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# THE DAILY ORANGE

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## LGBT Center, history department screen powerful film about AIDS advocacy group

By [Madina Toure \(/writers/madina-toure/\)](#) STAFF WRITER

March 6, 2013 (/2013/03/06/) at 2:04 am

Watching a documentary on the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power group that began in the late 1980s, Diane Wiener became emotional as she recognized some of the individuals featured in the film.

A member of the coalition from 1987 to the mid-1990s, Wiener remembered participating in die-ins — members lying on their backs pretending to be dead — and zaps — members going to various locations to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS. She remembered one project in which panels were used to represent the names of individuals who died from the disease.

“My whole life flashed before me,” said Wiener, who is now the director of Syracuse University’s Disability Cultural Center.

Documentary filmmaker Jim Hubbard’s feature, released in February 2012 on the work of ACT UP, was screened at an event sponsored by the department of history and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Resource Center. It was shown Tuesday night in the Life Sciences Complex auditorium.

ACT UP is an advocacy group created in 1987 that practices non-violent direct action to raise awareness about the key issues of the AIDS crisis.

Hubbard showed a part of the documentary titled “United in Anger: A History of ACT UP” at SU’s Human Rights Festival two years ago.

Hubbard first filmed ACT UP in June 1987 at the Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade in New York City. Since 2001, Hubbard worked with filmmaker Sarah Schulman on the ACT UP Oral History Project, a collection of interviews with surviving members of ACT UP.

“People with AIDS and people in the grassroots fighting with them were the true experts in the disease,” Hubbard said. “So the oral history gives people the opportunity to tell the story.”

The film touches on the progression of the AIDS activist movement. Using the oral histories of ACT UP members and archival footage, the documentary traces the work of the group, highlighting key events like the its first demonstration in March 1987 on Wall Street.

Following the screening, Hubbard answered audience questions about AIDS video activism, ACT UP’s leadership, the documentary’s style and purpose, as well as the structure of the HIV and AIDS movement.

Hubbard stressed that the group’s leadership was organic.

If someone had an idea, he said, they did not necessarily need unanimous support — they were still able to bring their ideas to fruition.

“One of the things that is said most often in the oral histories is people talked about how they never felt like they were in the center in ACT UP,” he said. “It was this de-centered organization.”

Hubbard said his film comes directly out of the AIDS activist film movement of the late 1980s and early 1990s, and features personal reactions to it.

He added that members of the ACT UP movement were diverse, spanning gender, race and ethnicity, and the film had to reflect that.

“It was a community rising to the occasion and actually, several communities in coalition,” he said.

Wiener, director of the Disability Cultural Center, agreed.

“There is this misunderstanding that this is a privileged white guy group, and that’s not what it is,” she said.

Students in attendance were moved by the documentary. Growing up as a dancer outside of Chicago, Lauren Tang, a junior television, radio and film major, said many of her older teachers were in their 20s and 30s when HIV and AIDS took their friends and families’ lives.

“I thought there was so much history and so many lessons, and I thought it was presented in a way that was easy to follow, but you were still able to grasp the information that was provided,” Tang said.

Roger Hallas, associate professor of English and director of the LGBT Studies Program, organized the event. He has conducted research on AIDS activist media and was a member of the chapters in Philadelphia and London when he was in college.

Hallas said AIDS video activism is important because it preserves the work of those who fought the disease, and supported those who had the disease back in the 1980s and early 1990s.

The film provides an account of the AIDS epidemic through the eyes of the individuals who experienced it.

Hubbard said individuals cannot replicate their actions. Instead, they should look to these activists as a source of guidance.

Hallas agreed and said: “Archiving is so often about taking things that are in need of preservation and taking their circulation out of the world and keeping them safe so that future generations can have access to it.”

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Published on [March 6, 2013 \(/2013/03/06/\)](#) at 2:04 am

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#### **Syracuse rises in AP Poll after two ACC wins**

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**Reporter's notebook: The Capital Gazette was where I got my start. And it should teach us how to go forward.**

By Meredith Newman

December 17, 2018 at 11:02 am

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**Newsmakers: With success at Runner's World, Heather Mayer Irvine has published her 1st cookbook**

By Kelsey Thompson

December 17, 2018 at 11:01 am

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**There remains a need for diversity at The D.O. Here's how 1 staffer is working to make a change.**

By Aishwarya Sukesh

December 17, 2018 at 10:37 am

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By Colleen Ferguson

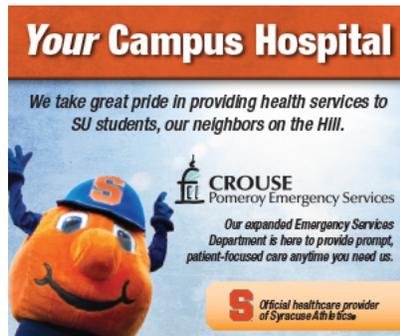
December 17, 2018 at 10:37 am

**DUCKS**

**Duck: Ali Harford**

By Ali Harford

December 6, 2018 at 1:52 am



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**MEN'S BASKETBALL** (</TAGS/MENS-BASKETBALL/>)

### Syracuse maintains steady control all game in double-digit win over Pittsburgh (</2019/01/syracuse-maintains-steady-control-game-double-digit-win-pittsburgh/>)

By Charlie DiSturco | January 19, 2019

The Orange won their second-straight conference game five days removed from its monumental upset of No. 1 Duke. [Read more » \(/2019/01/syracuse-maintains-steady-control-game-double-digit-win-pittsburgh/\)](/2019/01/syracuse-maintains-steady-control-game-double-digit-win-pittsburgh/)



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**MEN'S BASKETBALL** (</TAGS/MENS-BASKETBALL/>)

### Syracuse benefits from guards' rebounding in ACC play (</2019/01/syracuse-benefits-guards-rebounding-acc-play/>)

By Billy Heyen | January 17, 2019

Frank Howard, Tyus Battle and Elijah Hughes have crashed the boards more to help SU to conference wins. [Read more » \(/2019/01/syracuse-benefits-guards-rebounding-acc-play/\)](/2019/01/syracuse-benefits-guards-rebounding-acc-play/)



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**CONSERVATIVE COLUMN** (</OPINIONS/>)

### Government shutdown is also unpopular among conservatives (</2019/01/government-shutdown-also-unpopular-among-conservatives/>)

By Harrison Garfinkle | January 16, 2019

Conservative columnist Harrison Garfinkle argues that a compromise must be made in order to stop the government shutdown. [Read more » \(/2019/01/government-shutdown-also-unpopular-among-conservatives/\)](/2019/01/government-shutdown-also-unpopular-among-conservatives/)

## NEXT STORY

### SLICE OF LIFE

#### **After 2 years of researching the central New York food system, FoodPlanCNY prepares final reports to stakeholders**

By Nathan Abrams

October 30, 2018 at 10:01 pm

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#### **The can't-miss movies to watch before winter break ends**

By Patrick Gunn

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### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

#### **Turnovers keep it close, but Tiana Mangakahia saves Syracuse in win over Virginia Tech**

By Michael McCleary

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