

**Book Clubs**

**Flock to**

**Q Library**

# quatrefolio

**Writers Remember the AIDS Generation**

**Meet Desk Volunteers, Including a 29-Year (!) Veteran**

**Forgiving Overdue Fines • Win a Little (Queer) Free Library**

**Uniting Queer Communities to Remember**

# Reading Together

By Claude Peck, Q board member

Quatrefoil hosts monthly meetings of half a dozen book clubs. They bring together serious readers and longtime friends.

Fresh on the release of a new book, an author visits a bookstore. Folding chairs are lined up, a wobbly lectern comes out of storage. Authors at these events often face audience members who are buying the book that night and have not yet read it.

More and more authors, seeking a chance for deeper interaction, are saying yes to book club appearances.

Garth Greenwell, author of the much-praised 2016 novel “What Belongs To You,” talked with the Prime Timers Book Club (one of a half-dozen book clubs at Quatrefoil) via Skype on a laptop computer.

“Greenwell told us that it was meaningful for him to speak with a group that already had read his book,” said William Rehnstrand, a Prime Timer member since 2011. “We could

talk about it in more depth.”

Prime Timers plans a future Skype meet-up with veteran novelist and non-fiction writer Edmund White to discuss his memoir “The Unpunished Vice,” Rehnstrand said.

The long-running Twin Cities Lesbian Fiction book club, which meets monthly (third Wednesdays) at Quatrefoil, also hosts author meetups, either digitally or in the flesh. “Now that it is possible to Skype and Facetime with authors, turnout frequently increases when the author is available to speak with us in person,” said Ruta Skujins, a founder of the club, which has met monthly since 2008. “We recently spoke with Georgia Beers and Rachel Spangler and had a great turnout for them.”

Dale Carpenter, whose 2012 book “Flagrant Conduct” reported on Lawrence v. Texas, the landmark Supreme Court decision of



Clockwise from top left: Ruta Skujins, Jeanette Dennis, Tamara Wilson, Yvonne Schneider, Lorraine Shambach

2003 that invalidated America’s sodomy laws, joined the Prime Timers in person a few years ago. The former University of Minnesota law professor drew about 50 people to a regular club meeting.

“He is an extraordinary lecturer, and gave a wonderful presentation and is just superb with questions,” Rehnstrand said. When Ellen Krug appeared in person at a Prime Timers meeting, she was “very articulate, with a very interesting story to tell,” Rehnstrand said. Krug’s book “Getting to Ellen” tells the story of her transition from male to female.

Prime Timers Book Club has been around since the early 1990s in the Twin Cities. It began meeting at Quatrefoil several years ago.

It has 59 people on its mailing list and gets 20 to 30 people on average at each meeting.

Turnout varies at the Lesbian Fiction club. “If it is the week before Christmas, we might just have four or five people show up,”

Skujins said. “Other times, we can have 15 to 20 women attend.” New members are always welcome and encouraged, she added, As its name indicates, that club focuses exclusively on fiction, including literary, romance, mys-

“It is very important to have a club where we can freely discuss books about lives like ours, and to sit down with other women and just talk.” -RUTA SKUJINS

tery, sci-fi and fantasy.

Prime Timers, aimed at gay men over 50, alternates monthly between fiction and non-fiction. It is one of a half-dozen active clubs meeting at the library. Most clubs meet monthly, and try to select titles ahead of time to allow members to get and read the book.

Rehnstrand, a retired high school history teacher, looks forward to the club's monthly meetings, "even if it means racing to finish the book."

The group "is a great opportunity to read and discuss gay literature and to meet people who like books as much as I do," he said. One downside, he added, is that he may not have time to read books by non-gay writers.

"The fact that so many of us have now known each other for 10 years or so makes it a very personal experience," Skujins said by email. "When new members attend, everyone is always curious about them as individuals, as well. So in some ways we are also a social group."

The group's core mission is the same now as when it was started more than 10 years ago by Skujins (she bought Amazon bookstore in 2008) and then store manager Jessie Chandler. "We wanted to introduce women to modern lesbian fiction," Skujins said. "Many women had read the genre back in the '60s and '70s, when the books were difficult to find, and a lot of the books were poorly edited. We wanted to showcase the great strides that had taken place as lesbian-owned presses such as Bold Strokes Books, Bella Books, Regal Crest and Intaglio put out more and better books."

When Skujins closed Amazon, the club met at a coffee shop, "but it was a very noisy place without much privacy," she said. "We moved to Quatrefoil when the library moved to its current location, and it's hard now to imagine meeting anywhere else. We love the atmosphere at Quatrefoil, as well as its proximity to a bus line and free parking."

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How to  
Start a  
Book Club  
at  
Quatrefoil

**New LGBTQ book clubs are welcome to use Quatrefoil's community room for free, subject to limitations on time and space on the schedule. We urge you to commit to meeting monthly for at least year to see if a new club will catch on. Clubs must meet during regular library hours, and must designate a person to be the primary contact between the group and the library. Submit your proposal to James Bacigalupo of the library's programming committee. Contact James at [kissofthewolf@gmail.com](mailto:kissofthewolf@gmail.com).**

## Book Clubs Meeting at Quatrefoil

### NORTH COUNTRY GAYLAXIANS

Science-Fiction and Fantasy • Second Tuesday of the month • 7 p.m.

### TWIN CITIES LESBIAN FICTION BOOK CLUB

Third Wednesday of the month • 7 p.m.

### POLYAMORY BOOK CLUB

Third Thursday of the month • 7 p.m.

### PRIME TIMERS BOOK CLUB

Third Saturday of the month • 1:15 to 5:15 p.m.

### TWIN CITIES GAY MEN'S READING CLUB

Fourth Saturday of the month • Noon to 2:30 p.m.

### TRANSGENDER BOOK CLUB

Fourth Tuesday of the month • 7 p.m.

### BI+ BOOK CLUB

First Wednesday of the month • 7 p.m.

## What Prime Timers Book Club read last year:

"Beyond Paradise: The Life of Ramon Novarro" by André Soares

"Call Me By Your Name" by Andre Aciman

"Logical Family" by Armistead Maupin

"The Black Penguin" by Andrew Evans

"The Kinda Fella I Am" by Raymond Luczak

"The Pink Marine: One Boy's Journey through Boot Camp to Manhood" by Greg Cope White

"A Perfect Waiter" by Alain Claude Sulzer

"My Father and Myself" by J.R. Ackerley

"Less" by Andrew Greer

"The Evening Crowd at Kirmser's" by Ricardo J. Brown

"The Year of Ice" by Brian Malloy

"Breaking the Surface" by Greg Louganis

"The Sparsholt Affair" by Alan Hollinghurst

## What Lesbian Fiction book club members are reading next:

June: "Postcards from the Canyon," by Lisa Gitlin

July: "My Lady Lipstick" by Karin Kallmaker

August: "Bend" by Nancy Hedin

September: "In The Silences" by Rachel Gold

October: "Listen" by Kris Bryant

November: "Chain Reactions" by Lynn Ames

December: "The Goodmans" by Clare Ashton

# OUT OF

Novelist helps students write about the history and impact of AIDS and HIV.

By Claude Peck,  
Q board member

# THE FOG

**M**inneapolis writer Brian Malloy has published three novels and is at work on a sequel to his funny-sad 2002 coming-of-age novel “The Year of Ice.” He’s taught at Hamline University and the Loft, but he’s never led a writing class focused on stories of AIDS and HIV. Until now.

Malloy is leading a class at Quatrefoil called “Writing the AIDS Generation.” The fruits of his students’ labor will be issued as a chapbook, and Malloy and his students will read from their poems, stories and essays at Quatrefoil on July 10.

“I lost a roommate and several friends to AIDS,” said Malloy, who is 59. “It’s particularly important for the AIDS generation—like all survivor groups—to write our own stories, because we lived them.” Malloy, a University of Minnesota graduate, worked at Minnesota AIDS project in the late 1980s.

When Quatrefoil checked in about half-

way through the free 10-week class, Malloy said, “It’s going really well. I made it clear that it is not a therapy group. It is about creative writing centered on the first 10 years of the pandemic. Still, we are dealing with a lot of emotional content. One man said, ‘I realize it’s not a support group, but I am going to occasionally burst into tears.’ Which is absolutely fine. Robert Frost said, “No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader.”



**BRIAN MALLOY**

The dozen students are mostly older men, including some who are HIV-positive and some who survived a partner’s AIDS-related death. There are a couple of younger people and two women enrolled. The class has both experienced writers and novices.

“I’ve never done anything like this,” said Doug Melroe, one of Malloy’s students. He’s a fitness instructor and longtime MAP vol-



From left in photo: Brian Farrey-Latz, Arthur Ramirez, Deb Leavitt, Brian Malloy, Laura Jones, Bob Kronschnabel, Scott Eastman, Steve Forseth.

unteer who recently worked as development director for JustUs Health. “I’m very nervous and scared, but Brian’s been great, and I’m thrilled to be a part of it.

“I’m trying to write about Andrew and David and Michael,” he said, referring to friends and loved ones who died of AIDS, “how each one affected my life, but also seeking the bigger story about HIV in Minnesota and the Twin Cities, what life was like here in 1985.”

A grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board enabled Malloy and Quatrefoil to offer the class free. The idea for the class and the grant came after Malloy heard activist and author Cleve Jones at Quatrefoil in 2017. “It was a crowded event, and people had a lot of stuff to share,” Malloy said. “I was also moved by the TPT documentary [‘Out North’] about the history of gay activism in Minnesota, and by the book and movie ‘How To Survive a Plague.’

In the first few weeks, the class read AIDS-related poems by Essex Hemphill, Maria Howe and Melvin Dixon and short fiction by David Leavitt. Since then, Malloy and his students have been doing writing exercises and sharing their work with each other.

Survivor’s guilt and generational differences in response to AIDS are two themes that have come up often, Malloy said.

There continues to be a need for AIDS education, Melroe said: “A big change that I’ve seen is that young people think, ‘If I’m positive, I’ll just take a pill. People aren’t afraid of it anymore. People don’t talk about it anymore. People think it’s over. It’s not over.’”

One way to fight apathy, Malloy said, is to “bear witness to a period of time that is starting to get lost in the fog of memory.”

Fans of Malloy’s “Year of Ice” and its teenaged protagonist, Kevin, will be glad to hear that Malloy is writing a sequel. The novel moves Kevin ahead 10 years, to 1988, when he is living in New York and is a surviving partner of a man who died of AIDS.

Q

## What

**Brian Malloy and students from his “Writing the AIDS Generation” workshop read from their work and sign a class-generated chapbook. Refreshments after the reading.**

## When

**7 p.m. Wed. July 10**

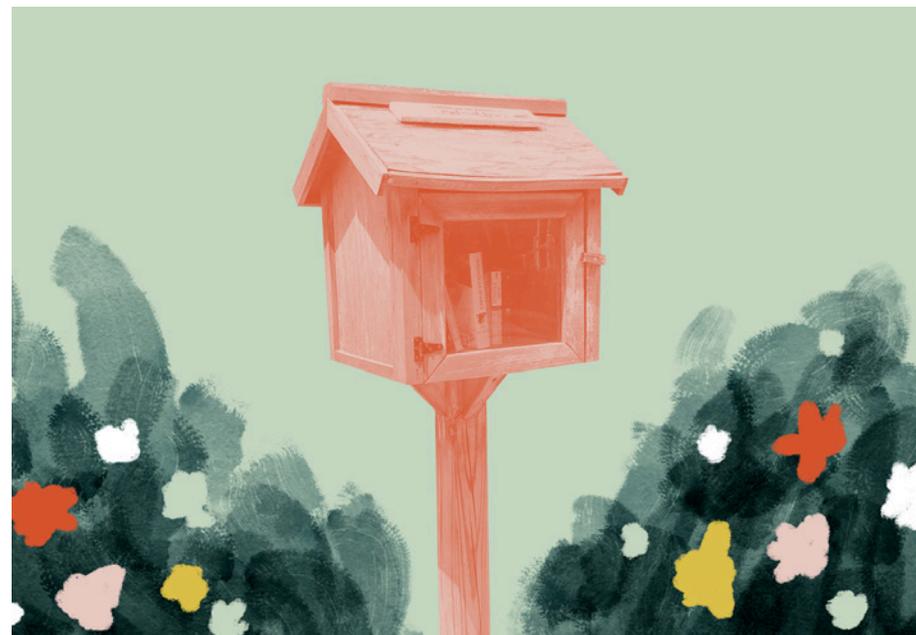
## Where

**Quatrefoil community room, 1220 E. Lake St., Mpls.**

## Tickets

**Free**

**Please RSVP on Quatrefoil’s Facebook page.**



**Enter to Win**

**a Little (Queer)**

**Free Library**

Are you a member of a high school or college Gay-Straight Alliance? Would you like to win a fully-stocked little free library for your home or institution? The Quatrefoil Library is giving away a complete Little Free Library that contains a variety of LGBTQ-themed fiction and non-fiction titles as well as several DVDs. Little Free Libraries are small, user-sustained lending libraries that encourage literacy, strengthen community bonds, and provide a wonderful way to share information.

In honor of National Coming Out Day, the Quatrefoil Library will give away one Little (Queer) Free Library in a drawing to be held October 19, 2019. The library will be fully assembled, but unpainted (so that the winner can paint it in school colors, if so desired). There is no cost to enter the drawing. To be considered, please send your name, address, phone number and email on a 3 x 5-inch card to The Quatrefoil Library, 1220 East Lake Street, Minneapolis, MN 55407. If interest persists, Quatrefoil hopes to continue to promote college and high school “branches” throughout the region. If you are interested in contributing to this project, or if you would be willing to help construct Little Free Libraries to be distributed, please contact the Quatrefoil Library at (612)-729-2543 or write [info@qlibrary.org](mailto:info@qlibrary.org).

**Phillip Voight, board member**

## Meet More

### Amazing

## Q Desk Volunteers

Quatrefoil relies on more than 80 veteran and newer volunteers to staff the front desk and keep the library open seven days per week throughout the year. Here are some of them.

### Davina Baldwin



**Occupation:** Insurance agent  
**Regular shift:** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. second Saturdays  
**Volunteer since:** 1990  
**Volunteers because:** For connectivity, and to return some good that I've experienced from our community.  
**Favorite LGBTQ book (or author):** "Middlesex," by Jeffrey Eugenides  
**Favorite LGBTQ movie:** "Moonlight"  
**Comment:** The library helps us connect to the community in a safe environment. It gives us access.

### Renata Casale



**Occupation:** Kitchen help at Mississippi Market  
**Regular shift:** 1st Monday and 2nd Sunday (12-5 p.m.)  
**Volunteer since:** August 2018  
**Volunteers because:** It's fun, and also to gain experience in a library.  
**Favorite LGBTQ book (or author):** "Other Voices Other Rooms" by Truman Capote  
**Favorite LGBTQ movie:** "Carol"  
**Comment:** The library is a great resource. Just the other night I met some research students who found a book in the kid's section that they weren't able to find at any other library in the area. It's also a great way to meet people. And when I'm on my shift putting books away I find more that I want to read. If you want to stay current with new queer books and magazines, this is the spot!

### Bob Garrett



**Occupation:** Retired from real estate title insurance abstracting  
**Regular shift:** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. second and fourth Saturdays  
**Volunteer since:** 2003  
**Volunteers because:** Was looking for a volunteer job that would involve, and have some benefit for, the LGBTQ community. Plus, I was amazed there were so many books (and movies) by and about us.  
**Favorite LGBTQ author:** Armistead Maupin  
**Favorite LGBTQ movie:** "Tales of the City" series  
**Comment:** Besides its wealth of books and movies relevant to all ages of LGBTQ folk for entertainment, education and research, Q offers a comfortable space to meet friends, and just be who you are.

## Dates to Remember

### JUNE 22-23, ALL DAY

Find thousands of books and DVDs at deep discounts at Quatrefoil's giant annual Pride sale in Loring Park. All proceeds support the library.

### JUNE 28, 5:30-7:30 P.M.

A free reception at St. Paul's Landmark Center (Rm. 317) marks the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots in New York. Short talks by Ann DeGroot, Robert Frame, Victor Macias-Gonzalez and Barbara Satin will reflect on Stonewall's legacy for today. Refreshments.

### JULY 10, 7 P.M.

Novelist Brian Malloy and students of his "Writing the AIDS Generation" class at Quatrefoil read from their poetry and prose. The reading is free, and a chapbook of writing produced by the class is available for a donation to the library.

### OCT. 5, 10 A.M.-4 P.M.

Fall book sale, at the library.

### OCT. 13, NOON-2 P.M.

Join Quatrefoil on a fall-color cruise on the Mississippi aboard the Anson Northrup. Boarding is at the St. Paul River Landing, 205 Dr. Justus Ohage Blvd. \$20. Cocktails and refreshments for purchase. Benefits Quatrefoil.

Summer is

NO FINES Season

at Quatrefoil

Many people associate library visits with facing up to fines for overdue materials. In an experiment designed to overcome this psychological and financial barrier to patronizing the library, and in honor of Pride month, Quatrefoil will offer amnesty on all overdue books and DVDs if they are returned to the library by Labor Day.

All fines will be forgiven during the entire month. We want you – and your overdue books and movies – back! Don't let fines or the fear of fines keep you away!

“Library books are free—until they are not.” The American Library Association governing council released a resolution identifying monetary library fines as an economic barrier to library usage and encouraging libraries to reassess the collection of overdue fees. The St. Paul Public Library system ditched its overdue fines permanently this year. Research shows that such amnesty programs help with access and have little to no down side in terms of revenue or lost books.

Return overdue items to the library by Aug. 31 and we will waive any fees. If the book has been lost, we will work something out. Happy Pride!

**Karen Hogan, Q technology chair**



Edited by Claude Peck  
Design and illustration  
by Chris Larson

1220 E. Lake St.  
Minneapolis, MN 55407  
[www.qlibrary.org](http://www.qlibrary.org)  
612-729-2543

email: [info@qlibrary.org](mailto:info@qlibrary.org)

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**HOURS**

Sat.-Sun., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Weekdays, 7-9 p.m.

Wednesdays, 1-5 p.m.