

Tolerance is Key – An Interview with Dr. Richard Florida

In January 2007, GALIP member Dave Robertson interviewed Dr. Richard Florida for this issue of the GALIP Gayzette.

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...” Charles Dickens wrote these words to describe a period of profound political, economic and social change in France at the end of the 18th Century. In 2007, the GLBT community in the United States also faces change. More openness and opportunities can be found in urban, suburban and rural communities, but on hot button issues like adoption rights and same-sex marriage, gays encounter a steady barrage of restrictive and frequently mean-spirited laws. Businesses that support workplace equality or market to the GLBT community frequently come under attack and are the targets of boycotts sponsored by organizations that see these steps forward as special rights at best, or immoral at worst.

Gays have turned to advocacy organizations and supportive public officials in the face of these challenges, but in the past the local or state economic development office has not been viewed as an ally. That may need to change, according to Dr. Richard Florida, who has made a powerful case that communities and regions that

embrace tolerance will have an economic advantage over those that do not.

Forget that dry economics textbook from graduate school. In two groundbreaking books, *The Rise of the Creative Class* and *The Flight of the Creative Class* and numerous scholarly and popular articles, Florida has turned a fresh eye to a subject that may hold as much relevance for the GLBT community as it does for the economic competitiveness of U.S. cities and regions.

In *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Florida introduced the Three T’s --- Technology, Talent and Tolerance. Economic vitality depends on all three, he said. Public officials, economists and

Continued on page 4

The Gays and Lesbians in Planning (GALIP) Division addresses planning topics and issues that relate to the gay and lesbian community by providing a forum for exchanging ideas and information. GALIP provides a professional network for planners who are division members and a mechanism that allows friends of the division and the gay and lesbian community to support GALIP’s mission.

**APA National
Conference in
Philadelphia:
April 14th - 18th.**
**See page 3 for a list of
GALIP– sponsored events**

Dr. Richard Florida is the Hirst Professor for Public Policy at George Mason University, a senior scientist with the Gallup Organization, and a Senior Fellow with the Brookings Institution. He has taught regional economic development at Carnegie Mellon University, and has been a visiting professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. Dr. Florida earned his Bachelor’s degree from Rutgers College and his Ph.D. from Columbia University. He lives in Washington, D.C. For more information on Dr. Florida or his work, go to his website, www.creativeclass.org.

From the Chair...Marj Press



Greetings GALIP members!

By now you've received your GALIP election ballot and cast your vote. The election marks the sunset of my time as Chair and I now look forward to working with you as Immediate Past Chair. After the election is completed, the newly elected Executive Committee will be installed at our annual business meeting on April 16th during the APA National Conference in Philadelphia.

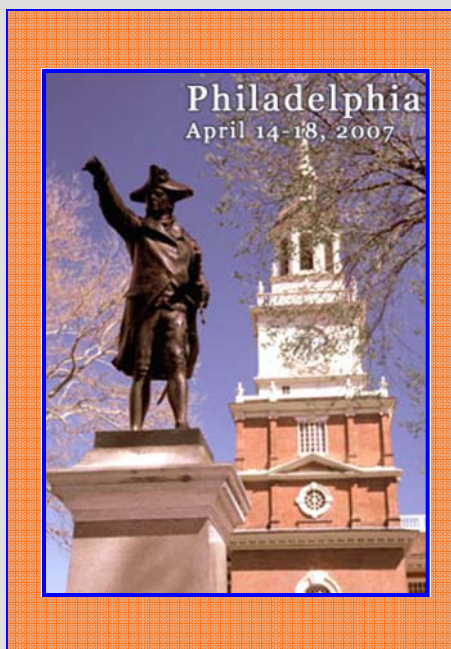
I'd like to take this opportunity to say that it has been an honor and a privilege to serve as Chair for the past four years. During that time we've accomplished great things...we secured a Divisions Council research grant; collaborated with our colleagues in the other population specific divisions and hosted social equity sessions and a joint division reception (second annual joint division reception to be held in Philadelphia); we've graduated to an electronic newsletter whose format and content have received kudos from members and APA leadership (Thanks Linda!); we've participated in APA committees; and implemented a GALIP annual dinner...just to mention a few successes! It's been a wonderful four years. Thank you for your support.

The National Conference is next month and the GALIP conference activities are as exciting as ever. This year our sessions include an update of the research being conducted by Petra Doan and Harrison Higgins. Much progress has been made since they last presented their research at the 2005 National Conference. In addition, Linda Amato and I will present part two of Writing Clear and Concise Planning Documents. With the overwhelming positive feedback to last year's session, we had to create a Part Two! And in the spirit of true Philly tradition, our GALIP reception is a block party. An event not to be missed. And in true GALIP tradition, our mobile workshop will highlight the LGBT history and community in Philadelphia. With the success of our new event, the GALIP dinner, we'll meet on Monday evening after our Business Meeting for our second annual GALIP dinner. Please make sure to RSVP (details are in this newsletter). I do hope you're able to attend the National Conference and all the GALIP events and activities. You won't be disappointed.

In closing, I hope each of you will consider donating some time to furthering the goals and objectives of GALIP. We can't sustain our division without support and input from our members. You can join a committee; write an article for the newsletter; assist with membership recruitment and retention; or volunteer to host a local event and meet some of your GALIP colleagues. Whatever your fancy, it's a great way to meet

your GALIP colleagues, network, and further the mission of GALIP. I hope you'll consider volunteering.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Philadelphia and as always, thanks for supporting GALIP!



2007 National Conference: GALIP-Sponsored Events and Activities

Please join your fellow GALIP members in Philadelphia, April 14th through the 18th, for the APA National Conference. GALIP activities are listed below.

Saturday, April 14th

GALIP Reception (X028)

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Location: 1211 Rodman Street, Philadelphia
(Private home of GALIP Member)

Description: Mix and mingle with fellow GALIP and APA members.

Sunday, April 15th

Mobile Workshop (W009)

“City of Sisterly and Brotherly Love”

Time: 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Location: See final conference program for meeting location

Description: Trace the Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender (LGBT) roots of modern America. Learn how pivotal 20th-century Philadelphia names and events shaped the world many of us take for granted. This walking tour of America’s third-largest downtown includes a historical overview of the growth and importance of one of America’s most established and vibrant LGBT communities. Transportation: Public, walking.

Monday, April 16th

Conference Session (S519)

“Writing Clear and Concise Planning Documents”

Time: 1:30 PM to 2:45 PM

Location: PCC Room 201B

Description: Review the basic techniques and skills for preparing and writing clear and concise planning documents. Then on to the next steps: techniques to manage the development of these documents, working with a multi-disciplinary team, and the nuances of computer file management.

GALIP Business Meeting (X009)

Time: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Location: Philadelphia Marriott Rooms 302/303

Description: Meet division leaders and talk about the future of GALIP.

GALIP Dinner

Mixto

215/592-0363

www.mixtophilly.com

Time: 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Location: 1141 Pine Street

Description: Mixto, a Cuban/Columbian restaurant is located in the heart of the gayborhood (and within a short walk of the convention center). We have the upstairs area reserved for our use. Dinner will consist of a buffet which will include choices of three appetizers, two salads, three entrees, two rice dishes, black beans, and two desserts. Total cost, including taxes and tip, is \$45 per person (does not include the cost of beer, wine, and cocktails).

RSVP to rsvp@galip.org

Note: After you e-mail your RSVP please mail a deposit of \$25 (make check out to GALIP) to: Michael E. Levine, 45 West 10th Street Apt 1C, New York, NY 10011

Tuesday, April 17th

Conference Session (S631)

“Mapping Safe Gay and Lesbian Communities”

Time: 4:00 PM to 5:15 PM

Location: PCC Room 103B

Description: Learn about a research project that seeks to advance the understanding of fear and crime related to neighborhoods, districts, and other sub-metropolitan areas. Examine evidence from a cognitive mapping survey that assessed the differences in the ways LGBT populations perceive and describe their neighborhoods.

Diversity Reception with the Population-Specific Divisions and APA

Time: 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Location: Philadelphia City Planning Commission Conference Room, One Parkway Building, 18th Floor, 1515 Arch Street

Description: Mix and mingle with fellow APA members from the other population-based divisions: Planning and Women; Planning and the Black Community; Indigenous Planning; and Latinos and Planning.

Tolerance is Key (Continued from page 1)

planners increasingly understand the importance of embracing technology, but are often less clear on the roles of talent and tolerance.

Talent is highly mobile, according to Florida and motivated by more than salary. The new and growing creative class -- artists, engineers, writers, scientists, bloggers, software designers and multi-media producers -- will locate in communities and regions that are energetic, with great educational and cultural opportunities, and that are diverse and tolerant.

America's dominance in technology and talent is not guaranteed. In *The Flight of the Creative Class*, Florida noted the United States now faces global competition for talent, just at the time when tolerance at home is often under attack.

As thousands of planners prepare to gather in April in Philadelphia for the American Planning Association's annual conference, Dr. Florida took some time from his very busy schedule to respond to a few questions by GALIP member Dave Robertson.

GALIP: Many cities and regions in the U.S. have neighborhoods with large GLBT populations. Has your research identified a link between creative, talent-rich communities and those with a significant GLBT population?

RF: Using the Gay and Lesbian Index -- a measure of a region's ratio of same sex couples to heterosexual couples --, here (Tables 1 through 3) are the top five large regions for gays, lesbians, and gays and lesbians combined. Keep in mind a

score of one is equal to the national average. Any score above 1.25 is significantly higher than the national average.

GALIP: From a GLBT perspective, what comes first, communities that embrace tolerance and attract talent, or talent that demands tolerance? Does it make a difference?

RF: Areas that embrace tolerance -- for all communities -- have an easier time attracting talent needed to fuel today's regional economies. Talented workers want to live and work in communities that allow them to be themselves and assimilate with individuals of different cultures.

Table 1: Top 5 Large Regions - Gay Index

Rank	Metropolitan Area	Score
1	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA Metro Area	2.05
2	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA Metro Area	1.58
3	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA Metro Area	1.52
4	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area	1.51
5	Birmingham-Hoover, AL Metro Area	1.45

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2005. Steven Pedigo, Greater Washington Initiative (GWI), 2006

Table 2: Top 5 Regions -- Lesbian Index

Rank	Metropolitan Area	Score
1	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH Metro Area	1.58
2	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA Metro Area	1.54
3	Denver-Aurora, CO Metro Area	1.48
4	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT Metro Area	1.46
5	Baltimore-Towson, MD Metro Area	1.39

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2005. Steven Pedigo, Greater Washington Initiative (GWI), 2006

Table 3: Top 5 Regions -- Gay and Lesbian Index

Rank	Metropolitan Area	Score
1	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA Metro Area	2.05
2	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA Metro Area	1.58
3	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA Metro Area	1.52
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Tolerance is Key (Continued from page 4)

GALIP: Local and state economic development strategies often focus on low crime, cultural and recreational amenities and good schools to attract business. Businesses increasingly target the GLBT market to maximize return on investment. How can the public and private sector work together to show that tolerance is good for the community and business?

RF: *It's intuitive - more people acting out their dreams means a stronger, more diverse economy and the research shows this. Creating a more tolerant culture though isn't always obvious or easy. Certainly, community members know best how to effect change in their cities. One place to start may be a communications plan that reminds citizens of the intuitive and empirical importance of tolerance.*

Action is even more powerful though, and the public and private sector can each take steps forward in supporting their citizens and workers, helping them make their ideas into tangible innovations.

GALIP: In *The Rise of the Creative Class*, you noted that talent, gay or straight, is highly mobile. Do you see opportunities for small and medium size regions to be magnets for talent?

RF: *Yes, small and medium communities that embrace tolerant messages and open/welcoming communities have an opportunity to retain their own "home-grown" talent. In reality, small and medium communities can only compete with larger*



cities/regions if they embrace an open community - one that creates opportunity for individualized niches.

GALIP: European Union member countries are quickly reforming laws on GLBT discrimination and civil unions and same-sex marriage, and lowering mobility barriers for EU citizens. In *The Flight of the Creative Class*, you caution that past American dominance in talent could be in jeopardy. What actions should the federal government consider to make the U.S. more attractive to domestic and foreign talent?

RF: *First and foremost, the federal government should abandon the federal marriage protection amendment. It's a worrisome message of intolerance for many parties - the gay and lesbian community, foreign-born residents/immigrants, and future foreign talent.*

GALIP: In the 1950s science fiction movie, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, Professor Barnhardt (played by actor Sam Jaffe) said, "we scientists are too often ignored or misunderstood" when asked by Klaatu to enlist their help in promoting interplanetary peace. Planners are often ignored or misunderstood, too. How can planners be more effective in helping their communities attract talent and promote tolerance as part of a comprehensive economic development strategy?

RF: *As my mentor Jane Jacobs suggested many times, the best thing planners can do is "ask the people that live there."*

Thank you to GALIP member Dave Robertson for conducting this interview. Mr. Robertson is the executive director of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments in Washington, D.C.

Member Profile—Dr. Petra L. Doan

For this edition of the GALIP Gayzette, our roaming reporter, Jon Hoffman, interviewed GALIP member Dr. Petra L. Doan.

Dr. Doan is an Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Master's Internationalist Program, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida

What types of projects really captivate you personally?

My work has focused for the most part on planning in less developed regions, especially the Middle East and Africa - regional development planning, decentralization, municipal development, and local capacity building.

When and why did you join GALIP?

I joined GALIP four or five years ago. I joined because I identify as LGBT and think that planning has for too many years ignored the needs of this minority population.

How does your gay/lesbian identity influence your approach to planning?

Well, I identify as a transsexual lesbian so I bring a fairly unique subject position to the table. I am very concerned with gender issues and planning.

How do you think transitioning has affected your career?

I would say that transitioning at a university is a moderately safe place to do so. I made the decision to transition my research agenda as I made the transition from male to female and began looking into issues of queer space and the inclusion of lesbians and trans people in urban areas. It took me a while to “re-tool” in this way so my productivity took a hit for a few years.



Please describe the challenges you faced as you shifted your research focus from Middle Eastern and African development to queer space.

The challenge for me was to delve into a whole new literature and find the places where my research could make a contribution. The queer geography literature is very rich, but there is much less work on the application of these ideas to planning. I have been asked to write a chapter for a book project that will address some of these gaps.

Please describe the concept of queer space, and your interest in it.

Queer space for me is a kind of mythic concept. As LGBT people, we long for spaces in which we can be fully accepted and live our lives

without fear. Most large cities now have areas that are in some measure “queer space”, but often these spaces are marginalized and ephemeral, shifting and moving as the urban areas around them change. My interest in this notion is a concern with how planners can nourish and protect such spaces.

Describe the queer space project you are working on now.

We extended our survey of cognitive mapping to a single neighborhood in Tallahassee (Indian Head Acres) and are now in the process of analyzing those data. In addition, we have begun examining issues of queer spaces in Atlanta, which as a large metropolitan area has several established queer areas within the city. We are looking at the ways in which the gentrification process constitutes a threat to these spaces.

Are public safety issues for transgendered different than that for gays and lesbians?

In a separate piece of research, I examined the perceptions of trans people about safety in urban areas. Because trans people often display some characteristics of gender variance or gender dissonance, they are often much more vulnerable to violent hate crimes. In *Planners Network Magazine* a few years ago, I published an article that suggested

Continued on page 7

Member Profile—Dr. Petra L. Doan (Continued)

that trans people might be considered the mine shaft canaries for urban areas. If there is an epidemic of violence against trans people, it is likely that there is also a much larger problem of intolerance for LGBT generally. So no, I don't the safety issues are different, just more intense.

What can planners do to promote public safety for all minorities?

Well, I think there is a link between issues of safety and what I call crimes of intolerance, hate crimes, harassment, etc. There is no magic bullet to reducing intolerance. Education is a key component and the accompanying exposure to differences. Equal opportunities for earning a "living wage" also seem really important. But these really aren't so much planning issues as basic human rights. I don't have direct evidence yet but I suspect that in areas where hatred is expressed for one minority, it is easier for that hatred to be replicated and expressed towards other identity groups.

When did you decide on a career in planning?

In 1981 after I returned from Peace Corps in West Africa where I was appalled by the lack of planning in so many parts of that continent.

Please describe FSU's Master International Program and its relationship with the Peace Corps.

The MI program is joint program with the Peace Corps for what are considered to be "scarce skill areas". A student comes to FSU for the first of roughly two years of coursework.

During the summer after the first year, the student is posted to a Peace Corps position in urban planning in one of a wide variety of countries (we have sent students to roughly 15 different countries so far). Students in the program receive a course reduction of six credit hours from their FSU degree requirements for the intensive cultural and language training. After

approximately two years of work in the field, the student returns to FSU and finishes the remaining semester or so of coursework.

How have you counseled queer FSU students who intended to work in the Peace Corps?

While Peace Corps itself is somewhat supportive, often in developing countries sexuality is a sensitive subject, so I counsel students to be discreet.

What has been your experience as a transgendered person when working in the Middle East and Africa?

Fortunately or unfortunately, I have not traveled in either place since my surgery. It is my hope to do so in the future when the right opportunity presents itself. I did travel as a closeted trans person prior to my transition and found evidence of trans related people both in Togo where I was a volunteer and in Jordan where I lived for two years. Trans people are everywhere, just in some places more deeply hidden.

Be sure to attend Dr. Doan's session at this year's APA National Conference entitled: Mapping Safe Gay and Lesbian Communities (Tuesday, April 17th at 4:00 pm)



Leadership Roster

Marj Press
Chair

HDR Engineering, Inc.

Phone: 425-450-6211

E-mail: marj.press@hdrinc.com

Vince Papsidero, AICP

Vice Chair

City of Columbus, Ohio

Phone: 614-645-8030

E-mail:

VAPapsidero@columbus.gov

Michael Levine, AICP

Secretary/Treasurer

Phone: 212-533-7757

E-mail: mlevine1@nyc.rr.com

Randy Gross

Immediate Past Chair/
Research Committee Chair

Development Economics

Phone: 202-332-7430

E-mail: rangross@aol.com

Linda Amato, AICP

Newsletter Editor

The Resource Group

Phone: 206-364-6778

E-mail: linda@resourcenw.com

Jeff Davis

Membership/Elections Chair

Montgomery Housing Partnership

Phone: 301-946-0882 x32

E-mail: [jeffreycharles-](mailto:jeffreycharles-davis@yahoo.com)

davis@yahoo.com



The Newsletter Team Needs Your Help . . .

The newsletter team needs volunteers: someone who is willing to contact GALIP members and encourage them to write articles, and someone who is willing to distribute the newsletter via e-mail. If you are interested, please contact Linda at newsletter@galip.org.

And, as always, we welcome articles, announcements, and general news about you, your organization, and GLBT planning issues. The newsletter team depends upon GALIP members to make this publication interesting and worthwhile. Send your information to: newsletter@galip.org.

AICP Community Planning Workshop

Make a difference! APA and its professional institute, AICP, are hosting the AICP Community Planning Workshop for the seventh year during the annual conference. Participation in this workshop on Saturday April 14th is a way to give back to our host city through the provision of pro-bono planning services to a community in need.

This year's charrette-style workshop will focus on Philadelphia's Sharswood neighborhood. Distressed by blight and economic disinvestment, the large number of vacant properties in the neighborhood presents both a planning challenge and an opportunity. Sharswood's proximity to Center City and active, engaged residents make it a good candidate for implementing workshop proposals.

Consider donating your time and planning expertise to this worthwhile project.

For more information regarding the AICP Community Assistance Program (CAP), please visit www.planning.org/cap

**Don't forget to register for the
APA National Conference in Philadelphia
(April 14—18, 2007)**