

Gay greek chapters fade

By Joelle Hutcheon
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While there are members of the greek community who are gay and lesbian, Penn State does not have fraternities or sororities for these groups.

Those who led both organizations said there wasn't interest in having a fraternity or sorority that focused on providing an open community for gays and lesbians.

The Penn State chapter of Lambda Delta Omega sorority closed this semester due to lack of membership. "It was tough [to close the sorority]," said former member Jennifer Woolson (senior-communications).

Sorority President Kamillah Cole and Woolson were the only remaining members of the sorority before it closed.

Declining membership also caused the 2002 closing of Delta Lambda Phi fraternity.

The organizations' past leaders said the groups did not

specifically try to inform the greek community of homosexuality.

"[Lambda Delta Omega] wasn't really an activist group, they were more of a sisterhood," said Jane Neitz, assistant director of fraternity and sorority life.

Lambda Delta Omega was an associate of the Panhellenic Council, meaning the sorority paid dues and attended meetings but had no voting privileges within the council.

Russel Martin, the 2002 Delta Lambda Phi president, said the chapter opened in 1998 dedicated to serving the whole community's needs.

"The founder saw a need for a fraternity that did not discriminate," Martin said.

The fraternity was never a part of the Interfraternity Council, he said. "Being new, young and gay, we wanted to act together before we did anything like that."

Martin said fraternity members were very involved in the Penn State community and

could not dedicate enough time to sustain a new chapter.

"We weren't able to bring people in at the rate we need to counterbalance the people who were graduating," Martin said, adding that there is a chance in the future for the fraternity to reopen at Penn State.

Martin said although the Penn State community tried to be open to LGBT issues, work still needs to be done. He said students must be open to resources provided by the university.

"It is the students' responsibility to be open. ... It works both ways," Martin said.

Woolson and Cole said they also feel Penn State is not fully open to the issues regarding LGBT students. "It is very true that we do live in central Pennsylvania, and it is not the most liberal area," Cole said.

Allison Subasic, LGBT student organizations director, said she hopes Penn State can eventually reopen the organizations, but added that there must be interest shown first.

Greeks

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year, Zagame lived in the house and knew the truth had to come out. Fraternity members became suspicious of his behavior, and he couldn't keep the secret any longer.

"I think if they hadn't known me already, they would have pushed me to the side," Zagame said. "But because they did know me and because I was a friend, I think they became a little more open-minded with the situation."

Zagame said he expected the worst but was surprised when a most other fraternity members supported his coming out and were open to talking about it.

"Some people I actually became better friends with," he said. "It was such a personal thing that I told them and me coming out to them let them be totally honest with me. Others were uneasy with the situation. Some people were brought up believing homosexuality is wrong. ... Some were afraid to confront me and afraid of offending me."

Zagame lived in the house until this semester, when he decided to study abroad in Italy.

Not all stories have as happy an ending, though.

Spencer Unger (senior-hotel, restaurant and institutional management) began college at the University of Montana, where he joined Sigma Chi fraternity. Unger began physical contact with men at 13, but didn't come to terms with his sexuality until he was 20, when he started coming out to family and friends.

Around that time, the Maryland native came to Penn State and moved into the Sigma Chi house, 400 E. Prospect Ave. He kept his sexuality a secret.

"I went home a lot because I didn't want to stay here on weekends and just tried to avoid being around the house as much as possible," he said. "I didn't want to come out to them, but I wanted to live my life."

Although Unger tried to keep his sexuality a secret, word spread. Unger said he felt too awkward to stay in the house, and this year he moved into an apartment with his partner.

Although contact with members has been limited since he left the house, Unger said everyone he has bumped into has asked him to come back. "I just came to the realization that this was not the place for me at this time in my life," he said.

AFTER ZAGAME'S experience with his fraternity, he interned at the LGBT Student Resource Center, where he helped start the Greek/LGBT Initiative. "We wanted to create programs that would reach out to the greek community and help people who want to come out," he said.

Berget and other greek leaders have helped the initiative become reality by helping arrange presentations at new member orientation and in houses. "Any group that approaches us that tries to get the word out about issues, we're more than welcome to work with them," he said. "If they need the resources, we can help out there as well."

The initiative has a few components, including online chats and the Greek Straight Talks presentations, discussions about the greek LGBT community.

The online chats help answer questions LGBT or greek members — or both — have and facilitate discussion between the communities. Despite a message sent on the greek e-mail list advertising the discussion, no students participated in the most recent session.

LGBT resource center direc-



Adam Zolyak/Collegian

Leaders of the Greek LGBT/Initiative meet in the Boucke Building's LGBT Resource Center to discuss upcoming Straight Talk events.

tor Allison Subasic said she has seen much improvement in her four years working at Penn State.

"I think there is a lot more involvement by students with campus initiatives," Subasic said. "... There's also a lot more trust between the students and administration now."

She added that while the tensions between the two groups might concern some, many greek organizations are accommodating to such issues.

"My impression is that a lot [of greek students] are closeted," she said. "There are some that are out, but it often seems to stay within the fraternity or sorority. ... There's sometimes a negative image about people coming out in fraternities but I think it goes both ways ... some [greek organizations] are very supportive."

Dina Liberatore, a resource center graduate assistant and former sorority member, said it can come down to the image a fraternity or sorority wants to maintain. "Greek life is not always very accepting of people who are different than what one might expect from a greek person," she said. "... If one had a member come out as LGBT, it can affect recruitment and alumni relations."

The only thing seemingly rarer than an LGBT brother is an LGBT sister, Merchant said. "That seems to be the case, which is odd, because girls ... seem to be much more accepting of the LGBT community," she said. "Sometimes I think it's a case where girls tend to talk more than do and guys do more than talk. Girls just may be afraid of being ostracized or cast out of this group of friends they've created."

NOT EVERYONE helping the initiative is LGBT or university employed. Enter Jacob Wolf (junior-biobehavioral health), Matt Factor (sophomore-premedicine) and Sara Ryan (senior-political science and African and African American studies).

All are heterosexual, but have devoted much of their Penn State careers to helping the LGBT community. Wolf and Factor are greek, both members of Theta Chi fraternity, 523 S. Allen St. "You can be fired from a job in Pennsylvania because you're LGBT, and that pisses me off," Ryan said. "I don't feel right living in a country that is supposed to be equal and fair to all when it's not."

Wolf and Factor are Zagame's friends and are continuing the initiative while he is in Italy. "We just want to show people that there's nothing wrong with being straight and wanting to help, especially in a fraternity setting," Wolf said.

Their involvement with the initiative has been important to maintaining a balance and keeping the greek community from being villainized.

"The whole initiative is based on trying to destroy two stereo-

types: that being gay is wrong but also that fraternity men or sorority women don't accept homosexuality," Factor said.

The three said they had rarely been harassed by their peers for their work with the Greek/LGBT Initiative and other LGBT-related campaigns.

"The only type of attention I've gotten is positive," Factor said. "Guys come up to me and are just like 'great presentation, guys.'"

Ryan said the only negative reaction she has ever gotten was from select members of the LGBT community. "There were a few members who didn't like that position I was in," she said, referring to her role as Allies president last year. "It's a major issue whether a member of a majority group should lead a marginalized one. Otherwise, they've been very supportive and wonderful to me."

DESPITE HELP from the powers that be, controversy still lingers and fingers are pointed.

For a few weeks, members inside and out of the LGBT community waged a war of words over a letter to the editor sent to The Daily Collegian by student Chris Kovalchick, a member of Delta Theta Sigma fraternity, 101 N. Patterson St.

In the letter, Kovalchick disapproved of a photograph on the front page of the Collegian of gay couples kissing at an Allies-sponsored event.

According to Kovalchick's friend and fraternity president Jeff Gorzkowski, Kovalchick has since received hate mail, including threats, and some supportive ones. The mistake may have been making, he said, is the link people have been trying to make between Kovalchick's comments and the organizations to which he belongs.

"His opinion was that of his own and not the ideals of our organization or that of any other in the IFC," Gorzkowski said.

Gorzkowski added that although he supported the actions, he believes Kovalchick could've been less offensive in the letter's presentation.

He also said it's difficult to say whether the greek system's stigma of homophobia is real, but said many greeks come from backgrounds that may influence personal views.

"People who join the fraternity system, especially a social fraternity, their ideals are very different from other people's," he said. "Us being an agricultural fraternity, most of our backgrounds are from the country ... we're very family-oriented ... we're just brought up that way."

Zagame said most LGBT people avoid a school that some say has a heterosexist image. "It's a greek and jock school," he said. "Most of the people who are gay at Penn State are the people who realized it after coming to this school. ... People who are out in high school are not usually going to go to a school that's like Penn State."

UPAC WHAT'S GOING ON

LateNight-Penn State

Friday, March 18

HUB 50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION - Swing dance lessons and dancing from 9:00 PM-10:00 PM; 5 Decades of Song, a cappella-style starting at 10:00 PM; Karaoke with Local Motion DJs all night long - Door prizes every 20 minutes plus games and free root beer floats! - 9:00 PM-1:00 AM, Alumni Hall

LATIN DANCE EXTRAVAGANZA - The BEST Club-style and Ballroom Latin Dance with the occasional standard Dance! - 10:00 PM-2:00 AM, Heritage Hall (Sponsored by Ballroom Dance Club)

HUB 50th BINGO - Tons of new prizes! - 10:00 PM, Ground Floor

3-D MOTION PHOTOS - Your picture has never looked so unique! - 10:00 PM-2:00 AM, Ground Floor

CHIP MOCK CARICATURES - 10:00 PM-2:00 AM, 1st Floor

BALLOON ARTIST LOUIS PAUL - Balloons like you've never seen! - 10:00 PM-2:00 AM, 1st Floor

IN CONCERT: BLAIR DRAKE - 11:00 PM-1:00 AM, The Stage at Joegies

CREATIVE CRAFTS - Paint and decorate stuffed animals! - 9:00 PM-1:00 AM, Ground Floor

POLITICAL SCIENCE SOCIETY - At the Hot Spot - 10:00 PM-1:00 AM, 1st Floor

POKER TOURNAMENT - Prizes for winners! - 10:00 PM, Ground Floor (Sponsored by GAPS)

MOVIE: FINDING NEVERLAND - 7:00 PM, 9:30 PM & 12:00 AM, Auditorium

WHITE BUILDING ACTIVITIES:

LateNight Basketball League - 7:00 PM start

Open Recreation - Badminton, Table Tennis, Whiffle Ball, Horseshoes, Bubble Hockey & Squash - 9:00 PM-2:00 AM; Basketball after league play until 2:00 AM

Yoga Pilates Fusion Fitness Class - 9:30 PM start

Open Pool Recreation - Water Basketball, Spa and Sauna - 9:00 PM-1:00 AM (Closed if no Lifeguard)

MBNA Fitness Center - 9:00 PM-2:00 AM (*Requires Fitness Pass/ID)

Saturday, March 19

KEYSTONE CLASSIC 2005 BALLROOM DANCE SHOW - Featuring a midnight showcase by World #7 Latin Professionals Matthew Cutler and Charlotte! - 10:00 PM, Alumni Hall (Sponsored by Ballroom Dance Club)

CROSS COLLEGE TRIVIAL PURSUIT - Show your smarts with PSU and USG trivia! - 10:00 PM, Ground Floor (Sponsored by USG Academic Assembly)

3-D MOTION PHOTOS - Your picture has never looked so unique! - 10:00 PM-2:00 AM, Ground Floor

BALLOON ARTIST LOUIS PAUL - Balloons like you've never seen! - 10:00 PM-2:00 AM, 1st Floor

IN CONCERT: BEN LEWIS - 11:00 PM and AARON ANTHONY - 12:00 AM, The Stage at Joegies

CREATIVE CRAFTS - Paint and decorate stuffed animals! - 9:00 PM-1:00 AM, Ground Floor

CHABAD JEWISH STUDENT ORGANIZATION - At the Hot Spot - 10:00 PM-1:00 AM, 1st Floor

OPEN GAMES NIGHT - Monopoly, Risk, Jenga, Scrabble and more! - 9:00 PM-2:00 AM, Ground Floor

MOVIE: FINDING NEVERLAND - 7:00 PM, 9:30 PM & 12:00 AM, Auditorium

WHITE BUILDING ACTIVITIES:

Half Court Shot Contest - 9:00 PM start

Open Recreation - Badminton, Table Tennis, Whiffle Ball, Horseshoes, Bubble Hockey & Squash - 9:00 PM-2:00 AM; Basketball after contest until 2:00 AM

Noche de Salsa - 10:00 PM

Underwater Hockey - 9:00 PM-12:00 AM **Hi Lo Fitness Class** - 9:30 PM start

MBNA Fitness Center - 9:00 PM-2:00 AM (*Requires Fitness Pass/ID)

Sunday, March 20

MOVIE: FINDING NEVERLAND - 9:30 PM, Auditorium (No 7:00 PM showing tonight)

PSU-UPark Student ID required at most events
All events are in the HUB-Robeson Center unless noted otherwise
www.latenight.psu.edu

Check out Union St. and get a great deal on late night food on Friday and Saturday nights!

Unity Christian Campus Ministry

WORSHIP SERVICE
MARCH 20, 2005 10:00 AM
FRIZZELL ROOM OF EISENHOWER CHAPEL

Experience a lively, joyful, interdenominational, student-led worship service. All are welcome!
Guest speaker will be Dr. Barbara Farmer.
Special Guests: The Lock Haven University Gospel Choir

SHAMROCKAPPELLA

MARCH 19, 2005 8:00 PM SCHWAB AUDITORIUM

A Capella concert featuring the Pennharmonics, The Dreamers, Savoir Faire, NOTA & the Y-Chromes from the University of Delaware.
Students \$3.00 General Public \$7.00
All proceeds benefit charity.

WE ARE Campaign

THE WE ARE SPEAKER SERIES: INSIGHTS ON LIVING WELL
MARCH 23, 2005 7:30 PM
PASQUERILLA SPIRITUAL CENTER, WORSHIP HALL

Jeremy Cohen, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and professor of communications, will be speaking on service to a community and the new service initiative minor at Penn State.

ECOTOURISM PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Presented by
STUDENT ORGANIZATION FOR SOCIETY & NATURAL RESOURCES
MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2005
6:00 PM 11 FERGUSON BLDG

Promoting open discussion on topics relating to the interactions of Society & Natural Resources.
Open to all majors.

USG ELECTIONS COMMISSION

USG/UPAC/ARHS Elections Schedule

Executive Ticket Debate
Monday, March 21 8:00 PM, 108 Forum

Meet The Candidates

Tuesday	March 22	4:30 PM-7:00 PM	Pollock Commons
Thursday	March 24	4:30 PM-7:00 PM	Waring Commons
Friday	March 25	4:30 PM-7:00 PM	Findlay Commons

SOUND DECISION MAKING: Workshop by Mr. Durbagh Borad

Presented by
HINDU STUDENTS COUNCIL
SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2:00 PM
FRIZZELL ROOM, PASQUERILLA SPIRITUAL CENTER

Power of Decisions: This workshop deals with the root cause of wrong decisions, their consequences and factors affecting them. It will also illustrate the 8 universal laws of sound decision making.

Mr Durbagh Borad founded the Global College of Gayatri in 1993 and has conducted over 500 workshops and seminars since then. For more information regarding this seminar please visit www.collegeofgayatri.org and www.clubs.psu.edu/up/hsc

STUDENT AFFAIRS REWARDS & RECOGNITION NOMINATIONS

Have you received excellent service from someone in Student Affairs? Has someone gone the extra mile to enhance your experience at Penn State? Did a Student Affairs staff member demonstrate sensitivity toward you? The Student Affairs Rewards & Recognition Committee is taking nominations for the "Outstanding Service Students Award." Please take a moment to nominate deserving individuals. Your nomination will let them know that their contributions have made a difference.

Visit <http://www.sa.psu.edu/awards/default.html> to submit your nomination today. If you are not able to access the site and/or if you prefer a hard copy of the nomination form, please contact Karen Struble at kas5@sa.psu.edu or call 3-1710. If you are not sure who is in Student Affairs, please refer to <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sadepts.shtml>

Nominations are due by 5 PM on April 1, 2005.

HAPPY 50th BIRTHDAY TO THE HUB!

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, March 18 (Noon-1:00 PM) Noontime Concert featuring Pennharmonics and The Dreamers
First Floor Lounge

Friday, March 18 (9:00 PM-1:00 AM) LateNight Penn State, Alumni Hall. Dance the night away to music from the past 50 years! Games, prizes

EXHIBITS Art foyer & Display Cases in front of the HUB Information Desk. Displayed through June 5.

THE HUB
1955
2005
celebrating 50 years
PENN STATE

WEEKEND MOVIES

ARHS MOVIES

PRESENTS
FINDING NEVERLAND
THURSDAY - 10:00 PM
FRIDAY & SATURDAY
7:00 PM, 9:30 PM & MIDNIGHT
SUNDAY - 7:00 PM & 9:30 PM

PSU Student ID required.
All ARHS movies are shown in the HUB Auditorium.
All movies titles and times are subject to change.
All ARHS movies are free.
Funded by UPAC - Your Student Activity Fee at Work!

GSA C.A.F.E. FILM SERIES

PRESENTS
ZELARY

FRIDAY & SATURDAY
6:30 PM & 9:00 PM
101 CHAMBERS
&
LAST LIFE IN UNIVERSE
FRIDAY & SATURDAY
7:00 PM & 9:15 PM
112 CHAMBERS

All movies, titles, and times are subject to change.
All ARHS movies are free.
Funded by UPAC - Your Student Activity Fee at Work!

HUB-ROBESON ADVISORY BOARD

Monday, March 21 5:00 PM-6:30 PM
Room 330 HUB-Robeson Center
Student open forum at the beginning of each meeting

HUB 50th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL CONCERT

Featuring
THE PENNHARMONICS & THE DREAMERS

Presented by
NOONTIME CONCERT SERIES
FRIDAY, MARCH 18 NOON-1 PM
1ST FLOOR LOUNGE, HUB-ROBESON CENTER

Come and listen to some great music sung by two of Penn State's A Capella groups. They will be singing songs from the past 50 years.

Noe-Rooz Gala

In celebration of the Persian New Year

Presented by
THE IRANIAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION
HERITAGE HALL - HUB-ROBESON CENTER
SATURDAY, MARCH 19 7:00 PM-1:00 AM

Celebrate the arrival of spring by enjoying a variety of delicious Iranian foods and desserts and dancing to live Persian music featuring performances by
Hooshmand Aghili
And a screening of the new animated film
Babak & Friends - A First Noo-rooz
Tickets on sale at the HUB (ground floor)
University Park Students \$15.00 Non-Students \$25.00
March 16-18 10:00 AM-4:00 PM
Or contact Saed at sxs987@psu.edu
Funded by UPAC

PERSPECTIVE MIC

presented by
USG - SOCIAL AWARENESS COMMITTEE
EACH WEDNESDAY NOON-1:00 PM
FIRST FLOOR LOUNGE - HUB-ROBESON CENTER

Perspective Mic is a part of a larger theme of civic engagement being worked on by the Social Awareness Committee of the Student Government. Each Wednesday you have an opportunity to voice your perspective on important issues facing our community and often do so in front of administrators or decisions makers within town. The program allows students to learn from their peers' varying perspectives and become producers of their educational experience rather than just being consumers of it. We will provide the microphone and forum, you provide the perspective. For more information email socialchange@psu.edu