

alga NEWSLETTER

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Archives 30: A New Future for our Queer Past

In August 2008, the Archives celebrates its 30th anniversary – and rather than wait, we thought we would start the party now. Beginning with Midsumma, we will be staging a series of events to highlight our achievements and to give people a taste of the collection and of the history that it preserves.

But we also want to take this opportunity to talk with the community about the future of the Archives.

Over the past three decades, the Archives has relied entirely on its membership and volunteers. The collection has now seriously outgrown its space, and the demands on volunteers' time continue to expand. These are, of course, signs of success, but unless we find ways to address our growing needs, it is not clear how the Archives can continue to do its work as well as we want to.

We are now committing ourselves to exploring, over the coming year, two options for the future.

State Library of Victoria

The first comes in the form of an offer from the State Library of Victoria, which has flagged an interest in housing the collection should that be the wish of the community. Broadly speaking the SLV would be willing to take ownership of the collection, or to take it on loan; it would take the collection in whole or in part; in one donation or in a series of donations over time. (A Fact Sheet has been prepared setting out the results of these discussions to date and is available on request).

Archives 30

Partly in response to the discussions within the Archives about the SLV offer, a second option has been developed – to explore whether there is sufficient community support for maintaining the Archives as an independent, community-based organisation. This will require an active effort to meet certain clear targets in terms of money and space and, secondarily, more members and volunteers. The anniversary year offers

and opportunity to highlight our achievements – and to bring our needs to the attention of the wider community. An Archives 30 Project Plan has been developed. It includes measurable targets – to be reviewed by the Committee in March 2008 and at the 2008 AGM – and a series of activities designed to help us achieve these targets.

What do we need?

Space – lots of it. Or money to buy or rent space. More members. More volunteers. Of these, the space/money is the most urgent. We are currently spread over several locations (including members' houses) – and we still don't have room enough to grow, or to spread ourselves out and work properly.

What are we going to do? And how can you help?

For some months now we have been analysing exactly what we need in terms of space and money, and what we would like to have in terms of volunteers and members. We are well advanced in the process of developing strategies for how to meet these needs. In the coming months you will be hearing more from us about this. But if you think you can help, please get in touch. If you have ideas, fundraising skills, or would like to volunteer some time (or if you happen to have vast amounts of cash sitting around, or a spare building that you would like to dispose of), do get in touch. We'd love to hear from you ...

Join us at Midsumma

As always we will be out and about all through Midsumma. The History Walk this year is in Carlton, and we are having a Quiz night Spectacular to launch Archives 30. Full details, page 2.



Have you renewed your 2008 ALGA membership?
All donations of \$2 or more to ALGA are tax deductible.

For easy access to websites mentioned in this newsletter, go to the PDF version available now from the Newsletters section of ALGA's website at <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~alga/news.htm>

Websites of interest

❖ The Wayback Machine (internet archive) at <http://www.archive.org/index.php>

This remarkable website allows you to track obsolete websites, especially useful when a link to a website is broken. If it existed at an earlier time, the Wayback machine will find it. Just type in the address, and get a list grouped by date - with * to denote when the archive was updated. You can then access earlier versions of the site by clicking on to the appropriate date.

There is background to the way the archive works at <http://www.archive.org/iathreads/post-view.php?id=84843>. It takes a snapshot of the World Wide Web every two months, and at December 2006 had 85 billion websites. Thanks to Mannie De Saxe for this lead.

❖ Pandora Archive

The National Library's Pandora Archive does a similar thing to the Wayback Machine but with an Australian focus, and not so comprehensively. See <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/>

It selects websites from recommendations of various state and other libraries - see list of partners at <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/partners.html#VSL>. A search of 'gay and lesbian' currently produces 12 sites with those words in the title - among them the Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby in both NSW and Victoria, Midsumma Festival (Vic) and Gay and Lesbian Equality of WA (2004 Federal Election).

❖ <http://www.time.com/time/archive>

This is an online archive of *Time Magazine* from 1923 to the present. Searching on 'homosexuality' produces material back to 1926, along with seven cover issues (the first in 1969).

❖ South Australian Library - SA Memory project

<http://www.samemory.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=111>
Among the 39 items in the gay rights section are images and stories of the Duncan case, homosexual law reform in 1975, the first issue of *Lesbian Times* (1992), the Pink Files (musical), Bert Edwards (MP), the Gawler tragedy of 1879, Bert Erroll (female impersonator 1929), Hetty King (male impersonator, 1924) ... and much more.

❖ The Uranian Society Archive at

http://www.geocities.com/uranian_society/Archive.html The Uranian Society is a cultural forum for gay men in Adelaide. Spanning 1989 to the present, this site reproduces flyers the Society's events over the years (history walks, forums, etc).

❖ For a visual history of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parties see

<http://www.pinkboard.com.au/history/mardigras/> (includes reproductions of posters back to 1978 for Mardi Gras, and to 1990 for Sleaze parties)

❖ Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby has an excellent account of its history 1997-2007 at

<http://www.vglrl.org.au/about-us/history-book/index.php>

ALGA at Midsumma 2008

Check out the 2008 Midsumma guide. Or go to the Midsumma website, <http://www.midsumma.org.au/>

Carnival

Midsumma Carnival is back in the Alexandra Gardens, but at the start of the festival this year - Saturday 19 January, 11 am till 6 pm. Feel welcome to drop by ALGA's tent for a look and a chat.

Pride March

ALGA and the Rainbow Network (young GLBT) will join forces for Pride March on Sunday afternoon 3 February - a joint birthday celebration, 30 years for ALGA and 10 for the Rainbow Network. There will be a banner-making workshop in preparation for Pride March on Friday 18 January, 10 till 3 at the Family Planning Action Centre, 2nd fl, 94 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.

History Walk

We go to Carlton for the first time - Graham Willett and Wayne Murdoch again doing the commentary. Sunday 27 January, 11 am
Meet at Kangaroo Fountain in the grounds of the Exhibition Building, near corner Nicholson and Gertrude Streets.

Cost \$15 full, \$8 concession (includes program)

To register, email gwillett@unimelb.edu.au or phone 8344 3630, giving contact details.

Auslan interpreter available. Please advise need by Sunday 20 January 2008.

There is a limit of 60 for the walk to keep things manageable. We encourage ALGA members to book early to avoid disappointment.

Quiz night

ALGA quiz night will be on Thursday evening 7 February, dinner at 6pm, show starts at 8 pm. Venue is the Edinburgh Castle Hotel, 681 Sydney Road, Brunswick. Cost \$20 / \$15 concession (includes ALGA members). \$120 for a table of eight. There's screenings of archival film footage, a reading by Joan Nestle and a cabaret of queer performers to guarantee you a great night whether your history knowledge goes back to convict poofers or just to what happened at Girlbar last weekend. Info/bookings 0427 616 995, email queer.history@gmail.com, more details at ALGA's website www.alga.org.au

❖ There is an extensive archive of the late Jane Rule's writing at http://www.xtra.ca/public/viewstory.aspx?AFF_TYPE=1&STORY_ID=3982&PUB_TEMPLATE_ID=1

❖ The Lesbian and Gay Solidarity Newsletter is now fully indexed, 65 issues back to no. 1 in 1979 - see <http://www.zipworld.com.au/~josken/archive.htm>

TRIBUTES

Kym Makkaan

3 March 46 – 21 June 2007

ALGA lost a great friend with the death of Kym Makkaan this year. Our book and video collections lived in Kym's house for six years, and if you've ever had a cause to use ALGA's online listings, it's Kym you can thank. The lists of books, videos, posters, badges and theses were all done by Kym. His remarkable organization skills were seen in the way he devised ways of housing the badges and posters. He also gave generously of his time to the Melbourne Queer Film Festival and to the West Footscray Library.

In 2006, Kym opened up his house for a display of our books – photo opposite from that day. It was a day he remembered with justifiable pride. Some of the decorations from Kym's house have been retained by ALGA – framed prints of things that caught his fancy, often gay-themed, and just about anything rainbow coloured (Kym's rainbow curtains are an especially treasured memento!).

Jeff Hayler

1953 – 2006

News reached us only late this year that Jeff Hayler died in an accident in Perth in November 2006.

As an openly gay man aged 20, Jeff Hayler was elected to office in Macquarie University's student association in 1973 and became Vice-President of the Australian Union of Students in 1974. He is remembered especially for his part in enlisting industrial support from the NSW Builders Labourers' Federation to secure the reinstatement of a fellow student, Jeremy Fisher in 1973. Fisher had been expelled from a residential college at Macquarie University when his homosexuality became known to the college dean. At the time the BLF support was thought to be a world first for active union support of a gay cause, and rarely repeated to this day. Jeremy Fisher has written about that episode – and Jeff's supporting role - in a soon to be published book (excerpt online at http://www.cfmeu.asn.au/construction/history/Jeremy_Fisher.pdf)

Jeff was part of a homosexual caucus of AUS that was instrumental in organizing the first National Homosexual Conference in 1975 - a conference which shaped a good deal of gay and lesbian



Photo courtesy of Greg B

activism in the following decade, and in which Jeff took part.

After his move to Perth, Jeff became president of CAMP WA, and played important roles in gay advocacy there, including moves for decriminalisation of male homosexuality and the early response to HIV/AIDS in WA.

Oz homo history in print

❖ Sydney's Pride History Group has published a monograph, *Camp as a row of tents; the life and times of Sydney's camp social clubs* (24 pages). It charts the rise of Sydney venues and social groups through the 1950s and 60s – The Stork Club, Movie and Arts Balls, Chez Ivy, The Purple Onion, the Chameleons, Polynesians, Clover etc. With great images and quotes from participants, *Camp as* sells for \$10 including postage from PHG at GPO Box 415, Sydney NSW 2001. Make out cheque or money order to 'Pride History Group Inc'

❖ *Free Radical; memoir of a gay political activist* is a self-published record of Roderic Anderson's life from 1943 to 1962. It has fascinating accounts of Rod's coming to homosexual awareness as a young man in the RAAF posted in Darwin during WW2, then finding his way into a camp social scene in post-war Melbourne whilst a student at Melbourne University and later as a school teacher before going overseas in 1962. Available for purchase at www.redhen.com.au (\$18.40 plus postage)

❖ Peter De Waal's extraordinary three volume work, *Unfit for publication: NSW Supreme Court and other Bestiality, Buggery & Sodomy trials 1727-1930 - a researchers' resource was self-published in 2007*. Cost \$185 plus postage. A must for any GLBT reference collection. Further information at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ozhomohist/message/643>

All are available for perusal at ALGA.

Finding lesbian history in unexpected places

Thumbing old newsletters of Melbourne's Nomads (bush-walking) group, I was surprised to find an article about Freda Du Faur, Australian born mountaineer, 1882-1935 - first woman to climb Mount Cook in NZ. Newsletter #41 (2000) gave a potted history of Du Faur's life including a reference to her lover, Muriel Cardogan. Du Faur suicided after Cardogan's death, but their names remain linked in New Zealand where the twin peaks, Du Faur and Cardogan, are named after them.

There is an understated reference to Du Faur's lesbianism in Australian Dictionary of Biography online - <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A080373b.htm> - a Wikipedia reference is more explicit - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freda_du_Faur.

The web trail led me to <http://www.laganz.org.nz/conference/programme.doc> for a paper presented to a 2003 conference of the Lesbian and Gay Archive of New Zealand - a critical reading of an Australian biography about du Faur: Sally Irwin, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Life of a Mountaineer, Freda du Faur 1882-1935*, Hawthorn, Victoria: White Crane Press, 2000 (available second hand, about Aus\$25).

Gary Jaynes

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