



Year Nine

Though 2009 was a year of some major losses for the local community, Rainbow History maintained its role as the city's primary documenter of the LGBT community's history. In the course of the year, we lost two historically important individuals: Larry Stansbury, of the city's leather community and Brother Help Thyself, and Theodore Kirkland, a founding member of the Gay Liberation Front and one of the founders of Best Friends and of Black Gay Pride. James Crutchfield, founding member of Rainbow History, left our board. Year end also brought news of the closing of the *Washington Blade* and of *Lambda Rising*. However, there was good news as well with the re-opening of Ziegfeld's/Secrets in the old Pier building in SW and the move of the DC Center to more spacious quarters in the former Lesbian Services Project building.

COLLECTIONS.

In 2009, Rainbow History continued processing and transferring its collections to the Historical Society of Washington's Kiplinger Library. We have transferred the Aiken, Summersgill and Pennington collections as well as smaller collections of materials donated by Joan E Biren, Paul Kuntzler, Eva Freund, Commerce GLOBE, and Barbara Gittings/Kay Lahusen.

This year we have finished sorting through materials left by Cheryl Spector and donated by her estate to Rainbow History. Cheryl's storage units were closed down and the material kept by Rainbow History was moved to Rainbow History's storage in Arlington, VA. The process of sorting and scanning Cheryl's materials has hardly begun. The size of the project is, in fact, somewhat daunting.

At year end, Rainbow History received the *Our Heroes* collection of nearly 150 portraits of heroes of the city's response to AIDS. The collection was transferred to the Historical Society.

PRESERVATION.

On February 20th, the DC Historic Preservation Review Board unanimously approved Rainbow History's nomination of the Franklin E. Kameny home and office at 5020 Cathedral Avenue NW as a historic landmark. Rainbow History's project had begun with informal meetings in 2004. The Kameny home is the first LGBT historic site recognized as a landmark in Washington, DC and joins a handful of other sites recognized around the country. The Historic Preservation Office intends to forward the nomination to the National Park Service's National Register.

At the end of the year discussions were beginning for nominating 1724 20th St NW, the original site of *Lambda Rising*, as the next site for landmark recognition.

PROGRAMS.

Though Rainbow History participated in Youth Pride, the bulk of the year's program activity fell in October and November.

In February, Rainbow History sponsored *Show the Love*, a testimonial evening celebrating Dr. Patricia Hawkins and Ms. Barbara Chinn for their many years of service to the LGBT community. The celebration was held at Covenant Baptist Church and was co-sponsored by the church, the DC Coalition, and other community members.

The major program of the year, requiring four months of preparation, was the fourth biennial Community Pioneers selection and presentation. Twenty new Community Pioneers were chosen in mid-summer and were presented at a gala reception at Busboys and Poets on October 21st.

Three days earlier the Academy of Washington had held its annual benefit for Rainbow History at the new Ziegfeld's, raising \$3000 in the course of the afternoon's performances.



On October 5th, Board members Patsy Lynch, Philip Clark, and Rebecca Dolinsky with Advisory Board member Papaya Mann made a presentation on DC's LGBT history to the gay students organization at the University of Maryland in College Park. On Thursday October 8th, Rainbow History hosted a well-attended discussion of the 30th anniversary of first March on Washington and the Third World Conference. The panel included former co-chair of the March, Steve Ault, who very kindly came down from New York City to attend. The other panelists were Advisory Board member ABilly S Jones and Board member Patsy Lynch.

Responding to a request from the Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League, former board member James Crutchfield and board members Chuck Goldfarb and Philip Clark led two separate discussions of gay youth outreach history in the first week of November.

WALKING TOURS.

Rainbow History participated in Cultural Tourism's semiannual Walking Town DC programs with tours of the Dupont, East Dupont, and Capitol Hill areas. A special tour combining the Dupont and East Dupont tours was conducted for members of the American University, George Washington University and George Mason University gay student organizations. New Board members received training in leading tours.

ANNUAL WASHINGTON, DC HISTORICAL STUDIES CONFERENCE.

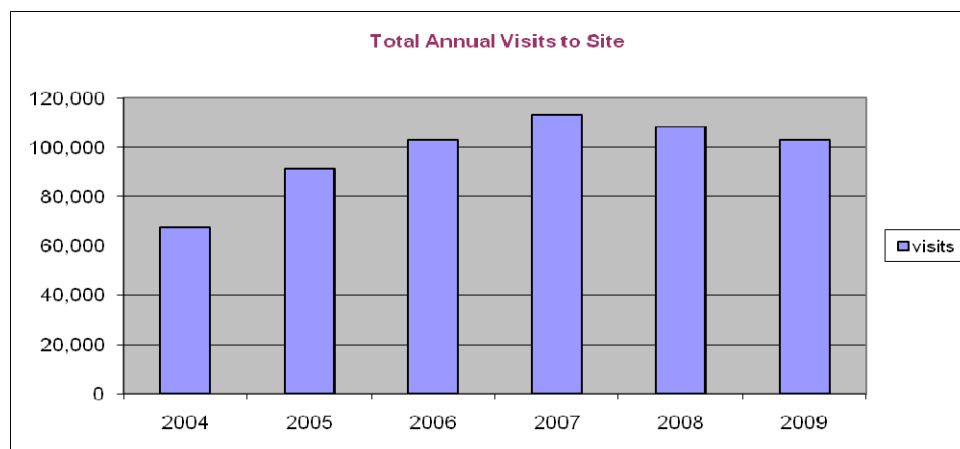
Board Secretary Jeff Donahoe replaced Mark Meinke on the planning committee for the annual Washington, DC Historical Studies conference, which was held in mid-November. The conference went well but for the first time in several years no papers on LGBT history were presented.

WEBSITE.

In 2009, Rainbow History added materials from its collections that

- expanded the documents connected with the Furies collective;
- created new pages and added documents concerning the Gay Left in the 1970s and the Gay Academic Union meetings during that decade;
- added documents connected with lesbian and gay men's involvement with the November 1970 Black Panthers' Peoples' Revolutionary Constitutional Convention held in Washington, DC; and
- added Dr. Kameny's ground-breaking 1961 writ of *certiorari* requesting Supreme Court review of lower court dismissals of his suit for reinstatement.

The website continues its international role as a major online resource and documentary archive of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender history. Though the number of total and average daily visits to the website continues a slow decline, visitors to the site are staying longer and viewing more pages.





In 2009, page views totaled 294,033, an increase of 10% over the previous year. Daily average page views increased 10% as well to 806 page views. The average length of time visitors spend on the website increased to **11 minutes**, from 2008's average of 9 minutes. In the past five years the amount of time spent on the site has more than quadrupled from 2.5 minutes. A mere 12% of visitors to the site enter through the home page or the directory indexing materials on the site. The remaining visitors enter the site directly through a specific content page.

All of these statistics suggest that we are maintaining our role as a research resource and that those coming to the site are doing so through searches on particular topics. Once on the site, visitors are spending considerable time. The national average amount of time spent on a website visit is about a minute or 5 minutes for content heavy sites. The length of time on the site and the increasing number of page views suggests that those who do visit the site are finding content that interest them.

Because such a low proportion of visitors enter through the home page and the directory shows these pages are much less useful and need redesign.

The entire site is, of course, crammed with data and documents which is good for those approaching www.rainbowhistory.org from search engines but reflects poorly on the utility of the site's internal organization. The website is now nine years old and needs a thorough review and reorganization.

ON TO YEAR TEN

As Rainbow History moves into its tenth year of service to the community, the Board is actively considering new directions and funding sources for RHP and looks forward to celebrating the tenth anniversary later in 2010.