

Finding Aid to the Prairie Lesbian/Gay Community Records

Prairie Lesbian/Gay Community

Prairie Lesbian/Gay Community Records, 1979-1994

.4 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 285

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OVERVIEW

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

Provenance: Donated by Prairie Lesbian/Gay Community, 1988 (Acc. 2218).

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Prairie Lesbian/Gay Community Records, MS 285, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

HISTORY

The Prairie Lesbian/Gay Community (PLGC), an incorporated non-profit organization, was founded to “promote a climate of understanding in all areas of life so as to foster the elimination of prejudice and discrimination against gay men and lesbians; to work for the defense of gay mens’ [sic] and lesbians’ human and civil rights; and all other activities as shall from time to time be found appropriate” according to the organization’s by-laws (1985).

The organization was originally the Fargo/Moorhead Area Dignity/Lutherans Concerned. The minutes of 30 April 1982 and the May 1982 *Impart* document the group’s name change to Prairie Gay Community.

The first issue of the *Communique* (c. 1986) records a further name change to Prairie Lesbian/Gay Community.

Intending to create a state-wide organization for the support of gay and lesbian individuals, the PLGC made much effort to attract attention from wide geographic areas. Their regular dances, the largest single source of income for the group, were attended from across the state. The PLGC newsletter, in its various incarnations, was sent to a wide variety of organizations not only in North Dakota, but also to umbrella organizations in San Diego, Atlanta, and Canada, among others. Not surprisingly, dances and publications encompass most of the organization's expenses, though outreach, public relations, fundraising, and programming also consume significant amounts of money.

Sources consulted: Prairie Lesbian/Gay Community Records

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The records of the Prairie Lesbian/Gay Community contain much information of the openly gay and lesbian Fargo, N.D.-Moorhead, Minn. community from the 1980s into the 1990s. The minutes, though only covering a year and a half, give a good indication of the level of activity in the organization. The newsletters of the PLGC, though, spanning fifteen years in three separate incarnations, provide the most detailed look at the organization's activities and concerns. They also provide educational information to their audience to address the gay and lesbian concerns of the day.

Unfortunately, information from other sources than the newsletter is limited, especially in the formative and later years of the organization. The minutes of the Prairie Lesbian Gay Community record much concerning their group's affiliation with both Dignity and Lutherans Concerned organizations. The newsletter records that the 1982 name change reflected a reorientation of the group's concerns, and the minutes mention political and religious issues involved in associating with them.

The [Administrative Files Series](#) includes a budget, by-laws, correspondence, and a co-director's report.

The [Minutes Series](#) contains the board meeting minutes of the Prairie Lesbian/Gay Community from 30 April 1982 to 11 December 1983. During this brief time, the board considered many items including organizational activities (mostly dances) outreach proposals, newsletter concerns, and membership records. The minutes also record an organizational name change, by-law amendments, and constitution changes.

The [Subject Files Series](#) includes, among other items, newsletter and newspaper clippings. Among the miscellaneous brochures are dance schedules, programs, regional Lutherans Concerned publications, and educational leaflets. The miscellaneous documents series contains lists of organizations to which the *Impact* was sent, a Dignity chapter development document, a publications list, and a Minnesota Civil Liberties Union record of gay rights civil liberties cases. Two papers are included in this series: "Homosexuality: The Report of a Campus Ministry Study Group" and "They Gay Children of God" or

“A View From the Back of the Church.” In addition, two liturgical services for gay and lesbian audiences are included.

The [Newsletters Series](#), the bulk of the collection, contains newsletters for the Prairie Lesbian/Gay Community. The *Impart* (1979-1985) is the earliest newsletter for the then-named Fargo/Moorhead Area Dignity/Lutherans Concerned and later (1982) Prairie Gay Community. Around 1986, a member vote changed the name of the newsletter to *Communique*. These organizational newsletters contain messages from board members, activity schedules, regional and national event coverage, poetry, and various medical and legal information which concerns gay and lesbian individuals. It appears that the newsletter changed names again in May 1993 to *The Moving Finger*. There is also a 1983 copy of *The Concord*, the national newsletter of Divinity/Lutherans Concerned.

This series also contains newsletters from other organizations. *In Touch*, a newsletter from Bismarck/Mandan, N.D., was published for two or three years in the 1970s. Two issues (1991) of the *Living Positive* newsletter published in Moorhead, Minnesota, which was designed for individuals with AIDS and their friends and families, are included. *Out Here!*, an unaffiliated newsletter, was published in Fargo in the early 1980s by Sharpe Publications. Among the miscellaneous newsletters are *Integrity Forum* (1979), *Parents and Friends of Gays*, *MCGLR News* (1981), *My Place* (1983), and *Gay Times* (1984).

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Contents
1/1	Finding aid
	Administrative Files Series
1/2	Budgets, 1983
1/3	Bylaws, 1985, n.d.
1/4	Correspondence, 1980, n.d.
1/5	Reports, 1982
	Minutes Series
1/6	Minutes, 1982-1983
	Subject Files Series
1/7	Clippings, 1983, n.d.
1/8	Miscellaneous brochures, n.d.
1/9	Miscellaneous documents, 1981, 1983, n.d.
1/10	Papers, n.d.

1/11 Religious Services, 1982, n.d.

Newsletters Series

1/12 *Communique*, 1986-1990

1/13 *Communique*, 1991-1993

1/14 *The Concord*, 1983

1/15 *Impart*, 1979-1985

1/16 *In Touch*, 1982

1/17 *Living Positive*, 1991

1/18 Miscellaneous Newsletters, 1979, 1981, 1983-1984, n.d.

1/19 *The Moving Finger*, 1993-1994

1/20 *Out Here*, 1983