



Year Eight

The Rainbow History Project's eighth year was one in which we continued to benefit from the unstinting support of our members, Brother Help Thyself, the Academy of Washington, and other benefactors.

COLLECTIONS. In 2008, Rainbow History began moving its collections to the Historical Society of Washington (HSW) under our archival partnership with HSW. The process is a slow one since it involves scanning major documents and resources before they are transferred to HSW. The process will likely continue through 2009.

In September, Cheryl Spector's family transferred Cheryl's storage facility in Alexandria and its contents as well as the items stored at the Whitman-Walker Clinic following the fire at Cheryl's home. Many of the items in the storage facility are personal items but we are slowly, very slowly, sorting through what is there. In December we moved the items at the Clinic to a new storage facility, with climate control, in Arlington. We also moved our collections out of the South Capitol St storage facility and closed that account. Unfortunately, until we can dispose of personal items and move historically significant items, Rainbow History incurs a \$250 monthly charge on Cheryl's storage unit. Funds donated by the community at the time of her death are subsidizing this expense.

PROGRAMS. In late February, ahead of the opening of the new ballpark, Rainbow History sponsored a well-attended discussion and retrospective about the clubs and social spaces that were obliterated by construction of the new ballpark.

At the beginning of June, Rainbow History co-sponsored the second annual Trans Pride. Mark Meinke prepared a timeline of local and national transgender history and mounted a display for the event.

Also in June, Rainbow History and the DC Center co-sponsored a reading by Craig Seymour whose new book *All I Could Bare* provides a detailed look at the O St and Half St SE clubs that were lost to the ball park.

In October, we co-sponsored with the DC Center a reading and discussion by Dr. Amin Ghaziani of his analysis of the LGBTQ marches on Washington, *the Dividends of Dissent*. Rainbow History had extensively supported Dr. Ghaziani's research with contacts and primary documents.

WALKING TOURS. Rainbow History continued presenting its popular gay history walking tours in 2008 with board members Kim Sescocoe, Jeff Donahoe, and Mark Meinke leading tours in Dupont, East Dupont and Capitol Hill neighborhoods. In addition, we continue to offer tours for special events and groups visiting the Washington area.

SECOND UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN RESEARCH TOUR. In late May, Rainbow History put together panels, speakers and visits in support of UW's second "rolling seminar" on LGBTQ history from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Lilli Vincenz hosted an evening

discussion for the students with Eva Freund. Dr. Kameny met with the students and participated with them in a re-enactment of the 1965 White House picket line. The students also met with a panel on transgender issues, a panel on African-American activism, members of the Latino History project, and separately with Joan E. Biren and Victor Banis.

ANNUAL WASHINGTON, DC HISTORICAL STUDIES CONFERENCE. Board member Mark Meinke represented Rainbow History on the planning committee for the annual historical studies conference, held this year at the Historical Society of Washington. Rainbow History presented a panel at the conference featuring remarks by independent historian David Carter on Dr. Kameny's *writ of certiorari*, Rebecca Dolinsky on the creation of social spaces for minority groups within the gay community, Kwame Holmes on the effects of the 1968 riots on development of the African-American gay community, and Mark Meinke on the creation of the slogan *Gay Is Good*. Board member Jeff Donahoe is currently representing Rainbow History on the planning committee for the 2009 conference.

COMMITTEE ON LESBIAN & GAY HISTORY (CLGH). Rainbow History chair, Mark Meinke, a member of CLGH's board of governors, attended the annual meeting of CLGH and the American Historical Association.

WEBSITE. Rainbow History's website continues to grow in both content and use. At the end of 2008 there were well over 400 webpages, including multipage Adobe pdf files, on the site, as scans of documents in collections transferred to the Historical Society went up on the website. The website badly needs re-organization and a more modern design.

In the past year, we have added documents from the Gay Women's Alternative collection, biographical materials for H Lynn Womack, and an article and documents concerning the Gay Left in the 1970s.

Good indicators of website activity are the numbers of visitors to the site and the numbers of pages they have viewed. Over the past five years, visitors to the site have grown by 160%. The number of visitors to the site has dropped in the past year to 108,500. However, the number of pages viewed continues to grow, increasingly annually by about a third. In the past year, our site had 268,000 page views (406,000 hits). The majority of site visitors come directly to the site rather than being referred by search engines. This suggests that site visitors are accessing more and more pages, always a good circumstantial indicator of site popularity and utility.