

Finding Aid to the Bernard (“Bernie”) DeKoven Papers, 1971-2011

Summary Information

Title: Bernard (“Bernie”) DeKoven papers

Creator: Bernard (“Bernie”) DeKoven (primary)

ID: 115.2075

Date: 1971-2011 (inclusive); 1975-1990 (bulk)

Extent: 0.25 linear feet

Language: The materials in this collection are primarily in English, with one instance of Dutch.

Abstract: The Bernard (“Bernie”) DeKoven papers are a compilation of materials from various projects, including the Games Preserve, Computer-Enhanced Meetings, and the Institute for Better Meetings. The bulk of these materials are dated between 1975 and 1990.

Repository:

Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong
One Manhattan Square
Rochester, New York 14607
585.263.2700
library@museumofplay.org

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Use: This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library and archives. Though the donor has not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, he has given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

Custodial History: The Bernard (“Bernie”) DeKoven papers were donated to The Strong in August 2015 as a gift from Bernard DeKoven. The papers were accessioned by The Strong under Object ID 115.2075 and were received from DeKoven along with 9 library volumes and several games.

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Controlled Access Terms

Personal Names

- DeKoven, Bernard, 1941-
- DeKoven, Bernie, 1941-

Corporate Names

- Institute for Better Meetings
- The Games Preserve

Subjects

- Business communication
- Business meetings--Technological innovations
- Communication in management
- Computer-Enhanced Meetings
- Educational games
- Games--Psychological aspects
- Institute for Better Meetings
- Play--Psychological aspects
- The Games Preserve

Biographical Note

Bernard (“Bernie”) DeKoven is an American play theorist, game designer, and author.

DeKoven developed the Interplay Games Catalog for the School District of Philadelphia between 1968 and 1971; the Intensive Learning Center printed four volumes and two manuals for this curriculum in 1971. Soon after, DeKoven established The Game Preserve, a retreat center for the study of play and games, in Northeastern Pennsylvania. He produced content for *Games* magazine, and in 1978, published *The Well-Played Game*. In the 1980s, DeKoven moved to Silicon Valley, California. While working with computers, he created several projects to help businesses work together in more collaborative and fun ways.

DeKoven has devised games for toy and game manufacturers, written books on the importance of play, and consulted with independent game designers and inventors. He is a lifetime member of The Association for the Study of Play. (For more information, see also [“Deep Fun and the Theater of Games: An Interview with Bernie DeKoven”](#) in the *American Journal of Play*.)

Collection Scope and Content Note

The Bernard (“Bernie”) DeKoven papers are a collection of fliers, brochures, booklets, reviews, publicity clippings, and other ephemera related to several of DeKoven’s projects during his lengthy career as a play theorist. Projects include the Games Preserve, Computer-Enhanced Meetings, and the Institute for Better Meetings. Additional scope and content information can be found in the “Contents List” section of this finding aid.

The Bernard (“Bernie”) DeKoven papers are arranged into four series. The materials are housed in one archival document box.

Related Materials

The Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play holds more than a dozen volumes authored by Bernie DeKoven in the library stacks, including the comprehensive *Interplay Games Catalog*, *The Well-Played Game*, and publications from Computer-Enhanced Meetings and the Institute for Better Meetings.

System of Arrangement

Series I: The Games Preserve, c. 1971-1978

Series II: Computer-Enhanced Meetings, 1985-1988

Series III: Institute for Better Meetings, 1990-1993

Series IV: Other projects, 1977-2011

Contents List

Series I: The Games Preserve, c. 1971-1978

Scope and Content Note: In 1971, Bernie DeKoven founded The Games Preserve, a retreat center focusing on the restorative powers of play. This series contains brochures, fliers, photo proofs, publicity clippings, and details on the 1976 “Playday on the Parkway” in Philadelphia.

Box 1

- Folder 1 The Games Preserve handwritten brochure, n.d. [c. 1971?]
- Folder 2 The Games Preserve workshops brochure, n.d. [c. 1970s]
- Folder 3 The Games Preserve Playfair flier, n.d. [c. 1975-1976]
- Folder 4 “Freedom Week: Playday on the Parkway” activity list and maps, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 5, 1976
- Folder 5 The Games Preserve Playfair 1977 photographic proof sheets, 1977
- Folder 6 The Games Preserve “Games Board” Game Evaluation Service booklet, © 1978
- Folder 7 The Games Preserve publicity clippings, 1975-1978 and n.d.

Series II: Computer-Enhanced Meetings, 1985-1989

Scope and Content Note: As DeKoven explored the connections between games and meetings, he established a project to help businesses to work together more productively. This series holds fliers, reviews, and publicity clippings from DeKoven’s Computer-Enhanced Meetings. [The library houses the related book *Power Meetings: An Introduction to the Computer-Enhanced Meeting* (1986).]

Box 1

- Folder 8 “Recent Computer-Enhanced Meetings” fliers, Computer Enhanced-Meetings, n.d. [c. 1989]
- Folder 9 Computer-Enhanced Meetings reviews and publicity clippings, 1985-1988 and n.d.

Series III: Institute for Better Meetings, 1990-1993

Scope and Content Note: DeKoven’s Institute for Better Meetings sought to improve business meetings through collaboration and fun. This series houses brochures, order forms, an instruction booklet, publicity clippings, and other ephemera. [The library also holds the related book *Connected Executives: A Strategic Communications Plan* (1990).]

Box 1

- Folder 10 “Products and Services Brief,” Institute for Better Meetings, n.d. [c. 1990]

- Folder 11 “Connected Executives: A Strategic Communication Plan” order form, n.d. [c. 1990]
- Folder 12 “The Meeting Meter” instruction booklet, Institute for Better Meetings, © 1990, with photograph, 1991
- Folder 13 Institute for Better Meetings folders, n.d. [c. 1990]
- Folder 14 Institute for Better Meetings reviews and publicity, 1991-1993 and n.d.

Series IV: Other projects, 1977-2011

Scope and Content Note: This series contains materials related to other DeKoven projects, including inventing games, playful activities, collaboration, and *The Well-Played Game*.

Box 1

- Folder 15 “New Tic Tac Toe,” Bernie DeKoven, © 1977
- Folder 16 *New York Times* Acrostic Puzzle [with “The Well-Played Game” as part of the solution], December 10, 1978
- Folder 17 “Interview met Bernie DeKoven en Eric Zimmerman,” Niels’t Hooft, ITEMS magazine, 2011 [in Dutch]
- Folder 18 “DeKoven video assets” DVD, n.d. [Towers game, ping pong story, “A Potpourri of Playfulness” activities footage]