

NOGLSTP *Bulletin*

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Frank Kameny: Astronomer Interruptus...

by Richard 'Doc' Kinne
NOGLSTP Member and AAVSO Staff Member

"I'm sorry to interrupt, but I may never get this chance again," a young man said as he came up to the table where Bill & I sat talking for more than three hours with Dr. Frank Kameny, the famous civil rights leader who sued the government for anti-gay discrimination. "Thank you, Doctor Kameny," the young man said as he shook Frank's hand, "Thank you for everything. I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for you."

This scene, or tiny variations of it (during one we actually took a picture for the folks who'd come up to the table), happened no less than five times. Upon leaving Annie's Restaurant in DC at 10:30PM an entire table chorused, "Thank you, Frank. Thank you for everything!"

The impression that I had, only semi-knowingly, just spent three and a half hours with a living legend, and with someone who actually deserved that status, was almost overpowering.

I remember a group of two guys coming up and again thanking Dr. Kameny for everything he'd done. They thanked him respectfully as "Dr. Kameny." Our waiter called him "Doc." Finally, as the third group had come up to the table, I turned to Frank and said, "Everyone knows you as Doctor Kameny." I turned to the folks who had come up to the table, "Do you know what the doctorate is in?"

"Gay & Lesbian studies?" the guy wildly guessed.

"This man was an astronomer," I answered.

In late June our Staff Research Astronomer at the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO) in Cambridge, MA had found a thesis in our Library, "A Photoelectric Study of Some RV Tauri and Yellow Semiregular Variables." Matt went to the ADS to see if the thesis and its data had been digitized. It hadn't. Matt then looked up to see what else the author had written, as the thesis had been published in 1956. He found nothing. That was odd. He then googled "Frank E. Kameny" and came up with his story.

Dr. Kameny had been fired from his post in the Army Map Service by what is now the Office of Personnel Management in 1957 for being Gay. That turned out to be - and I don't say this with any hyperbole - one of the worst mistakes that office ever made. Dr. Kameny took it as a declaration of war — and the government found out over the last 50 years, Frank fights to win. Over the last 50+ years Frank Kameny has been involved in every DC-related Gay issue, and most of the national ones. The most historic decision he was a part of was the removal of homosexuality from the American Psychiatric Association's manual of mental disorders. "The group of us went into the meeting sick, and left

(Continued on page 2, "Kameny")

Call for Nominations:

NOGLSTP GLBT Recognition Awards

Do you know a GLBT colleague who conducts important scientific research, develops critical engineering applications, or mentors GLBT students in science or technology? If so, please nominate them for one of NOGLSTP's 2010 GLBT Recognition Awards. The NOGLSTP Recognition Awards were established as a means of identifying, honoring, and documenting the contributions of outstanding GLBT science, engineering and technology professionals. The categories and descriptions for these recognition awards are as follows:

GLBT Scientist of the Year: for the GLBT Scientist who has made outstanding contributions to their field with sustained contributions in design, management, or research

GLBT Engineer of the Year: for the GLBT Engineer who has made outstanding contributions to their field with sustained contributions in design, production, management, or research.

GLBT Educator of the Year: for the GLBTA Educator who has enabled significant growth for GLBT students in science or technology - through teaching, counseling, advocacy, role modeling, or other educational roles. Allies, as well as GLBT people, are eligible for this award category.

Nominees need not be well known to the science/technology/engineering public at large, but they should be "out", and willing to serve as role models. Self-nominations are accepted.

The 2010 NOGLSTP GLBT Recognition Awards will be presented at a reception to be held on an afternoon during the AAAS Annual Meeting in San Diego, Feb 18-22, 2010. Point your web browser to http://www.noglstp.org/?page_id=10 for more information and nomination instructions.

Inside this Issue:

Page 1: Frank Kameny: Astronomer Interruptus...; Call for Nominations: NOGLSTP GLBT Recognition Awards

Page 2: In Gratitude to: The Gay Chemists Fund and Raytheon Company; NOGLSTP Supports Point Scholars; A Unique Opportunity High School

Page 3: NOGLSTP Will Present Symposium on HIV Research and Career Workshop at 2010 AAAS Meeting; Mark Your Calendars; Member Services; Membership Form

Page 4: ENDA Builds Momentum; About NOGLSTP

("Kameny", Continued from page 1)

cured!" Frank said to me during our dinner.

How have things changed? How completely has Dr. Kameny won the battles the government forced him to fight? Over the last three months Dr. Kameny was issued a formal apology by the Director of the Office of Personnel Management for his firing in 1957 - by a Director who today is openly Gay.

Dr. Kameny's memory for dates is scary. Several times as we talked he mentioned incidents and gave me specific dates as to when they happened. This statute passed on this date, this law passed on that date.

While it is utterly impossible to talk with Dr. Kameny without going through Gay history (its all he's done for the last 50 years), I was also interested in his astronomical side. This was a part of Frank that he thought had been long gone, "but had just come out of nowhere again." As noted, Dr. Kameny's thesis had been "A Photoelectric Study of Some RV Tauri and Yellow Semiregular Variables."

"Why RV Tauri stars," I'd asked.

"Well, like any graduate student who wants to get a Ph.D. you have to find a thesis topic. My advisor, Dr. Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin, suggested it. I didn't know anything about RV Tauri stars at the time so I educated myself about them, took the data, and wrote the thesis." Dr. Kameny said his largest regret is that after the thesis has been written Harvard University had allocated the sum of \$200 to have a paper written, to be published in the *Astrophysical Journal*, based on the thesis results. This unfortunately never got done.

In taking his Ph.D. at Harvard in the 1950's, Frank has strong memories working with the giants of the field - Harlow Shapley, and Bart Bok specifically, as well as Dr. Payne-Gaposchkin, who "discovered" that the Sun was largely made up of hydrogen. He also remembers Margaret Mayall, then Director of the AAVSO, working in the Harvard Observatory at the time along with Dr. Dorrit Hoffleit. Frank's memory, as he told me, was for numbers, not people, but after 50 years he definitely had a memory of working with these folks.

Drawing together all the elements of his life, one of Frank's most touching stories revolved around his time taking data at the Steward Observatory in Arizona. He would spend the night taking observations for his thesis, close down the observatory, and then go off to meet a special friend - the most normal thing in the world in the 1950's until you realized this friend was a boy. This turned out to be a summer romance as Frank went off to Ireland's Armagh Observatory to work after his thesis data gathering that summer was complete. Amazingly, Frank and his summer romance got back in touch exactly 50 years from their first meeting. The boy from his youth was now a happily married man - to a man. They'd gotten married in Holland and Frank got caught up at a meeting at the Dulles airport a few years ago. It must be an old story because its happened to me - astronomer meets boy, astronomer loses boy due to pursuing his work, astronomer meets back up with boy years later.

It just goes to prove the other "thesis" that Dr. Kameny has worked these last 50 years on: there is nothing at all abnormal about being Gay. We all have the exact same experiences, feelings, dreams and aims. Wonderfully, Dr. Frank Kameny's dreams seem finally to be coming true.

Editor's Note:

Frank Kameny is one of the nation's earliest and most effective gay rights activists, and helped NOGLSTP author a pamphlet addressing security clearance issues back in our early days. Now 84, Kameny was honored this summer during Washington DC's annual Capital Pride celebration, and artifacts from his half-century of activism are part of the permanent collections of the Smithsonian Museum, the Library of Congress, and The Velvet Foundation, an organization committed to establishing a National Museum of American LGBT History & Culture in Washington, DC. An indicator of Kameny's success is that the National Security Agency, formerly a foe of homosexuals seeking security clearances and high security employment, is now actively courting GLBT people in its diversity recruitment program. (See www.nsa.gov/careers/diversity)

In Gratitude to:

The Gay Chemists Fund and Raytheon Company

We are delighted to report that NOGLSTP received some very generous donations this summer. Last month we received an unrestricted donation of \$7500 from The Gay Chemists Fund via the Horizons Foundation. And just this past week, we received a \$2000 grant from Raytheon company, in support of our recognition awards program. These funds, in addition to recurring contributions from our members, ensure that NOGLSTP can continue its mentoring program, recognition awards program, and presence at professional society meetings, and nationwide pride and career fairs.

NOGLSTP Supports Point Scholars

Thirteen Point Foundation scholars STEM majors have been offered free NOGLSTP memberships this year as on-going in-kind support for the Point Foundation program. Point Foundation provides financial support, mentoring, leadership training and hope to meritorious students who are marginalized due to sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. The foundation would also like to solicit mentors and application reviewers from the NOGLSTP membership. Point your browser to pointfoundation.org/scholars.html to see the Point Scholars for 2009. Please contact the NOGLSTP office if you are interested in becoming a Point mentor or application reviewer.

A Unique Opportunity High School

A first of its kind GLBTQ On-Line High School has been launched out of Minnesota. The goal is to reach students who live in rural areas that do not have access to many resources. NOGLSTP has been approached by founder David Glick, online learning coordinator at the Minnesota Department of Education, to provide support for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics students. The school will offer an environment geared towards gay students. "We may not bring people closer physically -- but we will in every other way. We want to make them feel more confident about who they are," said Glick. Through the use of videos, chats, graphics and other multimedia, and occasional phone calls, teachers on the online high school will teach a more "GLBT-friendly" curriculum that highlights importance figures in gay rights history. Anyone interested in teaching or mentoring students, please contact Dr. Amy Ross, NOGLSTP mentoring coordinator.

NOGLSTP Will Present Symposium on HIV Research and Career Workshop at 2010 AAAS Meeting

NOGLSTP's proposal for a AAAS symposium entitled "Targeting HIV/AIDS Prevention: New Research and Future Avenues," has been accepted by the Annual Meeting Program Committee for the 2010 AAAS Annual Meeting to be held at San Diego Convention Center, February 20th, 2010. The 90 minute symposium's speakers include Dennis Burton (Scripps Research Institute), Bob Grant (J. David Gladstone Institutes) and Brian Williams (retired epidemiologist from the World Health Organization) who will provide talks on three promising HIV prevention strategies - prophylactic vaccination (Burton), pre-exposure prophylaxis (Grant) and universal testing followed by mandatory HAART initiation (Williams). Ken Mayer (Brown University) will provide discussion, overview and touch on the relative strengths and weaknesses of each approach as a viable prevention strategy for MSM (men having sex with men).

NOGLSTP will also present an informal career workshop at the AAAS 2010 annual meeting. It will be a panel discussion entitled "LGBT on Campus and at Work". That same weekend will have our Annual Reception to celebrate Recognition Award recipients, as well as our Annual Member's Business Meeting. All events except the symposium will be held at the San Diego Marriott Hotel and Marina. Details will be announced as the event approaches.

Mark Your Calendars

- October 6-9: Out and Equal workplace Summit, Disney's Coronado Springs Resort FL
- October 15: Society for Women Engineers workshop "LGBT and Allies in the Workplace", sponsored by DuPont
- October 16: Society for Advancement of Chicano and Native American Scientists reception for LGBTQ attendees, 8:30-9:30 pm, Sheraton Hotel, Dallas TX
- January 2010: Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Mathematicians reception during the Joint Mathematics Meeting, Moscone Center, San Francisco CA, details TBA
- January 2010: American Meteorological Society reception for LGBT attendees, details TBA
- February 2010: NOGLSTP Recognition Awards reception, Symposium, and Career Roundtable during American Association for Advancement of Science Annual Meeting, San Diego CA, details TBA

Member Services

The NOGLSTP member services site allows for self-serve member update and automated renewal notices. This member services area is also the gateway to access protected members-only areas, such as the Membership Roster, the NOGLSTP OutList, the opt-in e-list, and links to our social networking groups on Facebook and Tribe, and our professional networking group on LinkedIn.

Point your web browser to 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 clip-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 a significant discount on your NOGLSTP annual dues.*

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 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 →

ENDA Builds Momentum

Momentum is building for Congress to pass the first major civil rights act protecting gays and transsexuals, supporters say, and one of the stars in the debate is a barrier-breaking transgender staffer on Capitol Hill. The Employment Non-Discrimination Act, or ENDA, would prohibit workplace discrimination -- including decisions about hiring, firing and wages -- based on sexual orientation or gender identity. It would exempt religious organizations, the military and businesses with less than 15 workers.

The driving force behind the bill has been Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., the longest-serving of the three openly gay members of Congress. He expects hearings on the measure to be held this fall. Frank pushed ENDA in 2007, but it foundered because of insufficient backing in the Senate and a split within the gay and transgender communities. Many activists were irate because Frank -- seeking support from wavering colleagues -- was open to covering sexual orientation but not gender identity, excluding transgender people from protection. This time around, several factors have changed: 1) Barack Obama is now president, and is on record supporting ENDA. A veto was considered possible if the 2007 bill had reached then-President George W. Bush; 2) ENDA's core supporters, including Frank, have agreed they will push only for a bill that includes gender identity; 3) The bill has picked up key support in the Senate, where it was introduced earlier this month by Oregon Democrat Jeff Merkley and Maine Republicans Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe. Even without other GOP senators, Merkley believes it has a good chance of obtaining the 60 votes that likely will be needed to pass the Senate. The



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
- NOGLSTP at Purdue
- 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 _____

main Senate champion of ENDA in the past had been Sen. Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, who died this past August. That role was passed on to Merkley earlier this year.

There is another difference from 2007. Frank now has a policy adviser who is a female-to-male transsexual. Diego Sanchez is the first transgender person hired for a senior congressional staff position on Capitol Hill. Sanchez has done extensive face-to-face lobbying for ENDA, and Frank says that's enabled some members of Congress to get to know a transsexual for the first time. "He interacts with a lot of people," Frank said. "Prejudice is literally ignorance." Frank says he now doubts votes will be cast against ENDA solely because it extends to transgender people. Sanchez is a longtime activist who worked for the AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts and was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention last year before joining Frank's staff. Back in 2007, he was among a minority of transgender activists who accepted Frank's tactical decision to drop gender identity from that version of ENDA. "He's called on the entire community since then to lobby, work - - and the community has said, 'OK, we've got one game plan, and it's Barney,'" Sanchez said. "There's broader support this time."

(source: www.nytimes.com/aponline/2009/08/27/us/AP-US-Gay-Rights-Bill.html?_r=3)

ABOUT NOGLSTP

National Organization of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals is a 501(c)(3) educational organization and professional society 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 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. 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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