

# A YA Way of Knowledge



For Rachel Gold, writing novels

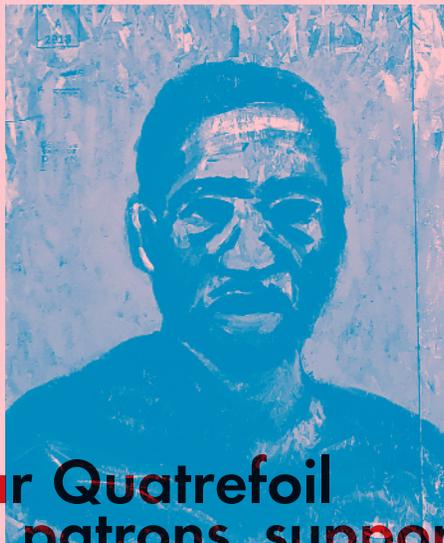
for young adults is a way to

understand herself. Page 7

# quatrefolio

How to use new curbside pickup service

Why the name Quatrefoil? • Hot 2020 titles



## Dear Quatrefoil patrons, supporters, & volunteers

In recent weeks, residents across the city and the country have wrestled with feelings of loss, grief and anger. George Floyd, an unarmed black man, was brutally murdered by a police officer on Monday, May 25, about one-and-a-half miles away from the library.

This is not the first time people have had to reckon with the death of an unarmed black man in the Twin Cities by police. Rather, this killing reflects years of an unsafe relationship between residents of color and local police. Here as elsewhere, racist attitudes have denied the dignity, life and well-being of Minnesotans of color.

Quatrefoil Library is a nonprofit community institution that seeks to cultivate the free exchange of ideas and make accessible LGBTQ+ materials for all members of the community. As part of our mission, we support and affirm the dignity of black and brown lives.

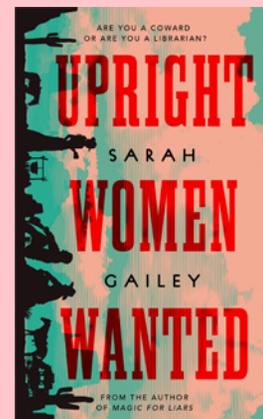
We are doing all we can to ensure the safety and integrity of Quatrefoil's books and periodicals, but many locally owned businesses, including the library's immediate neighbors, have had their storefronts destroyed.

We invite our members, supporters and patrons to support the efforts to rebuild by donating to the Lake Street Council's relief efforts ([www.welovelakestreet.com](http://www.welovelakestreet.com)). We hope that in the months and years to come we return to a different normal, one where people of color in our neighborhood and LGBTQ+ community know that they can breathe, thrive and have their dignity affirmed.

Sincerely,  
Nanette Stearns  
President, Quatrefoil Library Board

# New at Q

Sneak peeks at a half-dozen noteworthy books just acquired by the library. Check 'em out.



**"Upright Women Wanted"**  
By Sarah Gailey  
Tom Doherty Associates / Macmillan, 2020

Early reviews of Sarah Gailey's newest novel have called it "a dazzling neo-western adventure," that is "achingly relevant and inspirational." Gailey ("River of Teeth," "Magic for Liars") sets this story in the near future when the United States has been pitched into a primitive Wild West era. After seeing her lover executed for "deviance," Esther runs off to escape an arranged marriage and joins the Librarians, a group of ostensibly conservative women traveling back roads in the southwest to distribute "approved" books to the impoverished populace.

"I've always wanted to be a Librarian," Esther said, looking Bet right in the face, making her eyes wide and earnest the way she did whenever she talked to the Superintendent about the importance of the flag and the troops and the border. Her long hair was matted with sweat in spite of the tight braid she'd bound it in before climbing into the back of the wagon, and she felt like something that had gotten stuck on the tread of a tank, but none of that would matter if she could make herself shine with earnest dedication to the cause. "Ever since I was a little girl, I dreamed of joining an Honorable Brigade of Morally Upright Women, Doing Rewarding Work Supporting a Bright Future for —"

"—the Nation's Children," Bet finished flatly. "You memorized the posters."



**"Closet Cases: Queers on What We Wear"**  
Edited by Megan Volpert  
Et Alia Press, 2020

Seventy-five contributors from all over (including three from Minnesota) show off a favorite article of clothing and talk briefly about how their LGBTQ+ identity intersects with their fashion sense. From that perfect protest T-shirt to looks suited for weddings, dates, a goth ball or Pride parade, everyday people share their closet in words and color photos.

Jackets are my staple, my security blanket covering almost every favorite outfit that I style for myself. I put one on and slip into a dose of confidence. As a femme, I struggle with the in-between of feeling masculine and feminine the way I desire to. Jackets, to me, are essentially neutral and really can't be classified. I can put them with a dress and instantly make things comfier and more casual, and still have the sense of femininity. A good jacket find involves finding something that catches my eye and gets added to my mental wish list, at a thrift store or on clearance. I shop fairly green and those I like are pretty few and far between. That being said, I

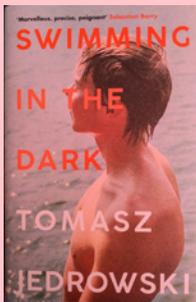
have been in a relationship with jackets many years. They full-on have their own closet in my house. I value them in my style more than any other item! And I am a woman of many clothes. Summers are hard for me as you can imagine. Torey in the summer feels strange, style-wise, a lot of the time, constantly wishing and waiting for that day the air drops a little cooler and I can take advantage to throw on one of my jackets.

Torey Tomsovic is 26. Queer. Femme. Cis woman. Midwestern.



**“The Gay Agenda: A Modern Queer History & Handbook”**  
By Ashley Molesso and Chess Needham  
William Morrow, 2020

This new release looks like the perfect gift for inquiring minds. Most entries are one page or less. They range from Sappho to safe sex, from the Mattachine Society to Matthew Shepard. The zippy, colorful, user-friendly handbook mixes history and movement politics with a megadose of pop culture.



**“Swimming in the Dark”**  
By Tomasz Jedrowski  
William Morrow, 2020

This debut novel got pre-publication buzz when it underwent a publishing auction in England and won a hefty advance in the United States. Jedrowski’s back story — raised in Germany by Polish parents, lives in Paris, speaks five languages, writes in English — certainly helps, but so does the fact that he has written a gay love story with the earmarks of an instant mini-classic. In 1980s Poland, two young men meet at a communist summer camp. Their ardent romance is twisted by politics and religion into a relationship riven by risk and ethical ambiguity. In this excerpt, the novel’s young narrator, Ludwik, sneaks a copy of an early gay novel by James Baldwin into a summer camp.

That night I took Giovanni’s Room out of the deepest recesses of my bag and started reading it by torchlight after the others had fallen asleep. It scared and comforted me — even just the first few pages. The narrator’s guilt toward his fiancée, his desire for Giovanni, and the deep regret for whatever it is he did to him. There was something about the rhythm, the language, about the knowledge implied and the sense of internal doom, that spoke directly to me. This wasn’t distraction or entertainment: here was a book that seemed to have been written for me, which lifted me up into its realm and united me with something that seemed to have been there all along, and that I seemed to be a part of. It felt as if the words and the thoughts of the narrator — despite their agony, despite their pain — healed some of my agony and my pain simply by existing.



**“The Shadowgraph”**  
By James Cihlar  
University of New Mexico Press, 2020

James Cihlar, who teaches at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, loves old movies. His newest book of poems, “The Shadowgraph,” pays homage in particular to Barbara Stanwyck, stalwart star of Hollywood’s Golden Age. Poems in the second half of the book often take their titles from Stanwyck movies. This poem, from the more autobiographical first part of the book, touchingly evokes moviegoing as educational, erotic, communal, euphoric.

### THE BIJOU

Walking from my apartment to the Bijou  
at the University of Iowa Memorial Union in Iowa City  
was like stepping into a wood-block print,  
the black outlines of the street grid  
containing the darkening lawns of the Pentacrest  
and the Old Capitol, the sky dotted with stars.  
Awkward and alone in a college town,  
I found a safe place to be with people in the Bijou.  
Standing in the nondescript lobby  
Among a crowd waiting for *Seven Sinners* to start,  
I began to choke up until someone friendly  
tugged my coat sleeve and said, *Here, you sit next to me.*  
When Marlene Dietrich walked onstage in top hat and tails  
to sing to John Wayne, the movie audience applauded.

Doris Day, her hair combed back in a ducktail, made John Raitt wear the other half of her pajamas. Barbara Stanwyck in *Ball of Fire* needed a cold compress after getting flushed while kissing Gary Cooper. The man and the woman in the cuckoo clock walked together into the same door at the end of *The Awful Truth*. When Gregory Peck showed up at the lunch table in *Spellbound*, the college audience gasped at his handsomeness.

From Jimmy Stewart I learned how to qualify a statement,  
from Irene Dunne how to undercut a situation,  
from Henry Fonda how to whisper in an ear.  
The Bijou was the start of me taking care of myself,  
just like the smart-talking dames and wisecracking mugs in the movies.  
Walking home afterward was like moving a piece  
forward on a board game,  
the city blocks richly colored squares.

# A YA Way of Knowledge

By Claude Peck, Q board member

“I set out to be  
a queerer  
Ursula K. Le Guin



Photos by Anna Min

but ended up  
being a queerer  
Judy Blume.”

For Rachel Gold, writing novels for young adults is a way to understand herself.

Before she was a young-adult novelist, Rachel Gold was a young English and Religious Studies double major at Macalester College.

Almost 30 years later, Gold was back at the St. Paul campus, teaching a spring 2020 course titled LGBTQ+ Literature in America with a reading list that includes Audre Lorde, James Baldwin, Alison Bechdel, Junauda Petrus and Stephanie Burt.

“It was kind of surreal in an amazing way to keep walking into the English department realizing that I’m teaching there, in the same buildings where I was taking classes all those years ago,” Gold said recently.

Professor Linnea Stenson, who taught several early LGBTQ classes at Macalester, was a role model when Gold was an undergraduate, she said, “and now I get to be one of the out professors.”

Mid-semester, along came coronavirus and the cancellation of in-person classes. “I was just feeling the flow of being in a room with students twice a week, and then we had to go online,” Gold said. That was disheartening, “but, bright side, I’m a gamer, so if you put me in an online environment I’m going to be fine.” Gold will return to teach at the college in 2020-21.

Gold, 48, did not pursue an academic career. She was a reporter for the GLBT Twin Cities newspaper “Focus Point” in the late 1990s, earned an MFA in Writing at Hamline University and has been a marketing strategist, trainer and public speaker.

## FROM CHRIS TO EMILY

Gold is best known for none of the above, however. Starting with “Being Emily” in 2012 and continuing with four more novels (a sixth one is due in late 2020), she has become an

award-winning author of young adult fiction that explores gender and sexual identity.

The novels combine the personal and the political and tackle issues that have seen big changes since Gold came out as a teenager in a suburb of Columbus, Ohio.

“Being Emily,” is told from the perspective of a young trans woman. Readers meet the novel’s narrator, a Minnesota high-school student who was assigned male at birth. Emily, who felt wrong-gendered from her earliest memories, explores the sometimes painful, sometimes joyous process of coming out. Will she lose Claire, her BFF and girlfriend, who thinks she’s dating a guy? How can Emily’s counselor be such a know-nothing? Aren’t her parents going to freak? What can Emily learn from Natalie, a young trans woman in “The Cities” who becomes a friend?

Gold said she learned a lot about young trans women during a relationship she had with a trans woman. “We were together for four years, and ‘Being Emily’ came out of my experience of being her partner and both of us being in the community of trans women. So I can understand to a greater degree than the average cis person a trans woman’s experiences. I could write this book that I saw was missing.”

Poet and Harvard professor Stephanie Burt cites “Being Emily” as the first YA novel (and one of the first in all of American fiction) in which “trans people, especially young ones, are not a problem, or a conundrum, or a failure that somebody needs to fix.... We are one of the reasons the world is good. If the world we inherit doesn’t recognize that, we’ll fix it or build a better one.”

Burt, who formerly taught at Macalester, wrote the introduction to a revised edition of “Being Emily” published in 2018. Gold wanted

the update for several reasons. One had to do with terminology.

“In the original I used the word transsexual, because that’s what people were using at that time,” Gold said. “Then around 2013, there was a huge breakthrough in the trans movement and we started saying transgender all the time instead of delineating between transsexual and transgender, which is a great step forward, but it immediately outdated some of the language.”

Gold also wanted to give the book’s two main characters “their happy ending” in an epilogue.

Gold built on the success of her debut, publishing four more YA novels that dealt with gender and queer issues. Her fictional characters and topics pushed Gold to examine herself.

“In my teens I was very much attracted to women, but also there was something about my gender. I assumed that all the stuff I felt about gender was just a subheading of lesbian.”

As transgender people came out in numbers and became more politically and culturally active, Gold identified with the reverberations of gender nonconformity.

“People have covered an immense distance in the past 20 years,” Gold said. “I know I’m not a guy, and I’m not even that trans masculine, and I’m definitely not a butch. Every time I say that around actual butches, they laugh. So it was like I don’t know how to describe myself. But when I’m in the trans community, when I’m around trans women, things make sense. I don’t have to define myself the way we had to back in the 1990s.”

## LESBIANS AND LIBRARIES

Going way back, Gold remembered the eye-opening role that a library played in her early teens. When she was 14 she overheard a girl at her school say she had been to the town’s library to research a report she wrote on gay and lesbian youth.

Gold went to the Worthington (Ohio) public library in 1985 and discovered two books on gay and lesbian lives.

“They were ‘Surpassing the Love of Men’ by Lillian Faderman and an anthology called ‘One Teenager in 10’ that was supposed to be actual writings by actual gay and lesbian teens. I read them in the library because I was not going to check them out. And that was a feat, because Faderman’s book is very long. It’s really great to be young and see all these other voices and these other ages. Then I ended up reading ‘Another Mother Tongue’ by Judy Grahn. Those first two gave me the trail to find the others, they turned me on to the existence of queer literature.”

Years later, Gold met Faderman at a book event. “I thanked her for her book. I told her, ‘You have to imagine me as a little 14-, 15-year-old hunched over your book in the library; It was magical.’”

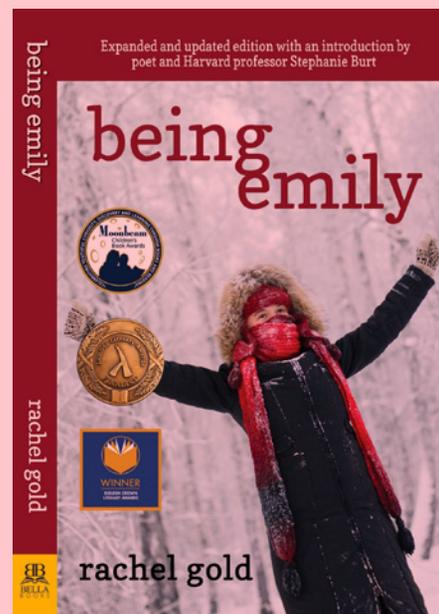
A friend of Gold’s used to say “there are two paths to discovering that you’re queer — and she meant specifically lesbian. One is, you go to the library. The other is you wake up in the morning, look next to yourself in bed and go, ‘Oh it’s a girl!’ I took the first path.”

Gold found her path into YA partly by happenstance. She originally set out to write adult fantasy and science fiction. “I had written two or three adult urban fantasy novels that I was trying to sell when I wrote ‘Being Emily.’ It just turned out ‘Being Emily’ sold first,” she said. “At first I was like, What just happened to me?”

As she dreamed up and wrote more YA novels, Gold found she really liked the genre, which frequently comes with a mandate to educate as it tells a story.

“I feel the universe just did me a solid by steering me towards realistic young adult, which is not something I would have thought of writing, except that I was mad that ‘Being Emily’ didn’t already exist. I was mad that trans girls didn’t have a book that loves them.”

That love has come back to Gold. After a



reading at Boneshaker Books in Minneapolis a few years ago, a young trans woman approached Gold for an autograph, clutching a well-read copy of “Being Emily.” They chatted a while about their shared love of comic books before the woman said she had to get going, as she had an hour walk to get back home. Turned out she lacked bus fare, and had trekked to the bookstore on foot. “Naturally, we gave her money to take the bus,” Gold said. “But that to me showed the level of need that ‘Emily’ fulfills.”

## Rachel Gold’s reading list for her course at Macalester

“Queer: A Graphic History” by Meg-John Barker (Author), Julia Scheele (Illustrator)

“The Gilda Stories” by Jewelle Gomez

“Giovanni’s Room” by James Baldwin

“Zami: A New Spelling of My Name” by Audre Lorde

“Fun Home” by Alison Bechdel

“Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars: A Dangerous Trans Girl’s Confabulous Memoir” by Kai Cheng Thom

“Release” by Patrick Ness

“The Stars and the Blackness Between Them” by Junauda Petrus

## Books by Rachel Gold (all published by Bella Books)

“Being Emily”

“Just Girls”

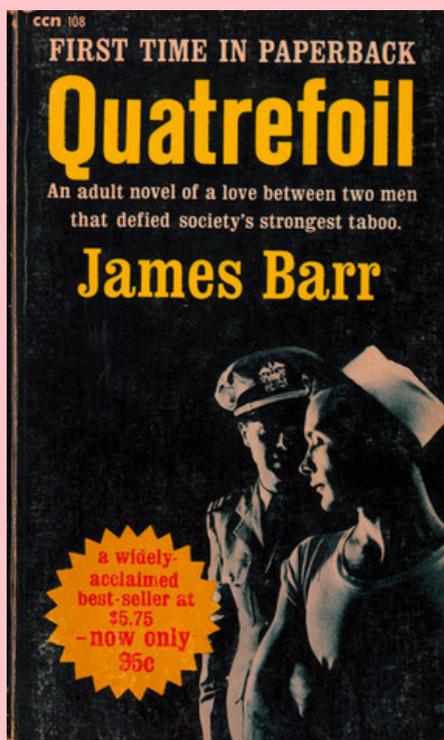
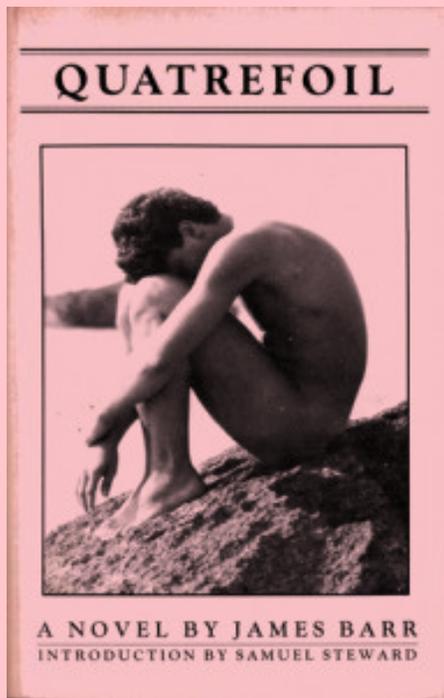
“My Year Zero”

“Nico & Tucker”

“In the Silences”

“Synclair” (Coming in November 2020. Stay tuned for a book launch event at the library.)





# Queery:

## Why is the library called Quatrefoil?

David Irwin (1920-2009), who started the library with his partner Dick Hewetson in 1986, was “so impressed with James Barr’s novel ‘Quatrefoil,’ which was published in 1950, that he insisted on naming their collection the Quatrefoil Library,” according to Adam Keim’s history of the library. Irwin and others admired “Quatrefoil” because it was one of the first novels to portray gay men “soberly and intelligently.”

Originally brought out by the small Greenberg Press, the novel was reissued by Alyson in the 1980s and 1990s, as it was discovered by a new generation of readers.

“Quatrefoil” received scant attention from gay or straight critics. It merits just half a sentence in Christopher Bram’s literary history “Eminent Outlaws: The Gay Writers Who Changed America,” for example. A capsule review in the New York Times called it “more contrived than convincing” and dismissed the same-sex romance as “abnormal yearnings.”

Not a lot is known about the book’s author. James Barr is a pseudonym for James Fugat . He published one story collection, “Derricks,” and one play, “Game of Fools.”

Barr has said that the novel’s main characters are based on people he knew, including a college fraternity brother. Both men joined the Navy during World War II. After the war, Barr took classes to become a writer and moved to New York. He re-enlisted as a Navy officer during the Korean war.

In the mid-1950s, Barr contributed several articles to the early gay publication “The Mattachine Review.” In one, he talks about returning to a small Kansas town to be with his ill father. In another, he recounts the or-

deal of his 8-month investigation by the FBI and the Office of Naval Intelligence. The Navy threatened Barr with court-martial, dishonorable discharge and prison when it discovered he was the author of two books “dealing with homosexuality.” The publisher of “Quatrefoil” faced an obscenity investigation by the U.S. Postal Service.

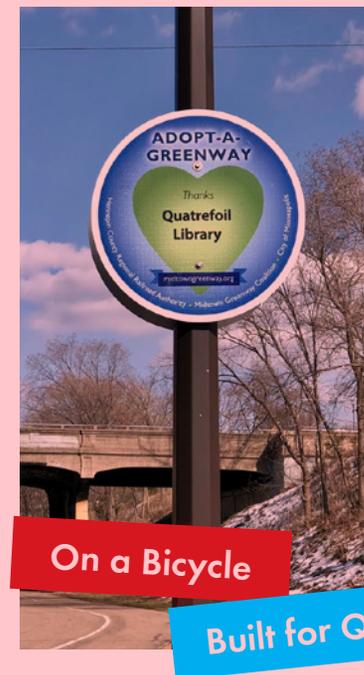
Barr fell out of sight for years, but in 1991 he was located and flown to Minneapolis for a retirement party honoring library co-founders Hewetson and Irwin. Those present “heard about the good/bad old days from James Barr, who came from Oklahoma particularly to celebrate the occasion,” according to Keim.

Set in 1946 in Seattle, “Quatrefoil” is the story of handsome 23-year-old naval ensign Phillip Froelich, who has an affair with a somewhat older commander, Tim Danelaw. Tim helps Phillip avoid a court-martial. Sex scenes are implied rather than described. The two men circle each other warily, drink heavily, go to Canada for a weekend, and socialize with wives, girlfriends and other Navy men. A long section describes a visit to Phillip’s wealthy family in Oklahoma.

It seems that Phillip intends to ditch his fianc e for Tim, and that Tim will get a divorce, but not before lots of stilted speechifying, moralizing and squirming caused by societal and internalized homophobia. While praised for having a positive ending, or at least one without suicide or murder, the final pages (spoiler alert) do not have the happy twosome sailing off into the sunset.

Those interested will find multiple copies of “Quatrefoil” at Quatrefoil. We also have (non-circulating) bound editions of “The Mattachine Review” that include articles by Barr.

Q



## Partnering with Midtown Greenway

Quatrefoil’s Adopt-A-Greenway signs went up on the popular Midtown Greenway bike path this spring. Look for them just west of the bikeway’s on-off ramp at 13th Av. S. From the top of the ramp, the library is just one block south, at 13th Av. and E. Lake Street. Bike racks are located outside the entry that faces the parking lot off of 13th Av. S. Also at that entry is a 24-hour book drop to return borrowed materials. Quatrefoil volunteers will pick up litter on the Greenway seasonally, so let us know if you want to volunteer and support this green metro treasure.

## Quatrefoil Offers Curbside Pickup

To better serve patrons while the library is closed or has limited hours due to coronavirus, Quatrefoil is offering curbside pickup. Curbside pickup is an easy, convenient way to order books and DVDs and pick them up at the library. Here's a step-by-step guide to how it works:

- 1) Visit [www.qlibrary.org](http://www.qlibrary.org) and click the online catalog. Browse more than 25,000 books and thousands of DVDs searchable by title, author or subject.
- 2) Select the books and DVDs you want to borrow. For each title, click "Request Hold" and fill in your name, email and library card number, then hit "Request Hold" again. Hit "Return to List" to request more items. You may also email the library at [curbside@quatrefoil.org](mailto:curbside@quatrefoil.org) with your list. Your email should include your name, library card number, email and phone number. Or call the library's main line at 612-729-2543 and leave a voicemail so we can call you back to get your order. Please limit requests to 5 books and 5 DVDs.
- 3) **Pickup hours are 5-8 p.m. on Wednesdays and 11 a.m.-2 p.m. on Saturdays.** We will alert you that your order is ready to pick up.
- 4) To pick up, enter the parking lot behind the library off of 13th Ave. S. Call us when you arrive. A volunteer will bring a bag with your requested materials out to you. There is a suggested \$2 donation per DVD, which you may pay with a credit card or pay in cash when you pick up. Please have exact change.
- 5) You may return materials to our 24-7 book drop by the back door or drop them off when you come back for another order. Materials will be reshelved when it's safe to do so within Minnesota health department guidelines.

**Quatrefoil Library • 612-729-2543 • [curbside@quatrefoil.org](mailto:curbside@quatrefoil.org)**

## Help Quatrefoil Thrive

1. Go to [www.qlibrary.org](http://www.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 [www.amazon.com/shops/QuatrefoilLibrary](http://www.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

Sat.-Sun., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Weekdays, 7-9 p.m.

Wednesdays, 1-5 p.m.



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Design by Chris Larson