

2000 - 2010



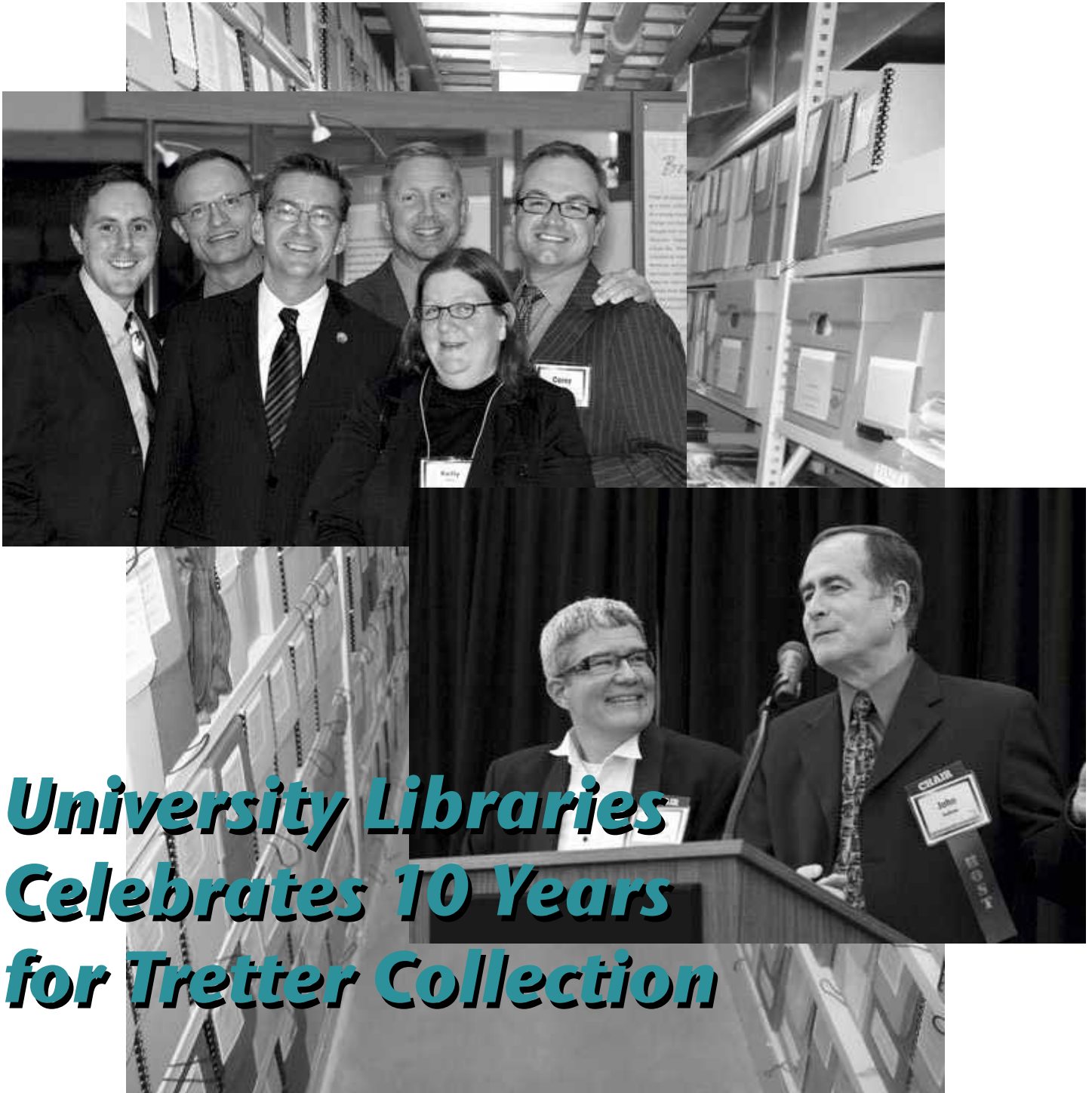
January, 2011
Volume 6 Number 1

TRETTER LETTER


UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
LIBRARIES
Archives and Special Collections

NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE TRETTER COLLECTION

Special 10th Anniversary Edition



University Libraries Celebrates 10 Years for Tretter Collection

FROM THE CHAIR

Saving Our Lives

By the time you read this, our 10th Anniversary celebrations in November will have passed. Our exhibit, "Saving Our Lives" (some of which is featured in this issue of the Tretter Letter) was a very important exhibition of some of the highlights found in the collection. I do hope you were able to come and see the displays. I am grateful to the Andersen Library Special Collections staff for their support to make this special anniversary possible.

What has struck me over these months since June and the annual Pride celebration is a feeling on some days that we have not progressed as far as we would like to think we have. The almost-daily "news" that GLBT kids and young adults (or even those perceived to be so) are bullied and take their own lives as a result of that bullying is not really news to those of us who lived those lives or do work in our youth communities. (What is news is the fact that the media is finally paying attention to this phenomena.) Indeed, even for many adults, the passage of time or the move to a major urban area, or any other solution, may not salve the wounds we suffered as young people and may still suffer today. It is difficult, at best, to feel a sense of self-worth when you hear on a daily basis you are "less

than" others: not suitable to marry a partner of your choosing, not suitable to serve our country, not suitable to participate in religious rituals, not suitable to adopt children, and so on. It should surprise no one that such attitudes are not only depressing, but it's likely they foster hurtful and hateful behavior on the part of others.



Linnea A. Stenson, Ph.D.

So where do we go from here? How do we move forward? I think of that great old feminist phrase "Don't Mourn. Organize!" I suppose for us, it might be revised to say "Don't Mourn. Collect!" A great part of what drives the Tretter Collection is the desire to document all our lives in all our ways of being, our community members and happy occasions, as well as those individuals who strive to harm us in some way and the material that they use to do so. All of these pieces of material culture tell a story about our lives, a story that is—yes, at times depressing. But it also tells stories about our willingness to survive as individuals and communities. How we do so, who allies themselves with us. It is quite literally about saving our lives.

You Can Help!

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

Thank you.

TRETTER LETTER

NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF
THE TRETTER COLLECTION

<http://special.lib.umn.edu/rare/tretter.phtml>

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Tretter Letter January, 2011

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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- Prof. Richard T. Isaacson – Minneapolis, MN

Donor List, continued on page 7

From the field....



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

By R. Arvid Nelsen

I would like to introduce myself as a new member of the Tretter Collection family, as head of the newly formed administrative unit, Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts, where the Tretter Collection resides.

A little about myself: a native of Minnesota, I grew up in Grand Marais before attending the University of Minnesota as an undergraduate, where I earned a bachelor's degree in Greek and Latin. As an undergrad I participated in what was then known as the University Gay Community (UGC) and took one of the first GLBT-themed courses taught at the U, "Homophobia" taught by Professor Jacqueline Zita.

In the 90s I participated one season in the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus where I had the pleasure of being a part of the recording "Sing Out." I left the Twin Cities for graduate school at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where I received a master's degree in Classics before transferring to the School of Library and Information Studies for my MLIS.

In 2002 I was a fellow at Rare Book School at the University of Virginia and then my first professional library position took me to the University of California, San Diego

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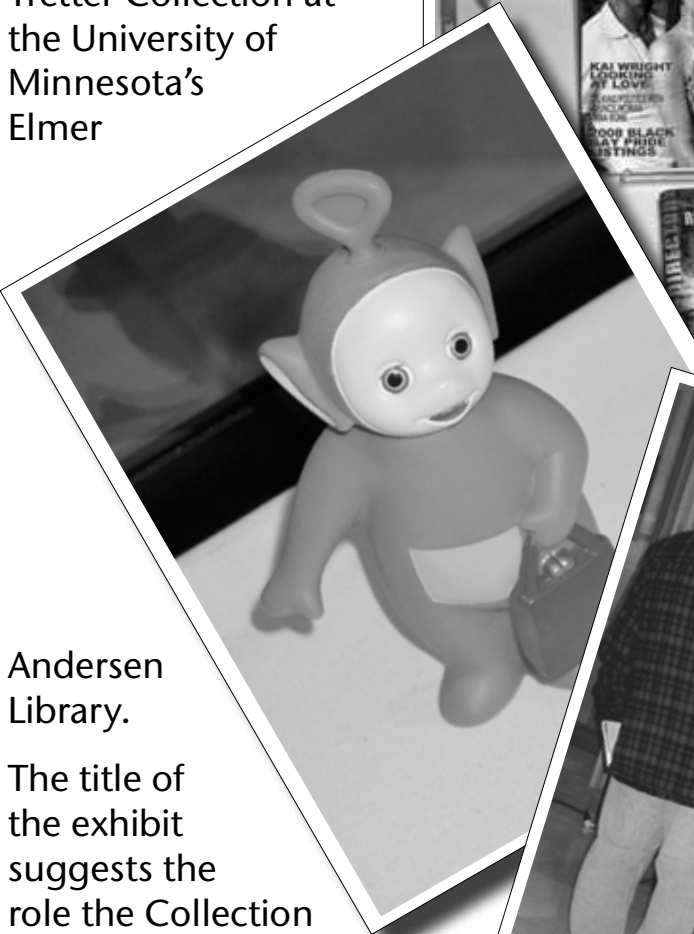
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The Tretter Collection Marks 10 Years

Saturday, November 5, 2010 marked the official opening of the Tretter Collection's special exhibit to the public. The exhibit titled "Saving Our Lives" honored the 10th Anniversary of the arrival of the Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection at the University of Minnesota's Elmer

serve as a fundamental act of authoring our own histories.

The exhibit featured a wide range of items including art, print media, books, video recordings, pamphlets, sculpture



Andersen Library.

The title of the exhibit suggests the role the Collection plays in preserving materials that tell the stories of our lives. It also expresses hope that such materials -- when collected and preserved together -- can provide a sense of our history and community, and

and other artifacts. The Saving Our Lives exhibit covered themes related to historical struggles and accomplishments, community heritage, humor and play, our complex variety of

with *Saving Our Lives* Public Exhibit

community identities, and artistic self expression.

Several hundred visitors attended the November 5th exhibit opening.

Visitors were offered a rare glimpse into the University archive facilities with guided tours of the

subterranean vaults and vast storage facilities.

A number of exhibit attendees also volunteered to record short video messages highlighting their own view of significant

events to be shared with future generations. The event also featured a buffet of catered refreshments as well as Tretter Collection information. Thanks to the many organizers and other volunteers whose hard work made this event a success and inaugurated the second decade of the Tretter Collection's

presence at the University of Minnesota. (cover inset photos courtesy of Heather Spear)



Remembering Our Lives: A Visit to Arcadie

by Greg Gronseth

Possibly due to the influence its founder, André Baudry, exerted in the organization, Arcadie continued to operate for several years longer than homophile groups in other countries. Thus it was possible for me to attend their weekend dances on several occasions when in Paris in 1977 and 1980.

Located on a side street in an historically working-class area of Paris, northeast of the city center, Arcadie's headquarters were somewhat removed from the commercial Gay scene. It was housed in a building that had been in use at least as far back as the 1850's as a music hall or vaudeville and, prior to its acquisition by Arcadie in 1969, as a cinema. When you passed through the main door, you found yourself in the lobby. There was a small glass case, presumably originally used for selling refreshments, which now contained a selection of homophile booklets and copies of their magazine for sale and was manned by M. Baudry himself. To the right, a staircase led up to the balcony, which still contained the rows of seats from its theater days. Small clusters of people could retire to the balcony to sit and chat or to look down at the action on the main floor. The original seating had all been removed from the main floor, which was primarily left open to leave room for dancing. The only furniture consisted of a few small, 4-person tables lined up along the walls where people could sit with their drinks. The small bar was located under the balcony. The stage was still there, although it would only be used when M. Baudry would go up to make a few brief announcements or welcoming remarks. The hall was otherwise rather austere and unadorned, and the lights were kept completely up.



So, the impression was less that of a commercial dance club than that of a community recreation center, which it arguably was.

The customers of the club were a very mixed group of men. They included older men who presumably had belonged to Arcadie since the 1950's, such as a portly, gray-haired man with a handlebar moustache who came dressed in a tweedy suit jacket over a cardigan sweater. Perhaps lured in part by the fact that Arcadie was perhaps the only Gay dance club where you could get a beer for less than \$10 (in 1970's dollars), it also attracted a fair number of young people. However, they tended to be more casually dressed than their more fashionable counterparts at the discos on the left bank or around the rue Ste. Anne. I never saw any



women there.

The age range of the clientele was reflected in the eclectic nature of the dance music. A contemporary disco tune might be followed by a ballroom dance such as a tango or paso doble. However, the most unique activity at Arcadie was the "danse du tapis" or "dance of the carpet". This apparently was derived from a game of that name that normally would be played at children's birthday parties.

People who chose to participate would form a circle, each placing his hands on the shoulders of the person in front of him. In the middle, there'd be one person holding a small carpet square. While a medley of old French



vaudeville songs was being played from the sound system, he would select someone from the circle and they would kneel on the carpet square in the middle and kiss each other.

The original person would then join the circle while the person he selected would choose another person to go to the center to kneel and kiss. Then this person would bring yet another person into the center. This would continue for as long as the music hall chansons continued playing.

Although the activities at Arcadie's dances probably would strike most people as rather hokey, the "danse du tapis" in particular, its lack of sophistication was part of its charm. That, coupled with the fact that it was one of the last remnants of an earlier period of Gay culture, made it, at least for me, one of the most interesting places in the Parisian Gay scene to visit.

The Tretter Collection is pleased to have acquired a complete run of the Arcadie groundbreaking magazine.

New Acquisitions

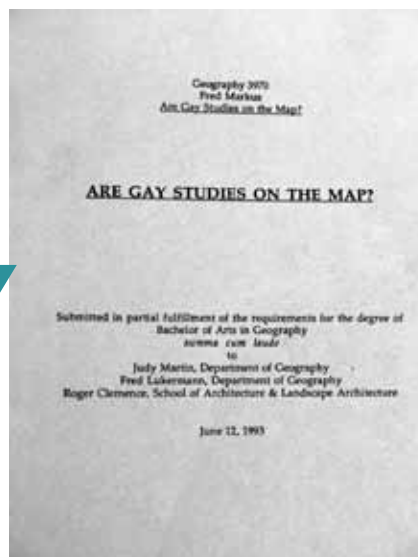


1 The Papers of Jon Yoakam (1947-2009), Professor of Social Work at the College of St. Benedict in Collegetown, therapist, major volunteer with the Youth AIDS Project, and a 1972 graduate of the Chicago Theological Seminary.

2 This whistle and sweatshirt are courtesy Ken Bunch, one of the co-founders of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a San Francisco based theater and community activism group.



3 A thesis paper by Fred Marcus for the Geography Department at the University of Minnesota on mapping the Minneapolis and St. Paul Gay Community. (gift of the author to the archive)



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From the Field, continued from page 3
as a rare book cataloger. While
in San Diego I also served on the
board of the Lambda Archives. In
2007 I returned to Minneapolis as
Archivist for the Charles Babbage
Institute, also here in Andersen
Library.

I have served on the Tretter
Advisory Committee since July
2009, but changes made in June
of this year here in the department
of Archives and Special
Collections have provided me
with an opportunity to serve the
Collection and its communities in
a more formal way. As head of this
new unit, formed from the merger
of the former Special Collections
and Rare Books unit –the Tretter
Collection’s former administrative
home – with the former
Manuscripts Division, I will be able
more directly to support the goals
and activities of the Collection,
its staff, advisory board, and
communities of researchers.

In addition to the Tretter
Collection, this new unit
comprises the Givens Collection
of African American Literature,
the Sherlock Holmes Collections,
Special Collections, Rare Books,
the Performing Arts Archives, the
Upper Midwest Literary Archives,
and the Northwest Architectural
Archives. The merging of these
two units provides opportunities
for a greater deal of professional
support between curators of the
different collections as well as the
ability to capitalize on strengths
of overlapping collections, such
as the performing arts and
bibliographic communities in
Minnesota (to name but two).

It is with great enthusiasm for
this outstanding collection and
the amazing communities in
the region that I look forward to
helping develop and promote the
Tretter Collection in GLBT Studies.