

3-30-2017

## March 2017; Buffalo-Niagara LGBTQ History Project Minutes

Buffalo-Niagara LGBTQ History Project

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/buff\\_lgbtq\\_histproj](http://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/buff_lgbtq_histproj)

---

### Recommended Citation

Buffalo-Niagara LGBTQ History Project, "March 2017; Buffalo-Niagara LGBTQ History Project Minutes" (2017). *Buffalo-Niagara LGBTQ History Project Minutes*. 8.  
[http://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/buff\\_lgbtq\\_histproj/8](http://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/buff_lgbtq_histproj/8)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Digital Commons at Buffalo State at Digital Commons at Buffalo State. It has been accepted for inclusion in Buffalo-Niagara LGBTQ History Project Minutes by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons at Buffalo State. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@buffalostate.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@buffalostate.edu).

**Buffalo-Niagara LGBTQ History Project**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 30, 2017**

*Dramatis Personae:* Jasmina, Adrienne, Brigitte, Liz, Phoenix, Carolyn, Madeline Davis!!, Bob, Nissa, Marielle, Ana

**Intro:**

Normally, I wouldn't include intros in the meeting minutes. They're typically used to simply introduce members to one another. But this time, in addition to names and pronouns, members were asked to talk about aspects of local LGBTQ history, or questions about local LGBTQ history, that they were interested in exploring. Alas, I didn't get everyone's answers down, but here is a selection of members' responses, that we might explore later:

- (Disclaimer: I may have not gotten all the details correct here.) As part of her ongoing interest in LGBTQ people in science and technology, and turn-of-the-20th-century LGBTQ happenings, **Liz** is interested in learning more about a house on Franklin Street where (possibly LGBTQ) women lived, and where still other women, passing through town for conventions, may have stayed. Madeline Davis, who came to our meeting, may have known one of the women who lived there, and is looking into what she knows for Liz.
- **Madeline**, in addition to continuing her ongoing project of assembling boxes to go into the archives, has a specific project for which she would potentially like to enlist the help of some History Project members. A local man, named Jesse Strash, responded to the book *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold* some years ago by starting something he called the Men's Bar Project. It is questionable whether some of the bars about which he has found information can accurately be called men's bars-- Madeline thinks it's more accurate to call them mixed-gender bars--but regardless, he has found information about gay bars stretching back to the 1930s. Madeline would like someone from our project--preferably a man--to contact Jesse Strash to ask about his project, and perhaps get him to donate to the Madeline Davis Archives. We don't have a phone number for him at this time, but we know that he lives on or near Richmond Street.
- **Bob** brought up the idea of assembling a "This Day in History" calendar that features happenings from local LGBTQ history. He can't be in charge of this project, but he would gladly help.

**Project Brainstorm:**

From there, the group began a larger brainstorm about projects we'd like to work on in the future, and possible first steps for working on them. Here's what we came up with:

Infringement Festival: In retrospect, we should have allowed ourselves more time to talk about Infringement Fest--applications for participation were due the day after our meeting.

We agreed to sign up for Infringement Festival, and to give a version of the workshop that Ana, Adrienne, Brigitte, and Liz are giving in Columbus, OH in May.

Participation in the Infringement workshop is not limited to those who will be presenting in May. The idea is to give a little bit of a how-to workshop for doing local LGBTQ history, and to tell some of the stories we've unearthed over the last year or so. Other History Project members who want to get in on the action are encouraged to do so. So far, Marielle has expressed interest in participating, and Carolyn would like to help, albeit in a background support role. If you would like to be part of the fun, please contact one of the four workshop presenters mentioned above. In the meantime, Adrienne, Brigitte, and Liz will put together an application for participating in Infringement on March 31.

As a group, we also briefly suggested some possible future Infringement events. One idea we liked was to have local bands/musicians cover songs by Buffalo-based LGBTQ musicians from previous generations. But only a few of us are musicians, and gathering bands for this purpose is a months-long project. Something to think about for next year, perhaps.

Brochures: This is not a new project, but Carolyn asked whether we had any brochures to hand out at rallies. There have been so many public gatherings and rallies of late that, at all events, we should have at least one History Project member on hand to pass them out.

At present, Stevie has what remains of our History Project brochures, as she recently passed them out at a fundraising event. However, a PDF of the brochure is available on our Google Drive, for anyone to print out. Adrienne and Nissa have promised to print out more brochures between now and the next meeting, and Carolyn and Ana will try to get in on the action, as well.

Following Up with Ebony and the MOCHA Center Ball: On March 25, the MOCHA Center threw a mini-ball, at which friend of the Project and house of Talon founder Ebony Johnson was honored and made a judge. At Ebony's request, a few of us came with a high quality camera. Ana took some absolutely gorgeous pictures of the mini-ball, which have been well-received on Facebook. Jasmina also took a few videos with her phone which show the talent and virtuosity of the performers.

Given that, and given our ongoing relationship with Ebony, we would like to do the following:

- Offer our pictures and film footage to the MOCHA Center and the Madeline Davis Archives.
- Although we have already done an event commemorating the ballroom scene, Ebony says it's been about 20-25 years since the scene was founded in Buffalo. That should be written about and celebrated.
- There has been talk about reviving the ballroom scene. We would like to do what we can to help.
- We are interested in working with Ebony further, and magnifying her story, in a number of ways, including:
  - Including her in our filmed interviews of local trans activists.

- Working with her in some capacity on the memoir she's writing, be that editing the manuscript, or finding a venue for publication.
- Reaching out once more to other folks involved in the ballroom scene, with whom we have not been able to build the same relationships, such as Regina.

In order to achieve these goals, we are working in the following ways:

- **Marielle** will talk to the MOCHA Center about giving them copies of our photos and film footage.
- **Adrienne** will talk to the Madeline Davis Archives about also giving them copies of our photos and film footage.
- **Marielle and Ana** will meet with Ebony on Sunday, April 2 about next steps.
- **Liz** pointed out to Marielle that the Trans Committee has already crafted a list of interview questions for our filmed interviews. Our typical MO is to give them to interviewees before we talk to them, allowing them to choose what they are asked and pick their interviewer. The list of questions should be on our Google Drive, but if Marielle can't find it, Liz will make sure she has a copy.
- **Adrienne** has offered to help Ebony edit her memoir. She will also reach out to Christopher Treacy, editor of *The Loop*, and see if he would be open to publishing excerpts from said memoir.
- **Marielle** has tried to reach out to Regina again, but hasn't heard back. She will keep trying.

Online Outreach: **Jasmina** pointed out that we don't have a great means of reaching out to people who are interested in the History Project, but who are not on Facebook. We have a defunct Google Group that has not been used in months, but it has never been particularly conducive to piquing interest. **Adrienne** has pledged that, while she has been talking about doing it for months, she will finally get her act together and create an e-mail list. She will also contact local press and make sure the History Project is in everybody's community calendars.

Men's Bar Project: As mentioned by Madeline Davis above, we spent some time discussing whether we had the wherewithal to contact and work with Jesse Strash in some manner. We are interested in talking to him, but as mentioned above, it would be best for a man to reach out to him, and no one at the table this month identified as a man. We have come up with the following angles for reaching out to Jesse Strash:

- **Carolyn** will reach out to Dan DiLandro of the Madeline Davis Archives about possibly reaching out to Mr. Strash, in tandem with Carolyn.
- **Liz** may be able to enlist her partner, Nigel, in this work.
- **Jasmina** has a student, Andrew Barron, who may be talked into reaching out to Mr. Strash.

We talked briefly about ways in which we might want to collaborate with Jesse Strash, if he is interested. They include:

- Being interviewed by Adrienne for her column in *The Loop*.
- Working with him to do some sort of public exhibit based on his findings.

## Update on the Anne Balay Speaker Event:

Finding partnerships to help us put on the event is proving difficult. Literally not a single union has agreed to sign on to this event. CEJ has expressed some interest, but Kirk Laubenstein has not answered Adrienne's most recent e-mails. Clean Air Coalition has expressed some interest, but every time the executive director sets up a meeting time with Adrienne, she ends up moving it weeks into the future at the last minute. Buffalo IAC has expressed interest, and so has UB--although Adrienne is very clear about wanting to create an event that is interesting and accessible to people who don't necessarily have access to the university, or a university education.

While the partners who have expressed interest at the moment may be enough to put together a decent honorarium for Anne Balay, the lack of buy-in from unions makes it difficult to create an event where Balay's work connects to local stories. Fortunately, **Madeline Davis** may have come to the rescue in this meeting. She has offered the following:

- Bobbi Prebis, the partner of Liz Kennedy (Madeline's co-author for *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*), either was a steelworker or is connected to local LGBT steelworkers. She lives in Arizona now, but she comes to Buffalo every August. She may be willing to be interviewed, and/or know people who will. Madeline will reach out to her.
- In the process of writing *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*, Madeline met a few African American steelworkers, and knows a woman, Brandy, who once worked in Republic Steel. Madeline can reach out to these women, and see if they're interested in participating.

In the meantime, the group has begun thinking of ways we can generate interest and funds for Anne Balay's arrival. Adrienne and **Brigitte** have talked about doing a sort of book club meeting, where people can talk about the book, and Brigitte's partner has started designing a poster. **Liz** and other members of the Trans Committee also think that it might be worthwhile to host documentary or other movie screenings, to open up conversations about the intersections of queerness and class/labor. So far, our ideas include:

- *Pride* (not a documentary, but definitely talks about queerness/class/labor)
- Susan Stryker's documentary about the Compton's Cafeteria riot. **Adrienne** could possibly even e-mail Susan Stryker, and see if she'd be willing to Skype in for a post-film Q&A.

As a group, we decided that our goal between now and next month's meeting is to find documentaries that will get people interested in the topic of queerness/class/labor.

## Plans for Pride:

As promised, **Nissa** asked the Pride Parade and Dyke March planning committees about possible tabling on the History Project's part. Both said that tabling details would not be up on the website until April. We will keep our collective eyes peeled for information. Additionally, now that the Dyke March planning meetings have been moved to Mondays, **Adrienne** will start to attend them again, and will report back to the group on their plans.

## Party in the Archives Update:

Two things to keep in mind on our archiving project:

- **Brigitte** has been working on a new coding system for digitizing archives. The current system we are working on results in names for files that are much too long. The new system is alphanumeric, and Brigitte passed around a handout describing how the system works. The handout will appear on our Google Drive.
  - We really, really need volunteers to help us digitize **Camille's** archives! We are past our deadline, and have renegotiated a deadline of April 22. If you are interested, let **Adrienne** or **Ana** know--the archival material is currently at their house.
- 
- Phoenix: Desire to have a website that isn't in social media form.
  - Liz: We have a website. Bridge is the webmaster. They haven't come to meetings in a while, but are always available on Facebook.
  - Adrienne: Will start a convo between Phoenix and Bridge.
  - Trans filming project:
    - Camille is supposedly the next person on the list.
    - Ana should be meeting with Isabel next week. We can find a date that both Camille and Isabel can agree on.
    - Adrienne and Ana will talk to Ari and see if there's anyone she wants us to interview.
    - Proposed interview between two young trans activists—is Bridget arranging that?
    - § Maybe work around that. We've got Ebony, Ari's folks, and Camille.
    - Phoenix will put together Slack page.
    - We need to talk to Bridget—is she prepared to lead the Trans Committee?
  - Marielle: End-of-summer event—sort of a year-end review?
    - Recruitment event.
    - Photography showcase, maybe a screening of our footage?
    - Panel?
    - Carolyn: "I will only go if you call if you call it Queer In Review."