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Accession number: 1992-08

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society

San Francisco, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Lesbian Agenda for Action Records, 1987-1991
Date (inclusive): 1987-1991
Accession number: 1992-08
Creator: Lesbian Agenda for Action
Extent: .75 linear feet in 2 boxes
Shelf location: Housed at the GLBT Historical Society.
Language: English.

Acquisition
The records of the Lesbian Agenda for Action (#1992-08) were received from Roma Guy, board of directors member.

Access
Collection is open for research.

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Copyright to unpublished manuscript materials has been transferred to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

Audio-Visual Materials
There are none in the collection.

Preferred Citation

Historical Note
The Lesbian Agenda for Action (LAFA) was founded in January 1987 as a sponsored project of the San Francisco Women’s Centers (also known as the Women’s Building). LAFA was formed to promote lesbian visibility in society through political and social action.
The major contribution of LAFA was organizing conferences. In November of 1987, LAFA held its first conference Lesbian Political Action. The conference goal was to build a consensus on the most pressing issues on the lesbian political agenda, and then devising strategies to make government more responsive to them. Issues discussed ranged from domestic partners to the politics of substance abuse.

In 1989, LAFA sponsored a "Report back to the Community" from the Second Annual Old Lesbians Conference. In November 1989, LAFA along with the Bay Area Lesbians of Color sponsored The Dynamics of Color Conference: Building a Stronger Lesbian Community, Combating Racism, Honoring Diversity. The conference was attended by over 600 women. The conference created and taught new ways of dealing with racial dynamics and aired issues around racism seldom discussed fully - among them land rights of indigenous peoples, anti-Arab racism, and the dilemmas facing lesbians of mixed heritage. The last program on record that LAFA sponsored was a forum on Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction Syndrome in March of 1991.

During 1990 LAFA became split over whom to endorse for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors election. Two out lesbians, Carole Midgen and Roberta Achtenberg were running. In the end, both women won seats on the board of supervisors.

Scope and Content
The LAFA records (.75 linear feet) document the many activities of this important organization from its founding in 1987 to 1991. The records are divided into four series; administrative, conferences, outreach/publicity, and miscellaneous. The administrative records documents the formation of policy and the day to day operation of LAFA. Included are minutes of the Board of Directors and committees, correspondence, financial information and budgets. The files are arranged in alphabetical order by title. There is extensive materials from the three LAFA committees, Lesbian Visibility, Organizational Development, and Political. One folder also concerns the early organization structure of LAFA. At its inception and throughout its existence an effort was made to be as inclusive as possible for all lesbians with a commitment to multicultural leadership and hence much time was spent on creating a working structure. Though this series contains a wealth of material on the functioning of LAFA, the researcher should be aware that gaps exists in the minutes for both the board of directors and the various committees. There is also an undated file containing a Three Year Program Development Plan. The plan outlines the proposed activities of each committee. The series contains two files documenting planning retreats held in 1988 and 1989. The retreats focused on setting an agenda for LAFA and creating a sense of unity of purpose.

LAFA's main achievement was holding various conferences bringing lesbians together to identify issues of concern and then bringing these issues into the political arena. The series is organized chronologically by conference date and then alphabetically by folder title for each conference. Some of the items included in this series are minutes, correspondence, printed materials, notes, and speeches.

The first Lesbian Political Action conference was held just a few months after LAFA's creation in November of 1987. The materials document the planning of the conference such as issues for workshops, planning and logistics. Documents from the actual conference including speeches, publicity and evaluations.

There is one folder of documents from the "Report back to the Community" from the Second Annual Old Lesbians Conference (August 1989) containing the proposal, programs, correspondence and other items. There are many files documenting the Diversity of Color conference held in November of 1989. A number of committees were set up to facilitate the conference. The collection contains minutes and related materials from the Children's/Youth Program, Fundraising/Finance, Logistics, Outreach/Publicity, Program and Steering committees. Other files from the conference include evaluations, personal notes, planning materials, programs, proposals, and publicity.

The Outreach/Publicity files contain news articles, publicity flyers, the LAFA newsletter The L Word, of which the records contain four issues, and mailings to attract more member, provide updates on LAFA activity, and raise money.

The miscellaneous series contains the achievement award presented to LAFA by the Alice B. Tolka Democratic Club in 1987.

Title: Carmen Vasquez Papers,
Identifier/Call Number: 95-5

Title: San Francisco Women's Building Records,
Identifier/Call Number: 96-15

Material Cataloged Separately
1 folder of materials concerning planning for the National Lesbian Conference (Atlanta 1991)
1 folder of materials concerning San Francisco Domestic Partnership Ordinances, 1987-1989
1 folder of materials concerning the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Democratic Clubs, 1988-1990
Administrative Files

Box Box 1

Board of Directors Minutes, 1987-1988
1989-1990
Board of Supervisors Election, Carole Midgen, 1990
Correspondence, 1987-1990
Finance/Fundraising Committee, 1987
Financial - Budget Statements 1987-1990
Financial - Samson estate, 1989
Lesbian Visibility Committee, 1988-1989
  Background Materials and Notes, 1988
Mailing List Policy, nd
Organizational Development Committee, 1988-1991
Organizational Structure, 1987-1988
*Personal and Political: Creating Multicultural Synergy*, discussion paper, 1988
Planning Retreat #1, Jan 1988
Planning Retreat #2, Feb 1989
Political Committee, 1988-1989
  Three Year Program Development Plan, nd

Conference Files

Box Box 1

Lesbian Political Action, 1987
  Correspondence
  Decriminalizing Sex and Sexual Stratification Workshops
  Evaluation
  Issues from Workshop
  Planning and Logistics
  Program and Publicity
  Speeches
  Workshops Committee
"Report Back to the Community" Second Annual Old Lesbians, Aug 1989
Diversity of Color, 1989
  Children's/Youth Program Committee
  Documents
  Evaluation Forms
  Fundraising/Finance Committee
  Logistics Committee

Box Box 2

Outreach/Publicity Committee
  Personal Notes
  Planning Documents
  Program Committee
  Programs and Schedules
  Proposals
  Publicity
  Racism and Anti-Semitism Discussion Notes
  Steering Committee

Outreach/Publicity Files

Box Box 2

Flyers, various dates

Miscellaneous
Box Box 2

Achievement Award, 1987