

# YALE GALA

YALE'S LGBT ALUMNI/AE NETWORK NEWSLETTER



Eliza Byard, '90

## Reunion Profile

### Eliza Byard, GLSEN Executive Director, To Speak at Reunion

By Donté Donald

Eliza Byard, Timothy Dwight Class of 1990, will give one of two keynote addresses at the gala dinner closing night of Yale's first LGBT Reunion. Byard was appointed Executive Director of GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network on November 1, 2008, after serving as the Deputy Executive Director for the previous seven years.

GLSEN is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students.

Also delivering a keynote address at the Reunion dinner will be Bruce Cohen '83, LGBT activist and producer of the numerous queer-themed motion pictures (continued on page 6)

## Rufus Wainwright Concert to Kick Off Yale LGBT Reunion

By Bob Barnett '89

Rufus Wainwright, queer troubadour *par excellence*, will open "The First-Ever Yale LGBT Reunion" with a Thursday night solo concert at Woolsey Hall, April 23 at 8:00. The landmark three-day LGBT Reunion runs Friday, April 24 through Sunday, April 26.

The Reunion—supported by the Association of Yale Alumni (AYA)—will feature two full days of panel discussions and keynote addresses by gay and lesbian luminaries film producer Bruce Cohen '83 and GLSEN Executive Director Eliza Byard '90, and a plenary address by Yale historian and author George Chauncey '77, '89 PhD on "Gay Yale Then & Now." There will also be cultural and social events including a musical soirée featuring student and alumni/ae cabaret performers, a dance party, and an exhibit "Documenting the LGBTQ Experience in Beinecke Collections." (See page 5 for complete list of events)

"This will be an exciting first-of-its-kind event," said Yale GALA Co-Chair Libby Halstead '00 MBA, "with LGBT students, alums, and faculty gathering to celebrate, take stock, and look to the future."

The Reunion is open to Yale alumni/ae from all schools as well as students, staff, friends, and family. It celebrates 40 years of LGBT student organizing, the 25th anniversary of Yale GALA, the University's rise to preeminence in LGBTQ scholarship, and the opening of Yale's on-campus Office of LGBTQ Resources. The Reunion will end on Sunday with a remem-

brance gathering, closing brunch, and the New Haven AIDS Walk.

### University supports Reunion

"The Reunion represents a sea change for Yale," said Mickey Dobbs '92, Yale GALA Co-President. "Gay and lesbian alums are now a recognized shared interest group in the AYA, with full standing within the organization."

It wasn't always so. Dobbs pointed out Yale GALA—the alumni/ae group for LGBT graduates—created a major controversy in 1984 when it was first being organized. "GALA put an ad in the alumni magazine, soliciting members," Dobbs explained. "It (continued on page 4)

To register for The First-Ever Yale LGBT Reunion, go to [www.aya.yale.edu/lgbtreunion](http://www.aya.yale.edu/lgbtreunion). To see who's registered, click "Who's Coming." To participate in a confidential survey on the lives and history of LGBT Yale alumni/ae, click [www.aya.yale.edu/lgbtreunion/survey](http://www.aya.yale.edu/lgbtreunion/survey) link at the bottom of the home page. Survey results will be presented at the Reunion in April. ▼

## From the editor:

### Lessons Learned . . .

When I'm asked what it was like to attend Yale, I'm sometimes flummoxed. What do I tell them?

I grew up in California, far from the ivy halls. When I first arrived in New Haven, I genuinely expected to hear students chatting in Greek, ancient Greek, as they strolled about the leafy campus with its stern Tutor Gothic towers abutting cheery Colonial quads. I was a graduate student at the Drama School—which I talked my way into, literally—so my Yale was not the quintessential residential college experience of the undergraduate. I was never tapped for Skull and Bones. I never sang a cappella, even in the shower.

What I do say is that Yale formed my standards. What I expect of myself, my work as a playwright, and my world. Yale teaches you to set those standards high and keep them there. I'm grateful for that.

When I reflect on our upcoming Yale LGBT Reunion, I realize that as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students, faculty, staff, and alumni, we have accomplished just the reverse. We've set the standards for Yale

when it comes to GLBT issues, rights, and scholarship. We've set those standards high and kept them there, year in and year out, in the face of ridicule, anger, disregard, incomprehension, and finally grudging acceptance, dawning appreciation, and conscious, committed support.

Here we are, weeks away from our first ever Yale LGBT Reunion, sponsored and promoted by the Association of Yale Alumni. While it may still be too soon to kick back and shout, "We've arrived!"—just glance at my home state where our right to marry has been trampled by self-righteous bigots—I think we can at least congratulate ourselves. Our student—Yale University—has not only mastered the lessons we assigned but has signed up for continuing education. And what's more, that student is throwing a great big party in our honor!

See you on campus in April!

*Bob Barnett '89* editor

**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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## Yale Seeks Endowed Funds in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Studies

LGBT Studies at Yale promotes innovative interdisciplinary scholarship on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues and in the study of sexuality. It has a national and international reputation for its faculty, guest lecturers, fellowships, prizes, and symposia.

Endowed gifts—from \$ 25,000 to \$3,000,000—can be designed to support professorships, postdoctoral fellowships, general programs, dissertation fellowships, or travel grants to provide scholars with access to Yale's outstanding collections of LGBT materials:

- An endowed professorship honors and supports distinguished scholarship and excellent teaching in LGBT

Studies. It helps Yale recruit and retain accomplished scholars and teachers, and enhances the University's growing reputation as a leader in the field.

- Postdoctoral fellowships promote original research on LGBT issues and mentor a new generation of outstanding scholars and teachers who enrich intellectual life at Yale by introducing new ideas, approaches, and underrepresented areas of study.

- The LGBT Studies General Endowment Fund enables Yale to host conferences, lectures, workshops, and film screenings and provides resources for faculty, graduate student, and undergraduate research.

- The Sarah Pettit Doctoral Fellowship fund supports year-long residential dissertation fellowships, which strengthen the education of the best graduate students in LGBT Studies and introduce faculty and students to up-and-coming scholars.

- LGBT Travel Fellowships provide grants to scholars who want to use Yale's rare and unique research collections in LGBT Studies, fostering scholarship in LGBT Studies and helping to publicize the University's rich archival collections at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library and Sterling Memorial Library. **To learn more, go to: [www.yaletomorrow.yale.edu](http://www.yaletomorrow.yale.edu)** ▼

# Gordon Appointment Breaks New Ground

By Raymond Carlson    Courtesy of *Yale Daily News*

When University President Richard Levin appointed Joseph Gordon PhD '78 as Yale College's acting dean September 29, 2008, it marked a new milestone for diversity in the upper ranks of Yale's administration—and one more milestone in Gordon's career at Yale.

Gordon served in the interim position until December 1, 2008, when Mary Miller PhD '81 assumed the deanship as the first woman to hold the position. But Gordon is not completely out of the job. He will serve as acting dean again this coming summer, when Miller will take two months off to focus on a prestigious series of lectures to be delivered at the National Gallery of Art in spring 2010.

Gordon will be speaking as part of the "University Update" at the Yale LGBT Reunion on Saturday, April 25. Joining him will be Maria Trumpler '92 PhD, Director, Office of LGBTQ Resources, and George Chauncey, Chair of LGBT Studies.

Although Gordon was the first openly gay dean of Yale College in the University's 307-year history, he appeared unfazed. "In 2008, I have to say, on the Yale campus and in the Yale community, I just don't feel it's an issue," Gordon said.

Some of Gordon's colleagues saw his appointment in a different light.

"I doubt an openly gay person would have been appointed to a high-profile position like this just a few years ago," wrote Chauncey, who serves on the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies Committee with Gordon, in an e-mail to the *Yale Daily News*. "The fact that Joe's being gay didn't factor into this appointment at all is a welcome sign of how far forward Yale, and American society as a whole, have moved on gay issues."

Chauncey added that Levin deserved praise for appointing Gordon.

Milestones are not exactly new for Gordon. In 1987, then-University President Benno Schmidt named him the acting master of Pierson College, mak-



Joseph Gordon, sometime Dean of Yale College, will be one of three speakers delivering the "University Update" at the Yale LGBT Reunion Saturday, April 25.

ing Gordon the first openly gay master of a residential college at Yale. "I think that took some courage, in those days, to do that," Gordon said when asked about Schmidt's decision to appoint him.

## Sign of the times

Today, gays and lesbians occupy an array of important positions within the University administration, said Maria Trumpler, who is also special assistant to the deans for LGBTQ affairs, citing the incoming master of Jonathan Edwards College, Richard Lalli, and Michael Morand, University vice president for New Haven and State Affairs.

Alfred Guy, director of the Yale College Writing Center, which Gordon helped create, felt his appointment sent an important message to the entire Yale community. "It's very useful both for gay and straight people to be reminded that [Gordon's] greatness encompasses his sexuality: It is neither irrelevant to nor despite it," Guy said.

Trumpler also stressed that during his time at Yale, Gordon has been significantly involved in LGBTQ academic affairs, starting as early as the 1990s, when he served on Fund for Lesbian and Gay Studies.

From a student perspective, Benjamin Gonzalez '09, coordinator of the LGBTQ Cooperative at Yale, praised Gordon for his kind manner and willingness to take on a mentorship role. "He is warm, open and genial," Gonzalez said. "I can't think of anyone better to be in charge of so much power."

## Active in Yale administration

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Amherst College, Gordon received his doctorate in English from Yale in 1978, two years after he began teaching here as a graduate student. In addition to helping to found the Writing Center, he was a driving force behind the creation of the Center for Language Study.

Gordon also has held numerous administrative posts in the University prior to his appointment as acting dean.

While an assistant professor of English, Gordon served as associate director of Yale's summer program. He joined the Dean's Office in 1988 as associate dean, assumed the deanship for undergraduate education in 1997, and was named deputy dean of the College a year later.

He has also worked with the Course of Study Committee, the Committee on Majors, the Teaching and Learning Committee, and the Committee on Teaching in the Residential Colleges and supervises the directors of undergraduate studies across the University. ▼





Rufus Wainwright

triggered a firestorm that didn't subside for six issues."

To illustrate the change of the times, Dobbs added, "The Reunion was just featured in the alumni magazine. There wasn't one single outcry."

In fact, AYA Executive Director Mark Dollhopf '77 will join Reunion Co-Chairs Monty Freeman '73 and Libby Halstead in officially welcoming the attendees at the Friday afternoon opening event.

## Meet your Yale LGBT Reunion Co-Chairs:

**BELMONT FREEMAN**, FAIA '73 is the principal of Belmont Freeman Architects, an award-winning design firm in New York City. He has earned a wide reputation as an innovative designer, a progressive practitioner, and a scholar. His work for institutional, commercial, and residential clients is regularly featured in the architecture and design press.

**LIBBY HALSTEAD** '00 MBA is the Principal of Halstead Coaching and Consulting, a leadership development practice based in New York that provides coaching and consulting services to organizations, executive teams, and individuals. Prior to starting her company, Libby was a management consultant with McKinsey & Company and Katzenbach Partners LLC. ▼

Freeman said he wanted to help organize the Reunion weekend because "it was an exciting opportunity to participate in an historic Yale milestone as an out gay man." Halstead remarked that, "the comment I hear most is 'this is the reunion I've always wanted to go to, but no one ever organized it before.'"

## Something for everyone

Additional Reunion events include a "University Update" and a panel discussion featuring alumni/ae from five decades sharing their Yale stories. There will also be additional panels on gay and lesbian parenting, theater, law, religion, communities of color, film and television, and politics and activism among others.

Panelists include Ruth Harlow '86, lead counsel in the landmark *Lawrence v. Texas* case; Ari Shapiro '00, NPR's award-winning justice correspondent; film and television producers Jennie Livingston '83 (*Paris is Burning*) and Alan Poul (*Six Feet Under*); Dr. Emilie Townes, Professor of African American Religion and Theology, Yale Divinity School; and Stuart Gaffney and John Lewis, Marriage Equality USA and plaintiffs in the marriage lawsuit before the California Supreme Court.

Also appearing on panels are Jacqueline White '83, artist and author (forthcoming *My Transgender Husband: A Love Story*); Dr. James Perlotto '78, Chief of Student Medicine, Yale University; Rev. Rebecca Voelkel, Program Director, Institute for Welcoming Resources, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force; Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Doug Wright '85 (*I Am My Own Wife*, *Grey Gardens*), and LGBT rights activists Maia Ettinger, '80s campus organizer, now with Working Assets, and Johannes van de Pol '71, founder of Yale's first gay student organization in the 1960's.

See the [www.aya.yale.edu/lgbtreunion](http://www.aya.yale.edu/lgbtreunion) website for an updated list of panelists and speakers.

To build awareness of the Reunion, Yale GALA held a series of kick-off events in Washington, D.C. (February 13), San Francisco (March 3), West Hollywood (March 7) and Seattle (March 20). The West Hollywood event featured a performance by the Yale Whiffenpoofs, the oldest collegiate a cappella group in the United States.

The Thursday April 23 Rufus Wainwright concert "celebrating LGBT life at Yale and in New Haven" will benefit AIDS Project New Haven and GLSEN-CT. For tickets, go to [www.yalegala.tix.com](http://www.yalegala.tix.com). ▼

Handsome Dan, now rainbow colored!



Yale GALA and the Association of Yale Alumni (AYA) proudly present

## The First-Ever Yale LGBT Reunion

Thursday, April 23rd–Sunday, April 26th, 2009, on the Yale Campus in New Haven  
REUNION PROGRAM:

### Thursday, April 23, 2009

- Pre-Reunion **Attend LGBT Classes and Campus Tours**
- 8 pm **Rufus Wainwright in a Charity Benefit Concert— A special solo performance, celebrating LGBT life at Yale and in New Haven.**  
Must purchase tickets in advance! (www.YALEGALA.TIX.COM) All proceeds benefit AIDS Project New Haven & GLSEN-CT
- After Party **Performances by Jason Abrams (Met Countertenor), Rupert Boyd, MA '08 (Classical guitar), and Ryan Kelly (NYC Ballet)**

### Friday, April 24, 2009

- 9 am **Registration**  
AYA, 1201 Chapel Street
- 9:45–10:30 **Special Viewings**  
and Advance reservation required. See website.
- 10:45–11:30 **“Queer Art at Yale: An Intimate Look”**  
Yale Art Gallery  
Graham C. Boettcher, '95, '06 PhD, Curator of American Art, Birmingham Museum of Art  
**“Documenting the LGBTQ experience in Beinecke Collections”**  
Beineke Rare Book Library  
Tim Young, Curator, Modern Books & Manuscripts
- 2 pm **Welcome and Reunion Overview**  
Mark R. Dollhopf '77, Executive Director, AYA  
Monty Freeman '73 and Libby Halstead '00 MBA
- 2:30–3 pm **“Plenary Address: Gay Yale Then & Now”**  
George Chauncey '77, '89 PhD, Professor History and Chair of LGBT Studies
- 3–4:15 pm **Panel Discussion: “LGBTQ Life at Yale: Generational Perspectives”**  
Alumni from five decades share their Yale stories
- 4:30–6 pm **LGBTQ Archives Exhibition & Reception**  
William Massa, Head of Collection Development, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library  
Anna Wipfler '09
- 6:30 pm **Dinner with Students, Faculty, and Staff**  
Residential Colleges
- 8 pm **Musical Soirée**  
Student and Alumni/ae cabaret performers and singing groups (Join other singing group alumni in performance. Visit the website for details.)
- 9:30 pm–12 am **Party!** (cash bar)

### Saturday, April 25, 2009

- 9 am–12 m **Registration**  
AYA, 1201 Chapel Street
- 9–10 am **Coffee, Mix and Mingle**
- 10–10:45 am **University Update**  
Joseph W. Gordon '78 PhD, Deputy Dean, Yale College  
Maria Trumpler '92 PhD, Director of the Office of LGBTQ Resources  
George Chauncey '77, '89 PhD, Chair of LGBT Studies
- 10:45–11:30 am **Plenary Address: “AIDS and Remembrance: Days of 1984”**  
William B. Rubenstein, '82, Professor of Law, Harvard Law School
- 11:45 am–1 pm **Panel Discussions—I**  
a. Film & Television, b. Religion, c. Business & Finance
- 1 pm **Lunch** (on one's own)
- 2:15–3:30 pm **Panel Discussions—II**  
a. Gay and Lesbian Parenting, b. Law, c. Literature, d. Art and Architecture
- 3:45–5 pm **Panel Discussions—III**  
a. Communities of Color, b. Politics & Activism, c. Science & Medicine, d. Theater
- 6–7 pm **Cocktail Reception**  
University Commons
- 7–9 pm **GALA Dinner**  
University Commons  
**Yale GALA Honors and Recognitions**  
**Keynote Address**  
Dr. Eliza Byard '90, Executive Director, GLSEN  
Bruce Cohen '83, Film Producer (“Milk”) and LGBT Activist
- 10 pm–1 am **Student-Alumni Dance Party**

### Sunday, April 26, 2009

- 10:30–11:30 am **Remembrance Gathering**
- 11 am–1 pm **Brunch**  
Alumni House, 232 York Street  
Closing Remarks
- 1–3 **Campus Tours**
- 2:30 pm **New Haven AIDS Walk** ▼

including *Milk*, *American Beauty*, and *To Wong Foo Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar*.

The dinner, to be held at the University Commons, is open to all attending the Reunion and will be followed by a student-alumni/ae dance party.

As Executive Director, Byard oversees all of GLSEN's programs, communications campaigns, fundraising, and operations. She also serves as GLSEN's primary spokesperson, having appeared on *The O'Reilly Factor*, *Buchanan & Press*, and *60 Minutes* as well as making presentations on GLSEN's work and LGBT issues to organizations including the National Education Association, the American Association of School Administrators, the National School Boards Association, and the Learning First Alliance.

Byard was selected by unanimous vote by the search committee and the GLSEN Board of Directors after an exhaustive six-month national search. She replaced GLSEN founder and Executive Director Kevin Jennings who stepped down after leading the organization for 18 years.

Jennings praised Byard's appointment, calling her his "primary partner

in taking our vision and creating a national movement" since she joined GLSEN as Deputy Executive Director in 2001.

## Promoting the "Conversation of Democracy"

Byard originally planned to be a documentary filmmaker. During her senior year, the twentieth anniversary of coeducation in Yale College, she worked on *Boola Boola: Yale Goes Coed*, a look at the first group of women to attend the college, produced by Julia Pimsleur '90.

"I had the privilege of working with Bill Moyers while I was at Yale," Byard explained. "His work focused on engaging a broad audience in what he termed the 'conversation of democracy,' across differences of politics and philosophy, promoting real dialogue."

After graduation, Byard served as Development Director for the Center for Investigative Reporting, and Field Producer on *School Colors*, a Frontline documentary on public education forty years after *Brown v. Board*. She then co-produced *Out of the Past*, a chronicle of the modern-day struggle over the formation of a Gay-Straight Alliance in Salt Lake City, Utah, as well as pivotal chapters in lesbian and gay history in the United States. The project was her first with GLSEN.

*Out of the Past* premiered at Sundance, where it won the Audience Award, and was broadcast nationally on PBS in 1998.

## Her years at Yale

Byard felt "supremely fortunate" to have attended Yale at the time she did. "It was a remarkable moment for LGBT activism in general and for gay life at Yale," she said. "The AIDS crisis was exploding, so there was a sense of urgency in the community, a desperate need for action. This was a time of vibrant activism that came out of the sense of impending doom."

Yale activists also faced hostility from within the community. "There was an op-ed piece in *The Wall Street Journal*," Byard recalled, "written by an alumnus who was alarmed by a conversation he had at a reunion with an undergraduate who said that 25% of the student body was gay or lesbian. Newsweek then ran an article about Yale being a 'gay school.'"

"In response, some friends concocted the slogan '1 in 4, maybe more' and plastered the campus with fliers with four pictures of prominent Yalies—like then-president Benno Schmidt—

**"There was an op-ed piece in *The Wall Street Journal*," Byard recalled, "written by an alumnus who was alarmed by a conversation he had at a reunion with an undergraduate who said that 25% of the student body was gay or lesbian."**

with one picture in pink."

A History major, Byard later completed a PhD in United States History at Columbia University. Her dissertation examined the origins, purpose, and impact of federal regulations of homosexuality in the United States.

"History gives you a sense of how and why change happens," Byard reflects, "Filmmaking challenges you to convey that understanding succinctly to others. Advocacy in the first age of AIDS was about determination and creativity in the face of an outrageous reality. All of that experience is still relevant today, even with greater hope for positive change."

Byard lives in Brooklyn with her partner of 14 years, film producer Eva Kolodner '92, and their daughter Klara, who recently began pre-school. ▼

## AYA Honors

### Mickey Dobbs

Association of Yale Alumni (AYA) honored five alumni volunteers including Mickey Dobbs '92, Co-President, Yale GALA, presenting them with the first AYA Ambassador for Yale Leadership Awards at the AYA Assembly last November.

Dobbs was recognized "for his accomplishments at organizing, sustaining, and advancing the mission of Yale GALA, a pioneer among shared interest groups at Yale that celebrates its 25th anniversary this year." ▼



## Philip Galanes Lives and Loves Multi-Tasking

By Sherri Wolf, Trumbull, '84

I first met Philip Galanes in our junior year. He was Saybrook, I was Trumbull, both '84. He was very busy not paying attention in a seminar on James Joyce and Virginia Woolf.

Our young professor responded to virtually everything we said with a verbal tic, "Yes, but at what level of reality is that true?" Philip sat on the window ledge at the back of the room, passing notes and politely ignoring the professor. His final paper for the class went on to win prizes from the English Department and at commencement and was later published in the *Paris Review*.

Philip can be annoying like that.

We've been close friends for nearly twenty-five years. I've watched as Philip graduated from Yale Law School ('91), going onto a career as an entertainment lawyer at a leading New York law firm, where he represented some of the nation's foremost authors, composers, and visual artists.

Then, after *The New York Times* profiled an apartment he designed with his partner, Michael Haverland (Yale

pages of *The Times* and *New York Magazine*.

As if this wasn't enough, in 2004, Philip published his first novel, *Father's Day*. His second novel, *Emma's Table*, is scheduled for an August 2009 paperback release by HarperCollins, which published the hardcover edition in August of last year. *Emma's Table* recounts the

**"Getting a husband and a wife—or two husbands, for that matter—to agree on the look and feel of a room often requires a lot of talking!"**

post-incarceration live of a lifestyle diva that *Kirkus Reviews* dubbed, "Sophisticated yet accessible, light-hearted but also telling, *Emma's Table* is a thoroughly winning and surprisingly affecting tale of second chances."

Add to this, he now writes the "Social Q's" a weekly column for the Sunday Styles section of *The New York Times* helping clueless urbanites with awkward social situations with breezy but frank answers to their questions.

**Q: That's a lot of hats to wear!**

**A:** When you list them like that, it does sound like a lot, doesn't it? But when I'm in the middle of a day, working away, it doesn't feel like so many at all. And they're more closely related than they might sound.

**Q: How so?**

**A:** They're all just different ways of communicating, or trying to start a conversation anyway. My law practice being the most literal—making deals for people who want to do specific things, in very specific ways, for even more specific amounts of money. It's all about language, and to the extent there's success in law, I think it's all about communicating well.

**Q: But how does that relate to interior design?**

**A:** Getting a husband and a wife—or two husbands, for that matter—to agree on the look and feel of a room often requires a lot of talking! But more than that, collecting things that I love—furniture and fabrics and rugs—and sharing them with other people, hoping they'll like them too, is all about creating a bond with them. The trick is collaborating well enough so that everyone feels heard and respected.

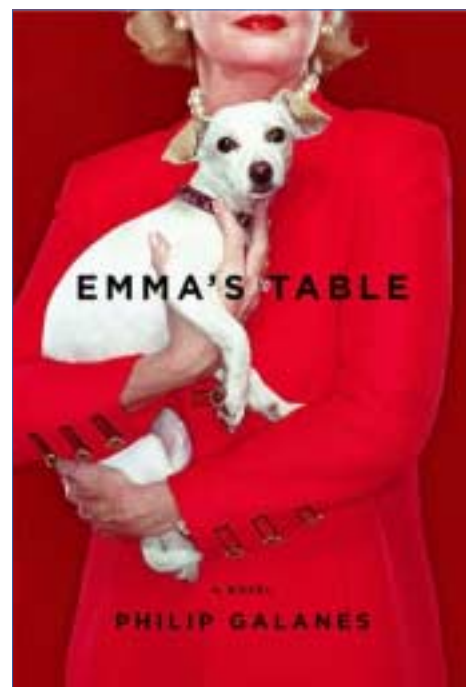
**Q: And the novels...? They're obviously about communicating as well.**

**A:** Yes, but in a different way than you might be thinking. When I got to my early thirties, I began to bump up against questions—emotional ones and psychological ones—that defied simply talking about them with my partner or close friends, with my shrink even. They were thornier than that. I needed to explore them more deeply, and somehow, the best way for me to do that was to create fictional characters—like me,



Philip Galanes, Yale '84, Yale Law '91

Architecture School '93), people started asking him to design interiors for their homes. A parallel career was born. Their projects appeared on the cover of *House & Garden* and in the



in some respects, and not, in others—and set them loose in the world to work out the very questions that I was worrying about.

**Q: Can you give me an example from the new book?**

(Continued on next page)

## PRISM's Future in Doubt

By Bob Barnett '89

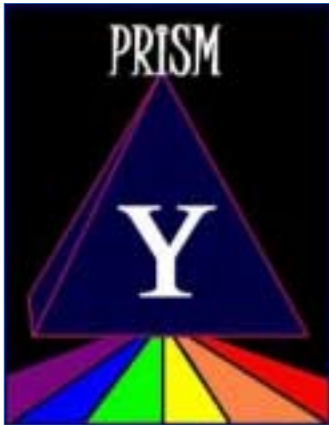
After struggling for years, PRISM, the University's undergraduate organization for queer students of color, lost much of its membership in June 2008 when its upperclassmen, including its main coordinator, graduated. Interest in the group has also dwindled over the years as relations improved between members of PRISM and other LGBT campus groups.

LGBT Co-Op coordinator Benjamin Gonzalez '09 hoped someone would take the helm of PRISM when the school year started in September but no one stepped forward. He plans to offer the position of PRISM coordinator at the Co-Op's spring elections. According to Gonzalez, the organization is currently considered "inactive."

PRISM was founded in 1995, when the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Cooperative was primarily "white, gay males" said Gonzalez. "The tensions sparked the need for a group for queer people of color," he added.

Now the Co-Op's membership includes many people of color, contributing to the decline in PRISM's membership.

"[The Co-Op] used to be a white, male place where it was difficult to talk about being queer and of color, but in the last ten years, it has become much more open and supportive," said Diaz-Machado '10, a former secretary of the Co-Op. He pointed out that today the cultural houses and academic departments devoted to LGBT issues also provide many other forums for queer students of color.



"PRISM is still a much needed organization," countered Pamela Y. George, Assistant Dean, Yale College, "given the number of Black students who come to me for counseling. Many questioning or gay students of color do not participate in the Co-op and they essentially have nothing organized by their peers to assist them." She recalled how PRISM held regularly scheduled meetings every Thursday night at 10 p.m. whether there were five students or 20 showed up.

"LGBT students of color," said George, "who struggle with their sexual identity or identities or don't know how to 'come out' still need culturally sensitive resources that PRISM should provide." George added that she is currently working on PRISM's revival and continued coordination with the Co-Op.

—Story assistance from Raymond Carlson and Rachel Wang of *Yale Daily News*. ▼

**Ben Gonzalez '09, coordinator of the LGBT Co-Op, will offer the position of PRISM coordinator at the Co-Op's spring elections in an effort to revive the organization for Yale's LGBT students of color.**



## Philip Galanes

(Continued from previous page)

**A:** Sure. In *Emma's Table*, I wanted to explore how we, as adults, somehow manage to go on in the wake of all the failures and hurts and humiliations that are inevitably a part of our lives.

**Q:** You do that through *Emma*?

**A:** Exactly. I explode the problem. I created Emma, a high-functioning designer and media darling—with a magazine and all kinds of commercial success—with an unfulfilling family life, and then I deal her a terrible failure. I send her to prison for tax evasion, and watch what happens when she comes out. I wanted to see how it is that people redeem themselves, how we make our second chances.

**Q:** I was an early reader, as you know. I found the book

extremely fun and surprisingly touching.

**A:** But you didn't buy a copy, Sherri! And as they used to say about voting in Chicago, I want people buying early—and often!

**Q:** Got it. So when do you find time to write the column for *The Times*?

**A:** I always have plenty of time to do things that are fun. And this column is tremendous fun. It's called "Social Q's," an advice column for people trying to deal with life's sticky situations—social, romantic, work-related—all kinds. It's serious with a comic edge, or comic with a serious edge. One or the other. And obviously, it's a privilege writing for such a great newspaper as *The Times*.

**Q:** Do you plan on sleeping?

**A:** Oh, don't worry. I sleep beautifully, especially since my boyfriend introduced me to Benadryl. I sleep better than ever! ▼