

LGBTQ/Straight Alliance



Campus club provides a space for everyone to hangout and talk openly with no fear of outside prejudices or restraints

By Kyle Smith
The Clackamas Print

This week's club spotlight sheds its figurative photons on the LGBTQ/Straight Alliance of Clackamas Community College. This stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer/Questioning, and as the name implies, it is a group for those of any sexual orientation to meet in a judgment-free environment and seek support from one another, as well as learn from each other and themselves.

"I guess that what we're here to talk about is how to survive (in a sometimes prejudiced society), because this is the one place you can go and talk about anything and not be judged," said Miki Marshall, a Clackamas student and member of the club.

According to the club constitution, the purpose of the alliance is to "have a safe and supportive place for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, queer/questioning and straight students, as well as anyone else that may fall along any portion of the human sexuality/gender identity spectrum."

"I think one thing (the alliance) has in common with all the other clubs on campus is to help people feel more connected to their community and not just think of themselves as a student in this class and that class," said Bruce Simmons, one of the two club advisers.

Originally known as the Rainbow Club, the LGBTQ/Straight Alliance has had many name changes over the years, with the most recognizable to the current student populace being GSA, or Gay/Straight Alliance. The club's current name more accurately reflects its membership, even if the acronym is slightly more difficult to remember.

The group meets on Tuesdays from 3-4 p.m. in Roger Rook 220, the Literary Arts Center. Anyone is welcome to attend, and there is no need to contact anyone prior to doing so; the club is an open forum with no official leadership. Even the club advisers take on only a supervisory role in the process and participate just as much in discussion as the student members.

"I know that in the past there have been some students who have been really nervous about even coming (to the club)," said Carol Burnell, the other club adviser, "and sometimes I even get cryptic e-mails (from students prior to their attendance)."

Outside of club meetings, which almost always include free food of some sort, the alliance participates in many awareness-raising events with local organizations cut from a similar cloth. Among these events is the annual drag show put on in the community center during spring term.

More information about the LGBTQ/Straight Alliance and the events it participates in and hosts can be obtained by contacting either of the club advisers carolb@clackamas.edu or bruce@clackamas.edu, or by simply attending one of the club meetings. Just be sure to leave any prejudice you may have at the door.



Ben Carlson Clackamas Print

Members discuss club topics in an open environment focusing on comfortability throughout its members.



Nathan Sturgess Clackamas Print

The Vocal Jazz Ensemble rehearses their seasonal winter performance, not letting the cold slow them down along the way.

Jazz warms souls

By Nathan Sturgess
The Clackamas Print

Despite the still bone-chilling cold and icy roadways around Oregon City, about 80 people of all different descriptions crowded into the Leroy Anderson music room. Arriving late, I made my way to a seat, nestling down among the other appreciative onlookers as if the off-beat harmonies of the choir in front really emanated tangible warmth and relief from the cold outside.

The performance was split into two halves, the first being attributed largely to featuring alumni students, returning to cater their talent like the soulful food that it was. "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," performed by Joshua Weir, was the first of these pieces that subtly set the tone of the evening's amusement. Weir's performance was both technically immaculate and passionate and spoke to the inspiration he clearly received from his experience as a past student. Even after he left the stage he often mouthed the words or playfully directed the choir from the back row.

Following Weir was a piece written, composed and performed by Clackamas adviser Paul Creighton and accompanied by the current Vocal Jazz choir, called Jungle Jim. An alumnus himself, Creighton is also the lead vocalist in his own R&B band, Intervention and these influences were apparent in his performance. A driving rhythm propelled the fast-paced lyrics out onto the audience, many of whom couldn't resist the primal urge to tap their feet along with Creighton and the choir.

A series of solo performances

by several members of the current Vocal Jazz Ensemble followed, beginning with a strong rendition of Oscar Peterson's "Night Train" by Billy Boteiff and quickly rejoined by impressive performances of "Mack the Knife" and "Someone to Watch Over Me" by Theo Newton and Aria Kelland, respectively. Though Newton's stage presence was somewhat impeded by the fact that he apparently hadn't quite memorized the lyrics, his articulation and comfort with several difficult sections in the piece were commendable. Conversely, Kelland's performance was very passionate and the combination of hand gestures and constant eye contact with the audience made her performance one of the most professional and entertaining of the evening.

The upbeat tempo and characteristically jazzy rhythms and beats of the preceding pieces were momentarily juxtaposed against the smooth and gentle flow of a moving piece entitled simply "Answer," performed by Alyssa Smith.

The ever-present and enthusiastic Lonnie Cline, the choir's director, prefaced the piece by really trying to consolidate what he felt was the purpose of the choir. "What I like to do is pick music that has meaning for you," he said to the audience.

The song describes the inner thoughts of a discouraged individual searching for hope in the dark of night. The moving lines end, "If it takes my whole life / I won't break I won't bend / It'll all be worth it / worth it in the end / But I can only tell you what I know / and I need you in my life / and when all the stars have all gone out / you'll be burning so bright / caste me gently,

into morning / for the night has been unkind." The touching lyric impassioned delivering of Alyssa Smith made the piece one of the most memorable and moving of the event.

After a short intermission the tone of the event shifted back to a more edgier, poppy sound that jazz lovers loved. First to perform was Lindsay with a dramatic rendition of the standard "Peel Me a Grape" composed by Dave Friedman. Though frustrated by a false start the piece came off well, revealing the incredible technical difficulty of the harmonies and timing.

Next were three pieces by Wind & Fire that, more than anything else, revealed the extraordinary talent and versatility of the accompanying band comprised of four students who have been playing together for several years. The band offered the choir a professional sound and consistency that made the entire performance so engaging. Wesley Mason-Schaffer stood out particularly with his brilliant playing on the guitar.

The final piece of the performance was an a cappella rendition of "Gone Too Soon," attributed to Michael Jackson, that was technically perfect and awe-inspiring in how it allowed the choir to truly become one musical instrument that reverberated throughout the room.

In the end, the entire performance was very well done and successful at both acknowledging alumni and honoring the musical commitment and skill that Lonnie Cline has patiently brought to the Vocal Jazz Ensemble for the thirty years.

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All proceeds benefit
the CCC Debate Club

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