

▼ *alga* NEWSLETTER

Australian Lesbian & Gay Archives Inc
PO Box 124, Parkville, Vic 3052
Newsletter No 9, December 1993
ISSN 1037-3756

EDITORIAL

1993 has been a year in which some big strides have been made in funding the physical resources of the Archives.

Over the past year and a half the Archives has raised over \$6,000 to purchase equipment which we believe will greatly enhance the accessibility of the collection. About \$5000 went into the purchase of a computer and indexing software, and this month (December) we purchased a second-hand photocopier (\$1,000), which we believe will be invaluable to users of the collection.

In addition to the many individuals who have made financial contributions we are indebted to the support of the Parkestone Association in South Australia for their donation of \$550 towards the purchase of the software and \$1000 towards the computer, and to the ALSO Foundation whose donation of \$1,000 made the purchase of the photocopier possible. We also thank the 'kind fairy' who donated a transcribing machine which will be much appreciated by those involved in bringing to life the Archives' considerable bank of oral history tapes.

Another piece of good news this year, which we hope will assist in future fund-raising, was the approval by the Taxation Office of donations of money to the Archives as tax deductible.

With urgent equipment purchases behind us (database back-up facilities and scanner remain on our wish list for the medium term), it is a good time to re-assess other funding priorities. There are various maintenance expenses associated with the Archives and one of the larger of these is binding of periodicals. An article on page 2 looks at this in more detail.

There are also some preservation and security measures that have never been implemented because of lack of funds. Readers of this newsletter will remember that an environmental survey of the Archives was conducted in 1991 by Carolyn McLennan, then a student of Preventive Conservation at the University of Canberra (see Newsletter No 7, October 1991). Carolyn's report identified various short-term and longer-term recommendations for the Archives, and it has been a matter of concern that even some of the short-term recommendations have not been acted upon because of more pressing financial commitments. Our fund-raising in 1994 will be returning to these basic considerations.

Goals for 1994

A recent meeting of the Committee of Management decided on other priorities for 1994:

- the Oral History project to be focused on Melbourne's gay and lesbian social venues up to the mid-1970s, with the aim of preparing an article for publication by the end of 1994.
- systems to be set in place to ensure indexing of the feature articles of Australia's major gay and lesbian magazines (ongoing maintenance as well as the backlog) - see 'Making it easier to find things', page 4 of this issue.

You will hear more about these plans in the months to come, but as always, Archives supporters are welcome to contact us first-hand for information. Telephone President, Mark Riley on (03) 534 8578, or Secretary, Graham Carbery on (03) 499 6334, or visit us on a Thursday open night.

NEW ACQUISITIONS

Well-known Sydney artist David McDiarmid donated a set of his posters, several t-shirts with his designs on them, plus a limited edition copy of his book *Toxic Queen*. David also passed on some material from his long-time friend Peter Tully.

Included among the large number of overseas periodicals received were quite a few early issues not already held in our collection. For example, missing numbers of *The Advocate* (Los Angeles), *Gai Pied* (Paris), *Gay News* (UK), to mention a few.

Each year we receive many duplicates of Australian periodicals. These are not thrown out (unless we have more than four copies of an issue) but are kept so that we can swap material with overseas Archives, and where appropriate pass them on to libraries and groups within Australia.

This year we added substantially to our collection of gay fiction books because of some large donations. We have not been actively collecting books but over the years the collection has developed into a sizeable one, particularly our reference collection.

One interesting donation was a collection of, *Physique*, a pictorial history of the famous Los Angeles Male Model Agency, which began in 1945, and is still going today. Ostensibly for people interested in body-building, its

homo-erotic photographs made it popular among camp men in the U.S., particularly in the 1940s, 50s and 60s.

Another donation along the same lines came to us via the National Library in Canberra. Earlier this year they received a large donation of Australian and overseas male erotica. They kept the Australian magazines but as they do not collect overseas material they contacted us to see if we would be interested.

About 3 years ago, as part of a huge donation of material, we received two tea-chests full of newspaper clippings and newsletters. Because of the amount of material coming in to the Archives at the time this material was stored and not sorted until earlier this year. Well, what a surprise! Not only were there hundreds and hundreds of newspaper clippings we did not have, some going back to the early 1970s, but there were copies of several early newsletters we did not have, such as Married Homosexual Group (1977), which is now known as GAMMA.

The Archives has received copies of a number of new lesbian and/or gay male periodicals which commenced in 1993. They include:

Brother Sister (Brisbane). Free fortnightly newspaper for Brisbane's gay and lesbian communities.

Burn. Free monthly magazine for lesbians and gay men, published in Sydney and distributed nationally.

GLAD Newsletter. Occasional newsletter of Gays and Lesbians Against Discrimination (Melbourne)

Homestay Newsletter. Occasional newsletter of the Victorian branch of the International Home-stay program.

Hot & Sweaty. Occasional, free, gay male publication catering to Sydney's social scene.

Lesbian Space Adventurers. Occasional newsletter of the Sydney Lesbian Space Project which aims to establish a lesbian centre in Sydney (see report page 4).

Lesbian Territory (Darwin). Monthly newsletter for Wimmin only communicating pro-lesbian and pro-wimmin attitudes, values, ideals and activities

Lilac. Monthly newsletter for Tasmanian lesbians.

Out in the North. Bi-monthly magazine for lesbians and gay men in North Queensland.

PanDA (Poofers and Dykes Advocate). Monthly newspaper for Canberra's lesbian and gay communities.

SMASH. Newsletter of Sydney Men and Sexual Health - a long term study of the impact of HIV and AIDS on men in Sydney who have sex with other men.

BINDING OF PERIODICALS

Around this time each year the Archives turns its mind to binding the previous year's periodicals. In January 1994 about 15 periodicals will be sent off for the old stitch, glue and guillotine treatment, to return resplendent in their solid green cover and gold lettering.

Binding of periodicals is an important archival safeguard, although of course not a fail-safe one, against deterioration, loss and, to a degree, mishandling.

Our periodicals collection now exceeds 600 titles and represents not only a major part of the total Archives collection, but a large financial investment. This is due to the cost of binding - between \$25 and \$40 per volume and at this time we have just on 120 bound volumes. We spend about \$400 each year on binding, but in recent years this has not been sufficient to cover all the binding required.

Most of our periodicals are newsletters, and these are not bound. Of the many magazines received by the Archives, priority has been given to the regular binding of major current Australasian periodicals: *Melbourne Star Observer*, *Sydney Star Observer*, *Brother Sister*, *Lesbian Network*, *Lesbians on the Loose*, *West Wide Observer*, *Queensland Pride*, *Capital Q*, *OutRage*, *Campaign* and *Out!* (NZ). Significant defunct magazines have also been bound: *Camp Ink*, *William & John*, *Lesbian News*, *Gay Community News* (Melb), *Gay Changes*, *Gay Information*, *Laughing Medusa*.

With the proliferation of gay and lesbian media in Australia over the past few years (see opposite), the pressure on the binding budget will become even greater.

Only a few non-Australasian periodicals are bound. *Christopher Street* (NY) is the only current one, but there are bound volumes of defunct publications such as Canada's *The Body Politic* (complete set, 1971-87) and the Boston weekly, *Gay Community News* (1971-1984). Eight volumes of Boston *GCN* and three volumes of *Christopher Street* need to be bound, but these will have to wait until funds become available.

WE NOW HAVE TAX DEDUCTIBLE STATUS FOR DONATIONS

It has been a long time coming, but at last the Taxation Department has given approval for donations to the Archives to be tax deductible. It is important to remember that membership subscriptions are **not** tax deductible. As well as donations of \$2 or more being deductible, donations of material **may** also be tax deductible. If someone wishes to make a donation of material which they think has a significant monetary value, it has to be valued by two independent valuers (at the donor's expense), and the average of the two valuations is the figure the Taxation Department will accept as the value of the gift for the purpose of the tax deduction.

We are hopeful that our fund-raising efforts will be made a little easier now. We are also pleased that our current financial contributors will now be able to offset their financial support against their tax.

People who want more information about donating to the Archives should contact Treasurer Rob Thurling on (03) 497 3519.

ADDITIONS TO OUR BOOK LIBRARY

Ken Atkins has undertaken the task of organising our library and has written the following comments on this year's new arrivals:

Four important books were added to the Lesbian section. The first is 'Voices of Vashti', an anthology of articles selected from the Melbourne women's newspaper, 'Vashti's Voice', 1972-1981. These articles present the viewpoint of the Women's Liberation Movement on Women's Liberation. The second is the 'Lesbian Periodical Index', a 400 page bibliography, compiled by Clare Potter, from lesbian publications and writings in the USA from 1947 to 1986. The third book, 'Caught Looking', is about feminism, pornography and censorship, and was published by the F.A.C.T. Book Committee, New York in 1986. The last one is 'Kink', a 130 page paperback containing a vibrant mixture of pieces by four Australian writers, each in his/her own way vigorously challenging the reader.

For the autobiographical section we have four new additions. In, 'Bi, any other Name', which deals with bisexuality, seventy-five US bisexuals, diverse in race, class and lifestyles, relate their life histories. In 'Feeling Our Way', skilfully edited by D. Vadasz and J. Lipp, Australian gay men talk about relationships in their lives. 'Fairyland', a semi-autobiographical novel by Sumner Locke Elliot, is about a young camp man in Sydney in the 1940s and 50s. 'The Gender Trap', is the story of Chris and Cathy, possibly the first transsexual parents. The book tells how they fell in love, had a child and then decided to switch sexes.

Among the additions to our collection of biographies is Stuart Timmons', 'The Trouble With Harry', a lively and informative account of the life of Harry Hay, the founder of the Mattachine Society. Two other notable additions are David Marr's biography of Patrick White, and the first volume of Robert Skidelsky's biography of John Maynard Keynes. Standing mid-way between autobiography and biography is a poignant book, 'Someone You Know'. The author, Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, a heterosexual married woman, gives a sensitive account of her friendship with Jon, a gay man dying from AIDS.

To the reference section we have added 'Hidden From History', a Penguin paperback containing a series of articles on different aspects of gay and lesbian history. We now have another two books by Jeffrey Weeks, 'Homosexual Politics in England from the 19th Century to the Present', and 'Sex, Politics and Society'. 'Gay Roots' (Vol 2), is an anthology of American gay history, sex politics and culture, edited by Winston Leyland and published by Gay Sunshine Press.

Our S&M section has been fleshed out by some new additions. These include three collections of short stories on S&M edited by Larry Townsend, and a reprint of the original 1973 edition of the 'Leathermen's Handbook' by

Larry Townsend. The inner workings of the leather and S&M scene is well covered in 'Leather-folk', a book of 28 essays edited by Mark Thomson.

The work of Tom of Finland is represented by the following works: 'Tom of Finland Retrospective' (Nos 1 & 2), a portfolio of Tom of Finland drawings, three volumes of cartoons, and a book 'Tom of Finland' by Durk Dehner, which contains biographical notes.

CLIPPINGS COLLECTION IN DANGER!

Much of the credit for the Archives having such an extensive collection of newspaper clippings must go to *OutRage* magazine. For many years they subscribed to a national clipping service and passed them on to us when they had finished with them. Unfortunately for us they cancelled their subscription late last year (1992) and this has meant a large reduction in the number of clippings coming in to the Archives.

The only other gay or lesbian publication we know that subscribes to a clipping service is *Sydney Star Observer* so we approached them. We were told that their clippings are passed on to Gay and Lesbian Action in Media Association (GLAMA). The first two letters we wrote to GLAMA went unanswered, but we recently obtained the name of one of the group members and have written to him direct, so hopefully we'll get a positive response soon.

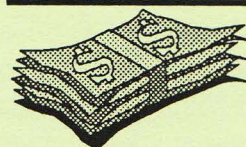
It would be a great pity if the collection fell away. We have close to 45,000 clippings at present from all major Australian newspapers, and many regional ones. Researchers often comment on the value of this resource.

DID YOU KNOW?

Q. When and where was the first person executed in Australia?

A. In 1727 - 61 years before settlement - a Dutch merchant ship was wrecked just off the coast of Western Australia, near where Geraldton is today. The crew survived and managed to reach an island off the coast. Shortly after their arrival two of the crew, who were in a sexual relationship, were discovered having sex. They were convicted of sodomy and sentenced to be banished to separate small islands nearby with no food or water, where they starved to death.

This information was passed on to us Martyn Goddard who was told about it by Sydney archivist and historian, Robert French.



**Have you renewed your
1994 ALGA membership?**

**Cheques for \$15 / \$2 to ALGA,
PO Box 124, Parkville, Vic 3052**

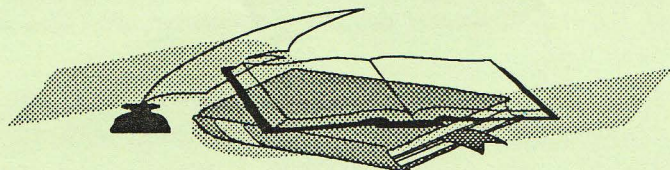
MAKING IT EASIER TO FIND THINGS IN THE COLLECTION

Over the past year and a half, the Archives has committed a large share of its fundraising efforts to enable the development of effective indexing tools. In 1992 we raised more than \$3200 to buy a computer, and this year we raised \$1850 to buy *InMagic Plus*, a special library software package which is suitable for our needs.

With a little help from our friends (thanks Wayne, Rob and Gary), we have now set up the package and begun indexing our collection of Australian periodicals. In order to make the job manageable we have decided to begin by only indexing feature articles. We believe these are likely to be the main source of interest to users of the collection.

We have set this as one of our two main goals for 1994 (see Editorial, p1), and in the early part of the year you will see publicity in the gay and lesbian press aimed at enlisting helpers. Keywording and data entry aren't everybody's cup of tea, but with the benefit of the Canadian Gay Archives' extensive thesaurus of gay-related terms (modified for our needs) and a friendly and flexible software package, we are confident that in 1994 we can make a real dent in the backlog, as well as get under way some systems to keep the momentum going.

People with a special interest in one publication are very welcome to focus their energies on keywording just that publication. They could do the keywording without being involved in the data entry if that were their preference. The task calls for some teamwork - keyworders all doing their own thing would be a recipe for chaos! - and there will be briefing opportunities for anyone who would like to be involved in this vital aspect of the Archives' operation.



COMMUNITY CENTRE AND LIBRARY FOR SYDNEY

An advertisement in the 17 September 1993 issue of *Sydney Star Observer* caught my eye. It was from *Pride*, a body set up in Sydney whose aim is to establish a permanent community centre for lesbians and gay men in Sydney. The ad was an invitation to people to attend a public meeting to develop strategies for the setting up of an archive/library at the centre.

I telephoned the contact person, Malcolm Thorne, to find out more and to offer our assistance.

I spoke to Malcolm recently to find out how the meeting went and he said it was well attended and a lot of interest was expressed. The meeting decided to establish a relationship with the Powerhouse Museum and the Mitchell Library and to deposit archival material with

them. Whatever material they don't want will be retained by *Pride*. It appears that the *Pride* collection will primarily consist of books and periodicals, however the role of the archive/library will become clearer in the coming months.

The idea of creating a lesbian and gay community centre in Sydney has been around since the early 1970s. The inability to raise sufficient funds to buy a suitable property was the main reason for the failure of previous attempts.

It was in 1989 that the idea of a lesbian and gay centre was resurrected and *Pride* was formed. The ability of *Pride* to raise large amounts of money, particularly through its dance parties, has been the key to its success so far. It would appear that the idea of a community centre, conceived so long ago, now has widespread support and will become a reality very soon.

Graham Carbery

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE LESBIAN SPACE PROJECT

The inspired vision of the founders of the Lesbian Space Project (LSP) in Sydney to raise \$250,000 to establish a lesbian centre in central Sydney has been realised.

The Project began in December 1992 and was based on receiving 500 cheques of \$500 each to meet the target of \$250,000 by December 1993. Sydney's lesbian community got behind the idea as can be seen by the success of a LSP concert at the Sydney Town Hall on 10 December 1993 which raised more than \$20,000. The Project was also greatly helped by the generous assistance of one woman who gave \$50,000.

The search now begins to find a suitable building. When established, the centre will be "a lesbian-specific environment, administered by an elected committee, and include dance and performance facilities, a café, an information and networking office, a pool table and businesses".

Interestingly the Committee of Sydney's proposed Pride Centre (a mixed gay and lesbian centre) and the Caretaker Committee of the LSP recently held a joint public meeting to develop links. We wish both bodies every success.

MISSING ISSUES - CAN YOU HELP?

Wicked Women (Sydney), 2 (1987), 4 (1988), 7 (1989), 10 (1991).

Labrys (Melb.), 4

Sydney Star Observer, 18, 19, 25, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 36, 37, 39, 45, 49, 50, 51, 62, 63, 64, 65, 69, 76.

Gayline Newsletter (Adelaide), 1-111.

In some cases the missing issues are the only reason we are delaying binding of the periodical. Call Graham Carbery if you can help fill any gaps, so to speak, tel: (03) 499 6334.