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MEDIA ADVISORY**



**GLBT
Historical
Society**
museum & archives

April 10, 2020

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**Weekly “Fighting Back: Lessons From AIDS for
COVID-19” Online Series Explores Pandemic in
Historical Context**

San Francisco — The GLBT Historical Society is responding to the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic in a new series of online programs that examine the crucial lessons learned in the fight against AIDS. The “Fighting Back: Lessons From AIDS for COVID-19” series is an intergenerational discussion bringing together community leaders, experts, historians and activists to explore lessons from the past that might be useful in formulating “resistance” efforts today.

Originally launched in the wake of the 2016 U.S. presidential election, “Fighting Back” has investigated many contemporary social issues in a historical context and has made the intersectional nature of the LGBTQ community one of its central themes. Each panel in the current series provides historical context to the pandemic, exploring topics such as direct-action movements, community-building efforts, the role of art and artists and the challenges confronting healthcare workers. The intention of this series is to inspire members of the public to find ways to transform feelings of anxiety, despair or anger into action, and to find models for building community and solidarity.

“A big part of our job here at the GLBT Historical Society is to explain why history matters,” says GLBT Historical Society Executive Director Terry Beswick, who is available for interviews about the series. “Rarely are we presented with a clearer illustration than the COVID-19 pandemic. With ‘Fighting Back,’ we hope to stimulate an intergenerational and intersectional exchange of experiences and ideas that will inform the most pressing issues of the day.”

Events in the “Fighting Back” series are free and a suggested donation of \$5 is appreciated. Participants must register in advance to receive a Zoom link to watch the panel and participate in the live Q & A session. The events in will also be livestreamed and then archived on our YouTube page at <https://bit.ly/2x8eeJZ>. Registration and complete information about the series

are available on our website at glbthistory.org/fighting-back.

UPCOMING PANELS

Fighting Back

Building Community in a Pandemic

Wednesday, April 15

6:00–7:30 p.m. PDT

Registration: free; \$5 suggested donation

Bay Area community leaders, mental-health specialists and historians will discuss the opportunities for and challenges facing community-building during the ever-growing COVID-19 crisis. What lessons have members of our community learned from the HIV/AIDS crisis that we can apply to our current health emergency? How do we prioritize self-care in the midst of a pandemic? This program is co-organized and co-hosted by the East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club and the GLBT Historical Society. Free registration is available online at <https://bit.ly/2wp8EIQ>.

Fighting Back

Healthcare Workers on the Front Lines

Wednesday, April 22

6:00–7:30 p.m. PDT

Registration: free; \$5 suggested donation

From the earliest days of the AIDS epidemic, healthcare workers were instrumental in diagnosing patients, devising treatment strategies and advocating for research funding. This panel brings together both healthcare veterans and current professionals to consider such topics as patient care, public health policy and activism in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Registration will be available online at glbthistory.org/fighting-back.

Fighting Back

Confronting the Stigma of Disease

Wednesday, April 29

6:00–7:30 p.m. PDT

Registration: free; \$5 suggested donation

New and frightening diseases have often led to the stigmatization of impacted patients and populations. During the 1980s, the emergence of AIDS reinforced existing prejudices against the already-marginalized LGBTQ community, and the appearance of COVID-19 initially in China has led to incidents of violence and discrimination against Asians and Asian Americans. An intergenerational panel of activists and community leaders will discuss how disease leads to xenophobia and stigmatization, and will discuss what strategies used during the height of the AIDS crisis might be adapted during the COVID-19 epidemic. Registration available online at glbthistory.org/fighting-back.

ARCHIVED PANELS

The following past events in the “Fighting Back” series can be viewed on our YouTube page at <https://bit.ly/2x8eeJZ>.

Fighting Back

Direct Action & Community Response

Wednesday, April 1

View the program online at <https://bit.ly/3a08peK>

The first program in this series brought together San Francisco ACT UP veterans to discuss what direct-action protest strategies were effective during the 1980s and 1990s and considered how these might be adapted during an epidemic that requires us to shelter in place. The panel was moderated by GLBT Historical Society Executive Director Terry Beswick. This event was organized by the ACT UP Oral History Project, a GLBT Historical Society initiative made possible by California Humanities, a nonprofit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Fighting Back: The Role of Art & Artists in a Pandemic

Wednesday, April 8

View the program online at <https://bit.ly/3e64f8u>

An intergenerational panel of Bay Area artists explored the ways in which artists responded to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and how these experiences might inform artistic responses to COVID-19 today. Panelists also discussed the personal and cultural impacts of living through a pandemic, and how these impacts might constrain or inspire the creative process. The panel was moderated by GLBT Historical Society Executive Director Terry Beswick.

ABOUT THE GLBT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The GLBT Historical Society is a public history center and archives that collects, preserves and interprets the history of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and the communities that support them. Founded in 1985, the society maintains one of the world's largest collections of LGBTQ historical materials. For more information, visit www.glbthistory.org.

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GRAPHICS: The following images may be reproduced only in association with coverage of the GLBT Historical Society's "Fighting Back" program series. Credits noted in captions are mandatory.

April 15: Building Community in a Pandemic

Lessons from AIDS and COVID-19:
Building Community in a Pandemic

April 15, 2020 from 6 - 7:30 pm
Via Zoom and YouTube Live



Illustration courtesy of the East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club.

April 22: Healthcare Workers on the Front Lines



ARC AIDS vigil at the Federal Building in San Francisco, 1988; photographer unknown, Collection of AIDS-Related Photographic Negatives (1999-50), GLBT Historical Society.



Bobbi Campbell, the "AIDS poster boy," ca. 1983; photograph by Marie Ueda, Marie Ueda Collection (2006-12), GLBT Historical Society.

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