

Up & Out

The Newsletter of PennGALA

<http://www.alumni.upenn.edu/penn gala>

October 27 & 28

Food, film and fun: Homecoming debuts

The premiere of a film about PennGALA will be just one of our exciting events this Homecoming. We hope you'll join us in Philadelphia Oct. 27 and 28.

A delicious brunch kicks off the festivities Saturday morning. As a special bonus, we're planning the long-awaited premiere of a documentary about PennGALA's history and the remarkable changes in LGBT life that have transformed Penn's campus and alumni community in the last two decades. The 20-minute

documentary interviews students, faculty, staff and alumni who helped bring about the changes. Brunch begins at 10 a.m., with the film and brief remarks to follow at 10:30. Be sure to RSVP. You can register online for brunch and all Homecoming events at www.alumni.upenn.edu/homecom-



[ing2006](#), or call Nicole Maloy in Alumni Relations at (215) 898-6168.

If you're not going to the game, please stay with us for an open meeting of the Steering Committee, beginning at noon. Then at 4 p.m., our Speed Mentoring program will give you yet another chance to help current Penn students find their way into the working world – and life beyond Penn in general. Join us at the LGBT Center (3907 Spruce St.) for one of the most mean-

ingful and successful interactions we have with *tomorrow's* PennGALA members. We need plenty of alumni to participate. Then you can reward yourself by attending the fabulous Taste of Penn party at 6 p.m., this time in the garden of the University Museum.

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Help run PennGALA: it's election time!

PennGALA depends on you to grow and thrive. There's no better way to get involved than to join our Steering Committee, five of whose nine seats are up for election to two-year terms beginning Dec. 1. You'll have the opportunity to help set the agenda, build our outreach to students and administrators, meet new people, plan events, and much more—all through monthly toll-free conference calls. All Regular PennGALA members who were in good standing as of five days prior to the mailing of this newsletter are eligible. Nominate yourself (or another member) in writing and include: the nominee's name, Penn school and year of degree; nominee's address, phone number, and email address; and a 150-word candidate statement that will appear on the ballot. *All of this information is mandatory and nominees will be contacted prior to appearing on the ballot; contact info will not appear.* Send nominations to: PennGALA Nominations, c/o LGBT Center, 3907 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104. You may also fax your nomination to us at 215-573-5751. Or email (if using an MS Word attachment, keep it simple, please) to center@dolphin.upenn.edu **The deadline for receipt of nominations is Oct. 30 at 5 p.m. ET.** As always, our by-laws provide for a gender-diverse Steering Committee (female/male/transgender), and our election format guarantees that no more than five members will be of the same gender.



News Briefs:

Atop the Rankings

It's official: Penn tied atop the list of the Top 20 Campuses in *The Advocate College Guide for LGBT Students*, the first college guide of its kind. The guide rates colleges and universities across the country on a wide range of criteria, including student life, safety, curriculum, housing, and more. Penn shared top honors with the University of Southern California; Princeton was the only other Ivy League campus to make the list. LGBT students from across the country narrowed the list from 680 nominations.

LGBT Center Director Robert Schoenberg GrS'89 said that although the *Advocate* ranking was unlikely to get as much play as the annual *U.S. News* ratings, he nonetheless expects an increase in applications. Admissions officers will now describe the rating when they speak at high schools. "Whatever the impact on numbers, Schoenberg said, "the ranking is a very satisfying achievement. It is one more indicator of how much the University has changed in the last 25 years because so many have worked so hard to make [Penn] a more accepting and supportive place." Provost Ron Daniels also expressed satisfaction that Penn was "one of the top campuses" for LGBT students, specifically crediting the LGBT Center's role.

The University also took 7th place in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, besting all of its Ivy rivals except Harvard, Yale, and Princeton.

Panel Examines Marriage

Cambridge University psychology professor Susan

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Family trees and 'gay' desserts: Alumni Weekend '06

Susan Miller C'83, GEd'83, Gr'01 isn't one to waste time: Arriving from Mechanicsburg, PA in 1979, she found herself coming out to a hundred people in her first month at Penn. Then, "having no closet



Susan Miller: "No closet to go back into"

to go back into," she got more and more involved in Philadelphia's LGBT community. Twenty-seven years later, Miller represented PennGALA at a remarkable Alumni Weekend program in May, under the heading of "Broadening Penn's Family Tree." Moderated by Rutgers associate history professor Wayne Glasker C'80, Gr'94, the program looked at the diverse experiences and intertwined histories of Penn's Asian American, African American, Latino, and LGBT communities. It was a fascinating and often sobering appraisal of the hard work of building a more diverse campus – and then making it accepting and safe for everyone. In Miller's case, that meant enduring verbal and physical assaults on Locust Walk and being forced off a varsity sports team on the premise that an out lesbian would be disruptive. Miller, who serves as undergraduate advisor in Penn's History De-

PennGALA: Looking for members like you!

PennGALA is one of the nation's oldest and largest LGBT alumni organizations. But that doesn't mean we can't grow some more.

PennGALA is your *official* representative and helps you shape the University. Our members mentor students, plan events, and help support the LGBT Center. Our seminars have addressed subjects like women in sports, estate planning, same-sex marriage, and parenting. We bring nationally known speakers like Freedom to Marry's Evan Wolfson and P-FLAG founder Paulette Goodman to campus. How special is this? Very. Few universities have so fully incorporated the LGBT community, including alumni, in their ongoing life. *The Advocate's* first-place rating (see sidebar) is just the latest recognition Penn has received.

You're a PennGALA member already if you're an

partment and teaches in the Women's Studies Program, said that despite obvious progress on campus, Penn still deserves only a mixed report. Other panelists included George S. Huang C'93 and Randolph D. Quezada C'01.

In an upbeat finale to the day's events, an especially well-attended Taste of Penn celebration brought hundreds of alumni from the Diversity Alliance together under a huge tent in the middle of College Hall Green. Once again, PennGALA and its sister Diversity Alliance organizations were co-sponsors, but this time there was an added twist: an entire buffet of desserts (including Jello cups) designed to look like a rainbow flag. Finally, an answer to the question that had dogged previous "TOP" celebrations: "Where's the gay food station?"



PennGALA: now a dessert

LGBT alum. If you know someone we haven't reached yet, please tell her or him to get in touch. There's no commitment and no cost, although we hope you'll be as involved as you can. You can choose simply to receive this newsletter (mailed twice yearly, and soon to be joined by an electronic bulletin). Or, you can get involved in planning events in Philly and elsewhere. Join one of our subcommittees and work on such areas as academic affairs, communications, membership and leadership development, mentoring, campus programming, or advocacy. You'll meet new friends, network, and build a community that serves as your "home base" whenever you return to campus. You can reach us at center@dolphin.upenn.edu (be sure to let us know your name, Penn school and class, and contact information). And please share this newsletter with your Penn friends!

Catching up with...Kirk Marcolina '92

Kirk Marcolina C'92 was co-executive producer of the TV's "Boy Meets Boy" and the creator and supervising producer of "Gay Weddings," both on Bravo and both nominated for GLAAD Media Awards. His newest project, a feature documentary film called "Camp Out," follows 10 Midwest teenagers attending the first overnight camp for gay Christian youth. PennGALA Steering Committee member Ira Hillman, who is also president of the Class of 1992, reconnected with his classmate as work began on their 15th reunion next May.

Ira: *How did you first come up with the idea for "Camp Out?"*

Kirk: A good friend of mine, Pastor Brad Froslee, emailed me asking if I knew any teens who would be interested in going to a new gay Christian Bible camp that he was starting. I emailed him back saying that I myself wanted to come and document the inaugural year of the camp. I directed two seasons of *Bug Juice*, Disney Channel's reality show



about kids at summer camp, so I knew first hand that summer camp makes for a great backdrop for stories to unfold. Add in the religious and gay elements and I was certain that interesting stories would abound at this camp.

What is life like for these kids? What did you discover about them that would most surprise us?

The thing that struck me the most...was that they seemed so much smarter and self-aware than I was at their age. I couldn't imagine being out at 15, let alone having the courage to go to a gay camp! But as I got to know the kids during camp, I saw that in certain ways they were exactly like me at their age – they just wanted to fit in and feel accepted. These campers were just average happy-go-lucky teenagers who were learning about their bodies, developing crushes and trying to figure out who they were and what they wanted to be in this world. They were real. Not hiding, but still sorting things out... and answering questions about spirituality that most adults don't even contemplate. But they were also lonely and they worried a lot. At camp, they got to experience a place where they weren't alone... a place where they were fully accepted.

What role did your being out and being Christian play in your time at Penn?

Growing up, I went to Catholic schools my entire life. In fact the first person I came out to was my high school pastor. He told me that I could be-

come straight if I tried hard enough. He told me I just had to follow three easy steps: 1) Date a girl. 2) Pray to God. 3) Avoid boys who I thought were cute...I followed all of these steps, and ended up crying myself to sleep many nights. Needless to say his prescription to become straight didn't work.

When I arrived at Penn it was the first time I didn't feel the overt pressure to be a good Catholic boy. I joined the Newman Center but as I

slowly came out I stopped going to Mass every Sunday. I wasn't sure how to integrate my sexuality with a religion that told me that I was evil. It's a question I'm still struggling with today. That's why it was so refreshing to meet these teenagers who are so comfortable with their religion and their sexuality.

Do you think camps like this one – and the film – can help bridge the perceived gap between religious doctrine and acceptance of homosexuality?

I think there is a knee-jerk reaction from the gay community against Christians – we too often assume if someone is religious that they will preach hatred towards us. There's also a knee-jerk reaction from the Religious Right against the GLBT community – they too often assume that everyone from our community is a faithless sinner. Hopefully this camp and the film can teach (both communities) that they have more in common than they might think.

If you could accomplish one thing with this film, what would it be?

I hope audiences will have a better understanding of the struggle teenagers face trying to find their place in the world, as they grow up gay and Christian. I hope this film will be an inspiration for gay folks to reconnect with their faith, and for straight religious folks to become more accepting of our community.

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Golombok was a keynote speaker at "Real Families, Real Facts," a symposium on same-sex parenting co-sponsored by the LGBT Center in May. According to the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, 160 participants gathered in a Center City Philadelphia hotel to hear about the latest research, which continues to show that gay and lesbian parents are as capable as their "straight" peers. The event was co-sponsored by Family Pride, whose former co-chair, Scott Davenport, was a panelist at a PennGALA program on parenting in 2003.

Alumni News Briefs

PennGALA Treasurer **Joan Lau EAS'92** will receive this year's Young Alumni Award of Merit at a ceremony Friday evening Oct. 27th at the University Museum. A neuroscience researcher at Merck & Co., Joan is a past PennGALA co-chair and teaches advanced cellular biology at Penn. Congratulations, Joan!...**Karen Magee WG'89** has been named CEO of PlanetOut, the LGBT media and entertainment company on whose board she's served since 2003. She arrives from a 10-year career at Time Warner. PlanetOut recently acquired publisher LPI (parent of *Advocate* and *Out* magazines and Alyson Books), as well as travel company RSVP Cruises. Magee said in a statement that continued integration would be a priority... **Amy Errett WG'88**, CEO of Olivia Cruises and Resorts, joined Olivia founder Judy Dlugacz in winning this year's Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award for consumer services in Northern California. Olivia has announced plans to branch into several new areas, including a magazine and a retirement community geared to lesbians.

Join Us for an Upcoming Event

Philadelphia

Oct. 27-28

Homecoming. See p. 1 for full details.



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University of Pennsylvania

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Alumni Association

Founded in 1984 as an informal organization for lesbian, gay and bisexual alumni of the University of Pennsylvania, PennGALA became an official part of the University's Alumni Society in 1999. Throughout its history, PennGALA has supported the family of LGBT alumni and promoted their interests at Penn. We encourage LGBT alumni to seek leadership roles at Penn, and we have a special interest in supporting current students. PennGALA also plans an extensive roster of social, educational, and cultural events. On campus, PennGALA works closely with the University's Alumni Relations office and the LGBT Center, which provide support to the organization.

Join, Update, Share!

PennGALA needs you to help it grow and wants to keep you informed about upcoming events in your area. If you're not on our mailing list or have new information to share, please fill in this form and return it to us. Or, use it to let us know about a member who may not be on our list yet (we will contact the member to make sure s/he wants to be included). Your PennGALA membership status will not be shared with any party outside PennGALA, PennAlumni, or Penn's Office of Alumni Relations. All PennGALA mailings are sent in envelopes showing only a return street address. Please print, and provide the most complete information you can, including your email address (we don't send "spam"). You may also email your information to center@dolphin.upenn.edu.

Please check one: ___ Add my information ___ Update my information ___ Tell my friend about PennGALA

Name _____ Penn School & Degree Year _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip/Postal Code _____

E-mail Address _____ Telephone _____

I'd like to help PennGALA with (check as many as you wish):

___ Event planning in my area ___ Mentoring ___ Other (describe): _____

If you have any questions, concerns, news or ideas to share, please tell us! _____

We welcome contributions of any size to help defray costs of this newsletter and other PennGALA activities. Please make checks payable to the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania, note "PennGALA" in the memo field, and send them to us at the address above. Thanks!