

▼ *alga* NEWSLETTER

Australian Lesbian & Gay Archives Inc
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WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE ARCHIVES COLLECTION?

As many members will know the Archives collection has been in storage since October 1995. For the previous six and a half years the collection had been housed in a specially built area under the house of Archives secretary, Graham Carbery, but had to move out when Graham sold the house.

Graham was concerned that the Archives should not be left without a home. He bought a building in Gertrude Street, Fitzroy which, when renovated, would be his home and provide ALGA with a more central and accessible location, especially with regard to its proximity to public transport. The building is two-storey and the plan was that the Archives would occupy most of the ground floor, which would be altered to provide fixed shelving and a mezzanine, installation of a security door and hardened opaque glass in the street-facing window, and modification of the existing security and lighting systems.

Graham took possession of the premises in late 1995, but it needed renovation before he or the Archives could move in. Richard Peterson, an architect by profession and a member and supporter of the Archives, offered his services gratis as architect for the renovation. It was envisaged that the building would be ready for occupancy in February or March 1996.

The original time-frame proved to be unrealistic. Plans were drawn up and went to builders for quotes in February. It was intended that contracts would be signed in March and the work would commence shortly thereafter. However everything changed following a telephone conversation from Darren Ray, Executive Officer of the ALSO Foundation, to Graham on 27 February 1996.

Darren Ray informed Graham that ALSO had decided to purchase premises for use as a gay and lesbian community centre, and it wanted the Archives to be one of the groups using the centre as its base. He indicated that ALGA would be allocated a sizeable amount of secure (lockable) space under its sole control (at least 50% more than it previously had), and that the rental would only be a token amount.

After discussing the proposal with of the ALGA Committee of Management, Graham wrote to Darren Ray to confirm details of ALSO's proposal in writing and asked for clarification on several issues. Graham's letter also said that an Archives' committee meeting had been

called for Friday 15 March to discuss the proposal. Darren Ray faxed a reply on 14 March (and a follow-up one on 15 March) which set out the following:

- confirmation that ALSO intends to purchase premises, not lease.
- ALSO has given an assurance that the proposed centre would be operational within 12 months.
- a formal contract setting out the terms of the Archives tenancy to be signed.
- the period of tenancy would be at least two years.
- ALSO guaranteed to provide a minimum of 75 sq. m of lockable, secure space, under the sole control of ALGA.
- ALSO agreed to charge ALGA only a 'peppercorn rent', i.e. a token amount.

The ALGA Committee of Management met on Friday 15 March to discuss the ALSO proposal and make a decision. The necessity to reach a decision promptly was due to the fact that Graham was about to enter into a contract for the renovation of the Gertrude Street building and he needed to know of the Archives intentions.

After considerable discussion the committee decided to accept the ALSO proposal subject to the terms and conditions mentioned above being included in a contract.

On 18 March 1996 ALSO was advised by letter of ALGA's decision. The letter went on to say:

...Our decision to accept ALSO's offer represents a significant act of faith on our part in ALSO fulfilling its promise to establish a gay and lesbian centre within 12 months. It is a widely held view amongst our committee that by making this decision we have in effect placed our destiny to a large extent in ALSO's hands. Also, ALGA's decision has meant that it has virtually 'burnt its bridges' in the sense that it has now lost the

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What's happening to the Archives' collection? — cont.

opportunity of a permanent home in the Gertrude Street premises. This means that should the ALSO proposal fail to eventuate for any reason, ALGA will be left without a home.

In the interim?

Given that the proposed centre will not be operational for 12 months, ALGA was faced with the dilemma of remaining in storage or setting up in temporary accommodation for the interim period. The committee believes that the need to recommence operations in the near future is essential given that the collection has been in storage since October 1995 and we have been telling people and stating publicly that we would be operational again in February-March 1996. As a result, several people and groups are relying on this time-frame and have contacted us recently reminding us of their urgent need to access material. We feel a particular obligation to assist the Not a Passing Phase lesbian exhibition (see article p.3) and to some post-graduate students working on fixed term grants who need access to the collection.

Accordingly the Archives has taken steps to open certain parts of the collection from a temporary location in Fitzroy in order to meet the short-term needs for access. The address of the temporary location will not be advertised publicly. It does not have proper office facilities (no phone for instance), but it will be possible to operate on a limited scale during the interim period. Until the move to the community centre occurs, contact will need to be by mail through out postal address (PO Box 124, Parkville 3052) and we will then make arrangements for people to come and use the collection.

We are looking forward to again making the collection available to users and it is hoped that the facilities to be made available to the Archives in the proposed gay and lesbian centre will be to our long-term benefit.

FUND-RAISING

The Archives continues to receive generous financial support from both individuals and organisations. In the 1994-95 financial year, ALGA received:

- a grant of \$1,500 from the ALSO Foundation for scanning equipment, the purchase of which has been deferred pending the move.
- \$1,144 from ticket sales for a New Year's eve function at Three Faces, courtesy of venue proprietor Ken Payne.
- over \$1,500 in miscellaneous donations from individuals.

As part of the 1996 Midsumma Festival, the Northside Venues (Peel, Laird, Club 80 and Gatehouse) chose the Archives as beneficiary of a special fund-raising function

held at the Laird Hotel (the 'Best Buns' competition) which netted over \$860 for ALGA.

We would like to thank all concerned for their valued commitment to the Archives, and take this opportunity to remind people that all donations to ALGA are tax deductible.

NEW COMMITTEE

A new committee was elected at the November annual general meeting. Secretary Graham Carbery paid special tribute to outgoing president Jodie Joyce for her leadership during 1995. Jodie brought a fresh approach to the position and accomplished a lot in developing new links between the Archives and a range of community groups, in particular among lesbians and student groups, Graham said. Jodie is pursuing the final stage of her doctoral studies in 1996, but remains on the ALGA committee and will continue her promotional and outreach work for the Archives, which has included regular column 'From the Archives' in *Lesbiana*.

We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of retiring committee member, Ken Atkins. For many years Ken has been a stalwart of the Archives — a tireless helper with the routine work on the collection, and a great support and friend to others at the Archives. Ken has also done a lot to promote the collection to his contacts around Australia. Ken's own recollections of gay life from the 1940s onwards are an example of oral history at its best — an acute memory with sharp observations on the social context of his personal experience — some of which is captured in Graham Carbery's chapter 'Beats in Melbourne: 1930s to the 1950s' in the first volume of *Gay Perspectives*. Even though not an office bearer this year, we hope we will see Ken around the Archives for many years to come.

New committee members this year include Graham Willett, who is currently researching a history of the Melbourne Gay Liberation Movement as a post-graduate student at Melbourne University, and Heather Nix, who has been a volunteer at the Archives during the past year, working especially on ways of storing and displaying badges.

Other office bearers in 1996 are Gary Jaynes (President), Keith Stodden (Vice-President), Graham Carbery (Secretary), Rob Thurling (Treasurer) and Mark Riley.

ALGA AS PUBLISHER

In 1995 ALGA committed itself to publish two books, extending a trend in recent years which has seen ALGA become more involved in the production of materials as well as their collection and preservation. Previously this has been confined to producing information kits on various

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ALGA as Publisher — continued

topics in response to requests from secondary and tertiary students (*Homosexual Law Reform in Australia, Gays in the Military, Outing, Recognition of Gay and Lesbian Relationships*).

Graham Carbery's *A History of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras*, was published by ALGA in August 1995. The second book, co-published with Allen & Unwin in January 1996, is Michael Hurley's *A Guide to Gay and Lesbian Writing in Australia*.

Each is the first of its kind, and are important contributions to Australian gay and lesbian literature.

Graham Carbery began researching the history of Mardi Gras to satisfy the large number of requests for information from students at the time of the controversy over the ABC telecast of the 1994 parade. ALGA's usual method of responding to such requests had been to prepare kits of already published information, but that was not possible in this case. No comprehensive history of the event had been published, and permission to reprint articles about *aspects* of Mardi Gras' history was denied by the Sydney author concerned. Graham's original intention was to produce a brief summary of the main features of Mardi Gras' development, ie. the parade, parties and the festival, but as he got into it he became engrossed by the subject and the project developed into a book... some 20 months later! The book runs to 281 pages, including 39 photographs and six tables documenting some of the key indicators of Mardi Gras' history (attendances, organising structure, gender balance on committees, etc). It is also comprehensively indexed. The book is based on published sources held by ALGA as well as some unpublished material deposited in the Archives.

Melbourne historian Graham Willet launched the book in Melbourne last year, and his speech is reprinted in this newsletter — see page 5.

All profits from the sales of the Mardi Gras history will go to the Archives.

Michael Hurley devoted almost five years to writing his book and ALGA is delighted to be associated with its publication. The book's content is apparent from the following extract from the *Introduction*:

A Guide to Gay and Lesbian Writing in Australia is the first reference work of its kind. It consists of over a thousand authors, title and subject entries arranged in alphabetical order. The entries give information on writers of various sexualities, describe the titles of their publications and give bibliographical details of their reception. The *Guide* also includes subject entries relevant to the reading of gay and lesbian writing and the representation of sexual difference....

Lesbian and gay writing and representation are themselves now far more diverse than they have ever been. The *Guide* incorporates that diversity not only by having many subject entries, but also by using the comments of authors, reviewers and critics to describe the titles and their reception within mainstream publications and within gay and lesbian media.

Both books are available at reduced prices to ALGA members. See order form page 6.

NOT A PASSING PHASE

In February 1995, the Melbourne-based History Inverted approached the Archives after having prepared a submission to Visions of Australia (VOA) for a grant to fund a travelling exhibition titled 'Not a passing Phase: Lesbians' Stories, 1920s to 1970s'. Visions of Australia is the national touring exhibitions grant program of the Commonwealth Government Department of Communications and the Arts. VOA would only accept submissions from incorporated bodies, and as History Inverted was not incorporated, it asked ALGA to submit the application under its auspices. ALGA agreed, accepting that the project was entirely consistent with its aims. In July 1995, Visions of Australia granted \$20,000 to develop, but not tour, the exhibition, leaving open the possibility of another application for a touring grant when the project was further developed. Another grant application was submitted to tour the exhibition, and news has just come through that it was successful. See page 11.

DROP OFF POINT AT LABRYS

Sheril Berkovitch has kindly provided a drop-off point for donations of lesbian material to the Archives via her shop, Labrys Jewellery & Crafts, 433 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy. Enquiries: telephone Sheril on (03) 9417 7388.

ALGA AT PRIDE

ALGA was among the scores on contingents, and over 10,000 people, who took part in an amazingly successful Pride March at the recent Midsumma Festival in Melbourne. The ALGA banner, created for our stall at last year's Midsumma carnival, had its first airing at a gay and lesbian demo. Contrary to some claims, this wasn't Melbourne's first pride march — 1973's Gay Pride celebrations takes that honour — but it was a magnificent day, and the organisers and all their helpers deserve our congratulations and thanks.

ACQUISITIONS

Recent acquisitions by the Archives include:

- the records of the Southern European and Latin American Gay Men's group (now defunct)
- a collection of books bequeathed to the Archives by the late David McDiarmid
- the tapes of interviews (partially restricted) which

formed the basis of a forthcoming book by Dino Hodge on lesbians, gay men and spirituality

- the first video record of a lesbian commitment ceremony held in Victoria.
- unedited tapes of the 1995 Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras from the ABC.
- academic papers given at the Regulation and Resistance Conference and the Melbourne Gay and Lesbian Inter-Universities Studies Seminars.
- a house book from a lesbian household in Adelaide spanning most of the 1980s (restricted access).
- an English book *Daring Hearts: Lesbian and Gay Lives of 50s and 60s Brighton* (1992).

ALGA has recently accepted an offer by the Gay and Married Men's Association (GAMMA) to donate those of its records that are more than 15 years old. A number of individuals have also foreshadowed significant donations of material once ALGA is established in its new premises.

The committee would like to again express its appreciation of the support which comes in so many ways: one-off donations such as the above, complimentary copies of publications supplied by groups around Australia, ongoing donations of periodicals by OutRage, Gayzette, Hares and Hyenas bookshop and the State Library of NSW, newspaper clippings from our helpers in Melbourne and interstate, and, not least, financial donations.

NSW STATE LIBRARY LIAISON

A fruitful liaison with the State Library of New South Wales has continued after initial contact was made with senior librarian, Margy Burn, in 1994. ALGA agreed to lend the Library a number of Australian periodicals which were missing from the Library's collection for microfilming. In return the Library has provided ALGA with a microfilm copy of all issues of *Sydney Star Observer* and its predecessor, *The Star*, and will supply us with copies of any future periodicals they put on microfilm.

DON'T THROW YOUR LIFE AWAY

Over the years the Archives has acquired a very large number of photographs, badges and other items of memorabilia, but a disconcerting number of them have come with no explanatory information.

Often people decide to donate material to the Archives when they are clearing out their cupboards while moving house or doing the five-yearly spring clean. That is perfectly OK by us, indeed we've always encouraged people to think of the Archives as a valid alternative to the garbage bin. We would however also like to encourage people to think about how the significance of their donation can be best appreciated with the passage of time. That fascinating photo or theatre program will mean so much more

to someone else 25 or 50 years later if it has an accompanying note giving the essential who/where/when details.

This is particularly true of badges. At the time, or even a few years after they were issued, a badge's message is usually self-evident, at least to a fair number of people. But it is surprising how soon their message becomes hard to fathom. It occurs to us that we could have a very interesting community event asking people to put dates or context on our unidentified badges — perhaps next Midsumma Carnival? But in the meantime, this is a plea to all would-be donors to tell us all about their prized possessions, even if they were about to throw them in the bin.

Gary Jaynes

'STONEWALL', THE BOOK AND FILM

The recently released film *Stonewall* was based on Martin Duberman's 1993 book by the same name. The film is only loosely based on the book, and while both book and film provide convincing accounts of the events that drove the patrons of the Stonewall Inn over the edge on that fateful weekend in June 1969, the different purposes of the two projects have yielded two works of considerably divergent character.

Duberman's book is built around the stories of three people who were participants in the Stonewall rebellion, along with three others who, though not present at Stonewall, were to be caught up in the political activity which flourished in its wake (one of the latter three was also deeply involved in the pre-Stonewall homophile movement in America).

Like the film, the book records the impact of oppression and liberation on the personal lives of a small group of people who were at the eye of the storm. The film, incidentally, has invented some romantic links and personal histories for dramatic effect, unnecessarily in my view, since the real participants' lives had extraordinary dramatic force, and I don't know that the film gained for its detours into fiction. The life of Sylvia Rae Rivera for instance, an Hispanic street transvestite who was present at Stonewall and later founded Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR), is full of dramatic incident, of which the hilarious confrontation with the army draft board, beautifully captured in the film, is only one. A more extended treatment of Sylvia's life may have given the film's story-line a potency which I felt was lacking.

In telling the personal stories, the book also tells the story of Stonewall the rebellion and its political aftermath, the formation of Gay Liberation Front and the first Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade held one year later. In this respect it covers similar territory to Donn Teal's 1970 book *The Gay Militants*, which I think still stands as a fine contemporary record of the time, but which obviously

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HISTORY THAT MATTERS: THE SYDNEY GAY AND LESBIAN MARDI GRAS

Graham Carbery's *A History of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras* was launched at Hares & Hyenas Bookshop, Fitzroy, on 19 October 1995. An edited version of Graham Willett's launch speech follows. This was first published in *Freedom Socialist Bulletin* No. 14, Summer/Autumn 1996. The *FSB* can be obtained on subscription from 1 Appleby Street, West Brunswick 3055.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about gay and lesbian life in Australia over the past 25 years is the number of surprises there have been. This is particularly true if we think about what early gay activists expected. For liberationists, working for the abolition of gender and sex-roles, what could be more startling than the rise of the clone and, more recently, the lipstick lesbian, with their remarkable reliance upon traditional gender styles. For liberals, who believed that lesbians and gay men were just like everybody else and that the eradication of laws and discriminatory attitudes would reveal this, the Sleaze Balls, Ms Wicked, the fuck bars, the return of drag — what a shock all this has been. For socialists, the idea that gay families would have a real resonance, that gays could be accepted into the military (shudder!), that full legal equality (as embodied in the recent Democrats' bill to federal parliament) was even possible would have seemed laughable.

And then there is Mardi Gras. What began as a (relatively) smallscale demo to mark International Gay Solidarity Day has turned into one of the most prominent cultural, political and commercial events of the Australian calendar. Graham Carbery's *History of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras* sets out to describe how this extraordinary transformation took place.

Carbery's book is an important one and rests on the assumption that history matters. This notion of our histories as being about something real (as opposed to merely the play of discourses, or the strategies of power) is not perhaps a very fashionable one, but it is one that clearly meets a felt need. This is especially true for those of us who are in some way marginalised and oppressed within the present system, or excluded from its mainstream. As someone who tutors in first year politics at Melbourne Uni, I am

constantly struck by the way in which women, Kooris, students from different cultures, lesbians and gay men draw strength and courage from the visibility that the course offers them — speaking up and coming out with a confidence that is really quite remarkable.

The political importance of this process can hardly be overstated, and the role of history is as important to it as any of the other disciplines. It is important that we are able to seek ourselves, not just in the here and now, but also as having continuity and roots and even a heritage. History is never only about the past; it is also about the present. How the present has emerged from the past; how we got to where we are; how, in the case of lesbians and gay men, we have come from the position of an oppressed, marginalised and despised minority to the present visibility — proud, assertive, confident. (I

'The violence, injuries, chaos of this first year really set the tone for Mardi Gras — if not for the parade and dance parties, then certainly for the workings of the Mardi Gras Board. Carbery's descriptions of the interminable, internecine ways within the Mardi Gras organising bodies over the years are refreshingly clear, and concise and impeccably neutral.'

do not want to be accused here of overlooking the continuing discrimination and disadvantage that we suffer, nor of overlooking the way in which the existing heavily commercialised community excludes very large numbers of people. But these are depressingly less surprising, I think, than the gains that have been made.)

The surprising emergence of this new gay presence in society makes it so odd that so very little history has been written about gay and lesbian politics and life in Australia. We can think of Denise Thompson's *Flaws in the Social Fabric*, Garry Wotherspoon's *City of the Plain*, Verity Burgmann's *Power and Politics*, the two volumes of *Gay Perspectives*. But after that, we start to scratch around a bit. Graham Carbery's history of the Mardi Gras is an important contribution, both to our knowledge of our own pasts and to our understanding of the ways in which our lives have been transformed by the work of lesbian and gay activists and supporters. The Mardi Gras has

emerged, against all expectations (and again there is the element of surprise!) as a central part of gay and lesbian life, and of broader society. How this happened is a story that needs to be told, and Graham Carbery deserves to be congratulated for having done the work needed to begin this process.

If Carbery's history is an important work, it is not one that requires cold compresses and a hard chair to get through. It is, on the contrary, a stimulating and exciting read. But with a story like this, how could he go wrong? Mardi Gras began in June 1978 as a celebration of gay pride and an expression of international solidarity — and with a police attack on the parade which generated the most important gay rights campaign since the early 1970s. Carbery's description of this first year is particularly important, given that the political roots of Mardi Gras are often overlooked or played down. (He cites the 1995 program, which refers to 1978 as a 'motley, illegal little street demonstration' to make his point.)

The violence, injuries, chaos of this first year really set the tone for Mardi Gras — if not for the parade and dance parties, then certainly for the workings of the Mardi Gras Board. Carbery's descriptions of the interminable, internecine ways within the Mardi Gras organising bodies over the years are refreshingly clear and concise and impeccably neutral. I finally felt like I have some sense of what they were (are!) all about. The events of the subsequent 17 years have it all — furious debates, sinister machinations, tall poppies cut down and short poppies raised up, drugs (legal and otherwise), lesbians, hets and trannies, dances and marches, ageism, sexism, racism and solidarity, perseverance and sacrifice. It's like *Melrose* with homosexuals; *Dynasty* with good haircuts; *Dallas*, but less true to life.

It would have been all too easy, given the soapy quality of the goings-on over the years, to have produced a tell-all exposé or, given history's current passion for fictionalising its material, to have produced an elaborate, sophisticated (read: unreadable) reading of Mardi Gras as text.

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Mardi Gras launch — continued

Graham has resisted these temptations and instead set himself a more straightforward (though not actually simpler) task — to tell the story of the Mardi Gras from its origins to the present. The book is easy to read and impossible not to enjoy. It has a wonderful index, a chronology of gay politics in Australia, nicely chosen photos and will appeal to a range of readers — lesbians and gay men, especially, but scholars, students, and, indeed, anyone interested in recent Australian history.

The *History of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras* is by no means the last word on either the event or the issues that surround it. It is not intended to be. For lefties, especially, the relationship between social change (which Mardi Gras both reflects and contributes to) and the sort of radical social transformation that we are working towards is posed very starkly. What this history does is provide us with the facts we need to agree upon so that we can turn our attention to the political significance of the event. This is no mean feat on Carbery's part. Hopefully, our own analyses will measure up to the rigorous standards he has set.

Graham Willett is a Melbourne historian and has been involved in gay, left and union politics for 15 years. He is currently working on a thesis about the gay liberation movement in Australia in the 1970s.

NEWS FROM OTHER ARCHIVES

Canada The Canadian Lesbian & Gay Archives was established in 1973. In 1992 it moved to new premises in central Toronto where it rents about 2,000 square feet of space that includes a reading room, photocopier and camera facilities, and a multi-media viewing and listening area. CLGA is run entirely by volunteers, and is open three nights a week to users. It is supported by Toronto's Lesbian and Gay Community Appeal, which gave it a one year operating grant for 1995, as well as fund-raising activities by individuals, bars and film premieres. In 1995 CLGA expected to host a

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ALGA PUBLICATIONS

SPECIAL OFFER TO MEMBERS

ALGA members are entitled to discounted purchase prices on the two books below

Name _____

Address _____

Post code _____

I wish to order :

_____ copy/copies of *A History of the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras*, by Graham Carbery, ALGA, 1995 @ **\$12** (normal retail \$20)

_____ copy/copies of *A Guide to Gay and Lesbian Writing in Australia*, Michael Hurley, ALGA and Allen & Unwin, 1996, at **\$17** (normal retail \$30)

Add \$3 for postage (regardless of number of copies).

I enclose cheque/money order for \$_____

Signature: _____

**Please send this order with payment to
ALGA, PO Box 124, Parkville, Vic 3052.**

STOP PRESS

INCOME TAX EXEMPTION SECURED

As this newsletter goes to press, the Australian Taxation Office has just advised that ALGA's submission for exemption from income tax on the grounds of it being a 'public education institution' has been successful. ALGA's submission was based on the pronounced educational role of the Archives in recent years, as demonstrated by its published information kits for students, publication of books, and auspicing of History Inverted's 'Not a passing phase' lesbian exhibition (see p.3). ALGA argued that any income from these activities flows back into supporting the infrastructure that enables the above sorts of educational activities to occur.

This is important news in that it ensures ALGA will not have to pay income tax if the Archives is ever in the happy position of generating income above the tax free threshold. This is, sadly, not the case at present. But with the possibility of income from publications, or interest from large donations, it could be of real and practical benefit to the Archives to have this exempt status in the future.

Income tax exemption is distinct from tax deductibility for donations, which ALGA achieved in 1993.

NO END TO THE WAY — 30 YEARS ON

It is 30 years since the landmark Australian novel No End to the Way was published. Set in Perth in the early 1960s, the novel is credited in Michael Hurley's Guide to Gay and Lesbian Writing in Australia as being the first Australian novel to be narrated from an openly male homosexual point of view. It was written by Gerald Glaskin under the pseudonym Neville Jackson. Glaskin was born in 1923 in Perth, where he still lives. Originally published by Barrie & Rockcliff, his novel was reissued by Corgi, London, in 1985. The following interview by Rob Cover with Glaskin was published in Perth's gay and lesbian newspaper, Westside Observer, July 1994.

No End to the Way is an important book. Set entirely in Western Australia, it was the second ever gay novel published by a Perth writer. Glaskin, writing under the name Neville Jackson, worked on the book in two stages in the early 1960s; the first stage while travelling to Europe, where he was intending to live. The second was an extension of the first part, after publishers refused to produce the work as one in a set of three novellas.

The Perth setting is an unfamiliar one to those who were not part of the 1960s Perth scene. The gay venue frequented by the novel's characters was a bar in the former Palace Hotel on William Street and St. George's Terrace, where the R&I/Bankwest Tower now stands. A typical gay venue for the period.

'It was about the only thing I saw', says Glaskin. 'Four or five visits with friends. It was mixed, the main bar that they went to, had straights and what-have-you.'

The characters live in inner city suburbs and work in Perth office buildings. The book traces the troubled affair between Ray and his Dutch boyfriend, Cor. Problem: Cor is married to a possessive and pregnant woman called Mia, and, on the side, is a toy boy for his generous benefactor, Robin Hamilton.

The jealous Hamilton discovers Cor's attraction to Ray. In an effort to destroy their relationship, he offers Mia and Cor money for passage back to Holland. Mia insists they go and Cor submits. However, in a last minute move, Cor cleverly tricks his wife into going shipboard alone, and escapes her forever.

Hamilton persists, however. In an attempt to blackmail Ray, he manages to destroy Ray's business and health. The stress is reflected in Cor, leading him into alcoholism and rampant infidelities.

Cor's sudden betrayal of the relationship, and the man for whom he gave up so much, is a major point in the book. His promiscuity knows no bounds, and the violence he extends to Ray is shocking. It ends what began as a close relationship.

'They just drift apart', Glaskin tells us, 'from all sorts of pressures and temptations. I suppose there's more temptation in the gay world than there is in the straight, but I don't think gays are any more promiscuous than straights, and I don't think gays are anywhere near as violent as straights.'

It is not a happy ending, but it ends less tragically than most gay novels of the period. This was a breakthrough in gay fiction. Glaskin challenged the existing gay literature.

'Novels about homosexuality in those days all had tragic endings; they jumped off cliffs, they finished off in France...Tennessee Williams had a Negro batter one till every bone in his body was broken and then he ate him and chucked the bones over the end of the jetty or something. I just don't see any relation in that to any gay life.'

Like the setting, the characters in the book were based on real people, most particularly the evil Hamilton. 'There were a couple of rather nasty characters out there, then — I suppose I'd better let them rest in peace — who were obviously in that book... I was quite shocked at this particular character who was the nasty one in the book.'

'Mostly a writer makes characters up out of composites. One character might not be enough to build it on...In this particular case, the nasty character was a composite as well.'

As might be expected, publishing the work was not an easy task. There were problems, and using a different name was the first. 'All of the directors, except one did not want to publish this and spoil their image. But one of them did. Would I consent to having a pseudonym? I said it was going to break my heart, because I am proud of this work.'

It is a common misnomer that the pseudonym, Neville Jackson, was made up of the names of two Western Australian judges. There were two justices of those names at the time, but the pseudonym came from one of Glaskin's family names. 'Jackson is one of my great grandfathers, the Captain Jackson, who built most of the things on Rottnest Island, built the jails and all that sort of stuff. He was quite loved by the Aborigines, thank god, and entertained people like Anthony Collins when they passed through.'

It eventually became known that Neville Jackson was Gerald Glaskin. American copyright law laws meant G.M. Glaskin must appear on the publication page. Even *Who's Who* listed *No end to the Way* among Glaskin's writings.

Several years elapsed between the completion of the book and its eventual publication. With a less-than-tragic

ending, it was in direct defiance of the Home Office. However, after a five year wait, it won through in 1965, and Barrie Books Ltd, were able to publish.

Although the work was controversial, it was also successful. It was banned in Australia and the paperback publishers, Corgi, researched the Australian censorship laws, and discovered that the book could not be shipped to Australia.

'So they chartered planes and flew them in, and put them in every airport bookshop, they got the whole window — there was nothing else but *No End to the Way* in it.'

The book was resented in Western Australia and received a very homophobic review of T.A.G. Hungerford in the *West Australian*. Despite this local resentment, Glaskin received three film offers for the book, though negotiations never went further than the contract....

Publishing difficulties, banning, and poor local reviews did not stop *No End to the way* from becoming an important book. It was significant for two reasons. The first was the non-tragic ending, but more important was its literary style. It was the first published novel to have been written in second-person-singular, addressing the reader as 'you'.

ADDITIONS TO OUR BOOK LIBRARY

Ken Atkins continues the task of organising our library and written the following comments about some of the more recent additions:

Biography section:

Tom of Finland by F. Valentine Hooven 111. This is a straight-forward account of the life of one of the icons of gay male sexuality.

Federico Garcia Lorca by Ian Gibson. Lorca, a homosexual and a notable poet of his time, was executed by anti-republicans at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. After his death, Lorca became the most often translated Spanish writer in history.

Reference section:

Lesbiana by Barbara Grier, aka Gene Damon, is an important addition to the reference section. The title is uninformative and misleading. This paperback is a gold mine of pungent, witty but never unkind brief book reviews from the perspective of lesbians and gay men, published in the famous early lesbian magazine *Ladder* from 1966-1972 (the *Ladder* was the newsletter of the San Francisco chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis). This book is highly recommended reading but with a warning - once you start you won't be able to put it down.

Jung, Jungians and Homosexuality by Robert H. Hopcke. Jung himself wrote little about homosexuality

but he wisely said that Modern Western Man is afraid of his 'feminine weakness' but the more he tries to keep his 'soft' emotional life closeted, the greater toll the avoidance exacts.

Foreskin by Bud Berkley. Does the world really need a book on the foreskin? Yes it does! Though most of this book is devoted to that unnecessary male mutilation — circumcision.

Rock on the Wild Side by Wayne Studer. The blurb says it all - 'Gay male images in popular music of the Rock Era'. There is a naughty photo on the front cover of David Bowie fellating the guitar of Mick Ronson.

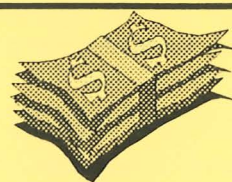
Homosexuality by U. Sharm and W. Rudy. This is a select bibliography of books and newspapers and medical articles dealing with homosexuality. While the authors describe themselves as 'librarians' in compiling this work they appear to have had little concern about the outcome. It is an irritating book to use but as the Archives has no other work in this field it is better than nothing.

In the late 1960s, my late mate, Allan, a film buff, would drag me out to the Italian cinema in Footscray to view the latest Italian beef-cake epic which very often were blatantly homoerotic. These epics are amongst the ninety films listed in Paul Roen's *High Camp, Vol. 1. A Guide to Camp and Cult Films*.

For more than twenty years, Old Reliable of Hollywood, has been catering to the gay market by quality photos, videos and audio tapes. We have received a donation of two of their catalogues, the first features wrestlers and boxers, the second contains an endless stream of spunky guys.

Novels

Cheap Thrills is the first novel by Australian author Nigel Triffit and is published in Australia by Outlaw Press. The story line is about the customers in a back-room sex bar. Some readers have found this novel human and poignant. I think it is nasty and condescending.



**Have you renewed your
1996 ALGA membership?**

**Cheques for \$20 / \$5 to
ALGA, PO Box 124,
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***All donations to ALGA
are tax deductible.***

ORIGINS OF THE RAINBOW FLAG

Have you ever wondered about where the idea of the Rainbow Flag came from? The following is an extract of an interview with the flag designer, Gilbert Baker, and the President of the International Gay & Lesbian Archives (IGLA), John O'Brien, which appeared in the Spring/Summer 1994 issue of the IGLA Bulletin.

This summer a mile long rainbow flag will be carried along the Stonewall 25 march in New York City (26 June 1994). This prideful symbol of Lesbian and Gay liberation was originated 16 years ago by a proud, Gay San Franciscan, Gilbert Baker...

John: Your flag has become a powerful force for Lesbian and Gay people. Unlike any other symbol, it represents the spirit of Stonewall. We at the Archive's feel it is important to document the flag's history and your creative role in bringing it to the forefront of our movement. Perhaps we should start with some background on yourself. Are you originally from the Bay area?

Gilbert: No, I was born in Kansas in 1951. I 'discovered' San Francisco in 1970 while stationed there in the Army. In '72 I was honourably discharged and decided to stay.

John: Didn't Randy Shilts write something about that?

Gilbert: Yes, in his book *Conduct Unbecoming*. Actually I came out to my parents the year before while still in the service. After leaving I got involved in George McGovern's presidential election campaign. I was a supporter of the Vietnam peace movement as were most Gays and Lesbians at the time. Actually I became involved in many gay rights issues during the seventies, but that's another story.

John: I understand you joined one of that city's more renown activist groups. Can you tell us about that?

Gilbert: I was one of the original Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. That was in 1980. We did much needed fund raising on behalf of the community. Flamboyant, ecclesiastic drag, it helped us to pull off some minor miracles.

John: I'd say it earned you a place of honour in our history. And now you're at it again. I understand that you've personally sewn the entire Stonewall 25 Rainbow Flag. I understand also that it will require thousands of people just to carry it.

Gilbert: Ten thousand actually. At least that many is needed to carry a flag that's a full mile long.

John: How did you come about the idea of a Gay and Lesbian flag?

Gilbert: It was an idea I came up with in April of 1978. We were planning for San Francisco's annual pride parade and the committee was looking for some way to brighten it up. We already had pink triangles but it was a symbol put on us by our enemies. It was not something emerging from ourselves, or from our own creative efforts.

1978 was a pinnacle period of our power as Gay and Lesbian people in San Francisco. Harvey Milk had become our Supervisor and a quarter of a million people were turning out for our Stonewall commemorations. We needed something colourful and grand. The idea of our own special flag seemed to me to be the perfect answer. The rainbow connected us to nature, I thought, and it had a certain mysticism about it. The colours represented all of who we are as a diverse people. It all seemed so logical. That was it. It just happened.

John: How did you go about displaying your first flags?

Gilbert: Our intent was to use them in decorating the Civic Center by flying them from 20 flag poles out front of city hall. I had to enlist volunteer help to produce them on time.

John: Where did you make them?

Gilbert: Those first flags were assembled at the San Francisco Gay Center which was located nearby on Grove Street. It was a unique place in itself and full of memories of those times. We obtained the best material we could find. Then we dyed the fabric ourselves to get the various colours we wanted....

John: I attended the San Francisco parade that year and remember that they looked somewhat different than the current version.

Gilbert: You're right. There are six different colour stripes in the rainbow flag, but that first year we had eight. The following year, in '79, we dropped two, the colours pink and turquoise. The flags became immediately popular so to meet the demand we decided to mass produce them. Not only did it look better with only six colours, it was easier and less expensive to reproduce....

John: Who actually made them?

Gilbert: We started an open search of flag makers and, after checking out a number of places, we settled on the Paramount Flag

Company of San Francisco. Mark Renny, the founder, was very supportive of our movement and we discovered that an open and wonderful Gay man was vice president of the company. We hit it off well from the beginning. I convinced them there was a market and they would be producing them in ever increasing numbers.

We started out with several sizes ranging from the small desk size to the common 3'x5'. In no time this flag was seen flying all over San Francisco — out front of both businesses and private homes.

John: When did it become recognised as an 'authentic flag' by the International Flag Association?

Gilbert: That was in 1986. The proposal was presented by Jim Ferrigan, a Paramount employee, who was an active vexillographic flag collector and scholar. Shortly after the flag's official recognition by the IFA, Paramount was bought out by others.

John: How do you feel about the many objects and interpretations that pick up on the rainbow theme?

Gilbert: It's great! It's a ubiquitous design that can be used in countless ways. It's been an odyssey for me that never ceases to amaze. It was easy to let go of the flag as being somehow 'mine'. It pleases me greatly to see how so many people seem to love their rainbow flags.

John: Have you ever made other flags than those first rainbow ones and this mile-long one?

Gilbert: Oh yes. In 1977 I made one that spelled out 'Gay Power', and I've also made a number of banners for various protests. Then in '84 due to the Rainbow Flag's popularity, I was asked to create a U.S. flag display at the Democratic Party Convention. During the convention itself I was disappointed by the narrowness of the politics in the venue decorated by myself. Later I designed the flag decor for San Francisco's Moscone Center. I especially enjoyed including the Rainbow Flag for display on the front of the building.

Then in 1989, for the 20th anniversary of Stonewall, I made some rainbow flags in

Continued next page

Origins of the Rainbow Flag — continued

electric day glo colours. They came out kind of weird so I never made more.

John: Now this largest of all Rainbow Flags will be paraded through Manhattan thanks in large measure to the Stadtlanders Foundation. How did this come about?

Gilbert: Well, Cleve Jones, the founder of the NAMES Project AIDS quilt wanted me to do something special with him around the 25th anniversary of Stonewall. It was May of '93 and Cleve had been hired by the Stadtlanders as a consultant. Together we came up with the mile-long idea. From the start the Stadtlanders Foundation has been

overwhelmingly supportive. They've backed us in countless ways including incredible public relations and press outreach.

John: What's been the response from the public in general? Has the community been responsive with the fund raising efforts?

Gilbert: It's been overwhelming. Our goal is to raise a half million dollars for AIDS services and we're well on the way. Thousands have already signed up to carry the flag. Their \$50 donations keep pouring in and donors can designate how they want their contributions to be spent. Their pledge entitles them not only to the privilege of being one of the bearers but also affords them

the opportunity to take home a piece of the massive flag when the march is over.

John: So it's true it's going to be cut up.

Gilbert: That's right. This solves the problem of what to do with a mile-long flag when the festivities are over, besides it creates a wonderful, personal memento. The Archives will of course be given a section of the flag for your preservation efforts. It will have two lives, the making of it and the unmaking of it.

'Stonewall', the book and film — continued from p.4

didn't have such rich sources to draw upon as a well-researched account 23 years on.

Much of the fresh material has come from oral history conducted by Duberman and others with those who had first-hand experience with the Stonewall rebellion. No doubt many who were once reticent about their involvement in Stonewall have, with the passage of time, become more prepared to speak about it. Indeed some no doubt feel proud to record their presence at Stonewall where they once felt fear or at least a need for circumspection. It is interesting however that one person who has intimate knowledge of the Mafia's connections with the Stonewall Inn and other New York gay bars, still would only allow Duberman to use pseudonyms for the safety of all concerned.

The book is also a valuable addition to the literature on the pre-Stonewall political movement in America, and it is in this respect that I believe the film was most deficient. Duberman had the historical grasp to acknowledge the achievements of the early gay movement, conceding their modest aims compared with what followed, and acknowledging some of their mistakes and follies, but without demeaning the risk-takers who got the ball rolling. In its dramatisation of the very real contrast between pre- and post-Stonewall gay politics, I thought the film opted for unsympathetic cardboard caricature of the pre-Stonewall politicians.

Duberman acknowledges that his ability to tell the pre-Stonewall story in some detail is due to his being granted access to two major archives still in private hands: those of Foster Gunnison, Jr (who is one of the six subjects of the book) and William B Kelley. Some fascinating detail comes out of these collections, especially on the conflicts within the homophile movement and later between and within the radical and moderate arms of Gay Lib, and the impact of *personal* conflicts on the politics of the various groups. And any reader with an appetite for Duberman's detail should not miss his endnotes. This is definitely a book to be read with two bookmarks.

Duberman is not afraid to show that his sources sometimes conflict — imperfect memory, and desire to embellish an event of such mythical status as Stonewall has become are both

formidable obstacles to historical veracity. I admire the way Duberman has woven his vast array of sources together, suspended judgment where the facts do not support any conclusion (eg. the unresolved and controversial question of what event, if there was a single event, triggered the riot), and offered reasoned judgment where subjectivity remains in the face of conflicting or sparse evidence (FBI infiltration of gay groups before and after Stonewall, Mafia links of families which controlled or owned particular New York bars).

I was prompted to read Duberman's book only after seeing the film, feeling a bit dissatisfied with its story-line and wondering what had been left out from the book or changed along the way. In reading the book, I became aware how vastly different the purposes of the two projects were. Duberman set out to write an authoritative account of Stonewall and the early American movement, focusing on individual participants' telling their own stories. The film set out to entertain and inform, with the emphasis on entertainment, but trying also to keep faith with the Stonewall story as Duberman's characters told it. I felt Duberman's method succeeded admirably as a work of social history with a human touch, but much was inevitably lost in the translation to screen.

I read one interview with the film maker which spoke rather disparagingly about the book for its scholarly attention to detail. It didn't make for good screenplay, and was all a bit too political. From a commercial film maker's point of view, I suppose that's understandable, but in down-playing the politics yet sticking with Duberman's overall framework, the personal and political sub-plots seemed to vie for attention, and in the end distracted from each other. Duberman's book might have translated better as a documentary, in the style of the 1970s film *Word is Out* and other documentaries about gay and lesbian lives before Stonewall. But for the film to have worked as infotainment, it needed a stronger story-line with Stonewall as backdrop. The film had some funny and poignant moments, but for me, it provided only a foretaste of what Duberman's book actually delivered.

Gary Jaynes

TOURING GRANT FOR 'NOT A PASSING PHASE' LESBIAN EXHIBITION

BOOK LAUNCH

As mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, the tapes of interviews which formed the basis of Dino's book have been donated to ALGA on a partially-restricted basis.

We also remind potential donors to ALGA that their material can still be extremely valuable even if it duplicates existing holdings. Without duplicates, donations of the above sort from one archive to another would not be possible.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP — YOUR THOUGHTS

**SEE OVERLEAF FOR ARTICLE AND PROFORMA
TO CANVAS MEMBERS' OPINIONS**

LIFE MEMBERSHIP — WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS?

At the most recent Annual General Meeting (29 November 1995), there was discussion of a suggestion put to the committee (by a non-member) that a category of life membership of ALGA be created for people who were prepared to pay \$1,000 up front — or some variation of this idea. In discussion various points were raised:

- that the concept of 'life membership' should be reserved for recognition of service to the archives
- there could still be some other form of membership, perhaps titled 'contributing membership' open to those who wished to support the archives financially, although such forms of membership would not be tax deductible (only gifts, not tagged for membership or any other purpose, are eligible for tax deductibility)
- a category of membership which is tied to larger ability to pay might carry an expectation of different voting rights or other influence; it could also be seen to advantage higher income earners, and be indirectly biased towards male members.

It was agreed that the views of the ALGA membership on this matter should be canvassed, to see what support there is for the concept. We would like to hear from members and we ask you to let us know in writing about your feelings and suggestions. A proforma for feedback appears below, or write us a letter if you would prefer.

News from other archives—continued from page 6
major three month exhibition of gay and lesbian histories, 'Pass It On', in conjunction with the Toronto Historical Board at Banking Hall, one of the city's renowned heritage sites.

CLGA are publishers of *Our Own Voices: A Directory of Lesbian and Gay Periodicals, 1980-1990, Including the Complete Holdings of the Canadian Gay Archives*. Compiled by Alan V. Miller. 1992. 704 pp. Can.\$40.00 (individuals), Can.\$50.00 (Institutions). Available CLGA, Box 639 Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1G2.

Source: *Lesbian and Gay Archivist* (Newsletter of the CLGA), February 1995

June Mazer Collection says No to USC option

The Los Angeles-based June L Mazer Lesbian Collection, founded in 1981, has rescinded a decision to move into a new building at the University of Southern California (San Diego). Previously it had planned to share a building at USC with the ONE Institute/International Gay and Lesbian Archives. However the Mazer Collection Board and volunteers unanimously decided that their \$40,000 - \$50,000 share of the \$473,000 renovation costs (triple the initial projection) was too much given that they would have no more space than they do in their current Hollywood location, and their tenancy was only guaranteed for 18 months (originally agreed to be five years).

For more information about the Collection, see the new Mazer Lesbian Collection WEB site on the Internet at <http://home.earthlink.net/~labonsai>.

Source: *Press Release* from the Mazer Collection, 15 March 1996

LIFE MEMBERSHIP — MEMBERS FEEDBACK

I support the concept of 'Life Membership' being tied to recognition of service to ALGA

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

Comment _____

I support the concept of 'Contributing membership' based on ability to pay an amount larger than the standard membership fee.

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

Comment _____

Any other comments? _____

Name (optional) _____

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