

Our Own Community Press Newspapers

Our Own Community Press Newspapers

1976-1998



Title Statement

Our Own Community Press Newspapers A Guide to Our Own Community Press Newspapers MG 143

Author: Special Collections Staff

Publication Statement

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Norfolk, VA 23529

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MG 143

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1976-1998

Unit Date

Date acquired: 09/22/1998

Language

English

Abstract

A collection of 15 bound volumes that represent 21 years of the paper's existence. The paper started in 1976 as a newsletter for the Unitarian-Universalist Gay Caucus of Norfolk and grew into an institution in the Hampton Roads community. When the paper folded in 1998, it was one of the country's oldest gay newspapers.

Creator

Unitarian Universalist Gay Caucus

Extent

4.50 Linear Feet

Extent

15 Bound Volumes Volumes

Repository

ODU Community Collections

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open to researchers without restrictions.

Conditions Governing Use

Before publishing quotations or excerpts from any materials, permission must be obtained from Special Collections and University Archives, and the holder of the copyright, if not Old Dominion University Libraries.

Source of Acquisition

Alicia Herr, Editor

Method of Acquisition

Gift. Accession # A98-9.

Preferred Citation

[Article author], [Article title], Our Own Community Press Newspapers, [volume, number], [date]. Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Biographical or Historical Information

Our Own began publishing in 1976 when thoughts of liberty were in the air. In August of that year, a handful of gays and lesbians created a social and political group at the Unitarian-Universalist church in Norfolk, called the Unitarian-Universalist Gay Caucus (UUGC). Before long, the group needed a newsletter to keep members informed of activities. The first issue of Our Own featured an article about a spaghetti dinner being held to raise funds for a gay helpline.

The first few issues of Our Own primarily detailed the sparse gathering opportunities for gays and lesbians in Norfolk, and expounded upon the UUGC's dreams of establishing the helpline, a venereal disease clinic, telephone counseling, a public library of gay material, and a free legal aid clinic.

By the end of its second year of publication, the newsletter had grown in circulation and size, distributed throughout the state and covering such news as Anita Bryant's anti-gay crusade (with Bryant's classic quote: I'd rather my child be dead than a homosexual.), same-sex marriage, gays and religion, gays in the military, and gays in the media. Over the next two decades, the topics would remain fairly constant, although Anita Bryant gave way to Jerry Falwell whose media spotlight was eventually usurped by Pat Robertson.

As the years went on, the climate in the country changed. Bryant was just the beginning of a violent backlash against the tentative acceptance mainstream America held out to gays. The pages of Our Own began to contain more and more stories about gay-bashing and murder, anti-gay legislation and anti-gay crusaders. For Our Own's readers struggling for self-determination in the back yard of Pat Robertson's multi-million dollar right wing compound, such events as the murder of San Francisco city supervisor and gay rights activist Harvey Milk brought home the level of hatred directed against gays.

Our Own became a nucleus for the community. The people who started new gay organizations either met while working at Our Own or were brought together through our articles or news stories. But mainstream Virginia didn't feel as fondly toward the newspaper. Our Own found itself fighting to keep its issues in public

libraries, which suddenly became unwilling to stock a gay newspaper. Our Own ultimately brought a lawsuit against the City of Virginia Beach with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union in an attempt to force the libraries to keep an issue of the paper with their periodicals. The lawsuit failed, but when the city sued the newspaper to recoup the money the city had spent on its defense, the case went all the way to the Federal Appeal Court in Wilmington, N.C., where the court decided in favor of Our Own.

Near the end of 1981, gays began to hear about a new gay cancer taking the lives of gay men. Gay newspapers and the gay community in general, weren't sure how to react to the news. To many, it sounded suspiciously like a government plot to force gay men back into the closet. But the rising death toll was impossible to ignore, and Our Own forged ahead with stories that educated readers about possible causes of the new disease. The AIDS crisis brought the gay and lesbian community together.

In August of 1998, the paper declared bankruptcy. Low revenues from advertising, increased rent costs, and chronic staffing problems hit a crisis point. At the time, it was one of the country's oldest gay and lesbian newspapers.

Note written by Special Collections Staff

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of fifteen volumes of Our Own Community Press, a Norfolk-based LGBTQIA+ newspaper that ran from 1976 to 1998. Of historical note are articles on anti-gay campaigns by Anita Bryant, Jerry Falwell, and Pat Robertson; the murder of San Francisco city supervisor and gay rights activist, Harvey Milk; same-sex marriage; gays and religion; gays in the military; gays in the media; the AIDS epidemic; and news, organizations, and events related to gay and lesbian people on local, state, and national levels. Our own can also be found in the library catalog under HQ75.076. The issues have been digitized and are available in the Old Dominion University Libraries Digital Collections.

Keywords

Gay rights--United States--History--20th century

Gay men--Virginia--Periodicals.

Lesbians--Virginia--Periodicals

Gay liberation movement--Virginia--Periodicals

Our own (Norfolk, Va.)

Gay people--United States--History--20th century.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections

Arrangement Note

The collection is arranged chronologically in bound volumes.

Description of Subordinate Components

Volume 01

Unit ID Volume 1

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/9813

Unit Date 1976-1978

Mixed Materials 01 (volume)

Preferred Citation

Volume 01, 1976-1978, Our Own Community Press Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections

Volume 02

Unit ID Volume 2

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/9814

Unit Date 1979-1980

Mixed Materials 02 (volume)

Preferred Citation

Volume 02, 1979-1980, Our Own Community Press Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections

Volume 03

Unit ID Volume 3

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/9815

Unit Date 1981-1982

Mixed Materials 03 (volume)

Preferred Citation

Volume 03, 1981-1982, Our Own Community Press Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections

Volume 04

Unit ID Volume 4

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/9816

Unit Date 1983-1984

Mixed Materials 04 (volume)

Preferred Citation

Volume 04, 1983-1984, Our Own Community Press Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections

Volume 05

Unit ID Volume 5

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/9817

Unit Date 1985-1986

Mixed Materials 05 (volume)

Preferred Citation

Volume 05, 1985-1986, Our Own Community Press Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections

Volume 06

Unit ID Volume 6

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/9818

Unit Date 1987-1988

Mixed Materials 06 (volume)

Preferred Citation

Volume 06, 1987-1988, Our Own Community Press Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections

Volume 07

Unit ID Volume 7

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/9819

Unit Date 1989-1990

Mixed Materials 07 (volume)

Preferred Citation

Volume 07, 1989-1990, Our Own Community Press Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections

Volume 08

Unit ID Volume 8

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/9820

Unit Date 1991

Mixed Materials 08 (volume)

Preferred Citation

Volume 08, 1991, Our Own Community Press Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections

Volume 09

Unit ID Volume 9

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/9821

Unit Date 1992

Mixed Materials 09 (volume)

Preferred Citation

Volume 09, 1992, Our Own Community Press Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections

Volume 10

Unit ID Volume 10

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/9822

Unit Date 1993

Mixed Materials 10 (volume)

Preferred Citation

Volume 10, 1993, Our Own Community Press Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections

Volume 11

Unit ID Volume 11

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/9823

Unit Date 1994

Mixed Materials 11 (volume)

Preferred Citation

Volume 11, 1994, Our Own Community Press Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections

Volume 12

Unit ID Volume 12

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/9824

Unit Date 1995

Mixed Materials 12 (volume)

Preferred Citation

Volume 12, 1995, Our Own Community Press Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections

Volume 13

Unit ID Volume 13

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/9825

Unit Date 1996

Mixed Materials 13 (volume)

Preferred Citation

Volume 13, 1996, Our Own Community Press Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections

Volume 14

Unit ID Volume 14

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/9826

Unit Date 1997

Mixed Materials 14 (volume)

Preferred Citation

Volume 14, 1997, Our Own Community Press Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections

Volume 15

Unit ID Volume 15

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/9827

Unit Date 1998

Mixed Materials 15 (volume)

Preferred Citation

Volume 15, 1998, Our Own Community Press Newspapers, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Libraries.

Related Digital Material

ODU Digital Collections