Guide to the Lesbian Avengers (San Francisco Chapter) Records, 1993-1997

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Accession number: 1996-10

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society

San Francisco, California

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Lesbian Avengers (San Francisco Chapter) Records,
Date (inclusive): 1993-1997
Accession number: 1996-10
Creator: San Francisco Lesbian Avengers
Extent: 1 linear foot
San Francisco, California.
Language: English.

Acquisition
The Records (96-10) were donated to GLHS in 1996 and 1997.

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Copyright to unpublished manuscript materials has been transferred to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.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
The Records contain many photographs.

Preferred Citation

Historical Note
The San Francisco Lesbian Avengers engaged in direct-action politics throughout the San Francisco Bay Area between 1993 and 1997 to promote visibility of queer women and to fight the rise of the Christian right. Founded in New York in 1992, the Lesbian Avengers were noted for their bold, theatrical style and their use of humor to capture media attention.

The San Francisco chapter of the Lesbian Avengers was convened to organize San Francisco’s first Dyke March in June 1993. The group’s subsequent actions targeted misogyny among gay men in the Castro; government inattention to
lesbians with AIDS; the Christian "ex-gay" organization Exodus International; harassment of lesbians in the military; and a variety of other issues. The San Francisco chapter was known for working on such non-lesbian-specific issues as immigrant rights and police accountability, as well as for being the first Lesbian Avengers chapter to incorporate bisexual and transgendered women into its mission statement. The controversy over the latter decision is documented in meeting minutes, correspondence, and press clippings.

The bulk of the San Francisco Lesbian Avengers’ records were donated to GLHS in 1996, during a period of relative inactivity. The group subsequently dissolved in 1997, at which time the remaining records were donated.

**Scope and Content**

The papers (1 linear foot) document the group from its founding in 1993 through mid-1997. The Records are composed of 3 series (internal records, literature, and photographs), and are organized chronologically within each series.

Box 1 contains internal records. These are primarily minutes from meetings, but they also include agendas, training materials, group policies and guidelines, notes on tactics, logos, correspondence, and communiques. Meeting minutes dated after 1995 are all handwritten and consist mostly of fragmentary notes, often on the backs of flyers announcing community events. Earlier minutes are more detailed and often typed. Typically, minutes include a treasurer’s report, a summary of the past week’s events, actions and ideas, committee reports, announcements and proposals. These document the group’s evolving structure and process, the controversy over its mission statement, and internal discussions about race and class.

Box 2 contains literature from other organizations and other Lesbian Avengers chapters, as well as information about most of the San Francisco chapter’s public actions-announcements about events, leaflets, press releases and media reports.

Box 3 contains the Lesbian Avengers’ photograph collection. The photographs are from 1993 through 1995. They are all color, 4”x6” and 3.5”x5” positive images, and portray several Lesbian Avengers events and actions, especially the 1993 and 1994 San Francisco Pride Marches, the 1993 political funeral for Joan Baker, "Come Out for the Holidays" (1993), and "Castro on the Rag" (1994).

The Records also include one oversized folder and two legal-sized folders.

**Related Collections**

Lesbian Agenda For Action Records, 92-8

**Other Contemporary Direct Action Groups**

AIDS/ARC Vigil Records, 91-5

AIDS/ARC Vigil II Records, 94-21

Meg Barnett Papers [Lesbians Against Police Violence], 89-5

Boy with Arms Akimbo/Girl with Arms Akimbo Records, 96-41

Forget-Me-Not Records, 89-10

Queer Nation Records, 93-2

**ACT-UP related collections**

Ephemera files on ACT-UP

Arawn Eibhlyn Papers, 95-23

Stephen Fish Papers, 91-19

Sheldon Ramsdell, 96-28

Bob Smith Papers, 93-21

Hank Wilson Papers, 96-2

**Materials Separated from the Collection**

Photographs (Box 3) are located in the Photo Room.

Oversized Folder located in **Mss. Manuscript Collections Oversized Box C.**

2 Legal Sized Folders located in **Mss. Manuscript Collections Legal Sized Folders.**

**Materials Removed from the Collection**

Articles from various newspapers around the U.S. pertaining to gay and lesbian youth were removed. Complete issues of *The Progressive, the Klanwatch Intelligence Report,* and the *Southern Poverty Law Center Report* were removed. A complete inventory of materials removed is available in the accession folder.

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**Guide to the Lesbian Avengers**

(San Francisco Chapter) Records, 1993-1997
Minutes

Access Information

[RESTRICTED]

July-August 1993
September-October 1993
November-December 1993
January-February 1994
March-April 1994
May 1994
June 1994
July-August 1994
September-October 1994
November-December 1994
January-February 1995
March-April 1995
Materials in notebook with minutes July 1994-April 1995
May 22-July 17 1995
"Info Session" material accompanying minutes May 22-July 17 1995
Material in May 22-July 17 1995 notebook, including policies and notes
July-August 1995
September-November 1995
December 1995-February 1996
March-April 1996
May-June 1996
Materials in notebook with 1993-1996 minutes
July-August 1996
September-December 1996
January-February 1997
March-May 1997
Notes and materials with minutes, November 1995-February 1997

Internal documents

Access Information

[RESTRICTED]

Internal trainings
Logos
Communiques
General Media

E-mail December 1996-March 1997

Access Information

[RESTRICTED]

Literature

Other Chapters
New York Chapter
Coalition and Support
Fighting the Christian Right
Pride and Dyke March, June 1993
Political Funeral for Joan Baker, October 23, 1993
Badlands Bar takeover, November 5, 1993
Come Out for the Holidays, December 1993
Lorena Bobbitt and Sharon Bottoms, January 1994
Camp Sister Spirit, February 1994
Castro on the Rag, May 14, 1994
Pride and Dyke March, June 1994
Center for Disease Control/Lesbians Get AIDS protest, August 1994
No on Prop. 187, 1994
National Coming Out Day, October 11, 1994
Flush Pete campaign, November 1994
Kate's Kitchen protest, November 1994
Holiday Actions, December 1994
*Dykespeak* Amazon Award, December 1994
Other 1994 events
Smell the Fuse protest at Wilson’s inauguration, January 1995
Avenging Tongues benefit, March 11, 1995
Office of Citizen Complaints (OCC) Reform, 1995
Plague of Locusts, February 1995
Boob-a-licious Crotch-a-rama Valentine’s party, February 1995
KSFO Full of Shit, April 1995
Pride and Dyke March, June 1995
Mumia Abu-Jamal, June and July 1995
Chowchilla Demonstration for medical care for women prisoners, July 8, 1995
No on Prop. 209/CCRI literature, March-September 1996
Republican National Convention, July 1996
Cable Car Awards, February 1997
Voice Bomb, May 1997
Web site 1997

Photographs

Lesbian Avengers photo album, June 1993-January 1994
San Francisco Pride parade, June 1994
Castro on the Rag (Protest of Misogyny in the Castro), May 14, 1994
Various events, 1995 (Pride parade, Mumia Abu-Jamal demonstrations)
There is also one envelope of duplicate photographs, for exhibition purposes.

Legal sized folders

Internal literature (Highlights of San Francisco Lesbian Avenger actions; phone tree)
Other chapters/coalitions

Oversized folder

Posters and Manifestos