

News

Lesbians, gays branch out in alliance

by Beth Wodzinski

The Grinnell College Gay Community is starting off the new year with several changes, the first and most obvious being the name change. The new name is the Grinnell

Lesbian Gay Alliance (GLGA). There are several reasons for the name change. One reason is that many people didn't feel that the word "gay" included women, and it was felt that lesbians were alienated by the name. While the current name specifically mentions only gays and lesbians, GLGA welcomes people of all sexual preferences. Another reason for the change is that the word "alliance" better reflects GLGA's political nature than the old word "community" did.

However, GLGA is "a diverse group reflecting diverse goals and interests," said Matt Macho. GLGA plans to set up support groups for those who are not interested in the political side of the organization.

GLGA has many goals for this year. One of these goals is to improve counseling

services, both in town and on campus. Several students have reportedly had bad experiences at the Mental Health Center in town. GLGA would also like to have an on-campus counselor, who would fill a role similar to that of the Minority Affairs counselor.

Another project, which has already been started, is a network of gay and lesbian alumni, who would be able to give support to Grinnell students, as well as ask for support. Macho also mentioned possible fundraising opportunities through this network, which would give GLGA some independence from the hassles of college funding. "Fundraising is sheer hell," said Macho.

Fred Morris said that he would like to see more emphasis on gay and lesbian history and literature in classes at Grinnell, possibly even a course. "Gays and lesbians have been pretty much ignored," he stated, "like how women and blacks are ignored. Now professors are starting to make women and blacks part of their courses; we'd like to see the same thing happen with gays and lesbians."

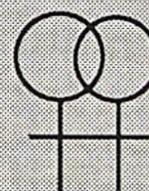
Macho spoke of starting a gay journal, for which he has already begun collecting material. Macho spoke of the importance of chronicling current events, since "this is the first time in history that gays and lesbians have been out and active in large numbers. What's happening now is important, and we'd be able to

look back on this journal as a record of this."

On a broader scale, Grinnell will be hosting events at Rock Creek on October 15 for National Coming Out Day. Todd Sheperd said that Grinnell was chosen because it is "a rural community. A lot of the people who will be coming are from rural areas. Confidentiality is guaranteed, which is easier in a rural area. It's also the first day of fall break, so there won't be many people around." National Coming Out Day commemorates last year's march on Washington, D.C., which 25 Grinnell College students attended.

The traditional meeting time of GLGA is Thursday nights at 9:00, in the Human/Gay Resource Center. All are welcome. People do not consider attendance at GLGA meetings a declaration of orientation. Macho said that "straight

people are an integral part of GLGA, and their support is important. Many people are also curious about where all those people disappear to on Thursday nights. All are welcome at meetings.



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