



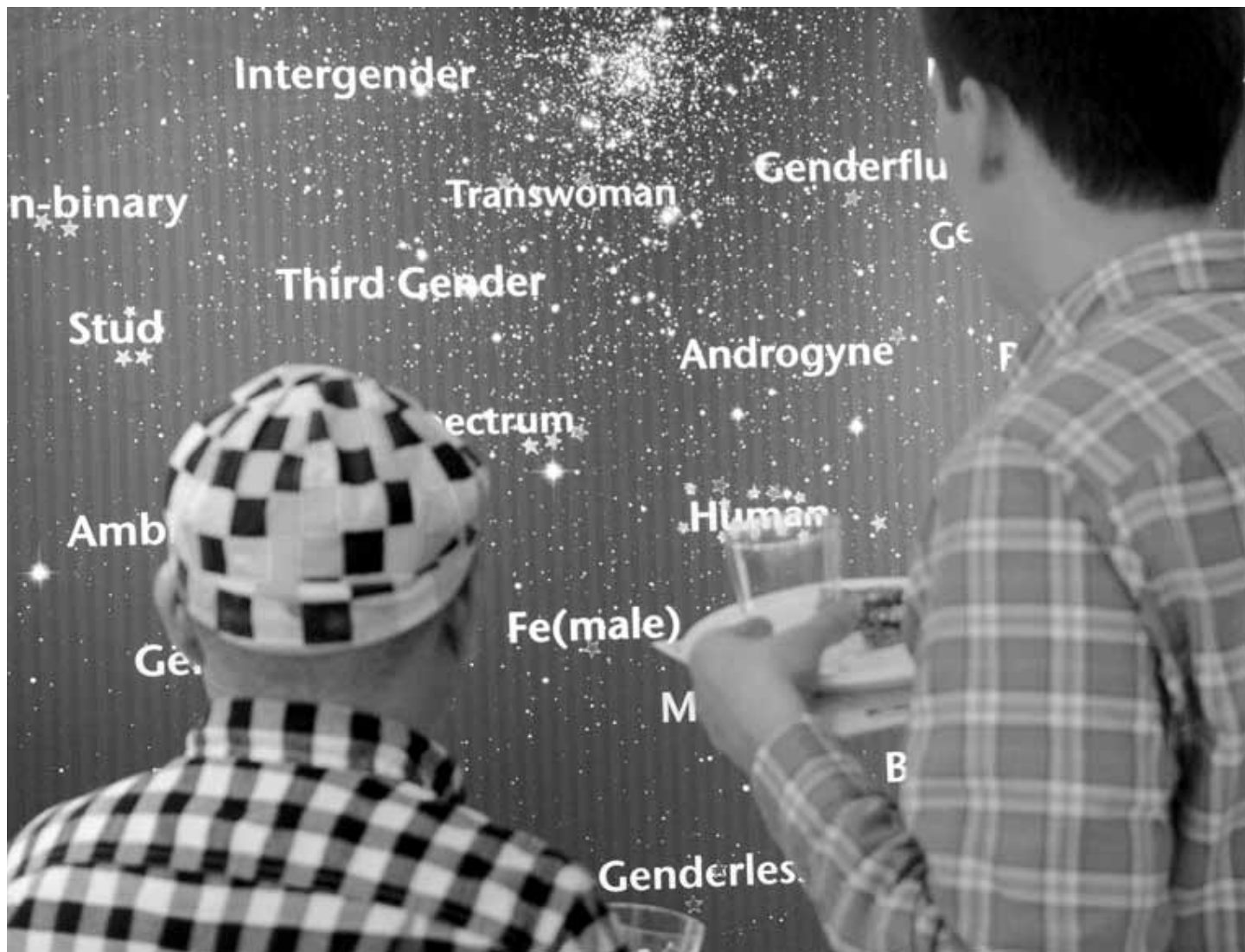
January, 2018  
Volume 13 Number 1

# TRETTER LETTER

NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE TRETTER COLLECTION

  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
**LIBRARIES**  
Archives and Special Collections

## *In Their Own Words* Exhibit Opens



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## FROM THE CURATOR

By Lisa Vecoli

Working in the archive, I have a front row seat to the many times Minnesota has made GLBT History. And last night it happened again – the Tretter Collection's own Andrea Jenkins became the first openly transgender black woman elected to office in the United States, winning a seat on the Minneapolis City Council.\* Andrea will be joined on the City Council by Phillippe Cunningham, a transgender man of color, was also elected to the Minneapolis City Council, making him the first openly transgender black man elected to any office in the United States.

I have an entire PowerPoint presentation about the many ways that Minnesota has lead the nation on the fight for GLBT rights and equality (I clearly need to update that now!). From the formation of a student group at the University of Minnesota before Stonewall, to the first legal same sex marriage in 1971, to the first lesbian feminist bookstore in the U.S., Minnesota and the people that live here have played an important role in GLBT history throughout the decades.

One of the reasons it is so important to have archives is because popular culture has a skewed lens. Even at its best, mainstream narratives focus on men, on the coasts, on urban areas, on white people, on heterosexuals, on the young and the able bodied. What could be more revolutionary or powerful than documenting and preserving the experiences of immigrants, of people of color, of transgender people, of those with disabilities?

Archives have a reputation of being places of quiet and dust. Where things go into storage, rarely to see the light of day. But those of us that work in, or with, archives know that at our best, we are radical and revolutionary gems of resistance to the mainstream narrative. We protect and make available the stories that others refuse to recognize. We value the hidden, the unheard, and the buried. Our mission is to complicate history by bringing a chorus of authentic experiences to mess up the simple narratives.

It is hard to imagine how we could have squeezed much more into the past few months. As you will see in the pages to follow, there has been A LOT going on: a new exhibit; the premiere and broadcast of a documentary; a national award; a major gift to support a Phase 2 for the Tretter Transgender Oral History Project; and all the usual activity of donations arriving and researchers using the collection. It has been a busy and invigorating fall – all under the shadow that I am retiring and Andrea would most likely be leaving to serve on the City Council.

With all of this success and the enormous possibilities ahead, it is a hard moment to walk away. But I'm not going far. And this is a perfect moment for someone with a new vision and fresh energy to take the Tretter Collection into the future. As much as we have accomplished, there is more to do.

*\*You are reading this later, but to allow production time, I am writing this piece on November 8, 2017.*

### You Can Help!

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

Thank you.

**TRETTER  
LETTER**

NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF  
THE TRETTER COLLECTION

<https://www.lib.umn.edu/scr/bm/tretter>

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

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- Lisa Vecoli- Minneapolis, MN
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- Phillip Voight - St Paul, MN
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- Ellen Wold - St Paul, MN
- David Wood - Minneapolis, MN

## From the field....

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

### Tretter Receives Award from the Society of American Archivists

In July the Tretter Collection received a Diversity Award from the Society of American Archivists (SAA). This was the first time in the history of the award that it had been presented to a GLBT themed honoree.



Announcing the award, SAA stated:

“The Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies exemplifies the SAA Diversity Award in multiple ways. Part of the department of Archives and Special Collections at the University of Minnesota Libraries, the archive has 3,500 linear feet of material from around the world documenting the GLBT experience. Throughout its existence, the Tretter Collection has strived to include the voices of those marginalized within the GLBT community. In the past five years, the Tretter Collection has prioritized adding materials from communities of color as well as bi/pan/fluid/omni and transgender/gender queer voices. We were especially impressed by how the Tretter Collection staff brings the collection's diverse contents out of



From the Field, Continued on Page 9

# Tretter Transgender Oral History Project

Lisa Vecoli

This fall has been a remarkable period for the Tretter Transgender Oral History Project. We completed the heart of the Project, we opened a temporary gallery exhibit, we worked on an online exhibit, we received funds for a Phase 2 for the Project, and Andrea Jenkins got a new job. Any one of these events could be an article



Curator Lisa Vecoli and oral historian Andrea Jenkins celebrate the announcement that there would be a Phase 2 for the Project.

in itself so please forgive the shortened descriptions below.

## Andrea Jenkins Moving On:

First, if you are familiar with the Project, you are most likely wondering what is happening with Andrea Jenkins, our oral historian. You may now refer to her as Council Member (Elect) Andrea Jenkins, following her election to the Minneapolis City Council in November. She will be sworn into office in early January, the first openly transgender black woman elected to office in the United States. We congratulate her on her success and wish her all of the best in her new challenging, (more than) full time role. We are sad to see her move on but are forever grateful for the remarkable treasure trove she is leaving

behind.

Andrea worked hard over the past year to be sure that her departure would not have a negative impact on the project. The priority has been to complete the oral histories so that they would all have a consistent interviewer. As of today, 194 interviews are done and we hope by the time you receive the newsletter that all 200 interviews will be complete!

Moving forward, we will have temporary staff working to finish the transcripts, prepare abstracts, and get the interviews posted online to wrap up Phase 1. The timing of the Andrea's departure should allow the work to continue with little noticeable impact.

## Gallery Exhibit:

To show off the success of the Project, we opened a temporary gallery exhibit at Andersen Library in October. We were joined by over 100 community members at the reception to celebrate and enjoy a live performance by Venus DeMars. The gallery exhibit includes several edited videos with clips from the full oral histories in the Project. There is also a timeline of transgender history and a gender galaxy inviting visitors to place themselves near the identity of their choice. The exhibit also features a dozen cases with artifacts and historic print material drawn from the Tretter Collection. The exhibit will be on display until January 31, and the public is invited and welcome to stop in during our open hours (Monday/Tuesday/Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30

p.m. and Wednesday/Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.). There is no fee for the exhibit.

## Online Exhibit:

We have been aware from the beginning that we needed a way to make the Tretter Transgender Oral History Project accessible to a wide range of users. The Project has been so ambitious that it is just too much for most viewers. (It will be the rare researcher who watches all 250 hours of content!) The gallery exhibit is wonderful, but temporary. So, to meet this need, part of the Project included the development of an online exhibit. The online exhibit will feature short edited clips from the full project and supporting content to provide context for the narratives. The exhibit should be online soon (now?) and you may



Oral historian Andrea Jenkins being interviewed by the press about the Project.

# Exhibit Opens - Phase 2 Announced!

find a link on the Tretter Collection website.

tell, and what does it mean? There are always more stories to collect,

in the community, experience with organizing/policy/political activism, an interest in collecting oral histories and the ability to travel. This project will be national in scope and seeks to collect material from transgender/gender queer organizations, GLBT organizations and mainstream organizations working to address challenges around transgender and gender queer issues. Please keep an eye on the Tretter Collection and Transgender Oral History Project Facebook pages to learn when the job is posted.



Speakers at the reception included Curator Lisa Vecoli, Prof. Eli Coleman and University Librarian Wendy Lougee.

## TAWANI FOUNDATION SUPPORTS PHASE 2!!!!

With work on the Tretter Transgender Oral History Project wrapping up, we began to spend time thinking about what comes next. The narratives already collected are largely about identity – how do you define yourself, when did you know, who did you

but with 200 completed, we felt it was time to think about what else was needed.

The more we looked at current events, the more we decided that this is the perfect moment to examine policy, community organizing, and political activism. To help us do this, we approached Tawani Foundation, the major contributor to the work thus far. This October, Tawani agreed to provide a second major gift to support a Tretter Transgender Oral History Project Phase 2! And the exquisite timing allowed us to make the announcement during the reception to celebrate the gallery exhibit.

Phase 2 is expected to begin in 2018, with the hiring of a new staff person. We will be looking for someone with deep roots

We are deeply honored for the opportunity to continue our ground breaking work in adding transgender voices to the archive. Our deepest thanks to Tawani Foundation, our donors and all who have participated by



Gallery exhibit visitors may view the timeline, watch videos or examine display cases.

providing oral histories. We hope you are as proud of the outcomes as we are.

***A recent issue of Continuum Magazine from the University of Minnesota Libraries offers an excellent recap of the Project thus far: [www.continuum.umn.edu/2017/10/narrating-a-transition/](http://www.continuum.umn.edu/2017/10/narrating-a-transition/)***



Attendees enjoyed a live performance by Venus DeMars.

# TPT Premieres “Out North:

By Lisa Vecoli

October is LGBT History month, the perfect time for TPT - Twin Cities Public Television to debut a new documentary on local LGBTQ history. *Out North: MN LGBTQ History* was premiered on October 12, and broadcast for the first time on October 16. [The full length documentary is available for streaming on the TPT website \(www.tpt.org/out-north/\).](http://www.tpt.org/out-north/)

The Tretter Collection was actively involved in the creation of the documentary. Archive founder Jean-Nicklaus Tretter was interviewed for the film, as was former staff Stewart Van Cleve, current Tretter curator Lisa Vecoli, and oral historian Andrea Jenkins. Numerous

community members with material in the archive also appear, including Patrick Scully, Michael McConnell, Jack Baker, Nick Metcalf, John Hustad, Karen Clark, Scott Dibble, Dianna Hunter, Shirley Duke, and June Remus. The Collection also provided many visual and historic items to enhance the narratives from community members.

Producer Daniel Bergin made deliberate efforts to reach into as many parts of the community as he could. There are many stories left to tell but there is also something for everyone in *Out North*.

Before *Out North* was broadcast, TPT actively looked for

opportunities to show clips around the state to engage the LGBT community with the film and our history. TPT also promoted on Almanac, inviting Stewart Van Cleve and Lisa Vecoli to appear and comment on the film and local history.

The documentary is a wonderful partnership between the archive and TPT. And the icing on the cake will be the addition of the raw interviews from the film into the Tretter Collection. This will allow researchers to explore hours and hours of content that were not included in the final cut of the film. TPT's access and production values will provide Tretter with content that we could not get any other way.



Curator Lisa Vecoli with *Out North* Producer Daniel Bergin celebrate the film premiere at the Cowles Center, the former Shubert Theatre building, in downtown Minneapolis.

# MN LGBTQ History”

Oral Historian Andrea Jenkins, former Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton and Minnesota State Representative Karen Clark on the red carpet.



Curator Lisa Vecoli, archive founder Jean-Nickolaus Tretter and donor Michael McConnell enjoy the party. Photo by Marjean Hoeft.



Tretter Letter editor, George Hamm (right), and spouse, Mike Fry (left), don their celebratory attire at *Out North*.

Archive founder and *Out North* interviewee, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter with Tretter Community Advisory Board Member James Garlough.



Marjean Hoeft, John Bradley celebrate with documentary interviewees Lisa Vecoli and Rosanna Hudgins.



# New Acquisitions

The Tretter Collection now has 188 finding aids online, each serving as treasure map to the collection it is named for. The new collections below have (or soon will have) finding aids online available for anyone to explore. We encourage you to visit our website and identify materials that you would like to use in the archive!

The work is never done! If you have files, papers, records, notes, flyers, posters, or other content about these and other groups, please contact Curator Lisa Vecoli (612-624-7526 or lvecoli@umn.edu). We know there are more stories out there. We want to help preserve them and make them accessible now and into the future.

Just a few highlights of the wonderful new collections at the archive:

- **Karen Browne-Courage Papers** – Karen Browne-Courage Papers – We are delighted to have material from Karen Browne-Courage, one of the founders of the Lesbian Resource Center (LRC) in Minneapolis and *So's Your Old Lady*, a lesbian journal published in Minneapolis. The collection is small but adds significant pieces of history about local lesbian organizing and activism in the early 1970s. Among the items in the collection are: the proposal submitted to United Methodist Voluntary Service for initial funding; the philosophy of the LRC written collectively in 1974; flyers about events; and an elegy by Karen Browne for an early member of LRC who committed suicide in 1973.

Karen also sent an email (quoted with permission) in which she wrote:

Hi Lisa,

I finally sent you the papers and the *So's Your Old Lady* issues this afternoon by Fed Ex. They said the package should arrive on Monday.

Unexpectedly I felt teary and very moved to be sending them to you. I had the sense that a part of me was going to be preserved and that the work that we did at the Lesbian Resource Center was important. At the time I was just being my spunky baby dyke self doing what felt right. Of course I could not have had a historical perspective that I/we was/were part of a nationwide movement that just seemed to spark up spontaneously in so many places with so much synchronicity. It means so much to me that there are people like you and the founders of the Archives who want to honor and preserve all that happened. I didn't realize just how much it would mean to me until I handed the clerk the box today. Thank you for all that you and the others there are doing. And, thank you Dianna for making this connection.

With deep appreciation,

Karen



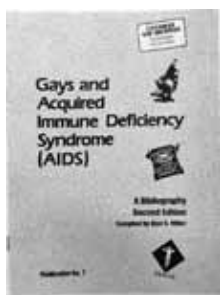
- **Dianna Hunter Papers** – When Dianna Hunter first visited the archive several years ago, neither she nor curator Lisa Vecoli could have anticipated how productive their partnership would be. Dianna was beginning work on her memoir and wanted to see some of the issues of the journal *So's Your Old Lady*, in which she had published work. Lisa asked her to think about material she had, or others had, that might expand the archive's holdings about lesbian feminist activism. Dianna's outreach to others resulted in the addition of the Shirley Duke Papers, including the photo of Amazon Bookstore when it was on Cedar Avenue in the early 1970s; and Karen Browne-Courage donating materials (more about this below). Lisa suggested Dianna as a participant in *Out North: MN LGBTQ History* (see page 4) which resulted in the Amazon Nation segment of the documentary. Lisa also connected Dianna with the University of Minnesota Press as a possible publisher for her book – now scheduled for publication in the spring! Dianna and her wife Deb Anderson have now donated papers to the archive and both collections are being processed with finding aids on the web site. Huge thanks to Dianna for partnering with the Tretter Collection to expand the history available for all researchers!!

New Acquisition Photos courtesy of the Tretter Collection



## New Acquisitions

- **3-D photos of the 1993 March on Washington** – Darrell Johnson gets the award for the most unusual donation of the year. He donated photos of the March on Washington, but the extraordinary element is that the photos are three dimensional! Darrell used a camera with four lenses to capture the images and had to have them specially developed and printed. The resulting snap shots, while similar to regular photos, are unlike anything the staff at Andersen Library had seen before. The prints and negatives are now part of our “March on Washington, 1993 Collection.”
- **June Remus Papers** – Many thanks to June Remus, who was also involved with the Tretter Transgender Oral History Project, for donating some of her papers to the archive. June was an early participant in the Transsexual Research Program at the University of Minnesota. The Program was the second in the U.S. to perform sex reassignment surgery when it began in 1967. You may see more about June Remus in the Out North documentary (see page 6) or on the website for the Tretter Transgender Oral History Project where she has 2 recorded oral histories.



- **James Lenahan Papers** – We are only part of the way through processing the donation of James Lenahan but this is already a collection with strong contents in socialism, Marxism, and early GLBT organizing. Among the notable contents are a 1983 bibliography of articles published on HIV/AIDS. This work is early in the epidemic and has sections on medical publications, mainstream publications, and gay publications. We are excited to continue working our way through the boxes to find what other treasures are buried.

- **Rick Stafford Papers** – Minnesota lost an important activist when Rick Stafford passed away this fall. Rick was the first out GLBT person elected to head a major state party organization when he was elected to Chair the Minnesota State DFL in 1993. His papers are currently being processed and include extensive memorabilia and photographs from national Democratic Conventions, as well as state and local party events.
- **Andrea Jenkins Papers** – During her 2 ½ years as oral historian for the Tretter Transgender Oral History Project, Andrea saw the power of archiving, and even as she leaves the Tretter Collection, her collection of material arrives to take her place. We are delighted to add Andrea’s papers, which cover her roles as a poet, writer, activist, community organizer, educator and political activist. These boxes will never fill her shoes but we are proud to have them and know they will be well used now and long into the future.
- **Additions to existing collections** – In the past year, we have also been able to add content to existing collections, including the Michael McConnell Files, the Queer Student Cultural Center Records, the Catherine Lundoff Papers, the John Hustad Papers, the Jim Kane Papers, and others.

From the Field, Continued from Page 3

the archive and into the community through teaching, exhibits, and presentations, as well as its strong relationships with the community. The Tretter Collection serves as an excellent model for other institutions interesting in connecting with their local LGBTQ+ communities.”

Combined with the Newlyn-Symons Award from the American Library Association last year, this national recognition demonstrates that the Tretter Collection is continuing to develop into one of the premier GLBT archives in the country.

### Telling Queer History – Lesbian Organizing 1960s to Today

On October 8, the Tretter Collection hosted Telling Queer History at Andersen Library. The opening of the event included watching clips from Out North: MN LGBTQ History, a new documentary produced by TPT. We had a panel including several women who had been part of early lesbian organizing in Minnesota: Jane Steadman, who founded So’s Your Old Lady magazine and Rising Moon Farm; Dianna Hunter, who lived at Rising Moon Farm; and Meadow Muska, who spent time at Rising



Moon Farm and photo documented many community events.

### First Friday – Minnesota Nice!

Archives and Special Collections offers a series of presentations by curators each school year called “First Friday.”

From the Field, Continued on Back page

# My Time As Curator: Making the Most of a Dream Job

By Lisa Vecoli

I have often called myself the accidental archivist. In truth, I do not have any of the background that you would usually expect for someone in the position – no library degree, no history degree, and no experience in special collections.

Ironically, while I have no professional preparation for the job of curator, I grew up in the stacks. There are 15 special collections at the University of Minnesota and my father was the director of one of them for 38 years. When I was young, my mother would drive us to the archive to pick dad up after work. He was never ready, and my brother and I would play games to amuse ourselves. Hide and seek in the stacks was a favorite. So when I say I grew up in the stacks, I do mean it literally.

My first involvement with the Tretter Collection was as one of the original members of the Community Advisory Board. The Board was founded when the archive came to the University to make sure it served the community and was not neglected or hidden. I think Jean asked me to serve in the hope that my 4,200+ book collection would eventually find its way into the archive. So I also describe myself as a case of donor development gone horribly awry!

Jean's retirement meant that we needed a new curator, a challenge that no one was sure how to navigate. Jean had built the collection over 4 decades and knew parts of it in a granular way that no one else will ever be able to match. The Advisory Board knew that following in Jean's footsteps would not be easy. We drew up a long list of skills, qualities and knowledge that we thought the next curator would need. I believe I am the one that put "ability to walk on water" on the list and began the joke about the miracles the next curator would need to accomplish.

I could still laugh about that when I was

asked to fill in during the hiring process for a permanent curator. At least for the first few months. But the longer I was here, and the more I realized what needed to happen, the more I got sucked into the archive. And when I transitioned from temporary to the permanent curator position, the joke was on me as I was the one expected to work miracles.

I will forever be grateful to Jean for saving GLBT history and providing the core that has grown into the Tretter Collection. It is hard to say for certain, but I estimate that his initial donation, made up mostly of books and print material, was around 6-700 linear feet. Without Jean's vision and his stubborn insistence that GLBT history was worth saving, we would have none of this. He is a model for the difference one person can make and should be a hero to everyone that cares about preserving GLBT history.

But no one is perfect, as I discovered in 2012 when I started working in the archive. While he loves collecting, Jean does not love computers. As a result, the contents of the archive were organized mostly in his head. Except where they weren't organized at all. And so neither researchers nor I had any idea how to make the Collection work. Even when I was in the temporary role, as I spent time in the archive two things quickly became clear to me. Most of our (then) 2,500 linear feet of material was undiscovered and we needed to be better organized. And we needed more content from people of color, transgender people, and the bisexual and lesbian communities. These two priorities have guided my work for the 6 years I have staffed the collection. And I am proud of the transformation I have lead in both of these areas.

For my first several months at the archive, when a researcher asked for material, I would call Jean and he would do his best to guide me: "I think that is in the last row,

down a ways on the left, kind of high up." To his credit, he was often correct about where something was. Just last week, when a researcher asked for something that hasn't yet been fully processed, Jean was able to direct me to it.

When I asked Jean if we had material about FREE, the first gay group on the U of M campus founded in 1969, he said we did, and that it was in Box 1 of the Queer Student Cultural Center Collection. I wondered why "FREE" was under "QSCC" and he replied that the student groups had split up, renamed and evolved over the years, so he would have either had to split them up all over or combine them into one. Once I understood, I could always find the box, but I cannot imagine how long it would have been before I stumbled up it. And even Jean's knowledge of the collection was limited to a few hundred linear feet.

It was clear to me that the first thing we needed was a list of what we had. During my first year the big project was a shelf read, documenting the names on all of the boxes. I also had to survey our offsite storage and inventory how much we had and how much was processed. This list was helpful as a starting point in serving researchers. If what they were looking for was on the title of a box we could get it for them, but we still needed to dig into the boxes to identify what was inside them.

Being able to quantify our holdings and identify what was, and was not, processed provided the documentation we needed to apply for a Legacy grant in 2013. Our proposal was to transform the archive by processing the collections and creating finding aids, making the materials discoverable and allowing researchers (and staff) to use the collection.

We were awarded the Legacy grant and over the next year, the Tretter Collection

Dream Job, continued on next page

Tretter Letter *January, 2018*

was indeed transformed. We used the grant funding to:

- process 1,443 feet of material in organizational or manuscript collections;
- catalog 40 linear feet of books (approximately 1,500 titles);
- and add over 15,000 issues of periodicals from more than 300 titles to the online catalog.

By the time the Legacy Grant ended, we had processed/cataloged over 1,700 linear feet of material. In 2012, we had 22 finding aids on our website. Today we have close to 200 finding aids! As a result, researchers now know about our holdings and come to request access. We are constantly adding new collections and processing new material, but by and large, my goal of organizing the collection has been accomplished.

My second priority was to diversify the holdings in the archive. Jean did his best to diversify the content of the collection and I have worked hard to expand on his foundation. My goal was to add more about people of color, the transgender community, bisexuals, and lesbians. There is no magic bullet to adding diversity to a collection. It is a constant, ongoing quest that takes creativity and dedication. We could and did purchase what was available, but mostly we needed community members to donate their papers and organizational records to the archive.

I worked with students and volunteers to expand our history exhibit to be more inclusive. I reached out to community members to request their materials and partnered with people doing oral history projects in local African American communities and the bisexual community. I added content to the newsletter and the website. I spoke at conferences and tabled at events. All reaching out and spreading the message that the Tretter Collection wanted to include all voices in the archive.

The most significant opportunity to diversify our holdings came when Tawani

Foundation awarded the Tretter Collection a grant to do an oral history project in the transgender community of the Upper Midwest. Attention on gender issues has been growing on campus, in the community and recently in the political arena. We had some content about transgender/gender queer issues, but with this as the focus of so much attention, we needed more.

The challenge was that our traditional methods of archiving were not working with the transgender/gender queer community, for many reasons. Some people threw away the photos, journals and letters of their previous lives making collections difficult to find. Historically, few publications or organizations were dedicated to transgender/gender queer issues. Our usual method of asking people to give us material would not work – we were going to have to generate the content. And the best way I could think of to do that was through oral histories.

To make the most of the opportunity, we needed the right staff person. Hiring Andrea Jenkins for the Project is what made it the success it has been. Her deep roots into the community, her visibility and credibility, and her passion for storytelling have resulted in a permanent contribution to transgender/gender queer history that any archive would be proud of. The work of the TTOHP has been so remarkable, in fact, that we have now received funding from Tawani Foundation for a second phase. Please see the article on the TTOHP in this issue of the newsletter for an update on the success of Phase 1 and the goals of Phase 2.

The transformation of the Tretter Collection has not gone unnoticed. Last year we received the inaugural Newlen-Symons Award for Excellent in Service to the GLBT community from the American Library Association. This year we received a Diversity Award from the Society of American Archivists – the first time the award has been given to a GLBT themed honoree. I am tremendously proud of both of these national awards from the organizations that promote archives and

special collections.

As busy and successful as the past 6 years have been, there is plenty left for the next curator. We need someone who is good with technology, websites, and email lists. We need someone who enjoys social media, digitization, and metadata. We need better supporting content on our website, more access to digital content, and more online presence. We need to continue our efforts to bring in material from across the community. I hope the next issue of the newsletter will introduce you to this paragon – who still needs to know how to walk on water.

I have loved (almost) every minute of my time curating the Tretter Collection. The work has been endlessly challenging and rewarding, my colleagues in the other collections are wonderful and the leadership and support I have enjoyed have made this a dream job. I leave knowing that I have helped transform a remarkable resource into a treasure that can thrive and evolve. I will always be proud of my work here and grateful for the opportunity to do this work.

Even as I dream of retirement, I am also plotting how to support the archive. My wife and I have put the Tretter Collection in our wills, but we hope that will be some time off. I continue to donate my book collection, a little each year to make room for new additions. And I am laying the ground work for a retirement project – a lesbian feminist oral history project. I want to spend the next few years collecting the stories of those of us who came out during the 70s and 80s, what was important to us and how we used our passion to work for social justice. From the Women's Coffeehouse to the bars, from softball to politics, and from women's music to the bookstores, there are so many stories to tell. Some funny and some painful but if they aren't told, they will be forgotten. We/I will be forgotten. Now that I know the power of the archive I cannot let that happen, even in retirement.



# TRETTER LETTER



NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE  
TRETTER COLLECTION

The Tretter Collection  
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## Regards and Thanks from Andrea Jenkins.....

Lisa Vecoli, Curator of the Tretter Collection, came to an event that I was sponsoring - The Transgender Equity Summit - at the City of Minneapolis in the hopes of enlisting my assistance in recruiting people for a job with the archive. I looked at the job description and I thought to myself I want this job. Unfortunately, because of the transgender community's invisibility for so long and really hiding in the closet, there was few records and papers and books and organizations to really try to collect their stories. The Tretter Collection had figured the best way to try to get information was to actually talk to transgender people and to do an oral history project.

So I applied and the rest, as they say, is history. And it is indeed history, I have learned so much from talking to elders in the community, and just as much from talking to the young folks who have been a part of this project. One of the elements of this project that I am particularly proud of is the fact that we documented the Sojourner Truth Leadership Cohort, which was a year-long leadership fellowship for Black Trans women. I co-facilitated the fellowship and interviewed

all of the participants (a total of 8). Talk about meta?

I am honored to say that I have become a part of the Tretter Legacy that archives and preserves the history of the broader LGBT community. I thank all of my colleagues at Andersen Library for the continuous support to bring this project to life. I want thank Lane Cunningham, for his technical expertise in creating the online exhibition "In Their Own Words", I want to thank Mary Dunn, Carter Thurmond and Anne Burhardt for transcription services. Thanks to Neno Miller and other interns that assisted with keeping the administrative activities behind the scenes. Profound thanks to Tawani Foundation for making this Project possible

But most of all I want to thank all of the brave and beautiful narrators who contributed their personal histories and life stories to this project. I love you all.

You know me I'm a storyteller. It is about telling stories. It's about uplifting the transgender narrative and shifting the cultural awareness of Transgender identities.

From the Field, Continued from Page 9

This year the theme is Minnesota Nice, both positive and not so nice reflections of Minnesota history found in the collections. The October First Friday featured a presentation by curator Lisa Vecoli, Minnesota Nice: Moments in GLBT History. Vecoli used the opportunity to review important moments in GLBT history that happened in Minnesota over the years, including the first legal same-sex marriage, the first International Two Spirit Gathering, the first local ordinances and state laws outlawing discrimination that included gender representation and the first lesbian feminist bookstore in the country.

First Fridays happen at noon in Andersen Library on the first Friday of the month, October – December and February – May. We provide light refreshments and welcome the public to join us to learn more about our collections. This is also an opportunity to go on a tour of the underground storage caverns!