

YALE GALA

YALE'S LGBT ALUMNI/AE NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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NOVEMBER 2009

FIRST-EVER LGBT REUNION IS "FABULOUS!"

BOB BARNETT '89

"**FABULOUS!**" proclaimed Mark Dollhopf '77, Executive Director, AYA, as he welcomed attendees to Yale's first LGBT Reunion: A Celebration of Our Yale Community Friday afternoon, April 24.

"Fabulous! Fabulous!" echoed Yale President Richard Levin '74 as he greeted 420 gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered alumni/ae, their spouses, current students, faculty, staff members, family, and friends at the Gala Dinner in University Commons Saturday night.

And that was from two straight men...

We drove up from Staten Island and we flew in from Milan. We grabbed a train from DC and Boston and we made a week of it winging in from the West Coast. One of us got back from Africa just in time.

We were teachers and public accountants. We were writers and married couples. We ran non-profits and we were retired from Wall Street. We were undergrads cramming for finals. We were black, Asian, Hispanic, white, young, old.

We wore pantsuits and tanktops, bow ties and cargo pants, flipflops and sensible shoes. We came alone; we brought the kids. Yale was the best thing that ever happened to us and we were so alienated we hadn't stepped on campus since graduation. But we all came.

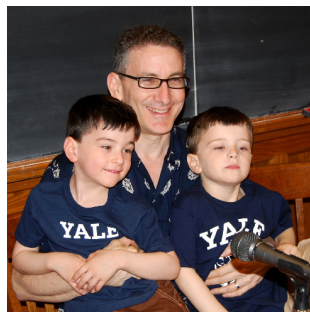
Between the Thursday night Rufus Wainwright concert and the Sunday morning memorial service and last good-byes, we discovered how our shared experiences and struggles reached across divides of decades, class years, and individual lives and united us in startling and reassuring ways as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people and as sons and daughters of Yale.

We heard about Yale's slow but committed embrace of its LGBT alums and attended panels on everything from families to law to the arts. There were flashes of wit and collected wisdom as alums both pre- and post-Stonewall or AIDS activists shared their stories with younger alums and undergraduates taking up the cause of marriage equality.

There were eloquent and poignant remembrances of battles



Yale President Richard Levin '74 is joined (left) by George Chauncey '77, '89 Ph D and his partner Ron Gregg and (right) by Bruce Cohen '83, his husband Gabe Catone '95, Eva Kolodner '92, and her wife Eliza Byard '90.



LEFT: Dr. Mark Schuster '83, MD, PhD with his two sons at the "Gay Families" panel.



RIGHT: Friends old and new gather in University Commons for the Gala Dinner Saturday night.

It's impossible for one issue of the Yale GALA Newsletter to do complete justice to the Reunion with its multiple high points of speeches, panels, and performances as well as the camaraderie and exhilarating joyfulness that energized and surged around those of us who attended.

Perhaps this issue will serve to remind and rekindle the delight and companionship that attendees experienced and give those who were unable to join us a taste of Yale's First-Ever LGBT Reunion.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 ►

BOB BARNETT '89, EDITOR, YALE GALA NEWSLETTER

Yale GALA, Yale's LGBT Alumni/ae Network Newsletter, is published by Yale GALA for members and friends. Yale GALA is the official LGBT alumni/ae Association open to graduates, students, faculty, administration, and friends.

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LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Dear Yale GALA Member,

This past year was an incredible one for Yale GALA as we celebrated our 25th Anniversary (or 27th or 30th depending how you count or whom you ask...). Indeed, it was a hard-won milestone worth remembering and celebrating.

More than 420 people celebrated in New Haven, attending the First LGBT Reunion in April. 1,700 alumni, students, faculty, staff and community members helped us kick off the three-day event by attending the Rufus Wainwright Benefit Concert in Woolsey Hall. There was also a series of pre-reunion parties in New York, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Los Angeles and Seattle that helped build excitement and attendance for the Reunion.

Yale GALA owes a debt of thanks to the numerous volunteers, donors, staff and participants whose planning and hard work over many months ensured that the Reunion was the brilliant success it proved to be. Even the Yale Alumni Magazine took notice, devoting 16 pages of its July/August 2009 issue to Yale's LGBT history and publishing some of the Reunion's presenters actual remarks from the panels and keynotes.

Yale GALA (Yale's LGBT Alumni Association) and the AYA (the Association of Yale Alumni) worked as a team from start to finish to organize, sponsor and promote the Reunion. Both organizations look forward to building on that teamwork, both with the next reunion and in a series of events in the U.S. and overseas cities between now and then. The exact date of the next reunion has yet to be set, but you as Yale GALA members will be the first to know once it is scheduled. Until then, please join us for upcoming events around the country and the world including our annual Student-Alumni Dinner in New Haven, New York and San Francisco pride events, women's mixers, monthly cocktail parties, lectures and concerts. If you don't see events that interest you or are in your geographic area, please get in touch with us. We'd love your help in helping to make new things happen.

As an international organization, Yale GALA supports and champions LGBT issues, perspectives and scholarship at Yale and in society and LGBT student life and opportunities on campus and provides alumni around the world as well as Yale's LGBT students, faculty, staff, family and friends with opportunities to connect with Yale and each other.

Your membership contributions help us fund the annual Yale GALA Senior Essay Prize in LGBT Studies, Pride Month at Yale, Trans Week at Yale, student subsidies for the annual Student-Alumni Dinner and other Yale GALA events...and, of course, the next LGBT Reunion! We are run entirely by unpaid volunteers and we use 100 percent of your contributions to support Yale GALA's goals. We are proud of our financial stewardship and all that we accomplish with each donation dollar received. We also welcome your non-monetary volunteer and leadership contributions. There are numerous volunteer opportunities: event organizing, student mentoring, strategic planning, board service and more. Your imagination is the only limit to what we can accomplish together.

For more information on getting involved with Yale GALA, please contact Mickey Dobbs '92, mickey.dobbs@yale.edu or any of our board members.

We were all moved and energized by the Reunion, which created new links across generations of Yale's LGBT community and connected us to one of the most vibrant and groundbreaking academic programs at the University.

We hope you'll share our enthusiasm by sending your membership contribution to GALA and by supporting LGBT life and studies at Yale. With your participation, we can continue to build on the tremendous legacy that is the Yale LGBT experience, creating a rich and promising future for generations of LGBT students and alumni to come.

Mickey Dobbs '92
Co-President, Yale GALA
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won and friends lost. As well as talk of coming out and first loves, hopeless crushes, fashion statements, activist bravery, political posturing, and generational differences. And there was controversy as our own aging lion Larry Kramer roared his truth.

The weekend opened with chilly winds but warmed until vivid blue skies arched overhead with all the promise of spring. The non-stop schedule of presentations, panels, impromptu lunches with old friends, evening partying, and personal discoveries was equally rejuvenating.

By the time keynote speakers Eliza Byard '90, Executive Director of GLSEN, and Bruce Cohen '83, film producer and activist, announced at the Gala Dinner, "We want to recruit you!" for the unfinished work of Yale's LGBT community both within the University and beyond its borders, the audience was already onboard.

The Reunion was an historic event for many reasons. It represented a very public recognition by Yale of the value and contributions that LGBT alumni/ae, students, faculty, and staff make to the University itself. Co-sponsored by Yale GALA, a one-time controversial unofficial alum organization, and the official Association of Yale Alumni (AYA), it was only the second "affinity" reunion on campus.

Special thanks goes to co-chairs Libby Halstead MBA '00, and Monty Freeman '73 and their Reunion Committee, who toiled months in advance of the Reunion to organize and solicit participants and worked as the behind-the-scenes coordinators Reunion weekend to ensure all the events came off without a hitch.

We all came away revived, reconnected, and in ways large and small, changed. Most of all, we realized just how much Yale shaped our lives and now how much our lives helped shape the Yale of today. And tomorrow.

FROM CAM SANDERS' POST-REUNION FACEBOOK ENTRY:

DATELINE JETBLUE FLIGHT 91 JFK - OAK
SOMEWHERE OVER IOWA
MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2009

For those who were in New Haven this weekend, thank you! How lovely to stroll the no-longer-ivy-clad streets in your company, giving witness to our well-deserved place as solid and real members of the Yale community. For those who couldn't be there, we missed you! This is my report.

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGES ►



Miriam Jaffe '82 (right) with her partner Karen Robinson.



Rosemary Palladino '76 and Don Bickford '66.



Activist Larry Kramer '57 with two undergraduates.



LGBT Theatre panelists Jack Lechner '84 and Doug Wright '85 with moderator Michael Walkup '06 MFA.



LEFT: Project Runway star Austin Scarlett designed and performed at the pre-Reunion birthday bash for Yale GALA co-chair Mickey Dobbs '92. RIGHT: Jason Kramer '96 congratulates two members of the Wiffenpoofs who performed at the West Hollywood cocktail party in March.



DC party co-hosts and partners Bob Bagnall '77 and Alex Tang '80 chat with Reunion co-chair Monty Freeman '73.



John Lewis with his husband and Reunion panelist Stuart Gaffney '84 talk with Jenna Whitman '95 and Anne-Marie Eileraas '86 at pre-Reunion party in San Francisco, sponsored by Tom Burke '85.

PRE-REUNION EVENTS

ORGANIZERS of Yale's First-Ever LGBT Reunion left nothing to chance. To build awareness and attendance, Yale GALA used every opportunity in the months leading up to Reunion Weekend.

In December of last year, Yale GALA co-chair Mickey Dobbs '92 turned his splashy 39th birthday party, held at Manhattan's cavernous Park Avenue Armory, into a Reunion kick-off in honor of Yale GALA's 25th anniversary.

It was also a fundraiser for Moving Theater (www.moving-theater.org), a "discipline-defying, frontier-crossing" performance company co-founded by GALA member Brennan Gerard '01 and Ryan Kelly. They created a crowd-pleasing *piece d'occasion* about a doll, played by Kelly, that comes to life and dances about, much to the delight of its owner played by Project Runway star Austin Scarlett who also designed the costumes.

There were also private parties in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco to help local alums reconnect, a cocktail party in West Hollywood's chic East/West lounge, complete with a performance by Yale's own Whiffenpoofs, with a final pre-Reunion event in Seattle.

THURSDAY NIGHT

ALTHOUGH THE REUNION did not begin officially until Friday, Thursday's early arrivals enjoyed the post-modern crooning of gay icon Rufus Wainwright whose musical stylings filled Woolsey Hall, accompanying himself on piano and guitar.

The appreciative Yale and New Haven audience burst into applause when Wainwright opened the concert with his song "Going To A Town" including an updated lyric line, "I'm so tired of homophobia."

He revisited many of his highly personal songs—many with a political edge such as "Liberty Cabbage" written at sixteen when the "government wasn't reacting at all" to the AIDS crisis—as well as newer works including a collaboration with the Berlin Ensemble using a Shakespearean sonnet for lyrics. All were intermixed with his off-the-cuff musings about his life as an artist and a gay man. He ended the concert with a fervently sung encore of Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah."

The concert, sponsored by Yale GALA, Yale's LGBT Coop as part of its Pride Month, and Yale University's Office of New Haven and State Affairs, was a fundraiser for AIDS Project New Haven (to contribute, go to www.apnh.org) and GLSEN-CT (to contribute, go to <http://chapters.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/connecticut/home.html>).

The evening's festivities continued as attendees gathered at The Study, a trendy hotel on Chapel Street for cocktails, conversation, and incessant table-hopping, filling the room with raucous laughter as new friends and old delighted in one another's company. A high point were the "I [pink triangle]

► CONTINUED FROM CAM SANDERS' POST-REUNION
FACEBOOK ENTRY

...Rufus Wainwright loud and proud and in pink, on the stage at Woolsey Hall, full house. Dreary lighting and outrageously overbearing organ-pipes-of-solid-gold backdrop no match for RW's passionate and inclusive message, and full-hearted delivery. Happy lesbians to my right (current faculty and her partner), groovy gay boys to my left...

YALE" t-shirts designed and handed out by alums Sarah Williams '88 and Cam Sanders '87.

The crowd momentarily hushed when a highly evocative performance piece by Moving Theater began in their midst. Directed by the company's cofounders Brennan Gerard '01 and Ryan Kelly, the scene featured a piquant romance between two counter-tenors (Jason Abrams and David Korn) accompanied by guitarist Rupert Boyd '08 MUS.

The music married Monteverdi arias and a hauntingly melancholy take on the Donna Summer standard, "Last Dance" while candle-lit couples—including a male bride played by Kelly—could be glimpsed through the hotel's picture windows dancing on the ramped steps of the School of Art across the street.



The Reunion got off to a thrilling start Thursday night with Rufus Wainwright first taking to the Woolsey Hall stage for a solo concert...



...then joining the post-concert party at The Study, Chapel Street's trendy hotel (ABOVE).

RIGHT: Moving Theater's Ryan Kelly pumped up the energy at the post-concert party with his Iowa-loving bride as part of the surprise performance piece provided by Moving Theater.





LEFT: Mark Dollhopf '77, Executive Director, AYA, officially open the first "Yale LGBT Reunion: A Celebration of Our Yale Community" with enthusiasm and open arms.
RIGHT: Co-chair Libby Halstead '00 MBA greeted attendees assembled in the Yale Art Gallery Lecture Hall.



FRIDAY DAY

FRIDAY MORNING found attendees scurrying from Beineke Library to the Yale Art Gallery, many happily hung over from the night before, to take in special curated exhibits organized and led by Tim Young, Curator of Modern Books & Manuscripts at Beineke, and Graham C. Boettcher '95, '06 PhD, the William Cary Hulsey Curator of American Art at the Birmingham Museum of Art.

The exhibits highlighted Yale's gay and lesbian archives – such as Gertrude Stein's love letters to Alice B. Toklas and rare lesbian pulp novels – and art works by Marsden Hartley and Paul Cadmus and photographer Berenice Abbott among others.

That afternoon Mark Dollhopf '77, Executive Director, AYA, officially launched the Reunion enthusiastically welcoming the attendees along with co-chairs Monty Freeman '73 and Libby Halstead '00 MBA.

George Chauncey, '77, '89 PhD, chair of the University's LGBT Studies, took the podium for an enlightening and entertaining history of gay and lesbian Yale from the 19th Century on. He followed it up by moderating a panel featuring gay and lesbian alums, one each from the last five decades: James Campbell '58, Johannes van de Pol '71 MA, M. G. Lord '77, Maia Ettinger '83, Terrance Charles '95, and Myles Gideon '02. Our his/herstory was ever so lively!

FROM GEORGE CHAUNCEY'S PLENARY ADDRESS "GAY YALE THEN & NOW" TALKING ABOUT MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY YALE

"...There are numerous diaries at Sterling Library from those years in which Yale students recorded their physical intimacy. Close friends

sometimes slept together, not because they didn't have their own beds, and not necessarily to have sexual relations, but because sharing a bed was a sign that they had achieved the sort of intense friendship and emotional intimacy that students prized, and because sharing a bed was a way of deepening that intimacy.

In 1858, for instance, Edward Sheffield regularly spent the night with his classmate and close friend Asher Wilcox. They didn't

► CONTINUED FROM CAM SANDERS' POST-REUNION FACEBOOK ENTRY

...Afternoon plenary session representatives of past 6 decades (!) each speaking to their LGBTQ yale experience - illuminating and eye-opening. women and pp of color were represented here. great stories and images of our folk, being the iconoclasts and trailblazers they are, with many of those mentioned in attendance, and others shouted-out to. very moved at the part they—we—all played in each others' lives...

think of this as peculiar or queer; it variously seemed a fun, enriching, or emotionally charged thing to do...

One of the striking features of these diaries is that they reveal some students worrying that their passionate attractions to other men surpassed the boundaries of normal, acceptable intimacy...

FROM "LGBTQ LIFE AT YALE: GENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVES" M. G. LORD '77, JOURNALIST AND ACTIVIST

"...When Libby Halstead '00 MBA asked if I would represent the 1970s on a panel at the

GALA reunion, my first thought was: can't you do any better? I mean, I was married to a man for 14 years. Libby, however, assured me that 'B' – as in bisexual – was part of the LGBT acronym, and my story was probably as emblematic as any...

I had not intended to fall in love with another woman in my early 20s. This was not part of my goal-driven game plan – or, for that matter, hers. For all the feeling that had brought us together, a social stigma tore us apart. In the 1970s, this relationship was frowned upon. And just when we had achieved a sort of resolution, a few days before my 25th birthday, she was shot and killed in a random crime..."

MAIA ETTINGER '83, ACTIVIST AND VICE PRESIDENT, CREDO MOBIL

"...I felt, and still feel today, incredibly humbled and grateful for the courage of my lesbian foremothers at Yale. But while I felt aligned with much of their politics, the other baby dykes and I began to chafe at the cultural constraints of an ideological framework that was quite separatist in nature.

The older lesbians told me that my blue eyeliner was a tool of the patriarchy. They urged me to trade my Elvis Costello records for women's music, and decreed that I should make love lying on my side, because being on top was an act of male domination...

Socially and politically, my cohort looked more 'queer' than what came before us – we lived and partied as lesbians and gay men together. Notably, this cultural evolution was occurring right before AIDS entirely rewrote our lives..."

FRIDAY NIGHT



THE REUNION'S OPENING DAY continued right into the early evening with a cocktail reception at Sterling Library. Bill Massa, Head of Collection Development, Manuscripts and Archives, talked about the Library's ever-expanding LGBT collections, selections of which were on display in a nearby room.

Also on display was a detailed and illustrated Yale gay/lesbian timeline researched and mapped out by Anna Wipfler '09 as her senior project in Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies.

Alums could revisit their college days by dining at one of the residential colleges such as Berkeley or Davenport or at the Joseph Slifka Center for Jewish Life. We then gathered at the Slifka Center for an intimate musical soiree featuring the musical work and performances by some of Yale's most talented alumni/ae.

Classical harpist Ashley Jackson, TD '07, '10 YSM led off with a Bach Partita in D minor, transcribed for harp. The Whiffs of 2009 performed standards and arrangements of their newer repertoire. Transgendered cabaret artist Geo Wyeth '07 (www.myspace.com/novicetheory) mesmerized with his spoken word and smoky accordion.

Tenor Peter Tantsits YSM '04 performed opera excerpts from *Before Night Falls* by composer Jorge Martin '81, who accompanied him on piano. The opera—about the gay Cuban poet Reinaldo Arenas who died of AIDS—will premiere at the Fort Worth Opera (www.fwopera.org) in May 2010. Kevin Quinn '01 sang a song from Adam Guettel's *Myths and Hymns*, with Alex Tang '80 at the piano.

Closing out the program were baritone Dennis Blackwell '87, and pianist Tang, who performed two Cole Porter songs, as well as the title song from the upcoming musical *The Kid*, lyrics by Jack Lechner '84 and music by Andy Monroe. The musical is based on Dan Savage's memoir *The Kid: What Happened After My Boyfriend and I Decided to Go Get Pregnant*, premiering at The New Group in New York in Spring 2010.

Still many of us didn't want the night to end. We trooped off to 116 Crown for drinks and Center Street for dancing in downtown New Haven, posh gay/lesbian friendly night-spots that were a revelation to those familiar with the less-than-grand Partners and York St. Cafe of old.



TOP: Reunion alums take in the LGBT exhibit at Sterling Library at the Friday evening cocktail reception.
MIDDLE: Yale GALA co-founder Corey Friedlander '74 congratulates Anna Wipfler '09 on her year-by-year illustrated history of LGBT life at Yale with her multi-paneled timeline (RIGHT), developed and researched for her senior project.
LEFT: Attendees compared their Yale experiences over dinner at residential colleges Friday night.



William Rubenstein '82 stirring plenary address "AIDS and Remembrance: Days of 1984" brings Reunion participants to their feet in a standing ovation.



SATURDAY DAY

SATURDAY MORNING got down to business with updates on LGBT Yale today from Joseph Gordon, '78 PhD, Deputy Dean, Yale College—his comment about being an "acting gay dean" got a big laugh from the audience—Maria Trumpler '92 PhD, Director, Office of LGBTQ Resources, and George Chauncey who emphasized that "this is an exciting time for LGBT Studies at Yale."

They were followed by a plenary address "AIDS and Remembrance: Days of 1984" by William Rubenstein '82. Bill was as eloquent as he was unsparing as he evoked and explicated how AIDS devastated a generation of gay men and turned party boys into activists who took to the streets to challenge and change a hostile society and an uncaring government.

FROM THE UNIVERSITY UPDATE

JOE GORDON:

"On website for this event, the bio refers to me as the first openly gay acting master of a residential college... 'Gay-acting' master? Gay 'acting-master'?..."

Would it be too much Gossip Girl to mention that we have gay- and lesbian-acting residential college deans, cultural center deans, deans at professional schools, coaches, senior athletic directors, chaplains, doctors and therapists, officers for city and state affairs, directors and service heads in museums, libraries, institutes, labs, the AYA, our unions, and WHC, where my own husband works..."

GEORGE CHAUNCEY:

"...In the past five years, Yale has hired three senior faculty and several junior faculty who teach and write in the field. Their arrival has



Transgendered Yalies, friends, and family lunch at the Atticus café before going on to afternoon panels.

brought new strength and attention to our program...especially in U.S. history...American Studies, English, Anthropology, East Asian Studies, and Religious Studies...This year students could choose from about 25 courses in LGBT history, literature, ethnography, cultural studies, theory, and other subjects...

Strikingly, student interest in these courses is not limited to gay students; for instance, half of the sixty students who took my lecture course on U.S. lesbian and gay history last fall were straight. These courses both provide students with critical analytical tools and send a powerful message to all students that Yale takes these subjects—and LGBT people—seriously..."

EXCERPT FROM WILLIAM B. RUBINSTEIN'S "AIDS AND REMEMBRANCE: DAYS OF 1984"

"...After graduating, I started doing legal work on AIDS issues because my friends were dying and I assumed I would too. While clerking for a federal judge in Washington, I volunteered... and I was assigned to work on wills with the organization's one lawyer.

During the day, he and a group of volunteers interviewed men, scores of them, about their

dying wishes. After work, I would pick up the files, return to my apartment, and type these desires into a computerized form..."

They left small bank accounts to their mothers, art work done by ex-lovers to new boyfriends ("Michael's oil painting of Fifi to Robert"), collections of Billie Holiday records to their church. They made specific bequests of toasters and Tallulah Bankhead portraits and jewelry boxes full of jade bracelets. And they died, scores of them..."

I remember bailing an ACT-UP protester out of jail in lower Manhattan so he can get home to take his drugs... the police took his belt—standard operating procedure even for the thirty-minute incarceration of a political demonstrator—and he emerged from the holding pen so emaciated from AIDS or from the drugs supposedly saving his life or from both that he had to hold his pants up with one hand, impossibly bony fingers furiously clutching a huge ball of black denim. Yet out he marched, a shocking apparition, dead man walking, right through the middle of the stunned precinct's now-hushed cacophony..."

SATURDAY'S PANELS

SATURDAY was chock-a-block with panels on film and television, business and finance, religion, art and architecture, politics and activism, gay families, theatre, law, health and medicine, and communities of color and LGBT diversity.

Panelists included individuals who have changed how the world views us and how we view ourselves, such as Ruth Harlow '86, lead counsel in the landmark *Lawrence v. Texas* case and Stuart Gaffney '84, Marriage Equality USA and one of the plaintiffs in California marriage case.

They included independent film and television producer Jennie Livingston '83 (Paris is Burning); Dr. Emilie Townes '05 MAH, Professor of African American Religion and Theology, Yale Divinity School; Tobias Wolff '92, who served as candidate Obama's chief advisor on LGBT issues; anthropologist Donna Daniels '98 MA; printmaker Andrew Raftery '88 MFA; Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Doug Wright '85 (*I Am My Own Wife*, *Grey Gardens*); and business professionals such as Anne Keating '77, Korn/Ferry International, and Jack Stephenson '82, PayPal Inc.

SANDY HOLMES '80, SENIOR DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE, ACLU, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, PANELIST, "COMMUNITIES OF COLOR AND LGBT DIVERSITY"

"...When I came out to one African American classmate he misunderstood my factual statement and felt the need to console me by saying, 'You're not gay.' Some were silently hostile, or attempted to engage me in a philosophical Marxist debate about homosexuality being a symptom of bourgeois western decadence. Some were tolerant, for others it made no difference, and some carefully avoided me, still others kept their own counsel about the matter... Being Black/Gay is much like being bi-cultural and likewise requires 'code-switching' to move with fluidity between both worlds..."

JAMES PERLOTTO '78, M.D. CHIEF OF STUDENT MEDICINE, YALE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES, MODERATOR, "LGBT HEALTH & MEDICINE"

"...I came from a small lower-middle class community. Much to my surprise, I was accepted as an undergraduate to the Yale Class of '78. I always wanted to be a doctor but it was quite a balancing act between pre-med and my growing awareness that I was gay. In 1974-78, Yale was a tough place to be gay or lesbian..."

I can't tell you how amazing Yale is today.



"LGBT Politics & Activism" moderator Ari Shapiro '00 leads a spirited discussion with panelists Stephen Glassman '75 M Arch, Mark Sexton '81, Maxim Thorne '89, and Stuart Gaffney '84 (not shown).



Filmmaker Jennie Livingstone '83 and panelist for "Film, Television, and LGBT Representation: Reports from the Front."

It's a whole different world now. It's a real joy of mine as a doctor to be able to treat our gay and lesbian students. To have them say, 'You're the first doctor I can turn to and talk to.' It's given me the most professional satisfaction in my career..."

PANEL MEMBER STUART GAFFNEY '84, MARRIAGE EQUALITY ACTIVIST, POLICY ANALYST, CENTER FOR AIDS PREVENTION STUDIES, SAN FRANCISCO, PANELIST, RECALLING "LGBT POLITICS AND ACTIVISM"

So many of us first became activists at Yale, and this panel was a great opportunity to exchange ideas with some of the people who first inspired us to create change together.

Steven Glassman analyzed priorities for LGBT rights on a federal level; Mark Sexton highlighted the importance of inclusivity in LGBT organizing; Maxim Thorne mapped out the movement building needed in order to continue advancing LGBT civil rights and so-

► CONTINUED FROM CAM SANDERS' POST-REUNION FACEBOOK ENTRY

...Downstairs the Bruce Cohen Eva Kolodner Jenny Livingston-featured panel on film and media of course very well attended. A subsequent panel on gay families sported several very young critters, their parents, as well as the very distinguished and articulate Dr. Renee (formerly Dick) Richards, all of whom were expressive in their stories of LGBTQ family-ing. The "diversity" panel then offered a solid array of perspectives, including from our own donald suggs, reflecting on his path to yale, and some amazing stories of strength and perseverance from several others, including from one about-to-graduate class of 09-er, Ben Gonzalez, son of ("practically illiterate") Mexican immigrants, out of the small town of Desert Hot Springs, CA, an impressive representative of the current student body, with his proclamation of self-identity, describing his one lgbtq leg and his one latino leg—"I need both to stand, if I'm missing either one I fall down" We are who we all are, indeed...

cial justice; and I shared lessons learned (and activist t-shirts) from Prop. 8. It felt like we had our own Yale GALA policy think tank.

Ari Shapiro kept the wide-ranging discussion on track, and the audience raised critical questions regarding the role of labor, women, people of color, and more. As the panel concluded, it felt more like the beginning of a conversation than the end of one—as evidenced by the many ongoing discussions spilling out into the halls afterward.

JACK LECHNER '84, MOVIE PRODUCER, LYRICIST FOR UPCOMING MUSICAL THE KID, SELF-ACKNOWLEDGED HETEROSEXUAL, PANELIST, "THE CONTINUING EVOLUTION OF LGBT THEATRE"

"...I just find gay characters much more interesting to write about. For example, a thief. You make him a gay thief and he's instantly more interesting..."



LEFT: Generations and genders of LGBT Yalies mix and mingle over cocktails and dinner at University Commons. RIGHT: Eliza Byard '90 and Bruce Cohen '83 deliver the joint keynote address.



SATURDAY NIGHT

A **COCKTAIL RECEPTION** and Gala dinner topped off Saturday night as we packed University Commons, dressed in our best to our butchest and everything in-between. The cavernous dining hall rang with raucous laughter and conversation until it was time to grab a table and line up for Indian, Italian, or American cuisine – or a little of all three.

Yale President Richard Levin '74 started the evening's program off with a surprise visit to welcome LGBT alums and reiterate Yale's appreciation and embrace of their contributions – often in the face of University intransigence – to their alma mater.

He was followed by Dr. Eliza Byard '90, Executive Director, GLSEN, and Bruce Cohen '83, film producer (*Milk*) and activist. Together they delivered a joint keynote address that congratulated attendees on their accomplishments and challenged them to continue the unfinished struggle for full LGBT rights.

Dr. Byard was especially heartfelt, having just spent two weeks responding to back-to-back suicides of two middle school boys, Charles Walker-Hoover and Jaheem Herrera, who had suffered persistent and dramatic bullying and harassment at school for being "queer."

Then it was awards time. Ruth and David Waterbury '58 were presented the Yale GALA Award for their unstinting support of the LGBT community, exemplified in the person of their lesbian daughter Margery, now son Marcus and his wife Jacqueline White '83.

But the evening was not without controversy. Larry Kramer '57 – who was presented with the first Yale GALA Lifetime Achievement Award – took the opportunity to speak of his keen disappointment in how Yale treated the Larry Kramer Initiative (LKI) funded with \$1 million dollars from his brother Arthur. He also voiced his own contrarian views on queer vs. gay in popular usage and the unheralded history of gay America.

The evening wrapped up with Dance Party at the GPSCY on York Street with alums, faculty, students, family, and friends taking to the sweaty dance floor to prove that busting a move transcended class year and academic credentials.

ELIZA BYARD (FROM HER KEYNOTE REMARKS)

"...I am here to deliver some not-so-good news, or perhaps simply a challenge. While we may soon have won most legal rights for gay people, we will still have to fight for those who are considered queer. Today's panels and presentations were a potent reminder that I came



David Waterbury '58 speaks after he and his wife Ruth receive the Yale GALA Award as proud transgender son Marcus Waterbury, wife Jacqueline White '83, and mother Ruth look on.

of age politically in the plague years and during an emerging struggle between 'gay' and 'queer'...

Charles Walker-Hoover may or may not have been going to be gay, but at his school he was a new kid and he was queer. He loved his schoolwork, he was outgoing, smiling, awkward physically, and related easily to adults. Jaheem Herrera may or may not have grown up to be gay, but at his school he was a new kid and he was queer. He was friendly, outgoing, athletic, and had a funny accent. Each of them was tormented for 'acting gay,' being 'fem-inine,' and being a 'faggot'..."

DAVID WATERBURY (AS HE AND HIS WIFE RUTH ACCEPTED YALE GALA AWARD)

"...As Margery transitioned on the job to Marcus, there was a teaching moment in our small part of corporate America and Morgan Stanley responded far better than we could have hoped. Margery's birthday was approaching, and the beginning of a new life as Marcus. 300 relatives, friends, and clients toasted Marcus on this exhilarating occasion at the Minneapolis Club. It was an incredible evening. One of the things Ruth told Margie on that day in 1986 [when she came out as a lesbian] was that we don't march, we don't write letters, and we don't call legislators. Things change..."

LARRY KRAMER (ACCEPTING THE YALE GALA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD)

"...Just as a point of information, I would like to proclaim with great pride: I am not queer! And neither are you. When will we stop using this adolescent and demeaning word to identify ourselves? Like our history that is not

SUNDAY

SUNDAY MORNING began with a Remembrance Gathering led by Rev. Rebecca Voelkel '96 MDiv. We shared memories of friends and lovers we'd lost as we placed lit candles in a tray of sand. While most had been taken from us by AIDS, there were those felled by breast cancer and merciless time.

The memories, now fresh, were punctuated with tears and laughter as old friends and new acquaintances reached across to embrace and comfort one another — and celebrate the men and women whose lives are far from forgotten.

When we are lost and sick
at heart,
We remember them.
When we have joys we yearn
to share,
We remember them.
So long as we live,
they too shall live,
for they are now a part of us,
As we remember them.

OPENING PRAYER, LED BY REV. REBECCA
VOELKEL '96 M. DIV.

*Cause Love don't need a reason,
Love don't always rhyme,
And love is all we have for now;
What we don't have is time.*

SUNG BY ROBERT LEUZE '58, ACCOMPANIED ON PIANO BY ALEX TANG '80
WORDS AND MUSIC BY PETER ALLEN,
MARSHA MALAMET, AND MICHAEL CALLEN

And then before any of us were truly ready it was time for good-byes at the Alumni House over coffee and danish. Business cards were hastily exchanged, handshakes all around as well as hugs and kisses as one by one we took off for planes, trains, awaiting cars, and journeys back to our lives elsewhere...even as a dwindling few lingered outside on the steps talking, gabbing, sharing one last memory of their lives at Yale and the amazing week-end they had shared and were so reluctant to let go.



TOP: Sunday morning, friends and loved ones take time to remember those fellow alumni/ae no longer with us.
LEFT: Dramatic baritone Robert Leuze '58, accompanied on piano by Alex Tang '80, sets the tone for the Remembrance Gathering by singing "Love Don't Need a Reason."
RIGHT: Time to go! Participants at Yale's First-Ever LGBT Reunion gather in Alumni House — and linger — one last time before going their separate ways.

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10, LARRY KRAMER

taught, using this word will continue to guarantee that we are not taken seriously in the world...

For those of you here celebrating Yale's acceptance of us, I am here to tell you that there is not quite so much to celebrate yet. Yes, it is a long way from my freshman year in 1953 when I tried to kill myself. But like so much that continues to happen to us, there is still too much invisible shit blocking the acceptance that we need and we are due..."

► CONTINUED FROM CAM SANDERS' POST-REUNION FACEBOOK ENTRY

...Commons is, unbelievably, pretty much filled up with our group. Almost 400, apparently. White tablecloths, wine service, and the ambitious and bountiful menu do not diminish from the transporting feeling I get making my way back to my table, second helping plate in hand. It's 1983, I'm tablehopping across the enormous room, we're all 18, and I'm basically in the exact same outfit I was twenty-five years ago, with that same expansive, trusting-in-the-universe-and-in-us-all feeling. It's kind of great...

...The night went barreling on with a party at the GPSCY, complete with the requisite sweatily cute student bartenders, which started innocently and demurely enough but true to form evolved quickly into a loud and generally happy crowd, complete with dancing, flirting and incriminating photography that hopefully will not be distributed further.

RESPONSES, REFLECTIONS, REALIZATIONS

DOUG WRIGHT '85 (PANELIST)

When I was at Yale as a gay undergraduate in the mid 1980's, our visibility on campus was low, and our resources relatively slight... So to return to the campus almost twenty-five years later to find a flourishing Gay and Lesbian Studies Department, politically motivated students, and compelling alumni from every spectrum of gay life was no less than exhilarating; and it was profoundly affirming... I look forward to the next LGBTQ reunion.

MAIA ETTINGER '83 (WRITING TO CO-CHAIRS LIBBY HALSTEAD AND MONTY FREEMAN)

The reunion transformed my relationship to Yale, making me feel, for the first time, that it is "my" university too... A lot went into that epiphany, but I wanted to comment on one factor in particular: the way you two managed the event...

I was and remain genuinely moved by the energy you devoted to shaping an inclusive and diverse reunion. I believe it resulted in the best event possible, and one that will generate change and growth for its participants and for the university in years to come.

► CONTINUED FROM CAM SANDERS' POST-REUNION FACEBOOK ENTRY

Many who were absent were thought of fondly while we were there – a momentary coming together across many planes of identity, community, time and history. Well done to all and see u on facebook. Or not! cheers, cam

CHARLOTTE ABBOTT '89 IN EMAIL TO FRIENDS

It was an ecstatic experience, starting with the thrill of walking those familiar streets in the company of so many familiar faces... Suddenly we were young and gay again – with goofy smiles all around...

Even more potent than the nostalgia trip was the powerful message that our queer activism, agitation, misery and exuberance had actually made a positive and lasting impact on the university. Not only has the undergraduate LGBT studies program we knew in its infancy now become one of the most distinguished in the country – but support for queer students across the university is becoming institutionalized...

Hearing it firsthand, during the historic gathering at Yale, was like reaching the top of a mountain after years of climbing under heavy cloud cover, and finding that suddenly the sun is shining brightly and if you turn back, there's a gorgeous view of the precipitous and at times breathtaking way up.

CHUCK WHELAN '63

Dear Libby, Monty and Committee,
Congratulations on the most successful and uplifting Reunion last weekend. Of the many visits I have made to Yale since my graduation this was by far the best and most satisfying.



Yale's historic LGBT Reunion brought together old friends from near and far.



The desire to connect and celebrate with fellow gay and lesbian Yalies — whether from one's own class year or not — continued long after the planned events ended.



The weekend Reunion included a series of addresses, updates, discussions, and panels. Here Tom Burke '85 moderates the Saturday panel on "Business & Finance."

What is your most defining memory of Yale as a LGBT student or alum? Did it set you on life's path, help you identify who you were, or demand a courage you didn't know you had? Was it the sweetness of first love or the first bitter encounter with prejudice? Whether you attended the Reunion or not, write that memory up and the GALA newsletter will publish as many of them as possible in the next issue! Email them to: Bob Barnett, Editor, Yale GALA newsletter at corporateink@sbcglobal.net.