



Women in Libraries

Volume 29, No. 4

The Feminist Task Force

Fall 2000

FTF Elects Leaders at ALA Annual

Jenny Baltes and Sarah Denton were selected Feminist Task Force co-coordinators at the July 10, 2000 FTF membership meeting. Following are their biographies.

Jenny Baltes: "I was raised in the Midwest and have since lived in several communities across the United States. I have a B.A. from Purdue University and an M.L.S. from Appalachian State University. I am proud to be a librarian: I have worked in public and school libraries for 15 years. I enjoy working with children and youth and connecting them to stories and information. I think that librarians have fantastic opportunities to share with children and teens literature which emphasizes the value of different ways of being.

"Through my example and through my teaching and practices, I try to show children and teens that women, people of different cultures, races, abilities, and beliefs are important and needed. I hope that my voice is not the only voice that young women hear telling them they can be anything they want to be. Most of all, I hope they believe it."

Jenny came to school media centers by way of substituting. "I liked the job enough, so I got my Master's degree while I was learning how to do my job. Since then I have been a high school media specialist, a children's librarian, an elementary media coordinator, a young adult librarian, a librarian and assistant

branch manager, and an elementary media specialist—in seven different states."

Sarah Denton: "I graduated from Cornell University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. After a not-so-lucrative year of cashiering at Woolworth's, I went back to school and got my MLS from SUNY Buffalo. My first job was a reference position in Montgomery County, Texas. When I got there, I found out the position included Teen Services as well. Eighteen months later, I was a self-taught Teen Services Librarian, and I moved west to the Stanislaus County (CA) Library System to coordinate Teen Services, which I did until November 1999.

Currently I'm a Teen Services Librarian at the Berkeley Public Library. My ALA involvement has been predominantly in teen services; I'm an active member of YALSA and serve on the Popular Paperbacks Committee."

Scribe Needed: At this time, FTF needs a scribe, someone to take notes at ALA Midwinter and Annual, transcribe notes for FTF members, update FTF listings in directories, and bring a slate of ALA candidates to Midwinter meetings to discuss FTF endorsement. Let us know if this is something that you would like to do. We welcome all newcomers!

"Your silence will not protect you." - Andre Lorde

Notes

Because of a family emergency, Lynn C. Chancer could not speak at the ALA Annual Conference as scheduled. She was to have examined the unnecessary polarization of "sex versus sexism" split in feminism. According to Chancer, it is possible to both argue for the legality of pornography and criticize it as part of patriarchal society. Her proposal of a "third wave of feminism," stressing commonalities between the first two waves of feminism, will be the subject of a discussion group at ALA Midwinter in Washington, D. C. Look for this program on the schedule that will be sent in late December.

Theresa Tobin attended the canceled program to discuss the cancellation with those who came to the meeting. With several people asking to have a conversation on the topic, Theresa moderated the group of more than 40 who discussed the impact and implications of this issue in public, school, and academic libraries.

The outcome of the discussion was an agreement that much work needed to be done to find a common ground among feminists to address a shared vision of the future!

During the FTF meeting at ALA Annual (2000) Theresa Tobin reported on a meeting with Marlene manor, Chair, ACRL Women's Studies Section and Sarah Watstein, Chair, COSWL, to discuss future Introductions to Women's Groups and a sharing of the production of a brochure to handout at these and other ALA events. COSWL may be able to take on the financing of the brochure. K. Hovendick volunteered to design it; an intern working with Sarah Watstein will research the history of the Introduction to Women's Groups program. At each ALA meeting one of ACRL Women's Studies Section members-at-large should attend a FTF and a COSWL meeting.

The Special Libraries Association, Gay and Lesbian Issues Caucus is pleased to offer a mentor program. This program is open to MLIS students and recent graduates. It will allow students and those new to the profession an opportunity to discuss issues with experienced professionals. Advisors are available from corporate and special information centers as well as academic and public libraries. For more information about this program, please see <http://www.sla.org/caucus/kglic/glicnews.htm> or contact howard.fuller@med-center.stanford.edu.

The Gay & Lesbian Issues Caucus provides a forum for resource sharing and addressing issues of interest to the gay and lesbian membership within SLA as well as for all members of the Association. Advisees do not need to be SLA members.

Correction: The most recent issue of *Women in Libraries* (Spring/Summer 2000) should be have been Volume 29 (not 28).



Women in Libraries

<http://www.lib.wayne.edu/ftf/>

Women in Libraries, the Newsletter of the American Library Association's Feminist Task Force, is published four times a year. To subscribe, inquire about your subscription, or to change your address, write to Diedre Conkling, Publisher, Women in Libraries, c/o ALA, SRRT, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611. Subscriptions are \$10 for individuals and \$15 for institutions (\$2 extra for invoiced subscriptions). Checks should be made payable to American Library Association, noted for "Women in Libraries." Subscription requests are to be sent to The Feminist Task Force, Office of Literacy and Outreach Services, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611 [<http://www.lib.wayne.edu/ftf/>]

Personnel: Nel Ward, Editor, Newport, OR; Sherre Harrington, Media Review Editor, Vanderbilt Science Library, Diedre Conkling, Publisher, Lincoln County Library District (OR); Theresa Tobin, Listserv Administrator, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

To subscribe to the Feminist List, send this e-mail message to: listserv@mitvma.mit.edu:

subscribe feminist firstname lastname

Send articles, comments, or materials for review, but not subscription questions, to Nel Ward, 156 SW Coast Street, Newport, OR 97365. Nel is currently in the process of moving and can be reached through Diedre Conkling's telephone (541-265-3066) or email (dconklin@OregonVOS.net).

Send books for review to Sherre Harrington, Stevenson Library, Vanderbilt University, 419 21st Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37240.

Gay Teens Subject of Abuse in School, Suffer from Feelings of Isolation

Librarians can save lives was the message at "Gay Teens in the 21st Century: Access for the Future," a preconference of the 2000 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago on June 7, 2000.

Keynote speaker Kevin Jennings, executive director of the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) sounded a wake-up call for educators and librarians. The most common taunt in schools today is "faggot." In a recent national survey, a majority of students reported hearing anti-gay taunts on a daily basis not only from other students—but also from faculty and staff. National news publications quote anti-homosexual statements from religious, media, and political figures.

Hate crimes against non-heterosexuals (or suspected non-heterosexuals), although under-reported, are increasing across the nation. Other research shows that gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (GLBT) teens are three to 13 times more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to commit suicide.

A recent national survey of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender teens shows the following:

- *90% reported hearing verbal slurs and taunts on a frequent or daily basis;
- *37% reported hearing homophobic remarks from faculty or staff;
- *69% reported experiencing some form of harassment or violence;
- *28% reported experiencing physical harassment, including pushing or shoving;
- *14% reported experiencing physical assaults, including beatings, or being punched and kicked;
- *42% reported feeling unsafe at school or on the way to school, often missing one or more days per month due to fears for their safety;
- *40% reported that no one intervened when the harassment occurred (and of the ones who

reported intervention, the people who objected to the harassment were other students—not teachers, staff, or other adults).

From GLSEN's National School Climate Study (<http://www.glsen.org/pages/sections/news/natlnews/1999/sep/survey>)

GLBT teens use the Internet to connect with other teens, decreasing their feelings of isolation and lack of information. Many school and public libraries, however, use filtering software to "protect" teens from inappropriate content. Unfortunately, most filtering software limits access to GLBT content, even if intended

for youth. The result is that youth access to information on the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender culture is skewed of non-existent. Current legislative initiatives in Congress seek to further increase the use of filtering software—with the result of endangering GLBT youth.

Panelists discussing the acquisition of young adult library materials of interest to GLBT youth noted that there are several bibliographies

and recommended book lists, and the need for materials is widely established. The job of the librarian of school media specialist is to make the materials available. The job of the Cataloger is to create sufficient subject headings and summary notes so that GLBT youth can FIND the material in the library. In summary: librarians have the tools; now just use them.

The afternoon session of the preconference included a presentation on the Columbia University Internet site, Go Ask Alice. Other speakers included Ann Symons and Judy Krug speaking on intellectual freedom issues; Linda Wallace on answering tough questions and dealing with the press; Lucy Jane Bledsoe, reading from her book *Working Parts*, and Leslie McGinnis on the Second Start Adult Literacy Program from the Oakland (CA) Public Library.—Jane Cothron, Cataloger, Lincoln County (OR) Library District

***Librarians
have the tools;
now just use
them!***

Dr. Laura Features "Lewd Libraries" on Show

Should young people be allowed open access to Internet terminals in public libraries? Dr. Laura Schlessinger thinks not, and her fifth television program this fall made that point clear.

Robert Willard, Executive Director of the National Commission on libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), was able to watch Dr. Laura's media style when he was invited to participate in the taping of this show on July 7, 2000.

Following the taping, Willard wrote a letter to the Dr. Laura Show, stating that they could not continue the format that he observed if they hoped to involve people who had a view contrary to Dr. Schlessinger's.

He continued the letter with concerns about the lack of time to discuss the issues and then listed points he wished to include: (1) Internet access policy should be determined locally (a NCLIS policy) and national legislation calling for filtering is an inappropriate, unfunded mandate; (2) filtering technology is imperfect and not a panacea; and (3) the real shameful activity in school libraries, which Dr. Schlessinger could do something about if she wished, is the woefully inadequate level of funding. He also expressed concern regarding the sensationalizing of the subject with reference to "sex in the libraries" and "X-rated" libraries.

Almost a month later, Willard was asked to participate in reshooting part of the show after comments from focus groups. He discovered that the second shooting was even more sensational. A new participant was a Louisiana police chief who discussed the arrest of a 38-year-old man who had masturbated at a public library Internet terminal in view of two teenage girls.

Evidently Rep. Ernest J. Istook Jr. (R-Okla), who added a filtering mandate to an appropriations bill passed by the house, was considered too dull. He lost his position on the show between the two tapings. (The bill, H.R. 4545, would deny Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title III funds to schools that refuse to shield children from online obscenity, child pornography, or "material harmful to minors.")

According to Dr. Laura, typing in the word "knee" will result in images so graphic that they cannot be shown on her show. Willard tried the same term but found primarily material on "knee surgeries," without the "nasty sites" that Dr. Laura discovered.

The filtering argument will continue, hope-

fully with librarians brave enough to "protect the children" by opposing censorship and allowing young people to find information that will help their lives be more satisfying and productive.

The entire issue of Dr. Laura, however, may soon be a moot point. It is possible that she has not created enough sensationalism. Between low ratings and protests from gay activists, the syndicated talk show went on hiatus for a week after only one week on the air. Because of pressure on advertisers, Paramount and its stations has been forced to sell advertising time at discounted rates. Coca-Cola, criticized for its advertising, claims that it did not directly provide support and requested that it not be represented on any of Dr. Laura's shows.

Heather and Daddy Safe In Wichita Falls, Texas

A federal judge struck down a local law that allowed signers of a petition to yank "objectionable" books from the public library in Wichita Falls, Texas. U.S. District Judge Jerry Buchmeyer said on September 19 that the resolution was unconstitutional. It allowed the removal of books if 300 library-card holders signed a petition.

City Council members took the action after protests over what to do about the placement of *Heather Has Two Mommies* and *Daddy's Roommate* on the library's shelves. One of the books portrays a lesbian couple who raise a daughter. The other describes a man who leaves his wife and son for a boyfriend.

In his decision, Buchmeyer labeled the issue an "unfortunate story of the censorship of two children's books."

"It puts the responsibility for censoring children's books on the parents, where it should be," said Linda Hughes, the city's library administrator and a defendant.

The issue caused legal wrangling among residents, city officials, and religious leaders over First Amendment rights and whether the books should be deemed objectionable.

Some Periodicals to Watch (Out) For

Does your library subscribe to *Men's Health*? If so, you might want to be aware of an article in the September 2000 edition that ranks the ten most "male friendly" and "anti-male" schools in America. According to FAIR-L, Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting media Analysis, Critiques, and News Reports, much of the article can best be characterized the way author Lawrence Roy Stains describes US Santa Cruz: "Mean, with a trend toward ugly."

To *Men's Health*, colleges are "anti-male" if they have "cranky" women's studies departments that produce "Angry Young Women." The magazine backs up a claim that Santa Cruz is "Male Hatred USA" by noting the school "boasts of having one of the largest women's studies programs in the nation."

More dangerous, however, is the advice for men to avoid colleges with strong policies against sexual assault—schools that "define rape so that all men are guilty" and have disciplinary systems that are "rigged against men." The magazine attacks schools that "parrot the feminist myths" about sexual assault. Bates College, for example, distributes a sexual violence handbook "repeating a long-discredited feminist canard—that one in four college women has been the victim of a rape or an attempted rape."

Actually, the 1-in-4 statistic came from a scientific survey conducted in 1987 by Dr. Mary Koss for the National Institute of Mental Health, which found that 28 percent of women in colleges experienced rape or attempted rape, and 15 percent had experienced rape, since age 14. Despite attacks, a 1999 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study found that one in five female undergraduates had been raped in their lifetimes and 15 percent had been raped since age 15.

Men's Health requires comparatively little from "male-friendly" schools, suggesting they have winning athletic teams, attractive women ("We've never met an ugly girl from Texas A&M) and, as in the words of one Washington and Lee student, "a testosterone atmosphere...that permeates the whole environment."

They should have "more courses on the Great Books than on 12 oppressed womyn writers of Borneo," since classes addressing gender are generally "nothing less than frontal assaults on men."

Students [presumably male] should look for

schools that give free reign for fraternities and have a tolerance for excessive drinking; at a "male-friendly" school, "you can play beer pong without campus security confiscating the Ping-Pong table." (It happened at Middlebury.)

It is ironic that a magazine supposedly dedicated to keeping men physically and mentally healthy would advocate against policies promoting safe and responsible alcohol consumption, consensual sexual activity, and diverse intellectual challenges.

More ironic is that the stated mission of *Men's Health* publisher, Rodale, is "to show people how they can use the power of their bodies and minds to make lives better." Rodale's website (<http://www.rodale.com>) features glowing rhetoric about an "ideal" world "guided by the spirit of cooperation," where "centered, self-reliant people...are capable of creating a better world for themselves."

You can communicate with Rodale as follows: Ardath Rodale, Chair & CEO, Rodale Press Inc., 33 E. Minor St., Emmaus, PA 18098-0099; 610/967-8619; FAX 610/967-7725; media@rodale.com.

On the opposite side of the feminist coin is the Spring *Feminist Collections: A Quarterly of Women's Studies Resources* from the University of Wisconsin. In addition to fine book reviews and an excellent listing of websites for/about women (including "A Look at Women's Health on Alternative Medicine") is an examination of four videos on date rape called "Young, Female, and in Danger: Violence in Relationships."

According to the author of this article, Cathy Seasholes, "one quarter of girls report having experienced some violence in their relationships before graduating from high school. This collection of videos is an excellent beginning to educate people—both young and old—about this violence: its causes, results, myths, and ways to confront the issue, especially the need to be aware of the situation in order to avoid becoming a victim/survivor.

Two centuries ago, the doctors removed the clitorises of girls and women to keep them more tractable. According to *Ms.* this practice of clitoridec-tomy continues in 21st-century United States.

(Cont. on Page 6)

Call for Papers

"Women in Print: Authors, Publishers, Readers, and More since 1876," a conference to be held by the Center for Print Culture in Modern America at Madison, WI on September 14-15, 2001, will address the world of print that women have inherited, constructed, and consumed over the past 125 years. Barbara Sicherman, Kenan Professor of American Institutes and Values at Trinity College, will deliver the keynote address. Papers should focus on and illuminate the interaction between the reader and printed materials (e.g. books, periodicals, newspapers, comic books, etc.) aimed at or produced and read by women.

Studies dealing with class, religion, journalism, feminism, immigrants, racial and sexual minorities, radicals, etc. are especially welcome. Studies of single group experiences and studies that compare the historical sociology of print in the lives of women located at the periphery of power are of great interest to the Center.

The Center encourages the interdisciplinary study of print culture history and welcomes proposals from scholars in all fields. Papers from previous conferences are in *Print Culture in a Diverse America* (James P. Danky and Wayne Wiegand, ed.; University of Illinois Press, 1998) and *Defining Print Culture for Youth: The Cultural Work Children's Literature* (Anne Lundin, ed; Ohio State University, forthcoming).

Proposals for individual papers or entire sessions (up to three presentations) should include a 250-word abstract and a one-page curriculum vitae. Deadline for submission is January 2, 2001. For information, contact James P. Danky, Co-Director, Center for Print Culture in Modern America, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706; 608/264-6598; FAX 608/254-6520; email jp-danky@mail.shsw.siwc.edu.

Q: The Journal of Sexual Orientation & Public Policy at Harvard, the first student-run gay and lesbian public policy journal, is seeking submissions of original, unpublished works that explore policy issues affecting the GBLT community. Sponsored by the John-F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, *Q* an academic forum for original public policy scholarship relating to sexual orientation and gender identity, including broader public policy issues

which affect gays/lesbians. The scope of issues considered is international: both U. S. domestic and international policy research is published. Additionally, the intersections of race and class with sexual orientation and gender identity are addressed. The journal publishes articles by professors and practitioners and will be online at www.gjournal.org in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. The first issues will appear at the end of January.

Articles should be 4,000 to 7,000 words in length. Formatting and citations should conform with the Chicago Manual of Style, 14th ed. They should include an abstract and a cover page with the author's name, professional or academic affiliation, address, telephone number, and e-mail address. Identifying information should be nowhere else in the text. Please send the article in MS Word format to qjournal@ksg.harvard.edu. The deadline for submission is November 15, 2000.

"Making the Cut"

(Cont. from Page 5)

Why? Martha Coventry explains this in the October/November publication. "We have been altering the healthy genitals of our children—boys as well as girls—for 135 years so that a girl will look and act

"We can make a child any sex if we get to him or her early enough."

like a girl, and a boy will look and act like a boy, according to social norms. The strict division between female and male bodies and behavior is our most cherished and comforting truth.

"Over the past 50 years, medicine has established standards for female and male bodies. Girls, if they want to perceive themselves, or be perceived, as fully "feminine," should have clitorises no longer than about 3/8 inch at birth. Boys, if they hope to grow up "masculine," should have penises that are about one inch in stretched length at birth. (variation in phallus length can be a sign of an underlying medical problem, but it is also used for nonmedical judgments about 'normality.')

For more horror stories, read the full article.

“Panty Raider” CD Causes Trouble For Simon & Schuster Interactive

“Holt Uncensored” is a free online column about books and the book industry written by former San Francisco *Chronicle* book editor and critic Pat Holt. She has this to say about a new CD-ROM.

“In the ‘What Were They Thinking?’ department, congratulations go to Simon & Schuster Interactive for announcing a CD-ROM to be published in May called ‘PANTY RAIDER: FROM HERE TO IMMATUREITY.’ (See <http://www.simonsays.com/subs/press.cfm?areaid=58&view=909688574>)

“This is a CD game for—well, see who you think the intended audience is—boys of many ages, one supposes. Players are told they can save the Earth from ‘perverted’ aliens with ‘hormone-driven anger’ who will soon blow up the planet. The key: ‘Only the sexy underwear of supermodels’ can satisfy these ‘testosterone-driven aliens.’

“The object of the game is to ‘Seek Out Supermodels to Strip Them Down to Their Bra and Panties.’ The reasoning goes like this: One day on a faraway planet, a lingerie catalog ‘inexplicably showed up in the mailbox at one horny alien’s home.’ Time passed, and soon this alien and his friends had ‘worn out the catalog.’ Uh-oh.

“Now they have hijacked a flying saucer to go ‘in search of supermodels in their underwear.’ The person playing ‘Panty Raid’ must ‘help the aliens in their perverted quest’ by cybertraveling to an island called Model Isle, disrobing supermodels to their undergarments and taking pictures of them for the aliens.

“Of course, the supermodels will be reluctant to participate, so to bring them out of the woods, players are given ‘lures,’ such as ‘tiny mints (lunch!

and credit cards,’ since ‘no self-respecting supermodel can resist these items.’ ‘Cheesy pickup lines’ are also available, and a secret substance called ‘goop,’ thrown on the supermodels’ bodies, ‘mysteriously removes their clothing.’

“Goodness, what a fantasy for the consumer! All that’s missing is...but no, here come the X-ray glasses! With these, players can ‘see what kind of underwear each girl is wearing before they go through the process of undressing her.’

“Well, it’s not the first raunchy CD game to hit the stands, and certainly those rape-fantasy CDs of a decade or so ago were much worse—or were they? This is the year 2000; we know this is a game that glorifies stalking; we know the audience consists of young boys who are still forming their ideas about women and girls. Didn’t anyone in the many committees that met about this project and the many people who signed off on it raise an objection?

[Holt continues with the request from Dads & Daughters to halt the CD’s release with quotations from the letter sent to Simon & Schuster.]

“It’s important to note that nobody is talking about banning the CD-ROM, if it is released. This is a call to Simon & Schuster to regard its audience more highly, to raise its standards of literature (and this is literature) to consider the ways that stereo-

types, prejudice, and bigotry get started and are sustained.

“On its website, Simon & Schuster refers to itself as a ‘global leader’ providing ‘the best in fiction and nonfiction for consumers of all ages.’ The best, did you say? Now’s the time to prove it.”

“It’s important to note that nobody is talking about banning the CD.... This is a call to Simon & Schuster to regard its audience more highly.”

Book Talk

For the past year, Scholastic's Harry Potter series has been the darling the media, the best-seller lists, and the cocktail party circuit. In fact, the series is probably the reason that Barbara Marcus, president of children's books at Scholastic, is so upset that the *New York Times Book Review* has decided to separate children's best-sellers into three different groups. This means that Harry Potter can appear only two of three weeks.

“...what youngster would want to be Hermione Granger or any of the other women. . . .?”

A frequent comment is that Harry Potter has benefited children because they become excited about reading. (Although I remember the same thing said for the Goosebumps series several years ago.)

Does everyone love Harry? Apparently not, as indicated by a column by Donna Harrington-Lueker, an education writer in Newport, RI, in *USA Today* (5/11/00) immediately following the release of J. K. Rowling's fourth book, *The Goblet of Fire*, in the midst of ALA midsummer festivities at Annual in Chicago. Following are a few of Harrington-Lueker's statements.

“Given a choice, what youngster would want to be Hermione Granger or any of the other women, young or old, in the Potter series so far? Perhaps it's a question only a Muggle would ask. The Potter books are filled with charm and imagination, close calls and humor, powerful friendships and abiding love. . . .”

“But for girls, *Goblet of Fire* dashes any hope that the subtle sexism of the earlier books would be tempered. None of the girls or women in *Goblet of Fire* escapes shrillness, giddiness or fear. . . . Admirably self-confident, Angelina Johnson, a Gryffindor chaser, nominates herself for the Triwizard competition, but it's fledgling French bombshell Fleur Delacour with her mane of silvery

“None of the girls. . . escapes shrillness, giddiness or fear.”

blond hair who's the only woman to compete. (Another case of sex sells?)

“Hermione remains problematic, as well. An overachiever whom the boys love to hate, Hermione is the stereotypical good girl who completes her work ahead of time, chides her friends for breaking rules and always has her hand up in class. She's also bossy, shrill, exasperating and meddlesome to a degree that puzzles Kathleen Odean, author of *Great Books for Girls*, an annotated list of books with strong female characters. . . .”

“Claudia Mills, an associate professor of ethics at the University of Colorado-Boulder and a children's book author, has similar qualms about the conflicting messages Hermione sends. Clearly, Hermione's intelligence is valuable. But while girls study in the Harry Potter books, boys take action, Mills says. And that's a stereotype that limits both sexes.

“Already girls are vulnerable. In a recent poll from the New York-based Girls Inc. (formerly the Girls Club of America), 59% of girls in grades 3 through 12 reported that girls were told not to brag about things they do well, 63% said they were under pressure to please everyone, and 56% said they were expected to speak softly and not cause trouble.

“The group's conclusion: Girls are being told they can do anything boys can do, but they're also being held to obsolete stereotypes that hold them back.

“Maybe the Ministry of magic could work on this?”

“Maybe the Ministry of magic could work on this?”

Recommended Books

Independent booksellers have recommended the following two titles.

Pure by Rebecca Ray (Grove, \$13, paper, 0802137008) “By the time I was halfway through this phenomenal book, I couldn't put it down, finishing at 2 a.m. This book is well-written, especially if it is indeed written by a 16-year-old! When I finished the book, I had many questions about her family and what had really happened; the feelings were intense.”—Andra Tracy, OutWord Bound, Indianapolis, IN

Those Jordan Girls by Joan M. Drury (Spinsters Ink, \$12 paper, 1883523362) “A simply delightful matriarchal tale of melded generations. Historical in all the right places. Emotional, evoking. . . from laughter to tears.”—Cheryl Townsend, Cat's Impetuous Books & Stuff, Kent, OH

Feminist publishing news

Feminist bookstores may be fewer in number these days but many continue to serve their communities with enemy and enthusiasm.

At this year's Book Expo America in Chicago, only seven booksellers attended a one-day Feminist Bookstore Network program. Last year in Los Angeles, 25 booksellers attended a two-day program.

Publisher's Weekly recently spoke to owners/managers of three longstanding feminist bookstores, members of a New York City bookstore collective that just celebrated its first birthday and the former publisher of *Feminist Bookstore News*:

- In less than three years, almost 30 feminist bookstores closed.
- Closings have leveled off in the last nine months.
- New stores, like New York City's *Bluestockings*, are taking a more activist approach with strong political ties.
- There is hope that this "generational shift" in booksellers will revitalize the niche bookstores.

--*Publisher's Weekly*, v.247, Jul 24, 2000, p. 24-26.

The name [*Alice*] captures the mission of Diane Anderson Minshall's new bimonthly feminist zine perfectly: an alternative to what she sees as a myopic attitude by the publishers who marginalize women outside the mainstream. "For women on the other side of the looking glass" is Alice's slogan.

At chain bookstores and larger newsstands today, you'll find *Bust* ("The voice of the new girl order"), *Bitch* ("The feminist response to pop culture"), *Girlfriends*, *Moxie*, *Fabula*, *Hip Mama*, *Rockrgrl*, *Radiance* and dozens of smaller zines.

--*Los Angeles Times*, Jun 29, 2000, p. 2.

Happily completing its third decade this year, The Feminist Press at the City University of New York takes pride in calling itself "the oldest women's press in the world."

While its focus has not been predominantly on lesbian-oriented books, the publisher has nevertheless been a pioneer in the field. "Restoring lost lesbian writers has always been a distinct part of our publishing mission," says publisher/director Florence Howe. "We have about 180 books in print, 22 of which are lesbian. We were the first to do a Lesbian Studies book, in 1982."

--*Publisher's Weekly*, v.247, May 22, 2000, p. 55.

Book Reviews

WINDRATH, HELEN, ED. *THEY WROTE THE BOOK: THIRTEEN WOMEN MYSTERY WRITERS TELL ALL.* DULUTH: SPINSTERS, 2000.

The writers Woman's Press senior editor Helen Windrath asked to contribute to this compilation of essays on different aspects of the mystery writing craft include Val McDermid, creator of investigator Kate Branningan; 1994 Edgar winner Marcia Muller, and Stella Duffy, creator of lesbian PI Saz Martin.

The "tell all" hook in the book's title seems to promise juicy gossip or at least the inside scoop on agents and editors. There's not much of that, but mystery readers -- even those who aren't particular fans of the contributors -- will find this a surprisingly interesting collection.

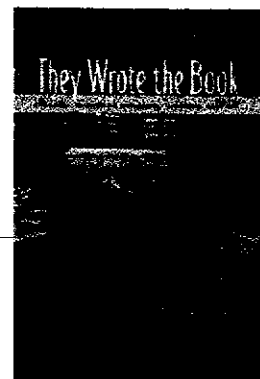
The pieces are intelligent (but not scholarly) and fluidly written. The revelations are the diversity of approach described (from Sarah Dreher, who describes writing as largely "instinctive, intuitive and

pretty chaotic," to Jean Bedford, who uses plot and subplot outlines and character lists to plan her books).

Although each author has a distinct topic ("The Business of Research," "Creating and Maintaining Pace," "Developing a Series Character"), there is a good bit of duplication across the collection.

This is probably because its hard to talk about just one aspect of a process as integrated as writing a book, and is illuminating in itself. Nearly all of the authors mention hearing their characters "speak."

Technically not a how-to book, *They Wrote the Books* would nevertheless make a good addition to a collection on writing technique, at the same time being a book mystery fans will enjoy.



Book Reviews

GAGE, CAROLYN. *MONOLOGUES AND SCENES FOR LESBIAN ACTORS*. ANAHEIM: ODD GIRLS, 1999.

Carolyn Gage's collection *The Second Coming of Joan of Arc and Other Plays* was a 1996 Lambda Literary Award finalist and many of the monologues in this anthology are from *Second Coming*. Others are from her play "Harriet Tubman Visits a Therapist."

Compilations of monologues and scenes are a rather specialized genre, used primarily by actors for searching for audition material.



Young actors, particularly, often search for off-the-beaten-path material for auditions or class performances, and *Monologues and Scenes* provides easy access to otherwise difficult to find excerpts. Most compilations of this kind stick to well-known writers, even when attempting to present contemporary drama.

On the other hand, it would be a brave woman who selected one of the readings from this book for her audition at the local town theatre.

Gage is relatively unknown (perhaps her autobiographical piece in the spring 2000 *Michigan quarterly review* will help) and the content of these readings is always quite plainspoken and often sexually explicit.

Characters include Lou, a "fat, working class dyke" in "Heterosexuals Anonymous;" Charlotte Cushman, "the greatest American actress of the 19th century, a fat, butch lesbian," and the Wild West star Calamity Jane, portrayed as a "butch bar dyke."

What someone should compile now is the book I thought this was when I read the title: scenes that include lesbian characters from more mainstream drama that will help lesbian actors, particularly younger ones, find material for auditions and classes that will be a little more likely to help them get the role while still .

Recently Received

Nonfiction

- Brownworth, Victoria & Susan Raito, eds. *Restricted Access: Lesbians On Disability*. Seattle: Seal, 1999.
- Edwards, Laura F. *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in The Civil War Era*. Urbana: Illinois, 2000.
- Gage, Carolyn. *Monologues And Scenes for Lesbian Actors*. Anaheim: Odd Girls, 1999.
- Hernandez Lara, Leopoldo. *Religious Discrimination Against Women*. Mexico City, 1999.
- Kiehndienst, Kris, ed. *This is What a Lesbian Looks Like: Dyke Activists Take On The 21st Century*. Ithaca: Firebrand, 1999.
- Ratner, Rochelle, ed. *Bearing Life: Women's Writings On Childlessness*. NY: Feminist, 2000.
- Silliman, Jael & Ynesra King, eds. *Dangerous Intersections: Feminist Perspectives On Population, Environment, and Development*. Cambridge: South End, 1999.
- Windrath, Helen, ed. *They Wrote the Book: Thirteen Women Mystery Writers Tell All*. Duluth: Spinsters, 2000.

Fiction

- Cornstock, Kathleen A. *Orchid House*. Raleigh: Pentland, 2000.
- Dalglish, Cass. *Nin*. Duluth: Spinsters Ink, 2000.
- McDermid, Val. *Booked For Murder*. 2nd edition. Duluth: Spinsters, 2000.
- Rodgers, Jon. *Sugar Land*. Duluth: Spinsters, 1999.

Young People

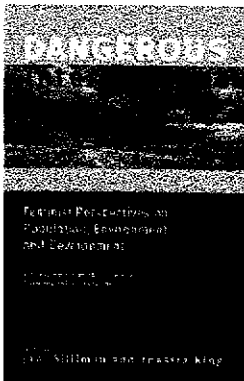
- Bailey, Linda. *When Addie Was Scared*. Wyatt, Valerie. Math book for girls. Pat Cupples, Ill. Buffalo: Kids Can, 1999.
- Moore, Isabel. *Daughter*. Buffalo: Kids Can, 1999.
- Waboose, Jan Bourdeau. *Sky Sisters*. Brian Daines, Ill. Buffalo: Kids Can, 2000.
- Wilson, Stacy. *Hockey Book for Girls*. Buffalo: Kids Can, 1999.
- Wyatt, Valerie. *Math Book for Girls*. Pat Cupples, Ill. Buffalo: Kids Can, 1999.
- Wyatt, Valerie. *Science Book for girls*. Pat Cupples, Ill. Buffalo: Kids Can, 1999.

Book Reviews

SILLIMAN, JAEI & YNESTRA KING, EDS. **DANGEROUS INTERSECTIONS: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON POPULATION, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT.** CAMBRIDGE: SOUTH END, 1999.

This collection of previously unpublished essays is a project of the Committee on Women, Population and Environment (CWPE), a "loose but politically astute network of feminist scholars and activists." CWPE was initiated because of concerns about the impact of free market policies and the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

Jael Silliman's introduction, along with the appendices (a CWPE document on women, population and the environment and the Political Ecology Group's position paper on immigration and environment), provides an excellent overview of the topic.



Topics covered range from the very specific (Meredeth Turshen's "The Ecological Crisis in Tanzania") to the more general (Joni Seager's "Patriarchal Vandalism: Militaries and the Environment"). Other topics include access to and the uses of birth control, abortion, AIDS and other STDs, and the intersections of gender and poverty.

The collection is international in scope, although many of the essays have a North American focus and several deal only with the United States. The essays are accessible to undergraduates without being too simplistic to be useful to faculty and graduate students. A helpful feature, often absent in collections such as this, is an index to the complete volume.

BROWNORTH, VICTORIA A. AND SUSAN RAFFO, EDS. **RESTRICTED ACCESS: LESBIANS ON DISABILITY.** SEATTLE: SEAL, 1999.

The contributors to this volume are poets, novelists, editors, artists, educators and activists. Most of them tell their own stories, although there are a few poems and interviews scattered among the collection.

This is not just a book for lesbians (or others) with disabilities to read and be inspired or comforted by.

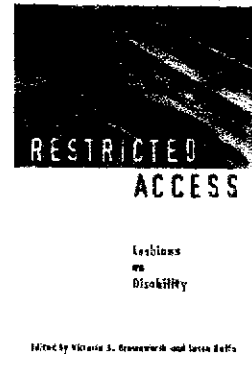
As Victoria Brownworth points out in her introduction, nondisabled people, even those of us who like to think we value diversity, avoid proximity to the disabled.

For nondisabled people *Restricted Access* is a tough and true introduction to a life we know very little about.

Restricted Access is a personal book, difficult to read yet hard to put down.

The reminder that anyone can become disabled is frightening. The language of the disability subculture (*crip, gimp*) is used alongside the more familiar language of the lesbian subculture (*dyke, queer*), but is still disconcerting.

Above all, the contributors' honesty about their feelings, their needs, how they are marginalized by nondisabled culture, even *lesbian* nondisabled culture, is stunning. Stunning because in their descriptions of their oppressors many of us will recognize ourselves.



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All of the books listed in "Recently Received" and not reviewed in this issue are available. A number of other books are also available, and more come in every week. Deadlines for reviews are the 10th of November, February and May.

Go to <http://staffweb.library.vanderbilt.edu/feministbooks> for more information.

Women in Libraries
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The Women's Studies Section of ACRL is seeking nominations for two awards that honor major contributions to women's studies librarianship. One recognizes a significant project or achievement in the past calendar year and the other recognizes career achievement. Each involves a prize of \$1000. The sponsors are Greenwood Publishing Group and Routledge. Submission forms, as well as details on criteria and eligibility, are available at <http://www.ala.org/acrl/wss/awardtop.html>. For more information, contact Marlene Manoff (mmanoff@MIT.EDU).