



JANUS SOCIETY RECORDS

Coll2008-027

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Descriptive Summary

Title

Janus Society Records

Creator

Janus Society of America

Extent

Number of containers: 1 archive carton
Linear feet: 0.1 linear foot

Date

1961-1969

Repository

ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California

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*.

Administrative Information

Access

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

Publication Rights

Researchers wishing to publish material must obtain permission in writing from ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives as the physical owner of the material. Note that permission to publish does not constitute copyright clearance. ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives can grant copyright clearance only for those materials for which we hold copyright. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain copyright clearance for all other materials from the copyright holder(s).

Preferred Citation

Box #, folder #, Janus Society Records, Coll2008-027, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California

Indexing Terms

This collection is indexed under the following terms:

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 Materials

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

Acquisitions Information

Donor and date of acquisition unknown.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Loni Shibuyama, June 5, 2008.

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*. Marc Stein, Ed. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons: Thomson Gale, 2003.

Scope and Content

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.

Container List

Box Folder

1	1	Constitution and Bylaws. Undated
1	2	Correspondence. 1966 - 1969
1	3 - 4	Form Letters. 1965 - 1969
1	3	<i>Drum</i> Subscribers. 1966 - 1969
1	4	General Membership. circa 1965 - 1969
1	5	Meeting Minutes. 1961 - 1964
1	6	Memo on the Janus Society Board Meeting. 1964
1	7	Pamphlet. Undated
1	8	The Jenkins Affair. Undated