

**DIRECTOR'S WELCOME**

Welcome newsletter readers! Thanks for taking the time to catch up with our LGBT Center activities. We have a really exciting year planned. We are already off to a strong start with our ever-popular "Guess The Straight Person," which was hosted in a larger room this year to accommodate the incredible crowd of people. We are proud to say that we filled Cohen hall with 600 first-year students for this fun and educational event which challenges people's stereotypes about the LGBT community.

There are some familiar and some new faces around the Center this semester. We are pleased to have not one, but *two* graduate assistants working at the Center this year. We are lucky to have Aaron Hartman returning for his second year; he will be focusing his time on educational projects including organizing and leading the new Safe Zone training that the LGBT Center will offer this year, and working on passive programming around health issues in the LGBT community. He will also be advising Team Q (which had its annual Provincetown retreat this month) and the leaders of our various discussion groups. Nino Testa, a doctoral candidate in the English Department, is also joining the staff and, among other things, is planning our World AIDS Day events. Nino has worked as a graduate intern at the Women's Center for three years and we are hoping that his presence in both centers will help to foster some new and exciting collaborations.

As you can see from our schedule of events on page 3, we have a busy semester planned. We are starting a Second Friday Lunch Series that will focus on issues and resources important to the LGBT community at Tufts. Our first lunch, "How 9/11 Affected the LGBT Community" was a huge success. On Thursday September 29, we are excited to host the nationally ranked slam poet and Mr. Transman 2010, Kit Yan. He has performed all over the country and has quite a following, so we are really lucky to have him. On November 2 we are sponsoring an event called "Beyond BINaries" with well-known activist, speaker and author Robyn Ochs whose work focuses on bisexual identity. In commemoration of World AIDS Day (Dec. 1) we will display a block of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt in Remis Sculpture Court for the week, as well as host a talk by Community Health lecturer Kevin Irwin on AIDS and stigma. We also plan to host a "Quilting Bee" where members of the Tufts community can make their own panel to be sent to the NAMES Project in Atlanta.

These are just a few highlights of the semester. We hope to see you all at some point this year. Happy Fall!

—Tom Bourdon, LGBT Center Director

P.S. Special thanks to grad assistant Nino Testa for putting together this wonderful newsletter!



Director Tom Bourdon (right), with intern & Team Q member George Murphy at Boston PFLAG's annual fundraiser. Murphy gave the keynote address at the event.

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## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: BEN SERRANO

A year and a half. It just amazes me when I reflect on my own story and my involvement with the LGBT community that it has only been a year and a half since I came out. I was afraid at that time, afraid that I would never be able to be accepted into a new community. Now that thought is just silly considering the effort I have put into being more active with the LGBT community at Tufts and with LGBT issues.

This summer, I was an intern with Equality Illinois, Illinois' oldest and largest LGBT rights and advocacy organization based in Chicago. Their focus is ensuring rights and protections for all citizens of Illinois regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. I discovered this internship through Tom Bourdon, the LGBT Center director, who discovered it through Andy Garcia at the Pipeline Project. The goal of the Pipeline Project is to support LGBT-identified people of color and to help them get into positions of leadership in the LGBT movement. Afterwards, I was directed toward the Equality Federation, an umbrella organization headquartered in San Francisco that organizes all of the statewide LGBT organizations (they then placed me at Equality Illinois). At first, it felt like my summer was going to be dominated by this complicated, layered internship, but it didn't become stressful, it became exciting.

My main project for the summer was the anti-bullying project, a project with the goal of getting more youth, whether LGBT-identified or not (in this case youth ages 18-25), to become more involved in the movement and in their communities. The best way of doing this was to organize youth to act and to show them that they have as much of a say in their futures as the politicians and older movement leaders do. The event was **"The Week of Action."** Held during the last week of July, I organized youth volunteers in the Illinois cities of Chicago, Springfield, and Bloomington-Normal to get Illinois citizens to sign an anti-bullying pledge. The pledge states: *I pledge to intervene when a person is being verbally or physically harassed due to their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity at school, at work, and in my community.* It was important for me to show that bullying happens at all ages, at all levels, and that it starts with the individual to stop bullying. After extensive travelling on Amtrak trains, cars, walking, and getting lost we were able to obtain nearly 1,000 pledges! I was blown away and it was an exciting number to see after going through each of these pledges one by one.

There was a political implication to this project as well. I researched the corresponding U.S. Representative of each signer and sent the pledges to the representative's Washington D.C. office. It was a tedious task, but the possible outcomes were well worth the strain. My hope was to get members of Congress to cosponsor the Student Non-

Discrimination Act, an act that will give protections to K-12 students who are harassed based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The State of Illinois already has similar legislation, but my goal was to show that this is a national issue.

My internship culminated in Madison, Wisconsin at the Equality Federation Summer Meeting where I met the other Equality Federation interns from around the country who were doing great projects of their own. This may have been the main project of my summer, but it was not all I did. I could list all of the amazing things I got to be a part of: helping to celebrate civil unions in Illinois, a protest, the Chicago Pride Parade, Windy City Black Pride, fundraisers—there was just so much in which I was able to participate. I'm just so thankful for the opportunity to be more involved in the movement and I cannot wait to bring what I learned back to Tufts.



**Ben Serrano is a junior.**

**He spent the summer interning for Equality Illinois.**

**"I'M JUST SO THANKFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN THE MOVEMENT AND I CANNOT WAIT TO BRING WHAT I LEARNED BACK TO TUFTS."**

**BEN SERRANO**

## Schedule of Events Fall 2011

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday Lunch: 9/11 and the LGBT Community (lunch will be provided)

Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 12-1pm

### Film Screening: Saint of 9/11

Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 8:15pm, \*Sophia Gordon\*

### Special Event: Being "Out" at Tufts (presented by Team Q, pizza provided)

Monday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 5-6pm

### Queer Group kick-off meetings

(Men's, Women's, Bi, Queer Students of Color & Allies)

Beginning week of September 13<sup>th</sup>

### Team Q Retreat in Provincetown

September 16-18 in PTown.

For details & application, go to: <http://ase.tufts.edu/lgbt/organizations/teamQ.asp>

### Queer/Jewish Tufts alumnus/author

Wayne Hoffmann (kosher lunch provided)

Wednesday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 12-1pm

### Spoken Word Superstar and Transman 2010:

**Kit Yan!**

Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, Sophia Gordon, 7 pm

### National Coming Out Day Rally & Events

Week of October 11<sup>th</sup>

(Rally on Wed, Oct 12 @ noon, Campus Center Patio)

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday Lunch (Oct): Coming Out (lunch will be provided)

Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 12-1pm

### Special Event: Robyn Ochs, Beyond Binaries

Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, time/location TBC

### Transgender Day of Remembrance

Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup>

(event may be held on Friday, Nov. 18, TBA)

### Thanksgiving "Family" Dinner

Monday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 5pm

### AIDS Quilt

Mon-Fri, Nov 28 – Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>, Remis Sculpture Court  
(Quilting Bee and other activities TBA!)

### World AIDS Day: Prof. Kevin Irwin

Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 12-1pm, Remis Sculpture Court

### World AIDS Day: Free Rapid HIV

Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, Tufts Health Service

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday Lunch (Dec): Assistant Professor Stephan Pennington (Music)

Queer Pop lecture

(lunch will be provided)

Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 12-1pm

### Monthly Graduate Student Events

Wine & Cheese Socials, Meet Ups in Davis Square... We try to offer 1/month, join the grad listserv or "LGBT Tufts Grad Students" on Facebook to stay connected!

### Confidential Questioning/Coming Out Support Group

Contact Director [Tom.Bourdon@tufts.edu](mailto:Tom.Bourdon@tufts.edu) for details



# Tufts Alumni

Looking to connect with LGBT Tufts alumni/alumnae, get career advice, or find out what life is like after Tufts? Look no further than Pride on the Hill (POTH), Tufts' own LGBT alumni/alumnae organization.

POTH seeks to support and connect LGBTQ alumni/alumnae, faculty and staff, foster links between the LGBTQ alumni community and the university, and to enrich LGBTQ life at Tufts through academic, cultural and social programming.

To stay informed about POTH events, sign up for our email list at <http://ase.tufts.edu/lgbt/alumni/index.aspx>. You can also check the POTH web site at [www.prideonthehill.org](http://www.prideonthehill.org), or find the group on Facebook.

## ALUMNI/ALUMNAE NOTES

- **Michael J. Cuipa** (A '88) was recently made Chief of Critical Care Medicine and Director of the ICU at Barnes Jewish Saint Peters Hospital near St. Louis, MO where he lives with his spouse Anthony Jones.
- **John Matthew Francis** (A'04) completed a master's degree in city planning at the University of California, Berkeley, in May 2011. He is now working as a city planner and urban designer in San Francisco.
- Foreign Service Officer **Ralan Hill**, (E'00), began work in the Operations Center of the State Department, in Washington, DC, in July 2011.
- **Matthew Pohl**, ('A05), will assume a new role as Assistant Dean of Admission at the College of William & Mary on September 7th. He previously spent four years as Assistant Director of Admission at Sarah Lawrence College. He will be relocating to Williamsburg, Virginia.

## ALUM SPOTLIGHT: RICHARD TOWNSEND (A'55)

Richard Townsend, who graduated from Tufts in 1955, married his partner of 39 years, Jacques Beaumont, on August 2, 2011 in New York City's Beth Israel Medical Center. The men had both been admitted for health problems—Townsend for issues related to Parkinson's Disease, Beaumont for recently discovered leukemia. They decided that the time had come to marry, less than two months after the Marriage Equality Act was passed by the New York State Assembly. Their story was so touching that the New York Times covered the ceremony in their style section on August 12, 2011.

The LGBT Center had the opportunity to speak with Townsend about the coverage of his marriage, his time at Tufts and his thoughts on over a half-century of gay life in America.

In the 1950s, there was a nascent gay community, but of course most of the connections between gay people were made underground. Townsend knew of other gay people at Tufts, but not many. There was a way of being "in the know" without being "out" as we might conceive of it today. Townsend reflected on the ubiquity of struggles for young gay people at the time.

"Everyone was having problems in one way or another because of the culture and we had to find our way through it, despite everything going on in the culture," he said.

Townsend wasn't necessarily conflicted about his emerging sexual identity, but he did struggle to understand the impact it would have on his life.

He said, "As far as my sexuality went I didn't know I was gay in college but I was certainly aiming in that direction and felt attracted and not unhappy about it, though I was perplexed and confused. But I enjoyed it already; I think

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**Townsend (right) with his husband Jacques Beaumont on their wedding day, August 2, 2011. The two were married in New York City's Beth Israel Medical Center.**

**SPOTLIGHT:  
JOANNE BERGER-SWEENEY,  
DEAN OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

**Can you tell us a little about yourself and what brought you to Tufts?**

I am a neuroscientist. Before coming to Tufts, I worked at Wellesley College for 19 years. I went through the professional ranks there and was Associate Dean of the college. What brought me to Tufts was the desire to try something new and have a slightly larger and more diverse campus. I think I was looking for more responsibility and some new and exciting challenges. Ultimately, I was looking for a community whose values I could support enthusiastically.

**How is Tufts similar or different from Wellesley College?**

Wellesley was an undergraduate institution. I think that there is a level of intellectual rigor that goes along with being a research university that is different and stimulating. Working at an undergraduate institution was wonderful, but having an institution like Tufts that is very liberal arts but on top of that gives you the ability to work with graduate students and people who are doing absolutely cutting edge research is so exciting. Even though I talk a lot about what I do as an administrator, my research life has been stimulated in a new and exciting way being associated with a university of the quality of Tufts.

**What are your impressions of the LGBT community at Tufts?**

I would say my impressions are quite good. The first interaction I had with the LGBT community at Tufts was with Tom [Bourdon, LGBT Center Director]. I had open office hours and he came to introduce himself. I was impressed by his poise and his energy and his desire to do new and innovative things here at Tufts. I was equally impressed by Steph Gauchel [Women’s Center Director]. Both came to early office hours around campus—I liked their energy and I liked what they had to say. During my second semester I went out to the Group of 6 and had open discussions with students. And, once again, the quality of the discussions, the engagement of the students, was really very impressive. I was impressed by the fact that the LGBT Center sends students to high schools to do outreach and education; I was so impressed by how active the students were not just here at Tufts but out in the community, how they try to reach out beyond Tufts. When I met with students they were so organized—and there were students who were active at multiple Centers and came to multiple meetings—they had presentations, asked questions, but were respectful and listened to the answers I had for them. They were just a really positive community—they were open and honest about the things that were working well here at Tufts, but also in voicing the things that concerned them.

**“I WAS LOOK-  
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**JOANNE  
BERGER-SWEENEY**

**What is the most professionally stimulating aspect of your new job at Tufts?**

I think without question the fact that Tufts is a creative, innovative community willing to make changes and take some risks. I love Wellesley. But the thing that I find different at Tufts is that people seem more willing to try something new. In New England when you have universities, like Tufts, with long institutional histories you can imagine them being a little more staid and conservative; I haven’t found Tufts to be that way at all. Being in an atmosphere like this, I become more creative and innovative than even I thought I could be. It allows me to take more risks in coming up with solutions to problems I encounter. There is a sense of innovation and experimentalism here that I’m comfortable with maybe because of my background as a neuroscientist.



**Joanne Berger-Sweeney joined Tufts last fall.**

**She is a neuroscientist and was previously Associate Dean at Wellesley College.**

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## JOANNE BERGER-SWEENEY (CONTINUED FROM P. 5)

### What are your thoughts regarding an expansion of queer curriculum at Tufts?

What I would say is that I believe that the Tufts curriculum for undergraduates could have a more cohesive focus on groups that have been traditionally marginalized. And even from my brief surveys of the curriculum, I believe that we can do better in that area. I have some ideas on how we can improve on this.

In general, I think my first year here was successful, but I am very much looking forward to year two.

## RICHARD TOWNSEND (CONTINUED FROM P. 4)

most people do earlier than they admit. Somewhere inside me, the fact that I was gay made me happy.”

Townsend praised Tufts for allowing him to pursue a variety of interests—from acting to writing—and preparing him for a life in the theater: “that’s why I went there so I could do all these things that I enjoyed so much.”

While Townsend has fond memories of his time doing theater at Tufts, he has always regretted not being able to explain his sudden withdrawal from a particular show to his theater group. He was set to play the flamboyant Russell in the Gershwin musical *Lady in the Dark* (a role originated by Danny Kaye on Broadway) but his parents disapproved. They told him he would humiliate himself in the role and so he dropped out. The director and other actors pleaded with him to reconsider, and so eventually he rejoined the cast; but his parents never did come to see him perform.

“Guess what, I didn’t humiliate myself for life,” he said. “I got a lot of laughs and was very happy and proud of what I had done and have never regretted it.”

Townsend never told his friends and cast mates of the familial turmoil his commitment to the role caused. When it came time to graduate, they held a grudge and did not give him an honorary membership into the group.

“The people in the show were angry with me and couldn’t forgive me for what I had done, for which I am very sorry,” he said. “But I felt I couldn’t explain it to them at that point.”

This anecdote sums up the open secret of his sexuality. He claims that his parents must have known that he was gay, but neither he nor they acknowledged it.

“I felt they couldn’t deal with it which was not fair to me; but of course by saying they couldn’t deal with it, what I really meant was that I couldn’t deal with their knowing,” he said.

Townsend is pleased that the publicity his marriage received might have a positive impact on young people who feel hopeless or confused about their sexual identity.



shared their nuptials.

“They all tell me that they cried, and I saw that at the wedding,” he said. “The whole place was in tears at the end—including me.”

“DON’T THINK YOU ARE SO ALONE IN THE WORLD. WE ALL THINK WE ARE ALONE IN THE WORLD, ESPECIALLY GAY KIDS.”

RICHARD TOWNSEND

“When we did the announcement,” he said, “my husband said we aren’t doing it for ourselves—we’re doing it for gay kids; that’s the audience we wanted to reach the most. The kids who feel outside society, who feel they’ll never get in, who feel they’ll never be treated without bigotry. I have lots of advice for young people. Don’t think you are so alone in the world. We all think we are alone in the world, especially gay kids. Anything that encourages gay people to be more open or out or in the world or participating in our culture is valuable in every way.”

Townsend and Beaumont’s story has struck a chord with readers across the country, as well as with the family and friends with whom they



TUFTS UNIVERSITY  
LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL,

Bolles House  
226 College Avenue, 2nd Fl.

Phone: 617-627-3770  
Fax: 617-627-3579

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT  
[WWW.ASE.TUFTS.EDU/LGBT](http://WWW.ASE.TUFTS.EDU/LGBT)

The programs and services of The LGBT Center support the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students, faculty, staff and alumni of Tufts University. The Center is available to anyone on campus interested in learning more about LGBT-related subjects or issues of sexual and gender identity. The Center is committed to maintaining LGBT visibility on campus and providing campus-wide education on sexual and gender identity and the effects of homophobia.

Our services include advocacy on behalf of LGBT students; counseling and referrals to students in need; information about resources available to LGBT people on and off-campus; research assistance with topics relating to sexuality; a student outreach and education team (Team Q); a peer-support network (Queer Peers); trainings and workshops for faculty, staff, or student groups; email lists networking people affiliated with Tufts University; and programming that reflects the diversity of students at Tufts.

The LGBT Center works collaboratively with many groups on campus, including the Dean of Students Office, the Women's Center, the Asian American Center, the Latino Center, the Africana Center, the International Center, Greek Life, the Office of Residential Life and Learning, the Hillel Center and the Tufts Chaplaincy.

Drop by the Center and enjoy a comfortable and safe space dedicated to supporting and celebrating lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer identities.

**If you would like to help support the work of the LGBT Center, contact LGBT Center Director Tom Bourdon at [tom.bourdon@tufts.edu](mailto:tom.bourdon@tufts.edu).**

## INTRODUCING OUR STAFF ASSISTANT AND GRAD ASSISTANTS...



**Grad Assistant Nino Testa**

Feel free to contact Nino about anything, but especially:

- World AIDS Day
- Second Friday Lunches
- Grad Events
- Special Programs

[Nino.Testa@tufts.edu](mailto:Nino.Testa@tufts.edu)



**Staff Assistant Emily Mears**

Feel free to contact Emily about anything, but especially:

- Logistical Concerns
- Reserving the LGBT Center
- Website Updates
- Announcements/General Questions

[Emily.Mears@tufts.edu](mailto:Emily.Mears@tufts.edu)



**Grad Assistant Aaron Hartman**

Feel free to contact Aaron about anything, but especially:

- Team Q
- Discussion Groups
- Safe Zone Training
- Sexual Health and Education

[Aaron.Hartman@tufts.edu](mailto:Aaron.Hartman@tufts.edu)

See the rest of our staff at the [LGBT Center web site!](#)



### STAY CONNECTED WITH THE CENTER

New ways to stay up-to-date on all the goings on around the Center:  
"Follow" us on Twitter! <http://twitter.com/tufts-lgbtcenter>

And "Like" us on Facebook! <http://www.facebook.com/tufts-lgbtcenter>