

# Lesbian Herstory Archives Newsletter 17 – March 1999

## VALERIE TAYLOR, 1913 - 1997

Valerie Taylor – author, poet, and activist – died on October 22, 1997, in Tucson, Arizona, where she had lived since 1978. She was eighty-four years old. Born Velma Tate, in Aurora, Illinois, in 1913, Valerie Taylor was one of her pen names. A pioneer in lesbian literature, she published numerous lesbian novels in the 1950s and 1960s and continued writing

until her death. She wrote for several Chicago alternative newspapers including *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter*, *The Chicago Gay Crusader*, *women's news...For a Change*, and *The Paper*. She wrote almost 200 poems for women's and religious magazines, most under the pen name Nacella Young. Her poems also appeared in *The Ladder*. She was co-founder of the Lesbian Writers' Conference, first held in Chicago in 1974, as well as its first keynote speaker. In her address, entitled "For My Granddaughters," she said:

*So all of us build on the lives of those who have gone before. Today we think in terms of sisterhood – and that's productive. But when a writer reaches sixty, she also begins to look for daughters, for inheritors.*

*We hope that our work too will help to make a foundation for those who come after us. We hope that young women coming up...will go on where we leave off...We are planting a seed here. Unless male politicians and militarists manage to blow up the human race, I believe that some of you will still be around in the year 2000 to harvest what grows out of this weekend. That's your future and I wish you luck with it.*



In addition to being a writer and poet, Valerie Taylor was an activist for peace and justice, women's rights, lesbian and gay rights, tenant rights, and environmental issues and was an advocate for the elderly. She was inducted into the City of Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 1992.

A partial bibliography of her work and of articles

about her is below. It is excerpted from one prepared for us by Marie Kuda, also co-founder of the Lesbian Writer's Conference and a personal friend. For those interested in researching Valerie Taylor's life and work, Marie Kuda has relevant material in her own archives (in Oak Park, Illinois), including correspondence, books, poems, short stories, videotapes, and so on. Here at LHA we also have most of Valerie Taylor's books, as well as *Working Papers #1: Letters to Valerie Taylor from Jeannette H. Foster, Dot Ross and Hazel Tolliver*. We also have some physical artifacts, including the purse she carried. In addition, Tee A. Corinne, literary executor for Valerie Taylor's estate, has transferred material pertaining to Valerie Taylor's personal and professional life into a special collection at the Human Sexuality Collection in the Carl B. Kroch Library at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. She is asking others with such material to add to that collection (See her letter on the next page).

Valerie Taylor in her home in Tucson. July 7, 1997. Photo by Angela Dawn

### Books and Monographs by Valerie Taylor

- 1957 *Whisper Their Love*, Greenwich, CT: Fawcett-Gold Medal (London: Neville Spearman Ltd., 1959)
- 1959 *Girls in 3-B*, Greenwich: Fawcett-Crest (second printing, 1963)
- 1960 *Stranger on Lesbos*, Greenwich, CT: Fawcett-Gold Medal (London: Neville Spearman Ltd., 1960)
- 1963 *A World Without Men*, New York: Midwood Tower (Tallahassee: Volute-Naiad, 1982)
- 1964 *Unlike Others*, New York: Midwood-Tower
- 1963 *Return to Lesbos*, New York: Midwood-Tower (Tallahassee: Volute-Naiad, 1982)
- 1965 *Journey to Fulfillment*, New York: Midwood-Tower (Tallahassee: Volute-Naiad, 1982)
- 1967 *Secret of the Bayou* (as Frances Davenport), New York: Ace (in The Netherlands, published as *De Verwisselde Echtgenoot*, 1967; in France, as *Le Secret du Marais*, Presses de la Cite, 1968)
- 1975 *For My Granddaughters*, Chicago: Womanpress
- 1976 *Two Women: the Poetry of Jeannette Foster and Valerie Taylor*, Chicago: Womanpress
- 1977 *Love Image*, Bates, MO: Naiad
- 1981 *Prism*, Tallahassee: Naiad
- 1988 *Ripening*, Austin, Tx: Banned Books
- 1989 *Rice and Beans*, Tallahassee: Naiad
- 1990 *Two Women Revisited*, Austin, TX: Banned Books

### Poems by Valerie Taylor

- 1962 "Friday Poem," *Choice*, Chicago, Vol. 1, #2, p.96.
- 1964 "Each Cell Glittering," *The Ladder*, Vol. 8, Feb., p. 5
- "Hour of Love," *The Ladder*, Vol. 8, Apr., p. 17
- "Lines from Li Po", *The Ladder*, Vol. 8, Mar. p. 7
- "Little Requiem," *The Ladder*, Vol. 8, May, p.21
- 1963 "Fragments from the Greek," *The Ladder*, Vol. 9, Apr.

### Short Stories by Valerie Taylor

- 1965 "Saturday Conversation," *The Ladder*, Vol. 9, June, pp. 9-11.
- 1989 "Generation Gap," *Intricate Passions*, Austin, TX: Banned Books, pp. 19-24

### Articles/Books about Valerie Taylor

- Tee Corinne: interview in *Common Lives, Lesbian Lives*, 1988, Winter, #22 introduction to *Two Women Revisited*, 1990
- Valerie Taylor, *Author: a Resource Book*, Oregon: Wolf Creek, 1991
- "Valerie Taylor," *Encyclopedia of Lesbian History and Culture*, Bonnie Zimmerman, ed., New York: Garland, forthcoming, 1999
- Studs Terkel, ed. "Valerie Taylor." In: *Coming of Age: The Story of Our Century by Those Who Lived It*, New York: Garland, forthcoming, 1999

Many thanks to Marie Kuda, who provided us with the biographical and bibliographical material on which this article and bibliography are based.

September 17, 1998

Dear Friends of Valerie Taylor,

Please forgive the informality of this letter. As literary executor for the estate of Valerie Taylor, I have worked with Brenda Marston of Cornell University to transfer all material pertaining to Valerie's personal and professional life into a special collection in the Carl B. Kroch Library. It was Valerie's wish and dream that her papers not be dispersed, but that they would have a permanent home where researchers could study her work. I am pleased and grateful that her desire has now become a reality.

If you have photographs, her letters or letters pertaining to her, or other material which you think should be included in this collection, please send them to Brenda Marston with the notation that they belong with the Valerie Taylor Papers.

Thank you so much for your support and interest.

Tee A. Corinne

THE SWEET LITTLE OLD GRAY-HAIRED LADY IN SNEAKERS by Valerie Taylor

I am a woman,  
a lesbian  
a poet,  
poor  
handicapped,  
radical,  
Indian,  
over seventy—  
an eight-time loser.

How shall I not be  
a revolutionary?

How shall I not see  
my sister in every woman,  
my brother in any man,  
my child to cherish in every child?

When they dragged Jane Kennedy into solitary  
that was my arm the cops were twisting.

When they dropped napalm on the rice paddies  
that was my skin on fire,  
that was my blood running out hot and sticky.

Goddess  
give me eight kinds of strength to fight back.

### IN MEMORY OF THE VOICES WE HAVE LOST

The Archives is a place to commemorate lost lovers and friends. As a people, we have been deprived of the ritual of communal sorrow. Many lesbians have experienced the pain of silent mourning. Often in newspaper obituaries, a euphemism for the death of a lesbian is "There are no known survivors." This is not true. We are each other's survivors.

We hope that you will remember the lesbians in your community, your sisters, your friends, through memorials and letters to the Lesbian Herstory Archives, so that we may all honor their lives. Their voices and lives must not be lost or made invisible when we ourselves are no longer here to tell their stories.

Vee Larsen  
Dorothy Isabel (Oz) Mitcheltree  
Kathleen Rae Moules  
Julia Boyer Reinstein  
Marcia Storch  
Valerie Taylor  
Cara Vaughn  
Bobbie Whitney  
Lesbian Woman on Flight 800  
Christine Burton  
Nan Evalyn Karpf  
Elizabeth Anne (Izzie) Harbaugh  
Sharon McCracken  
Pat Erodenko  
Dusty Springfield  
Charlotte Smith

# 25th Anniversary Year Celebration

This year we are celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary! Can you imagine? For *twenty-five years* this grassroots organization has managed to sustain itself as an all-volunteer group, rooted in consensus, and supported by the worldwide lesbian community. We should all be very proud of this remarkable accomplishment! We were able to purchase our own beautiful home to house our ever-growing collection of special collections, periodicals, books, videos, films, oral histories, audio tapes, music, graphic files, photographs, subject clippings, and ephemera and still continue to collect, process, and preserve lesbian materials.

We have a full year of activities planned to honor our anniversary, so if you are in the New York area in 1999 we hope you will come help us celebrate this extraordinary community institution. We are planning a big open house on March 21<sup>st</sup>, followed by a tea dance on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2 stepping with the Manhattan Mustangs at the Community Center. In June we are joining forces with the Rising Café in Brooklyn to host a block party on Brooklyn Pride Day. Finally, as a grand finale we are planning a major evening event Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>, that will include performances, readings, music, and reflections by both famous and infamous lesbians to commemorate our first 25 years. Save the dates.

As part of this celebration, we would like to ask you to participate by sending us your remembrances

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LHEF, PO Box 1258, New York, NY 10116 • 718/768-DYKE •  
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**LHA Coordinators:** Suzanne Bernard, Amy Beth, Constantia Constantinou, Deborah Edel, Nancy Froehlich, Paula Grant, Morgan Gwenwald, Beth Haskell, Joan Nestle, Robin Riback, Joy Rich, Ina Rimpau, Saskia Scheffer, Annette Spallino, Desiree Yael Vester, Maxine Wolfe, Lucinda Zoe  
**Newsletter Production:** Beth Haskell, Joy Rich, Tally Talbott, Maxine Wolfe

**The Lesbian Herstory Archives** exists to gather and preserve Lesbian lives and activities so that future generations of Lesbians will have ready access to materials relevant to their lives. The process of gathering this material will also serve to uncover and collect our history. These materials enable us to analyze and re-evaluate the Lesbian experience.

of the Archives. Maybe it is the first time you learned about the Archives, an Archives Slide Show given in your town, or a visit to the Archives either at the old location on the Upper West Side or the building in Brooklyn. Or it could be just something about how the Archives has affected you or the community you live in. The next LHA Newsletter will feature these remembrances. Send them to us at our mailing address, PO Box 1258, New York, NY 10116 or fax them to 718-768-4663.

Join us in our yearlong celebration! We deserve to Party!

## "HOW TO BE AN ARCHIVETTE"

This past year, as a new method of recruiting volunteers, we held five "How to Be an Archivette" workshops. The workshops included a tour of the Archives, a discussion of the principles of the Archives, and an overview of the many types of new projects volunteers can create for themselves as well as the ongoing projects they could work on. We also expanded the hours volunteers can work, changing from a single "volunteer night" to a system in which volunteers can work during any of the hours the Archives is staffed. To facilitate this new system, we mail each volunteer a monthly calendar showing when the Archives will be open and which coordinator is staffing. This enables her to drop by at her convenience to work on a project of interest. If she's interested in working with a particular part of the collection, she can arrange to come at a time when the coordinator most knowledgeable about that collection will be staffing. Then, once the new volunteer "learns" how to do the particular work she is interested in, she can drop by to work anytime the building is open. Creating the calendar to mail to volunteers has also meant we can distribute them at community venues with the headline "Lesbians Come Browse with Us." This maintains our visibility in our community and makes it easy for anyone to come and browse without having to call for an appointment.

We're planning to do "How to Be An Archivette" workshops at least twice a year. So, if you'd like to be included in the next one, please call the Archives, and leave a message for either Tally or Maxine. But don't wait for the next workshop to start volunteering! Instead, call us, and we can arrange for you to get a brief orientation and start immediately. Or, if you've volunteered previously, haven't been around for a while, and want to get back into the swing of things, call to tell us to put you on the mailing list to receive our monthly staffing calendar. We're sure you'll find some time slot that suits your schedule.

## CLOTHES WITH A MESSAGE

## THE LHA T-SHIRT COLLECTION

Jennica Born, an intern at LHA during the summer of 1996, came along as I led a tour group through the Archives. We came to the clothes closets and, with a huge sigh common to all Archives coordinators, I said: "This is our T-shirt collection" – opening several closets filled with boxes – "and one of these days we're going to get around to cataloging it." Jennica had been looking for a project, and the T-shirt collection had strong appeal to her as a political activist. She found out, however, that political messages are only one subject adorning – in words and graphic designs – the T-shirts lesbians have created and worn through the years.

Some of our T-shirts are *personal*, one-of-a-kind, and handmade, with sparkles, sequins, or just a magic marker. They let the world know something about the maker – "New Rage Dyke," how she feels about her lover – "You make me clit-happy and labia-laughing," or about her mother – "Daughter of a Dyke" (front), "Damn Proud!" (back). Most were silk-screened or printed in varying quantities. Some *commemorate events*, like "Seneca Women's Peace Encampment, 1985"; "3<sup>rd</sup> World Lesbian and Gay Conference, National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays, 1979 March on Washington, Proud of our culture, Proud of our heritage"; "San Diego Women's Music Festival 1975." Others identify *groups*: "Dyke Patrol, 1973, Orange County LA" (which came along with a note saying it was purchased at the Lesbian Conference in Los Angeles in April 1973); "Las Buenas Amigas" with the words "Latina Lesbians" written inside a triangle with three women's symbols; "Lesbian Avengers" written around their bomb logo (front) and "WE RECRUIT" (back); or "Salsa Soul Sisters. Third World Women Incorporated." Still others identify *bars* or *restaurants*: "Bonnie and Clyde's" (Manhattan, NY); "Grace and Rubies" ((Iowa City, IA), or *bands*: "The Dyketones. We're not just a gang, we're a band", or *journals*: "Common Lives/Lesbians Lives" (with a graphic of a group of women in a car). There are, of course, the *political commentaries*: "May the great seagull of P'Town shit on Anita" (along with a drawing of a seagull, @1977); "Stop Briggs"; "Sisterhood is Powerful" (with a fist in a woman's

symbol); and "Lavender Menace" (worn during an action by Radicalesbians at the Congress to Unite Women, 1970). And then there are the catchy *visibility phrases* we all know and love (well, that's debatable): "hug a dyke"; "we are everywhere" (written on a U.S. map); "uppity women unite." The graphics include lots of nude women, amazons, single, double, or triple women's symbols, labryses, rainbows, vagina-like flowers, as well as stars and moons.

Making up a cataloging form for this collection was fun, but it also proved that a project can seem so simple when you start and get complicated when you try to figure out what someone might want to know about something as usual – in our communities – as a T-shirt. Each shirt is assigned a major category describing whether the focus is lesbian; lesbian and gay; lesbian, gay, and bisexual; lesbian; gay, bisexual, and transgender; lesbian/transgender; AIDS-related; or women/feminist. Then we assign one or two subject descriptions from among a large list which includes: personal, social/community, visibility, religion/spirituality, pride events, political, conferences, sports, health, community centers, propaganda, cultural/ethnic, restaurants, bars, herstory, festivals, business/advertising, bookstores, music, media, marches, and so on. We also code whether the shirt has words only, a graphic only, or both; where these are located on the shirt; and the color of the shirt and the print/design (this is one of the most obvious changes over the years and would be a great subject for a research paper, as would the changing of the symbols we used). We code the style (short sleeve, tank, etc.), the event, organization, date, city, state and/or country it's from, the donor and the designers, and any information we have or which was sent by the donor about the story behind the T-shirt, its owner, maker, or the event/organization. And we cross-reference it to other parts of the collection.

Getting this collection in order has been a long

process. Before cataloging the shirts, we photocopy the front and back words/designs. This will be used to create a looseleaf notebook an LHA visitor can easily look through to get a sense of the collection or to find particular shirts. Then we wash each one and put it in an acid-free temporary box. After that comes data entry, then tagging and wrapping each one before storing them permanently in special clothing boxes.

Jennica did a huge amount of work that first summer, getting us off to a good start. Since then, we have finished photocopying, washing, and cataloging several hundred shirts, and we have been creating a computerized database. When this batch is finished, we'll begin working on the 100 or more T-shirts donated since we began this work – the ones we pretend not to see so we can have some sense of completion when this first group is finished. Once the data entry is completed, we'll have a printout of the entire collection and be able to search the file by keywords to create specialized lists.

Do you have one or more T-shirts you no longer wear – or never wore but bought to remember a special event or place or to support a group's fund raising effort? We'd love to have them – BUT please call before you clean out your drawers and mail them to us. We'll tell you if we already have that particular shirt. If not, we'll send you a donor form and a blank cataloging form (so you can give us all of the information firsthand) and then look forward to receiving your new addition to the collection.

-Maxine Wolfe



## LHA Enters Cyberspace

We are very pleased to announce the creation of our new website. The mission of the website is to provide information regarding the Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation, its collections, and services that LHA makes available to our community.

Users may obtain information describing the collections such as the Audio-Visual Collection; Books & Monographs; Reference Collection; International Collection; Special Collections; Oral History; Subject Files; Organization Files; Unpublished Papers; Periodicals; Vertical Files; and the Photography Collection. Pathfinders and bibliographies are also available for users who are interested in conducting research.

The Exhibits of Lesbian Herstory and treasures that continue to travel out of the Archives and onto the walls of community organizations across the USA are also available for viewing from our website. Currently, the "Fashion Exhibit," "Queer Covers," and "Keepin' On" are mounted on the site, enriched with bibliographies and vivid image galleries.

Information is also available regarding the LHA Internship program as well as on how to become a volunteer at the Archives. Persons interested in donating their collections or contributing to LHA financially may find relevant information under the "support the LHA" section.

Come and visit us at <http://www.datalounge.net/lha/>

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Many of you were generous in giving us your material for a Special Collection. Since the Web is part of the Internet and is accessible to an audience more vast than those who visit the Archives or receive our newsletter (where we have listed some Special Collections in the past), we did not want to list The Archives' Special Collection donors' names without their permission. We've begun contacting donors, but **if we have your special collection**, we'd appreciate you xeroxing the form below, filling it out, and mailing it to the Archives.

### LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES WEBSITE AGREEMENT

(The following information is for LHA internal use only)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE SIGN AND DATE EITHER SECTION A OR SECTION B:

A. I hereby give the Lesbian Herstory Archives permission to list my name and a general description of the contents of my Special Collection on the LHA website. I understand that any restrictions I have placed on the collection, as noted on my donor form, remain in effect.

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

B. At this time I do not want my Special Collection listed by name on the LHA website.

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

## SPECIAL COLLECTIONS – LET YOUR VOICE SING!

*Special collections are an important part of the Lesbian Herstory Archives' collection. We encourage you to come browse and even start your own. We have over 250 Special Collections from you, your friends, your favorite lesbian poets, women you may have passed in the street, lesbians from the East Coast, West Coast, Midwest, South, Northern Plains. Gay women who died in the 1960's and women who were born in 1970.*

A Special Collection is...

A Special Collection is a grouping of someone's personal memorabilia – love letters, manuscripts, financial papers, buttons, banners, flyers, photos, drawings, old pairs of glasses. When you start your own Special Collection, it starts to resemble a jigsaw puzzle: take pieces out of the box, arrange them, and you can see yourself as a young woman coming out. Take other pieces out, and see a lesbian in her middle years – strong, hopeful and a role model to others. Scatter the contents, and arrange them again – now you see a political activist and a grandmother.

Your Special Collection is a slice of your life. LHA Special Collections is a slice of lesbian life. Let me take you on a tour –

### The Tour

First, come in the door, in to the foyer, and take your coat off (hang it over there on the rack by the stairs). Now, look at the art exhibit on the wall. A set of doors leads to a big room, our Yellow Wallpaper Room, named for obvious reasons. Off this main room there's a door. Let's go in. This is our first stopping point.

In this Special Collections Room, you see floor-to-ceiling metal shelves lining the walls stacked with over a hundred boxes – all are clearly labeled with the year the contents were archived, how many boxes in the collection, and the name of the person or organization to which the collection belongs. In this tightly packed space, the feeling is comforting. There is a smell of close air and old paper. And through the silence, if we stay long enough, we may be able to hear the

anticipation and potential the boxes contain.

Let's take a Special Collections box off the shelf, go back into the Yellow Wallpaper Room, and open it. Here, in this box, we'll find mementos of disappointments and joys, invisibilities and comings out.

This box has two diaries, old and worn. A passage from 1956 is written by an anxious and frightened high school girl in her junior year wanting to go to the prom with a boy in the upper class. The other diary, from the late 1960's, is written by this same woman in her late 20's, excited and nervous, falling in love with a woman five years older than herself. In searching for identity she scribbles the word "homosexual" small and nearly illegible. In a folder, underneath the diaries, are love letters exuberant and celebratory, dated mid 1970's. The once scribbled "homosexual" is replaced here with bold happy script: "Lesbian Feminist." Further down are photos of groups of women posing at parties in dashikis, afros, workshirts, painter's pants – we are looking at the authors of the love letters. Folded small is a tee shirt from a protest march – we can still smell the day that shirt was worn – patchouli, cigarettes, herbal tea. And, at the very bottom of the box, baby's first pair of shoes and a birth announcement, "Congratulations: It's a Girl."

We look up and laugh because on the wall opposite us is framed that popular cartoon of a doctor handing mother a baby: "It's a Lesbian."

As we put the box back, I tell you that I know this woman is well and vibrant, retired, living in New Mexico with her lover. LHA gets a parcel from her every few years, and we'll add the incoming contents to her collection.

Now, look around and see that there are three other places that Special Collections boxes are stored because they outgrew the original Special Collections room. The more recent collections are creating a new wall in this Yellow Wallpaper Room, and hundreds more from the 1980's are stacked neatly in two alcoves.

To end the tour, let's go, past our dining room/meeting room, to the basement where we see more metal shelving with Special Collections, not in the uniform acid-free boxes like those on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, but collections in their

original boxes and envelopes – these are collections waiting to be processed.

### The Personal

In spring of 1996 I spent many weekends at home crying because my father who had been diagnosed with leukemia two years previous was rapidly failing. Each weekend contained at least one frantic and cryptic phone call from my mother about my father. By that spring he was never "okay" or "better" – he was always the same or worse. After a particularly bad conversation, I ripped open the mail to find a flyer from LHA about volunteering at the Archives. That sure sounded better than spending the day at home waiting for the phone to ring! I volunteered that weekend, and I have been working with Special Collections since that day.

A few weekends after the first time I volunteered I was shaken from yet another phone call about morphine or surgery, so I volunteered again. I went upstairs and walked into the Yellow Wallpaper Room and opened the door to Special Collections. Everything stopped. The anxiety, the grief, the wondering "what if." Finally, here was my answer to a question I was trying to formulate. In the answer "*because, it is so*" came the question: "*why does my father have to die now?*" In that moment, the women-in-boxes became my teachers: All those who allowed their lives to be time-capsuled in boxes sang to me, "*because it is so.*"

I have been learning from these women since the day they sang. Sometimes, I arrive to work at the Archives with life's usual frustrations: work-politics, loneliness, bad hair day. But as soon as I open a collection, all of that stops because I listen carefully to hear what I can learn. Some teach me how difficult it was to be a lesbian in the 1950s, some remind me how we have to fight for ourselves in the late 1990s. Some celebrate full and exciting lesbian lives, others tell of potential unfulfilled. Some admonish, some encourage, but all of them teach me, and all of them sing.

### The Political

An extraordinary keynote speech was delivered recently at Outright '98 the Lesbian/Gay Writer's conference held in Boston, by Nancy Bereano of Firebrand Books. She addressed the

issue of how being lesbian is now culturally chic, due to media coverage. We frequently see two model-like women labeled "lesbians" on a magazine cover with makeup, long hair, and long nails (ouch!), kissing. We watch talk shows and sitcoms about "who we are." Bereano warned us not to embrace this media image that is created by them and then fed back to us. She also cautioned us not to fall into the trap of trying to live up to their imaginary lesbian.

*You and I* can help stop these false presentations and create authentic lesbian herstory! We can start by learning to value our selves through our lifes' works. Our diaries are crucial enough to *never* destroy because we have outgrown the way we used to think; Our photos must remain intact, even through rage, when we want to destroy our ex-lovers' images; Our gay

pride tee shirts are to be kept and stored and not thrown away in shame because we are angry with our bodies for having gotten bigger!

#### Part 5: Help us Hear Your Voice

I am one who intends to keep my "stuff" around me in my apartment until the day that I die. You may or may not be more willing than I to part with your immediate surroundings. Though I will not "give away" papers or diaries right now, I am looking to the future when my life is over and others can learn from my Special Collection. Whether you are ready to give us the start of your Special Collection now or later, or whether you have decided that your personal possessions will go elsewhere, begin now to value the contents of your life.

\* Keep your love letters and journals "safe" by putting them in acid-free

boxes;

\* Take photos out of cheap albums and re-mount them on acid free paper between mylar sheets;

\* Look at your things and begin to create an order: chronological by date, subject by love-letters, etc;

\* Be aware of who has legal guardianship of your possessions. Should you become unable to represent yourself, or should you die – if you do not trust that person will follow your exact wishes, begin to think about re-assigning an executor to your will;

\* If you would like to know more about donating your Special Collection to the Lesbian Herstory Archives, call us at (718) 768-3953;

REMEMBER: *VALUE YOUR OWN HISTORY, VALUE LESBIAN HERSTORY, CHERISH YOUR BELONGINGS AND LET YOUR VOICE SING!*

-Robin Riback

#### LHA goes to Amsterdam: A Report on the "Know How Conference on the World of Women's Information"

The Archives participated in an international conference in Amsterdam. The "Know How Conference on the World of Women's Information," Aug 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, was attended by close to 400 women from 70 countries. It was the third such conference-- held every 4 years. Lucinda Zoe, longtime LHA coordinator, coordinated the primary lesbian workshop on Wednesday, the 26<sup>th</sup>.

The working title of the three-hour workshop was "Documenting a Movement: Lesbian Archives & Collections." This open forum was specifically on "Lesbian & Community Collections: Agents of Social Change" and included presentations by lesbian archives and organizations from seven different countries. Presenters discussed their involvement in community activism, the beginnings of their organizations, their collection development and outreach strategies, and how their collections are being used.

Participants included Bridgitte Geiger, Stichwort Archives, Vienna; Karen Martin, Gay & Lesbian Archives, South Africa; Olja Jans, Lesbisch Archief Nijmegen, Holland; Olga Stefaniuk, Polish Lesbian Archives; Ivana Cikis, Because Press, Croatia; Adele Patrick & Sue Johns, Glasgow Women's Library, United Kingdom; and Lucinda Zoe, Lesbian Herstory Archives, USA, Moderator.

The conference was held in a beautiful museum with cathedral ceilings--gorgeous conference rooms with high ceilings. They had put the workshop in a small, but elegant, room thinking we would only have 10-12 participants. As it happened, the room was packed with over 35 women and it was standing room only. The session lasted 3 hours and was very well received.

By the end of the session, a number of resolutions emerged including: that lesbian content and visibility be included in all future conference and international information efforts; there is a need to clarify the specific difficulties that surround access to lesbian information and materials-- such as being imprisoned in some countries if you are even caught with it; a recommendation will be made to the conference organizing committee that the next international conference be preceded by a Lesbian Pre-conference (this one was preceded by an Indigenous Women's Pre-conference). It was suggested that the Lesbian Herstory Archives website could serve as a focus for international work and networking among lesbian archives.

#### ON THE ROAD AGAIN – INTERNATIONALLY -Maxine Wolfe

This past summer and fall I had the wonderful experience of sharing our herstory and slide show with Lesbians and Gay men in both Northern Ireland and South Africa, meeting members of our international Lesbian and Gay communities, and learning a lot about Lesbian and Gay life in these countries.

Belfast was first. Emmaia Gelman, a self-described "Irish Jewish American dyke" was a co-founder of Queer Space, a new grassroots, all-volunteer community center. She asked me to present the slide show at Queer Space, June 19<sup>th</sup>, at 10 p.m., the only available time slot in a busy Lesbian and Gay Pride weekend. In Belfast I also attended a workshop on Lesbian History at the Downtown Women's Center and marched in their Lesbian and Gay Pride march.

Graeme Reid, the Director of the Gay and Lesbian Archives (GALA; part of the South African History Archives at the University of the Witwatersand in Johannesburg) managed to get a grant from the Mellon Foundation to fund LHA to participate in several activities they sponsored during their Lesbian and Gay Pride week.

On Sunday, September 27, the LHA slide show was hosted by GALA and the Hope and Unity Metropolitan Community Church, a predominantly Black congregation meeting in Hillbrow. The Workshop (sponsored by GALA) brought together people from a range of community archives in South Africa and other African countries (including Botswana and Zimbabwe. My presentation was on collection policies; other topics included community participation, advocacy, and the relationship between community based and national (or institutional) archives. On September 29<sup>th</sup>, after a tour of GALA, I gave a talk at the Graduate School for the Humanities and Social Sciences Advanced Seminar Series, "Refiguring the Archives." In Jo'burg I also marched in their Lesbian and Gay Pride March

Leaving Jo'burg I headed off to Capetown. There, the slide show was hosted by the African Gender Institute (AGI) at the University of Capetown and the Triangle Project, a health project for Lesbians and Gay men. About fifty people attended. Many were older, white Lesbians who said they particularly loved the slides of older Lesbians. I also came home with the wonderful feeling that our slide show and our messages – that we should all value and preserve evidence of our lives – is meaningful to Lesbians, Gay men, and other people who have been deprived of their histories, all over the world.

## FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 1997

### INCOME FOR 1997

#### GENERAL FUND

Donations General Fund	20,428.50
Donations Building Fund	8,199.88
Benefits	1,407.00
Honoraria	2,862.00
LHA Items	237.00
Exhibits/Photo Use	150.00
United Way/CUNY Campaigns	766.08
Grants:	
Open Meadows Foundation	1,000.00
Chase Matching Fund	25.00

**SUBTOTAL** 35,125.46

#### INTEREST

Chemical Bank Savings Account	170.84
Chemical Bank Endowment Account	315.82
Community Capital Bank Building Fund	105.95

**SUBTOTAL** 592.61

**TOTAL INCOME** 35,718.07

### EXPENSES FOR 1997

#### EXPENSES

Postage 1,914.96

Post Office Fees	585.00
Printing/Photocopy	7,004.64
Stationery/Archival/Household supplies	2,458.07
Storage: Pierce Leahy Archives	2,686.09
Ongoing Household Expenses	5,477.68
Repairs/Major Household Expenses:	
Handilift	195.00
Plumber	605.29
Engineer re: Building Crack	300.00
Hardware Supplies	175.24
Contracts:	
Alarm System	540.00
Photocopy Machine Service	546.00
IDT Computer Network	290.00
Books/Journals/Magazines	85.65
Events-Related Expenses	865.75
Listings	85.00
Parking	67.90
Mailing Preparation	2,873.00
Slide Reproduction	726.02
Flowers	95.22
Credit Card Renewal Fees	210.00
Bank Service Charges	421.36
Tax Preparation	500.00
Governmental Filing Fees	110.00

#### REAL ESTATE RELATED

Insurance	4,182.11
Water	640.81
Real Estate Tax	523.49

**TOTAL EXPENSES** 34,164.28

#### ARCHIVES PRESENTATIONS AND EVENTS

- March 21, 1997. Slide show presentation. Michigan State University, Lansing, MI. Sponsored by the Women's Studies Department.
- March 26, 1997. Slide show presentation. The Rising Café, Brooklyn, NY.
- April 26, 1997. Slide show presentation The Berkshires.
- June 24, 1997. At Home with the Archives: Elana Dykewoman, Jewish dyke, poet, author, and activist.
- September 28, 1997. Slide show presentation and talk. The New-York Historical Society, New York, NY.
- October 1997. Slide show presentation. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Student Group. University of Vermont, Burlington, VT.
- October 1997. Slide show presentation. University of Vermont Libraries. University of Vermont, Burlington, VT.
- October 15, 1997. "148 Moments in Joan Nestle's Life." Photographic exhibit celebrating the life of Joan Nestle. Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center, New York, NY. Curated by Saskia Scheffer.
- October 18, 1997. "A Black Slip Affair." Event celebrating the life of Joan Nestle. Pace University, New York, NY.
- November 12, 1997. Presentation. Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center's Brooklyn Orientation, Brooklyn, NY.
- November 30, 1997. At Home with the Archives: The Five Lesbian Brothers, a comedy performance group.
- December 14, 1997. At Home with the Archives: screening and discussion with Tami Gold and Kelly Anderson, makers of the film "Out at Work."
- February 28, 1998. Slide show presentation for Lesbian Herstory Archives volunteers. Lesbian Herstory Archives, Brooklyn, NY.
- March 19, 1998. Presentation. Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center's Lesbian Orientation, New York, NY.
- March 24, 1998. Slide show presentation. Archivists' Round Table of Metropolitan New York. Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center, New York, NY.
- April 7, 1998. Slide show presentation. Queens Gays and Lesbians United, Queens, NY.
- May 16, 1998. Slide show presentation. New London, CT.
- June, 1998. "Queer Covers" exhibit on display. The Rising Café, Brooklyn, NY.
- June 19, 1998. Slide show presentation. Queer Space, Belfast, Ireland.
- July 13, 1998. Pulp novel reading. The Rising Café, Brooklyn, NY.
- August 26, 1998 Workshop "The Know How Conference on the World of Women's Information." . Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
- September 27, 1998. Slide show presentation. Hope and Unity Metropolitan Community Church, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- September 28, 1998. Presentation. Community Archives Workshop. Sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Archives and the South Africa History Archives, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- September 29, 1998. Presentation. Seminar entitled "Refiguring the Archive: Community Archives." University of the Witwatersand, Johannesburg, South Africa. Sponsored by the Graduate School for the Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts.
- October 3, 1998. At Home with the Archives: Catharina Oguntoye, an Afro-German historian, and Carolyn Gammon, a Canadian writer. "Unlearning Racism in Germany: a Lesbian Challenge."
- October 5, 1998. Slide show presentation. University of Capetown, Capetown, South Africa. Sponsored by the African Gender Institute and the Triangle Project.
- October 20, 1998. At Home with the Archives: Mary Dorsey, Irish writer, poet, and activist.
- October 24, 1998. Slide show presentation. State University of New York (SUNY), New Paltz, NY. Conference "Silencing Women: Voices of Resistance." Sponsored by the SUNY New Paltz Women's Studies Department, the New York Women's Studies Association, and the SUNY Women's Studies Council.
- November 6, 1998. At Home with the Archives.: Victoria Ramstetter and Karen Phebe Beiser of the Ohio Lesbian Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.