Queer Life in Iowa City
January 17 - June 30, 2023
Main Library Gallery
I turned in my initial gallery proposal in a kind of manic, overly self-assured frenzy. I was a queer person with weird feelings about gender who’d just taken a class on museum curation. I felt like the Main Library Gallery was a safe place to practice and experiment with my newfound knowledge. In grad school and in my job at University of Iowa, I was seeing barriers and limitations in GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums) institutions that perpetuate the marginalization of oppressed people. I felt that it was important to push back against those barriers. As such, I wanted to use this opportunity to make and take up space on a couple of fronts.

First, when I submitted a proposal for this gallery exhibit, I was still working towards my Master of Library Science (MLIS) degree. I was a library worker with many years of experience, but I wasn’t a “real librarian.” I didn’t have the credentials or prestigious title of “librarian” or “archivist.” My work with collections required a lot of physical labor—work that is necessary but often looked down upon as “just moving books.” I’d found that as a library worker but not a “real librarian,” folks (including myself) often feel hesitant or unable to step forward and take on larger-scope projects that fall outside of their typical job description. As such, submitting the proposal felt like an act of rebellion. Being in this kind of peripheral position—and being in a role with a supportive supervisor and enough flexibility to accommodate it—I wanted to take on this task in hopes that it would inspire other library workers to inquire about and seek out these types of creative work opportunities that often fall into the laps of folks with higher degrees or professional credentials.

Second, I wanted the ability to highlight the queer histories and stories of people from both the University of Iowa and Iowa City communities, to bridge the “town and gown” gap that so often appears in college towns like ours. I wanted people in the wider community to feel like they have a place in the University Libraries too and that they can use our resources (Community Borrower cards are a thing that not enough people know about!), use our space, and be seen as valuable members of our community regardless of their relationship to the university.

Third, while there are endless examples of struggles, bigotry, and violent oppression throughout LGBTQ history, I hoped to highlight the joy that exists in queer life. Happiness and elation in everyday life is an act of resistance against a culture that doesn't want LGBTQ people to exist or thrive. While the protests and struggles are important, so is the celebration of queerness and love and community. That is something I really hope people take away from this exhibit—the persistence of LGBTQ happiness despite systemic oppression and bigotry.

on the cover: Illustration from April 1980 issue of Better Homes and Dykes. Jo Rabenold Papers [IWA0191], IWA.
Lastly, I wanted to highlight what we had in our collections (both at the University of Iowa Libraries and at the LGBTQ Iowa Archives & Library) while acknowledging the gaps. The notable lack of BIPOC representation. The absence of trans, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming voices. The ways in which our collections still need to grow so that archival spaces can be trusted repositories for these communities and stories. I hope that this exhibit will begin to build that trust through honest acknowledgment of the systemic ways specific groups are marginalized while also providing the opportunity for folks to build our collections as a community through the interactive part of this exhibit.

Those were my big goals with my initial proposal, and I immediately fell into a panic when it was accepted and I realized I had no idea how to make it happen. Thankfully, there was a crew of people that helped along the way and made the exhibit what it is. I hope that, in some ways, this exhibit meets my initial goals. I hope that people leave with a good story, a new queer role model, a better understanding of LGBTQ history, a sense of belonging, and more empathy for our neighbors with different experiences than our own. Let’s keep celebrating, growing, and being better and more caring people.

All the love,
Madde Hoberg  [she/they]
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GUIDE TO OBJECTS ON DISPLAY

ORGANIZING ON CAMPUS

1. Policy on Campus Homosexual Organizations, ca. 1970. Gay Liberation Front, Subject Vertical Files [RG01.0015.005], UA.
2. The Gay Iowan, Spring 1985. Student-Produced Publications and Newsletters Collection [RG02.0005.001], UA.
3. Gay People’s Union brochure, undated. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Allies Union Records [RG02.0003.018], UA.
5. Gazebo Gayla flyer, undated. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Allies Union Records [RG02.0003.018], UA.
6. GLBTAU brochure, early 2000s. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Allies Union Records [RG02.0003.018], UA.

Gay Liberation Front “Outrageous Weekend” flyer, 1974. Jo Rabenold Papers [IWA0191], IWA.
8. GLBTAU Drag Ball flyer, undated. Pride Alliance Cultural Center Records [RG02.0003.060], UA.
9. Spectrum UI kickoff meeting, late 2010s. Pride Alliance Cultural Center Records [RG02.0003.060], UA.

**GRUPO LL**

10. Grupo LL flyer, mid-late 1990s. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Allies Union Records [RG02.0003.018], UA.
11. Photos of Grupo LL at the Iowa City Pride Parade, 1994. Latino-Native American Cultural Center Records [RG02.0003.007], UA.

**LGBTQ+ GREEK LIFE AT IOWA**

13. First annual Queernival flyer, 2017. Organizations & Clubs Vertical Files [RG01.0015.004], UA.

**FINDING COMMUNITY**

18. Trans Week of Action flyer, 2017. Pride Alliance Cultural Center Records [RG02.0003.060], UA.
19. TransWeek flyer, 2010. Pride Alliance Cultural Center Records [RG02.0003.060], UA.
20. The Outlaws brochure, undated. Organizations & Clubs Vertical Files [RG01.0015.004], UA.
22. Iowa Pride parade banner, 2019. Pride Alliance Cultural Center Records [RG02.0003.060], UA.

RAINBOW GRADUATION
24. First Annual University of Iowa Rainbow Graduation, 2000. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Staff and Faculty Association Records [RG03.0011.001], UA.
25. Transgender and rainbow graduation cords. On loan from Danielle Martinez.
26. University of Iowa Rainbow Graduation program, 2019. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Staff and Faculty Association Records [RG03.0011.001], UA.

LGBTQ+ COUNCIL
27. Outstanding Academic Service and Outreach Award, 2007. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Staff and Faculty Association Records [RG03.0011.001], UA.
28. First Friday Socials flyer, 2004. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Staff and Faculty Association Records [RG03.0011.001], UA.
29. Brochure for the Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Staff & Faculty Association, 1990s. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Staff and Faculty Association Records [RG03.0011.001], UA.
30. Promotional bookmark, undated. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Staff and Faculty Association Records [RG03.0011.001], UA.
31. Rainbow Graduation program agenda, 2007. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Staff and Faculty Association Records [RG03.0011.001], UA.

PRIDE ALLIANCE CENTER
32. transGroup flyer, 2009. LGBT Resource Center Organizations, Subject Vertical Files [RG01.0015.005], UA.
33. Fluidity Group flyer, 2009. LGBT Resource Center Organizations, Subject Vertical Files [RG01.0015.005], UA.
34. QPOC (Queer People of Color) flyer, 2009. LGBT Resource Center Organizations, Subject Vertical Files [RG01.0015.005], UA.
35. “The RC: a home away from home” card, 2006. Pride Alliance Cultural Center Records [RG02.0003.060], UA.

GRACE & RUBIES WOMEN’S RESTAURANT
37. Grace & Rubies kitchen, 1976-78. Karla Miller and Jean Bott Papers [IWA0997], IWA.
38. Grace & Rubies business card, 1976. Karla Miller and Jean Bott Papers [IWA0997], IWA.

RUBY’S PEARL
40. “Don’t forget your daddy” flyer, early 2000s. Ruby’s Pearl Records [IWA0549], IWA.
41. Cardboard photo archive sign, early 2000s. Ruby’s Pearl Records [IWA0549], IWA.
42. Ruby's Pearl file folder art, early 2000s. Ruby’s Pearl Records [IWA0549], IWA.

**I.C. KINGS**

43. I.C. Kings t-shirt, 2011. On loan from Sara Tate.
44. I.C. Kings shot glass, sticker, pin. On loan from Sara Tate.
46. Varla pin. On loan from Sara Tate.

**IOWA CITY WOMEN’S PRESS**

47. *A Women’s Poetry Reading: All Women Are Welcome to Read Their Poetry.* Iowa City Women’s Press, 1972 proof. Susan Redfern Papers [IWA0998], IWA.
48. Cards from Spinster, “a lighthearted lesbian gayme.” Created by Lavender Lace, printed by Iowa City Women’s Press, 1982. Iowa City Women’s Press Records [IWA0220], IWA.

**RFD: A COUNTRY JOURNAL FOR GAY MEN EVERYWHERE**

51. *RFD,* Summer 1976. Jo Rabenold Papers [IWA0191], IWA.
52. *RFD,* Fall 1986. Donald Engstrom Papers [MsC1170], Special Collections & Archives.

**BETTER HOMES AND DYKES**

55. *Better Homes and Dykes,* Fall 1976. Jo Rabenold Papers [IWA0191], IWA.

**ACCESSLINE**

56. *ACCESSline,* Vol. 2, No. 2, March 1988 [Coll. 8]. On loan from LIAL.
57. *ACCESSline,* Vol. 11, No. 4, July/August 1997 [Coll. 8]. On loan from LIAL.
58. *ACCESSline,* Vol. 22, No. 3, May/June 2008 [Coll. 8]. On loan from LIAL.

**A LESBIAN QUARTERLY**

60. Schlesinger Library fan mail and subscription request, Sept. 21, 1982. Jo Futrell Papers [IWA1305], IWA.
COMMON LIVES/LESBIAN LIVES:

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
65. Softball photos, 1970s. Karla Miller and Jean Bott Papers [IWA0997], IWA.
69. Statement excerpts from the LGBTQ Iowa Archives & Library, June 2020. Courtesy of LIAL.
70. LIAL pins. On loan from LIAL.

LOCAL AIDS AWARENESS
72. AIDS Community Support Training packet, 1987. Patricia Herring Papers [IWA0741], IWA.
74. Iowa Center for AIDS Resources and Education brochure, undated. Patricia Herring Papers [IWA0741], IWA.
75. “A safer sex workshop for gay & bisexual men” flyer, 1990. Patricia Herring Papers [IWA0741], IWA.
76. 11th Annual International AIDS Candlelight Memorial and Mobilization flyer, 1994. Patricia Herring Papers [IWA0741], IWA.
77. AIDS Coalition of Johnson County Newsletter, June 1991. Patricia Herring Papers [IWA0741], IWA.

LESBIAN ALLIANCE
80. Series of photographs from The Women’s Coffeehouse. Early 1980s. Karla Miller and Jean Bott Papers [IWA0997], IWA.
81. The Women’s Coffeehouse special events calendar, May - June 1982. Jo Rabenold Papers [IWA0191], IWA.
82. Lesbian Alliance questionnaire, undated. Jo Rabenold Papers [IWA0191], IWA.
83. Photographs from the Lesbian Alliance and the Women’s Resource and Action Center, 1970s-1980s. Karla Miller and Jean Bott Papers [IWA0997], IWA.
86. Lesbian Alliance info sheet, 1981. Organizations and Clubs Vertical Files [RG01.0015.004], UA.

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CONTRIBUTING LOCAL ARCHIVES
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Visit lib.uiowa.edu/gallery to learn more about the Main Library Gallery and this exhibition.