Putting 20 Years into Perspective

by Adam Keim

I have many freedoms handed to me by people who have worked quite a bit harder than me to get them. I am just about to turn 32, and even though I have achieved quite a lot for my age, I have never really had to face any adversities because of my sexual orientation. I came out when I was 18. I was an active duty in the U.S. Marines, stationed and living in Albany, Georgia—one of the most redneck, racist, segregated, and backwards right-wing religious places in this country. And I never had one problem. I owe that to the pioneers in the GLBT community who paved the way for me to be out.

A few years ago I stumbled into a part-time job writing for Lavender Magazine. I heard from the editor that Quatrefoil Library was looking for a writer to document its history. I had never visited the library, but I had attended several parties hosted by Jeremy Wardein and Dale Johnson and so was vaguely familiar with the organization. I met with Matt Stark, who was editing and publishing the book and who, coincidentally, was the person who found the library its first home in 1983 on West Broadway in North Minneapolis. I was a full-time college student with a full-time job, but I loved to write and I believed in the Quatrefoil so I said yes.

Working on this project has opened my eyes to the courageous efforts by gay and lesbian people before me that have made my life easier. I never knew I had it so easy, and this awareness has given me a new respect for my GLBT elders who achieved and accomplished so much. Some of these pioneers were the people who started the Quatrefoil Library.

Dick Hewetson was never a huge reader, but he was a busy activist for the GLBT community back when activism was sometimes a scary and courageous thing. David Irwin was quite the opposite. He was a big fan of books and had been all his life. But he lived a more quiet life as a special education teacher in the St. Paul schools. They met at a meeting of Integrity, a gay group in the Episcopal Church, and started their life together over coffee at a nearby Embers restaurant. The beginning of their love for books and for community activism joined soon after.

The Quatrefoil Library was officially incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in September 1983. It was named after a book by James Barr published in 1950. David

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believed Quatrefoil was the first book that didn’t portray homosexuals in a negative way. Unfortunately, a breakup between Dick and David and some personal struggles that accompanied it temporarily interfered with the library opening. With the help of Matt Stark at the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union (MCLU), the library quietly opened its doors in February 1986. At the time of the opening Quatrefoil had continued on page 3...
Reading on the Go

Quatrefoil’s large collection of sound recordings includes cassettes and CDs of books, some read by their authors, others by actors. Audio books are a great way to pass the time on long drives or short commutes—or whenever you would rather listen to a book than read it.

This collection is located on the top shelf of the sound recordings, and each tape/CD is marked with white tape on the spine. They may be checked out just like print books for four weeks.

Take the bus to Quatrefoil
by Hank Herrmann
Would you like to use Quatrefoil Library more often but don’t have a car or easy transportation to go whenever the urge hits you? Here’s the good news: the library is only one block from four MTC bus routes.

If you’re coming from the east or west, there are the routes 21 and 53 limited/express bus lines running on Lake Street/Marshall Avenue all the way to downtown St. Paul. From north or south, Route 84 runs from the 46th Street LRT station up Snelling Avenue to the Rosedale Shopping Center. Route 144 goes from downtown Minneapolis through the University of Minnesota to Snelling Avenue and down to Highland Park.

If you’re a senior citizen, you can do it all for 50 cents round trip during non-rush hours. So come and visit. Don’t deny yourself the pleasure of the library any longer.

These routes can be displayed and accessed by route number from www.metrotransit.org/service-info/findRoutes.aspx, or you can call 612-373-3333.

New Lesbian MAGAZINES

Look for two new magazines in the library: Queer Ramblings, an arts and lifestyle magazine for lesbians, and Velvet Park, whose slogan is “dyke culture in bloom.” You might also like a publication called Weird Sisters West. It’s feminist and funny. And no, that’s not an oxymoron.
16 members, 1300 books, and six periodical subscriptions in two small rooms in the MCLU building. Three months later the library was expanding, and support was coming from all over the country. The Quatrefoil held its grand opening celebration on May 4, 1986, with special guest Quentin Crisp in attendance.

A lot has happened in the library over the past 20 years, some good, some not, but mostly great. The Quatrefoil Library history book should be completed towards the end of 2006. In the meantime, attendees of the library’s twentieth anniversary reception, on May 20 at the library, will be able to see a display of major events and items that have shaped the library over the past two decades. When the book is finished, I hope all members, volunteers, board members, past members, community members, and curious people around the world will get a chance to fully experience the immense and impressive past of the Quatrefoil Library. For some people, it will be new and exciting adventure. For those who are already familiar with this great organization, run by amazing people, it will be a chance to delve deeper into something they already adore—something that I have come to admire and appreciate.

Thanks Dick and David—for everything.

New at the Library

**DVDs**

- **Brokeback Mountain.** On order
- **Capote.** On order
- **Transgeneration.** Sundance Channel Production.
- **Fingersmith.** Sally Head Productions, BBC: 2006.
- **Lilies.** directed by John Greyson, Alliance Video/Wolfe Video: 1996.
- **Women in Revolt,** directed by Paul Morrissey, Score Movies, Ltd.: 1971.

**Selected Books**

- **Hit by a Farm: How I learned to stop worrying and love the barn.** Friend, Catherine. New York: Marlowe & Company, 2006. S521.5.M6 F75
- **Diary of a Drag Queen.** Harris, Daniel. New York: Carroll & Graf, 2005. HQ77.8.H37 A3 2005

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