MSU Community “Moving Forward” for Two Decades

The GLBT Alumni Association, with support from LBGT Resource Center, GLFSA and the Alliance of Queer and Ally Students hosted a panel and discussion on Friday October 12, 2012 to reflect on the past 20 years of LGBTQ advocacy at MSU and to consider the critical issues on the road ahead.

The Moving Forward Task Force Report was issued in 1992, serving as the initial template for inclusion of issues of sexual orientation in all spheres of university life for faculty, staff and students.

Panelists reflected on the struggles and torment of the LBGT experience at MSU as well as on the grit, pride and progress of our community and allies. In the years since, MSU students, faculty and staff have continued the work to advance equity in regards to gender identity and expression.

Michael Lee, president of the MSU GLBT Alumni Association facilitated the session. Panelists included Grant Littke (current President of GLFSA), Kate Murphy pictured at right (retired staff, former Co-Chair of the Moving Forward Task Force, and past President of GLFSA), Madeleine Townsend (Alumni and Staff, and former member of Moving Forward Task Force), Nick Pfost (Alumnus), Deanna Hurlbert (Alumnus and current Assistant Director of the LBGT Resource Center at MSU), as well as special guest Michael Shutt (Alumnus, and President of the Consortium of Higher Education Research Professionals).

Milestones since the 1992 Moving Forward Report:
--Institutional non-discrimination policy that includes sexual orientation and gender identity.
--Availability of medical benefits for those who qualify as Other Eligible Individuals, which may include same-sex partners.
--Founding of a LBGT Alumni group.
--Establishment of the Pride Scholarship.
--Availability of gender-neutral housing through the Flexible Housing option.

In fall 2013, a preferred name option will be available that

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Continued from page 1 will enable students to be addressed by their preferred name, rather than their legal name. This is a particular triumph for transgender and international students. See the Letter to the Editor in the State News by Nick Pfost on December 2, 2012.

Panelist Michael Shutt is also the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Services at Emory University and the Director of the LBGT Resource Center at Emory. Michael discussed national trends and the future of gender identity and sexual orientation equity in the higher education context.

Dr. Denise Maybank, Interim Vice-President for Student Affairs and Services, provided closing comments that honored the struggles of those marginalized by sexual orientation or gender expression and identity. Dr. Maybank expressed effusive gratitude for the fine legacy of institutional leadership of LBGT staff and faculty.

Michigan State University is positioned with the talent and knowledge to become the benchmark of inclusive excellence and equity in the educational experience. We have an opportunity to become a leader in scholarship regarding sexual orientation and gender identity in the global context. Together we must face the challenge of resourcing our student affairs and scholarly units in order to maximize the vast potential we have in order to keep Moving Forward.

The 1992 Moving Forward report can be accessed at: www.inclusion.msu.edu/.../HistoricalDocuments/Moving_Foward.pdf

Deanna Hurlbert, MPA, MA Assistant Director LBGT Resource Center

The Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference is an annual LGBTQ conference that is hosted at a different college each year. The three-day conference, which began in 1993, has grown to include over 90 educational workshops on various topics that affect LGBTQ people, as well as a variety of inspirational plenary speakers and entertainment.

The 2013 conference is hosted by MSU. MBLGTACC 2013 will be held February 8-10, 2013 at the Lansing Center in Lansing, MI. The address of the Lansing Center is 333 E. Michigan Avenue, Lansing, MI 48933.

Online registration for MBLGTACC 2013 will run from February 12, 2012 to February 1, 2013. On-site registration will also be available during the conference.

Register online at: http://www.mblgtacc2013.org/register-online

No Gender Left Behind

Tuesday, January 22
7:30 pm
Arena Theatre

There is no charge for this event

“Kling is a charming presence, and she explains her struggle to own her gender identity compellingly.”
Kris Vire, Timeout Chicago

Rebecca Kling is a transgender artist and educator who explores the performance of gender and identity through solo pieces and educational workshops. Her multidisciplinary performances incorporate conversational storytelling, personal narrative, humor, movement, video projection, and more. Kling takes the position that sharing accessible queer narrative with a wide audience is a form of activism, and that understanding combats bigotry.

Rebecca will be performing No Gender Left Behind

In the fall of 2010, Rebecca Kling was fired from a teaching position for being a transgender woman. The experience left her wondering what America is teaching its children— and its adults— about gender, conformity, and being just a little bit different.
As we bask in our post-Thanksgiving glows, and move into the range of festivities of the holiday season (including the GLFSA Holiday Party on Dec. 8!!!), there is truly much to be thankful for amongst MSU’s LGBT community. The federal election saw the return of a pro-gay marriage president, the election of the first out lesbian Senator, and the election of a record number of out LBGT Representatives. On the state level, our close ally Sam Singh (many of you spoke with him at the GLBT Alumni Association Homecoming reception) was elected to represent East Lansing in the House. Our perennial foe Rep. Dave Agema was term-limited, and will leave the State Capitol at the end of the lame-duck session. While the Republicans still control both the State House and Senate, the reduced size of their House majority is an encouraging sign that the aggressively anti-LGBT agenda of Agema and others did not pay political dividends.

Perhaps most encouraging, the MSU State of the State Survey (conducted June-August of this year) found that 56% of Michiganders now back gay marriage, with 39% opposed. A 17% margin!!!!!! This marks a radical shift from the same survey 2 years ago (when 51% opposed gay marriage and 48% supported), and especially from 2004, when Proposition 2 was passed with 59% support. This is a sea change in attitude that augurs very well for the security of OEI benefits at MSU, and for the day (perhaps not far off) when the vile Proposition 2 can be repealed, and marriage rights, and the full range of benefits that flow from that, can finally be made available to all. This attitudinal change is showing up across the country in a whole variety of manifestations. We are on the cusp, I predict, of monumental and very positive changes in the lives of LGBT Americans. I’m as hopeful as I am partly because I’ve seen it happen. As a displaced Canadian, I watched with amazement as Canada experienced a similar transition in 2003-04, and a similar attitudinal shift swept away layers of anti-gay policy, bigotry and ignorance. Gay marriage in a legal sense, and equality in a broader sense, came to be settled, rarely-contested features of Canadian life.

But we are not there yet. At the State Capitol, Agema may be gone, but Tom “people who are caught up in the homosexual lifestyle need help” McMillin was returned in the 45th District. He and his allies may well continue to push hurtful and discriminatory legislation, especially as they see the sea change coming their way, giving them limited time to act. On the federal level, we will find out very soon (they are deciding as I write this) if the Supreme Court will take several cases that are challenging the constitutionality of DOMA and some of the state-level marriage bans. If they do, how they will rule is far from clear, and much will depend on the Kennedy swing vote. Favorable rulings will advance our cause enormously, but unfavorable rulings will cause immeasurable damage. As much as I think the tides are moving in our direction, complacency is not in order. Active vigilance, and the willingness to move quickly to seize opportunities as they arise, remain key to our success. I am thankful that we are at this moment of history, but we need all of you to remain engaged (with GLFSA, and with the plethora of other organizations working on our issues) if we are to make the most of the opportunities in front of us.

--Grant Littke
Don’t Miss GLFSA’s Night at the Theatre!!!

Music by Jules Styne, Lyrics by Bob Merrill, Book by Isobel Lennart from an original story by Miss Lennart

Directed by Dev Janki

Famed comedienne Fanny Brice goes from ugly duckling to beautiful swan in this classic hilarious and heart breaking musical. Guest director Dev Janki directed East and West Coast Concert versions of the musical starring Ana Gasteyer, Lillias White, Jane Krakowski & Bebe Neuwirth.

THE PASANT THEATRE

Thursday, April 25, 2013 at 7:30pm

Tickets can be purchased directly from the Wharton Box Office.

Director’s Talk, with out director Dev Janki, immediately following the performance.

Gay Marriage Supported by Majority of Michigan Voters

MLIVE reports that The State of the State Survey, which included telephone interviews with 1,015 Michigan adults between June and August of this year, found 56 percent of respondents saying they support gay marriage, while only 39 percent said they were opposed.

Two years ago, the statewide survey revealed that a small majority of respondents -- 51 percent to 48 percent -- were opposed to gay marriage, which would allow same-sex couples to enjoy the benefits of traditional unions, including hospital visitation rights, joint tax returns and joint adoptions. Critics, often citing religious or moral concerns, say gay marriage could weaken the institution.

The results of the Michigan survey mirror national trends showing a general shift toward support for gay marriage. Polls conducted this year by the Gallup Organization and Pew Research Center found national support levels at 50 and 48 percent, respectively, compared to only 27 percent in 1996.

Michigan is one of 31 states to have adopted a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. Voters approved the amendment in 2004, with 59 percent backing the statewide ballot proposal.