Jim Thomas, editor of the *Gay News-Telegraph*, donated the records of the *Gay News-Telegraph* to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection at the University of Missouri-St. Louis on June 23, 1986.

Jim Thomas majored in Sociology and Anthropology at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio where he served as chairperson of the Oberlin College Gay Union. After graduating in 1979, Thomas moved back to Alton and helped organize a civil rights march on Washington. Thomas came to St. Louis in 1980 and helped organize St. Louis' first Gay Pride Week. This experience led to the formation of the *Gay News-Telegraph*. After witnessing a lack of communication among gay and lesbian organizations, Thomas founded Piasa Publishing to start a newspaper to report accurately the news, events, issues and services affecting the gay community.

*GNT* published its first eight page issue on October 6, 1981. Three months later it expanded to twenty pages and began coverage of national and global legislation affecting gays and lesbians. A core staff of three volunteers did production work on the newspaper from their apartments. In 1982, the *GNT* moved into an office on Gore Avenue in Maplewood. It moved again the following September to a new office at 10 South Euclid. *GNT* distributed six thousand copies of the first issue in bars, bookstores, small shops, and restaurants in the Central West End.

Another gay newspaper, *No Bad News*, had been published in St. Louis for a year and supported by advertising from gay-owned businesses. To help the gay community support both papers, Thomas expanded *GNT*'s advertising base to other small businesses with gay customers.

*GNT* expanded its distribution into Kansas City, Missouri and Indianapolis, Indiana in 1983 and to Memphis, Tennessee and Little Rock, Arkansas the following year. It stopped distribution in Indianapolis in 1985.

*Gay News-Telegraph* joined the Gay Press Association in 1981, but a lack of computers prevented the newspaper from receiving the Washington-based news service's wire copy. Thomas compiled stories from the national press and gay newspapers in other cities, but acknowledged a lack of press releases from area small towns. *GNT*, however, survived in these communities because, according to Thomas, "its coverage is vastly better than the local newspaper's."
Along with its news and features sections, GNT published a directory of gay and lesbian organizations and a calendar of events. Each month Piasa Publishing Company printed between ten and fifteen thousand copies of the not-for-profit GNT. It distributed half of the print-run in St. Louis, primarily to small businesses in the Central West End and the Delmar Loop area.

SCOPE AND CONTENT


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SERIES 2 - *GAY NEWS-TELEGRAPH*, 1981-1986, FOLDERS 5-20


FOLDER LIST

BOX 1

SERIES 1 - UNPUBLISHED ARTICLES, NEWSCLIPPINGS, AND NEWSLETTERS, 1981-1986

3. *No Bad News* Newsletters, July 1982-August 1983

SERIES 2 - *GAY NEWS TELEGRAPH*, 1981-1982

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7. August 1982-December 1982
9. June-October 1983

BOX 2
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15. November 1985-April 1986

1 Tape - T-844

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