

# **alga NEWSLETTER**

**Australian Lesbian & Gay Archives Inc**

**Incorporated Assn No. A0000240Z**

**ABN 92 450 443 760**

**PO Box 124, Parkville, Vic 3052**

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## **Launch of GLITF History**

Peter de Waal from Sydney has written a history of the Gay and Lesbian Immigration Task Force, whose work since the mid-1980s has resulted in landmark changes to the Australian Government's treatment of same sex relationships in immigration matters.

Peter's book, titled 'Lesbians and Gays Changed Australian Immigration: History and Herstory', will be launched in Melbourne on **Monday 6 May** at the Gryphon Gallery, 1888 Building, University of Melbourne, Grattan Street, 5 pm to 7 pm (formalities start about 6 pm).

Members and friends of ALGA are invited to attend the launch, which is jointly sponsored by ALGA, the Australia Centre (University of Melbourne) and the Gay and Lesbian Immigration Task Force. RSVP to Graham Willett (for catering) 03 8344 6865, [gwillett@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:gwillett@unimelb.edu.au) by Thursday 2 May.

Self-published by NSW GLITF, the 300 page book is based on 37 edited interviews with lesbian and gay Australians and their partners from overseas, early GLITF activists, bureaucrats, politicians and former and current immigration ministers (almost all since 1983) and shadow ministers. It is accompanied by two volumes of documents (1200 pages) from 1975 to 2001. For ordering details, visit the GLITF website at [www.glitf.org.au/](http://www.glitf.org.au/) and follow the links to the history project.

## **New committee**

ALGA's Annual General Meeting in December last year resulted in the election of a new committee, of which Graham Willett remains President, Vice-President is Wayne Murdoch, Treasurer is Gary Jaynes, and committee members are Graham Carbery (Periodicals Secretary), Joseph Chetcuti, Keith Stodden and John Waugh.

Joseph and John are new to the ALGA committee, and we welcome them both.

## **Melbourne Uni homo history**

In the year that marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of Gay Liberation in Melbourne, Graham Willett has written a fascinating monograph, titled 'From Camp to Gay: The Homosexual History of the University of Melbourne 1960-1976'. It includes a detailed account of the emergence of Gay Liberation on campus at Melbourne University in 1972. The monograph is the sixth in a series of free working papers published by the History of the University Unit, Department of History, University of Melbourne. For orders and enquiries, phone (03) 8344 5468 or email [gwillett@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:gwillett@unimelb.edu.au).

## **ALGA at Midsumma**

ALGA's main contribution to Midsumma 2002 was a history walk run in conjunction with the Victorian AIDS Council, featuring the much-loved Dr Gertrude Glossop as tour guide. The event drew over 100 people, and from all feedback, it was much enjoyed. Dr Glossop, aka Will Sergent, led the walk on a route which took in St Kilda Road starting at the Floral Clock, over Princes Bridge to St Paul's, turning right at Collins and ending at Parliament House. The commentary may have had factual similarities with previous walks, but the delivery was uniquely Dr Glossop's, with a lovely balance of information, entertainment and outrageousness. She may be an Adelaide identity, but Dr G has an undeniable feel for queer historical Melbourne and we hope that she will do an encore in the not too distant future. Thanks to VAC for their collaboration in making this event possible.

ALGA also had a presence at Midsumma Carnival where we had many visitors. Sales of books and badges of which we hold triplicate copies helped pay for our expenses – thanks to Kym for enabling this. Esther's work on the photo albums and Kym's on the badges were able to be displayed, and these drew a great deal of interest. Clearly the visual aspects of our collection are drawcards and this is

something we would like to encourage further work on.

## HH5

The fifth Australian Homosexual Histories conference will be held in Newcastle on Monday-Tuesday, **28-29 October 2002**. The call for abstracts deadline is **31 July**. Conference convenor Kevin Markwell is contactable on [Kevin.Markwell@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Kevin.Markwell@newcastle.edu.au).

The conference is one of a number of conferences being held in and around Sydney in the leadup to the Gay Games. Among other offerings of particular interest, the first queer studies conference, Out from the Centre, is also being held in Newcastle. Full details of the conferences may be found on the Gay Games website, [www.sydney2002.org.au](http://www.sydney2002.org.au).

## Thesis Prize 2001

The third ALGA thesis prize for the best fourth year honours thesis on a queer-relevant topic has been awarded to Mark Pendleton of Queensland University of Technology for his study titled 'Capitalism and Gay and Lesbian Identity in Japan'.

Sixteen entrants were received for the prize from four states (including several regional universities) – easily the largest response in the three years the prize has been offered.

Our thanks to Esther Singer and John Waugh for judging the prize.

## Website update

The Archives thanks Craig Johnston for his work on updating the ALGA website. Craig has done an excellent job in refining and extending the site's content. Students of gay and lesbian history will especially appreciate the updated bibliography and links to overseas archives. Check it out at <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~alga>

## Acquisitions

Recent donations have included a personal collection of Melbourne Gay Liberation papers 1972-73 (Chris Johnson), photographs from the 1980s (Helen Pausacker), interviews with lesbian activists from the 1970s (restricted access) and display panels from Telstra sponsorship of Mardi Gras (Robert Gibbs).

The Melbourne Gay Liberation donation was prompted by a sentence in our website urging readers not to assume that we already have what they possess. In this instance, new material has

come to light as well as fresh perspectives on existing material.

## Periodicals gaps filled

Our call for help last year in tracking key missing issues of periodicals brought a tremendous response, enabling us to complete volumes of *Adelaide GT*, *Campaign*, *Capital Q*, *Melbourne Star Observer*, *Lesbiana*, *Libertine*, *Lesbians on the Loose* and *Tropical Fruits*. Thanks to Silke Bade, Marja Berclouw, Colin Billing at ALSO, Gordon Balfour at Tropical Fruits, Jude Dennis at LOTL, Ashley Roberts and Ian Purcell at the Darling House Library. A few key items are still being sought and any help with finding these will be greatly appreciated:

- ◆ *Bliss* (Melb) No 18 (1995)
- ◆ *Brother Sister* (Qld) No 33 (1994), No 137 (1998), Nos 163-165 (1999), and any issue after No 167 in 2000.
- ◆ *Capital Q (Sydney)* 370 (Nov 1999)
- ◆ *Country AIDS Network* (Castlemaine) No 42 (1999) and Nos 50, 52 & 55 (2000).
- ◆ *G* (Sydney) Any issues after no. 3 (late 2000) and clarification of whether still current.
- ◆ *Gayline Newsletter* (South Australia) Nos 213 and 221 (1997), No 240 (1999), Nos 250 and 252 (2000) and any issues after No 253 (Sept 2000).
- ◆ *Panda* (Canberra), Vol 3 No 4 (1995) and Vol 4 No 8 (1996)
- ◆ *Sydney Gay Liberation Newsletter* No 14 (1973)
- ◆ *Sydney Star Observer* No 512 (June 2000).

If you can help, please email ALGA's Periodical Secretary, Graham Carbery, on [carbs@vicnet.net.au](mailto:carbs@vicnet.net.au).

About \$1,100 of binding has taken place this financial year, with more to come in June. Membership dues and donations continue to fund much of this effort. The response to the binding sponsor scheme has been particularly helpful.

## T-shirts – position vacant!

The Archives is looking for a person, or a few people who would enjoy working together, to help get our t-shirt collection in order. Some work was done on this in the early 1990s, but the collection has grown a lot since then. (Indeed, we are about to take custody of about 130 new items). It would involve listing the collection on computer, some laundering and (if possible – this would be a bonus) advising on storage and display possibilities.

If this sounds like you, please give Graham (8344 6865) or Gary (9499 1769) a call.

## **Rodney Thorpe 1952 – 2002**

The death of Rodney Thorpe earlier this year [6 January] has taken from us one of the founders of the gay liberation movement in Australia and one of its brightest stars. Over thirty years, his was an activism that fused politics, sex and pleasure in surprising – and remarkably effective – ways.

Rodney came to gay politics as one who had been touched by the radicalism of the 1960s and who saw immediately the value of a movement that applied the lessons of those earlier movements to ‘people like us’. And he came to the movement in the nicest possible way. As he told me in an interview a few years ago, he was picked up as a 19-year-old by a man who was subsequently his best friend for twenty years. And I quote: “on the head of the bed was this document, the gay liberation manifesto; so it was incredibly exciting. I got fucked for the first time and then I sat there I bed reading the Gay Liberation Manifesto.”

Young, enthusiastic and passionate in his ideals, he took to the streets with the rest of the movement, joined in the debates and the arguments, wrote leaflets and organised dances. He spoke on radio and to school kids. They were, he said, “pretty wild times”.

The times settled down, and in 1975 he moved to Sydney. He remained active in gay politics – in trade unions and then in the early days of the Mardi Gras (he was one of the first organisers of the cultural festival). He helped organise the community buyout of the *Sydney Star Observer*, which kept that paper from collapse, and in 1990 he was director of the first International AIDS Day, an event that was as much a celebration of survival as a commemoration of loss.

He was one of those who had sure his life made a difference.

**Graham Willett**

*Ed: Graham's obituary for Rodney was first published in Melbourne Community Voice (MCV).*

## **Photo project outreach**

ALGA is taking steps to encourage more lesbian visibility in its photo collection. There is a distinctly male bias in the collection as it stands. In the coming months we will place advertisements in the lesbian press in an effort to rectify this.

The Archives photo history project aims to collect photos of events/people that have personal historical significance to them. We ask that people consider donating just one photo, along with the who/what/where information, the name of the photo-

grapher, and contact details if permission needs to be obtained to display or reproduce the photo.

witnesses, and so many competing versions, that it took the jury less than an hour to find reasonable doubt and acquit. Leaving Harry, we can hope, to resume his life as Zas.

## Thanks

The Archives acknowledges the following people for making donations this financial year:

Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, NSW

Tropical Fruits Inc, Lismore, NSW

|                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Colin Baskerville   | Matthew Blackmore |
| Gordon Campbell     | Michael Carnes    |
| Anna Chapman        | John Cook         |
| Robert Gibbs        | KL                |
| Leigh Keen          | Paul McIntyre     |
| M Riley             | K Stodden         |
| Geoffrey Stewardson | Richard Stone     |
| Alison Thorne       | Paul van Reyk     |
| John Waugh          |                   |

## Candlelight badge query

Leo Heimburger from the AIDS Memorial Candlelight Vigil and Quilt Project (Melbourne) is seeking a badge depicting a gold outline of a hand holding a white candle, yellow flame. The badge is an oval shape, about 3 x 2.2 cm, with blue and gold background. ALGA holds a copy of this badge, but only one. If you can help with a spare, please contact Leo on 03 9826 1954.

## 52 up

**This is the title in 2002 of the Archives popular column in *MCV*, Melbourne's weekly GLBT newspaper. Each column is devoted to a year, starting with 1950. Here's the 1951 number on 'Zasu Pitts'.**

Today you mention Zasu Pitts and the mind flies immediately to the famous Hollywood comedienne of the forties. In Melbourne, in 1951, it was a very different Zasu standing in the dock in the Criminal Court. Harry Francis, also known as Zasu Pitts – Zas for short – was facing a murder charge, accused of pushing a man off Queen's Bridge.

In the early hours of 25 November 1951, Harry had met up with a friend Phillip Clark (Phyllis Calvert to his friends – another Hollywood star!), who had been to see the floorshow at the Galleon Coffee Lounge, a well-known haunt of bohemians and others of that sort, while taking a walk on the foreshore. They collected a bottle of wine from Zas' house, and were driving across Queen's Bridge, when they noticed a man straddling the parapet.

Zas jumped out of the car and went up to talk to him. From the car, Phil saw them talking until suddenly the man on the parapet disappeared over the edge. Zas' arms were outstretched.

As the car sped off, Zas told Phil that he had pushed the man in: "He wanted to jump, so I gave him some help."

A few days later, the body was pulled from the Yarra and Zas was arrested. In the end, there was so much confusion among

## **Why an Archives – and how you can contribute**

**The Archives is the memory of the gay and lesbian community. We aim to preserve records of Australian homosexual life, past and present, for use by future generations.**

The Archives has been going since 1978. The collection of periodicals is probably the core of the Archives' collection. But we also seek records of gay and lesbian life outside of organised groups, through personal letters, photographs and other memorabilia, including from times before there was a gay movement. We also encourage those with recollections of pre-movement days to record these for posterity through the Archives' Oral History Project. Requests for confidentiality are strictly adhered to.

**You can support the Archives financially** by becoming a member (\$20, \$5 concession), or by making a donation. All donations to the Archives over \$2 are tax deductible.

**For those with the time and interest, you can contribute as a volunteer.** There is a range of tasks to suit people's different talents and levels of commitment. For example:

- ◆ writing to groups around Australia to let them know about the Archives, and seeking their support
- ◆ listing and ordering parts of the collection that are of interest to you, eg. t-shirts, banners or posters
- ◆ taking care of the collection of a group that has special significance to you – ordering and listing that group's papers, maybe interviewing some of the people who are involved in running the group
- ◆ photocopying and ordering press clippings
- ◆ liaising with other collectors of gay and lesbian material, and arranging swaps of duplicate material
- ◆ helping with fund raising and organising major events (trivia nights, conferences etc)
- ◆ helping us distribute ALGA publications to bookshops
- ◆ writing promotional material to help raise awareness of the Archives
- ◆ arranging displays
- ◆ helping us solve the perennial problem of insufficient space.

**The Archives lives in the basement of VAC at 6 Claremont Street, South Yarra. We are open on most Thursdays nights from about 7pm to 9 pm, but we ask that people phone to let us know when they are coming. Tel. (03) 9482 1184, or email on [gwillett@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:gwillett@unimelb.edu.au)**

## **SUBSCRIBE FOR 2002**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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I would like to become a member and enclose

\$1 joining fee (new members only) \$ .....

\$20 (full membership) \$ .....

or \$5 (student or pensioner concession) \$ .....

Donation (tax deductible over \$2) \$ .....

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to 'Australian Lesbian & Gay Archives', or 'ALGA'.

Please indicate if you are agreeable to your donation being publicly acknowledged, eg. in ALGA's newsletter:

Yes       No

If yes, please state if you are happy for your full name or only your initials to be used.

Full name       Initials only

In the case of donations over \$50, ALGA would like to acknowledge the donation as sponsoring the binding of a periodical. This would be in the form of a slip pasted inside the cover of a bound volume. Are you agreeable to this?

If more than one person is the donor, please print names and \$ for each

.....

Signature

Please return this form to ALGA at

PO Box 124, Parkville, Vic 3052