By Jackie Eubanks

(FRANKFURT, GERMANY) Here I am outside the Frankfurt Book Fair (with some alternative presses and the press, which has been segregated out). The Fair itself is straight out of Weimar in the ’20’s—’30’s (considering the inflation of book prices). The weekend I arrived the Munich folk elected the right-wingers again—and many cheered because the right-wing had lost 2 seats in parliament. At that rate, in 100 years the place could be turned around—and at that rate, inflation here will continue to rise as it does in the states so that it will be ripe for fascism. Much has been learned since the Second World War about civilian control (already each person must carry personal identification, with address noted, for presentation any time requested by police) and so the progressive forces are limited to underground and terrorism to get attention.

(continued on p. 4)

(STREBSKE PLESO, SLOVAKIA) It took the bottom of her savings for Elizabeth Morrissett to get to the 1978 International Federation of Library Associations conference here. Arriving in Warsaw via budget fare (the most miles for the bucks) she carried a 3 lb. tent and a polar-guard sleeping bag, for camping is very easy in Europe. Buses go to the campgrounds, which are fenced, guarded, cheap, and supplied with such assets as restaurants (often) or stores (often), and hot showers (usually), places to wash clothes and heat soup. Trains and buses in Poland and Czechoslovakia are also inexpensive. People dealing with Americans trying to speak Polish and Czech are very patient (considering the aggravations).

(continued on p. 2)
Letters... problem patrons

To the editor:

It is tragic to see the SRRT Newsletter sink into such socially irresponsible Platonikism as Gay Frances Boughourian's "Problem Patrons" on page 2 of your September issue. It is further evidence of the death of SRRT's once exalted role as librarianship's conscience. Are we supposed to close the libraries to all but the clean, middle class who can comprehend such obtuse concepts as "libraryness"? Yes, a library is "a mission", and it has a mission for all patrons, those with and without problems. Let's rededicate ourselves to our once humane calling of service to all, instead of abdicating our jobs to the cops, the politicians, or the union leaders who think that they own all of our public institutions. Let's not buy the neurotic hysteria that urges us to bar access to libraries to "...the unwashed ...the spaced-out...the disturbed..." The library is a "way station" to a better life, and it cannot be abused by anyone except those professional elitists who think that it was built for their comfort. A library, "unviolated" or not, is surely not just "a place to work." It is, contrary to Boughourian, a public agency, a public place, and open to the public. Let's not let a gang of scared elitists push our libraries a step further away from the whole public in order to insure that those elitists don't have to deal with those legitimate library patrons who make them uncomfortable.

We don't need new kinds of discrimination, particularly those kinds that single out the weakest groups, the groups least able to defend themselves against the Albert Shankers of librarianship.

John M. Berry
Librarian, Member of SRRT

The "problem patron" poem published in the September issue left a rancid taste in my mouth (and heart). The poem echoed the sentiment expressed by librarians at the New Jersey Library Association Fall Conference where a seminar was held on the subject. I was appalled that so many librarians of diverse backgrounds, ages, and ethnic groups were so ready to pounce on the first patron to raise his/her voice a decibel. These librarians, as well as your poet, wanted no contact with the very people who might need our help and compassion the most. To them, the best way to deal with the "problem patron" was to incarcerate him, to ban him from our libraries forever. What is going on here? Are we so ready to give up? Do we think of ourselves so useless that our efforts don't matter to anyone? Or do we just want to sit behind our desks, wearing glasses, hair in a bun, ready to silence the first intruder to demand our attention? If we don't want any disturbances, any challenges, do we just want to be bothered by our famous "problem patron" rather than someone define the animal so? We don't, I'm afraid you might be talking about me or the high school students coming to my town's library), why don't we just hang a sign on the door saying, "Don't bother to come, this library is for librarians only."

Don Figueredo

For further comments on the subject of problem patrons (sic) by John Berry, see the editorial in the November 1, 1978 issue of IFLA.

Slovakia

I.F.L.A. in SLOVAKIA

I.F.L.A. was invited this year, a working meeting. The American Library Association delegation was large and unorganized. There were no policy positions discussed at meetings with all delegates. Conversations among American mostly dwelled on the sufferings occasioned by threats of further travel agency and where and what to eat and drink. The delegation was a group of people on their own.

One of the things which make I.F.L.A. interesting is the large amount of information exchanged, including plans for our own country and association not yet available back in the U.S. Because of the removal from the real seats of power (that is, funding agencies such as home governments and UNESCO) the professionals at I.F.L.A. have a lovely, idealistic and optimistic view of world cooperation and the papers are exciting futurology. Morrissett will be glad to loan Donald Broughart's paper on universal access which was one of the best papers this year to anyone who would like to read it and promises to return it.

With pleasure, Morrissett found a home for a Working Group on Information on Conflict Resolution and Peace Making in the Social Sciences Section. A big job this year is to locate the际ional members of this working group and to establish its goals and plans. But it is now on an international agenda. Volunteers to prepare questionnaires and letters into German, French and Russian are solicited. The subject will be discussed at midwinter to explore I.F.L.A. contributions to this group.

Elizabeth Morrissett
The Gay Task Force, active for eight years now, is steaming ahead with more plans to deal with discrimination against gay people in libraries and to get more and better gay materials into libraries and out to users.

Our Book Award Committee is accepting nominations for the 1979 Gay Book Award. Deadlines are January 31, 1979. The award is meant to "recognize and honor books of exceptional merit relating to the gay experience." It's given to books that are substantial contributions to the gay literature, whether fiction, non-fiction or biography. Nominations first considered are recent works, but previously unrecognized titles or important reprints are also considered. Anyone may nominate one or more titles; each nomination must include your statement of why you feel this work merits the Gay Book Award.

"Censored, Ignored, Overlooked, Too Expensive?" Our booklet of tips for non-librarians on getting gay materials into libraries is finished, thanks to Stuart Miller and five other Gay Task Force members. Cost was $1.00. Copies should be available by ALA Midwinter meetings in January 1979, tentative price $1.00.

At ALA's annual conference in June 1978, our task force launched a survey to find out about the concerns of gay librarians, especially concerning job discrimination. By late November 1978, 98 questionnaires have been returned. More than four-fifths of the respondents are from women—though the majority of librarians and other library workers are women—and most of the responses are from people who are at least partly open about being gay. We'd like to hear from more gay women and from more closeted library workers, men and women. So we're holding open the hopper for returned questionnaires until mid-January. To receive a copy, call or write Barbara Gittings (below).

The Gay Task Force, active for eight years now, has its first meeting on the very morning of the Supreme Court's Bakke decision. This was a shattering moment for the librarians, but the decision underlines the need for librarians, like everyone else, to re-examine their social role. The task force serves as one channel for such examination—through which library service can be explored in its relationship to history, social justice, legal doctrine (especially free speech theory). In practice the means task force will collect materials—films, books, pamphlets—which shed light on the librarian's social role, or those materials which librarians can find useful in building a culturally pluralistic resource enter in their communities. At issue, basically, in the age-old effort to bridge the gap between individual and public interests.

The Gay Task Force at the 1978 convention included as member Alternativa, a film produced and distributed by Tricontinental Films. This fictional documentary depicts the daughters of a black family and a white family who quarrel, unaware that the school's placement procedures are the real cause of the trouble. These procedures are ultimately revealed on video, biassed, and damaging to the aspiration and potential of both young women. The film (30 minutes in length) is notable for its simplicity and directness in exposing the gross discrimination and debt exposure of institutional racism.

Two filmstrips were also shown: "Understanding Institutional Racism," which analyzes how a number of agencies perpetuate racism, and "From Racism to Pluralism," a personal narrative by an educator who traces the emergence of a new awareness of institutional racism.

Guest speakers at the meeting were Marva DeLoach, Black Caucus member, and Diane Kadanoff, coordinator of the SRRT Task Force on Women. Ms. DeLoach explained the "high art of misunderstanding blacks" and administered a "Racism Quotient Test," giving everyone a chance to confront some widespread misconceptions. Ms. Kadanoff summarized actions initiated at the 1978 convention: the move to relocate the 1979 midwinter meeting, and other progressive steps in challenging racism.

A "Basic Reading List" on racism and sexism was distributed and a number of items exhibited.

PEACE

by Elizabeth Morrisaett

The Task Force on Peace Information is planning meetings focusing on organization during the midwinter meetings in Washington. We hope to get people who are interested in peace information involved in the collection of information on peace collections. A basic peace bibliography which can be used to evaluate general collections of public and university libraries for the quality of peace collections which they contain and the international exchange of materials on conflict resolution are also topics on the agenda.

We also have a commitment from the Mobilization for Survival to speak at ALA's annual conference in June.
EUROPE (continued from p. 1)

At the Book Fair, and in society at large, dissidents have been given their own "sandboxes" to play in—for there are many feminist, Left, and literary presses represented (at huge cost to them in money and time). And South Africa continues, and Rhodesia, and so forth. It reminds me of the academic "sandboxes" of Feminist Studies, Black Studies, and Third Worlds, even American Studies and Puerto Rican Studies, which were being set up in the late '60s in response to student demands. They are now all over the U.S. being dismantled, and the folks teaching and learning in them are being thrown out as the money crunch continues. It doesn't take long to sweep away a sandbox.

Today I tested my theory about "sandboxes" with some radical and avant garde presses inside the Buchmesse. The absence of two presses who had paid and yet had not attended supported the view (Daughters, Inc. of New York City and Come Out Verlag, München didn't participate for various reasons). Others inside, however, said that "it's the only game in town" and griped about table and placement.

I spent time with the feminists' presses, hearing about the conference held last weekend in Munich (so more was going on than the elections!) Eight countries were represented and prisoners' support groups, among Third World support groups, of course, were represented and prisoners' support groups as well. Some of the publishers (few) are at the big Buchmesse as well as local ones. Other presses and literary presses represented (at huge cost to play in—for there are many feminist, Left, and literary presses). It's being held on the second floor of the Linden Library, then walked over and found it was more private than I thought it would be.

Today my day was more pleasant because I spent time with the feminist presses, hearing about the conference held last weekend in Munich (so more was going on than the elections!) Eight countries were represented and prisoners' support groups, among Third World support groups, of course, were represented and prisoners' support groups as well. Some of the publishers (few) are at the big Buchmesse as well as local ones. Other presses and literary presses represented (at huge cost to play in—for there are many feminist, Left, and literary presses). It's being held on the second floor of the Linden Library, then walked over and found it was more private than I thought it would be.

Today I went to the ALTERNATIVE Book Fair and it was—a crash course in class struggle at the Royal Cambridge Hotel and a pick-me-up at the Kropotkin's Lighthouse Bookshop in London, it seemed logical to proceed to Belfast before approaching England again.

In Belfast, a great pleasure of applying what I had learned in Cambridge at the Belfast Europa, amid great enterprises and behind heavy security. Arriving late, I went for a walk to get out from behind those bars (there were armed soldiers on the street and me). Very peaceful. I asked one soldier the hours of the Linden Library, then walked over and found it was more private than Cambridge University.

Also visited with the folks at "Just Books" a collectively run bookshop (so community center suggested to me at Kropotkin's). Some excellent local publications I found there included the views, not often published, of poor British soldiers separated from their families for no good reason. I checked out the story concerning attacks on Black-owned bookstores with Bookshop Joint Action (5A Chigwell Place, Ealing, London W13) that appeared in Black Scholar magazine (July-August 1978) and found out the sad extent to which the "National Front", the right-wing group was being tolerated and even encouraged by the home office. The London Book Fair was open to the public, and everybody had tables and not booths as in most "trade" fairs. There was no charge for attendance.

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Ethnic Materials Task Force

By David Cohen

Page 5

Two hundred ALA members joined the workshop last June to participate in the workshop on "Tracking Community Ethnicity" chaired by Beth J. Shapiro (Urban Policy and Planning Librarian, Michigan State University) and Prof. Clara Jackson, Kent State University School of Library Science. Participants included Prof. Joe T. Darden, Community Services Specialist of the Chicago Public Library; Dr. Peter Cohen, Community Services Specialist of the Chicago office of the U.S. Census Bureau; and Ronald Washington, Director of Ethnic材料 Task Force in charge of planning for the program.

The business meetings of the task force produced two important decisions. One was to publish a newsletter three times a year with the help of a $2 subscription price, to report on programming, ethnic publications, research, curriculum, community relations and outreach. Also decided was a focus on reaching the adults in the community relatively short time will pinpoint the needs of the community and begin a plan of action. The irony is especially appalling when the community itself has seen, if any, WASP-ish characteristics in which the needs of the community are concerned. Might not the well-meaning librarian who applies his or her own information values on the community resemble the equally well-meaning missionary seeking converts to a religious value structure?

I am writing of something more than the feeling of dislocation which comes from leaving one culture and moving to another - culture clash. The juxtaposition of the WASP in the Black American ghetto or the Chicago community or the West Indian island. The question arises: Can you be responsive to the needs of a community which is unlike anything in your personal experience?

Librarians should have a knowledge of and sensitivity to the needs of the community. Your professional commitment to the community’s fatalism is well-founded. Others of your basic concepts will be challenged everyday, even while teaching how to use the card catalog.

In language, too, you may find yourself in the minority. "Standard English" in many parts of the country is used as a secondary language in the community. Deprived of the natural familiarity of common ways of speaking, communicative difficulties must be conquered in every personal interview and publicity release. Reference service suffers, obviously.

Language barriers and other factors lead to different attitudes toward books, literacy, and information. Your patrons could not read well in that second or foreign language called "Standard English" in order to make use of most library materials. Another barrier for your users may be that the library collection relects very little of their own culture. Perhaps this is one reason that you may find an understandable mistrust of library-based information, doubt about its usefulness, and equal acceptance of up-to-date and out-of-date facts. Opinions of liberals and local big shots, regards for accuracy, may carry much more weight with your patrons than the encyclopedia or other authoritative sources.

All of which may add up to a low estimate of library services in the community. Why should people be alienated from their library? Perhaps the source of funding comes from outside the community, resulting in a lack of local control or involvement over time. The professional staff may have been recruited from the outside, resulting in leadership foreign to the community. Your professional commitment to the importance of library services will run up against skepticism at best and rejection at worst.

Not every situation reaches the extreme of outright rejection of the librarian or the library. However, when taking a position in a non-WASP community, the WASP librarian should be aware that library science will only solve part of the problems that lie ahead. For the clash between cultures you will need mutual respect, the ability to compromise and to accommodate their real needs with your own.

A healthy sense of humor will prove the best tool for the job. You’ve got to be able to laugh at yourself and your mistakes rather than mucking around in guilty feelings. And no library school that I ever heard of was well known for its commitment to humor.
It is an axiom that, when searching for a job, one should try to dovetail one's interest, training, and skills. For this reason, I walked into the National Action Center of the National Organization for Women in Washington, D. C., last fall and offered my services. I saw this gesture as the culmination of my professional training (in Library work since 1965, M.L.S. in 1966) and my activism - having developed and expanded my Feminist commitment during the previous six years I had lived in New Jersey. As the officers of N.O.W. were looking, at the same time, for someone to bring order to the mass of materials accumulating in the office, I was hired as a part-time consultant to develop a system for organizing these materials. However, once on the job, I convinced the officers and members of the National Board of the need for a true library/resource center at the Action Center (the national office of the organization). This was not so difficult a task as you may believe; what amazed me was how N.O.W. had achieved so much through the years with no detectable system for locating information when needed.

Presently, I am in the process of creating a functioning library for the officers and staff at the Action Center. From the beginning, I recognized the uniqueness of this position - and the challenges that it presented. As N.O.W. is different from many other women's organizations in that it is committed to political activism, it is possible to work on a wide range of issues important to women. The library had to be more comprehensive than the libraries of other, more specialized women's organizations. Furthermore, N.O.W.'s library had to be different from any feminist librarian's; most of these libraries acquire and disseminate the records of our times while N.O.W. is creating these records. Therefore, it was obvious that the collection had to be developed with two major orientations: feminist and political. It is as important to locate a quote of Susan S. Anthony's as it is to find the provisions of a bill introduced into Congress yesterday.

Not only was the library situation obviously exceptional, but my job was different from any I had held previously in fourteen years of working in libraries. In addition to establishing the usual routines of acquisitions, cataloging, periodical subscriptions, record keeping, etc., I had the opportunity to conceive, plan, and fulfill a position unique in the N.O.W. organization. Everyone recognized the need for controlling the chaos; in fact, I was even hired on the expectation that I could wave a wand and create instant organization. It did not happen.

At first, I spent my time trying to organize all the materials (reports, articles, clippings, testimony, books, etc.) that somehow had found their way to one room in the office (the proverbial "library"). I recognized the need for classifying everything into some system that could be easily understood and used by the staff - a scheme that reflected N.O.W.'s organizational structure and activist orientation. Therefore, I developed a decimal classification system based on N.O.W.'s internal structure and issue areas, adding headings and subheadings where appropriate. This system is now in its fourth revision and, along with its index, has provided the means for the staff to access information that at one time was dependent on someone's ability to remember.

Now that this system exists, I have a guide as to what materials are needed. Currently, most of the Action Center staff is oriented to the ERA extension/ratification effort. Aside from a few people in specialized fields, no one is able to stay on top of all the issues affecting women. Notwithstanding this, N.O.W. is always being called upon to make a statement, take a stand, respond to some issue or event. Background information is needed - data are required - and it is my job to provide them. What I do not have in the library (and sometimes what I do not have is everything I need), I research myself. Thus, for instance, I wrote a memo on the use of filibusters to block controversial issues in the history of the Senate and of the success of cloture votes to end the filibusters (to provide background information for our drive for the ERA extension in the Senate).

A part of my job is to be aware of on-going events that could impact women in some significant way. Therefore, although there are other organizations that have more in-depth material on one specific topic, such as Title IX compliance, I try to collect enough information that we can do research for our own purposes. And, of course, I try to collect anything on the ERA that would help N.O.W. in its advocacy. Right now, the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment is the cornerstone of N.O.W.'s efforts, and anything I can do to advance the cause if part of my job. This includes such non-standard library activities as attending House and Senate committee hearings, and such exhilarating moments as the House and Senate passage of the bill extending the time limit for ratification.

My plans for the future of the library at N.O.W. are to continue implementing the procedures I have developed, refining and changing them as the need occurs. When one is living the revolution, there is too little time for reflection, but at some point I intend to go through all the files and send those materials that give historical perspective to the N.O.W. archives at the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe. When the time comes to write a history of the second wave of feminism in this country, N.O.W.'s records will be in an accessible form.

Meanwhile, on with the revolution!
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*** Our Gay Film Festival at the 1978 conference showed eighteen documentary 16mm films. Comments ranged from "A great success!" to "I fail to see how the subject of homosexuality is relevant to libraries." Copies of our film list with distributors’ names and addresses are free for a stamped reply envelope.

*** We're working on the 6th edition of our famous GAY BIBLIOGRAPHY, a non-fiction list of books, periodicals, articles, pamphlets, audiovisuals, and directories and bibliographies. Should be available Spring 1979, tentative price $60+. The new edition will group books, articles and pamphlets under topical headings such as Law and Civil Rights, Social Sciences (or Human Sciences), Religion and Ethics, Gay Liberation Movement, Biography and History, Literature and the Arts.

We welcome suggestions—so send us your list of those books, articles and pamphlets you feel should be included in which sections of the
bibliography. Tips: Please give complete citation information on each item, including addresses of pamphlet publishers (but not book publishers). Include all relevant lesbian items. Articles can be book chapters as well as articles from non-gay periodicals (if we tried to list articles from gay periodicals the job would be unmanageable). Pamphlets include special gay issues of non-gay periodicals. Keep in mind that our GAY BIBLIOGRAPHY serves a huge audience--over 33,000 copies of the 5th edition have been distributed--an audience that's diverse in interests, reading ability, etc.

We'll also be grateful for suggestions about audiovisuals, periodicals, and directories/bibliographies to list in their separate sections. We'd rather hear about an item ten times than miss hearing about it because everyone assumed we knew.

*** Recently we issued two short specialized lists, GAY RESOURCES FOR RELIGIOUS STUDY and GAY AIDS FOR COUNSELORS. One or two copies of either list are free for a stamped reply envelope; bulk rates, 5¢ each counseling list, 8¢ each religion list. We're also preparing short lists on gay health and on gay civil rights.

*** Gay Task Force members Frances Hanckel and John Cunningham now have a contract with a major trade publisher's YA division for their book for teenagers about the gay experience. In their text, they're using anecdotes and reminiscences, with the names changed, and they'd be grateful to get more of them. If you have a story to tell, or something to say, about being a gay adolescent (or knowing one), please send it along to the Gay Task Force for the authors.

*** Our list of GAY BOOKS IN FORMAT FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED, first issued in 1976, will soon be revised. As before, copies will be free for a stamped reply envelope.

*** We've helped the Gay Teachers Association of New York City to prepare a list of gay materials for use in schools by teachers, counselors, and students. The list will appear soon in the GTA Newsletter. (For a copy, send a donation with your request to cover costs, to Gay Teachers Association, 204 Lincoln Place, Brooklyn, NY 11217.)

*** We're collecting suggestions for our program event at ALA's 1979 conference in Dallas. The program should be clearly relevant to librarians' professional interests--and should also be entertaining and fresh. What's your idea for what we might do?

*** Our GAY MATERIALS CORE COLLECTION LIST is a buying guide for small and medium size public libraries. It lists twelve basic gay books, six pamphlets, and Gayellow Pages. (Copies of list are free for a stamped reply envelope.) We were spurred to do this list when we found out that H. W. Wilson's PUBLIC LIBRARY CATALOG, even in 1977, recommends only two books on homosexuality: Merle Miller's ON BEING DIFFERENT, and the Wyden's very anti-gay GROWING UP STRAIGHT! No matter how widely we distribute our core collection list, it can never be as influential as Wilson's buying guide. So how can we get the PUBLIC LIBRARY CATALOG to serve up a better selection of gay materials? When we contacted PLC about this two years ago, we learned there's a complicated sort of jury of librarians who pass on all suggested titles--so just sending in our recommended titles, which we did, doesn't help much. We'd like to recruit someone who knows what more can be done and who's willing to do it. If you're the one, please call or write!

-- Barbara Gittings, Coordinator
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