Finding Aid to the
Ten Percent Society Records

Ten Percent Society
Ten Percent Society records, 1989-2004
1 linear ft.

OVERVIEW

Access: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the University Archives.

Provenance: Donated by Larry Peterson, Advisor, Ten Percent Society, August 2009 (Acc 759).

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Ten Percent Society Records, University Archives, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

HISTORY

The Ten Percent Society, a Tri-College University (a consortium of the three higher educational institutions in Fargo-Moorhead, that consists of North Dakota State University [NDSU], Minnesota State University – Moorhead, and Concordia College) organization created with the expressed purpose of providing “a system of educational, emotional and spiritual support for gay lesbian or bisexual students, faculty and staff,” was initially founded and accepted as an official student organization in 1989, with Nancy Elverum, NDSU Lutheran Center, and Tom Williams, of Minnesota State University – Moorhead, as early co-advisors. In 1992, Dr. Larry Peterson, NDSU History department, joined as the faculty advisor. Although declaring itself to be a Tri-College University organization, the Ten Percent Society was unable to open a chapter at Concordia
College, a private Lutheran college, after meeting resistance from an unsympathetic administration.

The Ten Percent Society’s initial focus was on giving support to its members, as well as attempting to educate the local community, and spread awareness of the homosexual community in the Fargo Moorhead area. As a result, the society actively sought to become visible in the campus community, with members offering to speak in college classes, as well as sponsoring events. Of these events, the most noticeable was their activity in celebrating “National Coming Out Day,” which takes place every October. The Society also invited guest speakers, and entertainers, to the Fargo-Moorhead region, including the comedian Rick Burd and Dr. Toni McNaron.

Although active in student life, members of the Ten Percent Society were not fully accepted by all parts of the community. In 1989, chalk sidewalk drawings at NDSU were defaced with anti-homosexual comments. Also, in 1991, an attempt to sponsor a “Dance In” was met with resistance at the Old Broadway restaurant/bar in Fargo.

The Ten Percent Society went into decline following 2005, as a result of diminished interest amongst the student body, but was revived in 2009. The newly reformed organization dropped its affiliation with the chapter at MSUM in order to focus its attention upon the NDSU campus and community. The year of its revival, saw the organization sponsor two guest speakers, TJ Leyden, and Dr. Wayne Brekhus, as well as a YMCA of NDSU Brown Bag Seminar.

As per the NDSU Student Organization list web site (February 2010), the following is the mission statement of the Ten Percent Society: “TPS provides social activities, support, and education to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, intersex and allied students, faculty and staff on the campus of North Dakota State University.”
(http://www.ndsu.edu/mu/about_mu/student_organization_list/)

**SCOPE AND CONTENT**


**Ten Percent Society Activities Series** (1989-2004) encompasses information pertaining to the internal workings of the Ten Percent Society. Included are meeting minutes covering the early years of the organization’s history, “Coming Out Week” information, activities. drafts of the organization’s constitution, and photographs of the Ten Percent Society Activities Fair booth, as was a various materials relating to public events sponsored by the Society.

**Correspondence Series** (1989-1996) is a collection of correspondences between members associated with the Ten Percent Society. The Lou Cyr correspondence (1989-1991) is one of the largest correspondence files and related to Lou Cyr, the first treasurer, as well as holding the offices of Public Relations Officer, and Vice President the organization. Her correspondences
not only include information detailing with organizational activities, but also include copies of her letters to local newspapers, as well as personal correspondences. There is one restricted letter in the file. The L. D. Peterson, former President of the Ten Percent Society correspondence (1990-1996) contains information and letters sent to Peterson. Included in this file are letters sent to Peterson, copies of his letters to local newspapers, and a collection of newspaper clippings detailing the ‘gloved waiter’ incident at the Arrow-wood Radisson in Alexandria, MN. The general correspondence (1990-1992) file contains copies of letters sent out to faculty offering for members of the organization to speak to classes, as well as letters and other correspondence which show the link between the Ten Percent Society and the wider gay/lesbian/ transgendered community throughout the region and the United States.

**Presentation Series** (1990-1991) consists of student responses gathered at presentations to academic classes, in-service trainings, and at a residence hall, given by the Ten Percent Society at NDSU, MSUM, and Concordia between 1990 and 1991.


**Related Organizations Series** (1985-1995) contains information on organizations sharing the same objectives as the Ten Percent Society. These organizations include Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Wingspan, the Prairie Lesbian/Gay Community, the Temenos Youth Outreach Program and the Lesbian and Gay Rights Project.

**Newspaper Clippings Series** (1983-2000, gaps) is a collection of newspaper clippings, organized by year, which deal with, not only the Ten Percent Society, but also the Gay/ Lesbian/Transgendered community in the Fargo-Moorhead region. The earliest clippings, from 1983 through 1985, largely relate to Fargo Mayor Lindgren’s successful attempts to sponsor a “Gay-Lesbian Awareness Week,” and the furor which resulted. Later years detail the emergence of the Ten Percent Society, the backlash against a cartoon in the Fargo Forum which ridiculed the first Gay Pride parade, as well as letters and articles written by Dr. Larry Peterson. This collection contains newspaper clippings from 1983 through 2000, with gaps. In addition there is also a copy of “AIDS in the Heartland,” Banaszynski, Jacqui, *St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch* (MN), ](reprinted from Sunday, June 21, 1987). With the exception of the “AIDS in the Heartland” article, all articles have been recopied onto acid-free paper.

**BOX AND FOLDER LIST**

**Box 1**

Finding Aid

**Ten Percent Society Organization/Activities (1989-2004)**

Student Organizations – notifications – Moorhead State University (MSUM) – 1989-1991
Ten Percent Society Minutes – 1989-1993
Hate Crime Instances – 1990-1991
Campaign for Military Service – ban on gays in military – memos, articles – 1990-1993
Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual resources – 1990-1993
Tri-College - Fall Session Activities - 1990
Tri-College - Winter Session Activities – 1990-1991
Tri-College – Spring Session Activities - 1991
Human Sexuality Courses offered by NDSU, MSUM & Concordia - 1991
Galas and Events – 1991
Petitions at Concordia College calling for approval of the Tri-College Ten Percent Society as a legitimate organization on Concordia College campus – signed petitions Creating Change – c.1992-1993
Tri-College Ten Percent Society Constitution, n.d.; proposed changed to Constitution - 1992
Cris & Tret in concert – Fargo Theatre – proceeds to benefit the Dianne Schlotman Defense Fund – November 1992
Coming Out Week materials - 1992
Coming Out Week materials - 1993
Coming Out Week materials - 1994
Coming Out Week materials - 1995
Coming Out Week materials - 1996
Coming Out Week materials - 1997
Coming Out Week materials - 1998
Rally Chants - 1994
Budget & accompanying material – 1995-2000
Possible collaborative projects - Wahpeton-Sisseton - 2004
Peel-off stickers – “Another Blatant Display of Heterosexuality” – n.d
Name list Restriction [Restricted] – n.d.
Signed petitions (due to hate crime against MSUM student) - “Violence Against One Violence Against All” — n.d.
YMCA Proposal – draft/outline – n.d.
Ten Percent Society Booth – photographs – n.d.
Tri-College “10% Society” – brochures – n.d.

**Correspondence Series (1989-1996)**
Correspondence - Lou Cyr, PR Officer, Treasurer, VP of Ten Percent Society [1 letter restricted] – 1989-1991
Correspondence - J.D. Peterson, President of Ten Percent Society – 1990-1996
Correspondence – general - 1990-1992

**Presentation Series (1990-1991)**
Scholars Program – Humanities 498 - presentation responses – March1990
Education 214 (MSUM) - presentation responses – April 1990
Residence Assistant (R.A.) In-service - presentation responses - April 1990
Sociology 110 (MSUM) – Social Programs - presentation responses – April 1990
Speech 206 - Intercultural Communication – presentation responses – April 1990
English 103 - presentation responses – May 1990
Social Work 255 - presentation responses - May 1990
Sociology 317 - Gender Class (Concordia College) – presentation responses - November 1990
Sociology 110 - presentation responses -February 1991
Neumaier Hall – 15th Floor (Residence Hall at MSUM) - presentation responses – March 1991
History 130 - Women in America -presentation responses – November 1991
History 122 – Families in America - presentation responses – May 1991

**Conference Series (1990-1998)**
National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) Conference information – Minneapolis, MN – November 1990
Professional Issues workshop – “In working with Gays, Lesbians and Their Families” – Fargo, April 1993

Prairie Lesbian/Gay Community – newsletters, pamphlets, groups and workshops, brochures, flyers – 1986-1995
Temenos Youth Outreach Program (various groups offered to Lesbian and Gay youth 23 and under) - notebook – 1988-1989
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays – brochures, information sheets – n.d.

Clippings - 1983
Clippings - 1984
Clippings - 1985
Clippings - 1988
Clippings - 1989
Clippings - 1990