

# GertrudeandAlice.com Newsletter

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## "We Love You, Alice B. Toklas!" A 125th Birthday Celebration

*"I am a pretty good housekeeper and a pretty good gardener and a pretty good needlewoman and a pretty good secretary and a pretty good editor and a pretty good vet for the dogs and I have to do them all at once and I find it difficult to add being a pretty good author."*

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ALICE B. TOKLAS  
– Gertrude Stein

April 30, 2002 marked the 125th birthday of San Francisco-native Alice B. Toklas. To commemorate this occasion, a number of events were held in San Francisco, Paris and Seattle.

Later this year to culminate the Toklas celebration, a reading of a new one-person play, **Cooking With Alice B.** will be presented at the San Francisco Public Library. Watch [the site](#) for details. The play is based on an original idea by Hans Gallas and written by Gallas with Lissa Tyler Renaud. It is set in a 1950's San Francisco television studio, where Toklas has been invited to prepare some dishes from her now famous cookbook. The role of Alice is played by Ms. Renaud, an award-winning actress and director. There are also plans for future readings of the play and a full production.

An exhibition, **We Love You, Alice B. Toklas.** recognizing the accomplishments and celebrating the memory of Toklas was presented in the James Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library, Civic Center from January 18th to March 7th. The library location was very appropriate as it is a few blocks from the location of Toklas's birthplace on O'Farrell Street. The exhibit moved to the American Library in Paris, 10, rue Général-Camou, from March 19th through May 3, 2002. In Paris on March 20th, a presentation was given by Hans Gallas as part of the library's Evenings With A Writer program called **Alice B. Toklas: In Her Own Voice.** It featured excerpts from a rare 1952 interview with Toklas. A birthday reception on April 29th was also hosted by the library with snacks from Alice's cookbook.

Items in the exhibition were from the Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas Collec-

tion of San Francisco collector, Hans Gallas. First editions of **The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook** from around the world, hand-written recipes, original photographs by Carl Van Vechten, and letters were displayed. One of the highlights of the exhibit was a 19th century autograph book once belonging to one of Alice's childhood, Seattle friends in which she wrote a brief inscription.

The exhibit, which was curated by Gallas, was arranged around distinct themes including Alice the Cook, Alice the Muse, Alice the Letter Writer, Alice Alone, and Alice the Legacy. There was also a section on the evolution of **The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas** by Gertrude Stein, from its serialized version to bestseller.

Two restaurants were also included in the festivities. During the week of April 21st, The Meeting House restaurant in San Francisco included items from **The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook** on its menu and had photographs of gertrudeandalice displayed on the walls. On June 3rd at Seattle's Fandango restaurant, more than 125 people attended a fund-raising dinner and silent auction for Lambert House, a social service organization which assists gay, lesbian, transgender and questioning young people. The menu was prepared by local chefs inspired by Alice's cookbook. The small autograph book that had belonged to Alice's Seattle friend was displayed. The dinner was so successful, it is scheduled to become an annual event!

As the life partner of Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas both experienced the lifelong struggles of one of the foremost shapers of 20th century literature and visual art. She also contributed immeasurably to the development and recognition of Stein's work. In her own right, Alice has come to symbolize the openness, freedom, and creativity born of the "lost generation" of the '20s and perpetuated by both the Beats of the '50s and the Hippies of the late '60s/early 70s. Rightly or wrongly, much of this mythology centers around the infamous recipe for her brownies/fudge first printed in her 1954 cookbook. The devoted relationship of Alice and Gertrude has come to stand for a key milestone in gay/lesbian history, with TIME magazine (founder Henry Luce and Claire Boothe were good friends of Alice and Gertrude) having termed it one of the great love affairs of the 20th century.

2007 marks the 100th anniversary of the meeting of Gertrude and Alice. Preliminary plans are underway to coordinate an international symposium commemorating this event.

## Other Happenings...

- Work continues on the new opera **Gertrude Stein Invents A Jump Early On** by Karren Alenier and William Banfield. For more information [steinopera.com](http://steinopera.com).
- The latest book by Bruce Kellner, **Kiss Me Again: An Invitation to a Group of Noble Dames**, includes both a chapter about his meeting Alice B. Toklas and a copy of his one-person play about her which was performed by Julie Harris. The book is published by Turtle Point Press and can be purchased either from the press at [turtlepoint.com](http://turtlepoint.com) or through other online book sellers.
- **Waiting For Gertrude** is the latest novel by popular, Canadian radio personality Bill Richardson. The story is set in Père-Lachaise cemetery in Paris and is narrated by Alice B. Toklas, who along with a number of other famous people buried there, has returned as a cat. As Alice awaits the arrival of the reincarnated Gertrude, a series of mysterious events involve this gathering of historic felines. The book is published by Douglas & McIntyre in Canada and can be acquired from [amazon.ca](http://amazon.ca). The book has not yet been published in the U.S.



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