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February 2018 (2); Buffalo-Niagara LGBTQ History Project Minutes

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Buffalo-Niagara LGBTQ History Project

Meeting Minutes

Feb. 6, 2018

Dramatis Personae: Nissa, Carolyn, Dani, Collin, Ana, Adrienne, Brigitte, Melissa, Jocelyn

In This Issue:

1. Collin's project - gay liberation groups at UB.
2. Our new website is up! Sort of.
3. We're pausing on filmed interviews--but that doesn't mean we're not hard at work on our trans documentary.
4. Black in Time is happening in a month!
5. Money--let's make some!

UB Activism Project:

This month, Collin, a new project member, opened our meeting. Collin is a multi-talented individual who, among other things, is currently a history student at UB. He is interested in the development of radical queer politics in Buffalo--particularly on the UB campus. And of all the groups that have developed at UB, he is interested in the Gay Liberation Front most of all.

Collin has been looking through UB's archives for more information about the Gay Liberation Front and other, related groups--which is no small feat, since UB's main archives are closed for the time being, and he is restricted to digital archives. There, he has found little more than snapshot of events--not enough to tell anybody's story. So, he has compiled every name he can find associated with Gay Liberation Front and other organizations, and he brought a list to the meeting.

Collin is looking for help tracking down contact info for the names he has found. Adrienne will put his list up on Facebook and Slack shortly after releasing these minutes; if you know how to reach any of the people listed (or, if you know someone who might know them), please email Colin at collinza@buffalo.edu.

TL;DR version: Collin needs some help gathering the contact info of people who used to be involved with radical gay organizations affiliated with UB.

Assignments:

- *Everyone:* Take a look at the list of names. Do you know any of these people? Pass the contact info on to Collin. Do you think some you know might know them? Share the list with anyone you think might be able to help.
- *Adrienne:* Add Collin to group Slack.

New Website:

Brigitte, our digital archivist extraordinaire, announced that our new website is up. The website is <http://bnlgbtqhistory.omeka.net>. As the group discussed last month, our new webhost is Omeka, which specializes in hosting digital archives. We don't have curated collections up on the website yet, but you are cordially invited to look at the website, and offer constructive criticism, re: web design elements, and what we might want to put online.

The group held a brief discussion about hosting video on our website. In particular: Carolyn recorded a video of last year's Black History Month event on her phone, and it might be interesting to put it on the website (or at least an excerpt of it). Carolyn has expressed some concerns that this video may be gone forever due to some technical difficulties, but will search the cloud for it. If found, Adrienne and Dani will edit as necessary, and upload it either to the website or YouTube.

TL;DR Version: Brigitte, Melissa, and the archiving team have put up the bare bones of a new website. Now we have to start building said website up.

Assignments:

- *Brigitte:* Try to get in touch with Amanda and Phoenix again--see if they are still willing to help with web design.
- *Collin:* Is interested in being part of the scanning brigade, if and when there is scanning to be done.
- *Carolyn:* Search for Black History Month video.
- *Adrienne and Dani:* Edit Black History Month video, if it is found.
- *Everyone:* Look at new website, and offer constructive criticism.

Trans Activist Documentary:

Although we are (most likely!) not finished interviewing activists for our film, we are pausing in our interviews for the time being. The next few months will be a time to take stock of the interviews we do have, figure out what and who we need to film next, and hopefully pull together a trailer for the enjoyment of social media.

In order to cut together a trailer, Dani suggests that we assemble a team of people to transcribe our existing interviews. (Jocelyn, Brigitte, Nissa, and Adrienne have volunteered for this process.) As we transcribe, we will highlight portions of the interview that we think would be interesting for a smaller cut. We'll also see if the interviews bring any images to mind, which might inspire the creation of a B-roll.

Additional good news: at least for the next several months, thanks to her workplace, Adrienne has Adobe Premiere on her laptop. Dani and she need to find out whether it actually runs well on the laptop, but this could greatly simplify the process of editing/teaching project members to edit.

TL;DR Version: We're not interviewing anyone for our documentary right now. We're transcribing interviews, in preparation for making a trailer.

Assignments:

- *Adrienne:*
 - Has been given permission by the group to buy an external hard drive, so as to get the documentary files off her computer.
 - Find a way to get audio files to Jocelyn, Brigitte, and Nissa for transcription.
- *Jocelyn:* Get audio file from Adrienne and start transcribing.
- *Brigitte:* Get audio file from Adrienne and start transcribing.
- *Nissa:* Get audio file from Adrienne and start transcribing.

Black in Time:

Our historical dance party has a name, thanks to Mr. Robert Hairston. It also has a date: we will be gathering on **March 10**, at Sweets Lounge.

Here is where we are at on the planning of the event:

Partnerships:

The good news is, we have a lot of community leaders who are interested in making this event happen. Carolyn, Dani, Adrienne, and Ana met with Denise Sweet and Robert Hairston last month to make plans for the event. Both leaders agreed to recruit 10 people to share stories at the event, and to ask people to lend their memorabilia. Denise put a recruitment post up on Facebook, and at least 8 people have responded to it so far. She will also work with Dani to plan a date when people can come to Sweets and record their stories, if they don't want to speak in public. Robert volunteered to approach DJs on our behalf. Tinamarie Sweet, Denise's wife, has been floated as a possible MC.

In addition to this meeting, Ana has spoken to several other community leaders. Reggie Griggs, who spoke at our event in September, is interested in helping us out. Among other things, he used to be a regular at the bar that was alternatively known as A Touch of Class and 134, and he may get Miss Julie, the bar's former owner, to do an interview for the event. Ari Moore has agreed to lend A LOT of photos--though she has requested someone to help her go through them and pick the right ones. Ebony Johnson has heard about the event, and has asked us of her own accord whether she can help.

The issue is, it's hard to follow up with the people who have committed. At their request, we put together a Facebook thread where people can give updates, but none of them have actually written anything in it. We may need to help/bug people on a one-on-one basis.

Research:

Our attempts to research parties/bars that took place before the 1970s has proven full of dead ends, as well. Melissa visited the Madeline Davis Archives last month, and read the raw transcripts that formed the research for *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*, to see if there

was any additional information on parties/bars that welcomed black lesbians. She found that the overwhelming majority of women interviewed for the book were white, and that the researchers asked interviewees about race relations on an inconsistent basis. At this point, it seems like all we really know are the names of a few bars, such as the Little Harlem Hotel, that were not specifically black gay bars, but who were welcoming to a black gay clientele. We may just have to extrapolate from there.

Next Steps:

- Dani is tentatively planning to film stories at Sweets Lounge on the 22nd. They will confirm this date with Denise tomorrow, and will then need a small crew to help with setup.
- We need to follow up with our partners, fast, and make a plan to pick up memorabilia. We also need to especially see if Robert has followed up with potential DJs.
- It's time to do some publicity--posters, press releases, etc.
- Memorabilia needs to be picked up by March 1, so that we can frame, caption, and display it.

The Event:

As always, we will have a suggested donation of \$5 at the door, with no one turned away for lack of funds. Melissa, Brigitte, Collin, Nissa, Adrienne, and Jocelyn have volunteered to come early to the event, while Nissa and Brigitte have agreed to work the door.

There was some discussion/concern about how and where we would advertise this event. In particular: a concern was expressed that it might not be safe to advertise the event at UB, since there are some alt-right/neo-fascist groups at work on the campus right now, who might invade the event. After some discussion, the group determined that: a) the ideology of these campus groups aside, it was unlikely that they would descend en masse at a gay bar on the East Side; b) because the bar is a private business and not a public university, it would be way easier to kick them off the premises of the bar than it would be to curb them on campus.

TL;DR Version: Our Black in Time event is happening in a month and change, and there is much to do. Help!

Assignments:

- *Dani:*
 - Make a plan with Denise Sweet to film stories at her bar later this month. Once this plan is made, communicate with Jocelyn and Ana, so they can prepare to act as crew.
 - Help community members sort through memorabilia, as needed.
 - Put up posters around the city, once they have been designed.
- *Nissa:*
 - Scan and frame memorabilia, once it is collected.

- Arrive at event early to help set up.
- Work door at event.
- *Melissa:*
 - Follow up with Ari Moore (and other community leaders, as needed) to set up dates for going through memorabilia.
 - Scan and frame memorabilia, once it is collected.
 - Arrive early at event to help set up.
- *Jocelyn:*
 - Help Dani film stories at Sweets Lounge.
 - Arrive early at event to help set up.
- *Ana:*
 - Help Dani film stories at Sweets Lounge.
 - Help community members sort through memorabilia, as needed.
 - Put up posters around the city, once they have been designed.
- *Carolyn:*
 - Follow up with assorted community leaders by phone and email, to ask them to commit to a date when they can send their memorabilia our way.
 - Pick up community members' memorabilia, as needed.
 - Put up posters around the city, once they have been designed.
 - Scan and frame memorabilia, once it is collected.
- *Adrienne:*
 - Give contact info of community leaders to Melissa and Carolyn.
 - Also follow up with community leaders and help them sort through memorabilia, as needed.
 - Write and send a press release.
 - Ask Amanda if she would design poster for event.
 - Arrive early at event to help set up.
- *Brigitte:*
 - Scan and frame memorabilia, once it is collected.
 - Arrive early at event to help set up.
 - Work door at event.
- *Collin:*
 - Scan and frame memorabilia, once it is collected.
 - Help write press release.
 - Put up posters around the city, once they have been designed.
 - Arrive early at event to help set up.

Fundraising Opportunities:

We spent a brief amount of time at the end of the meeting talking about possible fundraising opportunities. The group agreed that we should pursue all of these opportunities to the fullest extent possible:

- Collin has connections to the restaurant community in Buffalo, and could help plan some sort of fundraiser using those connections. Additionally, as a history student,

he can apply for \$500 from the UB History Department for independent research.

- Adrienne found a grant from a foundation called the Pollination Project. Whereas most grants require a group to have a 501c3, the Pollination Project is explicitly meant to help small-scale volunteer-run organizations--particularly those who might not have that kind of tax base--grow their operations. Jocelyn offered to help Adrienne collaborate on writing the grant.
- Liz sent Ana information about an organization that acts as a fiscal sponsor to groups that don't have 501c3s, but may need to raise money for one reason or another. Ana will contact this person.
- Finally, UB professor Cindy Wu sent Ana a message earlier this month, saying she has an idea for possible collaboration with, and financial support from, the university. They will be meeting on March 6 to discuss the idea further.

TL;DR Version: We've suddenly been showered with possible fundraising ideas, and we're going to pursue them all.

Assignments:

- *Collin:*
 - Come up with initial idea re: restaurant fundraiser.
 - Apply for funds from UB History Department.
 - Talk to potential fiscal sponsor.
- *Adrienne:* Work on Pollination Project application.
- *Jocelyn:* Work on Pollination Project application.
- *Ana:*
 - Talk to potential fiscal sponsor.
 - Meet with Cindy Wu March 6.
- *Brigitte:*
 - Talk to potential fiscal sponsor.

Next Meetings:

Because we have so much to get done between now and the March event, we will be having a meeting on **Sunday, Feb. 25 at 4 p.m. at Grindhaus**, in order to check on the status of the event. Additionally, we will hold our March meeting one week early, on **March 6**, to meet any last-minute needs for the event.