

Queer Query

Volume Issue 4

BGSU's LGBTQA-Q Newsletter

March 21, 2005

Upcoming Events

March 25 -
April 1

Rainbow Dayz

Every
Tuesday

Vision

BGSU's GLBTQIOSS
Undergraduate Student
Organization
9pm, Women's Center
107 Hanna Hall

Every
Thursday

Thursday Night
Peer Support
Group

Confidential Student
Support Group
sponsored by Vision
9pm, Women's Center
107 Hanna Hall

Every
Wednesday
Out@BGSU?

Confidential Coming
Out Support Group(
Professionally Run)
Call 419.372.2081 for the
confidential meeting
time and place
Sponsored by the
LGBTQA-Q Resource
Center and the BGSU
Counseling Center

Every
Thursday

Queer-Ally Grads

A group for LGBT+ grad
Students to gather and
meet each other
Sponsored by the
LGBTQA-Q Resource
Center
5pm *Happy Hour*
Union Pub

3rd Sunday of
Every Month

Transgender
Support Group

A support group for all
transgender people in
NW Ohio Sponsored by
the Toledo Area Pride
Center
3-5pm at the Toledo
Area Pride Center

Queer Eye for the Straight Guy: Helping or Harming the Community?

March 20, 2005

By Amanda M Monyak

Queer Eye for the Straight Guy has been a hit ever since it premiered on the Bravo television network. Created by David Collins, the show debuted on July 15th, 2003, with 1.166 million viewers. Chances are that most people have seen at least one episode of this popular series.

In case some are not aware of the premise, *Queer Eye* involves five gay men revamping a straight man's surroundings. The Fab Five, as they are often called, is composed of: Thom Filicia (an interior designer), Carson Kressley (a fashion expert), Ted Allen (an devotee of beverages and foods), Jai Rodriguez (the member that improves personal qualities in participants, such as manners), and Kyan Douglas (a grooming specialist).

Queer Eye is essentially a reality show that documents the experience of these five men helping the participant. The upbeat television show revolves around an event that the participant is partaking in, such as proposing or going on a job interview. By the end of the show, the five collaborators are able to see how their protégé applies what he has learned from the Fab Five.

Since the show has aired though, there have been many controversies about how it represents the queer community. Some feel that *Queer Eye* harms, specifically, the representation of gay men, especially by stereotyping.

"It reinforces stereotypes, but I think that it makes gay men seem less threatening," says Diana Delbalso, a student here at Bowling Green.

"The men of the program's first season often tower over the Fab Five in terms of height and body mass, thereby physically framing the Fab Five as not masculine and therefore feminine," states E.

Michele Ramsey and Gladys Santiago in their article, *The Conflation of Male Homosexuality and Femininity in Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, published in November 2004 issue of the journal *Feminist Media Studies*.

Ramsey and Santiago make a good observation, one that many viewers may not notice. The co-authors also mention the negative affects of the word "metrosexual," one which, they feel, is strongly associated with the series. "...the word "metrosexual," a new term stemming from *Queer Eye* to designate heterosexual men who are comfortable partaking in rituals typically associated with gay men- primping, preening, and product consumption. The political, social, and economic privileges extended to heterosexuals and typically denied to homosexuals are thus reified as homosexuality is defined as a "lifestyle" rather than as a legitimate and "normal" sexual orientation."

Some have a different view on the show and enjoy watching the different personalities interact with each other.

"The gay men in *Queer Eye* are humorous, sarcastic, but also indulgent and patient with their charges, and the whole show functions as a carnivalesque assault on traditional assumptions about masculinity and sexuality, while operating superficially with a set of comforting stereotypes about gay men," writes Liz Morrish and Kathleen O'Mara, co-authors of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy: Confirming and Confounding Masculinity* (*Feminist Media Studies*, November 2004).

It is clear that there are many different opinions about the series, but to form your own you can catch *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* every Tuesday night at 10:00pm on Bravo.

Students Debate the Meaning of 'Queer' at the University of Pennsylvania

By Chidiogo Akunyili

Tuesday night's LGBT event, organized by the Queer Student Alliance, in association with ALLIES, raised awareness of what it means to be queer.

The meeting began with audience introductions, as all attendees were asked to give an assumption about themselves that was untrue. Replies ranged from incorrect assumptions about nationality, heritage, blondes, threesomes and, in the case of English professor Heather Love, people assuming professors are dorks.

Love focused the discussion on the history of the word queer and the controversial connotations surrounding it.

In addition, the group discussed the transformation of the word in recent years, which has come partially as a result of shows such as *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*.

"Its rise to fame was the end of the '80s and beginning of the '90s," Love said. The academic genealogy and move into the academy was unthinkable in the early '80s, Love said in reference to queer studies.

Love questioned what it really means to be queer. She defines "queer" as "identity that is against identity" and also as acting to "question gender categories ... and identity."

The floor was opened to questions from students -- many of whom held personal and passionate opinions.

Although Love said, "for me I will always be lesbian, because there was no queer when I was growing up," College sophomore M Tong, said "I don't like the word lesbian. I would say 'queer' because I don't like being identified with bull-dykes."

Tong explained that the word lesbian creates a rift between women, as "you can't be a 'lesbian woman.'" In Tong's opinion, linguistically speaking, people are identified as either a lesbian or a woman, but not both -- as in this case the word lesbian is a noun as opposed to an adjective like gay or queer.

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BGSU's LGBTQA-Q Resource Center

404 Saddlemire rainbow@bgnet.bgsu.edu 419.372.3244

About the LGBTQA-Q Resource Center

The LGBTQ-A Resource Center is up and running. Every day, the office, in 404 SaddleMire gets more visitors, each looking to have a comforting environment, or to learn a little more about Queer Issues. The Center opened this January 2005. As Mr. Nicky Damania, Graduate Assistant in the Center of Multicultural and Academic Initiatives for LGBTQA-Q Programs and Services, walked into what he thought was a resource center; he saw nothing but blank walls. Mr. Damania wanted the Resource Center to be great; he wanted warm colors on the walls, resources for students, staff, and faculty, and student involved in the development of the space. Because the Resource Center was in such high demand, The Office for Student Affairs supported the students by proving a space and a budget. Throughout the first semester of the Resource Center being open, Mr. Damania had a hard task at hand. He needed couches, bookshelves, decorations, supplies, books, magazine subscriptions, a desk, and computers. Somehow, Mr. Damania got Offices to donate furniture and brought community's attention the Resource Center. Little by little, Mr. Damania with the help of many other individuals made the Resource Center what it is today. As you walk in, you would have no idea that four months ago the space was bare.

Now that the Resource Center has all of the furniture and supplies it needs, there was one thing missing...the people. Mr. Damania knew that there was no point in a Resource Center that didn't have anyone to visit, he knew that he could not do it all himself. Mr. Damania decided to recruit students as volunteers, and as interns to help him make the Resource Center run smoothly. By the first day of spring 2005, the Resource Center was ready to operate with the help of seven interns.

Today, the Resource Center provides the services that most Resource Center should. It has a collection of books, magazines, pamphlets, films, and other resources. It has programs like Safe Space Workshops that are to be presented. As this semester is off to a great start, the Resource Center would like to invite everyone to take advantage of marvelous space.

Discussion of Queer cont.

Attendees found the discussion to be productive.

Wharton sophomore and co-Chairman of the Queer Student Alliance Brett Thalmann felt that the event had "great turnout and good discussion of different connotations of 'queer'."

College sophomore Emily Buzzell, who is interested in "becoming more active in the queer community," felt it was a "balanced discussion, with a lot of interesting perspectives," as she "came in thinking 'queer' was an accepted term, but apparently it does still have a bad connotation."

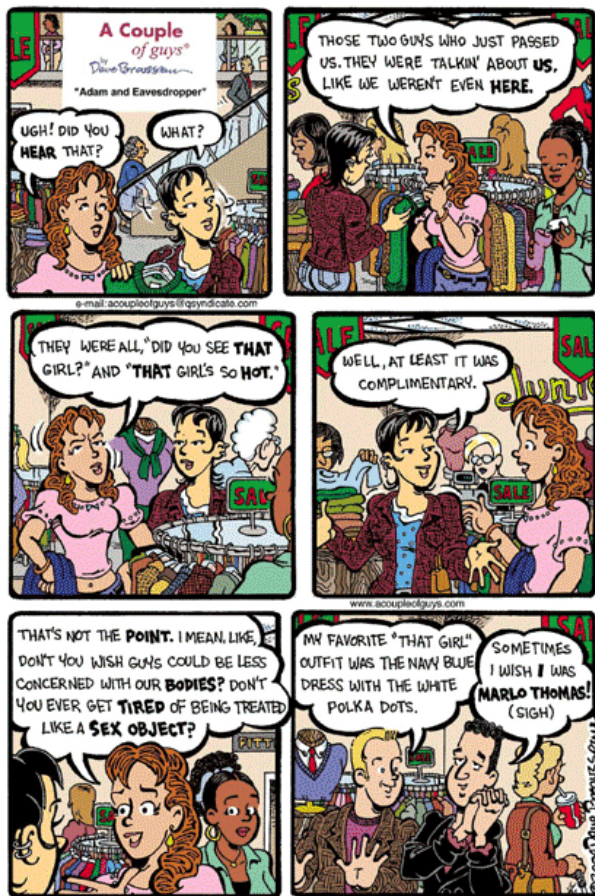
According to Love, events like this are needed, as "there could really be more activism in the LGBT Center."

<http://www.dailypennsylvanian.com/vnews/>

Adam and Eavesdropper

A Couple of Guys

By Dave Brousseau



Resource Center Interns

WANTED: Queer and Straight individuals who are interested in receiving **ACADEMIC CREDIT** for **INTERNING** in the LGBTQA-Q Resource Center. Call 419.372.3244 or e-mail Nicky Damania at nickyd@bgnet.bgsu.edu for more information.

David Sedaris

March 20, 2005

By Amanda M Monyak

David Sedaris is an award-winning gay playwright, commentator (National Public Radio), and author of eight different works, four of which are bestsellers (*Me Talk Pretty One Day*, *Holidays on Ice*, *Barrel Fever*, and *Naked*).

Sedaris was born in 1956 in Raleigh, North Carolina. The writer initially got recognized by reading *SantaLand Diaries*, one of six essays that complete *Holidays on Ice*. *SantaLand Diaries* is about Sedaris' experience working as an elf at Macy's during the holiday season.

Most of Sedaris' work is autobiographical, material coming from diaries that Sedaris has kept for twenty-seven years. Sedaris never fails to amaze his audiences with witty and sarcastic narrations of his whacky life experiences. The author was named *Time* magazine's "Humorist of the Year" in 2001.

Although Sedaris is one of the most well-known authors in America, he surprisingly did not start reading until he was out of school.

"I didn't read when I was a kid; I started reading when I was about twenty. I just turned into a reader one day after I dropped out of college. I started reading everything I could get my hands on, all those books that people were supposed to read," said Sedaris, in an interview done in April of 1998 an issue of the *Berkshire Eagle*, a newspaper printed in Massachusetts.

Sedaris has had numerous jobs aside from being an author, occupations being an area of his life that continually delivers extremely amusing stories for his audience.

"I had a job in Chicago- you know when squirrels crawl under the eaves of people's homes and get trapped in the attic and die? I had to crawl on my belly over fiber glass and dead squirrels to staple up screens so that no more squirrels could get in. You realize you're lying on top of squirrel that's crawling with maggots. It's the kind of job where you just couldn't take enough baths," said Sedaris (*Time* magazine, June 21, 2004) of another job that he had the pleasure of partaking in.

Sedaris currently resides in France and sporadically reads his essays for NPR's *This American Life*.

Flamey and Flambo

Dear Flamey and Flambo

I have this friend who just recently broke up with their partner. I don't know how to tell her that I care about them. It's hard because I don't want to make my friend feel bad, especially with the fact that I know, and I really want to tell my friend that it's ok. I'm not sure how to go about it. Please help.

Confused

Dear Confused,

It might be a good idea to write a letter, and tell your friend that you do care, even if you are afraid of hurting their feelings. It helps to know that someone cares regardless, and completely. Just be there for your friend and everything should be ok.

Flambo (with consultation of Flamey)

Please send any questions for Flamey and Flambo to rainbow@bgnet...

Queer Query