

Q Culture

between the covers

College survival

Secret Sisters: Stories of Being Lesbian and Bisexual in a College Sorority
by Pamela Freeman and
Shane Windmeyer, editors
Alyson Publications
April, 2001 \$13.95 paper

by Dan Cullinane
Special to Q-Notes

LOS ANGELES — *Secret Sisters: Stories of Being Lesbian and Bisexual in a College Sorority*, from Alyson Publications, is a powerful collection of voices seeking tolerance and acceptance of diversity within the sorority system by the editors of the best-selling *Out on Fraternity Row*, one of whom is a Carolinian.

"Powerful...sad...true...thought-provoking. *Secret Sisters* contains excellent resources on how to promote greater tolerance of diversity within the Greek community. A must read for any professional

"This volume is an important one, because it teaches, in the most intimate way possible, the complex lessons of embrace and rejection of sisters. Lesbians do not want to be 'accepted.' We want to be, and to have, sisters. As with all love, the greatest enemy of that goal is fear."

—Sheila Kuehl, first out GLBT member of the California legislature, and a sorority sister (from the foreword)

who works with sororities and fraternities on a college campus," says Jennifer Jones-Hall, former president of the Association of Fraternity Advisors

In *Out on Fraternity Row*, editors Shane Windmeyer and Pamela Freeman shattered the silence of gay men in college fraternities. Now they

have turned their attention to college sororities and the traditionally homophobic and heterosexist atmosphere they engender. This anthology, resulting from the work of the nationally known organization the Lambda 10 Project, presents the first-person accounts of 25 women — accounts of pain and isolation resulting from being lesbian or bisexual inside the very organizations which are designed to promote belonging, community, and sisterhood.

To further enhance this book's value, the editors have included information on organizations and resources designed to promote greater tolerance of diversity within the college Greek system, but *Secret Sisters* also stands as a powerful and courageous collective effort to gain greater understanding within sororities of the true nature of sisterhood.

Shane L. Windmeyer is a Masters graduate in higher education and student affairs administration, and currently serves as the assistant director of student activities at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Pamela W. Freeman is the assistant dean of students and director of the office of student ethics and anti-harassment programs at Indiana University in Bloomington.

The editors worked together to create and continue to coordinate the Lambda 10 Project, a national clearinghouse for gay, lesbian and bisexual issues in the college Greek system. Together they also edited *Out on Fraternity Row*, the first book to address GLB issues in college fraternities. ▼



Secret Sisters lets us hear and feel silence, isolation and secrecy in places where sisterhood should be paramount

Dance • Film • Literature

UNCC staff member co-edits book on college sororities' secret issues

by Sam Nixon
Special to Q-Notes

CHARLOTTE—Shane L. Windmeyer, assistant director of student activities at UNC Charlotte, is co-editor of a new book that chronicles the lives of lesbian and bisexual members of college sororities.

The book, *Secret Sisters: Stories of Being Lesbian and Bisexual in a College Sorority*, was edited by Windmeyer and Pamela L. Freeman, associate dean of students and director of the Office of Student Ethics and Antiharassment Programs at Indiana University. It is a follow-up to their first book, *Out on Fraternity Row: Personal Accounts of Being Gay in a College Fraternity*.

After shattering the silence of gay men in fraternities with *Out on Fraternity Row*, Windmeyer and Freeman have now turned their attention to sororities. *Secret Sisters* presents the first-person accounts of 32 women, who relate stories of pain and isolation resulting from being lesbian or bisexual within organizations with the stated purpose of promoting a sense of community and sisterhood. Like *Out on Fraternity Row*, the new book is a powerful collection of voices seeking tolerance and acceptance of diversity.

Both books are the products of the Lambda 10 Project, which is a national clearinghouse for gay, lesbian and bisexual issues as they relate to fraternities and sororities.

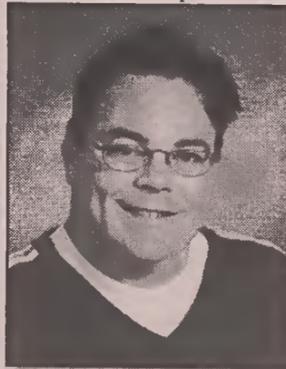
Windmeyer's interest in these issues is an outgrowth of his own experience as a fraternity member at his alma mater of Emporia State University. As a gay member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity, he dealt with many of the same is-

ues that the writers in *Out on Fraternity Row* and *Secret Sisters* faced. Ultimately, he chose to acknowledge his homosexuality to his fraternity and recalls that coming out as one of his most rewarding undergraduate experiences.

"Both of these books are designed to give a voice to people who have been silenced by prejudice and fear for too long," Windmeyer said. "I hope that the books will provide others living in silence the courage and support to speak out, and that the books also will help foster the true spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood among all members of fraternities and sororities regardless of sexual orientation."

Windmeyer, who founded and coordinates Lambda 10, has become one of the nation's foremost educators on sexual orientation and fraternities and sororities. He has been a guest speaker on more than 60 college campuses since the release of *Out on Fraternity Row* and has made presentations on his work at numerous educational conferences. Windmeyer also was featured on the PBS series *In the Life* and has been the subject of stories in a number of national publications, including *The New York Times* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Secret Sisters also includes a chapter on "Creating a Greek Safe Zone Ally Program" by Regina Young Hyatt, also an assistant director of student activities at UNC Charlotte. Safe Zone Ally Programs exist at a number of colleges and universities, including UNC Charlotte, to provide a visible network of support for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered students, faculty and staff. ▼



Shane L. Windmeyer

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One Voice Chorus is the Gay, Lesbian and Gay Affirming chorus of Charlotte. One Voice Chorus envisions a world without discrimination, where the contributions of all people are cherished, celebrated and sought out. We sing to bring such a world into being.

We believe in supporting the community that supports us. That's why we also perform an average of 20 smaller shows each season. Many of these take place in local houses of worship, where we seek to provide a positive alternative to the often negative messages heard in such places. So far this year One Voice has performed for the:

- Democratic Women's Convention of North Carolina
- Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte
- Mercy Hospital
- Metropolitan Community Church of Charlotte
- The Carriage Club Assisted Living Center
- Gastonia Aids Council
- The Local Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation
- The Brian Center
- Westminster Assisted Living Center
- Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church
- Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
- The Great Aunt Stella Center