



Lambda Archives of San Diego

Collecting, Preserving, and Teaching LGBT History

www.LambdaArchives.org

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Issue 53

Winter 2014-2015

Lambda Archives' Proclamation Celebration

Thank You for Your Support

Honorary Chairs

- Dede Alpert**
State Senator (Retired)
- Mary Herron**
Mayor of Coronado (Retired)
- Susan Davis**
Congresswoman

Co-Chair

- Chris Kehoe**
State Senator (Retired)

Hosts

- Frank Stefano
- Susan Guinn & Denice Feldhaus
- Jim Ziegler
- Mel Merrill
- Anna Curren

Co-Hosts

- Michael Growe
- Courtenay Compton McGowen
- Robert Leyh & Bill McClain
- Matt Stephens, Progressive Law Group
- Marc Matys & Robert Gleason
- Dave Roberts, County Supervisor
- Chuck Kaminski & Jeffrey Shorn
- Crystal & Susan Atkins-Weathers

Sponsors



(above) LASD Board President Maureen Steiner accepting the proclamation from California Speaker of the Assembly Toni Atkins.

(below) Some of our guests enjoying the reception. (L to R) Doug Case, Mel Merrill, Toni Atkins, Jess Durfee, Christine Kehoe, and Julie Warren.



POOLSIDE FUN AND FUNDRAISING

For those of you who missed it (shame on you!), on Sunday October 12 the Archives held its big Fall fundraiser. This year's focus was a recent proclamation from the Executive Department of the State of California commemorating the **27th anniversary** of Lambda Archives.

Speaker of the Assembly **Toni Atkins** signed the proclamation while serving the state as Acting Governor of California this summer. The event itself was a poolside party at the

home of Board President Maureen Steiner, complete with displays demonstrating the needs and the activities of the Archives. **Thanks again** to everyone who made it out there—the event was a success and we look forward to doing a lot of work in 2015!

President's Message



Maureen Steiner

Dear Friends,

I want to share with you the exciting LGBTQ Historic Sites project Lambda Archives of San Diego is undertaking with San Diego's respected historic preservation organization, SOHO (the **Save Our Heritage Organization**).

Lambda Archives will work with historic preservation professionals and LGBT community members to identify and prepare professional nominations of LGBTQ historic resources. Our first identified resource is the former home of Bernie Michels, an early activist and organizer in the San Diego LGBT community.

Bernie and his partner Thomas Carey were two of the early planners of **The Center**, and did much of the Planning Committee's follow-up work (transcribing notes, working on incorporation papers, etc) at this address. This is also where Bernie Michels outlined and prepared to teach the first Gay Studies course offered at San Diego State University.

We are very excited about both the project itself and the collaboration with our preservation allies at SOHO. We believe this is a project well worth doing to protect San Diego LGBT historic assets. While we wouldn't literally collect these resources, we certainly would further our mission to preserve and educate the public about important aspects of LGBT history.

This project is modeled on the **National Park Service Heritage Sites Initiative** and may eventually qualify for

Federal funding. However, we are collectively looking for "seed money" of about \$2000 for the first professional nomination. The Bernie Michels home is threatened with demolition as it stands in a project area. We are working with SOHO, the developer, and professional preservationists. An experienced historic researcher has offered to waive half her normal fee to prepare the nomination report. LASD and SOHO will cobble that savings together with donations from the SOHO Board, the Imperial Court, and other donors.

That will cover the first identified site, the Bernie Michels home. Then, we estimate we will need another \$10,000-12,000 to do a full-scale identification and "context" report. We would hire a professional consultant to organize public meetings to identify historic sites and do historic research to fully describe the resources and prepare the resource descriptions.

The resulting document will be provided to planning authorities to help protect sites from demolition or alteration. Further, it will provide context for possible projects like interpretive centers and even a future tour of LGBT historic sites.

To learn more, please see our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Save-the-Historic-LGBTQ-House-on-El-Cajon-Boulevard/389417961207516>.

To support this work directly, please contact SOHO at sohosandiego@aol.com.

Yours in Solidarity,

Maureen Steiner

The Archives is growing...

The ever-expanding archives is finally expanding physically! We are near completion on a long-awaited conversion of our upstairs storage room into additional archival storage space.

Our primary storage room within the archives is filled **wall-to-wall** with papers, photos, objects, and tapes. It is long past time to squeeze a bit more room out of our real estate.

But we can't just pile archival collections into any old storage room (hot, dusty, stuffy— what a nightmare!).

There are specific environmental conditions we aim for to keep our materials stable for long-term preservation.

To achieve these conditions, we are insulating the windows and sealing all other openings against light and heat, installing an air conditioner, and implementing **environmental** and **safety** checks (a fire extinguisher, a smoke alarm, and a thermometer/hygrometer). You know, the basics!

When the room is complete we will

have an additional **336 feet** of shelf space to grow into. Though, as you can see below, we already have a few boxes waiting for the expansion!



How do we fulfill our mission at the Archives?

“TO COLLECT...”

We go on at length about our paper, photo, and object collections. But we also want to collect the experiences of the community more directly, and that means capturing their stories in their own words.

To this end, we have revived our **oral history program**. Robert Lynn is conducting interviews with community elders regarding their life experiences and involvement in local activism.

Meanwhile, Meredith Vezina and Ellen Holzman are coordinating a Trans* Oral History Project to collect the experiences of the trans* community.

These digital interviews will join more than **100 oral histories** already housed in the Archives on videotape and audiocassette, mostly captured in the 1990s and early 2000s. We are very excited to expand the collection.

Many thanks to Bob, Meredith, and Ellen for all their hard work capturing the unique voices of San Diego!

“...PRESERVE...”



One of 100 OISD audiotape reels

The *Out in San Diego* collection contains 100 reel-to-reel audiotapes of the mid-80s radio show run by Jeri Dilno and Rick Moore. Topics included local culture, national news, the AIDS crisis, and other LGBT issues.

The original reels can't be played on-site, so we are thrilled to be having them digitized with the aid of the **California Audiovisual Preservation Project**. The originals will be stored in our cold room to extend the life of the tapes, and researchers will access their contents in digital form.

You can listen to the recordings on our Internet Archive page: <https://archive.org/details/lambdaarchives>

“... AND EDUCATE!”

The educational component of our mission is fulfilled primarily through our student internship program.

Every year, from about September-December and February-May, we bring **dozens of students** into the Archives, many of whom have never done primary historical research before or even stepped foot in their university's special collections.

Through the course of their internships we teach proper handling techniques and cataloging methods for archival materials. While handling the collections, they also learn the history of the materials they come in contact with. We always encourage a curious student to look up more about any topic of interest!

In addition to **providing tours** for local community groups and our membership, this is one of the ways that we not only teach people about the work we do, but begin to teach them the history of the San Diego LGBT community itself.

Archivist's Report



Sam Mills, Archivist

Greetings from the stacks!

It has been a busy few months since our summer update, with Fall semester volunteers, new projects, and old projects galore.

I've received quite a lot of good stuff since last summer! Examples include:

- Interviews of students from the Queer Student Union at SDSU
- Interviews of attendees at **San Diego's first Trans* Pride** in 2014
- Organizational papers of the athletic group Front Runners from Debbie Chaddock
- PFLAG meeting minutes, including the minutes of the **very first** San Diego meeting on 12/12/1981
- Assorted papers of the Holistic AIDS Response Program (HARP)

As you'll see elsewhere in these pages, we have also been busy with oral history projects, long-term preservation projects, and the usual push of cataloging and indexing bolstered by our volunteer army. It has been a good Fall semester at Lambda.

It has been a **transitional year** for the Archives, and a transitional year for me as archivist. I've been the digitization specialist, assistant archivist, and head archivist over the course of the past two years, but now my time is coming to a close. I will be stepping down at the end of December, and there will be a new face behind the counter sometime in 2015.

History is a chain of local stories stitched together to create a bigger picture, and the history of San Diego is woefully incomplete without the stories contained at Lambda Archives. For the past two years I have been privileged to hear and read many of those stories, and now I am eager to see them placed in a new pair of hands.

Thanks for the memories and **good luck in 2015!**

Introducing: some new faces at the Archives!

Office Manager Walter Meyer



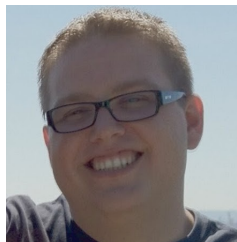
A few months ago, I donated to the Archives copies of all of my writings on LGBT topics for gay publications as well as the mainstream press, along with a copy of my gay novel, "Rounding Third." I also gave the Archives DVDs containing thousands of photos I have taken over the years at all of the marriage equality rallies, at Gay for Good outings, and many other political and LGBT events.

LASD board president Maureen Steiner mentioned they would be hiring someone to manage the office, a position that has been vacant for some time. She knew I had worked for other nonprofits, have written grants, and supervised volunteers so she asked me if I might be interested in the job when it opened up. I am pleased to have started in mid-November as the **new manager** of Lambda Archives.

Although I will not be processing the actual archival collections, I am happy to bring my skills to operating the less technical aspects of the Archives, freeing up the archivist and the hard-working board members for other duties. Given my interest in history in general and that of the LGBT community in San Diego in particular, I look forward to helping promote and grow this organization which is so important to **preserving our past**.

Stop by and say hello or contact me if I can be of assistance:
manager.lambda.archives@gmail.com

Board Member Ben Orgovan



Ben Orgovan comes to Lambda Archives by way of the **California Police Athletic Federation**, the parent organization of two multi-sport events geared toward peace officers and firefighters.

Specifically he helps put on the United States Police and Fire Championships (USPFC).

Ben is an **active member** of the San Diego community, demonstrated by his many contributions to local non-profit organizations. He volunteered with San Diego Pride for nearly ten years, three years of which he was the Parade and Office Manager.

Additionally, he was on the board for the South Bay Alliance, and he has put in volunteer hours at The Center, the Gary and Mary West Senior Wellness Center, and the San Diego Humane Society.

We are very pleased to **welcome Ben** to the Lambda Archives Board of Directors!

Wells Fargo Community Mural

Taking Pride in our LGBT Communities



WELLS FARGO MURAL UNVEILED

It's finished! As mentioned in our summer newsletter, **Wells Fargo** created a mural for their Hillcrest branch through their Community Mural Program.

The company developed the program to create unique, custom-designed artwork celebrating the history and diversity of

the communities they serve. Hillcrest certainly qualified!

The **finished mural** (above) incorporates images from both Lambda Archives and the San Diego History Center. It was a fun project to take part in, and we hope that Wells Fargo's customers enjoy the slice of history visible at their branch.

**I FOUND IT IN
THE ARCHIVES**

TOUR / EXHIBIT HOURS:

Tue/Wed/Fri 1-5 pm
 Thu 5-9 pm, and Sat 11-3 pm

Visit our **website** for holiday closures and to find out more about who we are and what we do:

www.LambdaArchives.org

Email the **archivist** if you have a collection to donate or a research question:
archivist@lambdaarchives.org

Check us out on **Facebook** and **Flickr**:
www.facebook.com/LambdaArchives
www.flickr.com/photos/lambdaarchives

Visit us behind **Diversionsary Theatre**:
 4545 Park Blvd, Ste 104
 San Diego, CA 92116

Or give us a call!
 619.260.1522

