

Rainbow SIG Newsletter

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These articles appeared in the Spring 2001 edition of Lesbigan SIGnals.

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The Story on The City of Brotherly Love

by Susan Carty, Indiana University

NAFSA will hold its 53rd annual conference, from May 27 to June 1, 2001. The conference, whose theme is "Advancing Global Diplomacy through International Education," will take place at the Pennsylvania Convention Center and the Philadelphia Marriott will serve as the headquarters hotel. Additional information and forms for registration and housing can be found on the [NAFSA Web site](http://www.nafsa.org) [www.nafsa.org].

Accommodation

A few SIG members will be staying at the Alexander Inn (tel: 800-253-9566; Web: www.alexanderinn.com), a B&B located within walking distance of the Convention Center. [The Think Gay Web site](http://www.thinkgay.com) also provides a list of Philadelphia accommodations at www.thinkgay.com/phiacc.html.

Philadelphia on the Web

Check out information about Philadelphia at the sites below:

[Think Gay Philadelphia](http://www.thinkgay.com/) [www.thinkgay.com/]

[GO Philadelphia](http://www.gophila.com/) [www.gophila.com/]

[Boulevard's Alternative Travel Guide](http://www.philadelphia.com/) [www.philadelphia.com/]

[ATL Live Web Cam](http://www.atl.external.lmco.com/philaview/camera.html) [www.atl.external.lmco.com/philaview/camera.html]

[Video Tours](http://cityguide.philly.com/videotours/) [cityguide.philly.com/videotours/]

[Best of the Web](http://local.botw.org/Pennsylvania/Philadelphia/) [http://local.botw.org/Pennsylvania/Philadelphia/]

SIG Business Meeting

Please plan to attend our annual business meeting on Wednesday, May 30th at 1:45 p.m. Location has not yet been assigned, but it will be listed in the final conference program.

SIG Social Event

Join us on Wednesday, May 30th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at *Citron*, at 12th and Locust. Cash bar with hors d'oeuvres provided by the SIG. Come and mingle.

Conference Program

As always, scheduled workshops and sessions cover an incredible variety of topics and issues. Please make note of the two programs described below. Your SIG colleagues seek your input and support with the following events:

Same Sex - Different Cultures: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, & Transgender Issues Abroad

Tuesday, May 29, 2:30 - 3:45 p.m.

Abstract: This session seeks to provide greater understanding of the various GLBT issues study abroad students encounter overseas. Overseas resident staff will share perspectives from many regions of the world. Issues for discussion include pre-departure advising, diversity and inclusion in overseas programs programming, and accessing local resources within the host culture's GLBT community.

SIGS - A Showcase of Special Interest Groups Within NAFSA

Thursday, May 31, 4:30 - 5:45 p.m.

Abstract: Members of NAFSA's Special Interest Groups will present a collection of their most successful programs, research, etc. Information will be presented in a visual format, inviting interaction with session attendees. Participants will learn what each of the SIGs represent, so that they might become involved in an area of interest to them, within the broad field of international education.

Call for Nominations

Lesbigay SIG officers include: two Co-Chairs (overlapping terms), Listserve Manager, Membership Coordinator, Newsletter Editor, Treasurer, and Web Site Manager.

The officers serve for two-year terms. An individual may hold up to two positions simultaneously. Officers must maintain membership in the Lesbigay SIG. The officers are elected at the annual business meeting of the SIG held at the annual NAFSA conference. Send nominations to [Joe Murnan](mailto:Joe.Murnan) [e-mail: HFJMurnan@aol.com] no later than May 18, 2001.

Volunteers Still Needed

Thanks to those of you who have already volunteered to help staff the Lesbigan SIG table at the upcoming Philadelphia conference (see below for background info). As we continue to gear up for the event and the visibility this will offer us, we would again like to ask for more volunteers. If you know you will be in Philadelphia (or are likely to be) please consider one or several 1-hour shifts to help make this first-time SIG project a success.

To volunteer, contact either Julie Trimpe [E-mail: jtrimpe@iesabroad.org] or Joe Murnan [E-mail: HFJMurnan@aol.com]. The more people who can help, the more we show our strength in numbers! Thanks for your participation!

SIG Information Booth

NAFSA Central has made arrangements to have a SIG booth or table at this year's conference. The 16 SIGs are being encouraged to have information materials for the table. The booth or table will be located near the Hospitality Booth and will be open during the entire conference. The SIGs are encouraged to seek member volunteers to staff the booth/table to answer questions by visitors and/or provide additional information about the SIGs. We would encourage our Lesbigan members to volunteer to staff the table all the time it is open. We are asking members to volunteer for at least one hour if not longer.

Please contact one of us about volunteering for this.

NAFSA Conference in Salt Lake City Could be a Sweet Experience

by Eero Jesurun, CIEE

The location of Salt Lake City as the 2003 venue for a major education conference such as NAFSA requires some closer attention. At the last annual conference in San Diego, some SIG members asked themselves if we want to support and invest money in a city and a state that has a strong history that is unfavorable towards gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered individuals. I believe there have been positive developments in Utah that NAFSA members should consider and should decide to sponsor and attend the NAFSA annual conference.

There is good news to report:

- In October of last year, the Salt Lake City School Board reversed the most extreme steps taken anywhere in the United States in preventing gay-supportive student clubs when it decided to change its policy and allow the clubs to meet at school. This decision ended nearly five years of controversy, as well as two lawsuits brought on behalf of East High School students who had sought to form

gay-supportive student clubs. The School Board now gives all students access, on a non-discriminatory basis, to important non-curricular clubs that had been banned in 1996.

- The Mayor of Salt Lake City, Rocky Anderson, signed an order on April 4, 2000, prohibiting anti-gay discrimination against Salt Lake City employees.
- Weber State University in Ogden offers an annual monetary scholarship in honor of Matthew Shepard for three students at their institution who "openly support gay, lesbian and bisexual issues." In addition, awardees are selected because they "build awareness of the academic achievements and community service of sexual minority students as well as a more positive image of sexual minorities."
- The Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Utah helps to organize the annual gay pride in Salt Lake City. Last year over 2300 people attended this fair sponsored by local organizations and businesses.

In my own conversation with representatives from the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Utah, there is an overall feeling that there is a "liberal community within Salt Lake City which makes many gays and lesbians feel at home." This does not mean that critics of this community, such as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, do not exercise influence on the national and local political scene. A group called "Utahns for Fairness" was formed in response to the LDS Church members' involvement in the anti-gay marriage initiative in U.S. Congress as well as their well-recorded financial support in anti-gay ballot measures in other states. Although NAFSA members are not expected to change religion in Utah, some other opportunities exist to help and support the growing gay and lesbian community in Salt Lake City.

For example, the Community Center can give NAFSA a list of bars and restaurants that have a pro-gay policy. Similarly, NAFSA conference participants can initiate contact with local groups and help to sponsor an awareness campaign in Salt Lake City. A session proposal for Salt Lake City could include a speaker from the Lesbian and Gay Student Union from the University of Utah or a Matthew Shepard scholar from WSU. We also might encourage NAFSA to identify an all-conference plenary speaker, such as James Hormel, the first openly gay U.S. ambassador; Matthew Shepard's mother, Judy; or Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), who recently introduced the Permanent Partner Immigration Act.

Perhaps such efforts will make Salt Lake City a sweeter experience for everyone.

Conference Site Selection Update

by Jo Murnan and Julie Trimpe, Co-Chairs

Following the San Diego conference, we wrote to Bill Barnhart, asking the Board of Directors to consider enlarging the Diversity Committee and have it meet more than once a year. We further encouraged them to include evidence of non-discriminatory

practice provided by conference sites in conference materials. The SIG sent another letter requesting that the Board set a timely schedule for the proposed sites to be sent to the Diversity Committee and for the Diversity Committee to contact all SIGs about site proposals. The Board of Directors assigned a Board-appointed liaison, June Noronha (NAFSA President Elect), to the SIG to improve communication.

GLB Abstracts Web Resource

by Jo Murnan and Julie Trimpe, Co-Chairs

A SIG member recently brought the Gay & Lesbian Abstracts Web site to our attention. The description on the Web site indicates the following:

Gay & Lesbian Abstracts (GLA), compiled by NISC, is the premier index to gay and lesbian literature. With nearly 25,000 records - growing monthly - GLA is an essential reference tool. Of paramount importance is the coverage of history, culture, social issues, interests, and concerns of the GLBT community.

To access the Go to the Web address www.nisc.com, select "Products," then select "Gay & Lesbian Abstracts."

Asylum Claims Handbook Available

The second edition of a popular reference book on asylum claims is now available. The press release provides the following description:

Preparing Sexual Orientation-based Asylum Claims: A Handbook for Advocates and Asylum-Seekers is the only comprehensive publication that assists attorneys and asylum-seekers in all aspects of their preparation of sexual orientation-based asylum claims. Written by immigration attorneys Lavi Soloway and Chris Nugent, who sit on the LGIRTF Board of Directors, and Heather McClure, the former Director of the Midwest Human Rights Partnership for Sexual Orientation (MHROSO), the handbook was published by the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights.

To order the handbook, e-mail info@lgirtf.org and be sure to include your name and mailing address or visit the [LGIRTF](http://www.lgirtf.org) Web site at www.lgirtf.org.

SIG Member Wins Human Rights Award

The Bloomington Human Rights Commission (BHRC) recognized Daniel Soto-Mayorga as a recipient of its fourth annual Human Rights Award.

The organization's press release indicates that the BHRC chose Soto-Mayorga because of his unstinting commitment to a number of civil rights issues. Soto-Mayorga's work includes the facilitation of the social integration of international students and new immigrants, the securing and protecting of human rights and equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people, volunteering for Amnesty International and educating people about AIDS. He also frequently arranges for speakers to lecture at Indiana University on international human rights issues and conducts orientation classes on cultural diversity as part of the summer training given to Fulbright students from abroad.

Soto-Mayorga's nominator said: "Soto has a big heart, a fierce sense of justice and a tireless commitment to advancing the cause of human rights through lobbying, education, fundraising, networking and - if need be - risking his own life."

Regional Activities: Expanding SIG Outreach

by Peter Kerrigan, IIE

NAFSA's regional conferences in November 2000 hosted a variety of Lesbigan SIG-related activities, including sessions and social events. Lesbigan SIG regional meetings were planned in Regions I, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, XX and XI. Sessions were held in Region VI in Sandusky, Ohio (GOLDEN TICKET for Education Abroad: Entry and Beyond) in Region VIII in Richmond, Virginia (Creating a Welcoming and Inclusive International Office) and in Regions XX and XXI in Montreal, Canada (LGBT Issues: A Canadian Perspective).

The following summaries of regional activities were submitted to the newsletter.

Region I

by Jacqueline Bedard, BCCIE, and Peter Voeller, University of Washington

We had our first regional SIG meeting ever in Region I. It was well attended by students, colleagues and even a friend of the SIG, who came because she had just come out in her community in Idaho as being Jewish and was dealing with the ramifications of that. It was a fun discussion.

Peter Voeller did a session on how NAFSA, the SIG and international education changed the course of his life and ended up talking more about the gay aspect of it all than he'd intended. It was also well received and afterwards, another friend of the SIG came up to ask if she could be a part of the support even if she was not gay.

More gay activity at the local level than before was nice to see! Jacqueline Bedard was regional chair of the conference and added a very nice touch to everything, including a Queen Victoria impersonator at the opening lunch! We even had enough rainbow flags to distribute to the group.

On the evening before the SIG, a group of six of us (two of whom were at the SIG the next day) enjoyed a little socializing at a quaint, gay-owned, French bistro.

It seemed valuable to have a SIG at the Region I conference.

Region IV

by Janet Alexander, Grinnell College

Chris Sullivan from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Maiko Morotani (student at Grinnell College) and I (FSA at Grinnell College) presented in Iowa City in November. The session was submitted as one of three nominations to the Regional Highlights for Philadelphia, but was not selected to present in Philadelphia.

The session entitled, When a Student Comes Out to You: Help for Advisers Working with Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgendered International Students, provided resources and help in understanding how coming-out issues affect international students in unique ways, in order to help attendees think proactively about how to make their offices more supportive of GLBT students.

This session helped advisers think about unique needs of international GLBT students who come out while they are students in the U.S. The panel included two advisers and a student who told their own story. We also provided an opportunity to work through case studies, and to think proactively about how the advising office can be supportive of GLBT students. A bibliography and other resources were available.

Region V

by Jay Lokken, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse

The first LGBT SIG meeting in Region V took place on November 6, 2000 in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Region V consists of the States of Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan. Around 15 people attended the meeting. The group went right to work and decided to begin planning an annual LGBT SIG meeting at each Region V conference, which will take place in November in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The group came up with the following goals and objectives.

1. Begin holding annual LGBT SIG meetings in Region V
2. Encourage the development of LGBT workshops at the regional and state conference
3. Be visible ...rainbow flag stickers for names plates in the future
4. Share information within Region V regarding resources and centers for LGBT students and staff

5. Work on encouraging Region V to use LGBT friendly language and semantics
6. Work on issues related to inclusively of LGBT issues in Region V
7. Plan on a reception for the next meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan for next November
8. Build a network of support for LGBT professional in NAFSA Region V
9. Bring forth issues affecting and assisting LGBT international students and LGBT student who study abroad

It was exciting to have the opportunity to get together and support one another. There was a good mix of LGBT persons and advocates. For a first meeting, I think it was a great success. After the meeting, most of the group went for dinner and afterward a number of people went out on the town to a LGBT pub not far from the hotel. For LGBT professionals in Region V, it was the first chance we have had to interact on a regional level. Everyone seemed to be looking forward to building awareness of LGBT issues in Region V and most importantly, better serving LGBT students within the region's colleges and universities.

Region VI

by Kevin Morrison, Earlham College

NAFSANs at the Region VI conference were treated to several events for Lesbian and Gay members and for educators working with LGBT students preparing to study abroad.

The first night of the conference the Lesbian and Gay SIG organized a "no host" dinner. 16 people signed up and gathered to follow our rainbow flag to Benny Vito's, an Italian American restaurant located at the site of an off-track betting facility. Conversation was lively and we were able to pass out rainbow stickers and discuss the SIG with newcomers. Although there are not many LGBT professionals in Region IV it was nice to see many conference attendees sporting rainbow flags on their nametags (many of whom chased me down to get theirs).

On the last day of the conference, LGBT student issues were highlighted in a SECUSSA poster session on study abroad issues. The new web-site was prominently advertised and displayed. The information provided focused on creating a friendly and supportive environment for LGBT students and how advisors and students can find useful country and culture specific information on LGBT issues. Attendees had a variety of questions and even some great stories to share about how LGBT participants have helped them to improve their own program orientations and materials. This session was also an excellent opportunity to promote the SIG and the new website as a valuable resource for ALL professionals in NAFSA. Folks liked the new colorful brochures (they look GREAT Bo!). Many of the people I talked with are looking forward to seeing what the Lesbian and Gay SIG has planned for sessions in Philly.

Region X and XI Bi-Regional

by Alan Sabal, CUNY, City College

Region X and XI conference crossed the border into Montreal, Canada for their annual conference. The combined the forces of both regions to put together a wide array of conference sessions. One of these included a LGBT session titled "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Issues: A Canadian Perspective. The session was a presented a case study of Concordia University. In the early 90's, a task force investigated issues facing queers in academic and non-curricular areas. The report that resulted developed policies across the university as well as laid the groundwork for a minor in sexuality studies. The session presenters included Dean of Students, Donald Boisvert, Professor Frances Shaver, Ann Kirby and Sally Spilhaus. The presenters, both faculty and staff, felt that institutions today are now confronting the issues Concordia dealt with eight years ago. Their self-study is a good model for doing the same on other campuses.

< SIG the of part as celebrated was which birthday, Meucci's Louis dentally coinci It attendance. in were people 15 Over restaurant. else?!?) (what French a held conferences both from attendees gathering event social impromptu An Conference. Bi-Regional with overlapped conference annual CIEE's note:>

In addition to the above session, I recently presented a LGBT session in New York at Metro International. Metro is a community organization that sponsors activities for international students attending schools in the New York metropolitan area. A monthly meeting brings together Foreign Student advisors as well as other international education professionals. The primary presenter was Todd Smith who directs the Center for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender services at New York University. His presentation gave insight on how to deal with LGBT students on campus. I expanded on his presentation with resource material extracted from the SIG website. A major outcome from this presentation was it opened the eyes of Metro that they are not providing any activities for LGBT students. Imagine this in New York City. Hopefully this will change!

Procedures for New SIG Web Links

by Joe Murnan, Co-Chair

It came up recently that we had no procedures or guidelines for placing Web site links on our SIG's Web site. Julie and I discussed it with the Board of Advisors and came up with the procedures outlined below. These procedures have been designed so that the responsibility of identifying and recommending suitable sites is shared between SIG members and the Web Site Manager.

Please review the procedures and let us know your thoughts [e-mail: HFJMurnan@aol.com].

Procedures for Placing Web Site Links on the SIG's Web Site

The primary goal of the Lesbigan SIG's Web site is to provide information about and

resources for GLBT issues to our targeted audiences: international educators, students (both international and study abroad), and SIG members. SIG members are encouraged to review other Web sites. When it is determined that another Web site would be of benefit to one, two, or all three audiences the member is encouraged to send the information to the SIG's Web Site Manager (hereafter the Manager).

Before sending the web site URL to the Manager the member should:

1. Review the entire Web site.
2. Determine whether or not the Web site is appropriate for and benefits one or all of the audiences and also benefits the SIG's mission.
3. Determine whether or not the new site (including links on it) raises any questions concerning appropriateness. If a section of the site is not appropriate the member should not send it to the Manager. Should the member be uncertain as to whether a section of the site is questionable he/she should send the URL with a note stating the uncertainty to the Manager. If the site is questionable the Manager will refer it to the Board of Advisors for review.
4. The member should also write a short review (30 to 40 words) of the site that will be sent along with the URL to the Manager.

Once the Manager determines that a site is appropriate he/she will:

For Commercial Sites: place the site's URL (e.g. biggulp.com) and the review of the site beneath the URL in a section called On the Internet.

Non-commercial Sites: provide a link to the new site on the Links Page on the SIG's site. The review will be placed beneath the link.

The Manager will have final and ultimate responsibility for implementing and monitoring the SIG's placement of URLs on the SIG's Web site.