
Finding aid of the Janus Society Records

Collection number: Coll2008-027

ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives
Los Angeles, California

Processed by:

Loni Shibuyama

Date Completed:

June 5, 2008

Encoded by:

Loni Shibuyama

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Janus Society records

Dates: 1961-1969

Collection number: 2008-027

Creator: Janus Society of America

Collection Size: 1 archive carton.0.1 linear foot.

Repository: ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

Los Angeles, California 90007

Abstract: Meeting minutes, bylaws and constitution, correspondence, notes, printed ephemera and other records from the Janus Society of America (also known as Janus Society of Delaware Valley), a Philadelphia-based homophile organization founded in 1962. The Janus Society was an influential group of gay men, lesbians and bisexuals, which was considered more politically aggressive than other homophile groups of that era. The Janus Society was active in the years 1962 to 1969, and its regular activities included public lectures, community services, protests and demonstrations, and publishing its monthly magazine, *Drum*.

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access

The collection is open to researchers. There are no access restrictions.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

Janus Society Records, Coll2008-027, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Acquisition Information

Donor and date of acquisition unknown.

Processing Information

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Administrative History

In 1961, a group of Philadelphia-based gay and lesbian activists began meeting on a regular basis with the intention of forming a local chapter of the national homophile organization, the Mattachine Society. After not receiving official recognition as a Mattachine Society chapter, the group renamed itself the Janus Society of Delaware Valley. Founded in 1962, the Janus Society was an influential, Philadelphia-based homophile organization that remained active until 1969. Janus featured participation and leadership by lesbians, bisexuals and gay men; published *Drum*, the most widely circulated homophile magazine of the 1960s; and developed political positions that were among the most militant, radical and sexually liberated in the LGBT movement of its era. Recognizing its growing national visibility, the organization again renamed itself the Janus Society of America in 1964. Mae Polakoff served as the president of Janus in its first two years. Her successor was Clark P. Polak, who started *Drum* and who was partially responsible for taking the Janus Society in a more politically aggressive and outspoken direction. Polak's personality and outside pornography businesses led to increased scrutiny of law enforcement on Polak and other Janus Society members. In 1969, Polak was arrested on federal obscenity charges and subsequently relocated to California. Following his arrest, the Janus Society ended its operations in 1969.

Source: Stein, Marc. "Janus Society." *Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History in America*. 3 vols. Marc Stein, Ed. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons: Thomson Gale, 2003. 93-95.

Scope and Content of Collection

This collection comprises the Janus Society's constitution and bylaws, minutes from board of directors and business meetings, correspondence, notes and printed ephemera. The materials are dated from the 1960s, during and before the Janus Society's official years of operation. Correspondence with Clark P. Polak is also included in this collection.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Drum: sex in perspective

Gay and lesbian rights

Gay rights

Gays--Services for

Gays--History--Pennsylvania

Gays--United States

Homosexuality--History--Pennsylvania

Homosexuality--United States

Janus Society

Janus Society of America

Janus Society of Delaware Valley

Lesbian rights

Lesbians--Services for

Related Material

Clark P. Polak Papers, Coll2008-028, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Box 1 : 1 **Constitution and Bylaws Undated**

Box 1 : 2 **Correspondence 1966 - 1969**

- Box 1 : 3 - 4 **Form Letters 1965 - 1969**
- Box 1 : 3 ***Drum* Magazine Subscribers 1966 - 1969**
- Box 1 : 4 **General Membership circa 1965 - 1969**

- Box 1 : 5 **Meeting Minutes 1961 - 1964**

- Box 1 : 6 **Memo on the Janus Society Board Meeting 1964**

- Box 1 : 7 **Pamphlet Undated**

- Box 1 : 8 **The Jenkins Affair Undated**