

The Quatrefoil Newsletter • Summer Edition 2023
So many reasons to be proud at Quatrefoil all year round



Proud
to Be

quatrefolio

Q scholarship named after longtime volunteer • An update on Q Digital
Reading at the intersection of queerness and disability

Proud to Be

A Letter from Quatrefoil Board President

My name is Paul Kaefer (he/him), and I am the 2023 Board President of Quatrefoil Library. Happy Pride! This Quatrefoil issue is all about the pride we have in Quatrefoil Library.

I'm proud to be a Quatrefoil member, volunteer, and donor because Quatrefoil has been my strongest connection to the queer community in the Twin Cities. I moved to Minneapolis following my partner in 2016 and have made many friends and connections through volunteering and serving on our board. Plus, board service has been a great leadership development experience for me as someone in my early-to-mid career.

The contents of this issue highlight how proud we are of our volunteers, our scholarship, our growing collection, and our community that we've created here at the library.

What makes you proud to be a part of Quatrefoil Library? Connect with us on social media or at our events—like our weekly Friday game nights or one of our many book clubs—and let us know! We are proud to have you as part of the Quatrefoil community.



Paul E. Kaefer

Paul Kaefer (he/him)

Volunteer Spotlight

Interview by Alex Engert

How long have you been volunteering at Quatrefoil?

Since April of 2022.

How do you volunteer?

I am a desk volunteer, and I'm one of the co-chairs of the Volunteer Committee. In my time here, I've been a part of Volunteer Appreciation Day, volunteer open houses, and tabling at Prides. I've also helped create book displays and recruit new volunteers.

Why did you start volunteering at Quatrefoil?

I wanted to find queer community after being cooped up so much in 2020 and 2021. I had just come out right before COVID hit and only had a few queer friends.

How does your political stance inform your work at Quatrefoil?

I am passionate about equal rights and resources for the queer community. I act on my passion as a nurse to provide adequate healthcare and advocate for my queer patients. As a community member, I volunteer my time at the library to protect and provide queer representation in literature and media.



Rose Funk (she/they)

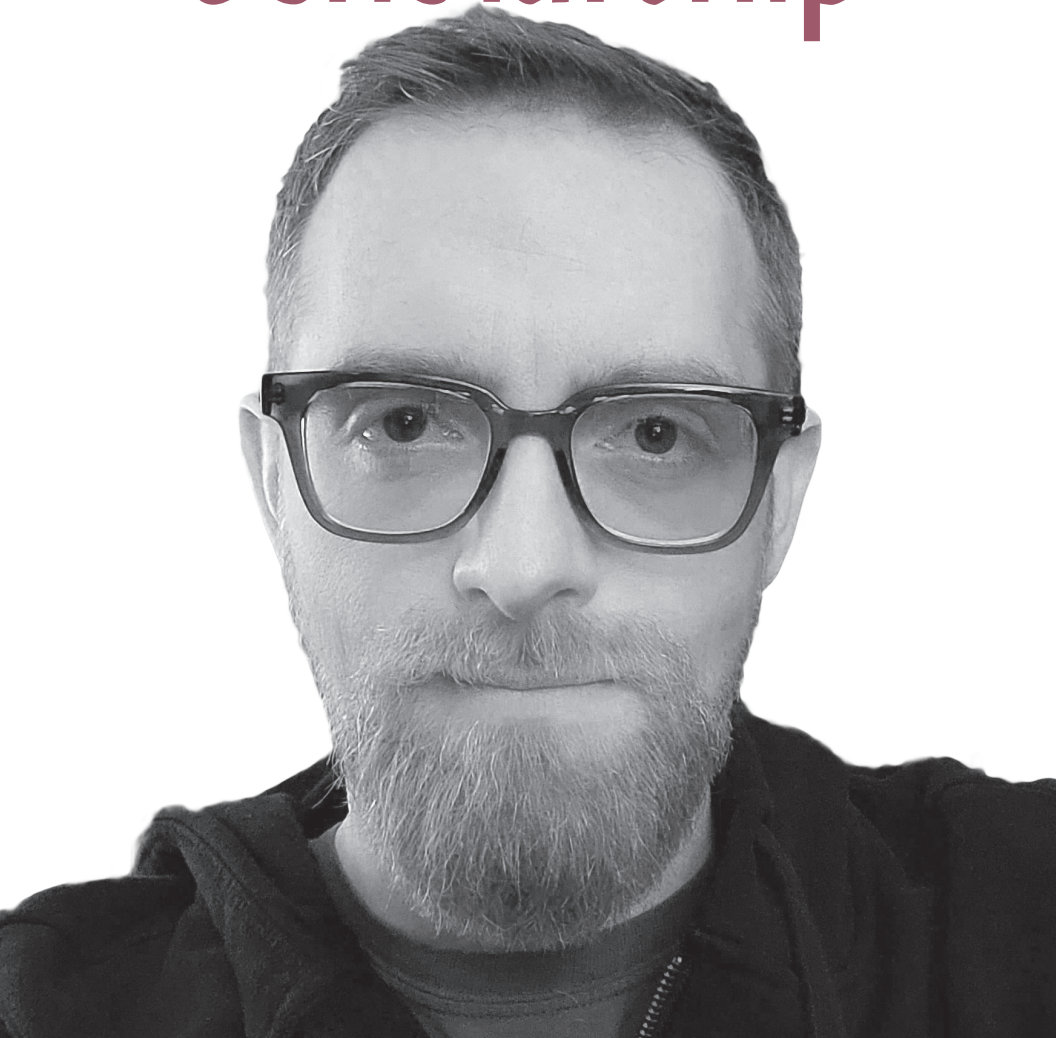
What is your favorite part about volunteering at Quatrefoil?

I love that volunteering gives me the opportunity to meet and make connections with amazing people. I love working with other empowered individuals to better serve our community.

Is there anything else you want to share?

Quatrefoil is not just a library; it is a community center. You don't have to go out to the queer bars or clubs to find a sense of queer community, just come to the library! 🏳️

Quatrefoil Scholarship



**Named for Longtime Volunteer
David Philip Norris**

Written by Meiran Carlson

On one of his many blogs, David Philip Norris wrote that he is “passionate about storytelling, about information and its organization, and seeing people reach their full potential in the world.” After David’s tragic passing earlier this year, and given his interests, it simply felt natural to rename the Quatrefoil scholarship in his honor. The scholarship, awarded annually to Minnesotan students, is now known as the Quatrefoil Library David Norris Memorial Scholarship.

As a Quatrefoil volunteer, David worked tirelessly to cultivate an environment of inclusivity and accessibility, not only amongst volunteers and members, but also within the library cataloging system. He was known by his cataloging friends, like long-time Quatrefoil volunteer Karen Hogan, as the “Night Cataloger.” According to Karen, David could often be found in the back office working into the early hours of the morning on one of his many cataloging related ventures.

In conversation with those who knew David, it is evident that the work he did for Quatrefoil was unparalleled. His passion was library work – specifically decolonizing library cataloging systems – and his legacy comes in the form of access. He accomplished so much at Quatrefoil and at other libraries, from systematically removing offensive and outdated terms from catalog search results, to generating new and specific book tags for people to search that increase access to diverse and queer-specific literature.

Involved in the scholarship process from the beginning, David worked to increase the number of applicants from diverse backgrounds, hoping

to award the scholarship to those who lack resources and who may be interested in library sciences. David’s passion for “seeing people reach their full potential in the world” is exactly why the scholarship was named in his honor. Quatrefoil board president Paul Kaefer hopes to award the scholarship to students who, like David, are dedicated to the library sciences and community and to creating diverse spaces in the literary community, though anyone is encouraged to apply. Paul noted that, while “our books and stories are under attack,” youth have the power to change that.

To those interested in applying for the Quatrefoil scholarship – keep David’s memory alive. Whether you are a passionate cataloger, a talented musician, or a brilliant scientist, your contributions matter, and Quatrefoil Library is interested in helping you pursue your interests.

Thank you to David for working so hard for the Quatrefoil and cataloging community, and thank you to those who are working to uplift his memory. David, your presence and work are dearly missed, and will not be forgotten. 🐶

To read more about David, visit qlibrary.org/remembering-david-norris/.

To read more about the scholarship and application process, visit qlibrary.org/scholarship.



In October of 2021, Quatrefoil officially launched Q Digital: A collection of LGBTQ+ audiobooks and e-books accessible via Overdrive's Libby app. From the original 500 books offered on the app, Quatrefoil's

collection has since grown to over 500 e-books and nearly 300 audiobooks. More than 800 users are signed up, with members all over the country from Hawai'i to New York.

Acquisitions Committee chair and Quatrefoil

librarian Karen Hogan has been at the forefront of the Q Digital setup and roll out. Karen has been a part of the library for decades, holding a plethora of roles from Board

President to Tech Committee chair.

According to Karen, Q Digital began as a way to increase accessibility to the library.

"We wanted to be able to reach people outside of the Metro," she said. "We also wanted to increase

accessibility for people who physically could not get to the library for any reason, and to offer alternatives to print formats for those with low vision, dyslexia, or just a preference for audiobooks. It rapidly became more of a need when the library was closed due to the pandemic."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Claude Peck was Board President.

Digital Pushes Back against Book Bans

**Reaches Readers
All across the US**

Written by Evan Allgood

He took it upon himself to start the process, looking at the feasibility of getting something like this off the ground and exploring grants that could make it possible. One of the original concerns was a potential lack of relevant books.

“At first, I was skeptical about how much LGBTQ+ content would be available,” Karen noted. “Much to my surprise, there was a ton! Overdrive had content from large publishers, small presses, and independent authors.”

Once it became clear that there was enough content to make Q Digital happen, all eyes turned to cost. According to Board Treasurer John Brentnall, the average cost of an e-book is \$22, and the average cost of an audiobook is \$69. On top of that, the board wanted to ensure Q Digital would be free for all, just as regular membership had been for the past few years.

Claude worked with the board to apply for a \$10,000 grant through the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council and, upon winning the grant, a Quatrefoil member graciously matched it with another \$10,000 donation. Now equipped with \$20,000, the Acquisitions Committee got to work.

“We had a collection manager from Overdrive work with us to select an initial book collection,” Karen said. “We chose a mix of 500 e-books and audiobooks with a wide variety of adult and young adult fiction, popular bestsellers, and some old, classic gay literature.”

Current Board President Paul Kaefer noted that representation was a critical piece of collection development and continues to be

a focus as the collection grows.

“Before we even started the collection, we knew we wanted to focus on diverse voices,” Paul said. “Our fabulous librarians have prioritized books by BIPOC authors and have curated book lists for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Black History Month, and Trans Day of Visibility. We’ve also highlighted books on the platform that are being challenged around the country, as book bans are disproportionately affecting books with LGBTQ+ characters and themes.”

This Pride month, Quatrefoil has been closely watching the book bans happening around the country. While folks in the Twin Cities might be able to visit the library, those in greater Minnesota and beyond may not be able to travel to Quatrefoil to get their books. This is where Q Digital shines: By making banned books available digitally to anyone with a Q Card, Quatrefoil is creating access where there otherwise may not be any.

The book bans are also disproportionately targeting young adult and children’s books. Quatrefoil Board Treasurer John Brentnall kept this in mind as he applied for the Lori Ann Schwab ‘95 Alumni Grant through his alma mater, Grinnell College.

“Lori Schwab, class of 1995 at Grinnell, tragically passed away prior to her graduation,” John explained. “She worked at Grinnell’s preschool and children glowed in her presence. Her parents established a fund in memory of her so that Grinnellians who graduated while Lori attended Grinnell College could receive monies to foster healthier, happier lives of children.”


Striving both to aid children and

young adults who may not have access to representative LGBTQ+ stories and to keep Lori Schwab's memory alive, John applied for the grant, which was granted to Quatrefoil in the spring.

"The grant is for \$2,000 and it will be used to purchase e-books and audiobooks that help strengthen the lives of LGBTQ+ children and their families," John said. "Most of the funds will be directed towards children's and young adult materials. A portion, though, will be directed to purchase digital resources that help parents of LGBTQ+ children be as loving as possible to each of their beloved children, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation."

As the Q Digital collection grows and Quatrefoil's books reach more people, Karen looks back on her time at the library. She remarked on how rapidly Quatrefoil has expanded its reach, and how proud this has made her.

"I never thought this would be something Q would ever be able to do!" Karen said. "Thank you to Claude for getting the ball rolling, to John and Paul for coming up with the financing, and to the Acquisitions Committee for keeping it going. We are finally seeing some of the available-at-all-hours library future we envisioned at our Q Board meeting at the dawn of the internet age."

If you would like access to Q Digital, all you need is a Q Card. Download the Libby app from your phone's app store, or go online to libbyapp.com and login with your Q Card number and password QUATREFOIL. 

Books at the Intersection of Queerness and Disability

Compiled by Alex Engert

The Future is Disabled by Leah
Laksmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

**Body and Soul: The Black
Panther Party and the Fight
Against Medical Discrimination**
by Alondra Nelson

Disability Visibility by Alice Wong

Being Heumann
by Judith Heumann

**Medical Apartheid: The
Dark History of Medical
Experimentation on Black
Americans From Colonial
Times to the Present**
by Harriet A. Washington

**Have Dog Will Travel: A Poet's
Journey** by Stephen Kuusisto

**Exile and Pride: Disability,
Queerness, and Liberation**
by Eli Clare

**Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of
Queerness and Disability**
by Robert McRuer

**Decarcerating Disability:
Deinstitutionalization and
Prison Abolition** by Liat Ben-Moshe

**The Pretty One: On Life,
Pop Culture, Disability, and
Other Reasons to Fall in Love
With Me** by Keah Brown

**Criptionary: Disability Humor
and Satire** by Maria R. Palacios

Sex and Disability by Robert
McRuer and Anna Mollow, editors

Proud to Be Q!

Quatrefoil visited many local Prides this summer and will be at even more in the fall. Have you seen us at your local Pride? If not, tweet at us @Q_Library and let us know where we should go next!

MNSOC Youth Pride

Como Park East Pavilions,
Saturday, June 3

Golden Valley Pride

Brookview Park, Saturday, June 10

Borderland Pride

Intl. Falls, MN / Fort Frances,
Ontario, Canada, Saturday, June 10

Elder Pride at Lake Phalen

Lake Phalen, MN, Friday, June 16

Pleasant Hill Library Pride

Hastings, MN, Sunday, June 18

Twin Cities Pride Loring Park

Saturday, June 24 through
Sunday, June 25

West Saint Paul Pride

West Saint Paul, MN, Saturday, July 8

Lake Pepin Pride

Stockholm Park, WI, Saturday,
August 12

Minnesota POC Pride Festival

Minneapolis, MN, Saturday, August 19

Duluth-Superior Pride

Duluth, MN, Saturday, September 2

South Central MN Pride

Mankato, MN, Saturday,
September 9

La Crosse Pride

La Crosse, WI, Saturday,
September 9

Brainerd Lakes Pride

Brainerd, MN, Saturday,
September 9

Bloomington Pride

Bloomington, MN, Sunday,
September 10

St. Cloud Pride

St. Cloud, MN, Saturday, September 16

Decorah Pride

Decorah, IA, Saturday, September 16

Columbia Heights Pride

Columbia Heights, MN Saturday,
September 23

Austin Pride

Austin, MN, Saturday, October 7



Thank You for the Books

A Tribute to Michael Denny

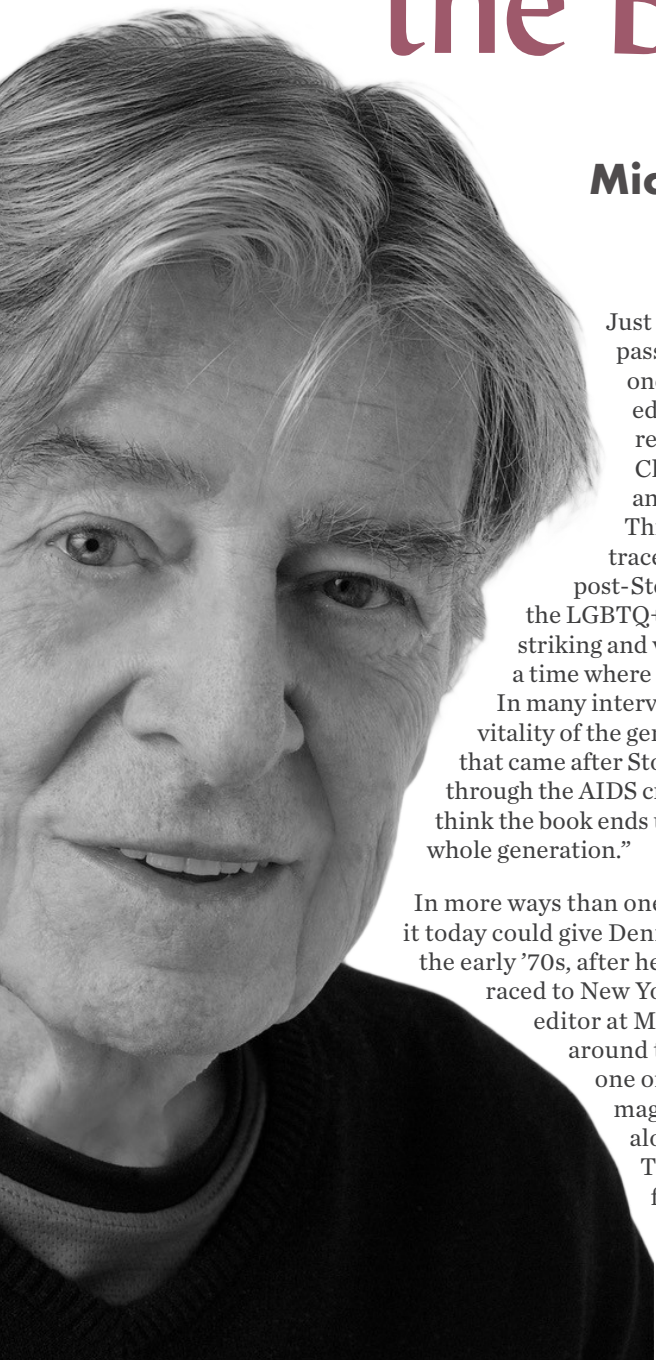
Written by Brett Dunn

Just a month before his recent passing, Michael Denny, one of the first openly gay editors in publishing, released his book *On Christopher Street: Life, Sex, and Death after Stonewall*. This cultural autobiography traces three decades of

post-Stonewall histories from the LGBTQ+ community, giving us a striking and visceral glimpse back into a time where countless voices were lost.

In many interviews he spoke about the vitality of the generations of queer people that came after Stonewall, those who lived through the AIDS crisis. Notably, he said, “I think the book ends up being an homage to that whole generation.”

In more ways than one, gay literature as we enjoy it today could give Denny a million thanks. In the early '70s, after hearing about Stonewall, he raced to New York. He found a job as an editor at Macmillan Publishers, and around the same time he began one of the first gay literary magazines, *Christopher Street*, alongside Chuck Ortley. Their magazine flourished for two decades.



After he was fired from Macmillan for being gay (per his interview in *The Homosexuals* by Alan Ebert), St. Martin's Press became his new home. There Denny worked to publish gay literature—and not just gay novels with tragic endings, mind you. He published works from a spread of artists including Edmund White, Robert Mapplethorpe, and Ntozake Shange that remain poignant and relevant. During his time at St Martin's, he also created Stonewall Inn Editions which printed paperbacks of LGBTQ+ books through 2004. Denny's efforts contributed to a vibrant manifestation of a new, flowering gay literary culture in the United States.

Despite his unfortunate and sudden death in May of 2023 at the age of 80, his voice lives on. In an interview for *Philadelphia Gay News*, he expressed the importance of libraries in gay politics, noting the rampant book-banning of queer books. Perhaps this short tribute to Michael Denny falls short of capturing his life and his significance, but as he nods to the power of libraries as protectors of queer literature, we feel called to nod back to him for the literary culture with which he helped fill our shelves.

For further reading, you can find Michael Denny's work in our catalog, as well as books from the authors mentioned. 📖

Villemez, Jason. "Michael Denny Forged a Path for LGBT Writers." *Philadelphia Gay News*, May 4, 2023. <https://epgn.com/2023/05/04/michael-denny-forged-a-path-for-lgbt-writers/>.

Sandomir, Richard. "Michael Denny, 80, Dies; Editor Created Outlets for Gay Literature." *The New York Times*, April 25, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/25/books/michael-denny-dead.html>.

Read Dangerously

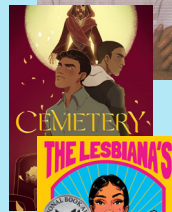
Protecting Your Freedom to Read



The Magic Fish
by Trung Le Nguyen



Giovanni's Room
by James Baldwin



Cemetery Boys
by Aiden Thomas



The Lesbian's Guide to Catholic School
by Sonora Reyes



Felix Ever After
by Kacen Callender



Queerly Autistic
by Erin Ekins

Weise, Donald. "The History of Gay Publishing Seen through One Remarkable Career." *Slate Magazine*, October 27, 2014. <https://slate.com/human-interest/2014/10/an-interview-with-michael-denny-about-the-history-of-gay-publishing.html>.

"Michael Denny." *Wikipedia*, June 9, 2023. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Denny.

Flex your leadership skills!

Quatrefoil welcomes applicants for its board of directors. The board manages all aspects of the library, from operations and volunteers to programming and development. Members serve three-year terms, attend monthly meetings, and help with committee work. Quatrefoil seeks diverse candidates and will work to identify, recruit, and retain candidates who are reflective of the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of the Twin Cities. Applications and more information is at qlibrary.org/about-us/board.

Help Quatrefoil Thrive

- 1) Go to qlibrary.org and view various ways to contribute—through membership, an annual gift, a bequest, shopping at our regular book sales.
- 2) Buy books and DVDs from us anytime on Amazon, at amazon.com/shops/QuatrefoilLibrary
- 3) Volunteer: We rely on more than 80 volunteers to run the front desk and help with special events and library operations. Go to Quatrefoil's Facebook page and click "Volunteer."
- 4) Give us your used books and DVDs: Drop off LGBTQ+ books and DVDs during library hours, or contact us. New materials are added to the collection, and we sell duplicates to support operations.



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HOURS

Wednesday-Friday, 7-9 p.m.

Saturday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Please check our website for updates.



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