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TRETTER LETTER

NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE TRETTER COLLECTION


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Pride's Proud Past



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FROM THE CHAIR

By Adam Robbins (Interim Co-Chair)

On May 21, 2011, the Minnesota Legislature voted to place a ballot initiative before voters asking, "Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to provide that only a union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in Minnesota?"

Like 30 states before, we campaign to prevent this marriage ban from reaching our founding document, part of a trend reaching back to 1998. Rallies against the vote lasted days. The marble halls of the People's House resounded with "it's wrong to vote on rights" and "What the World Needs Now Is Love." Yet, as before, people's words and passions fell on deaf ears and hardened hearts.

Watching this vote on their future, hundreds of Minnesotans cheered and sang late into the night. As OutFront Minnesota's Operations Director, and as the Interim Co-Chair of the Tretter Collection's Board of Advisors, I was compelled to be there. "This is history in the making," I told those around me.

The Tretter Collection reminds me how constantly we're making history. Our catacombs contain abundant stories of the slow progress from ignorance and shame to knowledge and liberation. From Dr. Hirschfeld's defiance of the Nazis to the fruit pie in the face of Anita Bryant, we record the lives and deeds of those who built the half-liberated world we inherit.

In the path of hard-won progress, bullies ever cry "Stop!" and unleash the vilest they can imagine. Yet hope is there, in the archives of the Collection: stories of pioneers like Jim Chalgren in Mankato, Joannes Henri François in the Netherlands, and Morris Kight in Los Angeles. We hold the stories of those who faced down bullies before, and who challenge us to the same.

The history of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people is rich in heroes and everyday we have the chance add more. In today's adversity, take heart at the brave people before us and take courage to make our own history proudly.

Front cover image: The intersection of Hollywood Blvd and McCadden Place/Morris Kight Square and the original parade route for the first Gay Pride parade in 1970 sponsored by Christopher Street West, which is seen in the smaller picture.

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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.

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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. *If we neglected to include your name in the list in this issue, please send us a quick note and we will gladly make sure to include your name in our next issue.*

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From the field....

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

By Regina Kunzel

I came to the University of Minnesota as a faculty member in 2007. Among the strong draws for me was the prospect of having regular access to the Tretter Collection. When I arrived, I was finishing my book, Criminal Intimacy: Sex in Prison and the Uneven History of Modern American Sexuality. There, I examine the social and sexual world made by prisoners through the nineteenth and twentieth century and track its illuminating relationship to the formation of modern sexuality. The book's final chapter considers Lesbian/Gay prison activism in the 1970s and early 1980s, which, I came to learn, was an important and under-recognized focus of Gay liberation politics. I was interested in particular in the complicated and sometimes conflicted relationships forged by newly politicized Gay men and Lesbians with prisoners, and in prisoners' efforts to organize on their own behalf, and I relied on the Tretter's rich collection of periodicals and newsletters from that period.

The Tretter Collection is a tremendous resource for scholars, students, and community members. I appreciate the collection as an historian of sexuality, as a teacher of history and LGBT/Queer studies, and as

(From the Field - Cont'd on page 8)

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The Evolution of a Revolution: From Demonstration to Celebration - The Birth of Pride

By Shamey Cramer

Although most people know that Gay Pride commemorates the rioting and protests that took place at the Stonewall Inn in New York City's Greenwich Village in June 1969, most people are unaware of how the first Pride event actually came to be. It took place one year later in June 1970, in the form of a parade down Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles. Having the right to host that street-closure took a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and an order by the California Superior Court. But that's getting a little ahead in the story.

After founding Team Los Angeles and helping to launch the inaugural Gay Games - where I met Team Minnesota Co-founder Jean-Nickolaus Tretter - I served on the Board of Christopher Street West for two years. CSW is the non-profit organization that fought for - and earned - the right to produce that first Gay Pride Parade, and every subsequent Gay Pride parade, festival, carnival (circus included that year!) and/or sports tournament held in Los Angeles since June 1970. The parade and festival officially moved to West Hollywood in 1979, and now attracts more than 300,000 people. There are more than a dozen other independently produced Pride events throughout Los Angeles County each year (Black Pride, Latino Pride, Long Beach Pride, etc.) and more than 300 Pride events take place around the globe in such diverse locations as Phuket, Thailand; Eureka Springs, Arkansas; Eilat, Israel; and Harare, Zimbabwe; to name a few.

The three men responsible for launching this extraordinary cultural phenomenon are Reverend Bob Humphries, founder of the United States Mission, a gay welfare organization; Morris Kight, the legendary "Father of the Los Angeles Gay community;" and Bishop Troy Perry, founder of the Metropolitan Community Churches. Although Humphries and Kight are deceased, I had the opportunity to interview Bishop Perry in May 2010 for my documentary film "Everyday People: Facets of Black & Gay." Although a resident of Los Angeles for nearly five decades, Bishop Perry still retains every ounce of his southern charm, grace and accent. We first met in 1983 during my tenure on the CSW Board and I have proudly stood with him on many an occasion, in good times and bad. The following includes excerpts from my 2010 interview with this gentle giant, giving Bishop Perry's personal account of some of the events that led to the birth of Pride.



Pictured: Bishop Troy Perry, Rev. Bob Humphries, Morris Kight (*Vintage photos from Metropolitan Community Church*)

THE EVOLUTION OF A REVOLUTION

"In 1969 in New York City, Stonewall took place. When I read about it in the Advocate, I was so excited. MCC was founded nine months before Stonewall. I always say we were pregnant with Stonewall. It was either gonna happen on the West Coast or the East Coast. They beat us to it, but I was already leading demonstrations here in Los Angeles since the murder of Howard Efland. That was where a young man was beaten to death at the Dover Hotel in downtown Los Angeles in March 1969. I went to the inquest.

"The Dover is where gay men went to have impersonal sex. Witnesses stated that when the police raided the place, they beat him, dragged him down the hall, naked, bleeding and screaming. Then they threw him into the back of the police wagon. The police claimed that halfway down to the station from where they had arrested him, he kicked open the door and fell out onto the Hollywood Freeway. So they rushed him to County General Hospital. The Nurse who was the

Admissions Officer testified that when they got him in, they tied him down to the bed, which was the policy. And that he kept crying 'for God's sake, somebody please help me.' Then the Nurse who tied him to the bed testified that she went into the other room with the cop because the guy had bitten his finger. Forty minutes later while she's still working on the cop another nurse came and said 'hey, the guy in the other room died.' That radicalized me...that was my radicalization of never saying 'I'm not gonna stand up for people's rights.'

"I had told my congregation over and over that our church was built on a three-prong gospel: the gospel of Christian salvation, the gospel of Christian community and the gospel of Christian social action. Absolutely: Christian social action. We are meant to go out and bring deliverance to people. So I told them 'I want you to come and march with me!'"

In March 1970, an article appeared in the Los Angeles Times about the increase in Gay marches and protests and another suspicious homicide. On March 7, two days before the anniversary of Howard Efland's murder, LAPD gunned down Larry "Laverne" Turner, who the Times describes as 'a twenty year old black male transvestite dressed in female clothing, who was shot once while being arrested for prostitution outdoors near 56th Street and Broadway.' The police claimed it was in self-defense.



One of the protests mentioned is the second time picketing took place outside Barney's Beanery in protest of the infamous 'fagots stay out' sign. After the first protest, the management posted an additional six signs throughout the establishment. Both protests were organized by the Gay Liberation Front and Morris Kight, and included approximately two dozen picketers dealing with religious fanatics screaming insults.

The Times article also states that Perry, along with the Committee for Homosexual Law Reform, led a demonstration that laid a wreath at the entrance of the Dover Hotel. He got up on the back of a flatbed truck and conducted a service where he shouted 'it disgusts me to know that in this country someone could have the license to kill another human being simply because of what a person does in bed. In no way can the actions of the persons responsible be called excusable homicide.'

THE BIRTH OF PRIDE

BISHOP PERRY: "Morris Kight received a letter from New York City asking us to hold some sort of demonstration here in Los Angeles to honor what had happened the year before. So Morris came over with Bob Humphries. The three of us had a meeting: Reverend Bob Humphries and I and Morris. We sat down and got to talking and decided that rather than have a demonstration, we wanted to have a parade. After all, this is Hollywood! Now saying it and doing it are two different things. So we said 'what do we have to do to get a parade permit?' and were told we had to go before the Police Commission.

"After we filled out the paper work, we went downtown to go before the Commission. They'd already passed everything on the agenda, except us. The committee asked me to act as spokesperson for our group. I didn't know that Ed Davis, the chief of police was going to be there. They started questioning me. It seemed like an eternity. They kept asking over and over again 'who do you represent?' and finally I said 'We represent the homosexual community.' Then Chief Davis spoke, asking 'Did you know that homosexuality is illegal in the state of California?' I looked at him, and I said, 'No, sir, it's not.' We then debated that issue. And then he said, 'Well, I want to tell you something. As far as I'm concerned, granting a parade permit to a group of homosexuals to parade down Hollywood Boulevard would be the same as giving a permit to a group of thieves and robbers.'

"They debated among themselves. One commissioner said, 'There'll be violence in the streets.' The Commission was against it, but said 'We'll give you the permit if you post two bonds, one in the amount of \$1 million, one in the amount of \$500,000. And you will post \$1,500 cash to pay for the police it will take to protect you. And if you don't have at least 3,000 people marching, you go to the sidewalks.' I thanked them and left. We called the American Civil Liberties Union and they entered the case. We were determined to hold that parade on June the 28th!"

Rev. Perry met with Herbert Selwyn, an ACLU attorney. They appeared at the Police Commission the following Friday.

(Birth of Pride - Cont'd on page 7)



Joannes Henri François – Gay Pride Pioneer

By Greg Gronseth

This past winter, the Tretter Collection obtained a copy of *Open Brief aan hen die anders zijn dan de anderen. Door een hunner* (Open Letter to those who are different from the others. By one of them) by Joannes Henri François.

François, who'd been aware of his attraction to men when quite young, had had suicidal thoughts as a teenager. However, in 1904, while a 19 year old student, he attended a famous lecture, "Unknown Sorrow," by L.S.A.M. von Römer, where homosexuality was presented as a natural, inborn trait.

He later described the experience as feeling like he'd been reborn. As a result, he realized that he himself was homosexual and that there were thousands of others like him. In 1911, after he had published a favorable review of the early Gay novel, *Levensleed*, he was invited to join the Dutch branch of Hirschfeld's Scientific Humanitarian Committee, by its founder, Jacob Schorer. In 1915, François published the *Open Letter* under the Committee's auspices. He later published two Gay themed novels, *Different* (1918) and *The Mask* (1922), in which he made a point of writing stories with positive endings. Spending most of his adult life as a civil servant in the Dutch East Indies, he also wrote about the rights of the Indonesian people and

went so far as to visit Gandhi in India during the 1930's to discuss applying his methods of nonviolent resistance to the independence movement in Java. As a vegetarian and pacifist, he wrote books in support of conscientious objectors as well. Back in the Netherlands, he was one of several men and women interviewed

for the book, *De Homosexueellen* (1939) by the Gay rights advocate Benno Stokvis, in which they described their lives as homosexuals in their own words. He also published a booklet about a recent scandal in the Indies in which over two hundred people had been arrested for



same-sex behavior, titled *What the Indonesian morals offences have to tell us*. At the beginning of WW II, he was one of the three people who, in the midst of the German invasion, went to the headquarters of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, in order to destroy its archives before they could fall into the hands of the Nazis. After the war, François was involved in the founding of COC, the Dutch homophile rights organization and contributed to the Gay paper, *Levensrecht*. He died in 1948. Unfortunately, none of his Gay books appear to have been translated into another language.

In the foreward, François made the point that, unlike previous books on homosexuality, which were written to explain it to the general public, this booklet was addressed from one homosexual to his peers, "for all those who need light and support in being different" and "to accept their nature". He said it had been inspired by talks with a young man who'd reached the point where he thought he had nothing more to live for. Although the book wasn't geared toward straights, he hoped they would benefit from reading it as well. In fact, it wasn't even intended as much for older Gays, who might already be disillusioned with their situation, as for young people "who haven't yet come to full clarity with their being different". In the opening paragraphs, he said he wanted reading the book to be comparable to the experience of someone walking alone through a crowd, who unexpectedly makes eye contact with a stranger and realizes that that person is just like him, then goes his way, comforted with the thought that he's not alone. Throughout the book, he stresses that he and the reader share a common bond. Later he describes the book as a word of consolation from someone who's "suffered their pain and fought their fight".

In the book, he advises readers not to believe what they're told by their parents, the doctors who want to cure them, or the clergy who claim same-sex love is sinful, since "they don't understand our feelings". He even calls on them to decline any compassion, for "your love is just as good ... as that of the normal people". "Keep your love desire as something holy ... as a priceless treasure." Instead he recommends joining an organization such as the Scientific Humanitarian Committee and getting to know more people who are also homosexual, with whom they can discuss their feelings based on common experiences. "It gives

(Gay Pride Pioneer - Cont'd on next page)

New Acquisitions

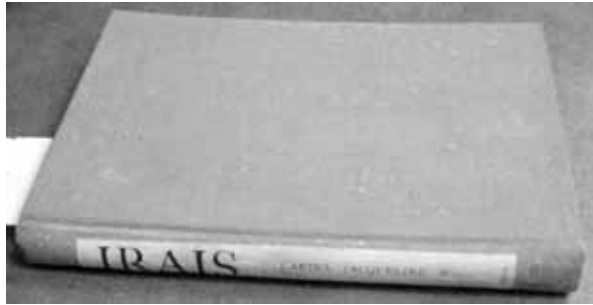
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EARLY LESBIAN NOVEL

The Tretter Collection's recent purchase, *Irais* (1912) tells the story of Carina, a British student

at a Catholic boarding school in France. After a series of romantic relationships, she becomes involved with an older woman, Gabrielle, through whom she meets Irais. She proceeds to have an intense physical relationship with Irais.

The author of this novel remains shrouded in mystery. On the book's cover, the author is given as "Carina Jacqueline M--- ." The bibliography *Registrum Librorum Eroticorum* lists the author as "Carina Jacqueline Maury," but there is nothing else to associate with the name. One dealer offered that the book might have been the work of the orientalist Edward Heron-Allen, but no evidence supports this. Some say the character Gabrielle is based on the American playwright and poet Natalie Barney, who maintained a well-known Paris salon from the early 1900s.



(Gay Pride Pioneer - Cont'd from previous page)

strength to stay in an atmosphere where one can be oneself." He also predicts that sometime in the future, the time will come when "our kind won't have to hide their nature anymore", but will "go through the world with upraised head."

Before coming out, François had participated in the Clean Life organization for moral advancement, one of whose principal members was the prominent (straight) Christian Socialist leader, Felix Ortt. When the *Open Letter* was published, it included a foreword by Ortt in which he stated that the opinions put forth in the *Open Letter* were as representative of the principals of Clean Life as many heterosexual relations.

Finally, the *Open Letter* indirectly helped to raise awareness of homosexuality in the general public. The Catholic newspaper *De Tijd*

printed a denunciation of the brochure in which they provided the name and address of Jacob Schorer of the Humanitarian Scientific Committee, calling on their readers to send him hate mail, which many did. Schorer printed some of them in the Committee's next yearbook, along with his sarcastic replies. However, they also received letters requesting more information from people who might not have known about the committee without the free publicity provided by the church.

The Tretter Collection is one of only two institutions outside the Netherlands to have a copy of this groundbreaking document. It's rather fitting that this issue of the newsletter, which coincides with the Pride celebrations, is able to bring some attention to this early example of "Gay Pride", from fifty years before the phrase was coined.

(Birth of Pride - Cont'd from page 5)

The Commission dropped all of its specifications except the requirement to pay the \$1,500 for police protection. And so, they went before the California Superior Court the following Monday. "The Judge brought us in, heard their case, heard ours, and said 'give me five minutes' and went off the bench. When he came back in, he banged his gavel and said 'this is a civil rights case if I've ever seen one. All citizens of the State of California are entitled to equal protection under its laws. I don't care if you have to call out the National Guard, you are to protect these people. They don't have to pay anything. They're like every other American, they pay taxes too.'"

"Then we got on the phones and said 'Oh my God! WE'VE WON!!! BUILD FLOATS!!! Start getting things ready!' And I gotta tell you. On that Sunday afternoon, when we held our parade in Hollywood, we didn't know what to expect. But it was amazing: 50,000 people showed up to watch the parade."

According to the CSW website History page, the 1970 parade kicked off from the corner of Hollywood and McCadden Place with a VW Microbus playing some recordings of marches over an amplification system. The order ran the gamut from the *Advocate* Magazine's float with a carload of men in swimsuits, to a conservative gay group in business suits from Orange County (commonly referred to as The Orange Curtain). The Gay Liberation Front carried banners and shouted, "Two, four, six, eight, gay is just as good as straight." Another organization marching was a group of friends carrying a large sign reading, "Heterosexuals for Homosexual Freedom."

What they didn't know at the time was that while other cities were hosting marches on sidewalks and demonstrations in parks, Los Angeles was the only city that held a street-closed parade celebrating the pride we have in ourselves and each other. On June 28, 2005, the Los Angeles

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(From the Field - Cont'd from page 3)

a queer person who understands how vulnerable that history is to marginalization, trivialization, and loss, and how important it is to have it preserved and accessible. The Tretter Collection sustains my research on LGBT/Queer histories, offers my graduate students remarkable resources, and allows me to introduce undergraduates to hands-on historical research. In the Tretter Collection, they find documents of the diverse and complex histories of queer people -- histories of community building, activism, and cultural production, of desire, accommodation, hatred, and repression, strategies for survival, and daily, ordinary life. It's an amazingly rich and diverse collection that the University of Minnesota is very lucky to house.

Regina Kunzel is Chair and Professor of the Department of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies and the Paul R. Frenzel Land Grant Chair in Liberal Arts.

(Birth of Pride - Cont'd from page 7)

City Council officially recognized the intersection of Hollywood and McCadden as Morris Kight Square. Just below the honorary sign bearing his name, they placed a bronze plaque along side the pink and gold stars in the Hollywood Walk of Fame commemorating that intersection as the official starting point for 'The First Gay Pride Parade in Los Angeles.... which was the first such action of its kind in America.' It also honors Perry, Humphries and Kight as the Organizers of the Event.

The Stonewall Riots were not the

first actions of protest demonstrating for Gay Rights in the United States - but they were pivotal. But also key to the promulgation of the importance of that event and its effect on American culture is the fact that Los Angeles activists were the ones to take what had been perceived as a negative - our sexuality - and turn it into a positive force for good. So in the future, whenever you think of New York as the place where the Stonewall Riots occurred, remember it is Los Angeles that gave birth to Gay Pride.

Shamey Cramer has been a Tretter Board member since 2000.

