

Quatrefolio

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Meet Mitch Marks, Quatrefoil board president

If you are an all-volunteer LGBTQ lending library with a small budget in search of a new home, you would want to have Mitch Marks on your side.

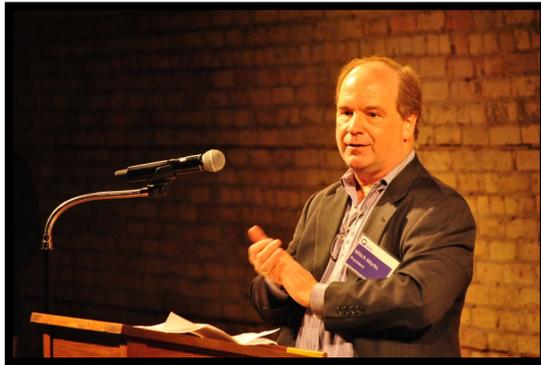
Marks, Quatrefoil's board president, was a key player during the lengthy process of moving Quatrefoil from its longtime home in St. Paul to its new location on E. Lake Street in Minneapolis.

"Our old space was way too small," Marks said. "But we also knew we could not afford an increase in rent." When the idea arose of space on the ground floor of a new housing project on Lake St. and 13th Av. S., Marks and other board members were interested.

Then came the housing collapse during the 2008 financial meltdown, which delayed construction of the building. "We spent quite a bit of time trying to hammer out a lease that would work for us," Marks said.

Long story short: "We got 50 percent more space and only increased our rent by \$200 a month." With a 7-year lease and an option to extend, Quat-

refoil moved to Minneapolis four years ago.



"It's like we went out of the closets and into the streets," Marks said with a laugh. "The old location was in the basement of an office building. It was cramped and dark and hard to find."

With its adjoining meeting room, "the library is much more of a community location now," Marks said. He hopes to see Quatrefoil do a better job in the future of connecting people to the library.

Marks has been a volunteer leader at Q library for nine years, and is coming to the end of his second term as board president, a job he estimates requires 10 to 15 hours per week. In addition to the move, his proudest accomplishment is helping raise money for the library's endowment fund, putting the library on firmer financial footing. "We are in much better financial shape than we

were," he said.

Marks and his three siblings grew up in Glasgow, Montana. His dad farmed and also had an appliance store in the town of 3,000. After graduating from Montana State in Billings with a degree in business administration, he took a job at First Bank (now U.S. Bank). He still works there, in the company's risk management and compliance division.

After living in Rapid City and Sioux Falls, Marks moved to Minneapolis in 1987. He lives with Mel Holm, his partner of 28 years. They got married in 2013, soon after Minnesota made gay marriage legal. He joined the Quatrefoil board, he said, "because I wanted to volunteer at a LGBTQ organization that could make a difference in the community." Even as he leaves as board president, Marks intends to remain involved in the library.

While at some future point the library's endowment might grow to the point where it could have paid staff, that is not in the cards anytime soon, Marks said. In the meantime, Marks estimates that the time donated by more than 80 volunteers is worth \$250,000 per year. "Our volunteers are the lifeblood of the library," Marks said. "Without them we are nothing."

Quatrefolio

Zine scene coming to Q. Comics, too.

Outrageous. Outspoken. Out there.

Underground. For me, gay zines mean hand-distributed, small DIY magazines whose reputation grew by word of mouth and fearlessness of content.

In the Twin Cities in the late 1980s and early 1990s there was

“Bundle of Sticks” and “Holy Titclamps,” full of dirty drawings, screeds about sex, politics, media, punk rock and art.

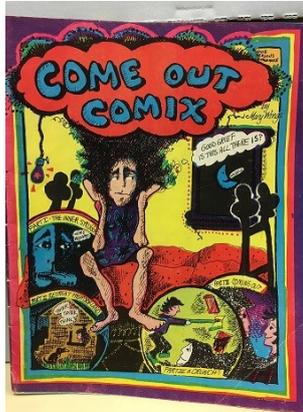
The zine scene remains active today, says Quatrefoil board member Jeff Rathermel, who is executive director of Minnesota Center for Book Arts. He witnessed the scene’s vitality last year via Twin Cities Zine Fest, which had spoken-word and art events at MCBA and at Quatrefoil.

“The reading at Quatrefoil drew a big crowd,” Rathermel said.

“We ran out of room. All of the artists were LGBT. We had a digital projector and laptops for the visuals.

And all the presenters were LGBTQ.”

Rathermel and others on the Quatrefoil acquisitions committee hatched a plan to



make a permanent space at the library for zines, comics and graphic novels. Partnering with Boneshaker Books, and with new board member Anna Bongiovanni,

strengthened Q’s ties to zines and their creators.

“We were looking for a format that is still in the realm of physical writing and art, and one that would separate us from a public library, and these make a vibrant niche,” Rathermel said.

Rathermel personally pledged a one-time grant to establish a fund for acquiring zines, comics and graphic novels, and also is making a monthly commitment to keep it going. The plan is to clear a space in

the front of the library to display new zines and older ones along with comics and graphic novels.

The zines and comics will be for in-library browsing, and will not circulate. The library already has a sizable collection of comics and some older zines, but the display will combine old and new. Members may check out graphic novels in the library’s collection.



Look for the new section at the library in October, likely to be introduced by a live event.

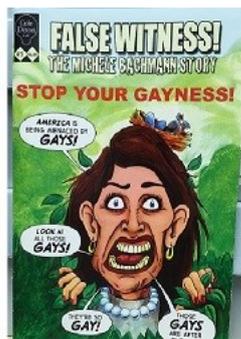
Quatrefoil is happy to accept

donated zines, current and vintage, to augment its collection.

“One of the things I really like about these is that they are easily accessible,” Rathermel said. “There is a strong community with those who write and produce these zines.

They are a democratic multiple, a way to get your story out there, quickly and easily without that middle person.”

--Claude Peck, Quatrefoil board member



Quatrefolio

Survey says: Members view Q

In summer 2016, volunteer Sarah Trachtenberg conducted a survey of current and past Quatrefolio members and volunteers. The 2016 membership survey was designed to investigate why people do or do not become and remain members, and what they would like to see from the space. Most of the 136 respondents were current members and closely connected to Quatrefolio Library; many have even volunteered at the Library. Most respondents said they became members either to access the resources or because they believed the library was an important community space and wanted to support it.

The majority of respondents regarded that their expectations were being met in all categories, and almost all respondents had incredibly positive reactions to the new space. Many commented that the community room that adjoins the library was an asset, the new space was “inviting,” “friendly,” “clean,” and

“comfortable.” In addition, most found the new Minneapolis location more accessible and convenient than the previous location in St. Paul’s Midway.

Respondents had primarily positive reactions to the Library’s collections and services, noting that they particularly appreciated the book sales and helpful volunteer staff. The only theme that emerged with regards to collections was a desire for newer or more current materials, but respondents acknowledged that this is difficult since the collections are partially donation-based. The Library’s acquisitions budget goes entirely towards new titles in an attempt to address this need.

Overall, although respondents mirrored demographically what we already knew about Library members (primarily older white men), they clearly emphasized outreach to and programming

for youth (as well as women, trans folks, and people of color). They felt positively about the resource Quatrefolio provides for the community and especially about the new location, and were eager to see more programming and expanded hours. The most common programming requests were film screenings, programming addressing activism and community organizing, and author readings. Both Library programming and Library hours have been expanded since summer 2016 in response to survey data, and we are excited to see the Library grow with the community as these changes are implemented.

--Sarah Trachtenberg, recent Carleton College graduate

Expanded Summer Hours

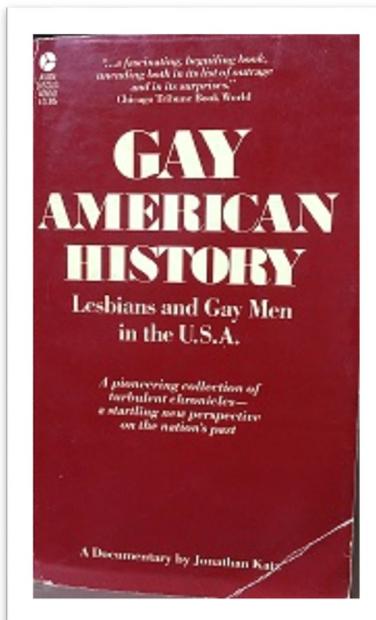
We are open on Wednesdays during the summer from 1-5pm. This will go through Sept 13th. Also new are expanded hours on Sunday, when the library is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., same as Saturday.

Quatrefolio

Review: History in aisle 3

“Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.” by Jonathan Ned Katz.

I discovered this book in the 1980s while in college and was completely fascinated by it. There are dozens of queer history books available now, but “Gay American History,” originally published in 1976, was a trailblazer. The earliest time period covered is in section four, “Native Americans/Gay Americans: 1528-1976.” What really got me was the first real quote at the start of the book (“Trouble: 1566-1966”) from a minister’s diary from 1629: “This day we examined 5 beastly Sodomitically boys, which confessed wickedness not to be named. The fact was so foul we reserved them to be punished by the governor when we came to New England, who afterward sent them back to the company to be punished in old England, as the crime deserved.”



I realize this is not the kind of quote that instills happiness in one, but for the first time I could see my history in a tangible way. (Please remember that this was before the Internets, and such information was scarce.)

Luckily, section six -- “Love: 1779-1932” -- has many much more positive quotes from people, letting us know that it was not all gloom and doom.

The other sections in the book are “Passing Women: 1782-1920,” and “Resistance: 1859-1972.” This is a big book and there is a lot of information, but it is written for a general audience. Next time you want an all-encompassing history, this comes highly recommended.

--Brian Dahlvig, Quatrefoil Board member

(“Gay American History” is available for checkout at Quatrefoil)

Programming

Programming is a high priority at the Library. We are always striving to find new programs/events to have at the library. These can include book clubs, panel discussions, informational workshops, readings, movies, teen programming and more. If you have an idea you think might be a good fit for us, please contact our programming chair, Howard Maki at 612-275-1946 or send him an email at hmaki23@gmail.com New ideas on items we can use are always welcomed!!

Quatrefolio

Meet a new board member

I was elected to the Quatrefoil Board of Directors in January. I've been a library member and supporter of Quatrefoil for more than 25 years. I'm a lifelong resident of Minnesota and I teach in the Department of Communication Studies at Gustavus Adolphus College, where I also coach the speech and debate team. I have served on several nonprofit boards, including OutFront Minnesota, and I am the Chief Operating Officer of Pi Kappa Delta -- a national intercollegiate speech and debate association. It was through speech and debate that I developed a keen appreciation for libraries, and I'm so proud to live in an area that has a fantastic community resource like the Quatrefoil Library. Did you know that Quatrefoil is one of the largest, oldest and most significant GLBT lending libraries in the country? We have something that few other metropolitan areas -- including cities much larger than Minneapolis/St. Paul -- can boast. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Board to maintain the strength and vitality of Quatrefoil for its next 30 years and beyond.

--Phillip Voight, Quatrefoil board member

Going to school at Quatrefoil

Quatrefoil library is a wonderful resource for high school or college students, teachers, Gay/Straight Alliance (GSA) advisers or members. The library houses a host of valuable resources -- on topics ranging from LGBTQ history and politics, literature, religion, culture, spirituality, and sexual health. It also contains just about anything you would need to know about the local community, and even if our volunteers don't know the answer to your question, they often can guide you to the right place to search. Particularly for high school students, the library's collection of coming out resources can provide a helpful basis for starting a difficult conversation with family or friends.

Quatrefoil's archive of local Gay and Lesbian newspapers and periodicals -- some of

which have long since disappeared -- is a rich source of history and context for students, teachers or scholars interested in local LGBTQ history. The library also contains a variety of rare books and periodicals -- many of which pre-date the rise of the modern gay rights movement.

In addition to the book and periodical collections, the library houses an enormous repository of LGBTQ-themed DVDs, both fiction and documentary, that are available for circulation. For several years, I served as the faculty adviser to the Gustavus LGBTQ student group and I found "movie night" events to be a very popular organizing tool.

One thing many people do not realize is that the library hosts or facilitates a busy schedule of

programming and special events each month. These events are open to members of the general public, and many would be of particular interest to GSA members or faculty advisers. Whether it be a game night, a community meeting, a book club, or an author event -- chances are the library has something scheduled that suits your needs.

The library is also a great place to schedule a field trip or group meeting. A Quatrefoil volunteer would be delighted to meet with you and guide your group's visit to the library. Although you must be a member to check out materials from the library, anyone can browse the collection during normal business hours. Discounted library memberships are available for students.

--Phillip Voight, Quatrefoil board member

Quatrefoil

Donate your time to the library

Without volunteers, Quatrefoil would not exist. That's because the library has no paid employees, and relies on more than 80 volunteers to staff the library during its regular hours on weeknights and weekends. Please consider volunteering at the Quatrefoil Library. There are many opportunities available, including commitments of as little as a few hours per month. The library's biggest ongoing need is for volunteers to staff the Front Desk. These are the front line folks for the library, the first people you see when you come into the library.

There are many other opportunities available too, such as serving on a committee, helping with a book sale or special project or by becoming a member of the board of directors. We need lots of volunteers for our big Annual Book Sale at the Twin Cities Pride Festival in June.

Volunteering is a good way to help others, make a difference, develop new skills, connect with the community, meet new people and make new friends. Stop in to fill out an application or go to our website at www.qlibrary.org to fill out an application online and then someone will get back to you with opportunities available!

--Howard Maki, Quatrefoil board member

Support Q while you shop

There are two great ways to support the Quatrefoil Library while shopping on Amazon.com.

The library has maintained an online store on Amazon for several years. This site is an extension of the library's used book sales that occur several times a year. The library's site on Amazon features popular, rare and hard-to-find LGBTQ titles that you might not normally find for sale on other sites. Visit <http://www.amazon.com/shops/metprobooks> and start shopping now.

Amazon Smile is an initiative where Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. This service is the exact Amazon you already know with the same products, prices and service. To learn more visit <https://smile.amazon.com>. After you sign-up, simply search for Quatrefoil Library as the charitable organization of your choice, it is that easy.

Whether you are buying books on the library's page on Amazon.com or just making other purchases on Amazon Smile, you are providing additional proceeds that support Quatrefoil.
--Scott Breyfogle, former Quatrefoil board chair

Quatrefolio

Review: A vivid life of Elizabeth Bishop

Note: *The most fascinating new LGBTQ-themed book on my 2017 list so far was a biography of celebrated poet Elizabeth Bishop by Pulitzer-winning writer Megan Marshall. Marshall focuses more than before on Bishop's lesbianism and how it influenced her poetry. Below is my review of the book, which first appeared in Star Tribune. Check the book out at Quatrefolio, where you also can find Bishop's "Complete Poems" and a DVD of "Reaching for the Moon," the excellent feature film based on Bishop's life in Brazil with her longtime partner.*

Maybe it's fitting that a new biography of the brilliant and troubled poet Elizabeth Bishop is something of a beautiful mess.

From a childhood marked by her father's death and her mentally ill mother being trucked off to a sanitarium when Elizabeth was just 5 years old, Bishop became one of the 20th century's most influential and admired poets.

During an adulthood marked by chronic, untreated alcoholism and the eventual suicide of her mother and her longtime partner, Bishop found love and willed into life a scant 100 published poems that won her a Pulitzer Prize and a National

Book Award.

Megan Marshall, herself a Pulitzer winner (for her biography of Margaret Fuller), makes use of a trove of Bishop letters discovered in a Vassar College archive in 2009 to flesh out Bishop's psychotherapy and her lesser-known love affairs with much younger women.

Marshall employs a keen eye for nuance, drama and psychology to write about a life both depressing and in Technicolor. There are vivid scenes of a childhood in Nova Scotia, a place Bishop remembered years later in such oft-anthologized poems as "The Moose" and "At the Fishhouses."



Megan Marshall--Photo by Gail Samuelson

Florida, poems arising from post-Vassar years spent in Key West with, among other girlfriends, the stationery heir Louise Crane, Bishop releases her inner Hemingway, most memorably in "The Fish."

I looked into his eyes which were far larger than mine but shallower, and yellowed, the irises backed and packed with tarnished tinfoil seen through the lenses of old scratched isinglass. They shifted a little, but not to return my stare.

For more than 15 years starting in the early 1950s, Bishop lived in Brazil with her lover, the wealthy and politically connected Lota de Macedo Soares. Lota built Bishop a writing studio alongside the fabulous modern house she designed in the mountainous countryside near Rio de Janeiro.

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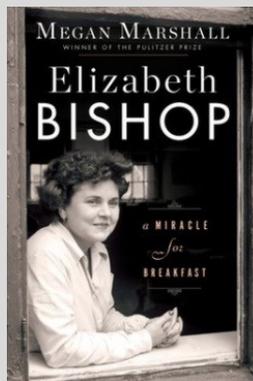
Bishop was inspired by both love and Brazil, and she traveled extensively along remote stretches of the Amazon. "Exile seems to work for me," she wrote in one of hundreds of letters from Brazil. Despite her heavy drinking, her career as a poet flowered. In 1956, Bishop won a Pulitzer for her second volume of poems.

Fueled in part by her affairs, Bishop's relationship with Lota deteriorated. Lota was hospitalized for mental illness. On a visit to see Bishop in New York, Lota took her own life with an overdose. Marshall vividly traces Bishop's struggles: with grief, shyness, booze, broken romances and long periods when she produced no poetry at all. But her skill as biographer tends to break down when it comes to exegeses of individual poems; deeper literary insight can be found in Colm Toibin's excellent 2015 book, "On Elizabeth Bishop."

Bishop's 30-year friendship with poet Robert Lowell, conducted mostly via letters,

was mutually beneficial, as they praised and critiqued each other's work. Lowell brought Bishop to Harvard to teach during the 1970s.

Marshall ends the book abruptly, with very little material after Bishop's death in 1979, a regrettable omission, since Bishop's reputation has grown since then, with publication of her letters, biographies and works of criticism. A tempest in a literary teapot, the controversial posthumous publication of a book of fragments and unpublished poems goes unmentioned, as does a 2013 feature film about her years with Lota, "Reaching for the Moon."



"Elizabeth Bishop: A Miracle for Breakfast," by Megan Marshall

The author's decision to include a half-dozen short, first-person chapters recounting a creative writing course she took from Bishop at Harvard in 1976 fizzles. Besides stopping the flow, these self-absorbed autobiographical digressions are antithetical to Bishop's own healthy disregard for the confessional poetry of such peers as Lowell, Plath, Sexton and Berryman. A reader who skips these chapters is better able to savor a fascinating and courageous life, uninterrupted.

--Claude Peck, Quatrefoil board member

Quatrefoil Library

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For more information about the library visit: www.qlibrary.org

