

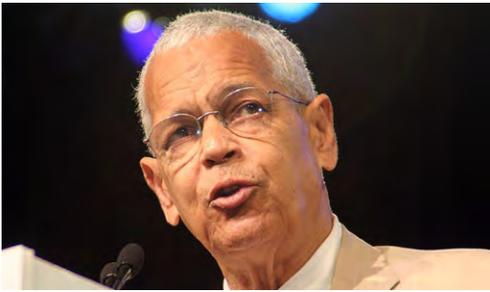
# OUT on Campus

the newsletter of the Standing Committee for LGBT Awareness

February 2008



*Our thoughts, prayers and meditations are with the community of Northern Illinois University...*



“...when I’m asked ‘are gay rights civil rights?’ I answer ‘of course they are!’ Rights for gays and lesbians are not special rights in any way. it isn’t special to be free from discrimination - that is an ordinary, universal entitlement of citizenship...”

NAACP Board Chairman Julian Bond, speaking at the National Conference on LGBT Equality: Creating Change Detroit, MI February 7, 2008 photo: NAACP

## From the Chair: reflections on a midwinter marriage

When I woke up this morning and took a glimpse at the temperature outside I immediately thought to myself “Why did I move here?” Living in Burlington, Vermont this time of year the gauge dips very low, sometimes even BELOW ZERO, which is frankly something I don’t think I will ever get used to. On mornings like this I typically roll over, pull the blankets up over my head and try to remember the tepid winter mornings of my South Carolina home.

So why did I move here? I clearly remember the conversations between my partner, Cori and I as we discussed it. Beautiful falls, more affordable housing, job opportunities. I remember nothing about this freezing weather. Then it comes back to me, the overwhelming feeling of peace that I felt last August 25th, when Cori and I were legally bound as a couple by the State of Vermont.

When Cori and I had our commitment ceremony over a year ago while living in Maryland, it was still just an idea that we might move to a place that our union would be legally recognized. I remember the feelings of happiness in committing to her in front of our loved ones, yet there

was a void present due to the fact that our union was not recognized by the state of Maryland. On one hand, we had said our vows and made a commitment to stick together through thick and thin. On the other hand, my parents would still have more legal rights than Cori to make decisions for me and about my belongings in the event

*During this month when love is celebrated it is important that we keep our eye on the prize; that these basic human rights should be afforded to all couples in this country.*

that I would not be able to. These and many other concerns drifted away upon our civil union, almost as quickly as the “ceremony” itself.

Because we had a commitment ceremony not a year before, we decided that a quick union with a Justice of the Peace would be most appropriate. We picked up our license for our union, along with our license for our dog at the City Clerk’s office (multitasking at its finest), for the mere cost of \$28. We made an appointment

with a JP, and invited our friend Amber over to take pictures and go out to dinner afterwards to celebrate. It is a good thing we had Amber taking photos, otherwise we may not have even remembered it happened. The reality is the legal union of any two people is an incredibly quick thing. Literally the JP pulled into our driveway, married us, signed our paperwork and chatted a little before she left,

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# Cabaret 2008: Call for Talent

***Glamour! Fashion! Fabulous!***



Can you believe it's that time again? Yep, convention and Cabaret are right around the corner. Now it's the official call for Cabaret performers. That's right folks, we need you! We need Queens! We need Kings! It is a special year for the Cabaret...the 10th Anniversary!

This year's Cabaret marks the end of another era - the last year that Wild Cherry Sucret and Coretta Scott Queen will be hosting the event. It's going to be a huge show you will not want to miss! We are working hard to get Cabaret tickets available for purchase online this year so you can buy them before even leaving for convention. More details to come about online ticket pre-sales. If you would like to perform at this year's Cabaret, please send the following information to Rick Moreci via e-mail:

Your name, Your drag name, Your institution, Co-performers (if any)

How many numbers you would like to do?

(only one spot is guaranteed at this point - we don't want a 5 hour show!)

What are you planning to do? (Do you have a song in mind?)

The deadline for performer responses is Fri, Feb 29. Those responding after this date will have no guarantee of being in the Cabaret.

Cabaret Contact: Rick Moreci, Director of Development  
(773)325-4283 [rmoreci@depaul.edu](mailto:rmoreci@depaul.edu)



## **Silent Auction: Call for Donations**

The Standing Committee is currently accepting donations for the Silent Auction at the conference in Atlanta, GA. Money raised from the silent auction will go to the Youth Pride, a peer based youth group dealing with issues concerning LGBT Youth in the greater Atlanta area. If you would you like to donate an item for the auction or have contacts with a major company/organization that you think will donate, please contact Brian Kurisky, Director of Marketing at [kuriskb@ferris.edu](mailto:kuriskb@ferris.edu) or by phone at 231-591-3753.

# EQUALITY

## are you trans-aware?

Each year the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) community celebrates many special occasions. Summer brings coast-to-coast pride festivals, with fall comes LGBT history months, Celebrate Bisexuality Day, etc. Sometimes we joke that we “throw the best party in town” for good reasons or no reason at all – even our social events at the ACPA annual convention are some of the largest and most flamboyant.

This is a quality I appreciate about our community, but the mission of the Standing Committee also includes education. As student affairs professionals we are committed to having a positive impact on students and affecting society by helping the upcoming generation prepare for life in the “real world.” We have the opportunity to network, learn, and support each other as LGBTQ professionals. As you consider this, please ask yourself: What do I know about the other identities within our community?

Chances are that our readership may be familiar with the transgender community – our very name implies a commitment to gender-variant people. The word “transgender” is often used as an umbrella term to describe individuals whose gender identity, expression, and presentation are different than those associated with their biological sex. It may be a one sentence description but there are almost as many ways transgender identity can be constructed as there are trans-identified people.

How does is this relevant to student affairs? Gender identity is salient in every part of our lives and can affect who we live with, how we dress, and how we take care of personal needs like restrooms and overnight accommodations. Most forms request gender and/or sex as an identifier, and we often address each other with gender specific words like Mr. and Mrs.

How can we meet the needs of the trans people in our lives? As students affairs professionals we often have the opportunity to request inclusion, modify policies, and create or revise our everyday paperwork. As you go through the regular tasks in your position, are you considering the needs of transgender people? Can you broaden your perspective of gender to include transgender, transsexual, gender queer, and gender variant people?

As the Standing Committee for LGBT Awareness, we also take this time and space to acknowledge and honor members of our community who identify as transgender, trans-

sexual, gender queer, and gender-variant. Their identities and experiences are personal yet many transgender people make the brave decision to educate others by sharing their stories.

As a member of the queer community and the Standing Committee, I encourage each of our readers to consider the experiences and contributions of transgender people in our community. Consider how you can honor our colleagues, friends, and community members in your advocacy and activism. If you’re not sure how to get started, here are a few ideas:

### ***As you go through the regular tasks in your position, are you considering the needs of transgender people?***

- 1) Acknowledge what you know about transgender identity and what you can still learn. The first step to understanding is admitting that you don’t know, at least not yet, but that you want to. Consider how your experiences are similar to or different from others.
- 2) Spend one week totaling each time you are asked a gender-specific question or expected to disclose your sex and/or gender during everyday activities. You could also do this with your staff or co-workers. What did you observe about this experience? Did you feel any tension or conflict about checking the corresponding “box?” DISCUSS!
- 3) Learn more about the transgender community by reading or visiting the Standing Committee website. Check it out at <http://www.myacpa.org/sc/sc/sglgbta/>
- 4) Talk to a transgender person and really listen. Like all communities, not every transgender person is the same or feels the same about their identity. We can each gain understanding and perspective by hearing people share their experiences.
- 5) Remind ourselves and others that LGBT includes

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# Black History Month: Celebrating LGBT African Americans



## *Audre Lorde*

There's always someone asking you to underline one piece of yourself—whether it's Black, woman, mother, dyke, teacher, etc.—because that's the piece that they need to key in to. They want to dismiss everything else. But once you do that, then you've lost because then you become acquired or bought by that particular essence of yourself, and you've denied yourself all of the energy that it takes to keep all those others in jail. Only by learning to live in harmony with your contradictions can you keep it all afloat. You know how fighting fish do it? They blow bubbles and in each one of those bubbles is an egg and they float the egg up to the surface. They keep this whole heavy nest of eggs floating, and they're constantly repairing it. It's as if they live in both elements. That's something that we have to do, too, in our own lives—keep it all afloat. It's possible to take that as a personal metaphor and then multiply it to a people, a race, a sex, a time. If we can keep this thing going long enough, if we can survive and teach what we know, we'll make it. But the question is a matter of the survival and the teaching. That's what our work comes down to. No matter where we key into it, it's the same work, just different pieces of ourselves doing it.

## *Mandy Carter*

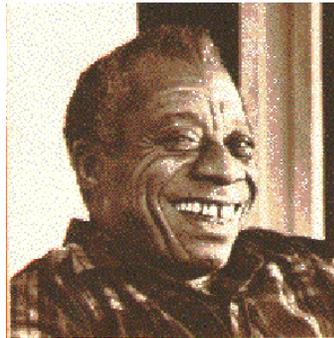


Mandy Carter is a self-described “out, southern, black, lesbian, social justice activist.” 2008 marks her 40th year of working in multi-issue and multi-racial grassroots organizing. Although she was first introduced to social justice activism in 1965 when the Quaker-based American Friends Service Committee visited her high school in Schenectady,

N.Y., it was the 1968 Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Poor People's Campaign that officially marked the beginning of her activism.

Carter is a founding board member of the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), which is the only national civil rights organization for black LGBT individuals and their allies dedicated to fostering equality by fighting racism and homophobia. She currently sits on the boards and/or advisory committees of Durham's Ladyslipper Music, Detroit-based Triangle Foundation, and Vermont-based Kopkind Colony.

## *James Baldwin*



Everybody's journey is individual. If you fall in love with a boy, you fall in love with a boy. The fact that many Americans consider it a disease says more about them than it does about homosexuality.

There is richness of life at the intersection of race/ethnicity and sexual orientation/gender identity & expression. We honor the lives of historical and contemporary LGBT African Americans continuing to show us that LGBT rights are civil rights. To read about more LGBT African Americans, visit the National Black Justice Coalition at [www.nbjcoalition.org](http://www.nbjcoalition.org)

# Getting to Know You....

## Directorate Bio: cris ayala



cristoval g. ayala, resident director at the American University: cris joined the Standing Committee in March 2007. cris has been a resident director at The American University in Washington, DC, since July 2007. Prior to accepting the resident director position with American University, cris served as the Assistant Director for Residential Life and Wellness Initiatives with the University of Maine at Fort Kent. cris received a Baccalaureate of Arts degree in Psychology (1999) from Jacksonville University and a Master of Social Work degree (2001) from the University of Kentucky. During cris' time at the University of Kentucky, cris served as a Hall Director for Jewell Hall's International Living and Learning Community with the Office of Residence Life. cris served a two-year term as an appointee to the University of Kentucky President's Commission on Diversity. cris jointly served the GLBTA Resource Center and Housing and Dining Programs at American University as a National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education intern during summer 2004.

## Directorate Bio: Holly Hippensteel



Holly Hippensteel is currently the director of student life at Carnegie Mellon University. In addition to Carnegie Mellon, Holly has worked at Chatham College, Smith College, and Seton Hill University with predominantly residence life and judicial affairs responsibilities. Holly received her M.A. in Student Affairs in Higher Ed from Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) and is currently pursuing her PhD in Educational Administration from Kent State University. She lives in Pittsburgh with her partner Cheryl and their 3 children (Spencer, Hanna, and Madalyn). Holly served on the directorate of the Standing Committee from 1997 to 2000 as well and is excited about renewing her connection to ACPA through the work of the SCLGBTA.

## Directorate Bio: AJ Haney



Hello Friends! My name is Adam Haney (but my friends call me AJ ;-)) and I am serving in the position of Networking Coordinator. Currently, I am the Program Coordinator for Student Organizations and Campus Activities at DePaul University in Chicago, IL. Before I became a Blue Demon, I was a graduate student in the Higher Education/College Student Personnel Administration program at New York University.

I am very excited to be joining the SCLGBTA and this is my first position on the directorate. I hope to be able to be a great resource for my colleagues and assist in putting together one of the greatest conventions yet. I will be working with volunteers for the convention and the Paul Hart Fund Administration specifically, but also with the Social for the Standing Committee. The entire directorate is an amazing group of people and are definitely "doing the good work" to assist in creating awareness and providing resources for the LGBT Community.

If you're ever in Chicago, be sure to say hello! ;-) I look forward to meeting many of you in Atlanta!

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## The Standing Committee on LGBT Awareness honors commitment to the field

### Outstanding Service Award

#### John Fox

Assistant Director of Residence Life  
University of Colorado - Boulder

### Research Recognition Award

#### Dr. Kristen Renn

Associate Professor,  
Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education  
Michigan State University

### Public Service Award

#### Chase Catalano

Assistant Resident Director  
University of Massachusetts-Amherst

### Val DuMontier New Professional Award

#### Michael Brown

Coordinator of LGBT Student Involvement and Leadership  
Washington University in St. Louis



It is with pleasure that the Standing Committee for LGBT Awareness announces the annual award recipients. This year we received a dozen nominations for a variety of areas. The selection committee had the pleasure of reviewing each nomination and selecting our winners. Congratulations to all of our nominees and recipients!

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all in a matter of about 4 minutes.

What we gained in that short time, however, has changed the way I walk through the world on a daily basis. I no longer feel concern in the back of my mind about our legal safety. I can suddenly check the “married” box on various forms. We can have the same doctors and dentist because we are on the same health plan. We even got a big discount on our car insurance because we are married. Our future children will have the benefit of saying their moms are married and their family is recognized and protected. These are all things I did not realize I would ever be able to benefit from before moving to Vermont.

In looking back on our union, it really makes me sad that something that seems so simple, i.e. 4 minutes and \$28, is still denied to the vast majority of LGBT people in the US. A right that is often taken for granted by heterosexual Americans is so far out of reach for many of us. During this month when love is celebrated it is important that we keep our eye on the prize: that these basic human rights should be afforded to all couples in this country. We need to make our voices heard, and there is no time like an election year to do so. I encourage you to keep your eyes open on your local newspapers for opportunities to get involved and make a difference. Also, don't forget how important your Senators and Representatives can be, and they need to know your thoughts! Check out both <http://www.senate.gov/> and <http://www.house.gov/> for the names and contacts of your elected officials. If you're

feeling extra “sassy,” go ahead and give our President a call. You can find the contact information for the White House at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>. True you won't get to speak to 'ol George himself, but you can leave him a message or shoot him an email. These things may seem small, but every voice counts, and as our elected officials know all too well, every vote counts.

While it is awfully cold here in Vermont, when I remember the reasons for making this move, it all feels worth it. Now, I am not saying that the whole state is void of ignorance and/or discrimination, but I know that the average Vermonter knows the state laws, that LGBT members are present in their community, and that their voices have counted for something. If I have to put up with the freezing weather, snow, chapped lips and ugly snow boots in order to protect myself and my family, I suppose it is not such a huge price to pay. Maybe one day I will even learn to ski... probably not, but a girl can dream, right?



*Claire Williams is the Chair of the Standing Committee on LGBT Awareness and is currently Hous-ing Coordinator at Champlain Col-lege in Burlington, VT.*

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transgender people...and do it! The issues and in-formation that can be true for lesbian, gay, or bisexual people may or may not be true for transgender peo-ple. Don't know...why not ASK?

6) Honor our brothers and sisters in your own way. If you are ready to commit look for small ways to con-tribute. Not ready or able to bring it up at work? Much can be learned from books, websites, and your col-leagues. Don't know any-one who is out to you about being transgender? Think about ways to be an ally – just like we often teach our students and co-workers – and commit to being an ally

in the best way you can.

On a more personal note, I'd like to extend my humble thanks to our transgender colleagues and students. It is nothing short of courage that makes it possible for others to know and appre-ciate your contributions. My identity and experiences have been challenged and enriched by you...and your patience. Your identity and expression are evidence of the diversity in our commu-nity, but you are also valued for your commitment to edu-cating, challenging, and supporting our students in your work as student af-fairs professionals.

*Contributor Jes Berndt is currently a Hall Director at Northern Illinois University.*



**ACPA**  
STANDING COMMITTEE FOR  
**Lesbian, Gay  
Bisexual and  
Transgender  
Awareness**