Chicago, Illinois - As gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals became more visible in the 1950s and 1960s, the mainstream media perpetuated the attitude that they were mentally ill and morally depraved queers, freaks, degenerates, perverts, misfits, and even threats to national security. In many cities, the police raided gay bars, harassing and arresting patrons.

Community-based gay newsletters and newspapers emerged to counteract the distorted view of non-heterosexuals and to support the rising gay-rights movement. They addressed gay issues, formed a sense of unity, announced demonstrations, and tracked the progress of legal and political action.

Gay Press, Gay Power: The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America, edited and co-written by Tracy Baim, publisher of Chicago's gay publication Windy City Times, is a comprehensive overview of the past, present, and future of gay print media. Baim uses essays, interviews, and hundreds of news clips and images from both mainstream and early gay publications to describe the critical role of the gay press. Award-winning historian John D'Emilio provided the book's foreword.

Part One covers the history of discrimination against non-heterosexuals throughout the 20th century and the birth of gay and lesbian publications, including Friendship & Freedom, Vice Versa, ONE, Mattachine Review, and The Ladder. Most of the publications during the turbulent 1960s and 1970s were produced on smallbudgets by gay societies or activists and volunteers. Many were short-lived, but others were catalysts for tolerance and acceptance. Gradually, the mainstream media became more supportive of gay rights.

Part Two is a series of essays by and about journalists who documented the gay movement, recounting their experiences and providing observations and insights.

Part Three features the history of 10 gay publications in 10 major cities as told by their publishers, editors or reporters. Each one represents the challenges, risks, and struggles to survive that were common among almost all gay periodicals.

Part Four focuses on the business of gay publications. Initially, funding came from subscribers and classified ads since advertisers were reluctant to buy display ads-until they realized the growing gay population was a potentially profitable untapped market. Many major brands, retail stores, restaurant chains and service providers began targeting the gay community

through its publications and even in some mainstream magazines.

Part Five reflects on the contribution of the gay press, yet debates its value as a source of news and advocacy in the era of the Internet, social media, and the economics of print media.

Gay Press, Gay Power:

The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America

Prairie Avenue Productions and Windy City Media Group

468 pages, 485 illustrations

Black & White, ISBN 1480080527, $25

https://www.createspace.com/4022184 or http://www.amazon.com/Gay-Press-Power-Community-Newspapers/dp/1480080527

Color, ISBN: 1481047213, $89

https://www.createspace.com/4064472or
http://www.amazon.com/Gay-Press-Power-Community-Newspapers/dp/1481047213

In Chicago it is also available at Women & Children First Bookstore.

About the Editor/Co-Author:

Tracy Baim is publisher and executive editor at Windy City Media Group, which produces Windy City Times, Nightspots, and other gay media in Chicago. She co-founded Windy City Times in 1985 and Outlines newspaper in 1987. She has won numerous gay community and journalism honors, including the Community Media Workshop's Studs Terkel Award. www.windycitymediagroup.com

Baim is the author of Obama and the Gays: A Political Marriage (2010, Prairie Avenue Productions). She is also the co-author and editor of Out and Proud in Chicago: An Overview of the City's Gay Community (2008, Agate), the first comprehensive book on Chicago's gay history (see www.ChicagoGayHistory.org); and author of Where the World Meets, a book about Gay Games VII in Chicago (2007, www.Lulu.com).

Her most recent books include a novel, The Half Life of Sgt. Jen Hunter (2010, Prairie Avenue Productions), and the biographies Leatherman: The Legend of Chuck Renslow and Jim Flint: The Boy From Peoria (both 2011, written with Owen Keehnen, and published by Prairie Avenue Productions).

What People Are Saying:

"Comprehensive, well written, and well researched, this media journey from homosexual to gay to queer is eye-opening and inspiring. The bravery of individuals, groups, collectives, and organizations here is breathtaking and vital. This book is endlessly entertaining and extremely important."

- Michael Bronski, author of "A Queer History of the United States"

Professor of the Practice in Activism and Media, Harvard University.

"The political successes of the gay liberation movement, and the defeats, were reported in the pages of the lesbian and gay press while the mainstream press ignored or denigrated our efforts. Tracy Baim has long represented the best of the GLBT press, and this book will be a valuable resource in the struggle not to forget our history as we continue to fight for our future."

- Larry Gross, USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism

Author of "Up From Invisibility: Lesbians, Gay Men and the Media in America"

"Gay Press, Gay Power is a meticulous and prodigious work, long overdue. It will be a reference source-but, more importantly, a source of inspiration."

- Barbara Ettorre, former reporter for The New York Times, New York Daily News and Chicago Today. Founder and editor, LetterBalm.com.

"This meticulously researched book captures the flavor and nuance of a myriad of specific events and times through compelling interviews with the people involved, gay and straight, backed up with insightful analysis. Hundreds of images of magazine covers, news clips, photos and ads from the 1800s to today present a comprehensive, stunning visual history of the evolving relationship between the media and the LGBT community. Belongs on everyone's bookshelf."

- Jean Latz Griffin, former Chicago Tribune reporter

Author of "In the Same Breath and One Spirit: A Creation Story for the 21st Century"

"Gay Press, Gay Power tells the story of the women and men who focused a revolutionary lens on our activism and still grind it every day, brightening the light on the paths of the LGBT generations that succeed us."

- John Teets, former editor for the Chicago Sun-Times and Chicago Tribune.