



June, 2014
Volume 9 Number 2

TRETTER LETTER

NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE TRETTER COLLECTION



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

LIBRARIES

Archives and Special Collections

Young Researcher Discovers History at Tretter Collection



Inside this issue.....

- Cover Story - (read about it on Page 3)
- Welcome Legacy Project Team!
- Recap of Trans* History Conference
- "YesterQueer" App Soon to Launch
- Tretter Preps for Pride!
- Millett Receives Honorary Degree

Legacy Grant Work Is Set To Transform The Tretter Collection--See Full Details In Centerspread Story!

FROM THE CHAIR

By Greg Gronseth, Chair

As work on the 2013 Pride issue of the Tretter Letter proceeds, the Tretter Collection is also busy getting ready for the History Pavilion it operates during the festival.

In recent years, there's been a certain amount of debate regarding why there should still be Gay Pride festivals being celebrated in most major cities. Given the level of acceptance GLBT people have been achieving lately, exemplified by the rapid increase of states and countries with marriage equality, some people argue that public demonstrations of pride are no longer needed. This is particularly the case among people who are concerned with the amount of commercialization in today's Gay pride festivals. Supporters of Gay pride point out that there's still work that needs to be done and that gay visibility is still important. It still is useful for educating people about the issues.

Some people also question just what it is that GLBT people have to be so proud about. In their mind, it gives the impression that GLBT people are claiming some sort of special status. Given the pejorative views about them for much of the past, it would be more reasonable to say that the festivals promote the sort of self-acceptance that any person is entitled to, but which had previously been denied the GLBT community.

However, it certainly doesn't hurt to have specific reasons to have pride in themselves as a group. That's where the involvement of the Tretter Collection and the History Pavilion becomes important. In addition to being a resource for academic research, part of the Collection's mission is to promote awareness of GLBT history in the general community, among GLBT people themselves as well as the community at large.

The Tretter Collection has been involved in this outreach for its entire existence.

It has a particularly close relationship with Twin Cities Pride and the History Pavilion. However, the history display has also been used by festivals in other cities, as well as by corporations and other public institutions for use in GLBT awareness displays.

The panels for the History Display cover a wide range of topics dealing with GLBT people in the past and the present. They highlight the roles that gays, lesbians, transgender people and bisexuals have played in the past. The difficulties and persecutions that have been endured are featured, along with the accomplishments of the movements to overcome those difficulties. When volunteering at the Pavilion in the past, I've seen young people who've spent a great deal of time standing in front of each panel reading the explanations. For many of them, it was an eye-opening experience to realize that there had been all of those struggles leading up to the acceptance and civil rights that they enjoy today.

As detailed elsewhere in this letter, the Collection is in the process of expanding the number of panels for the history display. Presently, most of the panels cover GLBT people in world history. In the future, more space will be devoted to the achievements of the GLBT community here in Minnesota. Many people, even in the GLBT community, are unaware of the extent to which Minnesota has been on the forefront. One of the first gay student groups was FREE at the University of Minnesota. Jack Baker made history by being elected student body president and by applying for a marriage license. Minneapolis has had a nondiscrimination ordinance for about 40 years now. These, and other examples of local GLBT history, should be featured on future panels.

So, please come by to visit the Pavilion this Pride Festival and bear in mind that this sort of community outreach is part of what your donations contribute to.

You Can Help!

The Tretter Collection relies on the support of organizations and individuals, like you! Please consider making a charitable donation to the Tretter Collection using the enclosed self-addressed envelope as part of your giving plan. Your support will help to preserve GLBT history now and for future generations.

Thank you.

**TRETTER
LETTER**

NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF
THE TRETTER COLLECTION

<https://www.lib.umn.edu/scrblm/tretter>

Advisory Committee

Community Representatives

Greg Gronseth, Chair

Eric Colleary

James Garlough

Jada Hansen

Martha Hardy

Anne Hodson

Jean-Nickolaus Tretter, Founder

Stewart Van Cleve

University Library Representatives

Kris Kiesling

Kathy McGill

Lisa Vecoli, Curator

Sodlis Emeriti, Ex-Officio

Jim Bones

Shamey Cramer

Jesse Field

Ralph Hanson

Christoph Heydemann

Angela Nichols

Anne Phibbs

Adam Robbins

Linnea Stenson

Phil Willkie

Newsletter Editor/Production

George Hamm

The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer. This publication can be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities.

Direct requests or address corrections to Lisa Vecoli, Special Collections, Andersen Library Room 111, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612-624-7526, (lvecoli@umn.edu).

The University's mission, carried out on multiple campuses and throughout the state, is threefold: research and discovery, teaching and learning, and public service.

© 2014 by the Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved.

Front Cover Photo - Curator Lisa Vecoli with student Ava Ewald who utilized the Tretter Collection as the basis of her research and student project. They are holding a book that survived Nazi book burnings.

Tretter Letter June, 2014

Thanks to the generous support of our donors.....

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals for their support and give thanks to countless others whose generous spirits have made our work possible.

- Roger Arvid Anderson - CA
- Anonymous - Golden Valley, MN
- Nancy V Barcelo - NM
- Sanford Berman - Edina, MN
- Thomas Blackmar - Minneapolis, MN
- Timothy M Bonham - Minneapolis, MN
- Broward County Log Cabin Republicans - FL
- Shamey Cramer - CA
- Ruth Hanold Crane & Douglas A Crane (In memory of Oyvind Piigaard) - Northfield, MN
- Margaret Cruikshank - ME
- Lynette D'Amico - MA
- David E Drinkwater - TX (15th Reunion)
- Thomas Edsall - MD
- Francis J Gagliardi - CT
- James Garlough - Minneapolis, MN
- GLBT Historical Society - CA
- Jay A Gordon - Excelsior, MN
- Marcia & Leon Greenfield - Minneapolis, MN
- Laura J Gurak - Arden Hills, MN
- Harvey Hertz - Minneapolis, MN
- Jo Hiner - Minneapolis, MN
- Kim W Jeppesen & Jeffrey Strand - Minneapolis, MN
- John H Maves - CA

- John W McConnell - Minneapolis, MN
- Michael McConnell & Jack Baker - Minneapolis, MN
- Ellen McElvoy - St Paul, MN
- Peter McLaughlin & Nancy Hylden - Minneapolis, MN (Honoring the marriage of L Vecoli & M Hoeft)
- Susan Nemeth - Minneapolis, MN
- Len Olds & Hugh Rouse - CA
- John L Sullivan - Minneapolis, MN
- Jean Nickolaus Tretter - St Paul, MN (In honoring Laurie Simon's 65th Birthday)
- Jean Nickolaus Tretter - St Paul, MN (In Memory of Rosemary Heidkamp Cramer)
- Jill Vecoli - Minneapolis, MN
- Lisa Vecoli - Minneapolis, MN
- Dr Phillip A Voight - St Paul, MN
- Kim W Waldof - Minneapolis, MN
- Philip H Willkie - St Paul, MN
- Peter Wilson & James Michael Lawrence - Minneapolis, MN

Matching Grant

In our last issue we announced a matching gift provided by our generous supporter, Phil Willkie. We are proud to report that we raised the money to receive the full amount of the challenge. Our sincere thanks to Phil and to those of you who donated to help us reach the goal!

From the field....

What's happening in national & international circles.....

Young Researcher Finds History at Tretter

By Ava Ewald, History Day Researcher
I came to the Tretter Collection to do research on the Pink Triangle/homosexuality in Nazi Germany for my History Day project.

The first time I came in, I learned more about the Collection itself. After I learned how it worked, I came in a second time and was pleasantly surprised with the amount of resources they had. There were newspapers, posters, and even a book saved from a German book burning which destroyed a homosexual doctor's library.

There were so many fascinating things to look at in the Tretter Collection. Thank you so much!

Curator's note: Ava's project was "The Pink Triangle: The Badge for Gay Rights." She is a student at Chaska Middle School. Her documentary received an Honorable Mention and a GLBT Topical Prize in the History Day competition. (Cover photo, Ava Ewald and Curator Lisa Vecoli). See Legacy Project story in this issue to see how cataloging will increase our research accessibility.

search
"Tretter Collection"
on
facebook[®]
find us. like us. say hi.

Kate Millett Receives Honorary Degree

By Lisa Vecoli



On April 21, the University of Minnesota awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science to alumnus Kate Millett.

The degree ceremony was held at Eastcliff, the home of University President, Eric Kaler, and was attended by members of Kate's family, as well as friends and faculty.

The following day, the Tretter Collection was proud to host Kate and her partner, Sophie Keir, for a tour of the archive.

In addition to her published works (which she gifted to the Tretter Collection), we also uncovered a connection to material in the Nancy Manahan Collection. Nancy had taken a course from Kate that resulted in the publication of *Caterpillars: Journal Entries by 11 Women* in 1977, with an introduction by Kate.



YesterQueer: A New History App Coming Soon

By Stewart Van Cleve

A few months after I began studying library and information science at St. Catherine University, I met with the Executive Director of Twin Cities Pride, Dot Beltsler, at Wilde Roast Cafe. We chatted about the overall direction of pride celebrations nationwide, and we agreed that for many attendees the event appeared to focus almost exclusively on the festivities, and not on the reason behind them.

Together, Dot and I sought to change that. We imagined a new way to highlight local LGBTQ history with modern technology: a mobile app that will allow users to see their memories mapped onto the contemporary Twin Cities landscape. I collaborated with the AppyNerds mobile app studio to create YesterQueer, a groundbreaking public history application that will be available for all iOS and Android devices for free.

YesterQueer features a map with more than one hundred rainbow "pins" that highlight places of LGBTQ historical significance in the Twin Cities metro. When a user taps any pin, they will find a short essay and related images that tell important stories that are otherwise at risk of becoming forgotten. Users may, for example, find a 1970 advertisement for the Greenwood, a short-lived lesbian bar on Lake Street. They can also share their memories or photos with the world by e-mailing yesterqueer.tc@appynerds.com, and we will add them to the growing list of historical sites.

Though I am most excited about YesterQueer's impact on local historical knowledge—something I have worked on since I started writing *Land of 10,000 Loves* in 2010—its most innovative feature is the "YesterQueer Cities" function. Once we receive feedback on YesterQueer Twin Cities, we will be able to introduce the app to any metropolis, city, or town

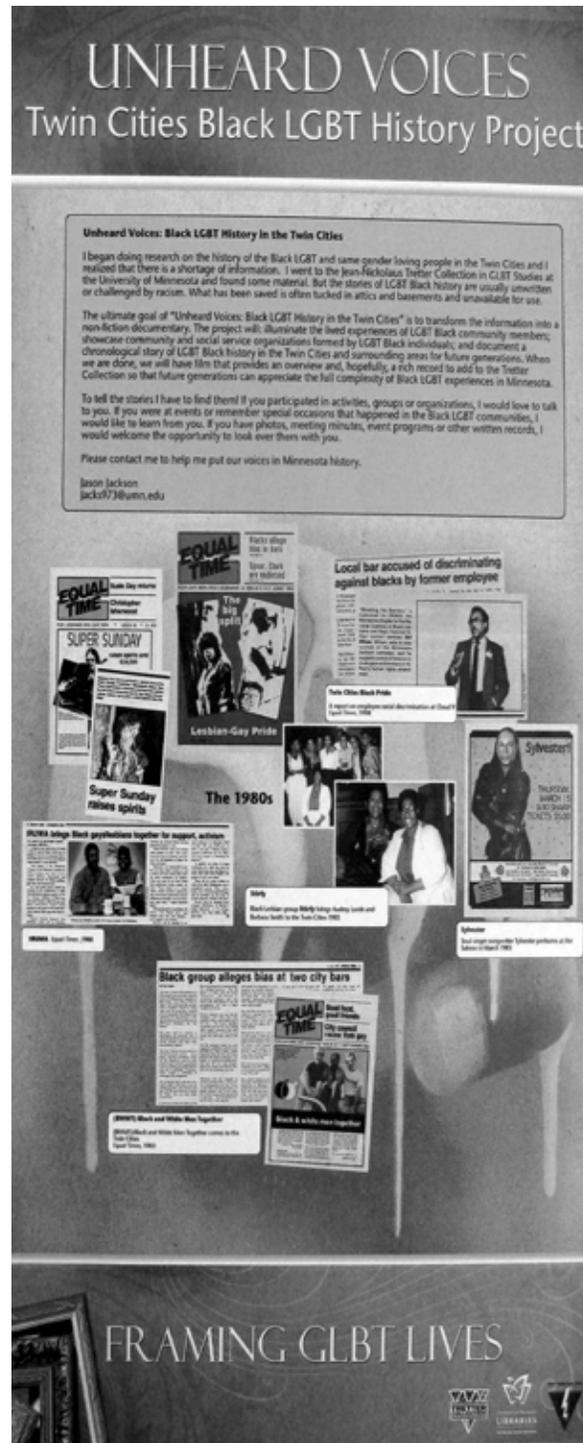
YesterQueer, Continued on Back Page

“Framing GLBT Lives” Exhibit Adds Content

The Tretter Collection is proud to bring our exhibit “Framing GLBT Lives” to Twin Cities Pride again this year. Our exhibit, which has been a fixture at Pride and other community events, is new and improved for 2014. This year, we will debut new content that will expand the exhibit by over one third. Thanks to a grant from the Steven J. Schochet Endowment, we were able to hire two student researchers to develop new content.

Last year our panel on marriage equality had to be updated on short notice when Minnesota became the 13th state to legalize same-sex marriage. A quick photocopy of newspaper headlines and some glue were all we had time for. This summer we have an updated panel on marriage equality in Minnesota, ranging from Jack Baker and Michael McConnell in 1970 up to today.

We also have a new panel on marriage equality beyond Minnesota. This covers some important milestones (Hawaii, Vermont, and Massachusetts), the spread of Constitutional Amendments from 2000-2007, and the current state of same-sex marriage internationally and with tribal governments. Even before we print this panel for



the summer, new events across the country are making it outdated!

Another new panel introduces the history of the Transsexual Research Program at the

University of Minnesota. Only Johns Hopkins was doing gender reassignment surgery before the U of M started a study in 1966. The original plan to do 20 surgeries and follow the participants for 10 years expanded to at least 41 procedures, including 8 female to male transitions.

We have also added exhibit content with two new panels on trans* history. These panels cover publications, organizations and notable moments.

Our other new panels highlight the documentary underway to illuminate the lived history of LGBT Black individuals in the Twin Cities. The cover story in our last newsletter described the work Jason Jackson is doing to create the documentary and the plan to add the unedited interviews to the Tretter Collection. Next summer we will be working on new content about bisexual history and organizing, the evolution of language in the GLBT community and more local history.

Please stop into the History Pavilion in Loring Park during Pride! We’ve got great history, iPads to demo the new “Yesterqueer” app (see previous page), and air conditioning!!!

Legacy Grant to Transform

By Lisa Vecoli

“The University of Minnesota Libraries seek support for 12 months to organize and describe 1,600 linear feet of archival materials documenting the history of the GLBT movement in Minnesota with the goal of opening them for research.” This was the opening line of our grant application to the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

It is not an exaggeration to say the next year will transform the Tretter Collection! Any archivist will tell you that collecting the material is only half of the battle. If you have it but no one knows about it, you are not fulfilling the role of an archive.

Materials need to be safe, secure, AND accessible.

The archives at the Andersen Library do that by processing the collections and putting finding aids on-line which allow researchers to search our holdings and request access.

The Tretter Collection has over 2,900 linear feet of material. That means if you put all our boxes of material side by side, they would stretch over half a mile! In that

line of boxes would be hundreds of feet of books and magazines, many of those are listed in MNCAT, the online catalog for the University of Minnesota Libraries.

There are another 300 hundred



Legacy Grant Project Team Members Jennifer Shaw and Amanda Wick with student worker Jordan Burrell chart cataloging progress on the great thermometer. The project has begun!

linear feet of processed collections – with the contents organized and listed in on-line finding aids. And then there is the project ahead of us!

In the past two years we made significant progress in organizing the collection. We have created a spreadsheet of our holdings and locations, and processed

several important collections. We incorporated thousands of items from the Social Welfare Archive and Quatrefoil Library. We have increased the number of on-line finding aids on the website from 22 to over 100.

All of these steps have improved the usability of the collection; however, the majority of the holdings are not ready for researchers. Last summer the Tretter Collection applied for a Legacy grant: funds from the State of Minnesota, from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, through the Minnesota Historical Society. The grants are very competitive, with organizations from across the state requesting funding for vital projects. After an administrative review and testimony before the selection committee, we were notified in December that we were awarded the full amount we requested.

Our project is to process 1,600 linear feet (*more than 1/3 of a mile*) of material by April, 2015. This is a very ambitious goal and one that will transform the collection. It will provide unprecedented access to our holdings. An average box may contain 2,000 to 3,000 sheets of paper, so we will be handling millions of pieces of paper, photographs, and other items before this project is done. We will fill in the details in dozens of finding aids and add many more.

Our colleagues at ONE Archive in Los Angeles underwent a similar evolution. They found, when their holdings were processed and findable, the use of the collections

Tretter Collection Cataloging

doubled. And then doubled again. This, in turn, increased the visibility of their collection and resulted in additional donations of materials to the archive. Success breeds success.

We are proud to welcome two new staff who will be making the magic happen over the next year. There were many strong applications but the two that stood out were **Amanda Wick and Jennie Shaw** (see *Staff Profiles, Page 8*). Over the summer we will be adding students to help as well.

Amanda is our Project Archivist and has the responsibility of managing the workflow and tracking our progress as well as processing some of the more challenging material.

Jennifer will be doing much of the processing and has already started on a large 86 box collection from Minnesota Men of Color.

Several times a day one of us will exclaim over a new find in one of the boxes and all three of us will huddle together to explore

and share. Every Friday we gather around our thermometer and mark

Facebook is trying to sell access and only sends our posts to a few of our friends, so if you want to see our posts this is the best way.)

We will also be posting in the blog for Archives and Special Collections, "Primary Sourcery." The transformation has begun!

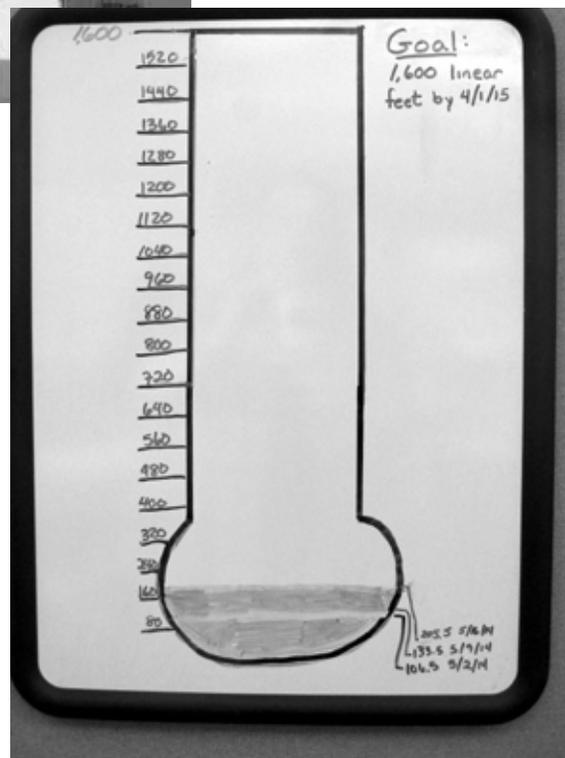


Legacy Grant activity: Jennifer Shaw catalogs materials from the Minnesota Men of Color collection.

off our progress toward the goal of the grant. It is not unusual to hear one (or all) of us saying how much we love our jobs.

The project is ambitious, but we have great people in place and amazing material to uncover.

We invite you to follow our progress. We will have updates on the Tretter Collection Facebook page. (Please "like" us and then hover over the like button and click notifications.



(All photos property of Tretter Collection.)

Welcome Two Legacy Project Team Members!

Jennifer Shaw is from Shoreview, Minnesota but currently lives in Minneapolis with her boyfriend, Tom, an illustrator. She is a voracious reader, a dog lover, and basically half fish.

She studied at the University of Minnesota, Morris, where she majored in English Literature, Spanish Literature, Multicultural Studies, and

minored in Studio Art (specializing in Photography and Ceramics).

She lived for a time in Chicago, where she attended the University of Chicago's Graham School to get her Editing Certificate.

She graduated from the University of

St. Catherine in May with her Masters of Library and Information Science, specializing in Archives. Jennifer has worked at a number of archives and libraries, including the American Craft Council Library and Archive, the James J. Hill Center (formerly the James J. Hill Reference Library), and the Donaldson Company's Library and Archive.

The Archives Assistant position Jennifer holds at the Nickolas Jean Tretter Collection gives her the opportunity to increase the visibility and preserve the documented history of communities that were ignored

or hidden. She was drawn to it because she has always been a fan of history, but she feels it can seem remote sometimes. Working with the collection provides a unique opportunity to see tangible evidence that history is created by living people and does not only exist in dusty text books. Jennifer thinks it is fun to find doodles or



Legacy Grant Team Members Amanda Wick and Jennifer Shaw display their University Libraries employee mugs.

handwritten notes scribbled in the margins of some of the documents she is processing. She has a collection of postcards, so she was delighted to find an extensive postcard collection in the first collection she processed.

Originally from Wisconsin, **Amanda Wick** moved to the Twin Cities in late March from Chicago. She holds her MLIS from Dominican University in River Forest, IL and her BA from Lawrence University in Appleton, WI.

She is a member of the Society of American Archivists, the American Library Association, and the

Dance Critics Association and has published and presented professionally.

Amanda has worked at traditional archival institutions, including Chicago's Newberry Library, the Chicago Film Archives, and the American Dance Festival at Duke University, as well as small performing arts-based non-profit organizations such as the Theatre Historical Society of America, the Ruth Page Foundation, and the Morrison-Shearer Foundation. In addition to her work in the archives field, Amanda has worked in advertising as a digital producer and in corporate consulting.

Amanda was drawn to the Project Archivist position because she believes in the power of archival activism and is thrilled to be working with materials that bring to light an important aspect of cultural heritage that has long been ignored – and often deliberately obscured – from the historical record. Moreover, she is proud of the strong ties between the Tretter Collection and the local GLBT community and hopes that her work with the collection will continue to support ongoing advocacy efforts.

Amanda is most excited to be working with some of the politically-minded collections, but is also looking forward to connecting her previous work experience archiving performing arts collections with Tretter's Patrick Scully and Gary Peterson Collections.

Outside of work, Amanda enjoys cooking, yoga, and going on adventures with her husband, Reid, and dog, Jake.

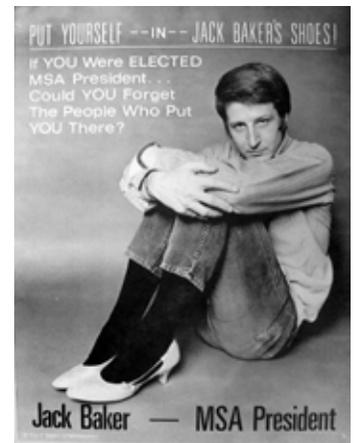
New Acquisitions

We cannot highlight all that we have added to the collection in the past months, but a few highlights:



• **Barrie Jean Borich and Linnea Stenson Papers** – We are terribly sad to lose Barrie and Linnea to Chicago, but take some consolation in having their materials at the Tretter Collection. Barrie’s papers include the manuscript of her Lambda Literary Award winning memoir *Body Geographic* as well as *My Lesbian Husband* and *Restoring the Color of Roses*. The collection also includes material about *Toklas, MN*, a local series of theater productions by and for the lesbians in the Twin Cities during the mid/late 1980s. Linnea’s papers document her involvement/work with: District 202; the Steven J. Schochet Center at the University of Minnesota; Macalester College; and the MN Department of Corrections. The collection also documents her selection as Grand Marshal of the Twin Cities Pride Festival in 2004. (Image - Flyer for *Toklas, MN* performance in 1985)

• **Michael McConnell Files** – The Tretter Collection continues to receive remarkable materials from Michael McConnell and Jack Baker related to gay activism, the fight for same-sex marriage, and gay organizing in the Twin Cities and beyond in the early 1970s. The most recent accessions include material on the Baker v. Nelson (1970), the first lawsuit attempting to gain same-sex marriage in the United States. The McConnell Files also include extensive materials on the founding of Gay House (1970-76), founding documents of the Gay Survival Fund of Target City (1984-87), Jack Baker’s political campaigns (1971-78), and a wealth of photos and documents from the third Twin Cities Pride celebration in 1974. (Image – photo of Jack in pumps and then the completed poster)



• **Russian GLBT Materials** - U of M student Sarah Rosenthal, had the opportunity to study in Russia and worked with GLBT organizations during her stay. She has graciously donated copies of several contemporary Russian GLBT brochures, magazines, and pamphlets to the Tretter Collection. Some of the items carry the age restriction required now required by Russian law. (image – magazines)

• **Broward County Log Cabin Republicans** – This collection, to be processed soon, adds to our extensive holdings of Log Cabin Republican (LCR) materials. The Tretter Collection has national materials in the Log Cabin Republican Records, a wealth of national and California material in the Frank Ricchiazzi Papers and information about Texas LCR in the Dale Carpenter Papers. The new addition from Broward County will add information from Florida.

New Acquisition Photos courtesy of the Tretter Collection

New Acquisitions, Continued on Back Page

Menacing the Archive: a Posttranssexual Reflects on Moving Trans* History Forward



By Emily Atchison

This past March, I had the privilege of attending *Moving Trans* History Forward*, the first symposium of my academic career¹. There, I had the honor of meeting many of my heroes in the flesh: activists, academics, and artists. Some of whom I knew of before, many of whom I had not yet heard of. Some of these heroes are from my generation, while some are more than deserving of the titles of ‘veteran’ or ‘founder’. I was also fortunate enough to be able to present a paper of my own on a panel alongside A. Scott Duane, representing the *Visible Bodies* Project, and the curator of the Tretter Collection, my supervisor, friend, and mentor, Lisa Vecoli.

The University of Victoria Transgender Archives, located in beautiful Victoria, BC, Canada, hosted this three-day international, multigenerational, interdisciplinary symposium. The UVic Transgender Archives are the largest in the world. The collection includes material from all over the globe, making it a fitting host for the first international conference for archivists of trans* related material, from the trained to the self-taught.

This being my first symposium, I honestly did not know what to expect. I have a wild imagination, and was both giddy with excitement

and horrified that I would not only be in the company of the likes of Susan Stryker, trans* activist (co-founder of Transgender Nation), community historian, and brilliant academic, but that I would also be sharing my work with a crowd of such caliber. If Lisa had not convinced me that I had something to contribute and suggested that we apply as a panel, I am not sure if I would have been brave enough.

While this was my first symposium, and also the very first of its kind, it was also unique in another sense. Though I have no standard to compare it to, the atmosphere of *Moving Trans* History Forward* was astounding. While many of the attendees knew each other from academia, there were also many of us that either only knew each other by name and by work, or did not know of each other at all before coming to Victoria. There was a certain air of excitement that I know was shared by others because we stayed up talking about it long into the night even though the conference began each morning shortly after breakfast. Though it was peers and colleagues of my generation that stayed up late sharing beers and gabbing in the hotel hot tub or down by the river, the tone of passion and generosity was shared by all (After sharing a cab downtown with Stryker, running into us again in the lobby on her way to the hotel bar with

a book, she told us in jest to, ‘get off her lawn!’). The weekend felt like a family reunion of strangers. The norms of academia condition those that fall into the category of student or the un-published to know their place among the professors and specialists in their field. Though I was impressed by this, it is perhaps unsurprising that these norms were dispensed with at a conference attended by an overwhelming number of folks with trans* experience (I consider it regular trans* business to dispense with norms). The keynote speakers were all extremely generous and genuinely excited to answer questions, and engage in both critical conversation and hallmark trans humor (jokes about trans* pathology abounded). There is also nothing like entering a space and realizing that trans people are the majority and that those allies whom are present are just as invested in retrieving and preserving trans* voices.

The content of the symposium centered on questions of acquisition, preservation, and access to trans* material, but these discussions took many forms. Discussions of ‘queering’ the trans* archive surfaced in many presentations alongside methodological suggestions for “un-co-opting trans* history”², ways to undermine normative Historical modes of naming/titling material³ that

included community participation and the use of hashtags, personal and second-hand accounts of trans* resourcefulness⁴ and critiques of the Archive as “colonial technology.”⁵

Our panel took place at the beginning of the first full day of the symposium so, fortunately, I escaped the distraction of nerves for the rest of the weekend. The paper that I presented is titled, *Menacing the Archive: a Posttranssexual in the Tretter Collection*. The title is a citation of both a canonical text by Sandy Stone (see footnote 6), and the educational/outreach and direct action group *The Transsexual Menace*⁶. This paper is a sample of my trans* embodiment in relation to the trans* archive. In it, I use the story of my relationship with the Tretter Collection as an armature to discuss archival access and representation in order to include intimacy, authenticity, self-empowerment, and mourning, in a discussion of the structural politics and *gestalt*⁷ of the archive. I argue that the trans* archive must be critical of apolitical or objective notions of history, and vigilant in its role as a site of coalition, a political force, an ideological field, and a space to, “read oneself aloud-and by this troubling and productive reading, to begin to write oneself into the discourses by which one has been written.”⁸

The overall intent of our panel was to discuss the evolution of GLBT archives, how that has impacted the representations of trans* communities in archives and models of partnerships to begin to expand the holdings of trans* voices. Lisa presented on the work that the Tretter has done to uncover the hidden trans* content in the existing collection, and the initiative to make new acquisitions of trans* material. She spoke eloquently of

the vulnerabilities of centralizing material and the benefits of dispersion. Lisa described archives as the “holders of the stories, not the creators” and emphasized that, “every community has to create and preserve their own voices.” Our co-panelist, A. Scott Duane shared his work with *Visible Bodies: Transgender Narratives Retold*, which is a community arts initiative whose goals are to empower transgender people and educate cisgendered people by providing a platform for trans* people to tell their own stories.⁹

“I came to the archive through the narcissistic labor of searching for myself in history, because I had life experiences that tuned me in to the existence of such a thing, and that I might look there. I entered in my newly abbreviated body, a blossoming high-femme boy, before I was consistently using ‘trans*’ to describe myself, before I had tattooed ‘Transsexual Menace’ across my chest-I came searching for my reflection. The archive has introduced me to heroes and muses, martyrs and brave explorers, friends and lovers that could’ve been, strangers that I feel I was somehow loved by, imagined by, lived and fought for by, and their legacies that have provided me with an inheritance of desire and maps to self-empowerment, queer ideologies of self-determination, and strategies of resilience.”¹⁰

As an aspiring specialist in archiving trans* material, attending this conference introduced me to a network of resources and incredibly fierce archivists, critical thinkers, and activists, and expanded my knowledge framework for what I hope to do in the future in and for queer and trans* communities. I extend my sincere thanks to Lisa, as well as my gracious peers

and colleagues that assisted me throughout my writing process.

I hope to one day feel confident that I have been able to give back to queer and trans communities even a fraction of what the archive has given to me: an ever evolving language to describe my experiences and desires for transformation, new models of love for oneself and others, resources for access to health care, safe spaces, surgeries, a critical framework for attacking oppressive regimes of heteronormativity, and heroes with self-made bodies and self-chosen names and families who have fought tooth-and-nail to survive and have made my path much easier to walk and countless other gifts that must be preserved and passed on so that trans* folks can do much more than just survive.

¹ My ability to attend this symposium was made possible in part by the generous support of the Steven J. Schochet Endowment.

² *Unique Problems in Classifying Pre-1960’s Archival Images of Cross-Dressing*, Ardel Thomas, Chair, LGBT Studies, City College, San Francisco.

³ *Access to transgender collections--revisiting the past--the power to name*, Michael Waldman, Head, Libraries Collection Management, Baruch College, NY.

⁴ “unable to obtain a prescription [for hormones] by legitimate means, I forged a prescription. I was thirty years old.” *Preserving Trans*History: A Short History and Suggestions for the Future*, Dallas Denny, Activist, Board Member, Gender Education and Advocacy Inc.

⁵ *Organizing and the University Classroom*, Cassius Adair, University of Michigan

⁶ www.transsexualmenace.org/

⁷ *Gestalt* is German for ‘form’ or ‘shape’. The term as I use it in my paper, was generated in the field of psychology by a group of German researchers in the early twentieth century, Gestalt Principles are the rules that dictate the organization of the complexity of perceptual senses.

⁸ Sandy Stone, *The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto* (1991)

⁹ visiblebodies.org

¹⁰ This paragraph is a quotation for my symposium paper, *Menacing the Archive: a Posttranssexual in the Tretter Collection*



TRETTER LETTER



NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE
TRETTER COLLECTION

The Tretter Collection
Special Collections and Rare Books
University of Minnesota Libraries
111 Elmer L. Andersen Library
222 21st Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55455
<https://www.lib.umn.edu/scr/bm/tretter>

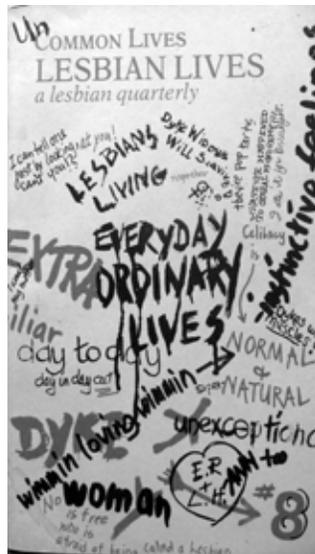
Misspelled? Two copies? Please send
corrections to lvecoli@umn.edu

Nonprofit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Twin Cities, MN
Permit No. 90155



New Acquisitions, Continued from Page 9

- **Jo Hiner** – We were delighted to get a long run of the journal “Common Lives, Lesbian Lives” from Jo Hiner. The collection only had a few issues and Jo’s gift filled in a significant gap for us! (image – cover of Common Lives, Lesbian Lives)
- **Roger Arvid Anderson** – We received a large infusion of California material from Roger Arvid Anderson. We owe a big thanks to Roger, who has been diligent over the years in collecting materials for the Tretter Collection. As a result of his efforts, we have extended runs of several Bay Area publications including: *Bay Area Reporter*; *The Bay Times*; *Frontiers*; *Oblivion*; *Odyssey*; and *San Francisco Spectrum*.



YesterQueer, Continued from Page 4
in the country. Most cities in the United States are not fortunate enough to have a dedicated LGBTQ repository like the Tretter Collection, so YesterQueer allows community members to assemble their own disparate collections and memories into a cohesive framework.

Please be sure to download YesterQueer for free, try it out, and email us with your memories, historic photos, or feedback. We look forward to hearing from you!

Story Image photo provided by AppyNerds.

search
“Tretter Collection”
on
facebook
find us. like us. say hi.