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Rally deals with pride, equality, dignity

Gays, lesbians call for unity

By Catherine Hawley
Emerald Associate Editor

An enthusiastic crowd of about 100 kicked off Gay and Lesbian Pride Week with speeches, signs and chants during a rally in the EMU courtyard Monday.

Students demonstrated support for their right to learn, live and work free from discrimination and also acknowledged the special problems they face as gays, lesbians and bisexuals.

"There are gays of every color, age, nationality and class," said Marlene Drescher, director of the Office of Student Advocacy. "What we have in common is that we are denied rights and privileges that heterosexuals have."

Gays, lesbians and bisexuals struggle to be able to work where they please, live in housing of their choice and establish families if they want to, Drescher said.

She told the crowd that gays, lesbians and bisexuals should unite their efforts and work with other minorities to fight discrimination in all forms, including racism, sexism and ageism.

"They will defend me from homophobia just as I defend them from other '-isms,'" she said.

In her address to the rally, University law student Debra O'Gara called for a socialist-

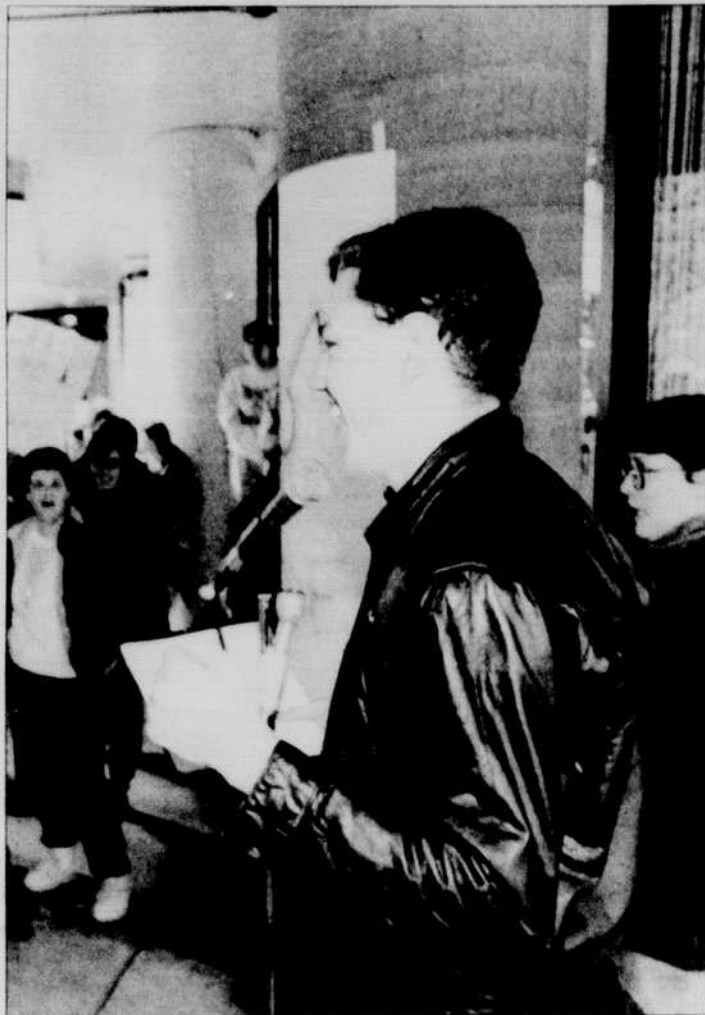


Photo by Andre Ranieri

Gay and Lesbian Alliance co-director Michael Peeler speaks to a crowd during Monday's rally. The theme of the group's Pride Week is "Deal With It."

feminist revolution to end capitalism, which she said she saw as the source of minority oppression.

"Basic human rights will not be granted if we say

'please' or even if we ask politely," O'Gara said. "Capitalism must end if we are to survive."

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Speaker says racism slows progress for all

By Hon Walker
Emerald Associate Editor

Lesbians and gays of color are at the forefront of multi-issue leadership because their perspectives enable them to bridge a number of social movements, said socialist feminist Merle Woo.

"We have connected the movements, from the feminist movement to the people of color movement to the lesbian and gay movement to the labor movement," she said to an audience of about 75.

Woo's speech, "On the Front Line of Freedom," Monday night in the EMU Fir Room, was sponsored by Radical Women and the Gay and Lesbian Alliance.

Lesbians and gays of color have been relegated to "footnotes" in the histories of minority rights, lesbian and gay rights and class struggles, she said.

"As the most oppressed, we're at the bottom," she said. "The reason why we have the potential to be the most militant is that we've got nothing to lose. We've got the most to gain."

However, Woo said many remain in the closet, in fear compounded by racism.

"It has been so hard for lesbians of color and gay men of color to simply be out and to carry over with us the struggle for multi-racial equality, and de-

mand that people address our needs," she said.

Full equality can only occur outside the capitalist system, Woo said. The socialist strug-



Merle Woo

gle must be led by those on the bottom, the ones who can best define what freedom is all about, she said.

"We know we cannot succeed in a struggle by ourselves," Woo said. "We know we have to link up with people of like mind. And we know it's gonna be across race, it's gonna be across culture, and it's gonna be across sexuality and gender too."

Woo said she has been criticized for dividing the gay and lesbian movement by focusing on racial issues. However, she

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Ben Linder Room dedication brings speakers

Avirgan tells of Central American chaos

By Marina Swain
Emerald Contributor

Tony Avirgan remembers hearing the "clanging of a large bell." But for the freelance journalist working in strife-ridden Costa Rica, the bell was really a bomb.

"It felt like my skin was on fire," Avirgan said of the bomb which decimated a gathering of journalists in La Penca, Nicaragua. A survivor of the blast that killed seven people, the ABC-TV newsmen, and his wife Martha Honey, began an investigation which now has them suing 28 individuals.

Avirgan spoke Monday night in the EMU Ball Room as part of a dedication ceremony for the Ben Linder Room, formerly known as the EMU Forum Room.

Earlier in the day a panel of faculty speakers spoke on "using higher education to benefit

humankind" as part of the afternoon dedication.

The room was named after the Portland man who died while working on small hydroelectric plants in Nicaragua. His death was attributed to the Contras, a rebellious faction at war with the Nicaraguan government and funded by the U.S. government.

Members of Linder's family, including his brother John, his mother Elizabeth and his father David, attended the 3:30 p.m. dedication ceremony. John Linder spoke of his brother's work in Nicaragua and events leading to his death.

At the evening presentation, Avirgan discussed the many obstacles he and Honey were faced with in their search for the identity of the bomber.

Although initially the husband and wife team suspected either the left wing or the right wing as responsible, the leads

soon narrowed their prospects. At one point the two were handed a stack of documents which implicated the Nicaraguan government's Sandinistas.

"But because we had developed a high degree of skepticism ... we went to see if there were corresponding originals," he said.

What they found instead was that they held a "very elaborate set of forgeries." A group calling itself The Babies, which Avirgan termed the "dirty tricks unit," had carried it out under order by the Central Intelligence Agency, he said.

Avirgan and Honey gathered a large amount of incriminating evidence. The bulk of it convinced the two that the Contras were responsible for the bombing incident. Both are now plaintiffs in a lawsuit for the Christie Institute, a public interest law firm based in Washington, D.C.

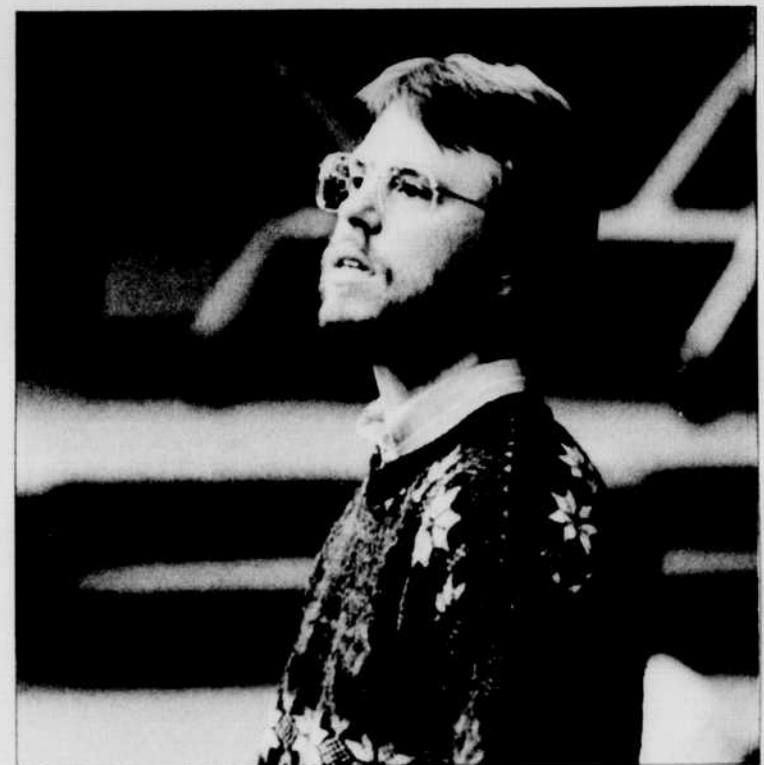


Photo by Steve Card

John Linder spoke about his brother's life and work at the Monday dedication of the EMU Ben Linder Room.