

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

Columbia Daily Spectator, Volume CXVIII, Number 99, 7 October 1994 – BGLAD week allows celebration, reflection [ARTICLE]

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**Bisexual, Gay, and Lesbian
Awareness Days
Organizing Committee**

From Oct. 7 to 15, the lesbian, gay, and bisexual communities at Columbia will be celebrating our second annual Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Awareness Days (BGLAD). Last year's BGLAD brought together students, faculty, and staff at a variety of events. The overwhelming success of BGLAD '93 inspired us to continue this year.

BGLAD is fundamentally a week for us to celebrate our pride and communicate our concerns. It is planned to coincide with National Coming-Out Day on Tuesday, Oct. 11, a day when lesbian, gay, and bisexual people across the country affirm our identities, increase our visibility, and celebrate our communities by proudly speaking our names as queer women and men. And more and more, it seems, we must speak loudly and assertively to be heard.

Certainly, queer people at Columbia and in the United States have made huge strides in our fight for civil and human rights. We have domestic partnership rights of some kind in several cities, corporations, and universities around the country. A number of cities, counties, and states have nondiscrimination clauses. And queer communities around the country are becoming increasingly organized, from Idaho to Mississippi to New York City. Right now there are more than 10 lesbian, gay, and bisexual organizations here at Columbia.

But we shouldn't be lulled into complacency by whatever gains we

have made. For every nondiscrimination clause there are two ballot measures somewhere prohibiting towns, counties and states from instituting such a clause. For every openly lesbian, gay, or bisexual person there are 10 trapped in the closet of external homophobia and internal self-hatred. For every red ribbon remembering people with AIDS there are countless more people fired from their jobs, abandoned by their families, failed by inadequate health care—all because they are the flesh-and-blood representations of what those ribbons mean.

Homophobia—the fear and hatred of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people—is alive and well at Columbia. We at BGLAD issue a call to action to all members of the Columbia community to respect and honor the multitude of gay people: your roommate, your teacher, your sister, your parent. We challenge queer people on campus to come out whenever and wherever possible—invisibility only fuels the bigotry against us.

BGLAD is a week of politics, partying, panels, and pandemonium. We'll be holding our second annual Queer Carnival to open the week on Saturday, Oct. 8, and from then on we'll be presenting programs to entertain, challenge, inform, and support as wide a variety of people as possible. BGLAD is for all members of the Columbia community—gay, lesbian, bisexual, and straight, as well as those questioning or exploring their sexuality. It's a week for celebration and affirmation.

Come out and BGLAD!