He said the planning commission would do everything it can to work with entrepreneurs.

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Inside

Volunteer day has discussion

The Progressive Student Alliance's volunteer day ended in a potluck dinner where an appropriate response to recent sexual assaults was the main topic of conversation. | LOCAL, Page 2.

Comedy show debuts in HUB

One of the new student-run television shows from PSNTV was filmed in the HUB-Robeson Center this weekend for a live audience. The comedy program will air later this month. | ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT, Page 7.

What's wrong with football?

The Daily Collegian's football beat writers explore the problems that the Nittany Lion squad must overcome during this season. | SPORTS, Page 10.

Bush seeks security solution

President Bush rejected North Korea's demand for a non-invasion treaty yesterday, but hopes for a security pledge, he said while traveling in Asia. | INTERNATIONAL, Page 5.



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Cho to bring controversial comedy to PSU campus

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Margaret Cho, a groundbreaking and controversial comedian best known for her promotion of equal rights through comedy, will be the second speaker in the 2003-2004 Distinguished Speakers Series.

Cho, whose appearance is being sponsored by Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance and Asian Pacific American Coalition (APAC), will speak at 8 tonight in Eisenhower Auditorium.

"I'm not particularly distinguished, I just talk a lot," Cho said in a telephone interview.

"I'm not even a celebrity," she said. "I'm more of a historian because I take information that's current and put it in juxtaposition with things that happened in the past."

Cho said growing up in Oakland, Calif., gave her inspiration for her work. Assassinations of key figures in her community led to movements that gave her motivation to raise awareness of social issues.

"I grew up in the '70s where I witnessed so many things," she said. "I can take my experiences and make them into a philosophy that we can apply today."

Cho will be at Penn State as part of the Revolution tour, which began in March.

Her performances are known to be risqué and cutting, and she said her speech at Penn State will be no exception. Cho said her comedic tone is the only way she knows to express herself, but hopes to be informative at the same time.

"I do believe I'm an educator on a certain level, but I'm ultimately a comic," she said. "My approach is to come, be myself and enjoy it."

Cho said she is looking forward to the audience and hopes her performance will be high energy and enjoyable for the crowd.

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