

GLBTRT Newsletter

A publication of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender
Round Table of the American Library Association

<http://www.ala.org/glbtrt>

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Vol. 23, No. 2 ♦ Summer 2011

GLBTRT Social in New Orleans

The Social Committee Eric Johnson, Tom Fortin, and Rod MacNeil and the GLBTR co-chairs, Anne Moore and Dale McNeill, are looking forward to welcoming everyone at our social during at this year's annual meeting in New Orleans. The social will be held at Hotel LeMarais (717 Conti Street) in the heart of the French Quarter from 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm Sunday the 26th. Donations will be gladly accepted to defray the costs of the event.

Hotel Le Marais is New Orleans' newest upscale boutique hotel. According to the hotel website, this French Quarter hotel is a modern and upscale sanctuary with four-star amenities and a high level of personal service.

This is the place to see and be seen. A trendy bar opens into a lush courtyard and offers a fine wine and tequila selection along with its signature purple cocktail.



Attend Membership Meeting and Participate in Vote for Over the Rainbow Committee

Over the Rainbow was given ad hoc status a year ago to complete important work meeting the missions of our Round Table, specifically creating an annual bibliography of "titles of interest to adult readers that reflect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) experiences." In the last year, OTR created an annotated bibliography of 108 recommended books and in less than 6 months and has had more than 4,000 hits on their new web page. This year the OTR has already identified 200 potential titles, of which 80 have been nominated by at least one Committee member.

Please attend the GLBTRT Membership Meeting on Sunday at 10:30 AM @ at the JW Marriott Hotel (JW-Maurepas Meeting Room), 614 Canal Street. Not only can you network with other members of GLBTRT, but one of the agenda items is approval of the Over the Rainbow (OTR) Ad hoc Committee application for permanent committee status.

Deadlines for the newsletter for the next year will be:

Fall 2011	August 31, 2011
Winter 2011	November 31, 2011
Spring 2012	March 20, 2012
Summer 2012	June 9, 2012

Please try to get your reports, articles, book reviews, etc. in by these dates or let us know if there will be a short delay so room

Kid Stuff

About young readers for people who care

June marks the twelfth national LGBT Pride Month, and I would like to describe some of the things that make me proud.

First is the progress that our community has made under the presidency of Barack Obama. He has signed the repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, an act that will allow lesbians and gays to serve openly in the military. He has work to stop discrimination against LGBT people in federal housing programs and in the federal workplace. Because of his efforts, LGBT people can freely visit their partners in the hospital. The White House has also led a global campaign to guarantee that the term "sexual orientation" be included in the United Nations resolution on extrajudicial execution.

During Obama's presidency, Congress passed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Crime. He has begun work to stop the threat of bullying of young people in the schools and joined administration officials to create "It Gets Better" videos. A commitment for next year is expanding access to HIV/AIDS prevention and care. The Office of Public Engagement has launched a new landing page, *Winning the Future: President Obama and LGBT Americans*, providing updates about White House actions that benefit the LGBT community.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/06/01/winning-future-lgbt-americans>

I'm proud of the young people who are willing and able to come out to fight for LGBTQ rights. During the past year, many of them fought their schools to attend proms with their same-sex loved ones and use their preferred gender identity for photos in the yearbook. In *A Queer History of the United States* (Beacon Press, 2011), Michael Bronski said that the events surrounding Save Our Children promulgated by hate-filled Anita Bryant in 1977 "would have taken quite a different turn if the voices of LGBT youth—proclaiming that they were not in danger,

but part of a larger LGBT community—had been publicly avowed." He recognized that the culture at that time would not have permitted them to speak, but "their visibility would have been an antidote to the fear and lies of Anita Bryant and her supporters."

Over 30 years later, young people are speaking out. When Tennessee Senate voted for its "Don't Say Gay" bill that prevented any discussion about LGBT issues in Grades K through 8, 13 high school students who attended the session opposed their action. These students were part of a larger group from three downtown Nashville high schools that attended every Senate meeting for two weeks as well as showing their opposition along the street outside the capitol.

I'm proud of the young people across the country willing to be open about their participation in Gay-Straight Alliances and other youth who stand up for bullied kids—like Olivia who reported the physical violence that suffered by a son of lesbian partners. Rebecca Haskell and Brian Burtch's *Get That Freak: Homophobia and Transphobia in High Schools* (Fernwood Publishing, 2011) supports Bronski's call for LGBTQ visibility in youth. According to the author's research, "silence about queer people and the issues affecting them fuelled homophobia and transphobia, which in turn further silences queer youth." The young people interviewed talked about the missing pieces in teacher training, curriculum, role models, and intervention in bullying. Young people are helping to change these omissions.

I'm proud of their legal struggles and the adults, such as ACLU lawyers, who support them in trying to achieve their rights such as the use of the Internet for information and social networking. One recent example is the communication with Kansas and Missouri public high schools demanding that they stop the censorship

of the web in areas of concern to LGBTQ communities after the Yale Law School notified the ACLU in its "Don't Filter Me" campaign when students reported schools' blocking Internet content.

I'm proud of other adults, especially librarians and educators, as they demonstrate the courage to provide young people with materials and information proving to them that they deserve an equal part of the great American pie. Reading Bronski's *The Queer History* would add to adults' understanding and appreciation of the past 500 years of LGBT experiences in our country. I honor Beacon Press for making this invaluable book the first in its *Revisioning American History Series*, devoted to "examining history through the lens of those groups whose stories have been excluded from the canon." In a highly readable style, the author writes, among many other things, about the diversity of gender identities accepted by the Native Americans when the white men first arrived, the practice (more frequent than many people realize) of same-sex love during all these centuries, and the accomplishments in the past half-century.

We can all benefit from reviewing the following from *The Queer History*,--An Outline of Imperatives for Gay Liberation, reprinted from Carl Whitman's "The Gay Manifesto" (1969):

1. Free ourselves; come out everywhere; initiate self-defense and political activity; initiate counter community institutions.
2. Turn other gay people on; talk all the time; understand; forgive; accept.
3. Free the homosexual in everyone; be gentle and keep talking and acting free.
4. We're been playing an act for a long time, so we're consummate actors. Now we can begin to be, and it'll be a good show.

I realize that I've painted a very rosy picture of our successes in this column. Yes, the term "sexual orientation" for the United Nations resolution—and everywhere—needs to include gender identity. Transgender people are often omitted from laws protecting gays and lesbians; I have not heard that term used at all in the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" debate. Young people are still killing themselves because of gender identity/orientation bullying, and ignorant principals are still outing them through suspensions for the "public displays of affection" which straight kids are allowed everyday.

But I plan to bask in the accomplishments for just a short time before diving back into the fray. Happy LGBT Pride Month!

-Nel Ward

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Letters to the editor, correspondence to the above address care of:

Sarah E. Wright
GLBTRT Newsletter Editor
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2011 Annual Conference Schedule

Saturday, June 25, 2011

Steering Committee I 8:00-10:00 am Morial Convention Center Rm 239

Rainbow Project Task Force/Committee 8:30-10:00 am Morial Convention Center Rm 240

All-Committees Meeting Time 10:30-noon JW Marriott Rm Conde

Stonewall Book Awards Committee I 1:30 – 3:30pm Embassy Suites Rm Andrew Jackson

(closed meeting)

Sunday, June 26, 2011

Membership Meeting 10:30 – noon JW Marriott Rm Maurepas

Stonewall Book Awards Committee II 1:30 – 3:30pm Royal Sonesta ROY-Board Room

(closed meeting)

GLBTRT Program: Vampirism Just 1:30 – 3:30pm Morial Convention Center Rm 285

Got A Little More Colorful: Queer

Vampires

GLBTRT Social 5:30 – 8:00pm Hotel LeMarais

Monday, June 27, 2011

Stonewall Book Awards Brunch 10:30 – 2:00pm Loews New Orleans Louisiana I

(Ticketed Event)

GLBTRT Program: Out of the 4:00 – 5:30pm Morial Convention Center Rm 285

Closet & Into the Library:

LGBTQ Programming

Tuesday, June 28, 2011

Steering Committee II 10:30 – 1:00pm Morial Convention Center Rm 236

Break Down Barriers with Human Library at ALA Annual

The Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) of the American Library Association is seeking volunteers to participate in a Human Library, to be held from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Monday, June 27 at ALA's Annual Conference in New Orleans in MARCC Blaine Kern A .

Volunteers will serve as "human books" and help attendees better understand people of different backgrounds and

cultures. "Human books" are "checked out" for one-on-one, respectful conversations. This unique opportunity allows volunteers to raise awareness of the biases and prejudices that participants have themselves or hold against others. The program ultimately promotes appreciation for differences in background and culture.

The Human Library (www.humanlibrary.org) is an outgrowth of a Danish anti-violence campaign. Since 2000, the movement has brought together people of different backgrounds to have meaningful dialogues, comprehend differences and seek common cause. Human Library programs have been hosted around the world, including Iceland, Australia, England, Brazil, Japan and the United States.

GLBTRT Programs at Annual

Vampirism Just Got A Little More Colorful: Queer Vampires

Sunday, 6/26: 1:30pm - 3:30pm

Convention Center - Rm 285

Vampire literature has enjoyed a huge upswing in popularity in recent years, mostly due to such works as the Twilight series and Let the Right One In. In this program we explore the experiences of LGBTQ vampires and their authors. Scheduled speakers are Jewelle Gomez and Dean James.

Out of the Closet & Into the Library: LGBTQ Programming

Monday, 6/27: 4:00pm - 5:30pm

Convention Center - Rm 285

This panel discussion will feature library workers' experience creating library programs that address the needs of LGBTQ users. Success stories, community controversies and practical advice will be shared. Scheduled speakers are Bleue Benton (Oak Park (IL) Public Library), Lise Dyckman (California Institute of Integral Studies), and Jim Patterson (Northwestern Connecticut Community College).

Speaking of Vampires...



I recently caught up with Lucio Privitello, a faculty member in the philosophy department at Richard Stockton College in Pomona, New Jersey regarding the publication he edited, *Blood Type: Writ(h)ing In&On TRUE Blood*. The book is a collection of essays from twenty-eight students that comprised Professor Lucio Privitello's Fall 2010 course, "Philosophies of Life and Death," otherwise known as True Blood and Philosophy.

Dr. Privitello is a proponent of a hands-on approach for learning and in the past has done projects that included getting education students to make board games, creating products that bring the topics to life for students. He is a friend of one of the editors of *The Simpsons and Philosophy* and he knew he would like to work on a book project with his students. Each student enrolled in the course wrote one paper which would in turn become a chapter in the book, some of those chapters include Death is Only the Beginning: Purpose in True Blood and Maryanne Forrester: The Adonic Puer of Dionysus. The course completes a general studies requirement at the liberal arts college and as you imagine was quite popular. Dr. Privitello required potential students to complete a permission of instructor illustrating knowledge of the show that included fifteen questions.

Readings from the course included *How Philosophers saved Myths: Allegorical Interpretation and Classical Mythology, Language and Myth, Dionysus, Myth and Cult, Monstrous imagination and The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience* and of course, viewing of the True Blood show on DVD. Through course readings the students investigated philosophical, ethical, mythological and literary issues within the HBO series *True Blood*. Students considered immortality, death, faith, love, the fantastic, the sublime, the monstrous, and meta-themes, such as popular culture and the humanities, film as philosophy, and the philosophy of mythology through interaction with the texts and the show.

The book resulting from the project could be a companion to the series from a philosophical perspective. It is quite interesting to think about the mythology of death in pop culture along with Dr. Privitello's students who were encouraged to unleash their imaginations and find inspiration in the modern monsters and myths of True Blood. *Blood Type: Writ(h)ing In&On TRUE Blood* is available from ComteQ publishing at the following address: <http://www.comteqpublishing.com>. ComteQ, a south Jersey publishing company is known for publishing academic texts surrounding the holocaust, but is supportive of the student project. All proceeds from the text will fund a foundation scholarship for the arts and humanities at Richard Stockton College.

- Sarah E. Wright, GLBTRT Newsletter Editor

Write Reviews or Articles for the GLBTRT Newsletter!

To become a part of the team of reviewers that publish in the GLBTRT Newsletter, or to receive a copy of our guidelines for book reviews, email Reviews Editor **Tracy Nectoux** at: GLBTRReviews@gmail.com. Or, if journalism is more your style, send in articles about GLBT library services and collections in and around your community.

Film Reviews

A Marine Story.

DVD. Dir. Ned Farr. With Drea Weber. Wolfe Video, 2011. 90 Minutes.



This film has won 17 Festival Awards and it's easy to see why. *A Marine Story* is a well-written story that gets to the heart of the absurdity that keeps GLBT people from serving in the armed-forces. The movie begins by telling the audience that it is "Based on true stories".

Drea Weber plays Major Alexandra Everett, "Alex," a mustang with a long and proud family history of serving our country. Put in the position to either earn

an honorable discharge or be kicked out of the military under the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, Everett returns home, where she is asked to mentor a young girl, Saffron Snow (played by Paris Pickard), who is on the wrong track and has been given a choice by a judge to either go to jail or join the military.

Weber and Pickard put their whole hearts into the roles they play. Weber's character deals with issues of telling her friends and family why she left the Marines, falling in love and living openly for the first time, and playing the no-nonsense Drill Sergeant to Saffron. Saffron on the other

hand is dealing with her own issues of growing up or else, leaving her druggie friends behind, and forging a new future for herself.

This film is not rated. It does contain violence and may not be suitable for younger viewers. I would recommend *A Marine Story* for public and academic libraries.

Reviewed by, **Rachael Elrod**
Reference and Instruction Librarian
The Citadel

Two Spirits.

DVD. Press & festival screener. Dir. Lydia Nibley. Riding the Tiger Productions, 2010.



Two Spirits, the excellent documentary directed, coproduced, and cowritten by Lydia Nibley, explores the brief life and murder of sixteen-year-old Fred Martinez in Colorado.

Fred was seen by his killer as gay, but was seen in his Navajo tradition as a "nadleeh," a person who blends masculine

and feminine characteristics—being two spirited.

As of this writing, *Two Spirits* is scheduled for television broadcast as a segment in PBS's series *Independent Lens* in June 2011. Interviews with family members, Native American scholars, and reenacted scenes examine the nadleeh tradition, Fred Martinez's life and death, and the impact of his death on his family and community. The film's score is performed by Native American musicians.

This documentary should be considered for purchase by all public and academic libraries, and would find use by those studying U.S. history, gender studies, Native American history and culture, hate crimes, and documentary filmmaking.

Reviewed by, **Dave Combe**
Librarian Specialist
E. P. Foster Library

Coming this fall to the *GLBTRT Newsletter, Letters to K.R.*

Send your questions about love, life and library science to K. R. Roberto. Please send questions to Newsletter Editor Sarah E. Wright via e-mail, swright@pwcgov.org.

Book Reviews: Youth

Payne, K.E. *365 Days*.

Advanced readers copy. Valley Falls, NY: Bold Strokes Books, 2011. Paperback. 194pp. \$13.95. ISBN: 978-1-60282-540-6.



Clem is determined to keep her diary up-to-date this year as she explores her changing feelings and dealings with her friends and romantic escapades. She is attracted to her elusive, female classmate J, while her clueless friends try to set her up with Ben. Meanwhile a girl named Hannah moves to town and confuses Clem further.

The reader follows Clem's comedic musings in her day-by-day diary. Fans of Louise Rennison's *Angus, Thongs, and Full-Frontal Snogging* will appreciate similarities between the bumbling, lighthearted heroines confessing their often-failed romantic escapades in diary format. Clem's awkward antics and

indifference towards school will resonate with readers in similar mindsets.

The trouble with *365 Days* is the quality of the writing. The prose is such a realistic depiction of how a teenage girl would write a diary that it fails to be art and instead reads like original fan fiction that somehow got published. Clem's character development also feels stunted and unrealistic. Perhaps her sudden, blind self-declaration of her sexuality is reflective of a changing society, but her thoughts feel like fluff rather than an engaging exploration of a young girl's life and awakening sexuality. The story seems to be set in the present-day, yet Clem needs to be taught about Facebook by her peers. These details, along with some rambling passages, add up to a clunky novel that distances itself from the audience it is written for.

It is certainly refreshing to read a

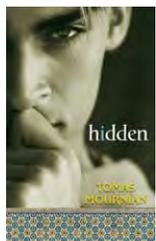
lighthearted novel that follows a girl as she realizes she is gay and experiences her first love. This novel could have filled a void; it never once delves into the politics of coming-out as a queer teenager or the backlash based on sexuality they often experience. It is a shame that the dull plot and poorly written prose make me unable to recommend this novel for collections in order to fill that void. I have great respect and admiration for what K.E. Payne has done, and hope to see her writing develop over time and produce the novels that I feel she is capable of.

I would only recommend this for public or high school libraries with a very large demand for LGBT literature, despite questionable writing quality.

Reviewed by, **Tracy Gossage**
MLIS Student
Dominican University

Mournian, Tomas. *Hidden*.

New York: Kensington Publishing, 2011. Paperback. 387pp. \$15.00. ISBN: 978-0-7582-5131-2.



Weetzie Bat into a blender and added a bit of spice, you'd get *Hidden*.

Ahmed has just been released from a rehabilitation center for gays, where he endured shock treatment and various medications. His overbearing and abusive father cannot stand him, especially since Ahmed reminds him of ex-wife—the one person he could not control and who left him. Ahmed makes a run for it and gets picked up by a couple of sympathetic lesbians who understand what is happening. Eventually, Ahmed makes his way to San Francisco and uses the phone number given to him at the rehab center to contact a safe house that will hide him away until he is 18.

Using the alias Ben, Ahmed now must convey his story, no matter how painful, in order to be hidden away so that various agents of the rehabilitation center do not find him and force him to return to rehab. Ahmed hides away with several other colorful characters: Anita (whose gender is always in question); the walking sex-on-a-stick, Hammer, who performs on the Internet for those willing to pay; and the brooding Latino J.D., who Ahmed lusts for, but whose friendship with Ahmed becomes muddled and confused as the story ends. There are a few other characters thrown in that are not particularly developed, but who move the story along.

The book's ending leaves room for a sequel, though Mournian wrote it as a stand-alone novel. *Hidden* also features an interesting Q & A with the author that explains where the story came from. Ahmed/Ben is a sulking character who typifies a confused gay teen—confused by the need to love and share love as he deals with his own demons and systematically compares them to the other wounded souls he is living with. He judges them, just as the reader does. We size

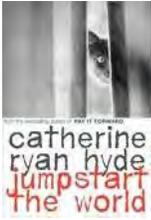
them up and try to label them, even if some of the characters defy labeling. Although difficult to believe in parts, *Hidden* illustrates a defect in American culture, highlighting families who send off a child to be "rehabilitated" into becoming heterosexual, as if being gay is a defect that can be fixed. This book is loosely based on real safe houses that have been featured in various news outlets; the characters' stories are somewhat based on actual accounts as well.

Hidden is appropriate for older teens and adults (due to adult themes, such as drug use and sexual situations) and is suitable for any library that wants to provide edgy fiction for its young adult and adult patrons.

Reviewed by, **Johnnie Gray**
Interim Director of Media Services
Christopher Newport University

Hyde, Catherine Ryan. *Jumpstart the World*.

New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010. Hardcover. 186 p. \$16.99. ISBN: 9780375866654.



Almost 16-year-old Elle is abandoned to an apartment when her mother begins dating a new man and wants her out of the way. Consequently, Elle shaves her head and adopts a terribly ugly, unfriendly cat in reaction

to her mother's beautiful vs. ugly world view. Upon moving into the apartment, Elle and her mother meet Frank, the gentle man next door who, along with his girlfriend Molly, offers help and friendship. When Elle arrives at school with her new

haircut, she is perceived as lesbian (she is not) and endures some bullying, but is welcomed into a group of students mostly on the GLBT spectrum. When her new friends learn that she has her own place, they convince her to have a party and when Frank drops, by they speculate whether Frank is a transman, which infuriates Elle, who abruptly kicks them out. Elle struggles with why this bothers her and finally determines that her attraction to him muddies her perception of herself.

In *Jumpstart the World*, Catherine Ryan Hyde explodes human binaries such as:

beautiful/ugly, sane/insane, good/bad, male/female, dependent/independent and embraces the idea that there is room for people to define themselves between the extremes. I loved this gentle book that covered important topics. It encourages each person to "just be as close to yourself as you can possibly bring yourself to be," regardless of other's expectations. This is a great book for all high school and public library young adult collections.

Reviewed by, **Sharon Flesher-Duffy**
Nashua High School South

Herren, Greg. *Sleeping Angel*.

Valley Falls, NY: Bold Strokes Books, 2011. Paperback. 237pp. \$13.95. ISBN: 978-1-60282-214-6.



Sleeping Angel is Greg Herren's first YA novel. He has two previously successful series of mysteries set in New Orleans. This novel is also a mystery, but not in the traditional sense. It follows Eric Matthews, who wakes up in the

hospital after an automobile accident with amnesia. In the car is the dead body of a former friend, Sean Brody. The boys were childhood friends until Eric discovered that Sean was gay and then started bullying him among other openly gay acquaintances. When Eric is released from the hospital, he enlists a former girlfriend

to help him piece together what happened before the accident and to try to recover his memory.

The action in the book is well paced and keeps the reader's interest with a mixture of flashback and present day action. The novel does have the traditional Herren plot point that the main character has some psychic abilities. The major downfall with *Sleeping Angel* is that it feels like an *Afternoon Special*. The plot points sometimes seem very contrived and heavy-handed. Without giving too much of the plot away, I was very disappointed with the final resolution of the main character's bullying.

I applaud Mr. Herren's attempt to add to

the continuing debate on gay bullying, but I think that the positive role models in his adult fiction have been much more successful.

Sleeping Angel has little to offend, but there is some sexual content. The novel is appropriate for any teenage reader, but probably would not interest older teens. I recommend this book to public libraries that have a large collection of YA gay fiction, but not to libraries with limited resources.

Reviewed by, **Scott Clonan**
Adult Services Librarian
West Charleston Library

Book Reviews: Non-fiction

Baines, Jenetta J. *100 of the Most Influential Gay Entertainers*.

Kernersville, NC: Argus Enterprises International, 2010. Paperback. 330pp. \$24.95. ISBN: 978-0-9846195-5-9.



Jenetta Baines' *100 of the Most Influential Gay Entertainers* is an excellent introduction to the world of drag kings and queens. Baines does a great job at providing a short biography of many different entertainers. More often

than not, these biographies are heartwarming and uplifting. Many include coming out stories that might give young adults the courage to come out, as well.

Entertainers is also a great resource for

those interested in the history of drag and the entertainers that helped bring it to the masses. Baines divides the book into sections that focus on older entertainers that have been performing for over twenty years, the gorgeous female illusionists, male performers that perform as males and are excellent at it, the big and beautiful drag queens, entertainers whose performances are a sight to behold, and the drag queens who specialize in comedy. Additionally, while there are more biographies on drag queens in *Entertainers*, Baines makes a special point to highlight drag kings as well.

From beginning to end, the reader can sense Baines' love of these entertainers, making this a great read for all interested. I would suggest this book to those with a curiosity about the drag world, its history, and its performers, both past and present.

While the language is tame, there is some graphic language related to violence; therefore, I would suggest this to ages 16 and up. Recommended for public libraries.

Reviewed by, **Talia Earle**
St. Catherine University

Mann, Jeff. *Binding the God: Ursine Essays from the American South*.

New London, CT: Bear Bones Books, 2010. Paperback. 231pp. \$15.00. Kindle Edition, lending enabled. \$7.99. ISBN: 978-1-59021-219-6.



Lambda Award-winning writer Jeff Mann follows up on his *Edge: Travels of an Appalachian Leather Bear* with this second collection of personal essays. And these essays are deeply

reflecting both his deep love for the land and people of the mountains and the deep pain the homophobia endemic to the region causes him.

Mann is a gay, pagan, leather bear, and in many ways, you might think this makes him out of place in the mountains of West Virginia. But he is also an Appalachian, and a country boy – and he can't live comfortably away from the region and its people. Instead, he uses his multiple outsider status – gay, blue-collar, mountain, pagan, and bear – to educate and enlighten the classes he teaches and

the communities in which he dwells. The essays in *Binding the God* will do the same for the urbane and sophisticated, the slender and smooth-chested, and the A-list gays, and will remind us all that the GLBT community and GLBT culture is everywhere.

That's not to say that Mann's home does not cause him pain. Despite his deep affection for the land and people of the Mountain South, he is acutely aware of its conservative politics. He looks around at the gym and sees a hot man, his perfect good ol' boy type – and realizes the object of his affection is likely straight and even homophobic. But then, he has a great time bonding with the men painting his house, and they don't mind that he's gay, because he can talk trucks and cowboy boots and country music. Being a hill-queer may be a contradiction – but it's one with which Mann has learned to live. And if he has to occasionally escape

to gay-friendlier climes, the mountains always call him back home.

Some may be wary of the sexual content, but without it we'd get a distorted view of the very complicated Jeff Mann. The essay "Bondage Tape in Budapest," for example, illuminates the relationship between leatherbear Mann and his vanilla partner. And when Mann talks about Tim McGraw, not just as a musician, but as a sex object – well, I can relate. I only ever listened to Tim McGraw because he looked hot on the album cover!

Recommended for all public and academic libraries, and particularly for those libraries serving GLBT or Appalachian communities.

*Reviewed by, John Bradford
Head of Automation & Technical Services
Villa Park Public Library*

Weil, Marcel. *Find Love in a Gay Bathhouse: An Eight-Step Guide to Finding Mr Right in a Gay Bathhouse & Then Making the Relationship Work*.

London: Homohappy Books, 2011. Paperback. \$14.99. Kindle Edition, lending enabled. \$2.99. [E-book](#) available from \$0.99. ISBN: 978-1-907867-01-9.



Well, sex, sure. But love in a gay bathhouse? That's really not what most people are after there...

But Marcel Weil did find his Mr. Right in a place more known for Mr.

Right Now. And when he mentioned this to a friend, and the friend discovered Weil had "sort of" used a strategy, he encouraged him to put it out there for "every gay man who goes to bathhouses and wants a boyfriend." Thus, Weil produced a practical and sex-positive book, which is explicit but not pornographic.

Weil takes the reader through the steps: finding the busy places and frequenting them; building up your self-confidence; making sexual encounters happen; dealing with sexually transmitted infections;

differences between having sex and making love; getting to a second date; helping love grow; and keeping the magic alive.

Sometimes the advice is basic – don't go in to the bathhouse right before closing; be approachable; always play safe; make sure you get his phone number – but there is a wealth of information here and I'd venture that even the most experienced cruiser could learn something new. (I never realized why my eyes got so dry, for example.)

Besides being comprehensive, the advice in *Find Love* is compassionate – Weil knows some people are not as comfortable with their bodies or sexuality as they'd like, and he suggests ways to get beyond these hurdles.

Of particular value are the thought exercises that Weil includes in each

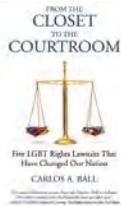
chapter, that will help readers apply the lessons to their own personal situations and attitudes. The reader has to think through the differences between sex and love, what he wants in a relationship and what he doesn't, how his lifestyle could help or hinder a budding romance.

The audience for this book is limited – it is not just gay men, but gay men who are open to finding true love in a bathhouse. Still, I recommend this book to public and academic libraries in metropolitan areas with gay bathhouses – and there are more of those than you might think!

*Reviewed by, John Bradford
Head, Automation & Technical Services
Villa Park Public Library*

Ball, Carlos A. *From the Closet to the Courtroom: Five LGBT Rights Lawsuits that Have Changed Our Nation.*

Queer Action / Queer Ideas Ser. 10. Boston: Beacon Press, 2010. Hardcover. 286 pp. \$27.95. ISBN: 978-0-8070-0078-6.



Bringing to life, and showing the human side of, five lawsuits related to LGBT issues of family, harassment, discrimination, marriage, and sex, Carlos Ball's *From the Closet to the Courtroom* takes dry legal issues and turns them into prose, without losing the seriousness or implications of these landmark cases.

While the book's table of contents does not

indicate the specific lawsuits discussed, one can quickly identify these through the introductory materials. The cases covered are *Braschi v. Stahl Associates* (1989), *Nabozny v. Podlesny* (1996), *Romer v. Evans* (1996), *Baehr v. Lewin* (1993), and *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003), respectively. In the narratives providing the background of each case, Ball also raises awareness of other issues in the LGBT communities occurring at the time, both of the case itself and the times leading up to the individual court case. Subheadings within the chapters organize the narrative into the main players

of the case, the background, the lawyer, the law with interpretations, and the impact with implications.

From the Closet to the Courtroom is a valuable book for those interested in LGBT rights, legal history in general, and those wanting to know more about the trials that went forth to bring about a more equalizing of civil rights for LGBT people.

Savage, Dan, and Terry Miller, eds. *It Gets Better: Coming Out, Overcoming Bullying, and Creating a Life Worth Living.*

New York: Dutton-Penguin, 2011. Hardcover. 338pp. \$21.95. ISBN: 978-0-525-95233-6



A companion to the popular video project, this book presents first-person accounts by adults assuring GLBTQ youth that, despite the challenges of being young and gay, life gets better.

The It Gets Better Project was initiated last year by sex columnist, Dan Savage and his partner, Terry Miller, in response to a string of highly publicized suicides by gay teens. As they explain in the introduction, Savage and Miller wanted to provide bullied youth access to the stories of happy, well-adjusted gay adults. So they created a YouTube channel, posted a video, and encouraged others to

submit their own. Thousands of videos later, this book collects transcripts of some of the best from YouTube, as well as new pieces. Like the video project, the book's success springs from the variety of voices represented, both famous and unknown. A sample of the writers includes a group of orthodox Jews, Broadway actors, an African-American minister, and a self-proclaimed "big rural dyke."

Though some of the stories suffer without their original video, none are longer than a few pages, allowing for easy browsing. The extensive discussion of bullying occasionally includes slurs and harsh language. There is also some mention of

sex and kink, but nothing explicit.

In addition to the narratives, the book is rich with resources for youth, parents, and teachers. The book and video project — now housed at www.itgetsbetter.org — present many opportunities for programming and teaching. Given the project's wide success and interest, this is a must for all public libraries and high school libraries.

Reviewed by, Kelly McElroy
Undergraduate Services Librarian
University of Iowa Libraries

McHugh, Erin. *The L Life: Extraordinary Lesbians Making a Difference.*

New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang-Abrams, 2011. Hardcover. 160pp. \$22.75. ISBN: 978-1584798330.



Conceived and written by Erin McHugh, and containing stunning portrait work by Jennifer May, *The L Life* is a glossy and selective *Who's Who* of American lesbians today. Part of its appeal is that it is not just a list of "power lesbians" -- though many of the individuals described in this book certainly qualify -- but rather all women who are continually working to improve the world in which we live. McHugh selected lesbians from vastly different walks of life, including a rabbi, a judge, a comedian, an actress, a sheriff, and, my personal favorite, an urban gardener. As a relatively new lesbian longing for role models, I read this book with relish, enjoying each portrayal as I encountered real life

versions of individuals in roles I had previously only met through *The L Word's* storyline.

The book's tone is casual, almost conversational, as though McHugh is talking directly to us, such as when she exclaims, "[I]f you don't know Beebo Brinker, oh, do you have a treat in store for you" (95). This is both the book's strength and its flaw, as some individuals are described with more enthusiasm than others. The text, however, is at its best when it allows the reader to meet these highly successful women as authentic people, describing their lives outside of their jobs, detailing their coming out stories, and sharing their insights about life, love, happiness, and being a change agent.

As the author states in her introduction: lesbians are everywhere, in every field, "the secret love child of the invisible sex" (6). As such, in the future I would love to see a more extended version of similar texts with greater diversity, particularly in terms of age, race, and ethnicity, but *The L Life* is a good start. It is a book to be shared publicly, whether that display is in the front of the library or on top of your coffee table. There is some strong language, but nothing out of line for teen audiences.

Recommended for public and school libraries.

Reviewed by, Katy Vance
UNC SILS alumna, May 2011

Madden, Ed, and Candance Chellew-Hodge, eds. *Out Loud: The Best of Rainbow Radio*.

Advance reader copy. Spartanburg, SC: Hub City Press, 2010. Paperback. 159pp. \$14.95. ISBN: 978189188576-1.



Out Loud: The Best of Rainbow Radio is a collection of material drawn from the first three years of the Rainbow Radio show and reflects the diverse LGBTQ audience and culture found in Southern Carolina. The [Rainbow Radio](#) program began

broadcasting on Columbia's Air America radio station, WOIC 1230 AM, on October 2005 and was the first in the state dedicated to addressing topics and issues of concern to the LGBTQ community and their allies.

The collection contains original essays, commentaries, poems, and stories read by their authors at the conclusion of each half-

hour program. The editors have categorized the writings into three broad areas of perception – listening, learning, resisting – that allow the reader to dip into the collection depending on individual mood. While the stories have the South as a common backdrop, the experiences are universal. This is not to minimize the importance of Rainbow Radio or the writers, as the stories will resonate with readers from across the country and around the world.

Reader interested in the history of the LGBTQ community and the media would be well served by reading two earlier books, *Alternate Channels: The Uncensored Story of Gay and Lesbian Images on Radio and Television, 1930s to the Present* (2000) and *Queer Airwaves: The Story of Gay and*

Lesbian Broadcasting (2001). Both books are national in scope and provide a good historical context of the roles LGBTQ people had in radio and television. *Out Loud* is not a history; however, it does provide the reader with a unique opportunity to view the world through the lenses of a diverse set of people reflecting and sharing personal experiences and perspectives.

This book, recommended for all libraries with an existing LGBTQ collection, is an easy, enjoyable read.

Reviewed by, **TJ Lusher**
Assistant Dean, Technology Initiatives and Support Services (TISS)
Northern Illinois University Libraries

Duberman, Martin. *A Saving Remnant: The Radical Lives of Barbara Deming and David McReynolds*.

New York: The New Press, 2011. Hardcover. 336pp. \$27.95. ISBN: 9781595583239.



Martin Duberman, Distinguished Professor Emeritus in History at CUNY Graduate Center and founder of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at CUNY, puts his deep understanding of American and queer history into play in this beautifully researched and written story of two radical activists.

Barbara, born in 1917, and David, born in 1929, were both part of "a saving remnant," which Duberman says refers to "that small number of people neither indoctrinated nor frightened into accepting oppressive social

conditions... They attempt, with uneven degrees of success, to awaken and mobilize others to join in the struggle for a more benevolent, egalitarian society."

Barbara and David spent their lives addressing issues of civil rights, nonviolence, nuclear disarmament, the Vietnam War, and the struggle for gay rights. Friends for many years, they shared many viewpoints and experiences, including the fact that they were "out" in an era when that was a rare and dangerous act. But they were often in disagreement over strategy and theory, and this is where Duberman's detailed and thorough research elevates the personal

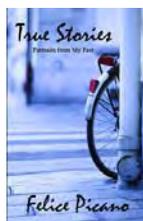
story of two inspirational activists into an important work of American political history.

If you only read/purchase one book on queer history this year, let it be this accessible and illuminating volume. It belongs in every collection that examines the United States, our history, our politics, and our future.

Reviewed by, **Morgan Gwenwald**
SUNY New Paltz

Picano, Felice. *True Stories: Portraits from My Past*.

1st U.S. ed. New York: Chelsea Station Editions, 2011. Paperback. 220pp. \$16.00 ISBN: 978-0-9844707-7-8.



Felice Picano's *True Stories* is a masterpiece. Every library interested in major contemporary authors, gay or straight, must buy it. Picano, one of the most prolific, popular, and literary of our gay authors has written many memoirs already, such as *Ambidextrous: The Secret Lives of Children*,

Men Who Loved Me, and *A House on the Ocean, a House on the Bay*, but this book is different. It is a collection of separate essays about persons missing from the other memoirs,

persons -- mostly men but some women too (Bette Midler, Diana Vreeland) -- who the author encountered throughout his life and who made an impact on him. They are arranged in more or less alphabetical order by the name of the chief subject, but these names are not included in the table of contents, only as subtitles in each essay. This alphabetical order breaks down among essays about family members. For example, Picano's chapter "Grandpa Ralph" precedes his father "Philip Picano." There are also a few typos, such as "her" for "here" on p. 137, but nothing serious.

This wonderful book has already received rave reviews from *The New York Times*, *Out* magazine, *Library Journal*, *Booklist*, *The San Francisco Examiner*, *The Advocate*, and *Lambda Book Report*. I hope that this rave review will persuade those who may still be on the fence. Frankly, every library serious about American literature, or gay literature, should have *all* of Picano's works, including this one.

(Continued page 11)

Picano, Felice. *True Stories: Portraits from My Past. (cont.)*

I'm not going to list all the subjects of these essays. Some are famous, such as W.H. Auden, who comes first thanks to his name, and Tennessee Williams, who comes last. Some are unknown except to Picano and a few others. Picano is an artist who constantly writes, including detailed journals, which were a major source for these essays. He doesn't have to rely on

memory alone, so we're treated to lots of fascinating particulars from contemporary "eye-witness" accounts.

There is some discreet sex in a few of the stories, but most of the essays are about friendships, encounters, or family members. Every essay is gripping, exciting, fun to read, and, yes, entertaining. No

wonder Picano is such a popular writer.

True Stories is a masterpiece. Buy it and enjoy it.

Reviewed by, **James D. Anderson**
Professor Emeritus
Rutgers University

Book Reviews: Fiction

Allison, Shane, ed. *Black Fire: Gay African-American Erotica.*

Valley Falls, NY: Bold Strokes Books, 2011. Paperback. 207 pp. \$16.95. ISBN 978-1-60282-206-1.



If you enjoy, or collect, gay erotica and are into black men, you will want this finely produced volume.

The cover features a gorgeous specimen and the stories are well written and exciting. Yes, there are black men in each of them,

but their tastes are wide-ranging, including many other ethnicities: white, Asian, Latino, and more. Only a few stories are limited solely to African-Americans, but they include some of the best -- often just two characters who really get it on and get to know each other.

The stories in *Black Fire* are extremely varied. They are entertaining, occasionally raunchy, but never unkind. Most of the sex is "safe"; there may be a few exceptions, but then this is fiction, not real life. This anthology does not include S&M, piss, or scat, but it offers everything else, and is often quite affectionate, even romantic.

The only "abuse" or "force" takes place during a quasi-supernatural voodoo ceremony in -- where else? -- New Orleans, where the main characters are compelled into intimacy. But they loved it, so everything turns out for the best.

The book's title refers to characters in the stories. Every tale includes at least one handsome (always) African-American. At least two of the authors are women; however, the short bios don't give too many details about the others.

Readers definitely won't get bored while reading this book. I don't know how many libraries collect erotica, but of all of the collections of erotic stories that I have read in the past, *Black Fire* is one of the best I've ever enjoyed.

Reviewed by, **James D. Anderson**
Professor Emeritus
Rutgers University

Gregory, Todd, ed. *Blood Sacraments.*

Valley Falls, NY: Bold Strokes Books, 2010. Paperback. 296pp. \$16.95. ISBN: 978-1-60282-190-3.



In recent years vampires have taken the spotlight as icons of sensuality.

Inspired more by lust than horror, this collection covers many aspects of vampire lore, while describing any number of sexy scenes. While some

vampires are cast as evil bloodsuckers looking to torture their victims, others are innocent men who are pulled into vampirism against their will -- all of which provide opportunities for highly charged scenes of lust and sexual abandon.

"Centuries of Longing" offers one of the collection's sweeter love stories, telling the tale of a vampire who has been waiting hundreds of years for love. "Out of Light and Into the Night" gives a more sadistic look at vampires involved in ritual killing. The vampires of "Three" find themselves entwined with a different sort of demon, while "Kells" shows that teenage crushes can be misplaced, especially if your crush becomes someone you hate once he drinks your blood.

A collection of stories from different authors always runs the risk of being uneven, but

on the whole *Blood Sacraments* succeeds in bringing together vastly different perspectives to create an enjoyable read. Although vampires and erotica aren't my usual topics of interest, I was surprised to find that I could not put this book down. I would recommend *Blood Sacraments* to any library looking to expand its genre collections.

Reviewed by, **Emily Faulkner**
Adult Services Librarian
Chicago Public Library

Line, D. L. *Head Trip*.

Valley Falls, NY: Matinee-Bold Strokes Books, 2010. Paperback. 187pp. \$14.95. ISBN: 978-1-60282-187-3.



is the year 2039. Shelby Hutchinson is 27 and is in charge of the Information Systems Department at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago. She has a boring life and is considered unreliable by her friends and coworkers, a reputation that she both likes and dislikes. Her only recreation is a video game about the cold war in 1985 Berlin that she plays with Jake, her best friend. Jake realizes that Shelby is tired and overworked and recommends she take a virtual vacation. Head Trip, a virtual travel service, promises a vacation that lasts only a few hours in real time, but which the vacationer's brain believes lasts a full week. Intrigued and excited, Shelby decides to reenact her video game adventures and takes a virtual vacation to Berlin in 1985. In the process of smuggling a prototype grenade launcher from

West Berlin into Russia, Shelby meets a beautiful Russian spy named Tasha. Together they survive sewers, trains, and a roll in the hay until they finally arrive in Russia. Something goes terribly wrong and Shelby is jolted back to reality in Head Trip's office.

Shelby begins to experience seizures and blackouts. After one episode in a coffee shop, Shelby and Jake meet Trish Aronoff, a journalist who helps them investigate the cause of Shelby's health problems. Shelby has to step outside her comfort zone to find the solution to her problem.

Head Trip is published by the Matinee Books imprint of Bold Strokes Books, which is their romance imprint. The novel is just as much an action/adventure story however, and the time travel and virtual reality themes qualify

Head Trip to be classified in the science fiction genre. The premise of *Head Trip* is similar to Philip K. Dick's novelette *We Can Remember It for You Wholesale*, which was adapted into the film *Total Recall*.

At 187 pages, *Head Trip* is a fast-paced enjoyable read, perfect for a day or two at the beach. The romantic scenes are somewhat explicit. It is recommended for fiction collections at libraries in lesbian friendly areas and college and university collections.

Head Trip is also available in Kindle and Nook editions and in various electronic formats from the publisher.

Reviewed by, **Paul Hubbard**
Retired Public Reference Librarian

Henderson, Clifford. *Spanking New: A Novel*.

Valley Falls, NY: Bold Strokes Books, 2010. Paperback. 283 pp. \$16.95. ISBN: 978-1-60282-138-5.



Spanking New is told from a child's point of view—from preconception through birth—and observes a heterosexual couple's coming together, while surrounded by homosexual friends and relations. Touching on issues

of bisexuality, hidden desires, coming to terms with oneself, death of friends in the war, joblessness, family, and more, this book is not only about lesbian and gay unrequited love, but also a heterosexual couple coming into their own with a new child. Giving a voice to the unborn child, Henderson takes us on the journey we all wish we could remember,

from selecting our parents, to conception, and through the nine months to birth.

Avoiding the whimsicality that this theme might draw out, the narrator, Spanky, shares insights by both visually seeing the characters and looking into their minds. At first, the title seems misleading, although upon reading, the intended meaning is revealed later in story.

We all wonder what the unborn child thinks or remembers, and Henderson draws on her imagination to share what one child might think. Worries, hopes, dreams,

desires, are all described—not only by the future child, but also by all of those involved in the ever-changing relationships surrounding its family.

Spanking New is useful for any collection where children are being considered, although the title might cause concern regarding censorship.

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