

IN BRIEF

Week of events celebrates National Coming Out Day

University organizations are hosting events throughout the week to celebrate the 18th annual National Coming Out Day.

National Coming Out Day is celebrated every Oct. 11 to mark the anniversary of the 1987 march in Washington, D.C. for lesbian and gay rights, according to the Human Rights Campaign. Each year since, thousands of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and supporters have celebrated the day in schools, churches and businesses nationwide through workshops, speeches and rallies.

The following events will take place on campus this week:

Monday

- Queer Bingo in the EMU Fir Room at 7 p.m. Free snacks are provided and prizes will be awarded.

Tuesday

- National Coming Out Day rally at the EMU Amphitheater at 1 p.m. The rally will feature guest speakers, resource tables and the "coming out closet."

- Standing Committee LGBT Social from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m., providing students with an opportunity to meet with faculty, staff and students who are LGBT and supporters in the Gerlinger Lounge.

- National Coming Out Day dance from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. in the EMU fishbowl.

Wednesday

- Screening of "TransGeneration" from noon to 1:30 p.m. in the EMU Board Room. "TransGeneration" is a documentary series that follows students changing genders at four different colleges over the course of a school year, capturing their setbacks and triumphs as they balance the challenges of academia, campus life and family with their gender changes.

- Screening of "Brother to Brother" in the EMU Fir Room at 6 p.m. "Brother to Brother" is a drama that looks back on the Harlem Renaissance from the perspective of an elderly, black writer who meets a gay teenager in a New York homeless shelter.

Thursday

- "Coming Out," a brown-bag lunch from noon to 1 p.m. in the Women's Center, EMU Suite 3.

- "Guess the STR8 RA" in the Bean West Lounge in University Housing Bean Complex, 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

— Brittini McClenahan

Pakistani villagers search for survivors after quake

BALAKOT, Pakistan — Villagers desperate to find survivors dug with bare hands Sunday through the debris of a collapsed school where children had been heard crying beneath the rubble after a massive earthquake killed more than 20,000 people.

Pakistani officials said the toll could go higher, and a provincial official in Kashmir said more than 30,000 died in that province alone.

President Gen. Pervez Musharraf called Saturday's magnitude-7.7

earthquake the country's worst on record and appealed for urgent help, particularly cargo helicopters to reach remote areas cut off by landslides. Rival India, which reported more than 600 dead, offered assistance.

A Pentagon spokeswoman said American officials were determining what assistance could be provided. The U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan said Washington had not instructed it to provide help, while a NATO spokesman said the mission was not allowed to operate outside Afghanistan.

Late effort to win Sunni support for Iraq's charter

BAGHDAD, Iraq — With U.S. mediation, Shiite Muslim and Kurdish officials negotiated with Sunni Arab leaders Sunday over possible last-minute additions to Iraq's proposed constitution, trying to win Sunni support ahead of next weekend's crucial referendum.

But the sides remained far apart over basic issues — including the federalism that Shiites and Kurds insist on, but that Sunnis fear will lead to the country's eventual break-up. And copies of the constitution were already being passed out to the public.

Though major attacks in the insurgent campaign to disrupt the referendum have waned in recent days, violence killed 13 Iraqis Sunday.

In one attack, masked gunmen in police commando uniforms burst into a school in the northern town of Samarra, pulled a Shiite teacher out of his classroom and shot him dead in the hallway as students watched from their desks, police said. A suicide car bomb killed a woman and a child in the southern city of Basra.

A U.S. Marine was killed by a roadside bomb in the town of Ramadi, west of Baghdad, on Saturday, the military announced.

NYC terror plot threat remains unconfirmed

NEW YORK — A reported plot to bomb city subways with remote-controlled explosives has not been corroborated after days of investigation, law-enforcement officials said Sunday amid an easing sense of concern.

Interrogations of suspects captured in Iraq last week after an informant's tip about bomb-laden suitcases and baby carriages have yet to yield evidence that the plot was real, officials said.

"The intelligence community has been able to determine that there are very serious doubts about the credibility of this specific threat," Homeland Security Department spokesman Russ Knocke said. "This is after ongoing review and analysis."

Homeland Security officials have been skeptical about the threat since it was publicly announced Thursday, but officials who were more assertive about the potential danger last week also appeared to be softening their assessment.

Miers faces questions about abortion, privacy

WASHINGTON — As doubts grow about her abortion views, Harriet Miers will face vigorous questioning

on privacy rights and her qualifications for the Supreme Court, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee said Sunday.

Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., said President Bush's pick to replace retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor must show she can handle complicated legal issues and has not cut deals with the White House to overturn Roe v. Wade.

Miers' nomination has caused division among conservatives, and a leader of the right said he will not be satisfied until it is clear whether Miers, a longtime Bush confidante who has never been a judge, would overturn the 1973 landmark abortion ruling.

"You can be an evangelical and you can be self-described pro-life. But it doesn't tell us what she will do about a decision like Roe that has been set in stone now for over 30 years. And that's the rub," said Gary Bauer, president of the American Values Coalition.

New Orleans police hit 64-year-old man on tape

NEW ORLEANS — Two New Orleans police officers repeatedly punched a 64-year-old man accused of public intoxication, and another city officer assaulted an Associated Press Television News producer as a cameraman taped the confrontations.

There will be a criminal investigation, and the three officers were to be suspended, arrested and charged with simple battery Sunday, Capt. Marlon Defillo said.

"We have great concern with what we saw this morning," Defillo said after he and about a dozen other high-ranking police department officials watched the APTN footage Sunday. "It's a troubling tape, no doubt about it. ... This department will take immediate action."

The assaults come as the depart-

ment, long plagued by allegations of brutality and corruption, struggles with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the resignation last month of Police Superintendent Eddie Compass.

Guatemala declares landslide areas cemeteries

GUATEMALA CITY — Dozens of foreign tourists fled devastated lakeside Mayan towns on foot and by helicopter Sunday as Guatemalan officials said they would abandon communities buried by landslides and declare them mass graveyards.

Villagers who had swarmed over the vast mudslides with shovels and axes digging for hundreds of missing gave up the effort Sunday, five days after Hurricane Stan made landfall on the Gulf of Mexico coast, bringing torrential rains before weakening to a tropical depression.

More than 640 people died and hundreds more were missing across Central America and southern Mexico after a week of rains. In hardest-hit Guatemala, 519 bodies had been recovered and reburied. Some 338 were listed as missing.

"Panabaj will no longer exist," said Mayor Diego Esquina, referring to the Mayan lakeside hamlet in Guatemala covered by a half-mile-wide mudflow as much as 15 to 20 feet deep. "We are asking that it be declared a cemetery. We are tired. We no longer know where to dig."

FBI may relax hiring policy regarding drug use

WASHINGTON — The FBI, famous for its straight-laced crime-fighting image, is considering whether to relax its hiring rules over how often applicants could have used marijuana or other illegal drugs earlier in life.

Some senior FBI managers have been deeply frustrated that they

could not hire applicants who acknowledged occasional marijuana use in college, but in some cases already perform top-secret work at other government agencies, such as the CIA or State Department.

FBI Director Robert Mueller will make the final decision. "We can't say when or if this is going to happen, but we are exploring the possibility," spokesman Stephen Kodak said.

The change would ease limits about how often — and how many years ago — applicants for jobs such as intelligence analysts, linguists, computer specialists, accountants and others had used illegal drugs.

Driverless VW wins \$2 million robot race

PRIMM, Nev. — A driverless Volkswagen won a \$2 million race across the rugged Nevada desert Sunday, beating four other robot-guided vehicles that completed a Pentagon-sponsored contest aimed at making warfare safer for humans.

The race displayed major technological leaps since last year's inaugural race, when none of the self-driving vehicles crossed the finish line.

Stanley the VW Touareg, designed by Stanford University, zipped through the 132-mile Mojave Desert course in six hours and 53 minutes Saturday, using only its computer brain and sensors to navigate rough and twisting desert and mountain trails. The Stanford team celebrated by popping champagne and pouring it over the mud-covered Stanley.

"This car, to me, is really a piece of history," Stanford computer scientist Sebastian Thrun said after receiving an oversized check for the \$2 million prize, funded by taxpayers. He said he did not know how he would spend the money, but joked that he needed to buy cat food.

—The Associated Press