



Women in Libraries

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ALA Midwinter Update

- 1) The ALA Executive Board cancelled the 1998 Midwinter Meeting, scheduled for Denver, right at the outset of this past meeting and without even waiting for formal resolutions or arguments.
- 2) The ALA Council passed a resolution against contracting for future conferences with any cities that appear to have explicit discriminatory laws on the books (there was a lot of wrangling about how to interpret this so as to cover what we wanted, and I forget how it was phrased, but the intent was clear) similar to the one in Colorado or the ones under consideration in some other states.
- 3) Council also directed the Intellectual Freedom Committee to review the Library Bill of Rights with the express purpose of proposing new language covering gender and sexual orientation, and relating to library users, staff, materials and services.
- 4) A great rally was held on Monday in Denver, marching to the State Capitol, with lots of press coverage, protesting the passage of Amendment 2.

Lots of individual ALA divisions and committees passed resolutions and policies of related sorts; as far as I could tell, almost nobody spoke out and said that any of these activities were inappropriate. For those of us who remember the ERA and Nestle boycott battles, it was amazing. Several different kinds of protest buttons were widely worn.

On another matter that reflected long-ago fighting on the part of the Ctte. on the Status of Women in Librarianship: When the ALA Publishing Ctte. tried to recommend that the policy of requiring full salary ranges in all ALA periodicals' job ads be softened, this was rejected and bounced right back to COSWL and Minority Concerns Committee. (The absence of salary ranges has been shown to work against minority and female job candidates during the process of salary negotiation.) SP

Bayless Decision

(reprinted from The Denver Post January 17, 1993)

Here are some key points from Denver District Judge Jeff Bayless' ruling that blocked Amendment 2 from taking effect:

*Plaintiffs argue that this amendment deprives them of fundamental rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution. They do not argue that there is a fundamental right to be homosexual or bisexual which is found in the

United States Constitution. Rather, they argue that the rights they are deprived of are found in the right to equal protection of the laws under the First and Fourteenth amendments to the United States Constitution.

*Plaintiffs produced evidence that the amendment was only addressed to claims of discrimination by homosexuals, lesbians and bisexuals. They did this by the testimony of

witnesses who came before this court and announced—self-declared if you will—that they were homosexual.’ They also said ‘that neither they nor anyone they knew who were also homosexual are seeking to establish any minority status or quota preference or protected status. By doing this, the plaintiffs have attempted to narrow the focus to the claim of discrimination based on homosexual, bisexual or lesbian orientation.’

*‘It has not said that the state will discriminate against homosexuals, bisexuals or lesbians, but it has said that if any private citizen does discriminate based on such orientation that no remedy may be provided by the state.’

*‘Plaintiffs argue that such a state stand endorsing and approving private discrimination deprives them of the right to vote and the right to approach their government, specifically their courts, for redress of grievances.’

*‘The defendants argue ‘that gay, lesbian and bisexual conduct has been held...to be criminal by some states. And they urge that this behavior which can be criminalized defines the class of people here.’

*‘The court concludes that this is principally— although the

word conduct appears in there— this is principally an amendment which addresses status, not conduct.

‘You can’t make a status a crime, even though the conduct is a crime. Can you say it is a crime to possess drugs? Yeah. Sell ‘em? Yeah. Can you say it is a crime to be addicted to drugs? No. The court finds this is a status.’

*‘The defendants, quite rightly, point out that the majority of cases offered by the plaintiffs deal with race and not with questions of sexual orientation. The court notes that the defense is right. But the court notes that it wasn’t very surprised by that. And the reason it wasn’t very surprised by that is the history of discrimination law in the United States is based on race.’

*‘What is the state of the law, in this court’s view, regarding the constitutionality of such an amendment? It has been mentioned that the law is not static. It has been mentioned that it evolves, grows, changes, and that is true. I’m going to borrow a few words from some justices of the Supreme Court...’ ‘The amendment must draw its meaning from the evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society.’

DENVER and GLTF

In addition to the regular business of the GLTF, this January we faced the fact that ALA held its Midwinter conference in the only state to have a constitutional amendment which effectively encourages discrimination against gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. Fifty-three percent of the voters this past November approved a change to the state constitution, despite the fact that Denver, Aspen, and Boulder had city ordinances upholding our civil and human rights. The amendment’s constitutionality will be decided by the Supreme Court this fall.

The Gay and Lesbian Task Force, recognizing that discrimination is also a library issue, planned several avenues of protest for Midwinter. With support from Peggy Sullivan, executive director of ALA and Marilyn Miller, president of ALA, SRRT had a booth at the conference registration area with buttons, flyers, GLTF meeting schedules, and a list of gay-friendly businesses and restaurants (ALA provided daily staffing of the booth). We asked exhibitors to display medallions supporting ALA’s non-discrimination policies, and some did. We wrote a resolution moving the scheduled 1998 Midwinter conference from Denver.

About two hundred people attended a rally Monday at noon on the steps of Denver’s State Capitol. They had walked together from the Convention Center where GLTF co-chair Roland Hansen introduced ALA president Marilyn Miller who spoke to the crowd there. GLTF co-chair Karen Whittlesey-First introduced speakers to the crowd at the capitol. The group heard from Stephen Stillwell (SRRT

coordinator), Dee Conkling (Feminist Task Force), Mark Rosenzweig (co-founder and co-editor of the Progressive Librarian), Susan Searing (ACRL’s Women’s Studies Section), Sandy Berman (SRRT Action Council and Minnesota SRRT), Sylvia Turchyn (Intellectual Freedom Round Table), Charlotte Rubens (LAMA), Sue Anderson (Equality Colorado and member of the board of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force), and Stacy Dorian (Boycott Colorado and University of Colorado Law School Library). A local singer, Mary Orland, who is also a state worker, provided some entertainment during the hour-long rally. The media covered this event and we were on two of Denver’s television stations Monday night.

In her statement at the convention center, Miller said: ‘Amendment 2 has implications for librarians beyond the issue of protecting basic human rights to employment and safety. As a profession, librarians are committed to providing information and resources that reflect the diversity of human experience and promote understanding of all people. Curtailing one freedom only makes it easier to curtail another. Will successful implementation of Amendment 2 lead to the curtailment of library collections and access to those collections? We know how the line can blur between access to information and denial of our human rights. We learned this during the book burnings in Nazi Germany. Any erosion of human liberty can lead to an erosion of intellectual freedom....Let us all enjoy freedom of expression and access to that freedom.’ KWF

Bisexuality Discussion Group

A new discussion group was approved at Midwinter by the Steering Committee of the SRRT/GLTF. Its mission statement reads: "The ALA/SRRT/GLTF Bisexuality Discussion Group, pursuant to the Gay and Lesbian Task Force mission to 'support other minority groups working for adequate representation and opportunity within the Association,' shall: serve as a forum for discussion of the purposes specified in the GLTF bylaws as they relate to bisexuality and librarianship; promote an understanding of bisexuality within the gay and lesbian library communities and the library community at large; and provide an opportunity for bisexual, gay, and lesbian librarians, archivists,

and other information professionals to explore common areas of interest and activity. The BDG is open to persons of all sexual orientations and identities."

The first meeting has been tentatively scheduled at the New Orleans Annual Conference for Friday, June 25, from 4:30-5:30 pm. Bisexuals are particularly urged to attend. For more information, contact the chair, Mike Montgomery, c/o GHRD, Princeton Univ. Libraries, One Washington Rd., Princeton, NJ 08544-2098, 609-258-3180, Internet: <michael@pucc.princeton.edu>.

Women's Studies in Vietnam

The Open University in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) has established the first ever Women's Studies program in that country. They desperately need books, but have limited possibilities of foreign acquisitions due to the trade embargo. Therefore they are asking for donations of Women's Studies books in English. It is anticipated that donated

books will have to be carried to Vietnam by people traveling there. Any librarians who would care to participate can contact Shari Thurber at 98 Pine Street, Florence, MA 01060. The Vietnamese contact is Dr. Thai thi Ngoc Du, Open University, 97 Vo van Tan St. Dist. 3, Ho Chi Minh City. SH

AARP Women's Initiative

The mission of the American Association of Retired Persons' Women's Initiative is to ensure that the economic, social, health and long-term care needs of midlife and older women are met.

The Initiative advocates and supports policies, programs and legislation that improve the status of women today and in the future. The Initiative works to remove barriers to productivity and achievement in all aspects of life; correct inequities in employment opportunities, practices and policies; improve income support and pension programs; promote healthy lifestyles; and provide access to universal quality health and long-term care.

The Initiative seeks to expand opportunities for personal growth and fulfillment; promote more informed consumer decisions; and foster greater recognition of the significant contributions of women to families, communities, our nation and our world.

AARP is the nation's largest and oldest organization of Americans 50 and older. The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization offers a wide range of membership benefits, legislative representation at federal and state levels, and educational community service programs carried out through a national network of volunteers and local chapters.

For further information, please contact Maxine Froman, Manager, Women's Initiative, 601 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20049; (202) 434-2400.



Women in Libraries

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ALA Announces 1993 Gay/Lesbian Book Award Winners

The American Library Association Gay and Lesbian Book Awards Committee is pleased to announce the winners of the 1993 Gay/Lesbian Book Awards. The awards are given annually to two books of exceptional merit examining lesbian and/or gay experience and published in the year prior to when the award is granted. The Gay and Lesbian Task Force Book Awards are the nation's oldest and long-lived, having been established by ALA in 1971.

The two award winning books were selected by a group of twelve academic and public librarians from libraries throughout the United States. This year the eleven "finalist" titles considered for the awards were selected from a list of 45 nominated titles, which in turn were drawn from a listing of over five hundred titles, fiction and non-fiction, that were identified as having gay or lesbian content.

In the Literature category, the 1993 award goes to Essex Hemphill for CEREMONIES: PROSE AND POETRY (Plume) whose passionate voice — tender, angry, argumentative, and persuasive — articulates his experiences as an African-American gay man, an individual in and in between community. He explores the confounding and often painful events of our time: AIDS, homophobia, racial bigotry and alienation from oneself — in a restless search for wholeness and connection. It is a powerful and welcome work.

MAKING HISTORY: THE STRUGGLE FOR GAY AND LESBIAN EQUAL RIGHTS, 1945-1990 (New York, HarperCollins) has been selected as the 1993 winner of the Nonfiction Award. Eric Marcus, the editor in MAKING HISTORY, has assembled oral histories from fifty-three Americans involved in community history-making. Mr. Marcus lets his subjects talk about their lives and times and the particular circumstances that drew each to find a public vehicle to express his or her identity. MAKING HISTORY adds to a growing body of excellent histories uncovering and embellishing on contemporary lesbian and gay social, political and cultural history.

Both books were selected from a list of eleven finalists. Runners up of the awards, all worthy of recognition as some of the best books of 1992, include:

Literature:

ALMOST HISTORY

Christopher Bra, Donald I Fine.

THE EASY WAY OUT

Stephen McCauley, Simon & Schuster

VITAL TIES

Karen Kringle, Spinsters Ink

WRITTEN ON THE BODY

Jeannette Winterson, Jonathan Cape

Nonfiction:

BECOMING A MAN

Half a Life Story. Paul Monette. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

EARTH HOUSE

Jeanne DuPrau. New Chapter Press.

A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY

Gay Men Write About Their Families. John Preston, ed. Dutton.

MOTHER CLAP'S MOLLY HOUSE

The Gay Subculture in England, 1700-1820. Rictor Norton. Gay Men's Press

POSITIVELY GAY

New Approaches to Gay and Lesbian Life. Betty Berzon. Celestial Arts.

The book awards will be presented in June during an awards ceremony at the American Library Association annual conference in New Orleans. With the selection of the 1993 award winners, the committee now turns its attention to reading titles for the 1994 awards. The committee welcomes and encourages nominations from the general public, excluding only those persons affiliated with book publishing firms. Nominations for English-language books published in 1993 can be submitted through December 31, 1993. Nominations should include a brief statement — no longer than one-half a page — as to why the title is being recommended.

Nominations may be sent by regular mail to Ellen Greenblatt, Chair-elect, Central Technical Services, Lockwood Library Building, State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY 14260-2200, or Susan Hoffman, out-going Chair, 180 Wilson Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455. [E-mail nominations may be sent to Ellen Greenblatt at ULCREG@UBVM (BITNET) or ULCREG@UBVM.CC.BUFFALO.EDU (Internet) EG

Mayday Rampage: Young Adults and AIDS

"A report issued April 11, 1992, by the House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families reported that in the previous two years, the number of teenagers with AIDS had increased by 70%. What can be done to bring young people to an understanding of their growing danger? Clayton Bess, award winning novelist for young adults, thinks he has an answer. "Grab their hearts, grab their minds. Give them a story they won't forget, characters they will grow to love like best friends. Dip them personally, through fiction, into a world in which AIDS is real. That is how they will begin to appreciate this terrible new threat to us all."

Bess does just that in his beguiling new novel, The

Mayday Rampage, about two young journalists who create upheaval in their high school and in their community when they persevere against all odds in publishing a series of frank articles about AIDS in their school newspaper. As the story surges relentless to its last shattering moments, the reader is riveted to the page and made to face the terror of AIDS with anew and profound understanding. The review in Publishers' Weekly, 1/25/93, says "In perhaps no other YA novel to date has the topic of AIDS been dealt with as graphically and thoroughly as in this timely book."

Get your copy now from Lookout Press, P.O. Box 19161, Sacramento, CA 95819, \$14.95 hardback or \$7.95 paper. KJ

U.C. Berkeley Suspends Admissions

On February 24, the Academic Planning Board, a year old committee on the U.C. Berkeley Campus, recommended to Chancellor Tien to suspend admissions to the U.C. Berkeley Library and Information Studies program pending the findings of a commission to investigate the future of the field of Information Science on the campus. Vice Chancellor John Heilbron was quoted in the campus newspaper as estimating that admissions to the program will be suspended for at least two years.

This decision leaves the state of California with only two other MLIS programs—one at U.C. Los Angeles and the

other at San Jose State University. While some are optimistic that the decision could lead to the revamping of the program, others are afraid that this decision will ultimately lead to the disbanding of the 70 year old school.

Currently there are approximately 150 students in the program. If you are concerned and would like to show your support for the reversal of this decision, please reply to Alicia Abramson, MLIS Student U.C. Berkeley; Internet address: alicia@info.berkeley.edu. As soon as more information is available, supporters will be asked to write letters or call the appropriate people.

NAACP Endorses March on Washington for Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Rights

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NAACP Chairman Joins the March on Washington in Condemning US Anti-Gay Military Policy.

The head of one of the nation's oldest civil rights groups has joined efforts to repeal the ban on gays in the military. Dr. William F. Gibson, national Chairman of the Board of NAACP and a supporter of the 1993 March on

Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights notes the similarities in objections to Blacks in the military and those now being voiced by opponents of repealing the ban.

"The alibis and excuses they're giving are the same ones they tried to use to keep Black Americans out of the military. They said white soldiers would not be able to sleep in the same barracks, use the same latrines and would not take orders from Black superiors," Gibson said. "No citizen should be excluded from any aspect of life because of race, religion, or sexual orientation."

Dr. Gibson plans to participate in the March on Washington in an effort to build coalitions between minority groups.

"If they had put our civil rights to a vote today, I'm not convinced the measure would pass," Gibson said. "We face the same opposition and we must coalesce to oppose these common foes."

The March is expected to draw over one million people to Washington on April 25th, 1993 to denounce the ban on homosexuals in the military and call for passage of a national civil rights bill banning discrimination based upon sexual orientation.

"It is heartening to see our allies step forward and acknowledge this battle as the latest chapter in our country's civil rights movement," said March Co-Chair, Nadine Smith, an ex-cadet at the USAF Academy.

The 1987 March on Washington, which drew a crowd of more than 650,000, was the largest civil rights demonstration in US history.

Time to Teach MD about Ms.

(reprinted from the Houston Chronicle, Section G, Sunday, Nov. 15, 1992. Column by Linda Gillan Griffin)

What took them so long? That was my first, second and third reaction to a report that called for establishing a medical specialty on women's health.

Ask nearly any woman who has ever been to a doctor— any doctor— and she'll tell you that most doctors don't know enough about women. And we're not talking only male doctors here.

One reason, of course, is that medical schools are turning out crops of graduates who know little about women's health problems. One woman doctor vividly recalled how her anatomy teacher instructed the class to cut off and discard the breasts of female cadavers.

Another reason has been lack of funds allocated for research on women's health problems. If a study was on heart attacks, it studied men's heart attacks. Hemorrhoids? They were men's hemorrhoids. Stress? It was men's stress. Ans it wasn't only because men were in the almighty workplace, sitting on their hemorrhoids eight hours a day and waiting for the stress to kill them. The lack of funds has also been caused by the fact that men have been responsible for appropriating the majority of money.

Lack of funds is part of why we haven't identified the cause of breast cancer and are nowhere near finding a cure, even though the disease now strikes one in every eight women by the age of 95 and kills 46,000 annually. And if the knowledge isn't there, how can it be taught?

The truth is that many women know more about their bodies than some doctors do.

A few years ago I visited a Houston clinic for my annual gynecological exam, a checkup I might have put off if my anti-baby-making device hadn't been due to self-destruct any day.

While I won't use the clinic's name, if it had been a restaurant, it would have been followed by several stars and several dollar signs. And because I had weathered the birth of two babies with this clinic, as well as years of the normal pediatric nightmares, sinus infections, ingrown toenails, hepatitis, a broken hand and a mystery ailment finally diagnosed as "stress-related," I felt vaguely as if I was in good hands.

I wanted, I told the doctor— a man whose obvious tender age I considered a sign that he was fresh out of school and had all the latest data— to discuss other methods of birth control.

"Why?" he asked. "You're 45."

So I don't grow up to become the 50-year-old mother of a kindergartner, I told him.

"You can't get pregnant," he told me. "How many women 45 years old do you see having babies?"

Well, none, I had to admit. But that's because I hung out with women who were smart enough to use birth control. I imagined there were plenty of women I didn't know who were still having babies at 45 because they had doctors as dumb as he was and didn't want, or couldn't afford, abortions.

So I explained to him how babies were made. That as long as a woman was enjoying her monthly proof of femininity, chances were she could still get pregnant. Maybe the chances weren't great at age 45, but if she was still getting her period every month, there was a chance she might not get it one month and eight months later get a baby instead.

By the way, I asked him, did he know that there are more than 40 symptoms of the onset of menopause?

He was incredulous, and I was out of there.

I've had enough conversations with women to know that my experience wasn't an isolated one, that ignorance of female health issues, diseases and even rudimentary anatomy is rampant.

So bravo! Right on for medical specialty on women that goes beyond obstetrics and gynecology to osteoporosis and female AIDS and heart disease and sports medicine and

even to growing fingernails that don't chip when we change a tire.

And, hey, in the interest of fairness, if you men want to argue that you also go through a change of life and have problems more complicated than male-pattern baldness, we might fight for giving you your own specialists.

Wilson Library Bulletin

Wilson Library Bulletin is most interested in seeing manuscripts from members of the Feminist Task Force, and women librarians in general. DeCandido has worked for three library publications (LJ, SLJ, and the Special Libraries publications) and has been surprised that more than half the submissions are from men, though women constitute the majority of members of the profession.

Feminist analysis is always welcome, but thoughtful pieces

on all aspects of librarianship will be carefully read. Management, technical services, and library service to children are of particular interest. Queries can be addressed to:

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