



THE FROMM INSTITUTE
FOR LIFELONG LEARNING
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

FROMM FOCUS

The Newsletter of the Fromm Institute

Issue #7 • June 14, 2021

IF WE BUILD IT, WILL YOU COME?

In last week's newsletter, we talked a little bit about the plans being made by the University of San Francisco and the Fromm Institute for reopening. Quite a few new options and procedures are being discussed to help keep our campus community safe for all. However, as soon as we discuss a new idea, it seems like things change once again.

In order to hire our faculty and get started building a catalog and the new enrollment system on our website, we have to make plans now. We know that the University will require that all who come to campus (including Fromm Institute students) will need to be vaccinated. We are still determining how best to implement a verification procedure for our students that would be least intrusive and complicated.

We also know that we will continue to offer classes via Zoom well into the future even after we are given the "all clear" and "return to normal." We have heard many benefits of Zoom classes from both our students and faculty, and one thing that the pandemic has taught us is that moving to a more online system is not as difficult as we thought it was.

In a world of unknowns, one piece of the puzzle we have not yet assessed is you and your plans. The vast majority of our students come to campus on public transportation or carpools – something many people may be uncomfortable doing. Whether we reopen partially or completely, will you want to return in the Fall? If not, do you think you might want to return in the Winter, or are you planning not to return at all?

We have developed a simple three question survey to assess the likelihood of your return to campus. The threshold question is the first one – How likely are you to attend an in-person class in the Fall? If you answer Likely or Certainly, you can proceed to submit the form. The two questions that follow are really to further assess the reasons people may not wish to return just yet.

[When you have the time, please visit our Return Student Survey by clicking Here.](#) Remember, the Fall Session runs from September 13 through November 11, 2021. All responses are anonymous and your input will help us tremendously in our planning. Thank you.

FOR NEWS FROM YOUR STUDENT ASSOCIATION PLEASE VISIT <https://www.frommfisa.org/>

FROM THE FROMM INSTITUTE STUDENT ASSOCIATION DIVERSITY TASK FORCE

HONORING PRIDE MONTH WITH TOM AMMIANO



Mr. Ammiano is an American politician and LGBTQ activist in San Francisco. In 1980 and 1988, Ammiano ran for the San Francisco Board of Education, and was elected in 1990, subsequently elected its vice-president in 1991, and then president in 1992. He served on the California State Assembly from 2008-2014 during which time he was also a member of the California Legislative LGBTQ Caucus.

We interviewed him for Fromm Focus:

How did you get involved in politics in the first place and why?

I became involved in politics through my work in public schools in the 1960s teaching special education in the Mission. I taught a very diverse groups of kids and became an advocate for them, joining with a group of educators to improve the way special ed and bilingual kids were taught and treated. This lit a fuse, spurring my involvement in grassroots and gay politics at a time when so much was happening (the murders of Harvey Milk and the AIDS crisis) and by osmosis I became an activist. It was in 1979 when I was motivated to run for office on the Board of Education. I wasn't successful then but by 1990 I became the first openly gay member of the Board.

What role during your political career did you enjoy most and which role felt most productive?

I always felt secure as an activist because I knew very clearly who I was as a gay man and where I wanted to go from campaigning on housing, to working on Healthy SF and Prop 13 reform – which is ongoing. Healthy SF was a really successful and an important initiative which I'm proud of.

I also pushed for the School Board to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and we successfully worked against the Briggs Initiative (Prop 6, 1978) that would have banned gays and lesbians from working in California public schools.

How did your career as a comedian help or impede your political work? Did it present problems in terms of people not taking you seriously?

It was transformative; I was terrifically gratified by being a comedian and standup comic. You learn as you go and I would joke that “we should always have the car running.” It toughens the skin. Most of my material was political and around social justice issues but it felt important to connect the dots to other issues in terms of gay politics.

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Do you feel real change and progress has been made for LGBTQ Americans?

I identify as a gay liberationist and social democrat and yes change has definitely been made, but there is still a long way to go. The community is fractured. What is called intersectionality is important in adhering to principles of liberation that unify us all across class, race, disability etc. It is not just a question of institutionalized racism or discrimination but outside of the legislative arena, it is about public attitudes and education which is why combatting attacks on public education is so important.

What are you most proud of in your career?

Surviving. Healthcare for sure. Healthy SF means any resident of San Francisco has access to healthcare. It is not on a par with Canada or the UK in terms of universal healthcare but we have a good infrastructure to work with. I'm proud of my work in public education and LGBTQ politics. Looking at the Black Lives Matter movement, people are ignited but not unified as yet. That needs to happen.

What are you doing now?

Teaching at Fromm, performing [Mincing Words](#) at the Marsh, writing Tom Ammiano's [KISS MY GAY ASS: My trip down the Yellow Brick Road through activism, stand-up and politics](#), being honored by the Giants which I really appreciate.

On June 5th at Saturday's game, the Giants honored "former SF Supervisor and California State Assembly member Tom Ammiano. Ammiano was the first openly gay teacher in San Francisco, and he recently made national headlines when an appeal to his Catholic high school in New Jersey resulted in them [sending him a varsity letter](#) that he was denied when he was a student athlete on the track team — ostensibly because he was outwardly effeminate." ([SFist](#))

Anything else?

I would like to strongly recommend the Oscar nominated documentary, [Crip Camp \(2020\)](#), about a summer camp which transformed the lives of teenagers with disabilities and really addresses inclusivity issues around disability.

We would like to thank Tom Ammiano for his time and good humor and mostly for his contribution to making the world a better place. Arlene Waksberg & Maxine Einhorn

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FROM THE FROMM INSTITUTE STUDENT ASSOCIATION DIVERSITY TASK FORCE

LGBTQ PRIDE MONTH BOOK SUGGESTIONS

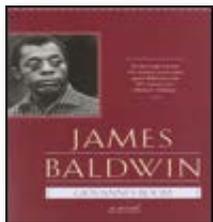
compiled by Margarita Ugarte

1. THE STONEWALL READER BY MARTIN DUBERMAN

This book commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the Stonewall uprising. It is an anthology chronicling the tumultuous fight for LGBTQ rights in the 1960s and the activists who spearheaded it.

2. THE BOOK OF PRIDE - LGBTQ HEROES WHO CHANGED THE WORLD BY MASON FUNK

This book contains interviews and biographies of members (well-known and unsung heroes) members of the LGBTQ community and advocates compiled by The OUTWARD archives.



3. GIOVANNI'S ROOM BY JAMES BALDWIN

Focuses on the events in the life of a young American man living in Paris and his feelings and frustrations with relationships with other men in his life, particularly an Italian bartender named Giovanni who he meets at a Parisian gay bar.

4. A TWO-SPIRIT JOURNEY: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A LESBIAN OKINAWA-CREE ELDER BY MA-NÉE CHACABY

The memoir recounts her extraordinary life as an Ojibwa-Cree lesbian, from her early, often harrowing life in a remote Ojibwa community riddled with poverty and alcoholism. Her story is one of enduring and ultimately overcoming the social, economic and health legacies of colonialism.

5. WE ARE EVERYWHERE: PROTEST, POWER, AND PRIDE IN THE HISTORY OF QUEER LIBERATION BY MATHEW RIEMER AND LEIGHTON BROWN

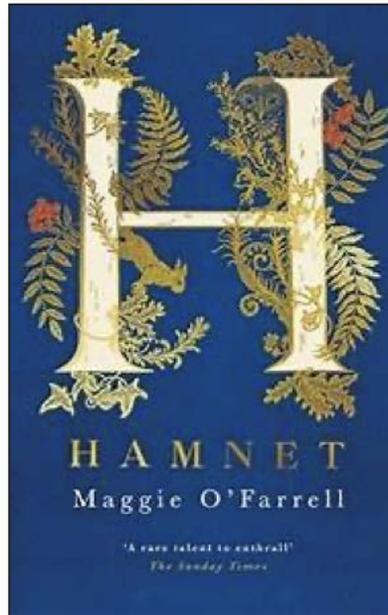
A sweeping photographic history of the Queer Liberation Movement, from the creators and curators of the popular Instagram account @lgbt_history.

6. ON THE EARTH WE ARE BRIEFLY GORGEOUS BY OCEAN VUONG

Poet Ocean Vuong's powerful storytelling is evident in his debut novel of a shattering portrait of a family, a first love and of people caught between disparate worlds, asking how we heal and rescue one another without forsaking who we are.

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**The Drop-In Book Club announces their Summer 2021 selection:
Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell**



HAMNET

Grief, separation, longing and the passionate love between a glove maker's daughter and the greatest poet who ever lived, told in a prose so beautiful it fits its story like a glove.

"A thing of shimmering wonder" says David Mitchell

An "exceptional historical novel" says The New Yorker

Maggie O'Farrell's Hamnet is a perfect treat for another long summer before, hopefully, we can all be together again.

It was published in 2020 and runs 305 pages. We hope you will join us on **August 12th at 3 pm** for the Fromm drop in book club's discussion of the book. **[Please register for the discussion here.](#)**

BTW you don't have to be a big Shakespeare fan to enjoy Hamnet.



Mary Joy Quinn submits a fanciful story of love, science and penguins to this week's *Express Yourself*. Submissions to *Express Yourself* are accepted on a rolling basis and can be articles, opinion pieces or notes, written by you, the students or others in the Fromm Institute family, who want to share something with the larger community. Email your submissions to Scott Moules in the Fromm Institute office (moules@usfca.edu or fromm@usfca.edu).

PENGUIN RESEARCH

By Mary Joy Quinn

Once upon a time, a scientist in Antarctica ran out of funds to conduct research on penguin behavior. Every day she scanned the internet to see what grant possibilities were being offered by foundations and academic institutions. Every day, she was disappointed.

As a result, she became very frustrated and started making plans to return to her home country of Estonia even though she had fallen in love with a fellow scientist at her station. She was torn. Finally, one day, she had a “lightbulb” idea. She decided to ask the penguins what they thought. She spoke fluent penguin.

The penguins had lots of ideas. The rockhoppers were sure a grant stipend could be found under a large rock. The gentoos wondered if a blue-ribbon commission of penguins should be formed to search for the the right grant. The chinstraps were delighted to be asked but had no concrete ideas. The Emperors thought previous research on penguins should be consulted for names of entities that had previously given out grants for research on penguin behavior. Finally, the fairy penguins asked her what would make her truly happy in life.

The scientist thought and thought and concluded that the love between she and her fellow scientist was serious, sturdy, strong, and most likely enduring. She also realized, however, that she needed to respect her calling as a researcher on penguin behavior.

She came up with a solution. She married her fellow scientist and they toured the UK and the USA lecturing about penguin behavior research. They used wedding gift money to meet expenses. In time,



research institutions sought her out and offered her exactly the research grants she needed. She returned to Antarctica having secured both her human love and her penguin love. She lived happily ever after albeit with a few twists in the road here and there.

ALONE TOGETHER - A PANDEMIC ZINE

Below is a message from the USF students who asked the Fromm Institute community earlier this session to submit creative work to their pandemic zine project Alone Together. They wanted to thank all the Fromm Institute students who contributed to the zine, and provide you with a link to the online version.

Hello! We want to thank you all for bringing our zine project to the Fromm Institute community. We received many more submissions than we had anticipated, so we created a full-length digital version of the zine (which you can read [here](#)), as well as a shorter [print version](#). We'll let you know once it has been printed!

Thanks again for all of your submissions!

Sincerely,

The Alone Together Team

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND AGING

Prof. Christian Thompson, who opened this session's Medical Lecture Series with his lecture on fall prevention, shares a special YouTube channel created by his students in his Physical Activity and Aging class. Below is his email introduction to the channel.

My Physical Activity and Aging class from Spring 2021 assembled a YouTube channel with videos of narrated PPT presentations on various topics such as exercise, nutrition and other lifestyle behaviors that affect health and well-being. These were created with the intention of being viewed by older adults who are interested in learning more about healthy aging. Please check it out, the link is below.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZmxXGft9jXn9-ZHKCZ8iFg>