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Greeks working to improve tolerance of gays

By Jason Cox

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In fall 2002, Joe Zagame (junior-psychology) pledged Kappa Alpha Order fraternity, 234 E. Beaver Ave., like many other freshmen. Zagame's experience, though, was a little different than most and during the next year he would be subjected to some of the most difficult and rewarding moments of his life.

Zagame decided to tell other fraternity members that he was gay — and they supported him.

But Zagame is not alone in his apprehensiveness about balancing his sexuality with his social life, as the words "gay" and "greek" are rarely heard in the same sentence.

Now, voices that have been silent on the issue for years have turned into whispers and those whispers into proud voices that have led to the beginning of change at Penn State. Zagame has joined others to form the Greek/LGBT Initiative, a program to help foster communication and integration of the two communities.

While few statistics exist on why it seems there is such a clash between the two groups, many offer speculations.

"There are a couple groups that tend to be more homophobic on campus, and I think the greek system is one of them," said Allies President Christy Merchant.

Allies is a student organization that supports the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered (LGBT) community.

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Brian Bertges, president of the Interfraternity Council, blames a lot of the negative image of greek views concerning homosexuality on the media, adding that "the greek community hasn't done anything specific to cause that stereotype to exist."

Whatever the opinion, there are a number of people around campus who are working to help these two worlds better understand one another. Some are LGBT, some are greek.

Some say there is little problem with integrating the two communities and some simply wouldn't comment.

"I already knew I was gay, but I didn't

really come to terms with it until I made it into the fraternity," Zagame said about his freshman-year pledging experience.

Fearing a negative reaction from his fraternity, Zagame kept his sexual orientation a secret from other members for more than a year as he tried to better understand who he was and slowly come out to his close friends and family.

In fact, in an attempt to maintain a masculine heterosexual image, Zagame said he verbally bashed gay culture in front of his brothers.

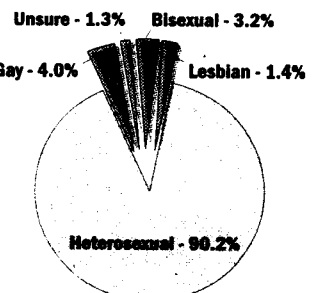
By the beginning of his sophomore

See GREEKS, Page 7.

Two LGBT greek groups used to exist at University Park. | LOCAL, Page 7.

Sexual orientations

Forty-seven percent of those polled said they personally knew an LGBT student, and the majority described their own sexual orientation as heterosexual at Penn State.



Source: Penn State Pulse

Jeremy Drey/Collegian

Jig, don't jog



Randall Mertzfeld/Collegian

Darci Chuba (senior-commercial management) dances on a table at the Phyrst around 7:15 a.m. on St. Patrick's Day.

On the day when everyone is Irish, top o' the morning signals drinking

By Josh Kowalkowski

and Rebecca Short

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First light for many people yesterday was spent in line waiting to celebrate St. Patrick's Day at the bars with green beer, plastic hats and a lot of beads.

When the doors of the Phyrst, 111 1/2 E. Beaver Ave., opened at 7 a.m., the line was longer than manager Mike Fullington had ever seen.

"I was shocked. People started standing outside at 4 a.m.," Fullington said.

Fullington said there was a consistent number of customers throughout the day who enjoyed the festivities without any disruptive incidents.

At 7:45 a.m., the line stretched out the door to Pugh Street with people decked out in green and enduring below-freezing temperatures.

Tim Kistner (senior-professional golf management) was one of the first people to get in line for the Phyrst at 4 a.m.

"Last year we got rejected and I



Daniel Freet/Collegian

Ernie Oelbermann leads the Phyrst Family Band in St. Patrick's Day festivities.

couldn't get in," Kistner said. "This year we wanted to be the first ones at the Phyrst."

Local stores see the sale of Irish liquors rise this time of year. | LOCAL, Page 5.

Car Bombs while listening to live Irish-themed music. See IRISH, Page 2.

Inside, patrons packed the Phyrst close to capacity and flooded the bar in search of green-colored beer and Irish

Experts say prices of gas will stay high

Trend due to change of seasons, demand

By Tara Simoldoni
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

As part of a nationwide trend, State College drivers continue to be affected by an increase in gas prices.

Greg Palazzari, owner of Greg's Sunoco, 605 University Drive, said prices at his gas station have increased by 10 cents since last spring.

"Our prices were about \$1.92 last year," he said.

"Now they're as high as \$2.05 and we're predicting they will go as high as \$2.15 for the summer."

According to www.fuelgaugereport.com, unleaded fuel in Pennsylvania costs, on average, \$2.038 per gallon compared to last year's average \$1.709.

Energy Information Administration (EIA) Economist Jonathan Cogan said gas prices in Pennsylvania and nationwide will not decrease anytime soon.

"Prices will remain high through the summer with some relief in the fall, but no dramatic drop off," Cogan said.

Pennsylvania AAA Federation Executive Director Ted Leonard said seasons also affect gas prices.

"More people travel and [travel] farther in the nicer weather," Leonard said. "The price at the pump will continue to creep up [in summer]."

But Leonard said the need to travel during the spring and summer months is not the only reason that gas prices will continue to rise.

"Refineries are switching to summer blends of gasoline, a cleaner burning gas for warmer weather that cuts down on evaporative emissions," he said, adding that the summer blend is more expensive.

EIA Economist Jack Bournazian said the supply has risen to 85 million barrels per day, and gas demand is up to 84.5 million barrels each day.

"Worldwide demand [for gasoline] matched worldwide production," Bournazian said. "Companies who can produce an excess of gas are limiting it to keep the prices up."

Larry Johnsonbaugh, manager of Graham's Exxon, 815 S. Allen St., said business has decreased by 25 percent from last year due to expensive gas prices.

See GAS, Page 2.

Eastview may affect downtown housing

Some off-campus landlords say the newer on-campus housing could create a competitive market.

By Jonathan J. Hukill
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Students could benefit from the competition created by Eastview Terrace this year, although some local landlords say the addition might have a negative impact on the downtown housing market.

Rob Venema, property manager for Nevins Real Estate Management, said that on-campus apartments like Eastview have a sizeable impact on his business.

"For some landlords, it will mean lower prices, more services or more amenities included with rent," he said. "Landlords will have to work harder to retain their residents."

Eastview Terrace, which houses 808 upperclassmen, opened at the

beginning of the fall semester.

Venema added that he could not comment on specifically how much his business might cut prices or increase services for tenants.

Kris Holzwarth, property manager for Associated Realty Property Management, said on-campus apartments like Eastview make the housing market more competitive.

"Eastview Terrace raises the bar, since it forces landlords to upgrade apartments that they offer," Holzwarth said.

Holzwarth added that the increased competition among downtown housing groups is good for students.

"When landlords have to upgrade their apartments or offer more services, students benefit," Holzwarth said.

Penn State Housing Director Sandy Harpster said Eastview Terrace was not meant to take away business from downtown housing management groups.

"Eastview Terrace was built to give

See EASTVIEW, Page 2.



Lady Lions begin tourney Sunday against Liberty

After a 14-day layoff, Penn State seniors Tanisha Wright and Jess Strom look to carry the Lady Lions. | SPORTS, Page 11.



'20s, '30s art exhibit swings into museum

The Palmer Museum of Art will feature artwork from the '20s and '30s, and a quartet will play live swing music. | ARTS, Page 10.

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