

## Madison LGBTQ Archives Project: Preserving Our Past

The U.W.-Madison Archives is collecting and providing access to items that help tell the story of LGBTQ people in Dane County. We are seeking donations of organizational papers, photographs, diaries, posters, flyers and buttons that reflect LGBTQ life in Madison. And, we are looking for film, audio and video recordings about local LGBTQ events, people and issues. Supported with funding from the New Harvest Foundation, Inc. and the George L. Mosse Program in History, this collection will form a permanent reflection of our community.

You can make a donation by contacting us at [uwarchiv@library.wisc.edu](mailto:uwarchiv@library.wisc.edu) or 608-262-5629. We are interested sharing glimpses of items donated with the community. Here we offer items from a recent donation from the collection of Judy Greenspan, founder of Gay Sisters.

Gay Sisters was the first public lesbian organization in Wisconsin, formed in Madison in March of 1971. Early Gay Sisters meetings were largely social events—parties, dances and consciousness-raising sessions which provided personal support and growth for group members. Efforts soon turned to publishing a monthly lesbian journal called the *Scarlet Letter*. Gay Sisters changed its name to Madison Lesbians in 1972. Women from Madison Lesbians went on to participate in the creation of some of the most important supports of the local lesbian and feminist communities of the 1970s including the Lesbian Switchboard, the Madison feminist paper *Whole Woman*, A Room of One's Own Feminist Bookstore, Fallen Woman Productions independent women's music production company, Lysistrata Women's Restaurant and Bar, Woman's Transit Authority, and more. The following images—most never-before published—document an important early Madison queer liberation group.



Madison Lesbians enjoy a summer picnic in 1972.

Madison Lesbians at the International Women's Day March, 1973.

Gay Sisters founders pose for *The Daily Cardinal*, 1971.

The *Scarlet Letter* begins publishing 1971 and is one of the earliest queer-themed publications in the state.

