

Collection #
P 0850

**KENN E. KING AND RICK C. MOORE COLLECTION,
CA. 1981-1987 (BULK 1985-1987)**

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 half-size photograph box, 1 half-size OVA graphics box, 3 OVB folders, 2 folders of Cold Storage photographs, 2 Polaroid photographs, 2 black-and-white 4x5 acetate negatives

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1981–1987 (bulk 1985–1987)

PROVENANCE: Gifts from Kenn E. King and Rick C. Moore, 2019 and 2022

RESTRICTIONS: Any materials listed as being in Cold Storage must be requested at least 4 hours in advance.

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBERS: 2019.0356, 2022.0142

NOTES: *See also:* The Michael Bohr Collection of the Indy Pride Chris Gonzalez Library and Archives (M 1242), *The Mirror* (HQ 75 .M4), and *The Works* (HQ 75 .W6)

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Kenn E. King created the character Nurse Safe Sexx in the fall of 1985 to educate as many people as possible in the community of gay men in Indianapolis and beyond about Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and how to prevent it. Kenn, bearded, portrayed the character by wearing a nurse's uniform, lacy stockings, saddle oxfords, and a lot of makeup. With this over-the-top campy appearance, Kenn realized that he felt like a cartoon character, and came up with the idea of a comic strip featuring Nurse Safe Sexx. He contacted Chuck Avery, the editor of the new and quickly growing *Mirror Magazine*, to see if it would be possible to include such a comic strip in the magazine. He then contacted cartoonist Rick Moore to draw the comic strip, using people from the Bag Ladies organization as characters. Using the pen name Rik for his cartoons, Moore created some additional characters for the strip, known as "The Further Adventures of Nurse Safe Sexx." It first appeared in *The Mirror* in December 1985. By March 1986 the strip was also running in *The Works* and *Metra* magazines in Indianapolis and in other publications throughout the Midwest.

King also started writing a column titled "The Nurse's Report," through the character of Nurse Safe Sexx that appeared in *The Mirror* and elsewhere, including *The Torch*, published in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

King's mother, Betty King, took on the persona of Hoosier Mom, and provided education on AIDS and safe sex also. Kenn and Betty provided care to people in the Buddy House, a program of the Bag Ladies, for people who were released from the hospital with AIDS but whose families, roommates, or boyfriends did not want them to return home.

The Indy Bag Ladies was founded by Coby Palmer, Ed Walsh, and Gary Johnson. In 1981 the group organized the Bag Ladies Bus Tour, which brought together men from Indianapolis's gay community for a Halloween tour of the local gay bars. In 1982, after learning about the new disease that eventually became known as AIDS, the group began fundraising efforts to care for people diagnosed with the disease. The organization still exists, and to date has raised more than \$3 million dollars to help people living with HIV/AIDS as well as for other charitable causes.

The Bag Ladies also began the Buddy House program, which provided shelter, food, and care for people with AIDS at a time when no effective treatments had yet been developed for the disease. The program was eventually replaced by the Damien Center, which was established in 1987, as a care and treatment center for people with AIDS.

Sources:

Materials in the collection

The Bag Ladies. <https://www.indybagladies.org/history/> Accessed 13 February 2023.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The materials in this collection pertain primarily to the persona of Nurse Safe Sexx, as portrayed by Kenn E. King, whose mission was to educate the community of gay men, in Indianapolis and beyond, about Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and the importance of engaging in sexual activity in a safe manner. The materials consist of comic strips (original drawings as well as photocopies of how they appeared in magazines and newspapers), newspaper articles, and photographs. The comic strip was known as “The Further Adventures of Nurse Safe Sexx” and was drawn by Rick C. Moore. There are also photographs that include Hoosier Mom (Betty King, mother of Kenn E. King) and members of the Bag Ladies organization. Newspaper articles include “The Nurse’s Report” column by Nurse Safe Sexx, written by Kenn E. King.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Kenn E. King as Nurse Safe Sexx – Photographs

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Twenty-nine black-and-white photos of various poses, numbered on the back A-1 through A-36 (missing A-4, A-9, A-21, A-23, A-25, A-26, and A-28)	Box 1, Folder 1
One 8x10 photo of Kenn E. King as Nurse Safe Sexx with Isaac “Ike” Coney	Box 1, Folder 1
One 4x5 black-and-white negative of photo above of Kenn E. King as Nurse Safe Sexx with Isaac “Ike” Coney	Cold Storage: 4x5 b/w acetate negatives, Folder 1 of 2
Thirty-four black-and-white photos of various poses, numbered on the back B0a through B36a (missing B2a, B16a, and B18a)	Box 1, Folder 2

Series 2: Hoosier Mom, First National AIDS Conference, Bag Ladies – Photographs

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Hoosier Mom (Betty King) with Isaac Coney, Leonard R. Roeschlein, and Jennifer (no last name provided) at a pool table (seven photos of five poses; one photocopy)	Box 1, Folder 3
One 4x5 black-and-white negative of Hoosier Mom (Betty King) with two men at pool table	Cold Storage: 4x5 b/w acetate negatives, Folder 2 of 2
Ed Talucci and Kenn E. King at the first National AIDS Conference at George Washington University, 1986	Cold Storage Photos: Folder 1 of 2
Two photos of Ed Talucci and Kenn E. King with an unidentified man in Washington, DC, learning about a program to house people with AIDS in need of a home (The Buddy House)	Cold Storage Photos: Folder 1 of 2
Kenn E. King dressed in pink, with someone named Ben, on the Bag Lady Bus Tour, Halloween 1983	Cold Storage Photos: Folder 1 of 2

Two photos of Kenn E. King dressed in leopard print and denim, with others, on the Bag Lady Bus Tour	Cold Storage Photos: Folder 1 of 2
Two men at first Bag Lady Garage Party [ca. 1984]	Cold Storage Photos: Folder 1 of 2
Bag Ladies on sidewalk by brick wall	Cold Storage Photos: Folder 1 of 2
First Bag Ladies Benefit Show at Talbott Street Bar	Cold Storage Photos: Folder 1 of 2
Kenn E. King above fundraising dunk tank at Pride picnic in Westlake Park, early 1980s	Cold Storage Photos: Folder 1 of 2
Portrait of Kenn E. King in black shirt	Cold Storage Photos: Folder 1 of 2
Two Bag Ladies – Crystal Flash and Kitty Katz – on Bag Ladies Bus Tour	Cold Storage Photos: Folder 1 of 2
Kenn E. King dressed in leopard print and denim for Bag Ladies Bus Tour	Cold Storage: Polaroids, Folder 1
Gary Bravard and Kenn E. King on Bag Ladies Bus Tour	Cold Storage: Polaroids, Folder 2

Series 3: Nurse Safe Sexx Cartoons and Articles

CONTENTS

Original drawings by Rik (Rick C. Moore) of Bag Ladies and Nurse Safe Sexx cartoons: 15 pages. One Bag Ladies cartoon is dated 1986. One drawing says “The Bugle” and shows someone holding a bugle. Some drawings are of individual characters: Mr. John Q. Public, Big Pete, and Kitte Littaire.

CONTAINER

OVA Graphics,
Box 1, Folder 1

<p>Original drawings by Rik (Rick C. Moore) of Nurse Safe Sexx with celebrities: 19 pages. Celebrities include: Madonna, Michael Jackson, Pee-wee Herman, Patti LaBelle, Whoopi Goldberg, scene from movie <i>Gone With the Wind</i>, characters from television show <i>Miami Vice</i>, Tom Selleck as <i>Magnum, P.I.</i>, characters from television show <i>Dynasty</i>, Tina Turner, Donna Summer and Barbra Streisand, Joan Rivers, characters from television show <i>Dallas</i>, Dolly Parton, Tom Cruise, Anita Bryant, Prince, Elizabeth Taylor; Stevie Wonder, Gladys Knight, Dionne Warwick, and Elton John.</p>	<p>OVA Graphics, Box 1, Folder 2</p>
<p>Original drawings by Rik (Rick C. Moore) of Nurse Safe Sexx cartoons: 11 pages.</p>	<p>OVA Graphics, Box 1, Folder 3</p>
<p>Original drawings by Rik (Rick C. Moore) of Nurse Safe Sexx cartoons: 11 pages.</p>	<p>OVA Graphics, Box 1, Folder 4</p>
<p>Clippings from <i>Metra</i>: article introducing Nurse Safe Sexx; Nurse Safe Sexx cartoons (February–April 1986) – 9 photocopies</p>	<p>Box 1, Folder 4</p>
<p>Clippings from <i>The Mirror</i>: Nurse Safe Sexx cartoons, interview with and article about Nurse Safe Sexx, and articles written by Kenn E. King, including “The Nurse’s Report” columns (December 1985–February 1987) – 21 photocopies</p>	<p>Box 1, Folder 5</p>
<p>Clippings from <i>The Works</i>: article introducing Nurse Safe Sexx; Nurse Safe Sexx cartoons; articles about the Bag Ladies (March–May 1986) – 10 photocopies</p>	<p>Box 1, Folder 6</p>
<p>Fourteen black-and-white slides of Nurse Safe Sexx cartoons seen elsewhere in this collection, magazine covers (<i>The Works</i>, 1981; <i>The Mirror</i>, 1986), and an <i>Indianapolis Star</i> article dated 16 January 1983 with the headline: “Mysterious Malady: ‘Detectives’ on trail of sinister epidemic.”</p>	<p>Cold Storage Photos: Folder 2 of 2</p>
<p>Two articles by Kenn E. King: “The Nurse Safe Sexx Cartoon: A Cute Little Idea That Has Become a Big Educational Tool for the Gay Community” and “An Open Letter To My Buddy.” Both articles photocopied from <i>The Mirror</i>, vol. 1, no. 14 – September 5, 1986. (4 photocopies)</p>	<p>OVB Folder 1</p>

Ten articles for “The Nurse’s Report” column written by Kenn E. King that appeared in *The Mirror*, from August 1986 to May 1987. Also, the front page of *The Mirror* from September 19, 1986 with illustration by Rik (Rick C. Moore) of Nurse Safe Sexx with characters from the *Dallas* television show.
(11 photocopies)

OVB Folder 2

Series 4: Nurse Safe Sexx and Hoosier Mom – Posters

CONTENTS

CONTAINER

“Play Safely Kids / Do It For Your Mother.” Poster includes a photo by Scott Perlman of Hoosier Mom (Betty King) with Jennifer (last name not provided), Isaac Coney, and Leonard R. Roeschlein at pool table. Provides a P.O. Box address for Hoosier Mom where people can write for information on safe sex.

OVB Folder 3

“Nurse Safe Sexx Says / It Could Save Your Life.” Poster includes two photos of Nurse Safe Sexx and urges condom use. Provides a P.O. Box address for Nurse Safe Sexx where people can write for information on safe sex and AIDS. [December 1985]

OVB Folder 3