Tensions mount after anti-gay group allowed on campus

By Melissa Hall, Editor-in-Chief and Maria Ramirez, Contributing Writer

Tensions recently escalated on the campus of Governors State University when the H.O.M.E. Group, an anti-homosexuality group, was allowed to disseminate their anti-gay message to GSU students.

H.O.M.E., an acronym for “Heterosexuals Organized for a Moral Environment” was allowed to set up a table on the GSU campus February 21 and 22 and distribute flyers to students entitled, “The Uncensored Truth About Homosexuals.”

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a nonprofit civil rights organization, classifies H.O.M.E. as an anti-gay hate group. According to its website, the SPLC is “dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry, and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society.”

The presence of H.O.M.E. on campus sparked confusion and outrage among students, particularly among members of GSU’s Gay Straight Alliance (GSA). Julie Bryar, an education major and member of the GSA, expressed her anger at H.O.M.E.’s presence on campus and questioned why they were allowed to be on the GSU campus.

“They were allowed to hand out whatever they wanted,” said Bryar. “However, any other club on campus is required to have their flyer screened and approved by Student Life. They had information based on logical science, which was not logical at all for an academic setting. If this is a free speech zone, then why do I have to go through a million hoops to put something on my table that I booked as well, and I paid to go here? Yet, someone who does not attend this university or has any attachment to it can hand out whatever they want. I was really offended by that.”

Many students felt that the H.O.M.E. Group’s presence on campus created a tense, hostile environment.

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Students share Inauguration experiences

GSU professors and students came together February 26 in Engbretson Hall to share their memories of a trip they will never forget – the journey to Washington, D.C. for the second inauguration of President Barack Obama.

The group celebrated their experiences and recollections of attending the January 21 Inauguration during an event focusing on the importance of civic engagement. The event’s Master of Ceremonies was Sheree Sanderson, Assistant Dean of Students. She kicked off the evening by giving thanks to all the people who helped her put together the event. She referred to the event as a “…historical journey that we went on to the Presidential Inauguration.” She then proceeded to introduce one of her “personal GSU student roving reporters.”

Amanda Ziaja, member of T.W.A.G., produced a video that opened the event, which appeared on the giant projection screen inside Engbretson Hall. The video contained a clip of the Mayor of Hagerstown, Maryland, David S. Gysberts discussing civic duty. Then there was a clip of Dr. Phyllis Dunce encouraging students to become civically responsible. Next, there was a clip of a student talking about the experience of witnessing American history firsthand. Then there were more student testimonials about what they thought of the trip.

Assistant Dean Sanderson proceeded to introduce Dr. Phyllis West, who talked about her belief that

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Freedom of speech and the role of the press

In the context of Governors State University, it is the duty of the Phoenix to keep GSU’s students informed about what is happening on their campus. I have come to realize that I had never fully appreciated the full weight of the responsibility I bear as Editor-in-Chief until very recently, when a situation arose that forced me to examine the responsibilities that come with the title of Editor-in-Chief.

On page 3, the very next page from this editorial, are two letters to the editor that I received. One is from the H.O.M.E. Group. The other is from GSU’s very own Dr. Raven James. One of the letters I received was unsolicited. The letters both address the topic of homosexuality. After much reflection, I felt that it would be wrong and biased to print one of the letters, which was strongly in favor of one position, without providing an equal forum for someone with an opposing viewpoint to be able to state a counter-argument.

As wrong and biased as it would be to print one side’s letter without providing an equal forum to the other, it would be just as wrong to censor either side. The press does not exist to censor, but rather to expose truth. I would be doing a disservice to GSU students by not printing these letters. GSU students need to know what is happening on their campus. Furthermore, they need to know what kinds of messages are being allowed to be spread on their campus, both good and bad.

I will admit that as a human being, I found one of the letters I received incredibly offensive and disturbing. However, as Editor-in-Chief it is my duty to provide a forum for free speech that is unbiased. I will not comment in this editorial as to which letter I found offensive. I believe GSU students should be able to read both and draw their own conclusions without my personal opinion influencing their opinions.

I expect that my decision to publish these letters will elicit responses from Phoenix readers, some of which may not be positive. I welcome all feedback, and especially welcome letters to the editor that can be shared in the next issue of the Phoenix, or on our website, gsuphoenix.com. I do ask that all letters to the editor do not exceed 350 words, and will note that all letters are subject to editing due to space constraints. Also, any profanities will be edited out.

While there are opinions in the world that are unpopular, and in some instances terribly offensive, a truly free press should not serve as a censor. Rather, it is the duty of the press to provide a forum for those opinions, and to allow for its citizens to be informed about what is happening in their community. To ignore an issue does not make it go away.

Melissa Hall
Phoenix Editor-in-Chief

Comic Strip Contest deadline has been extended!

The deadline for the first-ever Phoenix Comic Strip Contest, announced in the February 20 issue of the Phoenix, has been extended! Cartoons will now be accepted through 11:59pm on Friday, March 15.

The winner will now be revealed in the April 17 edition of the Phoenix. The April 3 edition will feature cartoons by three finalists chosen by Phoenix staff. Details on the voting process will be revealed in the April 3 issue. There are a few rules for the contest, which are as follows:

- All eligible entrants must be current GSU students. Students must include their major and expected graduation date when emailing their submissions.
- All entries submitted must be the original work of the artist (NO PLAGIARISM)
- All entries must be free of offensive material. Anything containing curse words, graphic sexual content, or anything else which could be considered offensive will be automatically disqualified from the contest.

Entries should be sent as JPEG, TIFF, or GIF files. For more details, please see gsuphoenix.com.
To the editor on behalf of H.O.M.E. group

Protection and equity for all GSU students & faculty

To the Editor:

Some years ago a well-known liberal attorney, Alan Dershowicz, was so disturbed by the lack of respect for free speech on college campuses, he's on record as saying: "Political correctness is the most serious issue on college campuses. We are tolerating, and teaching, intolerance and hypocrisy" (James Warren, "Drawing Laughs,"Chicago Tribune, April 14, 1991, section 5, p. 2). The situation is even worse now than when Dershowicz noted that.

Colleges are now allowing intolerant hate groups to organize on their campuses, and are even helping to fund those hate groups via fees all students must pay. Needless to say, this is a serious problem that requires remediation.

You may be asking yourself: What hate groups? You should be aware that on college campuses all across this country there are student groups that believe in censorship of "politically incorrect" ideas, that believe in inhibiting dialogue by shouting others down and by refusing to debate (because they would lose the debate), and that believe in bullying others into accepting immoral values. The kind of groups I'm referring to are so-called "gay pride" groups. I experience all this behavior firsthand because I go on college campuses and distribute flyers which explain why homosexual activity is immoral. I was recently at GSU.

Homosexual groups love to smear and label decent, moral people as "homophobes" and "bigots" and "Neanderthals" (et al, ad nauseum) just because these decent people reasonably deem homosexual activity immoral.

These groups also repeatedly offend and outrage blacks by comparing blacks to sexually aberrant people. They do this by comparing the blacks' struggle for civil rights with the struggle by sexually aberrant people for the "right" to engage in disorderly, immoral behavior. To compare blacks with the sexually aberrant is ridiculous and offensive, but homosexual groups do it routinely nonetheless. Talk about bigotry.

And homosexual groups, by strongly pushing the "homosexuals are born that way" propaganda (without any definitive proof incidentally) are effectively ignoring the sexual abuse of children. Researchers know that many homosexuals were sexually abused when they were young, and that sexual abuse can contribute to homosexual orientations. This is all well-documented. Yet the connection between sexual abuse and homosexuality is basically ignored by homosexual groups. What kind of "people" ignore the sexual abuse of children? (Do they ignore it because many of the abusers are same-sex abusers?)

The fact that homosexual hate groups are allowed to organize on college campuses needs to be addressed by colleges. Numerous colleges are helping to create an intolerant, hostile environment that is NOT conducive to education (unless you define education as indoctrination with one-sided, irrational propaganda). And, as we've learned the hard way, a hostile environment can someday morph into a violent one. Do colleges want riots occurring on their campuses like those that occurred during the Vietnam War? That's the direction they seem to be heading in. And by essentially subsidizing hate, they could be courting some serious lawsuits down the road.

Sincerely,

Wayne Lela of H.O.M.E. (Heterosexuals Organized for a Moral Environment)

Raven James, Ph.D.
Addictions Studies & Behavioral Health
Governors State University

Editors note: The full list of references in James' letter can be found in the online edition on gsuphoenix.com
Expect slight rise in tuition

On February 15th, 2013, the GSU Board of Trustees approved tuition and fee raises for the 2013-2014 academic year. I was able to attend the board meeting and afterward sought out our Student Trustee of the board, Erin Fletcher, to find out more detailed information regarding the raises and her affirmative votes in support of them.

According to Fletcher, the increase represents a 2.4 percent increase in tuition. The change in Strategic Initiative will rise to $1 per credit hour and the Facilities fee will increase by $2 per credit hour. Taking into consideration the specific improvements needed to maintain the university, Trustee Fletcher felt that they were within moderation and would benefit the student body to enhance the educational environment and safety of all within the University. All other mandatory fees were unchanged.

The Board of Trustees spent considerable time reviewing the student survey on the student fee referendum. Out of approximately 7,000 students, 215 responses were received with approximately 86.83 percent stating that fees should remain with no increase. Trustee Fletcher’s biggest concern was that 215 respondents account for only .03 percent of the student body.

In defense of her decision to approve these two agenda action items, Trustee Fletcher spoke to many of the students and determined that many of them did not have detailed information on exactly how the increase would affect them or the improvements needed to maintain a safe campus.

Other students she spoke to did not take the survey for a variety of reasons, ranging from the exhaustion of too many requests to take surveys to being unaware of the survey altogether. In speaking with them about her decision to vote as she did, Trustee Fletcher feels that she has received an overwhelming approval for her decision.

Trustee Fletcher has acknowledged the breakdown of communication within the student body: "For future reference, I have recommended that discussions and information in regards to student-focused issues extend beyond surveys and that those intended improvements to the university with regards to this increase in funds be noted throughout campus as we move forward."

It is incredibly important for students to be actively engaged on campus. As students, we must offer feedback and suggestions to student leaders. We must vote for our student representation. We must stay informed about the things that go on at Governors State University. To get involved, vote for your student representation in the upcoming online elections March 25th through April 1st (more details to follow). Keep up with GSU news by tuning in to TWAG, ThisWeek@GSU, and continue to read the campus newspaper, The Phoenix.

If you would like to know more about the tuition raises or any other campus issues, please contact a Student Senator, or visit us on our Facebook page. As our university president, Dr. Maimon alluded to in a recent interview, civic engagement and career excellence lead to success. It is up to you to be an active member of the GSU community.

Kayla Randolph-Clark
Illinois Board of Higher Education
GSU Student Representative

New writing group focuses on veterans

By Jonathan Hutchinson
Contributing Writer

Beginning this month, English Professor Robin Thompson will be starting a new six-week writing workshop for Veterans. The Veterans Writing Group will allow veterans to learn the techniques of narrative writing and poetry. Once enough participants are signed up, the first workshop will take place on the campus of Governors State University in March.

Professor Thompson said her love for narrative writing inspired her to create this workshop. Thompson believes that the veteran population can be underserved in society, and for her, "It’s just a way to give back."

Thompson’s 17-year teaching career certainly gives her the experience she needs to teach veterans narrative writing. She believes the community could benefit from the writing of veterans, and suggested that one day the program could be expanded to their families.

Professor Thompson thinks that after the initial six-week workshop is finished the program should continue.

In addition to the veterans who will enroll in this free workshop, former students of hers have expressed interest in the workshop.

As for writing workshops that are not for veterans, one would simply have to go to the development office to find out about the workshops that are currently being offered.

Being the mother of a son in the Armed Forces, Thompson has faith that her son would have a lot to say after his tour of duty is over. She also believes this workshop would be beneficial to families and loved ones who would like to share their stories.

According to literature promoting the new group, veterans who join the Veterans Writing Group will receive help in take ownership of their experiences, bridging the cultural divide between military and civilian life, learning new skills and gain fresh confidence, and connecting with other vets in a small, supportive group environment.

As Thomas G. Bowie, Jr. so eloquently stated in Memory and Meaning: The Need for Narrative, “...personal narrative invites memory to coalesce into meaning, inviting both the storyteller and his or her audience to 'get the war straight' in our minds.”

For more information, contact Robin Thompson at (708) 534-4581 or rthompson@govst.edu.
What Say U, GSU?

What new programs, services, or majors would you like to at GSU?

"I would like GSU to offer a Dental Hygiene program. It would be great if the program focused around that specialty."
- Noor Halawa
Palos Hills
Healthcare Administration

"I would love to see a fraternity or sorority. My mom and dad were Greeks. I would love to follow in their footsteps. It's about helping people."
- Jessica Buford
 undeclared
Matteson

"When I transferred here I changed my major to Interdisciplinary Studies because GSU offered no secondary education for history majors."
- Danielle Scaccia
Interdisciplinary Studies
Crestwood

"More classes that start 6:30 p.m to 9:20 p.m. It helps me out with scheduling conflicts throughout the day. I would also have more free time after class without it being too late."
- James Fisher
Media Communications
Glenwood

Organized sporting clubs coming to GSU?

By Samantha Kaspar
Staff Writer

In anticipation of GSU’s first freshman class, the university is working hard to ensure that there are clubs and organizations available to accommodate multiple interests.

From computer science to wellness and art to the Gay Straight Alliance, GSU currently has over 50 organizations in place and the college is planning on expanding its activities to include more club sports.

Dean Jennings, Assistant Program Director of Student Life, said that the process to add new sports clubs is underway and they are planning to have the new programs in place by the time the freshman arrive in 2014.

In addition to the bowling and table tennis teams that are already in place, GSU will offer sports clubs in men’s softball, men and women’s volleyball and basketball, golf and cross-country.

"Although the programs are still being developed, the club level sports will be open to everyone. We are trying to make it as competitive as we can," said Jennings.

If you still can’t find a club to suit your interest, you can start your own club. A minimum of seven students can seek a charter to form their own organization through the Office of Student Leadership.

GSU hosts first Black Women Rock awards ceremony

Expressionist, Creative Soul, and Sistah Philanthropist. The ceremony also consisted of various speeches and performances.

Guest speaker Connie L. Lindsey, Executive Vice-President of Northern Trust, spoke about her passion for advocacy. She also talked about how powerful women value what they can deliver to the community.

The ceremony featured a music video honoring prominent black women such as Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman and Michelle Obama.

GSU President Elaine Maimon opened the ceremony speaking about the importance for students who are role models of themselves to see other role models. "We are very proud of all the success of our students. All of you are winners," said Maimon.

The five award recipients were Sharon Starks (Passionate Advocate Award), Cynthia Gail Frye (Miz Entrepreneur Award), Nneka J. Howell (Literary Expressionist Award), Diana Muhammad (Creative Soul Award), and Shirley Faye Davis (Sistah Philanthropist Award).

Throughout the ceremony were performances by Karen Caesar-Smith of the GSU Acappella Choir, and LAVA The Poet, accompanied by Edward H. White Career Academy Poetry Guild.

The ceremony was brought to life by Vanessa Newby, along with the help from GSU’s Black History Month Committee comprised of Sheree Sanderson, Randi Schneider, Roshanda Ross, and Britanni Burnett.

"It’s an honor to be recognized for helping people. Seeing the smile on the faces of those I’ve helped is the greatest reward," said Shirley Faye Davis, Sistah Philanthropist Award winner.
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Learn the etiquette skills needed when meeting potential clients or employers in social settings.

Luncheon workshop includes:
- full meal with manners instruction for each course
- appropriate and professional attire presented
- tips on social etiquette skills for professional settings

Etiquette Luncheon for GSU Students
- Tuesday, March 26
- 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
- E-Lounge

Fee: $5
Registration required.

Contact:
The Office of Career Services
A1120
708.235.3974
career@govst.edu
Chemistry student accepted into top doctoral program

Most of those students are from Illinois and Indiana, making it incredibly difficult for international students to be accepted into the program. Graduate teaching assistant positions are even more difficult to come by. “Due to competitive funding, some students attend programs that do not offer complete tuition waivers or are awarded stipends that do not completely cover living expenses,” said Dr. Henne. “In Ravi’s case, he will be receiving $23,000 per year as a stipend with excellent health/student wellness benefits and $37,000 in tuition costs ($60,000 per year for 5 years or $300,000 in overall benefits). Many students do not realize the tuition/stipend benefits that accompany acceptance into a top doctoral program. One can easily graduate debt free from these programs with a wage that allows the pursuit of personal interests, travel, etc.”

Yerabolu’s acceptance into Purdue’s Analytical Program will allow him to pursue his life’s passion. Upon receiving his Doctorate from Purdue, Yerabolu wants to begin a career working as a research scientist, in the area of mass spectrometry-based proteomic analysis. Even as a child, Yerabolu always knew what he wanted to do with his life. “When I was a child and someone asked me what I wanted to be, I always said I wanted to be a scientist,” said Yerabolu.

Prior to coming to GSU to obtain his Masters in Analytical Chemistry, Yerabolu received his Bachelors in Pharmacy from The Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Yerabolu chose GSU because the university was one of the few American schools he found that specifically offered a program in analytical chemistry. He also cited GSU’s affordability as a factor in his decision to attend GSU.

“To be frank, most colleges have general chemistry, but only a few schools have Analytical Chemistry exclusively in their curriculum,” said Yerabolu.

During his time at GSU, Yerabolu created a website for the School of Analytical Chemistry Department. The website, analyticalchemistrygsu.com, serves as a valuable resource for other students in the Analytical Chemistry Department, as well as for Yerabolu himself.

“I was always interested in knowing the current updates in my field,” said Yerabolu. “I also wanted to generate the same kind of interest among the students of my department in GSU too. I also wanted to provide a handy access to many of the reference materials, articles and videos, all at one place.”

Yerabolu is incredibly grateful that he was given the opportunity to study analytical chemistry at GSU. He is especially appreciative for all that his professors have done for him over the years. Firstly, I would like to give my special thanks to Dr. Henne. Secondly, I would like to thank Dr. Addison, Dr. Fugles, Dr. Darcy, and Dr. Piotr for supporting me and writing me letters of recommendation,” said Yerabolu.

Dr. Henne, who formed a close relationship with Yerabolu during his time at GSU, thinks Yerabolu was an exceptional student whose passion for science was evident. “Ravi was an exceptional student in the classroom,” said Dr. Henne. “He really cared for his fellow classmates in the program and he was so happy that GSU had given him the opportunity to study in the US.”

Inauguration experiences

GSU students are fortunate to be there, and her conviction that GSU students are global citizens that can make a difference. She expressed her gratitude in the President’s confidence that GSU students are global citizens, and ended by thanking President Elaine Maimon for allowing those in attendance to be global citizens.

Following the video, several GSU students gave their own presentations accompanied by slideshows. Each of them covered a different segment of what they experienced at the Presidential Inauguration. The first to present was Shaniqua Jones from the College of Arts and Sciences.

Jones remembered her deceased family members during her trip, saying, “When I stood on the streets of Washington, I stood with my deceased father who served our country over 50 years ago. I stood with my mother who was born and raised in Mississippi in 1940.” Jones also remarked, “I laughed, I cried, and I laughed some more.”

Patrice Wilbur from the College of Arts and Sciences presented next. The Inauguration trip was not her first trip to Washington, D.C. Her group arrived in Maryland at 7:00 p.m. and had to be up at 4:30 a.m. the next morning. She said was exhausted, but her energy level was at an all-time high. When they finally arrived in Arlington Stadium, there were rows of buses for the group to ride to D.C. She drew laughter from the audience by saying, “Getting to the train was a breeze, but getting off the train was a trip.”

They visited the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial as part of the many stops they made on the way to the Inauguration. Wilbur expressed thanks and gratitude to the team that took her around D.C.. Wilbur said the trip, “Was very emotional, very touching.”

Suzette Shepherd, from the College of Arts and Sciences, was so touched by her experience that she expressed her gratitude by presenting her mentor, Professor Tammy Winn, with a bouquet of roses. She called the trip to Washington, D.C., “the trip of a lifetime.”

Michael Alexander, from the College of Human Health and Sciences, conveyed his gratitude towards mayor David S. Gysberts because he was inspired by his dedication to social work, his hospitality toward the GSU students, and the political change he was able to make as mayor.

Unfortunately, an ABC News interview of Dr. Phyllis West was not shown at the event because of a bad internet connection. However, the event continued with Dr. Elizabeth Johnson, an Assistant Professor of Social Science at GSU. Dr. Johnson gave a glimpse into the hard work she and her team went through, to make it possible for the GSU students to go on the trip.

GSU President Maimon also spoke about February 26 being an Election Day, and the importance of local elections. She also talked about the importance of civic engagement.

Sanderson then called to the stage all of the students who participated in GSU’s Washington D.C. Inauguration trip. Audience members were then invited to mingle with the participants and ask them about their experiences in Washington D.C.
Anti-gay group on campus continued from pg 1

uncomfortable environment. Several students engaged in heated arguments with members of H.O.M.E. One student, a biology major who was asked to remain anonymous, questioned the validity of the information that H.O.M.E. presented as facts about homosexuality.

The student argued with H.O.M.E., “Although you are showing me statistical evidence to support your argument, you still have not showed me biological proof to support your reasoning for why homosexual acts of sodomy causes HIV and or AIDS, although neither partner has any sexual transmitted diseases to begin with.”

Some students felt as though their safety was being threatened by the presence of H.O.M.E. Dana Duncan, an education major and GSA member, said of H.O.M.E.’s presence, “People were scared; they brought a type of fear. We were debating whether to go to our cars together as a group or to walk to our cars with security. H.O.M.E. was offered security. We were not offered security. If students here strongly disagree with what we do with our life choices, anything could have happened; anything can happen when there is conflicting reasoning. Why are we not entitled to the same protection as H.O.M.E.? We deserve the same respect.”

Although H.O.M.E.’s presence on campus caused feelings of apprehension and discomfort among many students, many were united in their opposition of H.O.M.E.’s anti-homosexuality message. According to William Schranz, Secretary of the GSA, several campus club leaders were united in their opposition of the presence of H.O.M.E. on campus, and offered moral support to the GSA.

Schranz contacted several other campus clubs, such as ALAS (Association of Latin American Students), the Accounting/Finance club, and the Social Work Student Organization, and arranged a counter-protest to the H.O.M.E. Group’s anti-gay message.

Part of the GSA’s counter-protest was arranging a “kiss-in”, in which members of the same sex would kiss each other in front of the H.O.M.E. Group’s table.

“I wanted to take the opportunity to take a crappy situation and turn it into a positive,” said Schranz.

In an email responding to the Phoenix’s request for information on the H.O.M.E. Group, H.O.M.E. founder Wayne Lela said that his group’s mission was “to inform people as to why homosexual activity is immoral, relatively unhealthy, somewhat financially costly, disordered, and a bad legal precedent.”

Lela also insinuated that the GSA was responsible for creating an unsafe campus environment. Although not naming the GSA specifically, Lela wrote in his email, “It seems like the one group allowed to exhibit hateful behavior is the gay group. Members love to call names like homophobe, bigot, and worse.”

When asked by the Phoenix how many members the H.O.M.E. Group has, Lela wrote, “Do you discriminate against groups based on their size? Shouldn’t ideas be judged on their own merit, not on how many people happen to call names like homophobe, bigot, and worse.”

Lela also refuted the SPLC’s classification of H.O.M.E. as a hate group, saying, “The SPLC is a liberal, prejudiced, hate group. It’s a bad joke. They have little credibility with thinking people.”
A week or two into my first term (Spring 2011) at Governors State University a group called H.O.M.E. had a table set up in the atrium. There were two white aged men at the table, and signs with the word homosexuality big and bold. I assumed the dudes at the table were gay. I went up to the balcony to read, and after about a half an hour I heard a woman screaming and a security guard with a deep voice asking her to calm down. Two points that hadn’t been connected were connected by overhearing the altercation; that table wasn’t about what I thought it was. I packed up my book and hadn’t been connected were connected by voice asking her to calm down. Two points that were gay. I went up to the balcony to read, and overhearing the altercation; that table wasn’t about what I thought it was. I packed up my book and

One student I spoke to said that she sided with H.O.M.E. and told me a story. She was at a beach with her young son, and there was a pair of men also at the beach that were doing gun fights, speed dating events, second chance promoting, zombies vs. humans, group building exercises with balls of yarn, and other fun things. She was psychically distraught telling me the story, and terrified by the idea that her son could be infected with homosexuality by watching two dudes express how they feel about each other in a public.

I spoke to an Indian student who supported H.O.M.E.’s claims. I tried to impress upon him they are using the same rhetoric that is used to keep untouchables in their place.

Many people I spoke to were as frustrated an angry as I was. It was good to see straight and LGBTQ folks uniting for a common good to voice their frustration together.

As a Human I was livid. Truth?

I started planning a counter protest for the next day, I would have started stirring things up then but I had to run to class. In class, I asked my fellow students if they had seen the two men at the table. Nobody had. By the time class was over the two guys were gone. I did some googling when I got home and found out that the acronym stood for Heterosexuals Organized for a Moral Environment. The counter protest that I had planned for the next day was going to use the slogan “The Uncensored Truth about Homosexuals!”

I engaged the H.O.M.E. representatives in a seemingly civilized conversation, until I recognized one gaping flaw in their argument: they were not citing their sources. So I started demanding a citation after every claim, which obviously frustrated the two men at the booth.

At this point two campus security guards spoke to the two H.O.M.E. representatives explaining that they were not in the legitimate free speech zone on campus. They bickered back and forth with the security guards. I took this opportunity to start organizing. I called every member from the Gay Straight Alliance. I called friends from the Social Work Student organization, I called other friends, I called the president of the Gay Straight Alliance at a local college, and I sent out several emails. During the conversation one of the police men showed the H.O.M.E. representatives, a copy of our school newspaper with the headline article “What To Do If There Is A Shooting On Campus?” and explained that he was worried about the H.O.M.E. representatives security.

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At this point two campus security guards spoke to the two H.O.M.E. representatives explaining that they were not in the legitimate free speech zone on campus. They bickered back and forth with the security guards. I took this opportunity to start organizing. I called every member from the Gay Straight Alliance. I called friends from the Social Work Student organization, I called other friends, I called the president of the Gay Straight Alliance at a local college, and I sent out several emails. During the conversation one of the police men showed the H.O.M.E. representatives, a copy of our school newspaper with the headline article “What To Do If There Is A Shooting On Campus?” and explained that he was worried about the H.O.M.E. representatives security.

After the policeman failed to convince H.O.M.E. to move their table a policeman stayed behind to guard the table. One of the women from the Gay Straight Alliance came and stood with me to talk with the H.O.M.E. representatives. She was visibly bothered by the dehumanizing statements and their pseudo-science—hate-speech. When she left to head off to class an incredibly smart ally with the temperament of a Zen monk engaged in a viciously logical argument over three hours.

I took this time to organize the people walking by without any emotion connection to H.O.M.E.’s hate mongering. I decided to ask everyone that passed coming and leaving school what they felt about the table. Most didn’t understand immediately. They asked “are they for or against homosexuality?” I explained that they were anti-homosexual group based out of Downers Grove, and that I had previously experienced their hate speech my first term on campus. The second question most folks asked was “Why are they allowed to be here?” I explained the nature of “free speech zones” on campus. Most people felt disgusted by the closeness of hate speech to their lives.

One student I spoke to said that she sided with H.O.M.E. and told me a story. She was at a beach with her young son, and there was a pair of men also at the beach that were doing what two dudes do when they like each other.

She was psychically distraught telling me the story, and terrified by the idea that her son could be infected with homosexuality by watching two dudes express how they feel about each other in a public.

I spoke to an Indian student who supported H.O.M.E.’s claims. I tried to impress upon him they are using the same rhetoric that is used to keep untouchables in their place.

Many people I spoke to were as frustrated an angry as I was. It was good to see straight and LGBTQ folks uniting for a common good to voice their frustration together.

On the second day, I showed up to campus several hours early to start rallying the troops. Many people from the day before saw me and said hello as I was stomping around campus. I stopped at Student Life to find out if there was any information about where H.O.M.E. would be located. I called every GSA member, and chatted back and forth with other members in our Facebook group. In the group they were talking about planning a kiss-in. We spoke to a lot of people, and handed out flyers. The tone was a lot calmer than the previous day, but there was still heated tension. Many brave individuals argued against H.O.M.E.’s tautological arguments until they were blue in the face.

At the end of the day the partner of one of the GSA members showed up and smooched-face in front of the H.O.M.E. table. Kiss-In accomplished! We celebrated love at the end of two days of hate.

We had an incredibly amount of fun handing out with students and spreading the love. We made a lot of new friends and allies, including some folks that supported the dehumanizing H.O.M.E. speech.

After two intense days I was emotionally and physically exhausted. I dropped down in one of the chairs in the atrium and hung out with the other GSA members. As I was driving home, I noticed a car that was following me for a lot longer then I usually have a car behind me. I take Steunkel road towards Monee to Western. It’s usually a dark and empty till I get to Western. As the blocks went by I noticed myself getting more and more tense; goose bumps and hair standing on end of feeling. I am a horror movie veteran; I’ve seen every bloody chain saw wielding, zombie chewing, mask wearing, and saw flogging film worth seeing. There have been very few times have I found myself so scared of the world I live in as I was that night driving down Monee Road last week. Then the car behind me turned right, and a wave of relief settled over me. I guess I didn’t realize how terrorized I was by H.O.M.E. until it was over.

People can react in many different ways to trauma. Trauma tends to derail the everyday psychology. Some folks enter flight mode and some folk enter fight mode. I’ve always been on the side of fighting. Nothing else has been ethically tenable to me.
Students sound off on H.O.M.E., GSA tensions

(Letters to the Editor)

To the Editor:

Let’s talk about political correctness. If H.O.M.E. is politically incorrect then they are framing themselves as some kind of rebels fighting for free speech! But they didn’t fight for free speech; they asked for it and received it. It’s a closed loop. H.O.M.E. filled out paperwork, they were given a space, they said what they wanted to say for two days and left. H.O.M.E. received freedom of speech, and now they claim this was barred from them by a homosexual hate group? It’s like if you went to the store and bought teddy bear, and then wrote a letter to the store saying that you weren’t allowed to buy the teddy bear you already own. Maybe H.O.M.E. is implying that freedom of speech is the right to say anything you’d like without repercussions? Speech free from accountability is speech that cannot stand on its own ground. It is like a child who after turning 50, still needs to hold on to their mothers hand to cross the street.

Let’s talk about hate groups. Let’s picture the absurdity of the KKK or a neo-Nazi group doing a Valentine’s Day Bake Sale in the style that the Gay Straight Alliance did. Let’s picture a bunch of neo-Nazis with swastikas tattooed on their forehead arriving early to GSU to set up a table and decorate a table. Let’s picture a trifold full of neo-Nazi couples kissing each other celebrating Nazi love! Let’s picture a group of KKK members patiently swirling the frosting on the cupcakes in the atrium, so that they are just right. Let’s picture a man in a giant white ghost cloak putting little hearts on sticks into each cupcake. Let’s picture a bunch of neo-Nazis watching Illinois vote Yes that its ok for two racists to marry and have same shaped doilies under them. It’s absurd, but if neo-Nazi’s took their voice and work together to better our community and experience together. I have met more students outside of my classroom in the past week than I have in the past year. I have watched the leadership of all the campus groups unite together. For the first time since I came back to school, I feel like I am a part of a united community. Do groups like H.O.M.E. still upset me, absolutely. But now I see their presence as a reason and a reminder that I must be active and get involved.

I’m proud that our university supports a “public square” philosophy as its central mission. I can think of no better opportunity to encourage students to find their voice and work together to better our community and experience together. This very philosophy creates an environment that protects and encourages our rights to organize and be heard. It’s a right that I have been guilty of taking for granted.

To the university, thank you for your commitment to our educational experience in and out of the classroom.

To the members of H.O.M.E., thank you for reminding me of my rights and awakening the beast inside.

To my fellow classmates, let’s find our voices and be heard.

Danielle LeMonnier

Secretary, Gay Straight Alliance

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Sudoku solutions from pg 12

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Crossword solutions from pg 12

GSU Happenings

**Going Gaga**
- Preview of 3rd Annual Gender Matters Conference
- March 7
- 4:30 - 6 p.m.
- Engbreton Hall

**Europe Arts Tour: Summer 2014**
- Information session
- March 13, noon
- D2446

**Women's History Month**
- Open Class: Ways of Making Digital Art
- March 15, 1-3 p.m.
- E1981

**Generating Hope: Post-Incarceration Struggles**
- March 11
- 3 - 5:30 p.m.
- Engbreton Hall

**Cloud Computing and Virtual Machines**
- March 27
- 4 to 6 p.m.
- Engbreton Hall

**Dr. Roberta Ness**
- "So You Think You Know Innovation?"
- March 7
- 7 p.m.
- Center for Performing Arts

**Women's History Month**
- Open Class: Ways of Making Digital Art
- March 15, 1-3 p.m.
- E1981

**Cloud Computing and Virtual Machines**
- March 27
- 4 to 6 p.m.
- Engbreton Hall

Comics

**PHD: Sleep Disorders**

**COMMON SLEEP DISORDERS IN ACADEMIA**

**Sudoko**

The Phoenix is holding it's first-ever Comic Strip Contest!

The winning comic strip will be featured in new issues of the Phoenix, every first and third Wednesday of the month!

See page 2 for contest details.

*PHD* ("Piled Higher & Deeper"), a comic about being a graduate student, is by Jorge Cham. Updates occur about twice per week. To read more comics, head to www.PHDcomics.com

Show off your super talents!