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Formerly Lesbian and Gay Historical Society of San Diego

Preserving and Teaching our History

Summer 2007

Newsletter

Dignity Collection Arrives: Thirty Boxes of LGBT History

Lambda Archives will finally house the bulk of the archives of the San Diego chapter of Dignity USA, an organization for LGBT Catholics. The collection was a virtual secret until one of the organization's oldest members, Bob Nelson, told others about it. "We didn't even know how much of this existed until we started talking to [Nelson] and people went over and got it," Bridget Wilson, a member of Dignity San Diego's Community Council, said.

In many ways, the Dignity Collection is

truly a unique collection. First, Dignity is one of the oldest ongoing LGBT organizations in San Diego. Dignity USA was started in 1969, but the San Diego chapter was formed only three short years later, in 1972.

Beacon of Light

"Dignity was originally conceived in San Diego in 1969 as a group by Pat Nidorf to give gay men an opportunity to share their life stories with each other," Pat McArron, one of the founding

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Gay-Straight Alliance High Schoolers Soak Up LGBT History at Lambda Archives



High-Tech High GSA students take a light moment away from their research. For more details on their experience at the Lambda Archives, see story on Page 6.

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President's Message

In the Jess Jessop Tradition

As you page through this newsletter, you'll see a great deal is going on at Lambda Archives. In a large sense we are getting ready for a generational transition. As we of the 1970s gay liberation generation slowly get ready to hit the rocking chairs — or the hiking trails – that befit senior status, many of us are passing along personal and organizational papers to the Archives. Meanwhile, the younger generations continue taking charge of the organizations we helped build.

Getting Ready

At the Archives, getting ready means increasing physical space and the endowment to pay for it. It means spreading awareness of the proper handling, processing and passing along of historical papers now in private and group hands.

We are taking a new, thorough inventory of current holdings, so as to bring a searchable catalogue of the collections into cyberspace. We're working with the Imperial Court and The Center to document history audio-visually. It means arranging for the acquisition of major collections like the most recent, huge Dignity/San Diego collection.

Increased Volunteers

All this is possible only because of the large increase in volunteers. They range from 40 to 60 year olds with skills and experience to college students with energy and community spirit who are expanding their experience.

Quintupled Endowment

This is also only possible with a corresponding expansion of endowment, memberships and grants to pay for all of this growth into the future. You would think that quintupling our endowment over the past year would have been enough. But it is not. It is only a start.

Financially Sound

I have said it before, but again, an archive must be a very sound, financially conservative organization, and not just in terms of ten or twenty years. An archive must look down the road for generations. We may win our equality within another generation. But as an historian of sexuality and teacher of world history, I can tell you



Lambda Board members: Michie Seto (stepped down in June), Sharon Parker, Frank Nobiletti, Rosalind Young (as of July 29), and Frank Stefano (Marc Jones is not shown).

that minority groups must remain strong and vigilant, whether they integrate with the majority or not. And sexual minorities especially are prime scapegoat targets when times get rough.

But to stay strong, a community must know its history and nurture its youth, thus the activity and change at Lambda Archives of San Diego. Things will become more routine in a year or two if we are successful. (And that depends not only on us but on our community's response.)

20th Anniversary

This flurry of activity is fitting as we approach our 20th anniversary in December. When Jess Jessop, Doug Moore, Frank Shine, Kate Johnson, Debbie Zeyher, Dennis Fiordaliso and all the others launched and nurtured the Archives in those early years, they knew of our community's needs. They had a vision. We want Lambda Archives to fulfill their vision and play its unique role in building a better, stronger community. We would want them to be proud of their work and ours, and ultimately our enduring

community.

Say it — like Jess Jessop

by Frank Nobiletti

I'd like to think that Jess is looking down on us, plugging for us all. I'd like to think that we are building that anti-racist, anti-sexist LGBT community he dreamed of, that he in fact insisted on. We are asking the community to open their hearts, hands and wallets — in the good old Jess Jessop tradition — so the Archives can do its crucial part.

People have said it is crazy to think in terms of a \$300,000 endowment, or almost two times what supports Lambda Archives now. But if you don't say it, how are those who can make it happen to know? And then how would the next Fritz Kleins step forward with a legacy donation of tens of thousands like his?

Some said it was crazy to think of \$160,000 endowment — or even to start an endowment — but it has happened, and the Archives and our community are more secure for it, as are our youth. Let's be sure to sustain the momentum.

Calling All Videographers!

Imperial Court Works to Save History, Donates State-of-the-Art Video Equipment



Frank Nobiletti of Lambda Archives (second from left) receives check for \$2,600 from Emperor Robi, Julia Legaspi and Big Mike, of the Imperial Court.

San Diego's Imperial Court has donated video equipment valued at \$2,600 to Lambda Archives, our community's depository of LGBT records and history. The Archives has just received one of the first Sony HD-SR7 camcorders available in the U.S. The grant includes all the related

equipment for recording community events and interviewing community members.

"We were losing our history!" said Nicole Murray-Ramirez after seeing a Wall of Honor ceremony at The Center without it being recorded. "And we're losing our

pioneers' stories!" Nicole asked the Imperial Court to remedy the problem. With the collaboration of Big Mike, San Diego Human Rights Commissioner Julia Legaspi, Emperor Robi, the Court and Nicole, a check was presented to the Archives for the ultra high-definition camcorder system including mics, tripod, chargers, hundreds of gigs of storage for the video files, and more. (There are no disks or tapes. The camcorder has a builtin 60-gig hard drive.) In fact Sony's ultra high-definition system is better than most high-definition TVs today. But the donors to Lambda Archives were thinking of what quality of image will be common 20 years down the road.

Lambda Archives is recruiting community videographers, volunteers, who ideally will work in pairs of two recording events and interviewing local LGBT figures. "We cannot maintain a strong community if we don't know our history," Nicole pointed out. Frank Nobiletti, President of Lambda Archives agreed. "San Diego is significant to the history of the LGBT movement," he said. "As a border city and military metropolis, San Diego is a unique. Only with support like that of the Imperial Court can the Archives do its part for our community, preserving and teaching our history for generations to come. Now is a great time for community videographers, amateur and professional, to join in."

Michie Seto

A Helping Hand From Japan

This year, Lambda Archives Board member Michie Seto experienced something different from other semesters of volunteering. She acquired skills such as organization, leadership, and communication, but the best part was meeting new friends.

Seto was elected to Lambda Archives' Board at the beginning of 2007. Seto had planned to stay in San Diego to do graduate work. Plans changed when she learned that her mother back in Japan needed her. Seto

left in June, having to cut short her stint at Lambda Archives. She will continue her graduate work in Japan.

What had she learned? "As I live in a community, people help me in invisible ways. And many of those people are volunteering their time, and power, and money for the help of others.... The more you give back to the community, the more you will grow and feel fulfilled." That is what Seto experienced. Volunteering helped her grow as a person and

More on page 11



Dignity San Diego Collection Showcases 35 Years of LGBT History



Pat McArron sorts documents from the extensive Dignity San Diego donation.

From page 1 members of Dignity, said. And, 35 years later, Dignity is going strong. "Dignity continues to be a beacon of light within the Catholic Church by speaking out on issues that pertain specifically to us as LGBT Catholics," McArron said. Second, the





Dignity Collection is one of the largest collections Lambda Archives has received. There are 30 linear feet, which includes two file cabinets and various boxes full of materials such as meeting minutes, papers, flyers, financial records and newsletters, all carefully documented by Nelson.

A Living Collection

Third, the accession of Dignity has ushered in a new kind of collection — the

living collection. In a living collection, a person or organization donates certain items to the archive, but retain some control over it. "The reason for doing that is that there are some materials in there that we might want to bring out to show other people," said Wilson, who suggested this agreement. "One way would be to keep these things. Rather than do that, the thing to do is to let the Archives have it but let Dignity come and borrow those materials." Wilson believes that this agreement would be perfect for organizations that, like Dignity/San Diego, are wary of letting go of their history. A living collection agreement makes "people feel better about giving things away," she

Bridget Wilson Says Do It!

Ultimately, Wilson thinks that people should be going through their stuff and making donations of their historical records. After 20 years, she said, Lambda Archives is not a "fly-by-night operation." Also, when they just keep it themselves, people put their collections at risk. "The problem is, the people go away," Wilson said. "No one but us is going to preserve our history."

Our Electronic Pride Exhibit Takes Archives to Festival

At the 33rd Annual Pride Festival July 21-22, the Lambda Archives tent is going electronic. This is just another way that the Archives strives to bring the collection alive to the public. In the past, in the way of technology, the Archives offered video interviews some years, but noise was a problem. This year, on the other hand, we will have several laptops, monitors and possibly projectors featuring visuals from the collection: posters, art and photographs.

Community Newsletters Exhibit

Also, there will be a tribute to four pioneers in the San Diego LGBT community — Jess Jessop, Fritz Klein, Martie Mackey and Tawny Tann. As if that were not enough, the Archives will be showing reproductions of a collection of community newsletters dating back to the early 1970s, including such publications as MCC's *The Prodigal* and APICAP's (Asian Pacific Islander Community AIDS Project) *The Paper Crane*. The tent will be staffed with Archives members and volunteers of all ages.



UCSD reference librarian Alex Gagné tests monitors in different lighting for Lambda Archives Pride Exhibit.

AIDS Walk:

Huge Photo Collection Added to Archives



AIDS Walk San Diego, 1997: One of the many poignant photos donated to Lambda Archives.

Photos are such an important part of an archive. In many ways, they recount a history that mere words never could. And recently, Lambda Archives has just been given the largest collection of photos it has ever received, easily doubling its photo collection.

The collection, from AIDS Walk San Diego, includes thousands of photos as well as booklets, records and reports, mostly from the 1990s.

AIDS Walk San Diego emerged in 1989, but the group was founded in 1987 as Walk for Life, a time remembered by Nicole Murray-Ramerez as filled with so much fear surrounding AIDS that many couldn't or wouldn't utter the word. "Just walking was courageous. Bystanders might scream, 'You have AIDS!', mixed with profanities, etc."

Today AIDS Walk proclaims itself "the biggest non-governmental financial provider for HIV/AIDS in San Diego County." It has provided many millions of dollars in grants since its inception.

LGBT Special Issue

Journal of San Diego History Looking For Articles

The Journal of San Diego History seeks contributions to a special issue on the history of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered San Diego.

Articles might address:

- The role of the military in the history of LGBT San Diego
- Development of Hillcrest and other relevant neighborhoods
- Response to the AIDS crisis
- Resistance to the Briggs Initiative
- History of San Diego Pride, the Center, San Diego Democratic Club, San Diego's MCC, San Diego's Imperial Court, Gay/Lesbian press
- Role of the bars, the border, or tourism in shaping Gay and Lesbian life in the city
- The ways race, ethnicity, class, nation, or religion inflect LGBT identities.

These topics are mere suggestions. If you are working on any aspect of the history of sexuality in San Diego they, and Lambda Archives, would like to hear from you! Submissions need not be traditional research articles. They also invite photo essays, documents with short interpretive essays, and interviews. All submissions will undergo a process of peer review.

The guest editors for this special edition are: Frank Nobiletti and Colin Fisher. For questions and/or submissions, please contact Colin Fisher: colinf@sandiego.edu

The deadline for submission is January 1, 2008.

SDSU's LGBTSU: Important New Collection

San Diego State University's Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Student Union has donated a large tub of historical materials: flyers, brochures, logs, clippings, photos and more. In 1975, student Gary Gulley and others formed the Gay Student Union (GSU), later the Gay and Lesbian Student Union, and ultimately the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Student Union (LGBTSU.)

SDSU had an earlier group, one of the first gay student groups in the country, the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), founded in 1970. The GLF left campus when SDSU forbade using "gay" in its name. Ironically, SDSU suggested the name FLAIR (Freedom, Liberty, and Individual Rights.) The group moved off campus in disgust. Lambda Archives has just one of GLF's newsletters in its collection.

The new donation fills in some of the LGBTSU's history. It also includes other relevant pieces such as an early, undated queer youth group's guide to San Diego, as well as flyers for rush events from Delta Lambda Phi, the gay and bisexual fraternity, and the queer sorority Gamma Rho Lambda.

Gay Straight Alliance: Frontier of LGBT Rights Struggle

When the students from High-Tech High School's Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) arrived at Lambda Archives, we were not sure what to expect. Although we were excited at the prospect of enhancing the students' research in LGBT history, we didn't know how sophisticated high school students could be today. We were pleasantly surprised.

Prepping for Day of Silence

The GSA had made an appointment to come with their advisor to do research for their "Day of Silence" project. The Day of Silence is an annual event at schools across the country to bring attention to the problems faced by LGBT youth in school. Students wear or carry explanations and stay mute all day.

Since this was the first time Lambda Archives had such a young group of researchers, we asked two college volunteers to come and help

"[At Lambda archives] You don't ave to worry about looking up things materials for their project. After a tour the visitors immediately got down to their research: Jess Jessop, queers in history, the rainbow flag, etc.

A First

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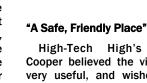
Clearly things are changing in high school. Ranging from gay, to bisexual, to questioning, to straight friends, these kids were out. For Lambda Archives, this was an historic first as we try to provide more access for all to LGBT history. We hope to serve this and other GSAs many times in the future.

The first Gay-Straight Alliances were formed in 1989 at two schools in Massachusetts. By 1993 the governor's Safe Schools Program chose this model for all of Massachusetts, and the

numbers grew. By 1999, the year of college student Mathew Shepherd's murder, the homophobia and violence faced by LGBT youth was in the national spotlight. The number of GSAs across the country rose to 600. In 2007, the number has mushroomed to more that 2000.

On the Cutting Edge

GSAs are on the cusp of the LGBT community's quest for equality. They are on the front line. So Lambda Archives will do all it can to serve their needs. High-Tech High's GSA aims to network local GSAs and Lambda Archives will aim to serve that network as well. We hope to do joint programs with Diversionary Theatre and local GSAs that would include films, speakers, archive tours and more.



High-Tech High's Emily Cooper believed the visit was very useful, and wished that there had been even more time. (They have a standing invitation from Lambda Archives to return any time, of course.) Observed Emily, "You don't have to worry about looking up things you'd otherwise be embarrassed to ask about. It's a safe, friendly place . . . that could help people who are struggling with homophobia and coming out to parents or standing by their friends." Emily is one student who is thinking of doing her senior internship at Lambda Archives.



A High-Tech High School student researches LGBT history in the company of her GSA adviser, Brett Peterson, and a fellow student's mother.

Archives] You don't have to worry about looking up things you'd otherwise be embarrassed to ask about."

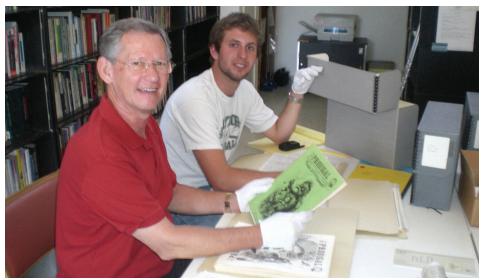
— Emily,

High School Student

supervise. When the five GSA students, their advisor Brett Peterson and one student's mother arrived, Lambda Archives supervising staff had nothing to supervise; the college student "supervisors" had to find other things to do beyond leading the students to



LGBT and Christian: Point Loma Nazarene University Researchers Polish Article for Journal of San Diego History



Point Loma Nazarene University history professor Dwayne Little with student author Christopher Rhamey. (Little holds an early issue of San Diego MCC's The Prodigal newsletter.)

What a time this is - we in the LGBT community have sure come a long way since 1970. It seems that every month we on the Lambda Archives board get to hear about the latest exciting researcher or volunteer who has visited the Archives. May was no different. Frank Nobiletti, LASD Board President, told us about student researcher, Christopher Rhamey, from Point Loma Nazarene University who visited us on April 28th, with his professor, Dr. Dwayne Little. Rhamey was putting the finishing touches on the award-winning paper that has since been published in The Journal of San Diego History (Volume 53, Number 3 - Summer 2007).

"Coming Out Gay, Coming Out Christian"

The paper, "Coming Out Gay, Coming Out Christian: The Beginnings of GLBT Christianity in San Diego, 1970-1979", is a well-researched history of the early organizations that worked to reconcile and integrate LGBT individuals with their Christian institutions and beliefs.

The paper "Coming Out Gay, Coming Out Christian" is important in at least three ways. First, we have graduate-level historical research being performed on the LGBT community at a top Christian University. This could not have been done 30 years ago. Next, we have the San Diego Historical Society (SDHS) publishing a paper that, in the not-so-distant past, would have been too controversial for

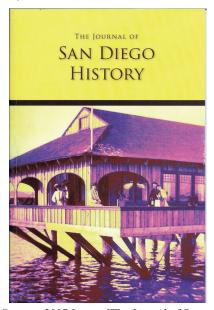
them to even consider. Even more than that, this paper was the winner of the SDHS "James S. Copley Library Award." And finally, with over three pages of footnotes, the paper does a tremendous job of documenting a specific aspect of gay life during one of the LGBT community's most significant decades in San Diego, exposing future researchers to its resources.

Five Student Researchers

Rhamey worked on this research project with fellow students Joshua Grace, Megan Dukett, Kaylin Gill, and Ricky Bell, and the paper was a project in Dr. Little's class. They used scholarly sources as well as several articles from the period in local periodicals such as The San Diego Reader and the San Diego Union, and an interview with Pat McAaron, who was a founding member of Dignity, an organization for LGBT Catholics. Besides presenting history of the founding of the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), Dignity, Integrity (an organization for LGBT Episcopalians), Lutherans Concerned, and the Ministries United for Gay Understanding (a collaborative among the previous four groups), their work also discusses the primary struggles and successes, as well as the development of each organization's vision

Lambda Archives is proud to have been even a small part of this project. We

congratulate them on their success and for their excellent job in documenting a slice of our community's history. We encourage you to read their paper. If you don't have a copy of *The Journal of San Diego History* stop by the Lambda Archives booth at the Pride Festival; we will have a copy on hand for you to review.



Summer 2007 Issue of The Journal of San Diego History includes "Coming Out Gay, Coming Out Christian."

More Research!

During the months of April, May, and June the Lambda Archives welcomed various researchers to use our materials. Two researchers who were successful in finding applicable information were Don Taylor and Don Reuter .

Don Taylor came from the Long Beach, CA, area to leaf through several years' worth of *Update* newspapers. He was doing personal research to corroborate dates/events in which he and friends were involved in the San Diego LGBT community during the 1980s.

Noted author, Don Reuter, who has written/compiled numerous books of listings, was featured in a San Diego Union-Tribune news article in May 2007. He pored over countless photos during several visits to the Archives, and will

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Spring '07 at Lambda Archives:









Top Left: Veteran Edward Cruz answers SDSU student Alberto Alvarado's questions during his interview at The Center.

Top Right: Schorsch Kaffenberger and Jessika Reliford discuss artwork for 20th Anniversary.

Center Left: Newsletter Editor Holly Smith with husband Sean Upton.

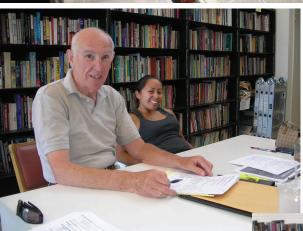
Center Right: Mother of GSA student speaks with her daughter's friend.

Bottom Left: The Tech Team – SDSU student Jayson Schmidt and Board member Marc Jones.

Collecting, Preserving, Teaching









Top Left: High-Tech High GSA students in the thick of their research, and their advisor, Brett Peterson.

Top Right: Member Aaron Shorb, who brings marketing skills to the Archives.

Center Left: Lambda Treasurer Frank Stefano and volunteer Karla Castillo — Pride planning.

Center Right: Frank Nobiletti with The San Diego Foundation's Adrienne Vargas (VP of Charitable Giving) at her workshop on fund raising.

Bottom Left: SDSU student Karla Castillo heads collection processing of periodicals.

Bottom Right: The Tech Team works on installing broadband.





Student Volunteers Shine Light on LGBT Vets' Stories for The Center, Lambda Archives, Library of Congress

"Don't Ask; Don't Tell."

For years, since President Bill Clinton coined the famous phrase in 1993, whenever spoke anyone homosexuality in America's military, it was sure to come up. But, lately, not as much around here. For the past nine months, the Library Congress has labored to document the experiences of those veterans whose lives seem shrouded in secrecy. Andrea Collopy, The Center employee charged with arranging interviews, said, "I like our take of focusing on LGBT wartime stories, especially with 'Don't Ask; Don't Tell' in the community."

And, with the help of The Center in San Diego, and some hard-working students from San Diego State University, the project is really taking shape, with 20 interviews completed and more scheduled. Interested students are given training in the documentation of oral history; then, they are paired with a veteran whose story is then recorded.

An Exciting Process

For some, the process was an eye-opener. "I had never gotten involved in the gay and lesbian community, and this was a way for me to get a different perspective," said Lorenza Hilliard. who interviewed a veteran for the Hilliard has project. experience working in the Veterans' Administration, and said she knew how veterans loved to tell their stories.

Collopy had a similar experience. "I had one veteran who maybe spoke to me for 15-20 minutes," she said. "He was so excited because he had never told his story before." Hilliard compared the stories



SDSU student & Archives volunteer Alberto Alvarado and The Center's Andrea Collopy prepare for interviewing a veteran for the joint Veteran's History Project.

of gays and lesbians in the military to veterans returning from the Vietnam War. Some people did not want to hear their stories either. She thinks that these experiences are important because "we were getting some stories that had never been brought to light before, and they were going to be heard."

Improving Expectations

For the veterans themselves, the process, and their reasons for participating, were varied. "My interest was the fact that I'd never really heard of any interview process that would be positive for a gay military member," Edward Cruz said. Cruz is a veteran and a recent graduate of SDSU with a bachelor of arts degree

in history.

During the interview, however, Cruz discovered some new things about himself and his own experience. "I learned that maybe I was one of the fortunate ones that in my time served in the military, I was not under the watchful eye of Big Brother," he said.

Chuck Cavanaugh also found the experience surprising. "I found it to be unexpectedly emotional talking about the 22 years of my service," he said. "I had not thought about those years in a long time."

Changing Perspectives

Ultimately, LGBT veterans hope that the sharing of their

experiences will help to change minds and policies. Cavanaugh hopes that those who read his interview "will gain some insight into the sacrifice and dedication needed to put up with living a double life in the service of this country."

Cruz, on the other hand, believes that his story is important to help other gays and lesbians with their decision to serve. After all, perhaps many others had a positive experience like he did. "It should serve as encouragement for those who are still on the fence to join the military based on the interviews of these veterans," Cruz said.

One Marine's Experience



When Rosalind Young recalls the years she served as a Marine, she thinks that her experience is very different from the experiences of women in today's military. Young was recently interviewed for the Veterans History Project [see article on page 10]. Young joined the Marines shortly after graduating from high school and served from 1983-1988. "I did not expect to ever face the possibility of being sent to a war zone," Young said. "For today's military, it is absolute."

While Young was never required to fight during war, her time spent in the military was often a struggle. During her first tour in Okinawa, she had to work seven days a week. But it was not until she returned stateside to New River, North Carolina, that the real problems started. First, it was an issue with sleeping quarters. Upon arrival, she had to spend three weeks in temporary quarters before she was forced to find her own housing off base. Her superiors would not allow the enlargement of the women's quarters even though there was plenty of room. Second, she had problems with her superiors. When she indicated an interest in applying to Officer School, she found obstacles at every step of the way.

Although Young's military experience was often frustrating, she was glad of the opportunity to share her story. "In telling my story I gained an understanding of how the stories and life experiences of the individual is important to ensuring an accurate record of history." She hopes that her experience will inspire others, and that the process itself has prompted her to do an oral history of her own

More Research!

From page 7 incorporate these into his latest book on gay neighborhoods and bars, in which he is featuring 10-12 U.S. cities (including San Diego). He also reviewed the "bars" matchbook collection (part of the Mike Passante collection) to enhance the book with photos and illustrations.

It is both interesting and rewarding when the Archives can successfully work with researchers. It is an affirmation of our mission to collect, preserve, and teach San Diego's LGBT history!

Returning to Japan

From page 3 learn something that is priceless.

Michie Seto, herself not lesbian or bisexual, was amazed at the depth of the LGBT community in San Diego. As head of our community newsletter collection, she had the opportunity to see just how many volunteer groups our community has.

Lambda Archives President Frank Nobiletti in turn was amazed by Seto: "How many of us would go half way around the world, see a need, and volunteer to be a part of the solution? Now, that's creating community!"

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Major Donor	\$250	Business Membership:	
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Sustaining Couple	\$180	Non-profit	\$60
General Member	\$25		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
General Couple	\$40	Contact me about volunteer work	
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In Addition to my membership above I would like to					
make a contribution of \$ for:					
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(as of July 29)

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July 2007 (same schedule will apply to August 2007)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	Open 6:30-8:30 pm	6	7 Open 1-4 pm
8	Open 1-3 pm	10	11	12	13	14 Open 1-4 pm
15	16	17	18	Open 6:30-8:30 pm	20	Pride Festival Archives Closed Come see us at our booth!
Pride Festival Archives Closed Come see us at our booth!	23	24	25	26	27	Open 1-4 pm
Open 1-3 pm	30	31	Join, donate	or volunteer? –	-See page 11.	4
				Als	o open by ap	pointment!



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