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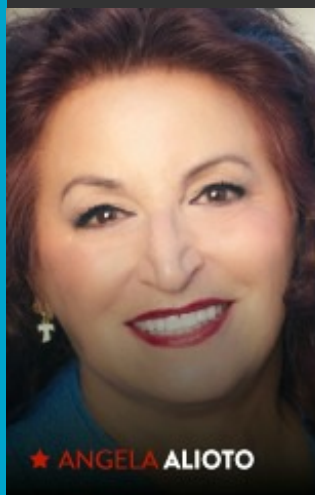
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April 2018

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New Survey Reveals San Francisco Mayoral Candidates' Views on LGBTQ Heritage & Culture

by Gerard Koskovich

The tech and real-estate booms San Francisco has experienced in the current decade are creating extraordinary challenges for LGBTQ historic

sites, legacy businesses and cultural nonprofits. As a result, queer heritage is a growing issue in local debates around public policy.

With a special election for San Francisco mayor set for June 2018, the GLBT Historical Society sent a survey on this vital subject to all the campaigns. The declared candidates are Angela Alioto, Michelle Bravo, London Breed, Richie Greenberg, Jane Kim, Mark Leno, Amy Farah Weiss and Ellen Zhou. All eight [responded to the questions](#).

"The preservation of our history, the strength of our living heritage and the very survival of our city's dynamic LGBTQ community are inextricably linked," notes Terry Beswick, executive director of the GLBT Historical Society. "All of those crucial elements of well-being for queer people are at risk in San Francisco. That's why we're exceptionally pleased that the candidates for mayor responded to our survey."

Posing the Questions

The survey distributed to the candidates' campaigns posed the following questions about policy issues related to LGBTQ heritage:

- What have you done to ensure that our diverse LGBTQ history and culture are preserved in San Francisco, and why does this matter to you personally?
- As mayor, what will you do to help prevent the loss of LGBTQ culture in San Francisco? Do you support the creation of cultural districts in the Castro, the Tenderloin and SoMa to preserve the history and culture of gender and sexual minorities?
- Do you support the GLBT Historical Society's initiative to create a full-scale museum, archives and research center in San Francisco dedicated to LGBTQ history and culture? Why do you think such an institution is or is not important? As mayor, what will you do to help make it a reality?

The responses show that some of the candidates are more conversant than others with regard to issues of LGBTQ heritage and culture. A few remark on the connections between economic displacement, gentrification and losses to LGBTQ culture in San Francisco, while others appear not to make this connection and one states that such losses are not taking place.

Abstract Support vs. Concrete Actions

All the candidates support the general idea of cultural heritage districts, though only some say they will champion districts designed to sustain LGBTQ heritage. All but one of the candidates likewise approve of the GLBT Historical Society's proposal to establish a New Museum of LGBTQ History and Culture. At the same time, only a few indicate concrete

actions they will take to help make this project a reality.

"Most of the candidates offer some level of support, but the question is what priority they would assign to these issues," Beswick emphasizes. "Half-hearted acknowledgment or 'some of my friends are gay' attitudes will not halt displacement of LGBTQ heritage and culture. And for San Francisco to create a home for the first world-class queer museum, we'll need a mayor who's fully committed."

As a 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit, the GLBT Historical Society does not endorse candidates for elected office. The society conducted the survey to determine the positions of the candidates, to assist San Francisco voters in ranking their choices at the ballot box, and to advance the development of public policies designed to sustain LGBTQ heritage.

To read the eight mayoral candidates' full responses to the survey, visit the [website of the GLBT Historical Society](#).

Gerard Koskovich is communications director of the GLBT Historical Society.

From the Staff

Archives & Museum: Two Places, One Mission



by Ramon Silvestre

Traditionally, archives collect personal papers and organizational records for use by researchers, while museums collect art and artifacts for preservation and display in exhibitions aimed at the general public. At the GLBT Historical Society, we've queered those boundaries ever since our founding more than three decades ago.

Faced with a dominant culture that had long ignored the LGBTQ past or actively worked to erase it, the organizers of the Historical Society did not have the luxury of placing this document in an archives and that artifact in a museum. No mainstream institutions of either kind were interested in queer history.

Through our first two decades, we happened to acquire more archives than objects -- and we had the resources only to hire archivists to manage the materials. Our Art and Artifacts Collection also grew to include many treasures, but it wasn't well catalogued and wasn't readily accessible to researchers.

All that changed when we opened the GLBT History Museum in 2011. With more donations of objects coming in and with our own curators and curators from other museums eager to use the collection, the time had come to put these materials on an equal footing with the archives.

Cataloguing Our Art & Artifacts

As the first project registrar for the Art and Artifacts Collection, I have worked with a team of trained volunteers to fully document our holdings. We are looking forward to making a searchable catalog with detailed records of our collection available online.

Our museum and archives are in two different locations, but they serve a single mission: promoting knowledge of the LGBTQ past. We're committed to bringing their activities together using innovative approaches. Highlighting our Art and Artifacts Collection is one of the key ways we will be doing this, with the new digital environment offering the prospect of increased public accessibility.

Our objective is to close the gap between formal research and informal education by making our full holdings of fine and graphic arts, photographs, memorabilia, costumes and other objects accessible to the widest public. You will be able to visit the museum to see actual objects selected for exhibition -- or visit the online catalog from anywhere in the world to explore our holdings in all their complexity.

You can help the GLBT Historical Society make the Art and Artifacts Collection more accessible by supporting "Illuminating Artifacts: Preserving Our Material Culture," the campaign marking our 33rd anniversary. To learn more and make a donation, [click here](#).

Ramon Silvestre is the collections and exhibitions registrar for the GLBT Historical Society.

In the Archives

Documenting a Queer Johnny Appleseed



by Bob Ostertag

Hank Wilson was a sort of Johnny Appleseed of queer San Francisco. Everywhere he went, new organizations sprouted. Many of these organizations form the institutional backbone of today's LGBTQ community in the city and beyond.

Hank was an extremely modest man who

avoided the spotlight, so his story is largely unknown. That's why I'm working with cinematographer Leo Herrera and the GLBT Historical Society to make a documentary about him, "[Thanks to Hank.](#)" Fortunately, the Historical Society's archives hold not only [Hank's personal papers](#), but also organizational records, photos, ephemera, and audio and video recordings reflecting his work and the times in which he lived.

To give you an idea of Hank's impact, here are just a couple of the gay groups he helped found: the San Francisco Gay Democratic Club (1976), now the Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club, and the Gay Film Festival (1977), now the Frameline International LGBTQ Film Festival. Hank also helped organize some of the first community responses to the AIDS crisis, including the AIDS Memorial Candlelight March (1983), now the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial, sponsored by 1,200 organizations in 115 countries.

Incredibly, Hank did all this in his free time. His main work was managing the Ambassador Hotel, a 150-room residency hotel in the Tenderloin where he pioneered a harm-reduction approach to social services. During the worst years of the AIDS epidemic, thousands of people with HIV found housing and hospice care at the Ambassador.

The GLBT Historical Society archives are providing crucial materials for telling these stories -- and what's more, the society is serving as fiscal sponsor for the documentary. For information on how to support the project, visit the "[Thanks to Hank](#)" [page on my website](#).

Bob Ostertag is a composer, writer and filmmaker who lives in San Francisco. He holds the post of professor of cinema and digital media at the University of California, Davis.

Upcoming Events

Illustrated Talk

Was Phoebe Hearst California's First "Fag Hag"?



Wednesday, April 4

7:00-9:00 PM

The GLBT History Museum

4127 18th St., San Francisco

\$5.00 | [Buy Tickets](#) | [Free for Members](#)

Although Phoebe Apperson Hearst (1842-1919) had a successful son in California newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst, he was a tough businessman like his

father. Pheobe found a tender, artistic soul in painter Orrin Peck (1860-1921), who is believed to have been gay. They were so close that Peck referred to her as "my other mum." Drawing on their correspondence and on Peck's papers, art historian Ladislav Zikmund-Lender goes to the heart of the matter in this illustrated talk: Was Phoebe Hearst, a progressive 19th-century woman, aware of Peck's sexuality -- and if so, what role did that knowledge play in her friendship with Peck? Or as the scholar rephrases the question in old-school gay slang, "Was Phoebe Hearst California's first fag hag?" Purchase advance tickets [here](#).

Book Launch

Discriminating Sex: Making the American "Oriental"



Thursday, April 12

7:00-9:00 PM

The GLBT History Museum

4127 18th St., San Francisco

\$5.00 | [Buy Tickets](#) | [Free for Members](#)

Historian Amy Sueyoshi will discuss her new book, *Discriminating Sex: White Leisure and the Making of the American "Oriental"*

(University of Illinois Press, 2018). While San

Francisco at the turn of the 20th century perturbed religious conservatives who saw it as a "moral cesspool," it also developed a reputation as a city that tolerated a wide range of gender and sexual expression and that cultivated easy race relations. Yet all was not love and joy in this "wide-open town." *Discriminating Sex* reveals how increasing gender and sexual freedoms for white people directly created the archetypal "Oriental" -- geisha, prostitute, homosexual and martyr all rolled into one. Purchase advance tickets [here](#).

Community Forum

Fighting Back: Queers & the Class Divide



Wednesday, April 25

7:00-9:00 PM

The GLBT History Museum

4127 18th St., San Francisco

[Free Admission](#) | \$5.00 Donation Welcome

The latest in our monthly "Fighting Back" series exploring contemporary queer issues in a historical context, "Queers and the Class

Divide" will offer a conversation about intersections between LGBTQ politics and growing class divisions locally and nationally. A panel of historians, veteran organizers and younger activists will discuss economic

inequality in the Bay Area and the United States in the past and present, the impact of wealth and poverty on LGBTQ community and politics, and how this history can help inform today's resistance movements. Reserve your free ticket [here](#).

Fairy soap! Harvey's eyeglasses! S&M Teddy Bears!
Want to know more? So do we!



**Help us catalog, preserve and protect
our arts and artifacts collection!**
glbthistory.org/artifacts

Visit Us

EXHIBITIONS & PROGRAMS

The GLBT History Museum
4127 18th St.
San Francisco, CA 94114
(415) 621-1107
www.glbthistory.org/museum

Monday & Wednesday - Saturday: 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Tuesday: Closed
Sunday: Noon - 5:00 PM

ARCHIVES & RESEARCH CENTER

The GLBT Historical Society

989 Market St., Lower Level

San Francisco, CA 94103-1708

(415) 777-5455

www.glbthistory.org/archives

Call to schedule a research appointment.

CREDITS. Feature: Graphic by PEPE Creatives; photos courtesy of the candidates' campaigns. From the Staff: Ramon Silvestre; photo by Ellis Martin. In the Archives: Hank Wilson marching in the San Francisco International Lesbian & Gay Freedom Day Parade (1985); detail of a photograph by an unidentified photographer; Hank Wilson Papers, GLBT Historical Society. Phoebe Hearst: Photo courtesy Doe Library, University of California, Berkeley. Discriminating Sex: Book cover illustration courtesy University of Illinois Press. Fighting Back: Affordable housing contingent in the San Francisco Pride Parade (2015); photo by Gerard Koskovich.

Editor: Gerard Koskovich **Design:** PEPE Creatives

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