

Rainbow SIG Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 1, Summer 1993

These article appeared in the Summer 1993 edition of Lesbigan SIGnals.

- Test your Lesbigan IQ
- The Birth of a New NAFSA SIG
- The Miami Beach Conference
- What is Heterosexual Privilege?

Test your Lesbigan IQ

From Volume 1, Number 1, Summer 1993

1. National Coming Out Day is a time when gays, lesbians and bisexuals are encouraged to tell others about their sexual orientation and who they are. It is celebrated every year on this day.
 - a. January 1
 - b. October 11
 - c. March 5
2. This is the college where the first lesbian sorority was formed in 1988, under the name of Lambda Delta Lambda.
 - a. Mount Holyoke College
 - b. UCLA
 - c. Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison
3. This many people were murdered during Nazi Germany because they were homosexual.
 - a. 50,000
 - b. 110,000
 - c. 220,000

4. Many commentators state that the word "homosexual" did not appear in the Bible until this year.
- a. 1543
 - b. 1865
 - c. 1946
5. In the countries of Iran and Saudi Arabia, this is the penalty for being gay.
- a. 20 years imprisonment
 - b. 100 lashings
 - c. death
6. Site of the largest gay, lesbian and bisexual bookstore in the United States.
- a. San Francisco, CA
 - b. New York, NY
 - c. Washington, DC
7. In this state, where gay and lesbian acts are still illegal, the sentence for first time offenders is 15 years in prison, with life for repeat offenders.
- a. Michigan
 - b. Texas
 - c. Rhode Island
8. Percent of men who have had some type of homosexual relationship between the ages of 20-24.
- a. 10%
 - b. 20%
 - c. 30%
9. This particular country allows gays and lesbians to marry, inherit property from each other, enlist in the military, and equal rights in pensions, social welfare and housing.
- a. Denmark

- b. Finland
- c. The Netherlands

10. This is the year "homosexual" was coined by a Hungarian doctor, in an effort to provide a neutral label for the practice of same-sex eroticism.

- a. 1373
- b. 1784
- c. 1869

The Birth of a New NAFSA SIG

The Special Interest Group on Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual concerns of NAFSA: Association of International Educators was approved unanimously by the Board of Directors at a meeting just prior to the Annual Conference in San Francisco. Recognizing the many complex issues which deal with sexual orientation and international education, the Lesbian and Gay SIG, as it is known, has the following foci, as taken from the petition to the Board:

Counseling of international students who are dealing with the issues of their own sexual orientation. Students, and those who advise them, often do not have training which can adequately assist during this difficult time, and there is a lack of materials available for acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills. The SIG will work towards filling this gap through education, locating and developing materials, and publicizing their availability.

Counseling of study abroad students who are gay, lesbian or bisexual. Such students must be prepared for the barriers they will face overseas, including cultural views and legal aspects.

Training to combat homophobia and heterosexism within our association membership. These forms of intolerance do exist within NAFSA as within society as a whole, and they have not been adequately addressed at any level.

Support for gay, lesbian and bisexual professionals in international education. The SIG will work towards providing a comfortable environment for all members to insure access to services and leadership opportunities, regardless of their sexual orientation.

More than 60 members attended the founding meeting of the SIG. This was a remarkable turnout, as there was not a great deal of advance publicity about the meeting, due to the timing of the Board's approval, and the meeting conflicted with several other SIG meetings, the Regional Updates, and a special event. At the meeting,

a steering committee and SIG coordinator were selected. Scott King of Old Dominion University was elected the coordinator for the coming year, with the following members elected to the steering committee:

Bob Ericksen, California State University-Fullerton
Paul Kreuger, Northeastern University
Bobbi Kyle, San Francisco, CA
Frank Ploener, St. Thomas University
Kathy Sideli, Indiana University
Steve Thewlis, American Language Institute, San Francisco
John Wright, University of Nevada-Reno
My Yarabinec, University of California-Berkeley
Jack Yeager, University of New Hampshire

At the meeting, the group present encouraged development of workshops, and conference sessions for both the national and regional conferences. We also plan to have special events in Miami Beach next year! A discussion of the 1994 conference site, Miami Beach, centered on the possible anti-gay initiative in Florida and its impact on the meeting. As no referendum can be held until late 1994, it appeared that no immediate action was needed, but the steering committee was given the task of presenting a proposal on future conference sites to the NAFSA Board. (See the [related article](#).)

The Miami Beach Conference

The 1994 NAFSA Annual Conference is scheduled to be held in Miami Beach, Florida. Also possible during 1994 is a referendum in the State of Florida to amend the state constitution to forbid any law which would prohibit discrimination based upon sexual orientation. (This is similar to the recent amendment which was passed in Colorado.) If such an amendment were passed, it would be allowable in the state to discriminate in housing, employment, etc., solely due to a person being gay, lesbian or bisexual. Local municipalities would be barred from giving any protection in their own jurisdictions.

At the meeting of the Lesbigan SIG in San Francisco, there was significant discussion about how NAFSA as an organization should react to the proposed amendment. Among the points that were considered were:

- The amendment is just in the proposal stage, and there will be no vote until after the 1994 meeting.
- Miami Beach itself has a local amendment protecting the rights of all, regardless of sexual orientation.
- The conference site has been booked for several years in advance and there would be significant financial penalties to NAFSA if we were to withdraw at this time.

The consensus of those at the meeting was that NAFSA should not withdraw from the Miami Beach site solely due to a proposed amendment, but that future conference site selection must take into account any ordinances or laws which allow discrimination against a member of our organization. The Steering Committee of the SIG has been assigned to look at this issue and to bring a recommendation on behalf of the SIG to the NAFSA Board of Directors. This will be done before the next meeting of the Board in October.

In the meantime, we have been told by members of the Miami Beach Local Arrangements Committee that we can expect a wonderful welcome for our 1994 meeting. We plan to have several programs on gay/lesbian/bisexual issues at the conference and will also have special events of interest to our gay, lesbian and bisexual members.

What is Heterosexual Privilege?

Marrying--which includes the following privileges:

- Public recognition and support for an intimate relationship, such as receiving cards or calls celebrating your commitment to another person.
- Joint child custody.
- Paid leave from employment when grieving death of your spouse.
- Property laws, filing joint tax returns, inheriting from your spouse automatically under probate laws.
- Immediate access to your loved ones in case of an accident or emergency.

Not questioning your normalcy, sexually and culturally:

- Having role models of your gender and sexual orientation.
- Learning about romance and relationships from fiction, movies and television.
- Having positive media images of people with whom you can identify.

Validation from the culture in which you live:

- Living with your partner and doing it openly.
- Talking about your relationship, or what you and your partner are doing together. Expressing pain when a relationship ends from death or separation, and having other people notice and tend to your pain.
- Dating the person of your desire during your teen years. Working without being identified by your sexuality/culture (for example, you get to be a farmer, artist, etc., without being labelled the heterosexual farmer, etc.)

Adapted from the presentation by Kathy Obear at Old Dominion University, February 8, 1993.