

# SRRT Newsletter

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## WANTED: PANELISTS

The Librarians' Task Force of the the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) is sponsoring two panels at the NWSA Annual Conference, June 11-15, 1986, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Any librarians who have interest and expertise in the panel topics or who can refer the task force to appropriate panelists are urged to contact Lori Goetsch, Information/Reference Dept., Michigan State University Libraries, East Lansing, MI 48824-1048 (tel. 517-353-8705). The panels are described below:

### *Working for Change: Librarians as Activists*

Throughout the history of librarianship, librarians have assumed an advocacy role in many social and political arenas such as literacy, nuclear war, equal rights, occupational health, comparable worth, ageism, and intellectual freedom. What role should librarians and libraries play in furthering these social and political goals? Can libraries be criticized for "censoring the right" by supporting "liberal" issues? These questions, as well as descriptions and analyses of librarian activities in specific movements, will be addressed by the panelists in this session.

### *Bringing Global Feminism into Libraries*

As our world becomes smaller, libraries take on a critical role in responding to information needs about other cultures, yet information about women is often

suppressed through the systems of library organization that have been created. Librarians need to assist users in interpreting or circumventing these systems and to develop more equitable means of accessing information on the status of women in other countries. Library services and resources such as online searching, bibliographic instruction, government documents, and archives are useful tools for accomplishing these tasks. Panelists will address both the practical problems and theoretical issues of bringing global feminism into libraries.

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## PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

On Saturday, January 18, 1986, during the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Chicago, the ALA Committee on Professional Ethics will hold a hearing on the feasibility of developing a self-policing mechanism for the ALA Code of Ethics. The hearing will take place from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. All persons interested in expressing a point of view are urged to attend.

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## BOOKS FOR NICARAGUA

The New York Book Fair, in concert with the ALA/SRRT Collective Book Exhibit Program and the New York Public Library Guild, has an on-going

project to collect Spanish and Spanish-English books for Nicaragua. They will be sent to aid in the literacy campaign, to communicate with professional writers, and for direct library support in a people-to-people effort.

Books may be sent for forwarding to Nicaragua to Jackie Eubanks, ALA/AIP/CBEN, Brooklyn College Library, Brooklyn, NY 11210 (tel. 718-780-5510).

Donations of money for library supplies may be sent to Marion Pooro, President, New York Public Library Guild, Local 1930, DC 37, AFSCME, 125 Barclay St., New York, NY 10007. Please make checks payable to: Local 1930/NYBF.

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#### GAY TASK FORCE

Last July, the Gay Task Force set up some committees to work on both internal and external projects. They will be meeting as part of our Midwinter business meeting on Saturday, January 18, 8-10 p.m. The committees will work on their own and also bring back proposals to the task force as a whole. Here is what they have been up to, and a preview of what they plan to do in January in Chicago.

##### *Core List*

One of the functions of the Gay Task Force has been to issue a core collection list of non-fiction books and pamphlets that present or support positive views of the gay experience and are recommended for small and medium-size public libraries. Begun in 1971, the "Gay Materials Core Collection List" was last revised in 1980. Of the fourteen titles on that list, four are now out of print, and many new titles have appeared that are worthy of consideration for inclusion. A Core List Committee is working on updating the list.

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Editor.....John Hostage  
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Linda Pierce  
John Sheridan

Deadline for next issue is Feb. 15

Once the revised list is completed, the goal of the Core List Committee is to assure its distribution and publication in appropriate library literature so that book selectors will be aware of the task force recommendations, and the books may find their way into public library collections.

Betsy Morris, chair of the committee, will be seeking input from committee members and any other interested persons. If you have suggestions for titles that you think should appear on the list, please send them to her at the New Haven Public Library, 133 Elm St., New Haven, CT 06510.

##### *Gay Materials for Libraries*

In Chicago, an informal and ad hoc "committee" discussed some of the problems of placing useful gay publications in public, private, school, and academic libraries, and how to support librarians who are interested in providing helpful and informative materials for their readers.

The group also discussed a major campaign to promote distribution through libraries of free authoritative medical and governmental publications about the AIDS plague. We look for further discussion during the next conference meetings and possible cooperation with other ALA units. By then there may be more substantive literature than what is now available. There is no thought that ALA would publish anything.

Lee Ash volunteered to approach the publishers of *The Advocate* to inquire whether it would be possible for them to consider a regular edition for libraries that would not include the classified advertising pages.

#### *Social*

New York City's Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade on Sunday, June 29, takes place in the middle of next summer's Annual Conference. The Social Committee is trying to plan Gay Task Force events in the gay community. For the first time in quite a while, we will have an official librarians' contingent in a pride parade. Other social events that are being investigated include a dance at the New York Gay Community Center, a gay history tour of lower Manhattan, and either a tour of feminist and gay bookstores, or a display by the bookstores at our dance. The committee is also looking into creating a handout orienting folks to the lesbian/gay community of New York.

#### *Structure*

Members of the Structure Committee have been looking into the rules under which we are supposed to operate as a task force of the Social Responsibilities Roundtable, especially with respect to governance and finance. We hope to figure out how to disseminate this information about how we operate. We have also been looking into the possibilities of becoming a Membership Initiative Group and making the GTF Book Award an official ALA award. At Midwinter we will try to formulate the pros and cons of these tricky issues for a presentation to the task force as a whole. The

Structure Committee may also recommend deciding or discussing goals of the task force. Why, in fact, do we exist? The idea would be to get a handle on how to prioritize our many ideas and projects. Come--it should be exciting!

#### *Thesaurus*

The working group on a subject thesaurus, classification schedule and lesbian/gay archives and libraries has been polled to establish agreement on specific goals (which may include indexing), their prioritizing, and the mechanics to be applied in their accomplishment. The group is also examining its role in relationship to the tasks of other working groups in an attempt to coordinate energies and avoid duplication of efforts. At Midwinter, the group plans to present a detailed agenda and the strategy for its achievement.

A list of contact people for the various committees and their addresses appeared in the September issue of the newsletter.

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#### GAY HISTORY/LESBIAN HERSTORY INTERNATIONAL MICROFILMING PROJECT

Sounds like a big project, doesn't it? It is, but it's far from impossible. It began with a very pressing need, and a very simple idea that was molded into a resolution that was approved "in principle" at the SRRT Action Council meeting during the ALA Conference in July 1985:

Whereas the need to preserve gay history and lesbian herstory <sic> exists because the resources and numbers of archives and collections devoted to its preservation are very limited,

Whereas much of gay history and lesbian herstory exists prior to the mid-1970s opening of small presses that began publishing gay and lesbian writers and exists in the form

of periodicals, magazines, and newsletters, and the creation of current gay history and lesbian herstory is still documented predominantly in periodicals, magazines, and newsletters,

Whereas many of these periodicals, magazines, and newsletters are or were published on poor quality paper using inferior printing techniques, gay history and lesbian herstory are being threatened by the disintegration of these publications, and a large portion of history will cease to exist when these publications disintegrate,

Whereas libraries in the past and present, whether consciously or unconsciously, have contributed to the oppression of gays and lesbians by limiting or providing no access at all to their history, therefore failing to educate the general public and directly oppressing gays and lesbians by refusing to acknowledge their existence and failing to preserve their history, and,

Whereas SRRT is opposed to the oppression of any minority people and further opposed to conscious and unconscious censorship of information,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT SRRT fully endorses the Gay History/Lesbian Herstory International Microfilming Project and believes that librarians should make it their responsibility to support and create gay history/lesbian herstory microfilm collections in their libraries, and

SRRT will lend its support to the project by printing information in its newsletter so that librarians of SRRT will become aware of this vital issue.

everyone is urged to attend the meeting of the Gay Task Force at ALA Midwinter. One person is needed to coordinate the project, which can operate as a series of collectives assigned to specific tasks.

The first collective should create a listing of gay and lesbian archives, special library collections, and individuals who have collections of gay and lesbian publications. A bibliography of these resources will determine what is available for microfilming and where it can be found--from university collections to the top shelves of closets. Everyone can help with the detective work of tracking down our history.

A second collective needs to research and compile a bibliography of what gay and lesbian publications already exist on microfilm. This can be done by reading manufacturers' catalogs and contacting gay and lesbian newspapers (for example, *Gay Community News* puts its publication on microfilm) and organizations.

With these bibliographies in hand, a third group should prioritize what gets filmed first, because hopefully there will be many. Some suggestions for priority:

- A) Pre-1965 materials
- B) Pre-1975 materials
- C) Publications included in Clare Potter's *Lesbian Periodicals Index* (to be published by Naiad Press)
- D) The oldest gay and lesbian publications still publishing
- E) Large and/or substantial publications
- F) Newsletters and/or publications of the oldest gay and lesbian organizations, such as the Mattachine Society, the Daughters of Bilitis (*The Ladder*), Metropolitan Community Church (*Journey*), and the Gay Activists Alliance in NYC
- G) Locally focused newspapers and newsletters.

Priority should always be given to the most complete collections.

Now, how to go about it? First,

To cover the legal aspects of filming, a collective should attempt to track down the copyright holders of periodicals, if applicable. Usually as a safeguard, money is placed in escrow if copyright holders cannot be found; that way filming can take place, and original authors may be recompensed (and therefore not sue) within five years. The people handling this task should make themselves painfully familiar with the new (1978) and old copyright laws.

Next, a public relations collective is needed. Librarians need to be encouraged to begin gay and lesbian history collections, including microfilm, in their own libraries. A list should be kept of all libraries willing to purchase the finished microfilm.

Finally, the microfilming companies can be approached. By using the non-profit tax status of any willing archives or organization, a company must be persuaded to take on the actual filming as a tax-deductible donation--in other words, at no charge. The people charged with this task should make themselves familiar with microfilm vs. microfiche and how companies authorize tax-deductible donations. The company should be persuaded to do the filming as a donation and supply copies to all archives and special collections who made available their periodicals for filming at no or very low cost. The company can then be given the right to sell to the libraries and institutions who are interested--the list previously compiled. In this way, public and university libraries, with greater monetary resources, will not be in "competition" with gay and lesbian archives for the same material.

Sounds ambitious, doesn't it? Yes. And it all begins with the first step: everyone pooling their resources and seeking out our vast gay and lesbian history that exists in periodicals.

## GAY RIGHTS ANNUAL

1984 was the International Year of Lesbian and Gay Action as proclaimed by the International Gay Association (IGA) of Lesbians/Gay Women and Gay Men, the first truly international organization of lesbians and gays. Within the call for action by the IGA was the recognition of the need for a global overview on gay rights and oppression. The IGA pledged itself to publishing an annual report on the status of gay men and lesbians globally. This pledge has resulted in the publication of the *Pink Book 85*, and a 1986 edition is in preparation. The *Pink Book* focuses attention on the legal and social predicament with regard to the human rights of lesbians and gay men. The *Pink Book* highlights the struggles as well as the progress being made by the world-wide lesbian and gay rights movement and discusses particular aspects of the situations in a number of selected geographic and cultural areas.

The IGA urges all SRRT members to help them get the book into libraries and into the hands of reviewers--thereby strengthening our visibility as persons of worth, while aiding our fight against ignorance and injustice.

For order forms or information: Dee Michel, 70 North Stanworth Dr., Princeton, NJ 08540; or Rob Pistor, Pink Book Editing Team, COC, Rozenstraat 8, 1016 NX, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

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## REVIEWS

*Changing Men*. Three issues a year. \$12. YMCA Community Center, 306 N. Brooks St., Madison, WI 53715.

A not-so-trivial question: What's the best men's magazine, the one that deals most honestly with how men relate to each other, to women, and to kids, the one that's gay-affirmative and opposes sex role stereotypes, the one that

"envisioning a world free of ... racism, militarism, and economic exploitation," the one that movingly explores men's hurts and joys and possibilities? *Esquire*? *Gentlemen's Quarterly*? *Playboy*? *M: the Civilized Man*? *Soldier of Fortune*? Uh-uh. It's *Changing Men*. For its first six years called *M: Gentle Men for Gender Justice*, it runs articles, graphics, songs, letters, poetry, and short fiction, plus a continually updated "Men's Group Directory," that should interest all men, not just straight, white, martini-toting or Marlboro-puffing jocks. Women, too. (In fact, Sally Roesch Wagner, a women's studies scholar, frequently contributes "men's history" profiles, and issue no. 13, under the former title, carried a passionate Andrea Dworkin talk: "I want a 24-hour truce during which there is no rape.")

Recent issues have addressed a host of intriguing topics, some "taboo" elsewhere, ranging from male rape, circumcision, and men's movement classism to gay fiction, porn, blue-collar work, and the Nicaraguan operations of an Alabama-based paramilitary organization, Civilian Military Assistance. Future issues will focus on heterosexual relationships, men of color, and men's health issues. Dedicated to discussing matters "important to changing men, affirming a healthy, life-loving, non-oppressive masculinity, and supporting the network of men and women working to end sexism," this is a mag for men who really care about themselves, their brothers, and their sisters--everywhere. And naturally it's a mag for libraries.

*The Nonviolent Activist*. 1984. Ten issues a year. \$15. War Resisters League, 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012.

Moral. Sensible. Literate. Nonviolent. And profoundly radical. Those adjectives best describe this expanded succes-

sor to the *WRL News*. Since it began, *The Nonviolent Activist* has metamorphosed from a house organ to an outstanding peace-and-justice magazine that readably and incisively explores issues as diverse as war tax resistance, media outreach, prisoner services, anti-apartheid protests, the Japanese peace movement, and opposition to ROTC. Although published on newsprint, it's an attractive, well-illustrated journal that also carries announcements and resource notes, as well as short news items (e.g. "Heavy Sentences for 'Pruning Hooks,'" "Women and the Heritage Foundation").

What's genuinely special about *The Nonviolent Activist* that can't be adequately described second-hand is both the quality and sensitivity of the writing. So here's a sample, from Wendy Schwartz's "Bitburg and Vietnam: the Wounds of War" (July/Aug. 1985): "If Reagan were sincere about reconciliation, he would have gone to Bergen-Belsen because he believes that keeping fresh the memory of the Holocaust is crucial to preventing a recurrence; and simply because his soul would not have rested if he did not bow his head before a German camp. He would have reminded the world how Hitler incinerated not only Jews, but also Catholics, gypsies, and homosexuals, demonstrating that no group is safe from such oppression, nor is any group free to turn its back on the oppression of others. Further, while he was honoring World War Two victims, Reagan would have also visited Dresden, where a hundred thousand civilians were killed by Allied firebombs. There, he would have asserted that such terror tactics have no justification, not even in war." That kind of sober analysis and ethical clarity make *The Nonviolent Activist* a particularly fine example of "alternative" publishing. And an excellent candidate for all library collections.

*Shmate*. Bimonthly. \$15. Box 4228, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Says 40-year-old editor Steve Fankuchen, "Contrary to popular belief, cloning was developed first by the Jewish press, not by the nation's genetic labs." To remedy the growing lack of diversity in the Jewish press, "Fanny"--a long-time political activist and single parent--started "The Rag" in 1982. "Today," he claims, "it stands virtually alone as a Jewish publication independent of all organizations, beholden neither to institution nor advertiser, devoted to serving and answerable to only its readers, guaranteeing a voice for all, not just the mainstream." So what's in this spiritual successor to the tabloid *Chutzpah* that makes it worth looking at by Jews and *goyim* alike? A lot. For instance, its second issue dealt with gay and lesbian Jews, hardly a favorite or common Hadassah/B'nai B'rith topic. Number 8 explored Jewish identity from seventeen highly individual, often passionate, perspectives, as well as featuring impressive Hagadah art. Another "special" focused on Israel, detailing a Jerusalem-Bolivia connection, critiquing Israeli arms policy, and condemning the dogmatic attitudes of both ultra-leftists and the Jewish-American establishment with respect to Middle East issues. An earlier number had demolished Reagan-ADL claims of rampant anti-Semitism in Sandinista Nicaragua, while others have variously examined Jewish humor, "caring," the Right, Jewish feminism, and Yiddishism, as well as running important Holocaust resistance bibliographies and oral histories by some of the Jewish vets who composed 40% of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade during the Spanish Civil War. But *Shmate* isn't only essays, art, and bibliographies. It's also a cascade of refreshingly candid and combative letters in each issue. It's occasional--usually moving--poetry and stories. And it's incisive book and film reviews. In short, it's a personal, cultural, and political mish-mash authentically reflecting the views and life of the myriad "other Jews," many of them secular, who

take pride in their identity and fight for just causes, but mostly don't buy Israel Bonds, join the American Jewish Congress, or subscribe to *Commentary*.

*The Nuclear Devil's Dictionary*, by James J. Farrell. 1985. Usonia Press, Box 19440, Diamond Lake Station, Minneapolis, MN 55419. 125 p. paper. \$7.95.

Fully acknowledging the "literary inspiration" of George Orwell and Ambrose Bierce, Farrell, who teaches history and American studies at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn., "translates the vulgar vocabulary of nuclear newspeak into common English in order to keep us all from being lexi-conned by the powers that be." His dictionary entries, ranging from A and ABM to Yield and Zero Option, are "meant to be both consciousness-raising and conscienceness-raising, and informative in the full sense of the word: conveying knowledge and informing (or forming within) the people who read it." In fact, his definitions are both accurate and wry (e.g., "Breeder. A reactor that breeds trouble by producing more fissionable material--especially plutonium--than it consumes") Like any good lexicologist, Farrell also specifies synonyms and antonyms, as well as furnishing plentiful cross references (e.g., "National Security ... --ant. personal security") Bierce and Orwell alike would applaud this effort--at once entertaining and enlightening--to demystify nuclear theology and render "nukespeak" understandable (if also frightening) to the unordained. And they'd surely appreciate the graphic dimension: some 44 stinging editorial cartoons by Herblock, Tony Auth, Jules Feiffer, Paul Szep, Pat Oliphant, and other anti-nuke artists. Ideal for libraries as a casebook of manipulative, Big Brother-ish jargon and a serio-comic treatment of atomic doomsday.

*All of the reviews above were written by Sanford Berman, Hennepin County Library, Minnetonka, Minn.*

Reviews of other materials of interest to readers of this newsletter are welcome and should be sent to the editor.

**CORRECTION**

The address given in the June newsletter for the magazine *Changing Work* included the wrong box number. The correct address is Changing Work, P.O. Box 5065, New Haven, CT 06525.

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