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2010 Kessler Lecture with Urvashi Vaid From the Development Desk: By Jasmine Burnett

F: 1995), registered partnership (G: 2001, F: 2002), or step-child adoption (G: 2005, F: 2009). In Finland alternative insemination for single women and lesbians continues to be legally available since 2006, unlike in Germany, where it is still illegal. One could argue that more than the presence or absence of openly lesbian and gay politicians, the directives presented by European Union since the 1990s are resulting in legislative measures pushed forward in both countries in roughly the same speed.

Although openly lesbian and gay politicians have obviously been advocating and advancing anti-discriminatory legislation in a manner dictated by the politics of their respective party of origin, the cultural importance of such politicians' presence (or absence) might thus be located elsewhere. In Germany openly homosexual politicians were the first publicly known lesbian and gay figures to elevate themselves from the realm of crime and illness—and this continued to be so until mid-1995. Moreover the media coverage of openly lesbian and gay politicians offers an excellent opportunity to follow the shifts that have taken place in the attitudes towards homosexuality among general public, as well as in the understanding of lesbian and gay identity and politics of coming out. Coming out, which used to be understood as a radical political statement, embedded in the lesbian and gay movement of the 1980s, has by the end of 2010s transmuted into a personalized statement of political credibility, more intimately connected with party politics than any sort of queer movement.

In Finnish society the persistent silencing of homosexuality in higher levels of public realm has been cracking only in the late 2010s, likewise after the appearance of the first openly gay politician. Contrary to Germany, openly lesbian parliamentarians still remain nonexistent in the public politics of a country which otherwise appears to be rather equal. Figuring out reasons for that will keep me busy after I go home to Finland at the end of the year. Yet even after finishing my book, I will no doubt be able to draw from my experiences, impulses and friendships gained during my visit in New York.

This year's Kessler Lecture featured the dynamic Urvashi Vaid, who was described by Nan Hunter as "a force of nature and a multi-dimensional activist serving roles as street activist, fundraiser, mentor and an intellectual leader of the LGBT movement." The Kessler Lecture is the premier event for CLAGS highlighting Scholarship, Art, and Activism. In addition to focusing on the unique experience of this lecture, it is also a fundraiser event where we invite our current and potential major donors to experience the best of our work here at CLAGS. This year's topic, "What Can Brown Do For You? Race, Sexuality and the Future of LGBT Politics," bridged a compelling cross section in the discussion race, gender, and sexuality. The conversation continued at the Kessler "Cocktail Hour" reception, held as a fundraiser to support our work at CLAGS. The reception was held at

the Asian American Writer's Workshop and was complete with delicious hors d'oeuvres, wine, while providing a space to reflect and continue the conversation on race and gender in the LGBT movement. This year's Kessler Cocktail Hour provided space for those who attended the lecture to decompress and engage in intimate conversations around this compelling topic and life experience for many LGBT individuals. The 19th Annual Kessler Lecture was a success and provided a way to engage communities and donors in a meaningful and sustainable way. CLAGS is delighted to be a leader in engaging our community around scholarship, art, and activism and Urvashi Vaid's lecture encompasses the complete package of our mission. As CLAGS approaches its 20th Anniversary, my hope is that this lecture will motivate a broader base of donors to support our strategic direction and inspire our existing donors to grow their involvement.

OutHistory.org Update

by Lauren Gutterman

This semester has been a busy one for the OutHistory.org team...

In October we held a public panel at which three of the winners from the "Since Stonewall Local Histories Contest" presented their online historical exhibits. **Megan Rohrer**, **Cindy Bray**, and **Lindsay Branson** each took audience members on guided tours of their exhibits representing FTM Mentorship in San Francisco, LGBT communities in Richmond, Virginia, and Gay Liberation in New York City, respectively. The three winners also talked about the rewarding process of creating their entries for OutHistory.org.

In addition, this fall we organized a series of unconventional *Seminars in the City* held in the computer lab at the CUNY Graduate Center. At these hands-on events, members of the public received one-on-one instruction about how to use OutHistory.org allowing them to create a free account, comment on existing pages, and create new historical exhibits. Participants began building exhibits on various topics of LGBT life in including life in Staten Island, and lesbian hip hop artists.

As usual, OutHistory.org's content grew substantially during the past semester. Please visit the site to discover several new exhibits including those on images and excerpts from the 1921 memoir of a transgender individual known alternately as **Earl Lind**, **Ralph Werther**, and **Jennie June**. Other material includes information from the La Guardia and Wagner Archives' City Council Collection documenting changes to New York City laws affecting the LGBT community, as well as a timeline of religion and homosexuality in the U.S.

If you value LGBT history as much as we do, we hope that you will consider making a contribution to OutHistory.org so that we can continue to publicize and preserve the history of our community. As you look ahead to the spring, please mark your calendars for our second annual fundraiser, which will be hosted by **Kate Clinton** and **Urvashi Vaid** and will be held on Thursday, April 7th from 6 to 8pm. Contact outhistory.org@agc.cuny.edu to learn how to purchase tickets.