

Inside:

- Nancy Roseman Named Dean of College, p. 2
- New Summer Interns, p. 3

- On-Campus Reunion Wrap-up, p. 4-5
- What I Am, p. 5-6
- Class Notes, p. 7

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Relax... It's Just Mitchell Anderson '83

By Dena Luna Zaldúa '98

On Sunday of the BiGALA reunion weekend this April, Mitchell Anderson '83 agreed to meet up with me in the Snack Bar for an interview. Before meeting him, I was nervous. I got to the Snack Bar early to do my homework – I went over what I could remember of his talk the night before (didn't he say something about Ricky Martin's struggle with the closet?) and came up with a list of questions that would cover his many facets.

My girlfriend, Carina [Vance '99], being a huge fan of Jennifer Tilly's after seeing her incarnation of Violet, the ultra-sexy super-femme in *Bound*, made sure to remind me to ask Mitchell what Ms. Tilly is really like in real life. I of course promised I would. Mitchell worked with Tilly, among others, in the 1998 movie *Relax...It's Just Sex*, which had been screened the night before, a highlight of the reunion weekend.

Readers may recognize Mitchell from his television credits, which include *Popular*, *Party of Five*, and *Doogie Howser, M.D.* In addition to *Relax...It's Just Sex*, Mitchell has

also starred in *If These Walls Could Talk II*, *The Karen Carpenter Story*, and, as his bio states, "audiences of classic bad movies will remember Mitchell as the first to go in *Jaws: The Revenge*, which featured Lorraine Gary and her enormous shoulder pads." He has also appeared in numerous theatre productions around the country.

It is his accomplishments in the entertainment industry that make Mitchell a successful and glamorous Williams alumnus. But it is the fact that he is also an activist and an out gay actor that make him a credit and asset to both fellow alumni/ae and to the College itself. Mitchell came out at the 1996 GLAAD Awards and has been politically active ever since, a move that even most out members of Hollywood dare not make. He has worked with organizations like The Victory Fund, which raises money for gay and lesbian candidates across the country, and The Human Rights Campaign. Most recently, Mitchell was a leader in the fight against the Knight Initiative – California's proposition 22, "the limit of marriage act," which sought to recognize only marriage between a man and a woman in the state of California.

As I scribbled questions into my notebook, Mitchell soon joined me with a coffee. I immediately felt at ease – the Snack Bar's easy-going common ground was the perfect equalizer and just the right setting to talk about Williams, BiGALA, political activism, and the like.

Dena: What did you think of the BiGALA Reunion Weekend?

Mitchell: It was great for me to come back to a place where I hadn't developed into myself. It's kind of a surreal experience.

D: What was Williams like for you when you were here? What was the queer/LGBT community like?

continued on p. 8



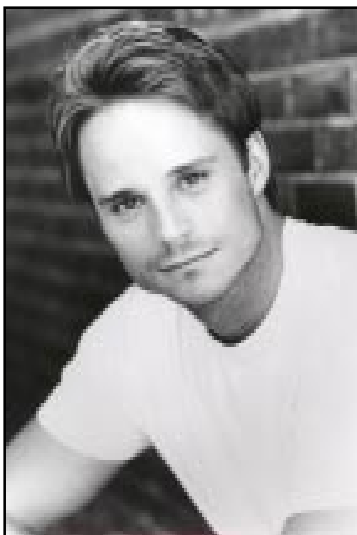
College Hires Stephen Collingsworth, First LGBT Concerns Coordinator

By Walter Cheng '97

In the last BiGALA newsletter, we reported that Williams was engaged in a candidate search to fill a newly created Coordinator of LGBT Concerns position. After an extensive search and interview process, the college selected Stephen Collingsworth for a three-year post, which began in January 2000. This summer, I had a chance to speak with Stephen and learned a little about his background, his work at Williams so far and his goals for the upcoming year.

Stephen has a bachelor's degree in English and master's degree in Education Policy and Leadership, both from Ohio State University. Prior to coming to Williams, he worked as the Director of the Kaleidoscope Youth Coalition, a LGBT teen center in Columbus, Ohio. Stephen has also worked in other LGBT-related arenas, including being the first education coordinator at Stonewall Columbus, a LGBT human-rights organization.

In his short time at Williams, Stephen has already made significant strides towards
continued on p. 2





on campus



Dean Nancy Roseman

Nancy Roseman, Professor of Biology, Named Dean of the College

President Morty Schapiro is not the only new leader assuming control of the College this summer. Out associate professor of biology Nancy Roseman became dean of the College in July, taking the place of Peter Murphy, who will return to the English Department.

This past winter Interim President Vogt notified Nancy of her appointment to the Deanship, a position which has been always filled from within the ranks of the current faculty. Chosen faculty hold the position for 3-4 years.

Nancy joined the Williams faculty in 1991. She has served on the Faculty Steering Committee, the Committee on Educational Policy, the advisory committees for Biochemistry and Women's Studies and chaired the Lecture Committee. She also played an instrumental part in the process that led to the hiring of Williams first LGBT Concerns Coordinator, Stephen Collingsworth.

Peter Murphy expressed great confidence in his successor. "I think that Nancy is simply

the best person for the job," Murphy said. "She is smart and decisive and is genuinely interested in student lives in all their many dimensions." But Nancy said that she has a lot to learn. "I think nothing can compare or really prepare you for being dean of the College, because it's so broad," Roseman said. She described herself as a "proto-dean."

While still new at the game, Nancy shared some of the issues she would like to address in her coming tenure with BiGALA members this past April at the Women's Reception, part of the on-campus reunion. One of her concerns is the residential housing system and "how to maintain and continue to build this place and its community spirit."

Despite her new responsibilities, Roseman plans to continue her own research. She has a National Science Foundation grant for the next two years, and is committed to maintaining her biology laboratory. "It may kill me, but I'm going to do it."

(The preceding is condensed from an article in The Williams Record).

New Williams LGBT Coordinator, Stephen Collingsworth

increasing awareness of LGBT issues on campus. In addition to acclimating himself to the Purple Valley, he has thrown himself into numerous college committees. A member of the Dively Committee, which is responsible for much of the LGBT event programming on campus, Stephen also sits in on weekly Dean's meetings as a voice for LGBT concerns in the consideration of college policy-making. Furthermore, Stephen works with the campus' Eating Disorders Group and Sexual Assault Response Team, advocating for continued efforts to address LGBT-specific eating disorder and domestic violence issues.

Besides his roles on campus, Stephen has taken on a number of positions in Berkshire County-wide LGBT organizations. These include facilitating a coming-out group and leading a youth group at the Berkshire Stonewall Community Coalition. Due to recent (and historic) attacks on LGBT students outside the Williams campus, Stephen believes that by forging ties with community members, such incidents might be handled cooperatively on a broader scope.

For the upcoming year, Stephen has planned a number of large-scale projects. As an example, he is designing a series of tracking forms to address the continuing problem of LGBT student retention and homophobia on campus. He indicated that although the campus was professionally and administratively progressive, many people have sensed an underlying homophobia, particularly in more casual and off-campus situations. To provide more evidence to support this assertion and collect sound data, Stephen plans to distribute forms to incoming first-years that would help to identify LGBT students and more accurately track LGBT student attrition and retention. Stephen also plans to create harassment tracking forms that would allow students to report non-violent anti-gay attacks, such as jokes or slurs, that would normally not be reported to Williams security.

In addition to this large data collection project, which should help to identify specific areas needing improvement, Stephen mentioned other projects, which include furthering the discourse on and acceptance

of transgender issues, promoting spiritual awareness among LGBT students, creating a LGBT faculty-student mentoring program, and forming a queer students of color organization.

In my last few minutes with Stephen, I also asked him what he thought BiGALA members could do to help out. He indicated that the recent BiGALA reunion, which was connected with Queer Pride Days on campus, received numerous positive comments from students. He encouraged continued involvement of alumni with the organizing of Queer Pride Days and thought that someone who might be geographically close to Williamstown could participate on its planning committee. He also thought that alumni could be an invaluable career mentoring resource for students, offering them advice on how to navigate through the workforce and graduate school as openly LGBT individuals.



Summer 2000 BiGALA Interns

This spring the BiGALA Executive Committee had the difficult choice of choosing two summer interns from an impressive selection of applicants. Summer Interns receive a stipend to help them work on self-designed projects in an arena of their choice. Past interns have used the funding to work at non-profit LGBT organizations, on art projects exploring identity issues, and to create a movie about their coming out experience. This past summer's interns were Will Rawls '00 and Izzy Lowell '02.

Will Rawls'00 has an impressive dance resume. He has danced at the American College Dance Festival, Bates Dance Festival, Jacob's Pillow Men's Dance Workshop, Alvin Ailey Summer Dance Festival and, of course, with the Williams College Dance Program. This summer he organized an oral history project about the lives of male dancers. As a recipient of a BiGALA Summer Internship, Will conducted interviews with male dancers at the American Dance Festival, and prepared an accompanying text exploring the evolution of the male dancer's role in society over the past few decades.

Izzy Lowell'02 finds herself challenging assumptions about gender every day of her life, whether she intends to or not. Having been called "Sir" on more than one occasion and having often been accused of using the wrong bathroom, Izzy had already begun to do some writing on gender and sexuality. This summer as a recipient of a BiGALA Summer Internship award, Izzy embarked upon a photography project, accompanied by short personal essays, exploring gender and sexuality. Izzy aimed to encourage her audience to question the accepted notions of male and female and to challenge their own assumptions about the boundaries of gender.

Look to the next newsletter for more information about both Will and Izzy's projects!

upper left: banners urging students to "Come Out Queer" have moved from their traditional home on the front of Chapin to Baxter this year, hanging next to Parents' Weekend Banners. lower left: Williams students show their pride at the March on Washington.

"Gaypril" in Williamstown

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community at Williams College re-named this past April, "Gaypril," and organized a comprehensive calendar of events for the month.

The month started with a performance by Marc Wolf'84 of *Another America: Asking and Telling*. His one-person show relates stories of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and straights who have served in the military since World War II. In all, thirteen characters present 21 monologues. It was followed the next weekend by the BiGALA reunion (see the next page for photos and more information).

During the third weekend of the month, Tim Miller lead a workshop on the use of art and dance in political activism and performed

Shirts and Skins in Lasell Dance Studio. Miller is an acclaimed performance artist whose work strives to explore the artistic, spiritual and political dimensions of his identity as a gay man, and is known to many as one the NEA4.

The month ended with the Queer Pride Rally and Bash on Friday, April 28th, followed by the departure of forty students and faculty for the March on Washington, 2000. At the March the students were joined by local Williams alums and even garnered the attention of the media, with MTV joining them for the day. The March provided all a chance to witness first-hand a human rights march on Washington and see its empowering effects.

Events for the month were organized by BGLTU, BiGALA and the Dively Committee with support from other campus offices.



April 2000 Reunion



Happy hikers Ted Welsh '95, Derek DaSilva, Bill Clendaniel '67, Ian Foraker '85, Brian Carpenter '86, Mitchell Anderson '83, Susan Paulson '88, Stephen Bottum '88 and Greta on top of Pine Cobble



Having fun at Mass MoCA: Eddie Murphy '99 and John Corso '97



Derek DaSilva and Ian Foraker '85



Izzy Lowell '02 and Ameni Rozsa '98



Mark Morgan-Perez '94 & Ted Welsh '95

Over fifty alumnae/i and partners traveled back to campus the weekend of April 14 - 16, 2000 for the third BiGALA reunion. The weather was perfect and the weekend was a great kick-off to the BGLTU's Queer Pride Days. Members of the BiGALA Executive Committee, the BGLTU, Wendy Hopkins and Becky Logue in the Alumni Office bent over backwards to make it a truly memorable weekend! Highlights included:

- An Opening Reception at Mass MoCA on Friday evening. The private tour and reception at Mass MoCA, one of New England's most exciting new museums, was followed by the chance to meet Stephen Collingsworth, new Coordinator for LGBT Concerns, and past BiGALA Summer Interns.
- An Exhilarating Hike up Pine Cobble on Saturday morning with BiGALA Board members and outdoor enthusiasts Brian Carpenter '86 and Susan Paulson '88 .
- A Lunch Forum on Being Out in the Big World with alumnae/i sharing with students their life experiences outside the Purple Valley.
- A Gay and Lesbian Parenting Panel with Linda Davis '80 and Professor Jana Sawicki and their partners discussing their experiences starting a family.
- A Women's Reception in Stetson Lounge with Jana Sawicki, Professor of Philosophy and Women's Studies, and Nancy Roseman, new dean of the College.
- Cocktails and the Alumnae/i, Faculty and Student Dinner on Saturday evening in Dodd Dining Hall (complete with linens, candles and a menu far nicer than the standard cafeteria fare). During dessert, Eddie Murphy '99 performed his own brand of acoustic styling in Dodd Living Room.
- A talk with Mitchell Anderson '83, and screening of *Relax... It's Just Sex* , his latest picture, our keynote event of the weekend.
- The weekend wrapped up on Sunday morning with an Ecumenical Forum in Thompson Chapel led by Michael Gross '93 (see text of his address to the right).

Numerous tables of fun at the Greylock lunch forum...



John Atteridge '76, Susan Drennan, Linda Davis '80 and their son Evan enjoy lunch at Greylock.

What I am

By Michael Joseph Gross '93

The following is a sermon delivered by Michael at the Ecumenical Forum on the Sunday of the BiGALA reunion. His text is Mark 15:1-39

Pilate wants to know who Jesus is. "Are you the King of the Jews?" He doesn't get much of an answer. "You say so."

Throughout Mark's gospel, people seek to learn who Jesus is, and throughout Mark's gospel, Jesus avoids addressing the topic of his own identity. Jesus heals a leper and orders him not to speak of the encounter. He drives demons out of the diseased and orders even the evil spirits to keep quiet about who he is. He raises a little girl from the dead and forbids her family to tell anyone.

Loaves and fishes. Walking on water. Healing the lame and the blind. Jesus is a busy guy. Just about the only task that fails to engage him is the project of explaining who he is. For most of Mark's gospel, he does not do it. Not for anyone. Not even for his closest friends.

When the disciples fail to grasp the parables Jesus uses to teach the crowds in Galilee, they get him alone later that day and ask him what he *really* meant. "To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom," he replies, not very helpfully. Then he piles on some more parables to drive home his point that the disciples have been given a mystery, not a secret. Their job is to receive that mystery, not to decode it. Their job is to witness him, not to interpret him. But that job is too much for them.

The night of his arrest, when Jesus goes to the garden of Gethsemane to pray, he asks just one thing of his friends. All he asks is that they be there with him and not fall asleep. *Keep awake*, he keeps saying. They keep falling asleep. Then the guards arrive to arrest him, and they all run away.

The events described by today's reading begin the morning after his arrest. And as you may have noticed, Mark's story of the trial and execution is structured by speculation, denunciation, and affirmation of Jesus' identity as Messiah.

He comes to trial, and is questioned: "Are you the King of the Jews?"

He is led to the cross, and mocked: "Hail, King of the Jews!"

He is crucified, and denounced: "Let the Messiah... come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe."

He dies, and is praised: "Surely this man was God's son!"

Such speculation is met, always, by his silence.

When Williams does its job right, the College scrambles your identity up good.

Each year several hundred self-possessed, bright young things arrive to claim the places they have earned here. We are so proud when we arrive. And our families are so proud of us for being here.

And then, what we were when we came here start changing. Separated from

continued on p.6



Zoe Agnew '97, Kelle Brooks, and Carina Vance '99

What I am, continued...

continued from p.5

the families and communities that we come from, and pitched into the anthropological argosy concocted for us by the Admissions Department, we realize, perhaps for the first time, what vast and varied choices we have regarding what to believe and how best to live.

We usually get the better of our confusion. Williams gives us every conceivable advantage - academic, social and material - to help us make good choices. So we conduct some experiments; we make some decisions.

We do this amazing thing: we make ourselves up.

It hurts sometimes. We would like people from our past to understand the new person we are becoming. Their understanding can seem so important that we become angry and resentful when it is not immediately forthcoming.

In the summer after my sophomore year, when I returned home for the little town in Illinois where I come from, I remember *seething* because my mother, a grade school librarian, showed so little interest in what I had been learning here. I remember getting quite worked up one night trying to tell her about the newest love of my life, the eighteenth-century writer Samuel Johnson. *He wrote the first English dictionary*, I told her. *By himself*. She thought that was nice, and would I like some more oatmeal cookies?

Samuel Johnson, however, was not the only man who caught my eye at Williams.

For gay students — whether out or closeted — the college identity scramble has an extra dimension. During our time here, many of us discern patterns in our sexual desires that demand our response, that tell us, *you have to change your life*.

Sooner or later, we do. And when we come out, the people from our past may, again, have trouble understanding the new person we are becoming.

Often, we are only too eager to explain ourselves. We are desperate to find a voice for what is happening to us, and so every posed or possible question, every real or imagined skepticism, becomes an occasion for us to read and write and think and talk about who we are becoming.

Some of this is conversation and cogitation is necessary. Gay people must come

to some functional understanding of homosexual identity in order to be whole people. But we must press further — to hash out the fine points of queer ideology; to hammer out an ironclad theological defense of homosexuality; to prove that the gay son can also be the good son. Preoccupation with sexual identity too easily and too often, and almost always unintentionally, becomes a way of postponing or avoiding the actual experience of love that is, really, the one reason we came out to begin with.

I wonder, why didn't Jesus answer Pilate's question?

The way Mark tells the story, Jesus didn't talk about himself because he didn't have to. Certain events in Mark's gospel suggest that discursive self-definition would have been almost blasphemously redundant. I'm thinking particularly of that booming voice from the sky at his baptism in Chapter 1: "You are my son the beloved. With you I am well pleased." And the Transfiguration, where God repeats that pronouncement for the disciples' benefit while Jesus, bathed in otherworldly light, stands around talking with Elijah and Moses, foreshadowing this year's reunion concerts by Diana Ross and the Supremes. Sort of.

When intellectuals want to avoid thinking about these events, we imagine them in literal terms. It's easy to scoff at a divine P.A. system in the sky. But this morning, let's try not to dismiss these events as figments of a superstitious imagination. Let's try to imagine that no one ever told us we had to understand them in live broadcasting terms.

Try to imagine them, instead, as exaggerated versions of those powerful, wordless, unearned, sense-bending experiences of self-forgetful self-awareness that creep up on you occasionally and relieve you with the certainty that you are part of something larger. A time when you glance out your window on the Freshman Quad and see snow falling upward and know you are perfectly, deeply at home in the place where you stand. A time when your grandmother says something ordi-

nary and innocent that blasts you with awareness or mortality, and the air between you seems to turn different colors. The first time you walked into a whole room full of people like you, and the burden of self-consciousness started its slow burn away.

A model of religious devotion formed by such moments would have to do with reflection on identity, and only slight interest in any kind of mental understanding. It would be too preoccupied with attending to the world: the physical facts of snow and air, men and women, bread and wine.

The God who would accept such devotion is a God who loves his world so much that he cannot be separated from it, a God who loves his people so much that the only thing for him to do it to become one of them.

I have not come out to my mother. She wouldn't understand.

My coming out happened simultaneously with her disappearance into Alzheimer's disease. Last year I went home to see her, and on the trip it came clear that she would never understand me, let alone Samuel Johnson.

When I walked in the door of our house last February, she beamed, and she said something that finally showed me what our relationship has always been about.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "You're *here*. And I can *touch you!*"

Later I realized that her words also describe the ethical discovery that accompanied the erotic experiences that happened when I started coming out. *You're here. And I can touch you.*

I like to believe that her words also describe the kind of presence that Jesus brought to his encounters with lepers and the blind men and the lame, and every suffering person that he met. *You're here. And I can touch you.*

I like to believe that the force of that presence is the reason he cannot stay dead.

Got News?

Please share it! Send us fabulous stories about your latest exploits across the country, your best gossip about who was seen where doing what, and photographs of your commitment ceremony, big parties, and new additions to your family for the next newsletter. Mail them to BiGALA News, P.O. Box 38, Williams College, Williamstown, MA 02167, or email them to kylar@bellatlantic.net.



class notes

Paul Barstow '48 writes that his initial contacts with Stephen Collingsworth have been very exciting. "He is ready and eager to move forward in making the Robert E. Jones '52 book collection more useful. Intelligent, sensitive, articulate and energetic - I think he is a great choice for LGBT Concerns Coordinator!"

Walter C. Allen '49 says he's enjoying retirement and spends time volunteering as a board member of the University of Illinois Chamber Orchestra. He also travels a lot with his partner, Francis Davis, and hopes to make it to Alaska this year.

Mike Dively '61, recently headed off to Paris for an annual G/L swimming meet.

Bill Clendaniel '67 is entering his 13th year as President and CEO of Mount Auburn Cemetery, the nation's oldest large-scale designed landscape open to the public. It is a museum, a horticultural showplace, birding destination, as well as active cemetery. He writes, "I'd be delighted to welcome any Williams Alumnae/i and give them a tour." In addition to his job, he's active in the Chiltern Mountain club, New England's largest Gay and Lesbian recreation club, particularly hiking and skiing. His oldest son Cam, is a member of the Williams Class of 2001.

Bonita Ann Palmer '71 says, "I'm finally a seminarian at The Church Divinity of the Pacific (Episcopal) after 20 years of aspiration." She's left her medical practice, but is getting advanced training at the San Francisco Theological Seminary in the Art of Spiritual Direction and hopes to develop Health and Healing Ministries.

Bill Harding '73 sold his house in Boston and has cut back his hours at work. After twelve years together in the USA, he and his partner have decided to move to his partner's native Brazil. Bill writes, "[My partner] couldn't get permanent legal residency despite trying everything. If we were a heterosexual couple, it would be easy: we could have married. I stay at our house in Provincetown when I'm back in the USA. It's not so bad spending time in Brazil in the winter, but it's not as fun as it seems because he is now 5000 miles away in a place he'd rather not be. Some day we both hope that we can live together here legally - not necessarily in a legally recognized relationship - but just free from government restriction, permanently, and together here in the USA."

Eric Kuzmuk '79 recently visited with Don Perry '79, who he hadn't seen since graduation. He also writes that the BiGALA newsletter is a "marvelous" resource for alumni who may have been in the closet during the time they were at Williams. He says he adores email and would love people to send him a line.

D. Christopher Kerby '81 writes, "It's been two years since I moved from my in-house counsel position at Siemens Corp. to my present job as a litigator at one of the larger San Francisco law firms and I haven't had a single day of regrets. It's a blast every day!"

Donald T. Freeman '84, with his partner, Patrick, met up with Gregor Kalas '85 for a Williams art event in Los Angeles at the home of artist Constantine Cherkas. Afterwards, the three headed out to dinner and some bar hopping to celebrate Gregor's completion of a Ph.D. in Art History from U. Penn. "We had a great time and vowed to get together with our lost friends, Cesar Alvarez '84 and David Desmond '86."

Marc Wolf '84 opened an Off-Broadway solo performance piece he had developed about gays in the military entitled, "Another American: Asking and Telling." The reviews were great and made it onto *USA Today's* top ten list for 1999. Look for the play to be coming to Los Angeles in the summer of 2001 and check out his website, AnotherAmerican.com.

John E. Denaro '85 has been the pastor of a small parish in East Harlem for over a year. Although it's hard work, John says it's very gratifying. In addition, John has been working on a documentary film about his gay bowling league and would welcome any inspiration his Williams BiGALA sisters and brothers would care to offer.

Ian Foraker '85 is busy climbing the corporate ladder and enjoying the journey. His partner, Derek, recently finished up a show at the Yale repertory, working with a group of talented New York actors.

Jim Jordan '87 writes that he saw fellow classmate, Scott Robinson '87, at the International Gay and Lesbian Aquatics Championships in Atlanta in June 1999. He also recently met up with Tim Shaw '89 last summer in New York. Jim is in his twelfth year teaching and coaching at Lawrenceville School and is training for more swimmeets with a gay team in Philadelphia. He's also interested in organizing a BiGALA mini-reunion at Gay Games VI in Sydney 2002.

Eric Wilson '87 recently switched from the "straight"-laced world of internet strategy consulting to heading up development for the leading GLBT internet site, www.planetout.com. He writes that it's a great company with lots of opportunities...

Mari Omland '89 and her partner, Laura Olsen, have purchased a home on Capitol Hill (DC) and are focused on creating a garden with native plants to create some distance from their immediate neighbor, Safeway, and its parking lot!

Andrea deMajewski '90 recently switched from a "demanding, exhausting, draining" job of nine years (union organizer) to something that leaves her with "a little room in my brain" (post office mail carrier). She loves it and says the uniform is a great "chick magnet."

Greg Bowne '93 is still together with hubby Mark after 3+ great years, and is now doing web design for agency.com. He says it's a super place.

Gerrard Khan '93 is in Boston working on a master's degree at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in International Migration and Refugee Studies. He writes, "I am frantically trying to write a thesis, learn to speak a foreign language (course Williams for not having a language requirement), and figure out a career plan—all the while trying to acquire a social life—to little avail."

Chris Kim '93 recently started school again at a Conservatoire in Paris, getting a Master's-

equivalent in Musicology and clarinet. He also writes, "I'm also still on the job hunt, as my prior determination to become a world-class bartender faded away (competition too fierce), so I'll be only too glad to accept a job of secretarial/administrative nature."

Nikki Kimball '93 is living in a tiny Northern NY town with minimal cultural/social opportunities, but which leaves her lots of time to play (run/ski/snowboard) in beautiful mountains whenever she's at work. According to her, "Rumor has it, a nearby (45 miles) town may be starting a Frontrunners (BGL running group) club. I may develop a social life yet..."

Greg Tate '93 says that last September, he was in Paris for a week where he hung out with Chris Kim '93. He's also going to Dublin in January to visit his boyfriend, who is moving back there in December. He's going to use that trip to see if he'll move there permanently later next year.

Donny Wong '95 celebrated his seventh anniversary with his partner, Chris. They've been living in Dedham, MA for the past five years. Donny remains in grad school and isn't sure where life will lead him after he gets his degree. He does enjoy his student interactions as a TA for a course and writes that he might just end up back at Williams someday.

Rachel Barenblatt '96 writes, "The biggest news in my life is that I'm working as editor of two monthly newspapers in Western Mass., both called *The Women's Times*. Also, Ethan [Zuckerman '93] and I just bought a house in Lanesboro. I finished grad school last summer and am working on a collection of poems. We're still within a stone's throw of the Purple Valley, and we're loving living here."

Drew Bunting '97 is at Yale Divinity School. He went there after working for the Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina for two years. He says that although he hasn't played much music since he got to New Haven, "I am still a musician in theory and I still have lots of CD's to sell."

Jennifer Cartee '97 moved out to Berkeley, CA last May to start law school at UC Berkeley. Although her first semester was intense, she got through it all and got to visit family and friends on the east coast for the holidays. She also writes that she had a wonderful opportunity to work with John Spear '92 last year at the San Francisco office of GLSEN before John moved back to NYC.

Walter Cheng '97 recently finished his master's degree in HIV epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. This summer, he's vegging in Washington DC, spending time with his partner and training for the Marine Corps Marathon. "Despite the fact that I'm constantly sore from training, I love that I finally have the time to see all my friends." In the fall, he'll start his first year at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, where he doubts he'll have any more time for anything fun.

Dena Zaldua '98 and Carina Vance '99 write, "[We] are doing great in NYC. However it is time for us to move on - we're leaving for San Francisco this summer." Dena hopes to find a job at an internet company and Carina hopes to be working as a carpenter.

Mitchell Anderson '83 on Williams, Acting and More...

continued from p.1

M: Overall, my Williams experience was great. I loved Williams and campus life. I did my very best to hide my true nature without even knowing it, partly because of high school – the Tracey Flick syndrome. [During his talk the night before, Mitchell spoke of how in high school and at Williams he suffering from the 'Tracey Flick syndrome' – named after the overachieving, overzealous, nearly annoying character in the movie *Electra*.] I had wonderful, close, close friends. As far as the gay and lesbian community, I had no concept of what it was. A few people that my friends and I knew were gay and lesbian. But there was not the same cohesive group that there is today. It's so amazing to see now.

D: What do you think about the whole chalking thing?

M: It was funny last night to hear Kyle [Roberts '95] talk about his idea of activism – chalking. It sounds quaint. I don't know if that's real activism. Also, the whole taking back of hurtful, derogatory language. I'm not sure if it's a good thing. At some point during this weekend I heard the chaplain talking about "Queer Pride Week" and "queer students." Maybe we need to be more sensitive to what we say. What we say means a lot. Language carries a lot of weight. The civil rights movement showed us that.

D: Did your time at Williams play a part (negative or positive) in your coming out?

M: Which coming out? To myself, my family, or the public? In a way, my time at Williams informed everything about my life. It was a very intellectual education, but I also learned how to be an adult, how to be a kind person. I don't think you can go to a school like Williams and not have it change the way you view the world.

D: Did you come to Williams knowing what you wanted to do? If not, when did you know and do you feel Williams helped you or hindered you in any way?

M: No, I did not know what I wanted to do. I thought about being a doctor. I took one theatre class every semester. Then I took Orgo [Organic Chemistry] and never wanted to set foot in the Chemistry Building again. Williams did what it was supposed to – it gave me passion.

D: What was it like to be a closeted actor?

M: It was very hurtful, I think. Acting is about truth. Acting is about bringing every part of yourself to create a new character. When you cut yourself off from a part of yourself, then it can harm your craft. It also hurt

my relationship with my family. I asked them to respect me and then they saw me on TV without accepting myself.

D: What was it like when you came out? What was the difference between your closeted life and open life as an actor?

M: All the complicated levels of the closet. It's everyone – not just actors. The difference is that as an actor you're a public figure. People want to know about famous people. To not be able to share yourself is detrimental. We don't get very often to feel like a pioneer, on the edge of a Gay and Lesbian Revolution – it's been happening for thirty years. I can feel that I'm on the edge all the time, as a leading man – it's exhilarating and you also don't know how far you can fall.

D: How have other actors, gay or straight, reacted to your coming out and/or been affected by it?

M: I have a fantasy that at my night at the GLAAD Awards, everyone went, 'Holy shit!' There's a sense of 'good for you, but don't expect me to join you.' People are very respectful. Some probably think I'm crazy. Since college I've developed a sense that social justice is imperative for survival. I may die a pauper but I may also have changed some minds.

D: Why is the fight against the Knight Initiative important to you? Why did you get involved?

M: Because of a couple of factors. First, Pete Knight has no business offering a moral agenda for California. So I'm against him. Second, I'm offended that California could vote on the value of my life and my relationships. It was hurtful and divisive and we need to get beyond that. I couldn't not speak out against it. I believed in an egotistical way that I had a big voice and could stir the gay and lesbian community up. [The proposition] was brilliantly worded: 'valid' and 'recognized.' People focused on word meanings. People on both sides of the issue are squeamish about the word meanings. And that's where we lost.

D: If gay marriage, or something like it, like the civil unions in Vermont, were ever recognized in California, would you get married?

M: I would, if California had something like Vermont. I think I would have to. I couldn't not, because of my activism.

D: Why/how/in what ways is BiGALA important to you?

M: Honestly, it never really was important to me. Registering as a gay alum seemed weird to me. But it's another coming out step. It is important to me now. I spoke at Stanford and

it was kind of an amazing and moving experience. BiGALA is important because undergrads get to see people who have created a life and that they're gonna be okay. I am so impressed by younger people who have a sense of themselves at this age.

The preceding is my best attempt to capture Mitchell's every word while scribbling ferociously in my notebook. In my concentrated journalistic mindset, however, I completely forgot to ask about Jennifer Tilly. I still have not been forgiven for my oversight, and so, Mitchell, if you are reading this and get a chance to write some email in the near future, please, inquiring minds need to know: What is Jennifer Tilly really like in real life?



Top to bottom: Mitchell at the GLAAD Media Awards; playing Richard Carpenter in the 1989 tv movie, The Karen Carpenter Story; and more recently in Relax... It's Just Sex with Jennifer Tilly (center).