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June 2017 (2); Buffalo-Niagara LGBTQ History Project Minutes

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Buffalo-Niagara LGBTQ History Project
Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2017

Dramatis Personae: Marielle, Renee, Ana, Adrienne, Isabel, Carolyn

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Making our project better:

At the very beginning of the meeting, as we were waiting for other members to trickle in, a few of us began a brief discussion about how to improve meetings. Renee, a new group member who had only attended one meeting before, gave us some really helpful feedback: she said that when she first came in, the work seemed really overwhelming, and she was unsure of how she could help. Some suggested ways that we can work on that problem include:

- Give new people concrete tasks to work on.
- Pair new group members with more experienced members, who can show them how to do specific tasks.
- We should structure responsibility and leadership around specific projects, instead of around committees, so that the projects new folks can get involved in are clearer.

As a corollary to these issues, we talked about the need for more and better communication:

- Instead of spending a lot of time at monthly meetings figuring out what needs to get done for specific projects by when, we should be figuring out these things in between meetings. By the time the meeting is held, we should have lists of tasks available. Monthly meetings should be for assigning those tasks and getting updates.
- As Marielle has frequently suggested: we should be having one-on-ones in between meetings with new members, people who haven't been to meetings in a while, people who aren't yet plugged into projects, and so on.
- We should have a clearer schedule, planned months in advance, of what projects are coming up, and timelines for getting them done in time.

And finally: We need to spend more time at our meetings talking about queer history. The sharing and accumulation of knowledge about local LGBTQ history should be an integral part of our meetings.

Benefit Concert?

Isabel's band, Tina Panic Noise, played Ladyfest Pittsburgh earlier in the month, and they were super impressed. Not only did a bunch of amazing bands play, but they raised a ton of money for Planned Parenthood. Isabel is now interested in planning a Ladyfest-esque festival in Buffalo, and proposes that the proceeds go to the History Project.

This is a long-term project. It will probably take 6-12 months to put together. At present, Isabel is in the opening stages of planning. She's going to talk to Athena, who ran Ladyfest Pittsburgh, about how to plan it, and once she knows more, she'll get back to us with assistance needs.

Editing Workshop and Trans Documentary Trailer:

Isabel also spent some time talking about how to set up an editing workshop, so that we can get a trailer for our trans activist interviews/documentary online. She says that there are two possible approaches:

- Isabel could hold a small workshop with 1-2 people on how to edit.
- We could ask Squeaky Wheel to open their lab to us for a day.

Isabel says she prefers the first option, because it would be easier for her. Asking Squeaky Wheel to open their lab to us might not be feasible, and even if it were, we probably wouldn't be able to open the editing workshop up to more than 4 people. That's a lot of expense for not a lot of return.

So, we will hold an editing workshop for 1-2 people. Adrienne and Isabel will discuss dates, and we'll put the offer up on Facebook/Slack/e-mail. Out of the people who respond, we will select 2 people at random to participate. In order to be selected to participate, respondents must agree to the following:

- Once the workshop is over, they will contact another interested member of the History Project and teach them what they learned.
- They will devote 2-4 hours of their own time to editing our documentary footage into a trailer.

Next Steps for Trans Documentary Project:

Next Interview:

The next interviewees on our list are Camille Hopkins, and one of Ari's contacts. We have decided to pursue one of Ari's contacts first. Ana will contact Ari about setting up an interview with said contact, with the understanding that we'd like to aim for July 22-23 as an interview date. When the interview is scheduled, we will need a 5-person crew.

Spectrum Meeting:

Tricia, who runs Spectrum, has invited us to come to one of Spectrum's meeting to talk about our project. The next meeting is Friday, July 14, at 7 p.m., and we would like to go to it. Adrienne will contact Tricia to make sure it's okay if we crash the meeting. Adrienne, Ana, Marielle, and Isabel have expressed interest in going.

Assorted Additional Projects:

Update on POC Committee:

Marielle reports that the POC committee did not hold a meeting in June, due to life getting in the way. The committee plans, however, on continuing work with their Storycorps-style project. Interested members should stay tuned for a planning meeting sometime in July.

Documentary Screenings:

History Project members remain interested in hosting a documentary film series, both for educational purposes and to raise funds for the group. The first film we want to screen is *Screaming Queens*, a documentary directed by trans activist Susan Stryker about the riot at Compton's Cafeteria in San Francisco.

Some of the specs of this event include:

- **Date:** We're aiming for mid-August to early September, but those dates are malleable.
- **Venue:** Our initial goal was to hold the screening in the patio behind No Labels. Isabel contacted Bridge to see if that would be possible, but Bridge informs us that the owner of that property has become paranoid about outdoor events, and that between fees and insurance, such an event might prove prohibitively expensive. We therefore need to decide whether it's worth the cost, or to come up with an alternative venue.
- **Speakers:** We'd like to see if we can get Susan Stryker to Skype in and talk about the film, and to have a local speaker (identity undetermined) talk about queerness and gentrification in Buffalo.
- **Moderator:** Possibly Bridge or Marielle.

Stuff we need to do in the next month or so to get this event off the ground:

- **Adrienne:** Contact Susan Stryker, to try and get a yes/pin down a date.

- **Isabel:** Talk to roommate about making a poster. Look at Nissa's projector to see if we can use it for the screening; otherwise, look into renting another projector.
- **Ana:** Talk to Chris about making a poster.
- **Carolyn, Marielle, Adrienne, Ana:** Research possible speakers who could speak on queerness and gentrification in Buffalo.

Meeting Venues:

Carolyn, who is primarily responsible for finding venues and putting up invites for monthly meetings, needs help brainstorming and finding new meeting venues. She will put a line out on the Facebook group, but would like more direct help from other meeting members.

At the meeting, we brainstormed the following places as possible meeting venues:

- Maybe Heaven, a QTPOC-owned business on West Ferry.
- Pilgrim St. Luke's Church
- Community garden at 60 York Street

Ana says she will help Carolyn with this process once she's done with her dissertation. But in the meantime, any venue ideas you have would help.

Ebony's Archive:

Ana reports that Ebony Johnson has a personal archive of digital photos from Buffalo's ballroom scene. She is interested in having us organize them, and helping her donate them to the Madeline Davis Archives.

In order to get this project off the ground, we will do the following:

- **Marielle:** Talk to Brigitte about the project. Marielle and Brigitte will then set up a meeting with Ebony about how to start the project.
- **Adrienne:** Talk to Dan and Hope in the Madeline Davis Archives about creating a release form for Ebony's collection.
- **Ana:** Talk to Phoenix about making space on the website for the photos.

