

# NOGLSTP *Bulletin*

Spring 1999

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NOGLSTP, PO BOX 91803, Pasadena CA 91109, phone/fax: 626 791-7689, <http://www.noglstp.org>

## NOGLSTP at AAAS

Despite severe scheduling competition against last minute speeches from high-government officials, NOGLSTP hosted a well-attended reception for queer scientists at the January annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Anaheim, California. The event was graciously co-hosted by the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Scientists. Conference attendees, local NOGLSTP members, and students from nearby universities stopped by to schmooze and snack from a sumptuously catered spread. Look for us at the next AAAS meeting in Washington DC, in February of the



*NOGLSTP Chair Rochelle Diamond (left) poses with AAAS staffer Nathan Bell.*



*From left to right: LAGLS member Candy Cassato, LAGLS member CJ Lam, NOGLSTP member Rachael Thompson, AAAS staffer Kai*

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## LesBiGay Chemists and Allies

The lesbigay chemists and their allies met for dinner one evening this past March at the American Chemical Society convention in Anaheim. Organizers strategized over ways to obtain more visibility in and influence on the American Chemical Society. The outcome was that NOGLSTP would apply to the ACS national meeting organizers for inclusion of a queer chemists' dinner party announcement in *Chemical and Engineering News*, along with other professional societies' social announcements for upcoming national American Chemical Society meetings. The next two ACS national meetings will be in New Orleans and San Francisco - perfect venues for gatherings of queer chemists. Check out <http://www.noglstp.org/lgbchem> for updated announcements about get togethers for chemists at ACS meetings.

## Isaac Newton - The Last Sorcerer

A Book Review by Rick Ottolini, Ph.D.

Isaac Newton is considered one of the top scientists and influential Western thinkers of all time for his contributions to gravity, optics and the calculus. Michael White's recent book *The Last Sorcerer* suggests Newton may have been homosexual too.

The title of White's book implies the modern scientific method did not yet have a strong foothold in the 17th century. Newton straddled the old and the new- alchemy and bible chronology as well modern physics and mathematics. Newton intensely sought patterns in natural phenomena and human affairs, however the science is classified. To his credit, Newton was instrumental in transforming one of the first scientific organizations- the Royal Society- from its "tabloid" demeanor into repeatable, experimental methodology.

Chapter 10 of White's book suggests Newton may have had a couple of homosexual relationships. Newton never married. However, this was not unusual for college professors of the time. The first half of Newton's adult life was spent at Cambridge university- as a student, faculty fellow and professor. Cambridge at this time was mostly a divinity school and in the process of adding secular subjects. Faculty were expected to take Holy Orders and enter the clergy, but Newton wrangled a special dispensation from King Charles II.

Newton was also poor in early adulthood and not considered good husband material. He was essentially disowned by his mother and stepfather. He did not come into money until their deaths and lucrative government posts due to his scientific fame. But he did not marry then.

Newton's first partner may have been his 20-year roommate John Wickens during his student and professor years at Cambridge. There is no direct evidence of this. Very little written material survives from John. Some Newton biographers interviewed him in old age, but he would only give anecdotes from the early days. John said he and Newton moved in together to escape from the disorderly Cambridge student life. John became a faculty fellow like Newton and later laboratory assistant and secretary to Newton.

The other strong candidate for Newton's affection is a young Swiss mathematician Nichols Fatio de Duillier. Fatio was kind of a "science groupie" who was attracted to science celebrities of the time. Several passionate letters between the two men survive. They detail several trips and overnight lodgings these men had together. Fatio was 25 and Newton was 46 at the beginning of their four year association, six years after Newton had parted from Wickens. Newton was emerging from almost 20 years of an isolated life and Cambridge, becoming involved in bustle of fame and national life. The author White suggests the breakup of

*(Continued on page 4) Isaac Newton*

## Openly Gay Commissioners of Patents and Trademarks

*The Washington Blade* reported that Bruce A. Lehman, the openly Gay assistant secretary of Commerce and commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, left his post at the end of 1998, ending his tenure of nearly six years as head of a 5,000-employee government agency. Lehman, an attorney with a specialty in intellectual property rights, said he plans to return to the private sector where he expects to practice law.

Lehman is credited with putting in place sweeping changes at the Patent and Trademark Office. He changed the role of the Patent and Trademark Office from that of mainly a clearinghouse for patents and trademarks to the government's leading advocate and coordinator of policy for intellectual property. He negotiated international copyright treaties to protect the property rights of inventions and technological advances as well as artistic works of U.S. companies and artists. He also placed more than 20 million pages of patent and trademark documents on the Internet, providing unprecedented, free access to such documents by the public. His efforts to speed up the patent approval process were praised by computer and biotechnology firms, who had long complained about the time it took to obtain patent approvals. Lehman overall high marks for his leadership at OPT.

Todd Dickinson, the openly Gay deputy assistant secretary of Commerce and deputy commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, is expected to be named as Lehman's replacement.

## Canadian Team Can't Replicate Earlier U.S. Work

This week's *Science* (April 26, 1999) features an article by a University of Western Ontario research team in which genetic studies found no evidence that gay brothers shared genetic markers in the Xq28 region at a rate any higher than would have been expected by chance. You may recall the 1993 sensation caused by NCI Researcher Dean Hamer when he reported that 33 of 40 pairs of gay brothers shared a set of genetic markers in an area of the X chromosome known as Xq28. The media furor over the 1993 discovery resulted in speculations of presence of a "gay gene", at least in a subset of gay men. The Canadian team, lead by George Rice, will continue to investigate other possible genetic links to homosexuality.

Whether or not there turns out to be a reproducible study that proves a genetic link to homosexuality, NOGLSTP has always advocated that basic civil rights should not be decided by biology, but rather, the democratically decent notion that all humans should enjoy all protections and rights.

# Report on Lesbian Health

The Institute of Medicine released the first study it has ever done on lesbian health last January. The study confirms that lesbians face unique challenges from a medical community that is often insensitive and ignorant about lesbian health issues.

How is lesbian health any different from women's health generally? With homophobia as a risk factor, access to and interaction with physicians is the biggest difference. Coming out to physicians and receiving quality, informed care is an obstacle many lesbians face, which makes them reticent to seek medical care. Furthermore, there is speculation that women (eg, many lesbians) who haven't had children are at greater risk for breast cancer. And there is the misconception that lesbians do not need the annual Pap exams that heterosexual women need.

For the full report, entitled "Lesbian Health, Current Assessment and Directions for the Future," point your web browser to <http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/leshealth/>

## Following Up...

In the previous *NOGLSTP Bulletin* (Fall/Winter 1998), we reported on the Bakersfield CA science teacher who was suing his school district for granting wholesale parental requests for student transfers based solely on his sexual orientation. James Merrick, award-winning science teacher, has now settled his lawsuit, and works in an administrative position at his school.

In the Winter 97/98 issue of the *NOGLSTP Bulletin*, NOGLSTP Chair Rochelle Diamond took issue with the just-heard-of fad of unsafe sex practice called "barebacking". (Go to the NOGLSTP web site and follow the links to editorials to refresh your memory). Now, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has published statistics showing strong evidence that young gay and bisexual men are less likely to engage in safe sex than older counterparts. Both *The Advocate* and *Out Magazine* report that as HIV and AIDS have become a manageable chronic disease with the use of protease inhibitor cocktail therapies, some people have not only become complacent about protecting themselves, but actively seek to infect and become infected in a twisted and self-destructive desire to "belong". Unfortunately, the younger participants in these unsafe practices haven't witnessed the ravages of pre-cocktail AIDS. As we've pointed out in previous articles, cocktail-resistant strains of the virus will develop, and the chronic will once again become the acutely lethal.

## Interesting Websites:

- ▽ <http://www.aclu.org/issues/gay/sodomy.html> is an updated list of state sodomy statutes maintained by the American Civil Liberties Union
- ▽ <http://www.gaywork.com> is a website for individuals seeking employment in a truly equal opportunity environment.

# IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES?

Check your mailing label. If it says 199903-199906, it is time to renew your dues. If it says 199911-199902, or 199912, it is past time to renew or join, and this will be your final newsletter unless we hear from you. We need and appreciate your continued support. Please 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. Remember to add \$5US if you are subscribing outside of the US. Thank you. You may also use this form to inform us of any address or area code changes.

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### 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:  
\$15-25 (sliding scale) (tax deductible after the 1st \$10)  
\$10 for students and unemployed\*  
\*inquire about our limited free memberships to 'starving students'  
\$5 extra for memberships outside of the US  
(for the extra postage) (US Funds only, please!)

Renewal  New  Info change only

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email/URL: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Technointerest or profession: \_\_\_\_\_

Latest Degree/Subject: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Don't forget to fill out the other side

## Calendar/Conferences:

Web99 - Web Design & Development, June 28-30, Moscone Center, San Francisco CA, <http://www.noglstp.org/web99.html> for discounts to NOGLSTP members

National Organization for Men Against Sexism presents "Men & Masculinities: Realities & Images", July 8-11, Pasadena CA; <http://www.nomas.org>

*Isaac Newton (Continued from page 2)*

Fatio's relationship had been partly responsible for Newton's "Black year" of depression, when he was little heard from and decided to leave Cambridge for good to his London Royal Mint job.

White's book has been criticized (amazon.com) as being too sensational about Newton's personal life and scientific development. I found the volume a fascinating look at academic life three centuries ago. Also, it is intriguing that one of the finest minds in history may have been homosexual as well.

*Rick has a Ph.D. in seismology, and is currently a scientific software developer at Halliburton in Denver.*

### Membership/Renewal Form (continued):

Please list any other professional organizations that you belong to:

Special Techno-Interests or Expertise:

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

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

EDIT NEWSLETTER

PRODUCE NEWSLETTER

NEW PAMPHLET TOPICS

GRANT WRITING

G/L/B/T CAUCUS OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES (which one?)

OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

### ABOUT NOGLSTP

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF GAY AND LESBIAN SCIENTISTS AND TECHNICAL PROFESSIONALS, INC., is a nation-wide organization of lesbian and gay scientists and technical professionals, regional and caucus groups, and others interested in technical matters and the gay and lesbian community. NOGLSTP's goals include dialog with professional organizations, providing information, improving our member's employment and professional environment, opposing homophobia and stereotypes, educating the gay, scientific and general communities, and fostering inter-city contacts among our members. National Organization of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals, Inc. is a tax-exempt educational organization under IRS section 501(c)3, incorporated in the State of California (TAX ID # 95-4358685). Membership dues are \$15-25 (sliding scale) annually for non-students. Student dues are \$10 annually. After the first \$10, dues are tax deductible. \$5 extra for memberships outside the US for the extra postage. Please, US dollars only. Written correspondence may be addressed to: NOGLSTP, PO BOX 91803, Pasadena CA 91109-9813. For more information, see our web page at <http://www.noglstp.org/>

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##### Newsletter

The **NOGLSTP Bulletin** is published quarterly. Articles are encouraged and gratefully received. Handwritten, typed, and magnetic (3.5" pc-FD) may be sent to the NOGLSTP office. If you have internet access, articles may be e-mailed the NOGLSTP office c/o [bbelmont@access1.net](mailto:bbelmont@access1.net)

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