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In Past and Present, BSA Seeks to Lift Minority Voices

Natalie Altayeb
Staff Writer

In 1969, the Student Affairs Committee drafted a memorandum – now in the Albion College archives – setting a plan in motion to create the Afro-American Union at Albion College. Though that name may be unfamiliar to many Brits today, the organization is still operating on campus as the Black Student Alliance, adopting their current name in February of 1985. No matter what name they operate under, the BSA works continuously to impact the Albion community.

The current president of the BSA is Chicago senior Anthony Neal, who said the group intends to promote belonging and meet the needs of minority students on the Albion campus.

“Black Student Alliance is a collective of individuals put on campus to create a safe space that meets the needs of minority students – most minority students being African American,” Neal said.

BSA secretary and Houston sophomore Aishat Fagun said BSA’s impact is simple.

“We create a safe space for learning, fun and cultural awareness,” Fagun said.

The BSA holds weekly meetings in the Umbrella House, a shared space for historically under-represented groups on Albion’s campus. The meetings themselves are primarily informational, discussing on-campus events or professional development skills, Neal said. A few weeks ago, members of BSA prepared for a job fair and revised their resumes.



Chicago native and senior Anthony Neal, president of Albion College’s Black Student Alliance, sits on a couch in the Umbrella House. The BSA is a student organization dedicated to the promotion of belonging and uplifting minority voices (Photo by Cade Thomas).

BSA isn’t just limited to weekly professional development, though, this semester the organization ensured that every day of February was dedicated to Black History Month.

Fagun said that one of her favorite BSA events was the barbeque last spring, which she said gave students an opportunity to network with the larger Albion community.

Neal and Fagun both said BSA is an ever-changing organization.

“BSA has changed a lot compared to now in terms of what students need and the type of students that join,” Neal said. “BSA is a cornerstone for students who like to involve themselves in the com-

munity and is a cornerstone for the finer things out there.”

The organization has shifted to include more groups over the years. They have prioritized the inclusion and uplifting of LGBTQIA+ communities, partnering with clubs like LGBRiTs to host campus-wide events. This semester, they partnered with LGBRiTs, Albion College Drip and others to host a Kiki Ball on Feb. 4.

“We want to let students know that no matter your race, we’re open to you performing or being a part of events,” Neal said. “We are here to shine a light on individuals and groups.”

According to research done by Akaiia Daishianna-Melyce Ridley, ‘22, BSA has

always had to fight for their place on campus, often facing challenges to their goals of inclusion and uplifting of minority voices.

Ridley’s honors thesis, “The Beginning of Belonging: Exploring the Black History of Albion College,” compared petitions from 1968 and 2021. Both of which include detailed demands for an increase in recognition of institutes for race, ethnicity and diversity along with an increase in budgets and resources for the organization.

The petitions, Ridley states, show that while the “administration is making progress in their commitment to belonging, there is still work to be done.”

Neal mirrored the petitions and Ridley’s sentiment, saying that historically, Albion College struggles to provide student leaders with the proper resources to fit their needs.

“The college should find a way to put different students from different systems in the same room,” Neal said.

Documents held in the Albion College archives indicate that a fight for funding and recognition for BSA has led to changes in the structure and diversity of Albion College. Since BSA began, the organization has hosted Black History Month celebrations dating back to 1994, created petitions to hire minority admissions coordinators, and in 1992, one of the first honors program lectures on Black history.

Fagun said the college should work continuously to embrace diversity on campus.

“When they step towards that change, BSA will fully shine.”

Photos: ACE Celebrates Holi, the Festival of Colors

Katherine Simpkins
Volunteer Photographer

On March 16, the Asian Cultural Engagement (ACE) organization hosted Holi, also known as The Festival of Colors. The celebration took place at the Umbrella House, a multipurpose space where students of different cultures, religions and other backgrounds gather. Activities included face painting, caricature drawing, tote-bag designing, a

photobooth, Indian snacks and the main event: the throwing of colors.

Holi is a significant Hindu festival that celebrates the arrival of spring, the end of winter and the blossoming of love. In India, Holi is celebrated by the throwing of powder in an array of colors throughout cities, known as the “Festival of Colors.”

Bella Bakeman contributed reporting to this story. To see more photos from the Holi celebration, visit albionpleiad.com



Watch out! Maggie Vongsa, a first-year from Elkhart, Indiana, regrets not ducking sooner from the color bomb (Photo by Katherine Simpkins).



Colorful powder flies as ACE members and other students end their Holi celebration with the long awaited main event. At the center of it all is the executive board who put the celebration together (Photo by Katherine Simpkins).



Egshiglen Batjargal, a sophomore from Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, smiles while grabbing green powder to toss in the air and celebrate the holiday (Photo by Katherine Simpkins).

Opinion: Guns and Gays – Queer Folk Are Taking Up Arms, Rightfully So

Juan Rodriguez
Opinions Editor

I do a lot of browsing in gun shops when I'm back home. It's Texas, after all. You can't go far on the highway without seeing billboards advertising one a few exits ahead.

Last summer, I was headed home down I-20 after a weekend with my grandparents, a change of pace from my usual route along US 175. I went this way so I could stop by a gun shop that I'd seen advertised along the way from Terrell to Canton, Texas.

It took some navigating down country roads, but I found it eventually. I spent a few minutes inside, conscious of the fact I was the only Latino there – something common in this sort of space. I just pushed it aside and tried to focus on the sheer variety of gear present.

I stayed for a good half-hour browsing. Too much of what I saw that day was out of my price range, so I left with my wallet intact.

As I started up my car though, I caught sight of a sticker on the back glass of the truck parked next to me.

I can't quote it exactly, but I do remember what it was about. There wasn't much I could do but sigh as I drove away that day.

I hate that queer people being accused of grooming has become something we put on stickers.

If you accuse a crowd of queer and gender-nonconforming folk of being groomers and the right-wing immediately goes on the attack. The accusation quickly becomes a tool to fuel the flames at the feet of the queer community while they're being strung up on the cross.

For evidence of the rabid nature that lurks, look at the targeting of drag shows in recent years by the political right. The events in Roanoke, Texas stick in my mind because of their proximity to home.

Anderson Distillery and Grill, a local establishment in Roanoke, was hosting a drag brunch on Aug. 28 of last year. It was open to the public, an all-ages event.

The public, in this case, included a lot



A bear with sunglasses looms over a mass of politicians, adorned in pride flags. In the wake of anti-queer rhetoric and legislation, queer people have begun to exercise their Second Amendment right to bear arms (Photo illustration by Bonnie Lord).

of right-wing protestors appalled at the idea of kids being exposed to that which doesn't conform to society's heteronormative, cis-centric ideals.

It was clear as a Texas day to me that the protestors there wanted to force folk back into the closet, to make them fear for their lives just because they dared to exist openly and earnestly.

It's likely that the armed guards standing outside were the only thing keeping the folks inside safe. Security was courtesy of the Elm Fork John Brown Gun Club, a leftist gun rights group. Clad in black, with rifles in hand, they stood guard while anti-queer rhetoric was hurled at them across the street by the drag brunch protestors.

The coverage done by Steven Monacelli on his Twitter shed light on something that is becoming increasingly common across queer communities all over the country as harmful anti-queer rhetoric continues to run rampant.

Spend enough time in the queer circles I frequent, and it'll quickly become evident that very few folks and friends trust the government to ensure their well-being. Queer folk don't have any reason to trust

the institutions that govern daily life, especially when one considers that many bodies of the government are actively hostile to queer communities in the United States.

Just because same-sex folk can get married at the moment doesn't mean homophobia is over. Shocking, I know. The history of queer folk fighting for the bare minimum is a long and sordid one, something that reminds onlookers that queer folk have always existed and will continue to do so.

Currently, the ACLU is tracking 409 anti-LGBTQ+ bills in this country. 45 of those come from Texas. These bills would restrict what people can discuss in classrooms, who gets medical care and what sort of public performances are allowed, for instance. It's clear to me that the Republican Party isn't on the side of the queer community.

My criticism of Republicans shouldn't be taken as support of Democrats, those concerned with decorum and bipartisanship in an era when Republican politicians advocate hostility towards queer communities. There is no negotiating with such

politicians, not when lives are at stake. In this light, liberal Democrats are nothing but spineless.

No agent of the state can be trusted to ensure the safety of queer communities, not when its ranks are infiltrated by members who would stand aside for Republican politicians as they argue the place queer people occupy in society should be the incinerator.

Is it any surprise then, that queer folk are taking up arms? It shouldn't be.

They shouldn't have to live their lives on perpetual alert, eternally aware of the fact that the government hates them and their neighbors view them as a threat. Queer folk deserve long, happy lives – they deserve to live free of fear, the same as everybody.

Such comfort isn't guaranteed, only because clowns in suits and ties on television have a vested interest in shifting blame away from their economic blunders. Queer folk are an easy target for them. All they need to do is argue that queer folk are the reason why this country is unraveling, that sexual deviancy is at the root of all societal issues.

So long as talking heads like Ben Shapiro, Tucker Carlson and Jordan B. Peterson feed a significant portion of the public this lie, queer folk will have to take up arms and fight for their right to life. It's always been a fight for survival. The fact that queer folk have had to grow accustomed to this sort of life is unjust.

In the wake of Roanoke and other similar events, there was an interesting reaction coming out of right-wing pundits. They had been under the impression that most queer folk wouldn't take up arms, that since they tended to vote Democrat, they would have a revulsion for firearms of any sort.

They were expecting easy targets, and what they got was an armed community.

When one's life is on the line, under threat from rabid dogs foaming at the mouth, is it any surprise that queer folk reached for one of the most common things in this country to defend themselves with? When survival is all that matters, politics isn't enough of a concern. After all, what good is politics to the dead?

Opinion: Egg Prices Are Skyrocketing and Mundane TikToks Are Going Viral. Why?

Heidi Faramelli
Staff Writer

In our current world, the discussion of eggs – especially on social media – seems more prevalent than ever before. Why?

Perhaps it's because egg prices this year have risen greatly, which may not seem like a big deal to some who can brush off the price increase. But for me, a broke college student who makes omelets almost every day? Yikes.

I did the math on this. If a Michigander bought one dozen eggs a week last year, they'd have spent roughly \$104 per year on eggs. This year, however, that same Michigander is now spending around \$260 annually on eggs.

Don't get too worried about egg costs, though. With the help of Taylor Swift fans, dubbed "Swifties," egg prices may be lowering at their behest.

According to the Minneapolis-area radio station KS95, at the Grammys on Feb. 5, Swift and Grammy host Trevor Noah had an interview in which Noah

jokingly asked Swift if she could get her fans to lower egg prices after the Swifties came together amid a Ticketmaster crisis when Swift's upcoming tour tickets were released.

Swift responded and said she'd tell her fans to "get on it."

The following day, KS95 said that some areas in the U.S. saw egg prices lower by 52%. I'm not saying Taylor Swift fans have the power to alter egg prices, but ... that is exactly what I would say if I was not an ethical journalist.

Egg popularity on social media was brought to my mind thanks to a TikTok video with over 190 million views. In the video, an egg simply rolls across a table, falls and breaks on the floor.

Breaking a precious, expensive egg just for views?

Personally, it's a risk I wouldn't dare to take.

But, egg breaking could be lucrative; the five-second video has over four hundred thousand comments.

The popularity of such a simple video led me to the question: Why did the egg video go viral on TikTok?

One possible answer is that fellow TikTok consumers and I can't help but laugh at simple, so-dumb-they're-funny videos of things falling and breaking.

But I think the popular video could have a deeper meaning. Just four years ago, @worldrecordegg on Instagram received nearly 60 million likes for a simple photograph of a brown egg. Why are eggs so relevant?

According to first-year friends Magali Perez, from Hillsdale, and Delaney Dimnet, from Clio, there are drastically differing opinions regarding eggs even among

friends in the small Albion community.

"I very much dislike eggs," Perez said. Her younger sister once made her think about the chickens who laid the eggs, causing her to contemplate her breakfast.

"We eat these possible chicks – their possible children," Perez said. "I vowed from that day on I would never eat eggs again, and I have not had eggs since then."

Dimnet has a different opinion.

"I actually love eggs," she said. "I make them a lot at home."

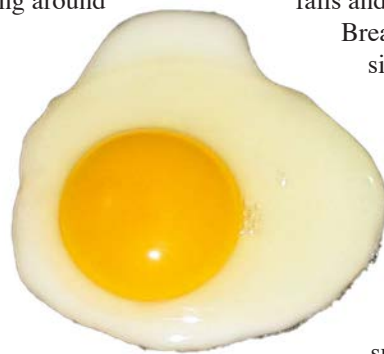
"And they smell weird," Perez said, interrupting her friend.

"But I don't like my parents making scrambled eggs," Dimnet continued. "I usually make them myself."

The real question is, why are eggs so influential online? Perhaps the egg fixation exists because Americans consume over ninety-two billion eggs a year, or 277.5 per person according to statista. Eggs are not only a breakfast food. They are in a myriad of baked goods as well as cooking recipes, making them a popular food choice overall (sorry, vegans).

It seems that there is no clear answer as to why eggs are so prevalent online today. Social media is a complex thing. Posts go viral for no apparent reason.

One thing is certain, though. Spending \$100 more on eggs in a year compared to last year is not particularly egg-celent.



Eggs currently have a unique cultural relevance among Gen. Z. What gives? (Photo via David Benbennick, Wikimedia Commons).

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