

Talking about sexuality:

FLAGB initiates 'Safe Zones'

by *Kim Leeder*
Opinion editor

You're in love. You've found someone who is amazing, beautiful, perfect, and you can't spend enough time with them. You want to tell the whole world... but you can't. There's no one who would understand, so you're reduced to sneaking around, hoping no one sees you, and keeping this incredible secret to yourself. Why? Because the person you're in love with is the same sex as you are.

Some people have chills going down their spines from reading this. Others may be disgusted, and won't read any further than that last paragraph. But probably a number of people will understand, and a few will relate. And no matter what your opinion, there are people everywhere who face this dilemma—even at Lafayette College.

It is for this reason that the Lafayette organization FLAGB (Friends of Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals) is initiating Safe Zones. Safe Zones is a program that has been implemented at other colleges and universities (such as the University of New Hampshire) and met with considerable success. The purpose of the Safe Zones program

is to raise awareness of gay/lesbian/bisexual issues, and to identify supporters who are open to issues concerning people of different sexual orientations.

"On a campus such as Lafayette's, any program that will increase gay, lesbian, and bisexual awareness is crucial," said FLAGB President Peter Theodore '97. "It is important to create an environment in which students can feel comfortable and able to discuss all avenues of sexuality and discover for themselves their true sexual identity. The Safe Zones program is being created to help foster such an environment on Lafayette's campus."

Those who are interested in the program may attend a workshop that will explore the attitudes and problems faced by many homosexuals. After the workshop, those who choose to do so may become identified as Safe Zones supporters by taking a Safe Zones sticker and posting it on the door to their room. This sticker indicates that the person residing in the room is open-minded and willing to talk about homosexual issues. The sticker also expresses a willingness to listen to anyone who is homosexual or confused about their sexuality. A Safe Zones supporter will have a list of

resources (such as gay/lesbian/bisexual support groups, books, etc.) to offer to such an individual.

The Safe Zones program is completely voluntary, and even those who attend the workshop do not have to become supporters. The program is simply a way for those who are sympathetic to gay/lesbian/bisexual issues to express their support. In addition, FLAGB hopes that any homosexual individuals at Lafayette will feel more comfortable walking around campus. FLAGB formed after the Princeton Review named Lafayette the most homophobic school in the U.S., and since then has spent several years struggling against the conservative atmosphere that pervades the campus.

For those interested, a brown bag will be held at noon on Friday, March 29 in the Williams Center (Room 123) to introduce the Safe Zones program. The first workshop will be held on the same day at 4:10 in the Interfaith Chapel in Hogg Hall. Minnie Bruce Pratt, a noted lesbian poet and speaker, will be at the workshop to show her support and assist in the kickoff of the Safe Zones program at Lafayette.