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## Guide to the San Francisco Street Patrol Records Collection

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### Collection number: 1998-17

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society  
San Francisco, California

Processed by:

Christopher Disman

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Heather Cummins

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** San Francisco Street Patrol Records Collection

**Dates:** 1991-1993

**Bulk Dates:** 1991-1993

**Collection number:** 1998-17

**Collection Size:** 1 manuscript box and 1 oversized box10.3 linear feet

**Repository:** Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society

San Francisco, California 94105

**Physical location:** Stored at the Archives of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Historical Society in San Francisco, California.

**Languages:** Languages represented in the collection: English

### Access

Collection open for research.

### Publication Rights

Copyright to unpublished manuscript materials has been transferred to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

### Preferred Citation

San Francisco Street Patrol Records Collection, 1998-17, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

### Acquisition Information

Collection donate to the GLBT Historical Society in 1998

### Biography / Administrative History

San Francisco Street Patrol (SFSP) began in August 1990, as a working group of Queer Nation San Francisco. Its original name was DORIS SQUASH (Defend Our Rights In the Streets/Super Queers United Against Savage Heterosexism), and the group took the name San Francisco Street Patrol in early 1991. The group was active from 1990 to 1994, and its mission was to promote GLBT peoples safety by primarily discouraging queer bashing through organized and regular nighttime patrols of the Castro. Women were among the founding members of the group, which always included roughly equal numbers of men and women. A founding patrol member and group leader was transgender, and other members included lesbians, gay men, bisexual men and women, two heterosexual men, and a heterosexual woman. SFSP members tried to verbally deescalate potential bashings when it seemed possible, and they made citizens arrests when "bashers" persisted in homophobic violence. Members were unarmed but carried handcuffs and whistles, and were trained in martial arts and self-defense. SFSP wasn't out to clean up the streets, and their patrols intervened only in bashings and not in street drug use or sex work. The group's aim was simply to make the Castro a place where Queer people can hang out without being targeted for violent attack.

SFSP also worked to increase awareness of self-defense and violence-avoidance methods. In addition to its patrols, the group handed out whistles and fliers with tips on street safety and identifying "bashers". They also watched for cars circling slowly through the Castro that might contain potential "bashers". They often volunteered in uniform for GLBT events,

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including the Pride parade and the major street fairs, and were also sometimes hired and paid to do security, for instance at the first International Mr. Leather competition.

The group began to drift apart by 1994 as members moved away from the Bay Area, or found new jobs, interests, or relationships. SFSP members worked or went on to work with the Center for AIDS Prevention Sciences (CAPS), Homes Not Jails, the Intersex Society of North America, San Francisco Sex Information (SFSI), New Leaf, the Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC), ACT UP/Golden Gate, and the B.A.R. For an expanded version of this historical sketch see the Fall, 2000 issue of the GLBTHS newsletter *Our Stories*.

### **Scope and Content of Collection**

Many of the materials in Box 1 are descriptions of San Francisco Street Patrol (SFSP) for people outside the group, or potential and new members. The collection also contains a number of internal group documents and news updates for group members. SFSP members wore a uniform on patrol and the collection includes drawings of the SFSP T-shirt designs. Box 2 includes two SFSP berets, which were worn by Michael Botkin and Steve Finlay; the metal studs in them each represent three months of working on patrol. One beret is covered with buttons (e.g. "I'm a Safe Sex Slut"), and the other is slightly stained from being dropped in a wok by the donor. The metal file box/clipboard was carried by the Hostess or Mistress of each night's patrol, who helped maintain a certain marching formation. Box 2 also includes two of the types of whistles SFSP members passed out on the street.

Folder 1/15 contains information about an L.A./SF gay male patrol group called the Street Cats, whose members carried mace and stun guns, and at least one of whom had an avowed interest in "beating people up." Some anti-bashing patrols only blew whistles when they saw violence, feeling that physically stepping between "bashers" and people being battered was inconsistent with pacifist or nonviolent principles. Both the Street Cats and SFSP followed a hands-on, interventionist philosophy, and the contents of this file provide interesting contrasts between the two contemporary SF groups' tactics and principles. The file contains an unsent open letter to the queer community that sets out SFSP's strong reservations about the Street Cats; another letter in the file which was sent addresses an incident of verbal abuse of SFSP members by members of the Street Cats driving by in their jeep. The letter was written by SFSP Director of Operations and Queen Suegee Tamar (later Tamar-Mattis) to Street Cats leader Don Fass, and copies were also sent to the SFPD, the SF Hall of Justice, CUAV, and a San Francisco law firm. Also see Folder 1/2 for internal SFSP minutes in which the Street Cats are referred to as "the Street Sissies."

Folder 1/14 contains a flier "Overcoming Masculine Oppression in Mixed Groups" that was put out by QUEERS (Queers United to Examine and Eliminate Racism and Sexism), a Queer Nation focus group.

### **Arrangement**

The collection is divided into 2 series:

1. Documents
2. Artifacts

### **Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Homophobia

Law enforcement

### **Other Finding Aids**

Related Collections at GLBTHS: Queer Nation San Francisco (1993-2) Michael Botkin Papers (1998-23) *Frighten the Horses* (Periodicals Collection, Box 26)[see issue 5, May 1991, pp. 12-14 for an article by Ellen Twinaime on SFSP]

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Box 1	<b>Documents 1991-1993</b>
Box/ Folder 1/ 1	<b>Bylaws 1993</b>
Box/ Folder 1/ 2	<b>Minutes 05/09/1993</b>
Box/ Folder 1/ 3	<b>Correspondence 1992-1993</b>
Box/ Folder 1/ 4	<b>Financial documents 1993</b>
Box/ Folder 1/ 5	<b>Fliers passed out by SFSP during patrols</b>
Box/ Folder 1/ 6	<b>Membership 1993</b>
Box/ Folder 1/ 7	<b>News-sheet and newszines 1991-1993</b>
Box/ Folder 1/ 8	<b>Publicity-fliers</b>
Box/ Folder 1/ 9	<b>Publicity-press release about SFSP</b>
Box/ Folder 1/ 10	<b>Publicity-publications with articles about SFSP 1993</b>
Box/ Folder 1/ 11	<b>Queer Youth at Risk program proposal</b>
Box/ Folder 1/ 12	<b>Stationary</b>

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Box/ Folder 1/ 13	<b>T-shirt design sheets 1991</b>
Box/ Folder 1/ 14	<b>Miscellaneous SFSP material</b>
Box/ Folder 1/ 15	<b>Street Cats in Los Angeles and San Francisco 1993</b>
Box 2	<b>Artifacts unknown</b>
Box 2	<b>Two whistles in packages</b>
Box 2	<b>One button</b>
Box 2	<b>One laminated map of neighborhoods that SFSP patrolled</b>
Box 2	<b>One metal clipboard/file box with "SFSP" in pink spraypaint</b>
Box 2	<b>Two berets</b>