

Diversity Newsletter

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Come Out, Come Out, Wherever You Are...

BY:

Jenny
Koslovsky

Society forces some of us to hide ourselves. For some, it is a life-long dedication to continue hiding, desperately hoping that our identities will never be discovered by those around us. This hide-and-seek game of life is a reality to many people, especially to some who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ). For others, the fear of hiding is over, and they have determined now is as good a time as any to share their identity with those around them. In openly sharing our sexuality with oth-

ers, every one of us is really coming out to others; however, the experience is quite different for someone who identifies as straight or heterosexual than someone who identifies as LGBTQ.

This is especially true as we continue to live in a coun-



try and a world that are still trying to define their beliefs on the concepts of being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer. In celebration of the coming out process experienced by members of the LGBTQ community, October 11th is

National Coming Out Day.

At Syracuse University, this week is filled with fun and excitement surrounding this day of awareness. In addition to having several renown speakers visit campus to hold events and having the LGBTQ student groups

hold their weekly meetings, Coming Out Week brought us chalking on the quad, a human rainbow bridge, an out and ally list in the Daily Orange, a showing of the film, "Bad Education," and of course, The Big Gay Dance.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Progressive Dinner**
Friday, Oct 28
6:00pm
- **UMOJA Retreat**
November 19-20
- **Spirituality Panel**
November TBA



Transcending Gender Boundaries

BY: Jenny Koslovsky

The collaborative planning efforts of the ORL Diversity Committee, LGBT Resource Center, and the Sundance Channel led to the amazing success of screening the premiere of *TransGeneration* on September 9 in Kittredge Auditorium. A combination of students, faculty, staff, and community members were among the 156 people that packed the “standing-room only” event that night. In addition to showing the series premiere, T.J. Jourian, featured in the documentary, and Staci Gunner, SU alumna, facilitated a 20-minute talk-back dialogue after the viewing.

Those in attendance were then invited to participate in a light reception where they had the opportunity to talk one-on-one with T.J. and Staci and with each other. While casually chatting near the newly assigned “gender-neutral” bathrooms, attendees were able to discuss issues in society that affect the “T” in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ). Standing up against a binary gender spectrum, taking proactive steps against trans

discrimination, and educating others on being trans allies were all concerns of many members of the LGBTQ community present that night.

For more information regarding TransGeneration, visit <http://www.sundancechannel.com/transgeneration/>.

An Invitation...

BY: Sara Moore & Kim Williams

When one thinks of the word progressive, one thinks of such meanings as “to advance ones self, to become better, and to move from one place to another.” It can then be safely assumed that the progressive dinner, is a movement from one state to the next while eating.

The diversity committee is proud to present the first progressive dinner for the 2005-2006 school year. This year’s dinner is intended to take participants to a higher place of awareness and learning through carefully selected articles designed

to stimulate the intellect and to challenge beliefs. Not only will the articles advance ones awareness, but the foods prepared by our very own colleagues will also contribute to heightened cultural awareness.

The articles that will be featured at this year’s dinner will include such topics as body image, international students, disabilities

and LGBT issues. The hosts and cooks are varied and talented. The food will be exceptionally delicious and the stimulating conversations will leave colleagues begging for

more. This year will be different, intense and magnificent!

So, if you don’t have a date for Friday October 28 at 6 p.m., you just found yourself one. To miss this event is to miss an opportunity to grow and to bond with your colleagues.

Friday
October 28th
6:00PM

SU Celebrates: Ramadan

On Monday, October 5, Muslims in the United States start the month of Ramadan, a month of fasting, prayers, meditation and charity. Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic lunar calendar. Like the solar calendar, the lunar calendar has twelve months. However, a lunar calendar, which is marked by the appearance of the new moon in the horizon, may last only 29 days. A lunar year is about eleven days shorter than the solar year. This means that Islamic festivals occur about eleven days earlier each year. In Ramadan, adult, healthy and non-traveling Muslims are required to fast. Young Muslims, Muslims with illnesses that could be prolonged or intensified by fasting, and travelers are exempt from fasting.

Observing Ramadan means abstaining from food, drinks and sexual activities during the daytime from break-of-dawn till sunset. Ramadan is a period of personal restraint and renewed focus on moral conduct. It is also a time to empathize with those who are less fortunate and appreciate what one has. Fasting does not mean that Muslims cease to work or study. Although Muslims fast while working or studying, it is recommended that educators and employers be mindful of their fast and not overwhelm a fasting person with strenuous tasks. Muslim students may not perform their best during fasting particularly at the end of the day and before breaking the fast. University faculty and staff are encouraged to make appropriate arrangements for their fasting Muslim students when planning programs and events where students need to be active or that involve food.

Breaking the fast takes place usually immediately after sunset every day. Muslims are required to break their fast and perform a prayer. Faculty and chairs are encouraged to allow Muslim students and employees the time to break their fast and offer the required prayer.

During the month of Ramadan, a nightly special prayer is held at the Islamic Society of Central New York. It starts at 8:00 p.m. and ends at 10:00 p.m. Muslims are strongly recommended to take part in the prayer as part of Ramadan's tradition.

Each Muslim culture has its unique ways of celebrating Ramadan. From Monday to Thursday, Muslim students on the Syracuse University campus join together at Hendricks Chapel for communal prayer and have Iftar (a meal to break the fast). On the weekend, many students join the Muslim community at the Mosque to break fast, perform the prayer, and have the meal together. Almost every night, a different ethnic group offers the meal to the entire Muslim community so that by the end of the month, one would have experienced cuisine of many regions of the world. A festival called Eid-ul-Fitr follows the month of Ramadan. The festival includes congregational prayer, family visitations, and the exchange of gifts. All the activities of Ramadan and the celebration festivities for its end are expected to be concluded by November 3.

[The Diversity Committee]

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