

# The Lavender

## Inaugural Edition

LGBTQ Resource Center

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### UW Oshkosh Opens New LGBTQ Resource Center

By Dr. Liz Cannon, LGBTQ Resource Center, Director

Often times, phoenix-like, good fortune arises from adversity. Such is the case with the new LGBTQ Resource Center at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. Many of us labored for years to bring such a center to campus. Despite years of meetings and proposal drafting, it took the increase in harassment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students, faculty, and staff, during the 2006 election, to galvanize the University into concrete action. The harassment was a result of the Wisconsin referendum to amend the State constitution to define marriage as “one man-one woman” and stop legal recognition of same-sex unions. Although we had been repeatedly told that the stumbling block to a center was limited campus space, Provost Lane Earns found a space, and the University now has an LGBTQ Resource Center. It is a time of celebration!

Though the way was not without turbulence in our quest for a center, our administration is definitely supportive of LGBTQ issues: Chancellor Wells was the first to chair the Advisory Committee to the Inclusivity Initiative, a system-wide group working to improve campus climate for LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff, and Provost Lane Earns and Vice

Chancellor Petra Roter have been very supportive of issues affecting the LGBTQ Community at UW Oshkosh.

While celebrating, some have still asked why we need such a center. We have a strong all-university committee, the LGBTQ Education and Advocacy Council, who runs SAFE trainings to give straight allies tools to be supportive. We have a strong student group, Rainbow Alliance for HOPE, which is one of the most active student organizations I’ve encountered. Why do we need an LGBTQ Resource Center? One reason is that the Center is a physical symbol of the University’s commitment to its mission to provide a safe, nurturing, learning environment for all students and embrace differences of sexuality, gender expression, ability, race, ethnicity, and age.

A second reason is that a Center can provide resources that a committee and a student group cannot. Not only is it a gathering place that is safe for GLBTQ and our straight allies—a place to study, a place to relax, a place to join in conversation—but it is also an information-gathering place for those looking for both local and campus services that address the needs of TLGBQ. Not only is it a

library of BGTQL books, journals, and magazines that can engage both individual searches for knowledge and research needs for classes, but it is also a resource for professors wishing to include QBGLT material in their curriculum. (Yes, the Center will provide programming to increase campus awareness of issues such as the conundrum of queers in the military and what being transgender means. But one-time programs can be attended or not. In a University setting, validation is given to people and subjects that are studied.) Not only is it a voice to join others speaking of diversity—and we do not train our students to join the world as it is in the 21<sup>st</sup> century if we do not teach them to willingly and joyfully operate in a diverse world—but it is a focal point to generate best practices for the myriad of services the University offers wishing to reach our LGBTQ campus community.

Do we need an LGBTQ Resource Center? The LBGTQ Council thought so and drafted a proposal with the full backing of HOPE. The administration thought so and designated space and resources to create it. And I strongly believe we do. I am honored to be the first director of the Center. Let’s celebrate our good fortune!

### Calendar of Events

#### December

Dec 1 ~ World Aids Day.

Dec 1 ~ Mon 12 - 1  
*HIV:Whats Really Going On?* With Christine Williams (a Social Network Testing Specialist with AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin) & Robert.

Dec 1 ~ Mon 2:30—4:30  
FREE HIV Testing in Reeve 207.

Dec 1 ~ Mon 6:30  
Filming of “And the Band Played On” followed by a talkback with Jack Talbot, in the Resource Center.

Dec 1 ~ Candlelight Vigil, sponsored by Rainbow Alliance for HOPE, held following the movie.

Dec 3 ~ Wed 12pm. *The Conundrum of Queers in the Military*. Part of our Brown Bag Lunch Series. Presented by Thomas J Wolf.

Dec 12 ~ Fri 2pm. LGBTQ Council Meeting. In the lower level of the Campus Center for Equity & Diversity.

### LGBTQ Council for Education & Advocacy News

The LGBTQ Council has entered its 5th year with the charge to visionary leadership, education, and advocacy necessary to cultivate an equitable, inclusive, and supportive climate for University Wisconsin Oshkosh community members of all sexual and gender identities. Co-chaired by Dr. Jordan Landry, Assistant Dean of the

College of Letters & Science and Thomas J Wolf, President of the Oshkosh Student Association, the Council has spent the past semester SAFE training faculty, staff and students; serving as the advisory group for our new LGBTQ Resource Center; discussing the results of the Campus Climate Study as it relates to the LGBTQ community; and

providing support and education to various departments across campus.

As the year progresses we are developing a second phase of SAFE training; preparing for the spring Cultural Diversity Week; and continuing to educate and advocate for the UW Oshkosh LGBTQ Community.

## Transgender Day of Remembrance

By Jack Scheerer

Ebony Whitaker, shot and killed behind a daycare center on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Simmie Williams, shot and killed on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Sanesha Stewart, stabbed to death on February 10<sup>th</sup>. Angie Zapata, beaten to death with a fire extinguisher on July 17<sup>th</sup>. Lawrence King, shot in a classroom by a fellow student on February 12<sup>th</sup>. Felicia Melton Smyth, stabbed to death on May 26<sup>th</sup>. All of these people, and several more, were slain this year for being transgender or otherwise gender variant.

November 20<sup>th</sup> of this year marks the tenth annual Transgender Day of Remembrance, founded by Gwendolyn Ann Smith. Originally held as a memorial service for the November 28<sup>th</sup>, 1998 murder of transgender woman Rita Hester, this annual date is held to remember the members of our community who are no longer with us due to hatred and bigotry. What started as a local memorial to one woman is now an international event. On this day, we do not only recognize the murders of those who self-identified as transgender, but of anybody who was killed or allowed to die because of perceived deviance from "traditional" gender norms, even if that "deviance" is simply a man holding his wife's purse

while she goes into a store. And this year, on the ten year anniversary of the murder of Rita Hester, hate crimes based on gender identity and expression still have not ceased, and they are just as brutal as ever. Crimes committed against gender variant people are often more violent than other crimes due to transphobic rage.

This dehumanization does not stop at death! After a transgender person is murdered, his family and friends may further suffer upon viewing the response of the media and the court system to that murder. Entire lives and identities are commonly erased or rewritten in the case of a transgender person. Articles reporting on the death of Sanesha Stewart referred to her as a "hooker" despite protests from her neighbors, who insist she was not a sex worker. And those who were known to have been sex workers, such as Ebony Whitaker, are blamed for their own deaths by implying that it is somehow less of a crime to murder a sex worker and, by extension, that sex workers are less valuable as humans. Kellie Tellesford, found strangled in her room by a scarf tied so tight that paramedics could not get more than their fingertips between it and her neck, had her death

blamed on a "kinky sex game" for no reason other than that she was a pre-op transsexual and people associated that with kinky sex. Stereotypes of the dangerously perverted deviant which affect many of our lives every day carry on after death when murderers are forgiven for their crimes on the basis that the people they killed were asking for it by their own circumstances. And despite the fact that the APA style guide's entry has since 2005 stated that the appropriate pronouns with which to refer to a transgender person are the ones that person prefers or used publicly, often the pronouns assigned at birth are *still* the default, such as in the case of Ruby Molina, known to be transitioning yet still referred to as "he" by the Sacramento Bee.

Over 20 transgender and gender variant people have had their lives taken in 2008, and there is no sign that next year will be any different. This is why Transgender Day of Remembrance exists. Not simply to say "transgender people exist and deserve respect," but to help people understand that the lack of respect we receive has dire, lethal consequences and that that lack of respect must be challenged.

## A Year of Promise

By Shawn Patrick, Rainbow Alliance for HOPE, President

On behalf of the Rainbow Alliance for HOPE Executive Board I would like to welcome all of our new and returning students. The start of the 2008-2009 is an exciting year for LGBTQ students, faculty, staff and their allies at UW Oshkosh. Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year HOPE has been working to expand many of its programs.

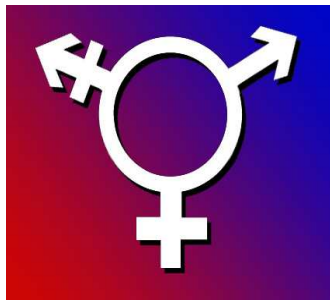
In October we had our annual Coming Out Week. This year's events were a success, in particular Dr. Jimmie Manning's presentation, "What's the Mat-

ter with Sex". In total we had over 250 participants to the Coming Out Week events. HOPE also continued the tradition of helping the LBGTQ Council with SAFE training and the department of Residence Life with the awareness and sensitivity training regarding sexual orientation and gender identity.

This year HOPE has expanded their Queer Peer Support Program. Already this semester the program has had over a half dozen participants. This program selects LGBTQ

students who go through a training process with the University Counseling Center and are then matched up with current students. The mission of Queer Peer program is to help queer and questioning students at UW-O succeed during their time at the university, reach their full potential as individuals, and connect with other queer UW Oshkosh students in an intimate and confidential setting.

The year is not even half way over and already we have accomplished so much!



Linking the Internationally accepted symbols for male and female, this Transgender symbol is an image of pride and freedom.

*"This dehumanization does not stop at death!"*



Popularized by San Francisco artist Gilbert Baker, the Rainbow Pride Flag represents diversity in the Queer community with its 6 colors.

## Matthew Shepard

By Thomas J Wolf

October 12, 2008 marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Matthew Shepard's death. A death, that for many of us still resonates deep within as each year we recall the brutality that left him tied to a fence like a scarecrow protecting its field from intruders. I was coming to the end of a 6 year tour in the United States Marine Corps when the news was filled with the aftermath of hate.

I could not believe what I was hearing and struggled within to keep my emotions from betraying my own masquerade. That could have been me!

How could such fear lead two men to such hate and gruesome acts of inhumanity? This could not be real, but it was as thousands kept vigil and prayed for this "shepard" of Wyoming. That "Big Sky" witnessed terror

and horror as every whip with the butt of a pistol silenced another soul and every degrading kick was felt in the heavens. This was not justified by social law, or sanctified by religious dogma. Yet thousands celebrated this heinous crime as another queer was sent to "hell".

We, the Queer Nation, had the last laugh as Matthew's death empowered us and brought us out of the dark. We marched, we shouted, we persevered! Matthew is our "shepard" and he guides us everyday, showing us the path through this heterosexist world. A world that is changing in excruciatingly slow moments, but it is changing as awareness and acceptance builds.

For the second semester in a row, I have acted the part of Matthew, as he was forced to

play the part of a scarecrow. I have witnessed the change in people as they journey through our tunnel of oppression and visualize the horrors that haunt our dreams. They are healing as we are healing and eventually we will once again become human.

To learn more about Matthew Shepard and how you can make a difference, visit:

[www.matthewshepard.org](http://www.matthewshepard.org)



Matthew Shepard.

*"the "Big Sky"  
witnessed terror and  
horror..."*

## HONORED QUEER

BY Thomas J Wolf

Though the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is no longer home to Dr. Ann Malain, it seemed only fitting to honor her as Queer of the Month for our Inaugural Edition. Mentor to so many of us, Ann was instrumental in the struggle to gain an LGBTQ Resource Center and with countless other issues affecting the LGBTQ community at UW Oshkosh and beyond. She was the one we counted on to counsel us when our frustration was so high we needed a caring and understanding shoulder. If you found yourself in need of an answer, or the next step, it was Ann we all called. A veritable Greek Atlas, Ann carried the weight of so many people. In typical Ann Malain fashion, she took it all with tremendous grace and tirelessly led us

to victory on whatever queer issue befuddled our senses. Ann empowered us and showed us that the closet was not a place to hide and our voices should not be silenced.

During her tenure at UW Oshkosh, Ann has served as an Associate Director and EAP Director for the University's Counseling Center, for which she earned the Outstanding Service Award (for nonteaching academic staff) in 2007. She developed an LGBTQ ally and first responders training and facilitated countless SAFE trainings for faculty, staff and students. She co-directed the LGBTQ Council for Education and Advocacy and served on its various sub-committees. Ann worked with the UW System

Inclusivity Initiative and served on the Diversity Leadership Committee. The list goes on and on.

Ann's emigration, with her partner Jean to Canada, left an abyss which can never be filled. Her leadership and support for the LGBTQ Community and beyond was gift from the gods. We count our blessings every day for the guidance she gave and the imprint she left. Knowing that Ann and her partner are living their life the way it was meant to be led—recognized, sanctified and blessed—is all the justification we need to endure the loss. She may reside in a morally superior country, but we know her spirit is with us!



Dr. Ann Malain

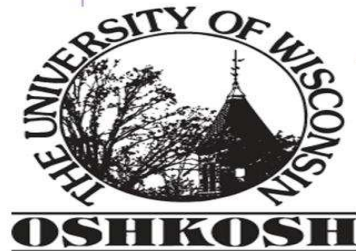
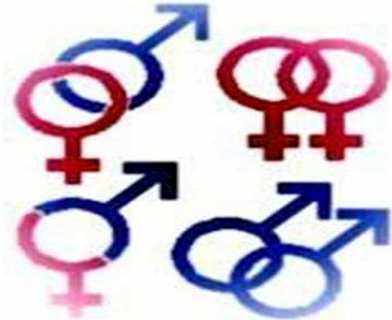
# Help Build the LGBTQ Resource Library



The Resource Center is trying to build a library of materials relating to the LGBTQ community to serve as a resource for students and staff and as a foundation for a future LGBTQ certificate program.

We are looking for materials such as books, movies, or other media related to the LGBTQ community. There are three ways you can help!

- If you have any materials you would be willing to donate, please drop them off at the LGBTQ Center or email the Director of the LGBTQ Center
- If you would like to purchase material to donate, the LGBTQ Resource Center has two wish lists: one for more academic resources and one for more popular resources. We will be happy to email these to you upon request
- We will also be glad to accept monetary donations from which we will purchase library materials. Checks can be made payable to UW Oshkosh



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LGBTQ Resource Center

## Rainbow Builders

Campus Center for Equity & Diversity  
University Wisconsin Oshkosh  
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Oshkosh, WI 54901  
Phone: 920-424-3465  
E-mail: [lgbtqcenter@uwosh.edu](mailto:lgbtqcenter@uwosh.edu)  
Website: under construction

**Together We Create Change!**



Become a part of history and help us build your LGBTQ Resource Center "One Brick at Time". Donate to the Center and we will add your name to our wall of "Rainbow Builders".

You can help by donating queer related books, DVDs, artwork, office supplies, furniture, and of course money. You may also donate your time by offering to facilitate a brown bag on any queer related subject, or volunteering to help staff the center.

Our center can only exist with your help! Please consider making a contribution today.

Join these "Builders" and become a part of UW-Oshkosh history:

Dr Liz Cannon  
Dr Simon Sibleman  
University Books & More  
UW-Oshkosh Health Center  
Rainbow Alliance for HOPE  
Jack Scheerer  
Thomas J Wolf  
Miriam Schacht  
Glenn Carlson  
Jared Holewinski

Jesse Smet  
Kyle Thomas  
Dr. Daniel J Maloney  
Alaina Wypiszynski  
Jess Ness  
Serena Knowles  
John Palmer  
Jenn Kiss  
Stan Sweeney  
For more information or to make a donation, please email us at [lgbtqcenter@uwosh.edu](mailto:lgbtqcenter@uwosh.edu) or call 424-3465.