



“Fabled Asp and The Year of Honoring Lesbians with Disabilities”

Written and narrated by Judith Masur

2010 was “The Year of Honoring Lesbians with Disabilities.” But it didn’t just happen. It started in 2007 with the dream that Laura Rifkin had that it would be possible. Laura founded an organization and quickly invited her partner in creating Gay Pride access, Jill Lessing, to join her. Cathy Cade was recruited as cultural historian and, sitting together over a game of Scrabble tiles, the name Fabled Asp emerged. Early postcards proclaimed 2010 “The Year of Honoring Lesbians with Disabilities,” willing it into existence.

By the time 2009 rolled around, we were hard at work. We used the visual, electronic, and performing arts as channels for evoking stories. We held mixed media workshops, open mic events we named Krip Salons, partnered with Berkeley Community Media, Diverse Disability Media, and Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project to videotape Living Histories. We organized and videotaped four discussion panels, created a photo and ephemera archives highlighting over 25 topics and groups, partnered with StoryCorps to build an audio archive, and with The Center for Digital Storytelling in Berkeley to create digital stories. Through the Lineage Project living disabled and able-bodied lesbians were asked to respond to the lives of lesbians with disabilities who had died. Karen Hampton created a memorial quilt dedicated to 12 disabled lesbian foremothers. We documented over 90 stories in four different mediums.

Then, as 2010 arrived, the dream came true: the California State Assembly, the State Senate, the cities of Berkeley and San Francisco all made proclamations honoring disabled lesbians. The San Francisco Dyke March declared 2010 “The Year of Honoring the Disabled Dyke” and featured Fabled Asp on the main stage. The Oakland City Council proclaimed 2010 as “The Year of Honoring Lesbians with Disabilities.”

And what a year it was! Fabled Asp coordinated artists, musicians, writers and activists, disabled lesbians and allies across the spectrum, producing events, concerts, luncheons, readings and performances. We organized a 20th reunion of the historic match between the Bay Area Meteorites, the women’s wheelchair basketball team, and the Bay Area Women Musicians. I can’t list it all!



We thank you for your interest. Please join me as we roll, walk or otherwise navigate this virtual exhibition: Celebrating Fabulous Bay Area Lesbians with Disabilities, a 40 Year Retrospective, sponsored by the San Francisco Gay, Lesbian, Transgender Historical Society in collaboration with The James C. Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center of the San Francisco Public Library, mounted in the Skylight Gallery and the James C. Hormel Center of the San Francisco Public Library, in 2010: The Year of Honoring Lesbians with Disabilities.

Let's make every year a Year of Honoring Lesbians with Disabilities!