

Denim Day Unites Gay Community

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Everyone wears jeans. Ideal for comfort and style, denim is quite the ubiquitous fabric. Today though, jeans are more than just jeans — the piece of apparel is also a symbol of gay pride.

“Gay Jeans Day” is just one aspect of “Coming Out Week,” a week-long affair which runs from Oct. 11 to Oct. 15. During this week, the movement encourages homosexuals to acknowledge their identity, and everyone else is encouraged to promote tolerance and understanding, regardless of sexual orientation. However, some students feel offended that wearing blue jeans automatically admits them into “Gay Jeans Day” festivi-

ties.

“I’m not gay and I’m not wearing jeans as a sign of support for anything!” said one UB student. His opinion does not stand alone; many students have voiced concerns about the use of jeans — a common component to any wardrobe — as an icon for a set of beliefs.

“Being gay is just as normal and natural as wearing jeans. There is nothing unusual about wearing jeans, so this is an example of how there’s nothing unusual about being gay,” said Michele Tucker, the coordinator of the Coming Out Support Group and a member of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Alliance.

“We understand that a lot of people may be offended by Gay Jeans

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Day and don't understand why jeans are being used as a marker," said LGBA Vice President Christian DiCano. "We're just trying to illustrate how being gay is something that its ingrained in you, the way people wear jeans without really thinking about it."

On Oct. 12 at 7 p.m., the 2nd Annual Drag Competition will occupy Harriman Hall. The professional drag show will take place in the Student Union Lobby from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. today.

"It's important to the students of UB to see that we're having a good time and that being visible isn't political," Tucker said.

Mocking criticism that LGBA isn't active enough in procuring gay rights, posters advertising the show sarcastically proclaimed, "Because all we do is drag shows."

DiCano refuted the allegation.

"It's not all about drag shows," he said.

"However, it's the drag shows that have the most universal appeal and attract the

greatest audience. If we said that our events were just 'a gay thing' then no one would be interested in attending."

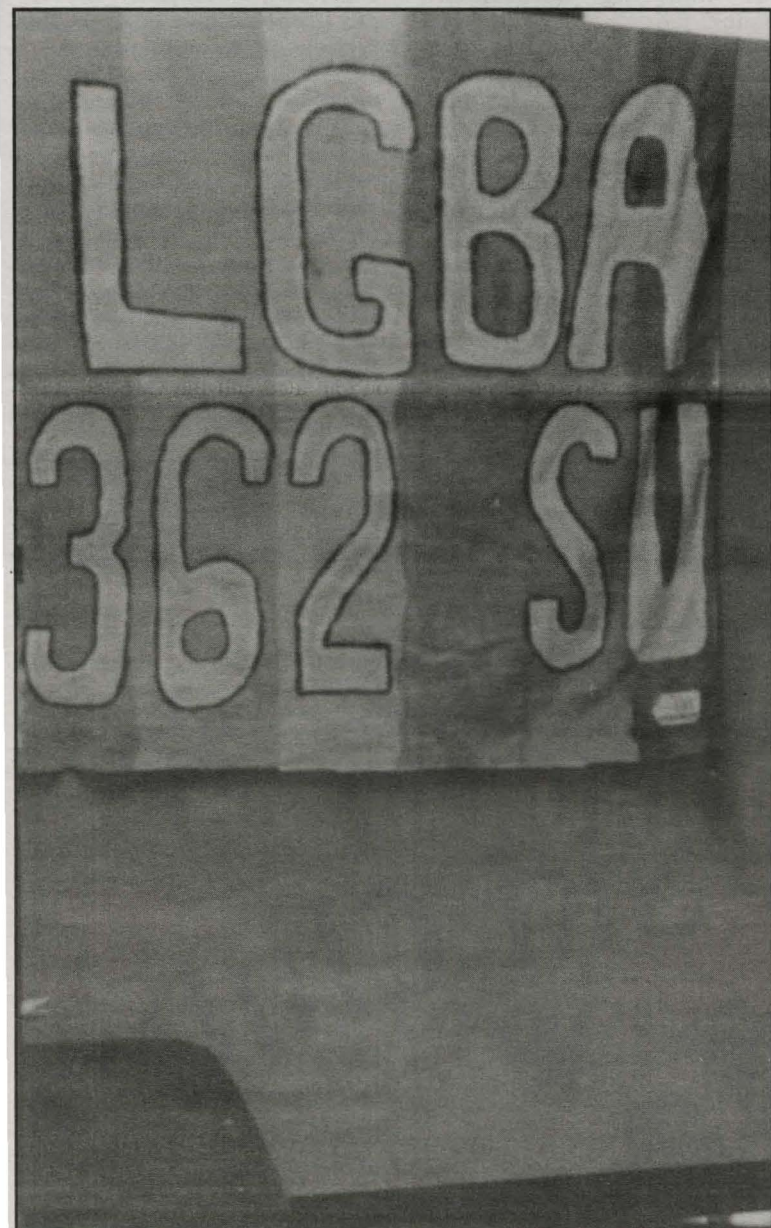
Tucker also said that LGBA would incorporate gay history into both performances and that the club encouraged people to take a stand against intolerance by promoting understanding for differences.

"Even though we want everyone to have a good time, one of our main goals is to educate people," she added.

During Coming Out Week, the LGBA will also support many causes that affect the gay community. One benefit includes GRASP, a program in which homosexuals openly discuss what it means to be gay.

The LGBA will also host a conference on the weekend of March 26, which they boast as the largest LGBA conference in the Northeast.

"It's more important then ever for people to see that we're a part of the community and that we shouldn't be stigmatized or ignored," said DiCano.



Marlene Potter/ The Spectrum

NOT JUST ABOUT DRAG SHOWS: Various pieces of activist literature decorate LGBA's office walls on the third floor of the Union.