

NOGLSTP *Bulletin*

Spring-Summer 2008

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Education is the key - Reflections on a Scourge

by Rochelle Diamond, NOGLSTP Chair

As chairperson of NOGLSTP, I wish we didn't have to have AIDS rides anymore except for the fun of it. I wish we didn't have to fund clinics for testing and counseling and provide outreach to at-risk communities. I wish that we could stop the scourge of HIV and this epidemic in its tracks. But, I have had a clear view for many years about what it will take to conquer this vicious enemy and it is not medicine or vaccines. It is education. In 1981, when I was working in the hematology/oncology department of UCLA, AIDS appeared insidiously. It mystified a young physician there, Michael Gottlieb. He reported a number of cases in young gay men of a rare cancer normally found only in older Mediterranean men, Kaposi's sarcoma. His patients were very ill with other diseases too. He thought it very strange and dubbed it GRID – gay related immunodeficiency syndrome, now known as AIDS, later to be identified as being caused by HIV-1, a virus which does not discriminate by race, gender, or sexual orientation.

No one could have predicted then, what we now know – that AIDS is one of the worst plagues in human history. Today, 33 million persons are living with infection by the HIV-1, while another 25 million have already died of this disease. Many years have passed since then and I have been watching carefully the progress scientists and medical professions have made fighting this pandemic which has presented an unprecedented scientific, medical, and moral challenge to our civilization. This June marked 25 years since the discovery of HIV-1. Over the years remarkable scientific discoveries have been made and translated into effective interventions. Our acquired knowledge base has led to the development of 25 approved antiretroviral drugs and 5 fixed-dose combinations. We are now able to knockdown the virus to manageable levels with these combination drugs for the majority of patients, if you have the money or the insurance to afford it. The therapeutic arsenal continues to improve with the advent of new reverse transcriptase and protease inhibitors, as well as two new classes of drugs targeting viral entry and integration.

Yet, major challenges in antiretroviral therapy remain. Current combination therapy allows viral replication to be controlled, but HIV is yet to be eradicated because it persists latently in resting memory CD4+ lymphocytes and from the brain. Thus, a cure is not possible until we find a way to banish the virus from this reservoir of cells.

More importantly, transmission still remains on the loose. People say it's only a matter of time until scientists make vaccine for this virus. But it's not that simple. Most of you know that the flu vaccine needs to be reformulated once a year to keep up with the rate of viral mutation. Well give this some thought HIV mutates 1000 times faster than the flu. That would mean that we would have to make a new vaccine every 12 hours or so. Yes, researchers hope to outsmart HIV, but it will take every bit of cleverness we have in the scientific community to do so. So in the meantime, it is up to us, as a people, to stop the transmission of this virus. Without a transmission the vehicle cannot go anywhere. We need to stop this virus ourselves through education and outreach. We need to continue our support within our local communities for the organizations that do the hard work of dismantling the transmission.

Equality Forum Features Rachel Carson and Margaret Mead for 2008 History Month Icons

Equality Forum has announced its GLBT History Month 2008 Icons. Each day in October 2008, an Icon is featured with a video, biography, bibliography and other educational resources. The resources for GLBT History Month 2008 Icons will be available in October at www.glbthistorymonth.com. Educational resources for 2006 and 2007 Icons are archived on the site. GLBT History Month Icon videos are expected to be broadcast on Logo and here! and streamed on major gay portals. The videos are offered without charge to educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, for profit companies and the public. GLBT History Month teaches GLBT heritage, provides role models, builds community, and makes the civil rights statement of the value of national and international contributions. (equalityforum.org)

Rachel Carson was a marine biologist and nature writer. Her book, *Silent Spring*, is widely credited for helping launch the environmental movement. Margaret Mead was a cultural anthropologist, and concentrated her studies on problems of child rearing, personality, and culture. Her reports about the purportedly healthy attitude towards sex in South Pacific and Southeast Asian traditional cultures amply informed the 1960s sexual revolution. Mead served as president of the American Association for Advancement of Science in 1975. (wikipedia.org)

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Gay Pride Events

NOGLSTP- Chesapeake Bay regional caucus had booths at both DC Pride 6/14 and at Baltimore Pride on 6/22. Hats off to the organizers!

Every year Salutaris, the NIH GLBT Employees Forum, holds a series of Noons in June events or other gatherings in honor of Pride Month. This year was no different. In conjunction with AHRQ, FDA, HRSA HIS, OMH, PSC and SAMHSA they hosted George Takei (aka Hikaru Sulu from the original Star Trek) on June 2 to open Pride month. They followed with "Transgender Awareness and the Workplace" on June 19th which was a panel discussion on workplace issues including transitioning and simple daily interactions featuring personal stories from panelists Janet Laylor, of the National Library of Medicine, Jessica McKinnon, of Bates White, and Dana Beyer, Special Assistant - Montgomery County Council. Their final event was "Same-sex marriage: Public rhetoric, public opinion and public health – a panel discussion" featuring M. Paz Galupo, Ph.D., Director, Multicultural Institute Professor of Psychology, Towson University, Ellen Riggle, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science and Gender & Women's Studies, University of Kentucky, and Sherry Rostosky, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Counseling Psychology, University of Kentucky.

A Big thank you goes out to NOGLSTP member Marcie Stillwell for representing us at a Seattle area Diversity Fair for U.S.Navy Contractors.

If your organization has pride events or diversity fairs, be sure to ask the NOGLSTP Office to send you some brochures to set out. Don't forget National Coming OUT Day is October 11th each year. Make your plans early.

Diversity Council Update

NOGLSTP Board member Tim Wilson represented NOGLSTP at the National Engineering Week's Diversity Council strategy meeting entitled "Increasing Hispanic Participation in Technology Careers" at IBM's conference center in Palisades, NY. The meeting was sponsored by IBM, Exxon/Mobil, and Univision. The meeting was the chance to meet with and network among organizers for Latino diversity and present NOGLSTP's case for LGBT diversity. Tim spoke to Exxon/Mobil reps about their moving backwards on LGBT issues since the merge. Tim remains, for the time, convinced that the advantages of networking and being able to bring our issues forward, are sufficient to continue NOGLSTP's participation on the Diversity Council worthwhile. He reminds us that a good number of Diversity Council participants still don't get LGBT issues or just don't see our demographics as being sufficient to offset the cost of taking on what is an unpopular issue for some fraction of their constituents. Keep up the good work Tim. It's worth it!

Advocating Q-Geek Media Coverage

The Advocate July 1st issue featured seismologist Dr. Kate Hutton from Caltech in an interview "Know Your Faults". In it she gives her opinions on what the probability is of a big one and what to do if it occurs. NOGLSTP chair, Rochelle Diamond, wrote a letter to the editor lauding them for featuring a scientist in their publication and hoping that magazine will do more of the same in future issues. Let them hear from you, too: letters@advocate.com

We're here, we're queer, and we're not going away....

Persistence of Homosexuality Through Time in Terms of Evolution

Italian scientists, Andrea Camperio Ciani¹, Paolo Cermelli, and Giovanni Zanzotto have published a paper entitled "Sexually Antagonistic Selection in Human Male Homosexuality" in *PLoS One* 3, e2282 (2008). Their results model several theoretical explanations for the maintenance of homosexuality in evolution. This has long been discussed since it does not directly lead to proliferation of the species. They have come up with a simple model that involves just two genes. At least one of these genes must be on the X chromosome (*Dean Hamer are you listening?*) and act to increase fitness when expressed in females. These conditions produce a population within which a small proportion of individuals is gay and in which this proportion remains stable over time.

1,500 animal species are known to practice same-sex coupling, including penguins, bears, gorillas, flamingos, owls, salmon and many others. This model may answer why natural selection has not eliminated homosexuality from the animal kingdom. Why everything must lead to reproduction can certainly be questioned and no doubt things that lead to pleasure or nurturing of the community might be high on the list to be preserved.

More Nature vs Nurture

Ivanka Savic and Per Lindström of the Karolinska Institute published on line in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* their studies of PET and MRI brain scans of 90 gay and straight men and women. They studied hemispheric asymmetry and functional connectivity by looking at the volumetry of cerebral and cerebellar hemispheres. Their findings indicate that the brains of gay men more closely resemble those of straight women than did straight men, with both halves of the brain more or less the same size rather than the right hemisphere slightly larger in straight men. The number of neural connections between the two sides of the brain was also reflective of the same differences. The authors state that these data of atypical sexually dimorphic characteristic cannot be primarily ascribed to learned effects, and they suggest a linkage to neurobiological entities. (*Simon Levay, are you listening?*)

No Benefits for Michigan DP's

In May, Michigan's Supreme Court ruled that local governments and state universities can't offer health insurance to the partners of gay workers. This ruling upholds a 2004 voter initiative. It states that the union between a man and woman is the only agreement recognized as a marriage "or similar union for any purpose." and blocks all domestic-partner policies. This affects gay employees at up to 20 public universities, community colleges, school districts and local governments in Michigan that have benefit policies which covering more than 375 gay couples. After the appeals court ruled, universities and local governments rewrote their policies to try to comply with the gay marriage ban making the effect of the decision unclear. These new policies no longer specifically acknowledge domestic partnerships but make sure "other qualified adults," including gay partners, are eligible for medical and dental care. The adults have to live together for a certain amount of time, be unmarried, share finances and be unrelated.

NOGLSTP's Improved Member Services Site

NOGLSTP upgraded its member services site last summer to a more robust package that allows for self-serve member update, email notification of manual dues updates, automates renewal notices, and integrates on-line and off-line data keeping. We have enabled automated renewal notices, and you will receive email reminders to renew your membership — two weeks before expiration, and 30 and 60 days after expiration if you don't renew. In the months to come, NOGLSTP members will be able to use the same interface to access protected members-only areas, such as the membership roster, the current newsletter, and more yet-to-be-announced member benefits. Point your web browser to <http://www.noglstp.org/memberservices> and log in to explore or update your profile, or to renew your annual dues. Of course, you're welcome to renew or join the old-fashioned way with pen, paper, and check. You can use the tear out form in this newsletter, or fill out a downloadable form from our website. We're happy to have your support any way you want to give it! *Attention LAGLS and NOGLSTP-CR Members: Please renew manually through your regional group and enjoy significant discount on your NOGLSTP annual dues.*

Calls for Nominations

NOGLSTP Recognition Awards

We are now soliciting nominations for our 2009 Recognition Awards for GLBT Scientist, Engineer, and Educator of the year. This award series is the only national award of its kind for ground-breaking achievements in research, engineering and education targeted to GLBT people. The nominee need not be well-known, but must be openly gay. The submission deadline is mid-November, 2008. Awards will be presented at our annual meeting on an afternoon during the AAAS Annual Meeting in Chicago, Feb 12-16, 2009. For more information, visit www.noglstp.org/?page_id=10

EWeek "New Faces of Engineering"

NOGLSTP would like to get nominations going for National Engineers Week "New Faces of Engineering". Last year the National Engineering Week Foundation took out a USA Today full-page ad for EWeek featuring young engineers who are doing great work. Let's put on our thinking caps and nominate a GLBT young engineer. Please send suggestions to the NOGLSTP office to get it rolling.

Mark Your Calendars

The Fall 2008 **LGBT Chemists and Allies** reception will be sponsored by the President of the **American Chemical Society!** Monday, **August 18**, 5:30-7:30 pm, at the Philadelphia Marriott. Details will be available at www.noglstp.net/lgbtchemists in early August.

Out and Equal Summit – Austin, Texas, September 10-13

NOGLSTP will be sponsoring the annual **LGBT SACNAS conference reception** – Salt Lake City, Utah **October 09-12**, 2008, NOGLSTP member, Brit Ventura, to host.

Society of Women Engineers national meeting - SWE08 - will be in Baltimore MD, **November 6-8**. NOGLSTP will be sponsoring a small reception on a date to be announced.

In Gratitude...

We are grateful to our spring benefactors for their unrestricted donations: Dr. Nancy Warner (\$2500); Gay Chemists Fund (via Horizons Foundation, \$5000), Tom Barrett (via United Way, \$99 monthly). These tax deductible contributions help fund NOGLSTP's growing outreach activities and projects. Many many thanks to you all!

IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES?

Check your mailing label. Your renewal date is in the upper right section of your address block. Your membership number is just to the left of your expiration date. If you have a trial membership, it says "trial" instead of a membership number. You may renew online (and pay with a credit card) at www.noglstp.org/memberservices, or fill out the form below (and on the other side of this page), and return it with your check to NOGLSTP, PO Box 91803, Pasadena CA 91109. You may also use this form to inform us of any address or area code changes.



Membership Form

To renew your NOGLSTP membership or become a member of NOGLSTP, support its activities, and receive a newsletter, complete this form and send it with a check or money order to:

NOGLSTP
PO BOX 91803
Pasadena CA 91109

Annual Membership Dues are:

\$25-40 (sliding scale) (tax deductible after the 1st \$10)

\$20 for postdocs

\$45 NOGLSTP/National Postdoc Association discounted joint membership dues

\$10 for students and unemployed*

*inquire about our limited free memberships to 'starving students'

Please pay in US Funds only.

Renewal New Info change only

Date:

Name:

Address:(don't forget your zip code!)

Telephone:

Email/URL:

Latest Degree/Subject:

Job Title:

Do you want your name and phone/email printed on a membership roster to be released to other NOGLSTP members?

YES

NO

Do you want your email/URL to be placed on the NOGLSTP web page?

YES

NO



Don't forget to fill out the other side →

Kerry Sieh to Become Founding Director of Earth Observatory of Singapore

Dr. Kerry Sieh, NOGLSTP's 2006 Scientist of the Year, will be giving up a 30 year career at Caltech to become the founding director of the Earth Observatory of Singapore (EOS). Located at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), the observatory will cost about \$287 million over 10 years. Construction of the EOS laboratories will begin later this year. The facility will study plate movement, volcanic activity and climate change. As one of the world's leading geologists, Dr. Sieh has spent the last five years studying earthquakes in Indonesia. He also successfully predicted the 2005 earthquake in Sumatra. But taking this position is an act of courage and comes with risks. Interviewed in the April 17th issue of *Nature*, Sieh was asked - *Did former prime minister Lee Kuan Yew's statement: "no public purpose is served by interfering in [gay people's] private lives" influence your decision to go?* Answer: "Yes, Yew weighed in on the issue while I was there last year. It was quite reassuring. There is a ban on homosexual sex. I'm not a political type, but I'm also not a sycophant. I decided to leave my acceptance speech for the gay scientist of the year award on my homepage, although I knew that Singapore might have issues with it. I don't want to be a poster boy for the Singapore gay community, but I wouldn't have gone if I couldn't bring my partner." Singapore's *Strait Times* also interviewed Sieh and found his NOGLSTP award acceptance speech on the net, so Sieh is out and open in Singapore. "I'm no crusader, but I'm going to be myself," Sieh said to the *Strait Times* interviewer. The issue of whether he could take his partner with him was the first one he raised with NTU when the university approached him with an offer in October. NTU told him it had no objections and has found a position for his partner. Sieh's NOGLSTP Recognition Award acceptance speech can be found at the following URL: <http://www.gps.caltech.edu/~sieh/cv.htm>



Membership/Renewal Form (continued):
Special Techno-Interests or Expertise:

Please list any other professional organizations/societies that you belong to:

Are you a member of any of these groups?

- American Chemical Society
- Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Scientists
- Mathematics Association of America or American Mathematical Society
- National Postdoctoral Association
- NOGLSTP—Chesapeake Region
- OSTEM

For New Members: How did you learn of NOGLSTP?

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP US WITH? (CHECK ANY THAT INTEREST YOU)

- BOARD OF DIRECTORS
- HOLD OFFICE
- AAAS
- FUNDRAISING
- MENTORING PROJECT
- NEWSLETTER ARTICLES
- EDIT NEWSLETTER
- PRODUCE NEWSLETTER
- NEW PAMPHLET TOPICS
- GRANT WRITING
- G/L/B/T CAUCUS OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES (which one?)
- OTHER _____

U of Wisconsin Names Openly Gay Chancellor

UW-Madison has become the biggest university with an openly gay leader. Carolyn "Biddy" Martin is the current Provost of Cornell. On May 28, 2008, she was named the next Chancellor of UW-Madison, and assumes office on September 1. She is the second female to lead UW-Madison, the first having been Donna Shalala. More importantly Martin is the university's first openly gay Chancellor. Openly gay college presidents and chancellors are a rarity and with the exception of the late Denice Denton of UC Santa Cruz, most have appointments at small colleges. Martin's appointment at UW-Madison is a large milestone opening the way for talented administrators to come out of the closet and move up the ranks.

ABOUT NOGLSTP

NOGLSTP is a national organization of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people (and their advocates) employed or interested in scientific or high technology fields. NOGLSTP's goals include educating the scientific and general communities about LGBT issues in science and the technical workplace; educating the queer community about relevant topics in science; dialogue with professional societies and associations; improving our members' employment and professional environment; opposing queer phobia and stereotypes by providing role models of successful LGBT scientific and technical professionals; and fostering networking and mentoring among our members. NOGLSTP is a non-profit educational organization under IRS section 501 (c)(3) (TIN # 95-4358685), and is incorporated in the State of California. NOGLSTP is an affiliate of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a participating professional society in the MentorNet® Affiliated Partners Plus program, a sustaining member of the National Postdoctoral Association, an endorsing society of National Engineers Week, and a Founding Partner of the Engineers Week Coalition Diversity Council. Written correspondence may be addressed to: NOGLSTP, PO BOX 91803, Pasadena CA 91109-9813. For more information, see our web site at www.noglstp.org

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