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# TRETTER LETTER



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
**LIBRARIES**  
Archives and Special Collections

NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE TRETTER COLLECTION

## INSIDE

2 From the Chair

3 Remembering  
Irwin &  
Sedgwick

4 Community  
Support Helps  
Build Collection

6 New  
Acquisitions

7 From the Field

## Jean Nickolaus Tretter Recognized with Quorum Lifetime Achievement Award



photo courtesy of jananoonaphotography.com © Twin Cities Quorum

Jean with Collection Intern and members of the Board: (seated L-R) Jesse Field, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter, Adam Robbins; (standing L-R) Stewart Van Cleve, Kris Kiesling, James Garlough, Anne Hodson, Anne Phibbs, Kathy McGill, Greg Gronseth

*by Adam Robbins*

Our own Jean Tretter—who I was proud to introduce as the archivist, founder, mascot, and heart of this special collection—was honored on March 14, 2009 at Quorum’s Community Leadership Awards Dinner. Quorum, the Twin Cities GLBT & Allied Chamber of Commerce, was founded in 1995 to develop a positive environment for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Allied businesses, organizations, individuals and consumers. To that end Quorum annually presents five Community Leadership Awards, highlighting exceptional accomplishments.

Jean was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award, in recognition of his life’s devotion to preserving one of the world’s largest records of GLBT culture and history. In receiving this honor, Jean joins only two others: Beth Zemsky, the former co-chair of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Board of Directors and founder

*continued on back page*

## FROM THE CHAIR

As the new chair for the Tretter Collection in GLBT Studies, I come with a fair amount of experience researching in archives in San Francisco and New York. My doctoral dissertation was on the development of self-identity in Lesbian novels, from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through the early 1970s. As part of my process, I needed to work with as much primary source material as I could locate: the novels themselves, of course, but also scholarly publications, medical tracts, music lyrics, magazines, and other cultural ephemera that aided me tremendously as I put forward my notion that Lesbian identity had not been static, but had shifted and changed through a hundred year span—reacting to—and in some notable instances causing—changes in the manner in which Lesbian identity was formed by both larger social forces, as well as those efforts put forth by Lesbians themselves.



Linnea Stenson

I look now at this burgeoning collection of primary source materials housed right here in Minnesota, a tremendous resource for scholars, artists, and community members from across the country as well as those in our own backyard. We are most fortunate that such a collection has found a home in Andersen Library at the University of Minnesota, where these invaluable materials can be properly cared for and made available for all who wish to access them. Without your assistance, our history would vanish through neglect or worse, destruction.

I want to thank each one of you for your continued help toward the growth and maintenance of this treasure.

### You Can Help!

The Tretter Collection relies on the support of organizations and individuals, like you! Please consider making a charitable donation to the Tretter Collection using the enclosed self-addressed envelope as part of your giving plan. Your support will help to preserve GLBT history now and for future generations.

Thank you.

## TRETTER LETTER

NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF  
THE TRETTER COLLECTION

<http://special.lib.umn.edu/rare/tretter.phtml>

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# Tretter Collection Remembers . . . .

## Eve Sokovsky Sedgwick

(May 2, 1950 - April 12, 2009)

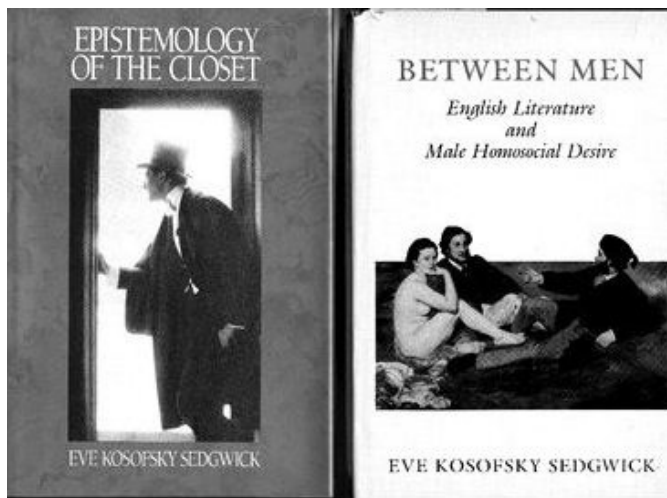
by Jesse Field

Professor Eve Sedgwick, an important founder of the academic sub-discipline “Queer theory” recently died of cancer. She was 58. When she took to the academic stage in the 1970s at Yale University, English and other humanities departments were rarely welcoming to discussions of Feminism, of same-sex desire, of the fluidity of gender, or of homophobia.

As an aggressive and radical teacher, advocate and scholar, Professor Sedgwick worked tirelessly to change that situation. The fact that universities across America are more open than ever to the study of Feminism and Gay and Lesbian Studies is, in part, due to the great conversations on identity, desire, and culture that Professor Sedgwick helped begin with essays like “Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl” and books like *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*

and *Epistemology of the Closet*.

Both of these works examine Western literature and find many places where



something “queer” is going on. In Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*, for example, Sedgwick finds coded expressions of female sexuality. In a study of *Our Mutual Friend* by Charles Dickens, Sedgwick shows how homophobia, heterosexual desire and homosexual desire can all become entangled among a set of multiple fictional characters. She believed firmly that nobody was completely “straight,” and the concepts of hetero- and homosexuality were far too

simple to describe the way we live, love and hate. Building on Michel Foucault’s theories of sexual behavior and the evolution of systems for controlling populations, Sedgwick developed “Queer theory” as a set of reading strategies that could show how our sexual desires, our senses of gender, and even our basic senses of identity are constructed by larger cultural forces.

Much of Sedgwick’s work, and many of her close readings of literary works, remain controversial. The constructivist view of sexual identity is problematic to many historians of Gay and Lesbian culture, including Jim Kepner, Louis Crompton, Warren Johansson, and the University’s own Jean-Nickolaus Tretter. To these scholars and archivists, Gays and Lesbians throughout history share a common, essential experience of same-sex desire that they are born with, and they also share a common experience of homophobia. Both scholarly perspectives have made great contributions to the study of sexual identity in American universities; Sedgwick would have called this a ‘productive tension.’

## David Irwin - Quatrefoil Library

by Jesse Field

David Irwin, one of the founders of the Quatrefoil Library, passed away January 13, 2009. He was 89 years old.

The Twin Cities GLBT community is proud of having so many local institutions--from an orchestra to a lending library, the list is impressive. Avid readers and film buffs in the community will surely be familiar with Quatrefoil Library, the unique GLBT



lending library in St. Paul. As with the Tretter Collection, Quatrefoil’s origins lie in personal collections. David Irwin and his partner Dick Heweston, both avid readers, had begun their own collection of books, films and magazines with Gay themes by the early 1970s. David, a special education teacher, helped bring their collection to over 1500 volumes by 1984. That same year, Dick and David parted, but a

generous offer from the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union mission allowed the library to become a public resource.

Today, Quatrefoil Library can still be found at 1619 Dayton Avenue, Suite 105, where many thousands of books, films and magazines are available for browsing and checkout. Quatrefoil Library and the Tretter Collection have always shared an amicable working relationship, each sharing the other’s duplicates.

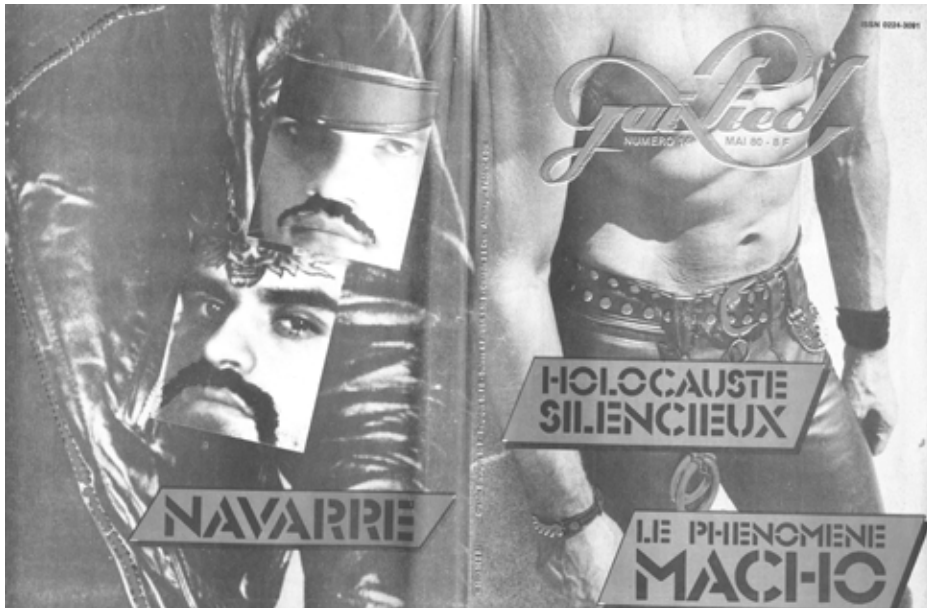
The Tretter Collection mourns David Irwin’s passing, but wishes Quatrefoil a bright future. This remarkable library is David’s legacy to the community.

# The Tretter Collection:

*Even in "lean economic times," sustained giving and community support can make the difference in*

Do you collect anything? Bottle caps, antique umbrellas, first editions, or antique coins? Think of the Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Studies as a collection of that sort, only it belongs to entire GLBT community and attempts to collect everything that tells the story of GLBT communities any where in the world. During an economic crisis like the present one, building and maintaining a collection presents both major challenges and new opportunities. The challenge is obvious:

the Tretter Collection and the larger university community must weather the hard times together. But the opportunity may be less obvious: cash-strapped collectors all over the world have now begun to sell their GLBT books, magazines, and videos at lower-than-normal prices. Thanks to the support of the University of Minnesota, donors and patrons of the Tretter Collection can feel confident that the Tretter Collection -- their collection -- has a permanent home at the UMN Libraries. And for those who want to help the Collection make strategic acquisitions in a good market for collectables, now is the time.



## Taking a Hit: Acquisitions funds

While the Collection now has two endowed funds due to the generosity of some wonderful benefactors, interest income is down. The Collection also receives an allocation for acquisitions from the University Libraries, but as the state's contribution to the University's budget shrinks, these funds are not likely to increase. The upshot

is that income streams for new acquisitions have been reduced, and may continue to contract depending on the economy.

## Taking up the slack: Donations from people like you

Libraries thrive on donations, both monetary and



# A Community Collecting Effort

acquiring rare items such as the *Gai Pied* and *Arcadie* collections

material. A cash donation of any amount, no matter how small, can be considered a stake in the potential purchase of major collectibles that are becoming available on the market. Donated funds are also used to provide conservation treatment for items in the collection, as well as cataloging to make the collection accessible to researchers. Material donations such as personal and organizational records, books, serial publications, films, etc., also make a significant contribution to preserving GLBT history and culture.



## Collecting GLBT: *Gai Pied* and *Arcadie*

Recently, the Collection was offered a near-complete set of the French magazine *Gai Pied* (lit. “Gay Foot,” a pun on the French guêpier, “hornet’s nest” because they promised to annoy the establishment). *Gai Pied* was a major voice of the “militant” French Gay movement, which traces its roots to the 1968 social unrest in France and to continental French thinkers like Michel Foucault. In fact, Foucault was a major contributor to *Gai Pied* and is said to have coined the magazine’s name. *Gai Pied* started in 1979 and ceased circulation in 1992, mapping out along the way the main issues and assertions of French Gay communities. The price of a full series of this magazine would normally have hovered around \$5,000-7,500, if it were even available. But in February, a series became available from a collector in Belgium for only \$2,500. That may seem like a lot of money for a magazine, but this one has true historical significance, and will be useful to undergraduate education at the University.

Similarly, a complete set of the French journal *Arcadie* has been on the market for some time, but in the current economic environment may well become more affordable. Where *Gai Pied* was one voice for Gay liberation, for pride in *différence*, *Arcadie* represents the voice of the older and more established community of Gay men and Lesbians who advocated not revolution, but respectability, tasteful living, and gradual assimilation into modern French society. Together, the documentation offered by *Gai Pied* and *Arcadie* can give us a clearer picture of the development of Gay political movements in France.

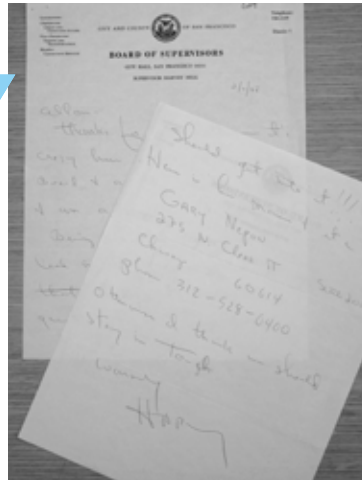


(Centerspread article by Jesse Field)

# New Acquisitions

**From the Estate of Allan Spear.** Pictured is a three page hand written Letter to Allan from Harvey Milk, dated February 2, 1978. Courtesy of Junjiro Tsuji and Marsha Greenfield.

1



2

**The Charles Nolte Collections in Theater and Cinematic Arts.** Pictured is Dr. Nolte as Billy Budd in the 1951 production at the Biltmore Theatre, New York City. The Nolte Collections include his private journals (1930's - 1990's) Still photos, films, press clippings, and reviews. Personal Correspondence, original plays, play adaptations, and Librettos, lecture tapes and notes.

**Beyond the Pink Curtain.** Pictured is "Beyond the Pink Curtain : everyday life of GLBT people in Eastern Europe" Edited by Roman Kuhar and Judi Takács - Ljubljana : Peace Institute, 2007. - (Book series Politike symposion); gift of Viachaslau Bortnik – Gomel, Belarus.

3



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*We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals for their support and give thanks to countless others whose generous spirits have made our work possible.*

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- Cash donation in honor of Thomas Barnes
- Cash donation in honor of Lisa Vecoli

Tretter Letter June, 2009

## From the field....

What's happening in national & international circles.....

by Shamey Cramer

"I'm mad as Hell and I'm not going to take it anymore.' This classic line comes from the 1975 movie 'Network' which won four Oscars, including one for writer Paddy Chayefsky and a post-humous one for Peter Finch, the actor who delivered the line.

It is the best way to describe my feelings following the passage of Proposition 8 this past November. On the same night the United States - albeit the entire world - celebrated our country's giant leap forward in the march towards civil liberties by electing Barack Obama as President and Commander-in-Chief, we took a dismal step backwards in the pursuit of marriage equality for us queer folk.

It's not that we hadn't been down this road before. During the 2000 California Primary election, I served as Orange County Field Organizer in the fight to stop Proposition 22 from becoming law in California.

Prop 22 had the identical language to Prop 8 (only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in the State of California), but only affected a portion of the California code. In May, 2008, Prop 22 was struck down by the California Supreme Court when they voted to legalize same-sex marriage, making us the second state in the Union to grant such rights (God bless Massachusetts). Prop 8 changed our state's Constitution. During those six months in 2008 when same sex marriage was legal, over 18,000 Californians  
Tretter Letter June, 2009

exercised their right to marry their partners.

When I heard the news that a new proposition was being put on the November ballot to reverse the court's decision, I knew we were in trouble. Come election day, as throngs of people burst with joy that Senator Obama had won the day, those of us working at the West Hollywood Democratic offices held our collective breath as the night wore on, and on and on and on. When the numbers came in, we had lost, 52-48.

As I trundled home around 3am, 21 hours after my day had begun, I was flooded with mixed emotions. I had never been so proud to be a 5th generation Chicagoan, but I was mad as hell and, for the first time in my life, fully understood the emotion of hatred. It was boiling over in my heart. The anger only increased as each day passed.

I was mad because the conservative right had controlled the agenda, AGAIN. I was mad because I only saw pre-election protests limited to street corners in West Hollywood, basically preaching to the choir. I was mad because outreach to the Latino, Asian and African-American communities was practically non-existent by the No on 8 campaign, with a paltry amount of literature printed in Spanish, and none in Korean.

I was mad because composer Marc Shuman boasted how he wrote the brilliant 'Prop 8: the Musical' parody in less than a day.....AFTER we had lost. I was mad because the five other Lesbians and Gays in my building never once took to the streets to express their outrage. I was mad because even though so many of our brothers and sisters took to the streets in protest after protest from downtown, to Hollywood, West Hollywood, Westwood and beyond, those same folks were sorely absent at the organized protests in East Los Angeles where the majority of

residents are Black or Latino. I was mad that not a single protest occurred in South Central, made famous by the Watts Riots in the 1960's, and again in 1992 following the Rodney King verdict.

Although the Hollywood protest made international headlines with 15,000 strong taking to the streets, only 200 of us brave souls marched through the streets from downtown to Lincoln Heights, intermingling chants in English and Spanish. What really made me mad about that protest was that there were more cops lining the route than there were protesters.

As we await the California court's decision on the legality of citizens changing our Constitution without legislative direction, there is a silver lining: we lost Prop 22 in 2000 by a percentage split of 62-38 and Prop 8 in 2008 by 52-48 - a gain of 10% of the general population. And in conservative Orange County, the birthplace of Richard Nixon, and a well-known bastion of religious and political conservatism which has earned it the moniker 'The Orange Curtain' -same Orange County where I had led the effort to halt Prop 22 nine years ago - we went from a percentage split of 69-31 in 2000 to 57-43 in 2008, a gain of 12 percentage points.

We may have lost these battles for marriage equality, but let there be no doubt: we are winning the war for equality and justice for all. And best of all, I am confident we will do so in our lifetimes.

Clearly, history is quickly unfolding as more arenas raise the issue of same-sex marriage. The Tretter Collection follows with keen interest events like Proposition 8 with the objective to secure, catalog and protect the records and artifacts of these struggles.

*"From the Field" may contain editorial viewpoints or commentary of the author. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official opinion or position of the Tretter Collection, Libraries or University of Minnesota.*

*Quorum Award, continued from front cover*

of the University of Minnesota's GLBT Programs Office; and John Sullivan, a founding member of the Human Rights Campaign Business Council and board member for a number of Twin Cities nonprofits.

In his remarks, Jean took a moment to offer his thanks and consider where we are as a community:

*So, how did I get on the path to the work that I do? When I first began, back in the olden days, my intention after leaving the military was to get a degree in modern social and cultural anthropology specializing in GLBT history and culture. But back then the University said that it was not possible as things like Gay history and Lesbian culture did not exist – so I found it necessary to set*

*out on a path of my own with the intension of demonstrating that GLBT history and culture did indeed exist. This denial of the existence of GLBT history and culture is probably the single greatest motivating factor in my work.*

*We—all of us here—are living on a cusp of history and when these windows of opportunity close, the GLBT people alive 50, 100, or 300 years from now will want to know what it was like to be GLBT at the turn of the 21st century. It is a gift that all of us together can give to those future generations of GLBT people so that their lives can be filled with light, hope, and adventure and not fear, darkness, and dismay. I am inspired by those who have been our martyrs and those who have toiled in the fields for centuries to bring us this far, and onto all the pathways of the future.*

*People like Jim Kepner, Steve Endean, Sen. Alan Spear, and our living icons such as Rep. Karen Clark, Sen. Scott Dibble, and Quorum's own Sam McClure ... I am inspired by such people as the good Dr. Rusty Barceló and allies like Kris Kiesling, the director of the University Archives and who has brought us and the Collection out of dark times and into the light of this 21st century....*

The Advisory Board of the Tretter Collection offers Jean our warmest congratulations on this well-deserved recognition.



**TRETTER  
LETTER**



NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE  
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