



GLBTRT Newsletter

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

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

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GLBTRT Updates Name—Changes "Transgendered" to "Transgender"

You may have noticed a new logo on the Newsletter! The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table (GLBTRT) is now the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table, to reflect the preferred terminology of the transgender community.

The name change was approved during the American Library Association's Midwinter Meeting in San Diego. By changing the previously-used "transgendered" to "transgender" in its title, GLBTRT's membership seeks to bring the round table's name in line with the language preference of the

transgender community and better reflect the GLBT community.

"The Round Table decided to make this change so there would be consistency between the name of the round table and commonly used language," said ALA Co-Chairs Anne Moore and Dale McNeill in a statement explaining the change. "From outside the community, this change may seem like a minor detail, but GLBT communities have long been attuned to the power and implications of labeling."

The Williams Institute Releases Research on GLBT Population



A leading think tank dedicated to the field of sexual orientation and gender identity-related law and public policy, released new research that estimates the size of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community in the United States.

Drawing on information from four recent national and two state-level population-based surveys, the analyses suggest that there are more than eight million adults in the US who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual, comprising 3.5% of the adult population. There are also nearly 700,000 transgender individuals in the US. In total, the study suggests that approximately nine million Americans - roughly the population of New Jersey - identify as LGBT. The study is available at <http://www2.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/pdf/How-many-people-are-LGBT-Final.pdf>

Deadlines for the newsletter for the next year will be:

Summer 2011	June 8, 2011
Fall 2011	August 31, 2011
Winter 2011	November 31, 2011
Spring 2012	March 20, 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 can be saved for them in the newsletter.

Kid Stuff

About young readers for people who care

Last year, Kentucky high school freshman Brent hit national news when he wrote about not finding gay books in the school or public library. Eventually he did locate them at the bookstores. It's time for librarians to catch up in diversifying materials with LGBTQ books. Fortunately, GLBTRT now provides two services support these librarians: the ALA Rainbow Project (<http://rainbowlist.wordpress.com/>) and the Stonewall Children's and Young Adult Award (<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/glbtrt/stonewall/honored/index.cfm>). The 2011 Rainbow LGBTQ bibliography for young readers, released in January 2011, was its fourth; the 2011 Stonewall award was its second.

Librarians familiar with the titles cited by these two groups already understand the importance of presenting LGBTQ people in a realistic and prominent manner, whether in fiction or nonfiction. But every year new librarians and paraprofessionals—sometimes clerks—are responsible for book selection. Knowledge about the resources cited above must be communicated to these and other librarians if they are to make the LGBTQ world visible.

The continual threat of school bullying was highlighted in a recent White House conference by President Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle. Nine out of ten LGBTQ students have experienced harassment at school, and they are bullied two to three times as much as straight—or straight-appearing—teens. As people dealing with young people struggle to find answers for this plague, they can help by providing LGBTQ experiences to all young readers with books.

In Lili Wiklkinson's *Pink* (HarperTeen), my favorite LGBTQ book thus far this year, 16-year-old Ava is probably the first bisexual protagonist in YA fiction.

Although she has a girlfriend, she questions what a relationship with a male would be like and decides to explore the possibility. Honest and witty, *Pink doesn't* dodge from the problems of searching for an identity.



This year's Stonewall winner, Brian Katcher's *Almost Perfect* (Delacorte), delves into another YA problem—that of transgender, this time through the boy who falls for beautiful Sage and breaks down the wall between them before he discovers that

she was born biologically male. From a straight author comes a direct book about the pain and growth resulting from developing greater understanding.

So many books—so little space! Following are other books that should be in all libraries for young people:

James St. James' *Freak Show* (Dutton): an over-the-top drag queen faces brutal homophobia at a very wealthy conservative school.

Mayra Lazara Dole, *Down to the Bone* (HarperTeen): in a hilarious debut novel, a 16-year-old Latina, Kicked out of school and home for being a lesbian, faces her prejudices about her culture.

Dale Peck's *Sprout, or My Salad Days, When I Was Green in Judgment* (Bloomsbury): a green-haired boy in conservative Kansas preps for the state essay contest and falls in love with the intriguing new boy at school.

Mark Hardy's *Nothing Pink* (Front Street): the gay son of a Pentacostal preacher fights his torments and impulses until he meets a more accepting church friend.

Cheryl Rainfield's *Scars* (Westside Books): a girl who cuts because of childhood sexual abuse finds support from another lesbian and their art teacher.

Julie Anne Peters' *Far from Xanadu* (Little, Brown): a small-town butch lesbian woos the new—and straight—girl in town.

Rigoberto González's *The Mariposa Club* (Alyson): Four racially diverse gay friends form a Gay/Straight Alliance in a small-town high school.

Bill Konigsberg *Out of the Pocket* (Dutton): a gay football player is outed in the school newspaper.

James Howes' *Totally Joe* (Ginee Seo Books): a 13-year-old boy comes out in his alphanography assignment—the story of his life from A to Z.

LGBTQ kids know they belong when they read about selecting a college and thriving in this community. Although somewhat dated (2008), John Baez's *The Gay and Lesbian Guide to College Life* (Princeton Review) seems to be the newest one on the market and provides lots of information on financing, the right school, being out or not, dealing with GLBTPhobia, etc.

Dan Savage's project "It Gets Better," videos from successful LGBTQ people, is designed to keep young people alive. From Dutton comes a book expanding on this website, a collection of essays and new material from celebrities, everyday people, and teens, showing LGBTQ youth the happiness, potential, and positivity their lives will reach if they get through their teen years. Savage is scheduled to be the ALA Annual Conference Opening General Session speaker on Friday, June 24 at 4:00 pm.

We mourn the passing of Perry Moore on February 17, 2011, at the age of 39. Author of Lambda Award winning *Hero* (Hyperion), he showed great promise with this debut novel about a teenage gay superhero: we will miss reading future books from him.



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Neutrality = Silence

An aspect of librarianship that is without fail emphasized in library school is neutrality. Librarians are taught to collect material that reflects all aspects of an issue in order to be impartial. Furthermore, librarians are also taught to not take sides on a political issue in order to not alienate individuals in their patron base. However, by their very nature, libraries are inherently political. This is especially true when the library collection deals with marginalized groups, groups that mainstream society would rather did not exist.

When Serbian nationalists wanted to eliminate all evidence of the many ethnic and religious groups that lived under one nation, they started burning down libraries because they knew that these possessed material evidence to the contrary. In Cambodia, in an attempt to **erase the country's multi-ethnic** and Western-influenced culture, those in power under the Khmer Rouge destroyed, among other institutions, libraries. As it carried out its agenda of extermination, the Khmer Rouge kept meticulous records of the groups they

targeted for elimination, which were mainly ethnic minorities; these same records later served to convict several in power of crimes against humanity and war crimes.

One does not need to look outside of the United States to see evidence of people trying to eliminate the visibility of a group. For example, using razor blades, a John Perkyns defaced a total of 607 books he perceived to be LGBT-related at the San Francisco Public Library. In some instances, these books merely contained **the proper name "Gay,"** such as books by historian Peter Gay or by the journalist **Gay Talese. At Harvard's Lamont Library,** about 40 LGBT-related books were found vandalized with urine. Incidents like these are not just the isolated actions of private individuals who are out of line with mainstream society, but are often carried out on a wider scale by public institutions and individuals. According to the American Library Association, from 2001 to 2009 344 books were challenged because of their mention of homosexuality in classrooms, public and school libraries. The point is that libraries serve as repositories for records—

books, pamphlets, videos, sound recordings, transcripts, lists, artifacts, etc.—of happenings that are seen as offensive and/or damaging by one or many groups.

These records reflect the fate, existence, and diversity of a community, and are physical evidence of past and present events. At the LGBT Campus

world and in the United States, historical, political, and cultural figures important to our community, influential cultural and political movements, and a wide range of other topics. Every month I put together a display that highlights certain subtopics in our collection in order to bring visibility to various groups that are especially misunderstood or underrepresented within our community and in society at large. These include displays on intersexuality, transgenderism, asexuality, queer people of color, bisexuality, and spirituality. At the beginning of the semester, in collaboration with my coworkers, I created a screensaver that makes our community visible in libraries all over campus. On a wider scale, on the 15th of April we will host **Break the Silence, Wisconsin** (BTSW), our annual **Stop the Silence** campaign to raise awareness about the impact of homophobia, transphobia, and bullying in schools. We are expecting Wisconsinites from all over the state to join us in marching to the Capitol. This event will be the culmination of a year of hard work and planning and will be especially important under **Scott Walker's administration's** hostile stance on LGBT rights. For more information on BTSW visit <http://lgbt.wisc.edu/stopthesilence/dayofsilence/>.

When the community we serve is the focus of constant attacks and librarians decide to remain silent, they are tacitly agreeing with the dominant group. At a time of political unrest and sweeping social change, librarians cannot afford to be neutral. Even if you cannot be physically present at our annual campaign on the 15th of April, there are **other ways to participate.** You can "like" Stop the Silence on Facebook, spread the word and encourage people to attend BTSW, change your Facebook profile picture to the BTSW icon, and, most importantly, stay informed and break the silence not just in Wisconsin and on the 15th of April, but every day of the year and anywhere where homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia is still socially acceptable.

Abel Ramos Ramos

Graduate Library Specialist, UW-Madison
LGBT Campus Center



Center library in UW-Madison we have material about human rights around the

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.**

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.

To volunteer as a Human Book, or to suggest resources for the event, please contact Julie Winkelstein at 2011humanlibrary@gmail.com.

Member Profile: Amanda Clay



We're also the largest Elementary library in the district, with over 10,000 titles. I love creating research lessons, matching storytime to curriculum, and building our giant collection. Acquisitions might be my favorite thing.

Did/do you have a mentor?

The closest thing I have to a mentor is Terri Street, who was my Children's Lit professor and is a librarian at a Middle School in my district. She's got an incredible amount of knowledge and enthusiasm, plus the most excellent sarcastic sense of humor. I've learned a lot from her, and hope to keep on learning.

Do you have any heroes in library land?

I'd have to say that this year my library heroes are the volunteers and aides who help us get our actual jobs done. We lost ours this year due to budget cuts (which, stunningly, did not affect the athletic departments) and I see every day how much they contribute to the work we do.

What are you reading right now? Would you recommend it?

I just finished reading "Hit the Road Manny" by Christian Burch, the sequel to his Stonewall Honor book "The Manny Files". I would recommend it to adults, since it has lots of clever jokes and excellent GLBT commentary, but alas would not recommend it to the middle-grades to whom it is marketed, since all the jokes and commentary would go right over their heads. This is something I see in GLBT C/YA fiction all too often. The author writes well, but doesn't actually write for their audience, and unfortunately this is a prime example.

What's the best part about being a member of the GLBTRT?

The best part about being in the GLBTRT is feeling professionally connected. At a school, especially an elementary school, it's so easy to get lost in your own world. Since I've become involved in the Round Table, I feel more a part of the library community. Plus, I've made so many fabulous new friends!

Social networks-yes or no? (LJ, Blogger, Second Life, WoW, MySpace, etc.)

As for social networks, I'm fairly rudimentary. I'm on facebook, but that's about it. I like to read and write things on paper and spend more time doing that. A luddite, I know...

Anything else you'd like to add?

For the rest, I'd have to say that being a part of the Stonewall Book Award committee is one of the best things that has ever happened to me, personally and professionally. Not only is it a fun committee full of some of the smartest, most enjoyable people I've ever met, but to be a part of something that big and important is an honor and a pleasure. This year, our first inclusion in the C/YA Youth Media Awards Ceremony was like nothing I've ever experienced, and a day I'll never forget. Committees can be a lot of work, but the rewards are immeasurable.

When or how did you know you wanted to work in the library field?

Coming from a family of librarians (my mother and sister) I fought my calling for a long time, but at last I could resist no longer. I was a classroom teacher for 14 years, but realized that the part I really liked was connecting kids with books, so the library was a natural transition.

What was your first library (or library-related) job?

My first library related job was as a child, shelving books and alphabetizing check-out cards for my mom. I love automation, but I miss all the snazzy old school wooden tools.

Tell us about your current job.

My current job is as an Elementary Library Media Specialist, though I prefer to be called the Librarian. Lakeview is a small, rural school adjacent to a large university town, so we have quite a mix of kids and a really solid community.

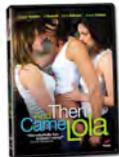
Write Reviews or Articles for the GLBTRT Newsletter!

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 Book Review 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 to **Sarah Wright** at swright@pwcgov.org.

Film Reviews

And Then Came Lola.

Dirs. Ellen Seidler and Megan Siler. New Almaden, CA: Wolfe Video, 2010. DVD. \$24.95. 71 min.



With the vaguest nod to *Run Lola Run*, this lesbian film is off and running through the streets of San Francisco with a simple storyline and almost non-existent character arcs. If you like cute lesbian fluff, this is the film for you, and it will happily snuggle in

between *Imagine Me and You* and *The L Word* on your DVD shelf.

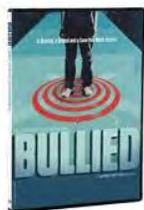
Though not written with enough depth to be really humorous, and not presenting enough sustained sex to be really hot, it is nonetheless, sure to delight many Sapphic viewers.

This light and breezy feature is not on the short list for mainstream libraries, but would be a good addition to your local GLBTQ community center.

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

Bullied: A Student, a School and a Case That Made History.

A Teaching Tolerance Documentary presented by the Southern Poverty Law Center. 2010. 38 min. Free for Nonprofit Organizations and Schools (one copy per school). www.tolerance.org/bullied



Bullied starts with a dedication to Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover, who hung himself at age 11 when people at school bullied him by repeatedly calling him gay.

And then Jamie Nabonzy's story begins with a reenactment of the moment when Jamie, his family, and his defense team were called into the courtroom to hear the findings of the jury concerning his lawsuit against the Ashland, Wisconsin School District and various administrators who worked there. In this landmark case Jamie, defended by the Lambda Legal Defense Education Fund, won the first lawsuit ever presented

concerning gay bashing suffered within a school setting. The rest of the film goes back in time in order to outline Jamie's abuse from students in both middle and high school, the reaction of the administration, his attempted suicide, running away to Minneapolis twice, and finally the trial: all through reenactments, interviews, and through Jamie's own words speaking sometimes to the movie audience and alternately to an auditorium of high school students as an inspirational speaker.

Finally, it is revealed that the administrators were found guilty, and while the school was not found liable, Ashland School District settled the case for \$900,000, which sent a message to gay students throughout the country that they deserve an appropriate education without the threat of harassment. Nabonzy

summed up his experience with the lawsuit by stating, "I fought back for all the kids who couldn't fight back."

Bullied includes a viewer's guide containing tools for educators who work with school staff or within the classroom, as well as further resources. The film has closed captioning and contains Spanish subtitles. Additional resources can be found online at the above website. This film is appropriate for schools and nonprofit organizations targeting audiences, including middle, high school, and college students, their parents, and school personnel.

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

David's Birthday / Il Compleano.

Dir. Marco Filiberti. 2009. Wolfe Video, 2010. 106 min. \$19.95



David's Birthday, the Wolfe release of the 2009 Italian film, *Il Compleano*, is a beautifully shot and a generally well-acted, though soapy drama. Two couples who have known each other for many years rent a beach house together for their summer vacation. We first see them together at the opera, *Tristan and Isolde*, whose love, of course, ends tragically.

Diego and Shery's son, David, has been in New York attending college and cultivating a budding modeling

career. Their friends, Matteo (a psychoanalyst) and Francesca, send their young daughter to visit her cousins, and assorted friends and relatives begin arriving at the beach house. David's eventual arrival exposes tensions between each couple and within their shared friendship. Moreover, David's beauty attracts all the neighborhood young women [when quizzed, David claims that they are kissing him, he is not kissing them], as well as the attention of Matteo.

The tragedy of Tristan and Isolde's love at the film's beginning is mirrored in the ending of this film, as the plans for David's birthday party

dissolve into disaster. Are David and Matteo gay or bisexual or something else? It doesn't really matter. Ultimately, what we have here is a variation on the old story that being either must end badly. So in some ways, the story devolves into a throwback. But the cinematography and scenery are beautiful and the acting is good-to-excellent all the way around.

David's Birthday would be a good addition to most library adult foreign film collections.

Reviewed by, **Dave Combe**
E. P. Foster Library
Ventura, CA

Eyes Wide Open.

Dir. HaimTabakman. With Zohar Strauss, Ran Danker. Hebrew with English subtitles. First Run Features, 2010. DVD. 90 min. \$27.95.



Aaron, a righteous man with a wife and four children, operates a butcher shop in the heart of the ultra-Orthodox community in

Jerusalem. One rainy day an unknown young man comes into the shop and asks to use a telephone. He tells Aaron that his name is Ezri and that he is a yeshiva student. He makes his phone call and leaves. At prayers the next morning, Aaron again encounters the mysterious outsider. Learning that Ezri has no job and no place to stay, Aaron hires him as an assistant and gives him lodgings above the shop.

As they work closely together in the butcher shop, the two men develop an attraction to each other that Aaron initially tells Ezri is a lust created by God, a challenge for them to overcome. Zohar Strauss (Aaron) and Ran Danker (Ezri) have remarkable chemistry with each

other. Their eyes and body language heartbreakingly express the turmoil going on inside their characters. In a wonderfully performed scene, after helping Ezri unload a large carcass of meat and hang it in the cooler, Aaron stares intently at Ezri while playing with the fringes on his tallit katan. Then, with his eyes wide open to the consequences, he walks unhesitatingly toward Ezri.

Eyes Wide Open depicts a community in which everyone knows everyone's business. Rule-breakers are quickly, sometimes violently, brought back into line. People know when Aaron is in Ezri's room. They circulate posters that say, "A sinner is in the neighborhood." In an amazing shot, while Aaron and Ezri are talking outside the shop, a vehicle passes by and reflected in its windows is a group of men who are watching them from across the street.

The dialogue is spare and stunning. The Rabbi asks Aaron why he cannot let the young man go. Aaron replies, "I need him . . . I was dead, and now I'm alive." "When Aaron tells Ezri, "We cannot go on like this. I have a family, a wife, children,

"Ezri says, "And I have only you." Rivka, Aaron's wife, who knows what is going on, generously asks him, "Where do you want to be?"

This gorgeous, intense film drenches the viewer in a culture in which to be something that is not expected of you is forbidden. The musical score beautifully expresses the heartbreaking melancholy of the film. Aaron and Ezri transgress boundaries in a community that does not acknowledge that homosexuality exists and find that it is impossible to live authentic lives.

The following link provides an insightful interview with Zohar Strauss that includes brief clips from the film: <http://www.art-tv.ch/5533-0-interview--zohar-strauss.html>.

Eyes Wide Open, one of the best gay-themed films ever made, is essential for all GLBTO film collections.

Reviewed by, **W. Stephen Breedlove**
Reference and Interlibrary Loan Librarian
La Salle University

The Four-Faced Liar.

Dir. Jacob Chase. With Marja Lewis Ryan, Emily Peck, Todd Kubrak, Liz Osborn, Danial Carlise. Wolfe Video, 2010. DVD. 87 min.



The Four-Faced Liar follows a group of college students as they navigate the complexities of their relationships with one another. Bridget (played by writer Marja Lewis Ryan) is a chain-smoking, blunt lesbian player

who names her conquests after days of the week. She finds herself flirting with and drawn to Molly (Emily Peck), a straight girl who is in a comfortable relationship with her boyfriend. Adding to the dynamic is Bridget's straight roommate Trip, who is navigating fidelity to his girlfriend while also being a player at heart.

The Four-Faced Liar is better than many of its independent lesbian film predecessors, but that does not say much. In its effort to be honest, the film makes it difficult to like any of the characters, including the abrasive protagonist who is initially seen reading on the toilet with the door open. It is hard to understand Molly's attraction to

Bridget. Unfortunately, the sudden switch from Molly and Greg being a seemingly happy couple to him being an antagonist and resorting to the old "what do you give her in bed that I cannot" argument breaks the genuine honesty the film strives for.

That being said, the film fills many voids that increase its merit for the LGBT audience. Bridget's character, while coarse, is refreshing. She embodies an imperfect sort of lesbian flirt that is written realistically, but is not often seen in movies. Additionally, the film features a friendship between a straight male and lesbian that does not cheapen itself through sexual tension, reminiscent of *DEBS*. And it oozes with sexuality and features some passionate, well filmed depictions of lesbian sex that are hard to find outside *The L Word*.

Perhaps unrealistically, *Four-Faced Liar* does not show sexual confusion of the initially straight girl confronting undeniable attraction to a lesbian (e.g. *Imagine Me & You*, which the film channels in narrative and its cover art), instead focusing on character dynamics

and issues of infidelity. It is also interesting that Molly pursues a committed relationship with Bridget instead of the other way around.

Ryan's writing is melodramatic in portions, but the acting is well done. Director Jacob Chase clearly has an eye for cinematic symmetry and balance, featuring many close-ups of two of the characters looking at the camera to indicate the sense of examining these characters' lives. The camera adds to the narrative and helps forgive some of the spotty writing.

Ultimately, I would recommend this film for public libraries with larger collections. Though it will inevitably be compared to the more mainstream *Imagine Me & You*, each film offers a unique depiction of a similar storyline and both are worthy to sit in the same collection.

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

Gay Revolt at Denver City Council (Oct. 23, 1973) and the Beginnings of an Organized Gay Community. Dir. Jerry

Gerash, 2010. DVD. \$20.00. <http://www.denvergayrevolt.com/home.php>



Gerald Gerash is an integral part of gay civil rights. Through this documentary, he narrates the events that led up to a confrontation with the Denver city council on October 23, 1973, where impassioned activists spoke for basic rights. Just a few years after Stonewall, this remarkable event changed the course of Denver's treatment of gay and lesbian citizens. Gerash uses personal accounts, photos, and actual recorded testimonies to depict the events on that evening. Viewers become witnesses to that night, when the

city council treated gay activism as a joke. We get to listen as though we are a fly on the wall, and we watch as the tide changes. Illegal roundups, entrapment, and a reckless vice squad make for a riveting heroic narrative of the people who stood up to the injustice in Denver.

Throughout the documentary, viewers are given a sense of the times and are struck aghast with the similarities to the harassment black people endured in the South just decades before. This is a testament to our heroic gay brothers and sisters, who bravely paved the way for future rights around the country.

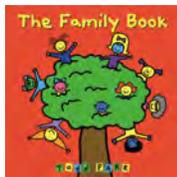
Gay Revolt is a powerfully important account of gay civil rights. It is suitable for any library and audience where gay history is important. It is a documentary that must be seen if we are to understand our past and to stay focused on our goals for the future of gay rights.

Reviewed by, Johnnie N. Gray
Director of Media Services/ ILL Librarian
Christopher Newport University

Did you know that many school libraries require their media specialists to utilize reviews for acquisitions? Some of those school media specialists can use reviews from our newsletter to help get children's books with GLBT themes into their school libraries. If you enjoy reading children's and young adult books and would like to write reviews, please get in touch with **Tracy Nectoux** at: GLBTReviews@gmail.com.

Book Reviews: Children's

Parr, Todd. *The Family Book*. New York: Hachette Book Group, 2010. First Paperback edition. \$6.99. [30p.]. ISBN: 978-0-316-07040-9.



The Family Book, written by New York Times bestselling author Todd Parr, is a feel good picture book with which people, both young and old will identify. Through humor and bright, colorful illustrations Parr shares with readers the diversity amongst families in our society. They range from families "big" and "small," "messy" and "clean" and also include families with, "two moms" and "two dads" or "one parent," as well as families that "are different colors" or "look alike."

The book celebrates the differences in families while keeping in mind the fundamental similarities that we all share.

This book will encourage thoughtful conversation and challenge children to broaden their definitions of what a family looks like. At the same time, the words and illustrations are empowering and allow children to gain confidence in whom they are, feel good about themselves, and have a sense of pride in their family. Similar to Parr's, *It's Okay To Be Different*, many children will see themselves or family members depicted

in a picture book for the first time through a realistic and loving lens.

The Family Book promotes print motivation and narrative skills, which are two key components to early literacy. This book would be a great addition to any public or school library collection aimed towards preschoolers.

Reviewed by, Jennifer Troy
MLIS Student
Drexel University

Bunnell, Jacinta and Nathaniel Kusnitz. *Sometimes the Spoon Runs Away with Another Spoon.*

Oakland, CA : PM Press; Daly City, CA : Reach and Teach, c2010.



This coloring book takes aim at gender stereotypes and turns them on their heads. The illustrations are a mix of re-imagined fairy tales (Prince Charming seeks the owner of the glass slipper so he can find out where to get

them in his size) and images from the experiences of real children (Zuri likes trucks, especially when the dolls are driving). All of the illustrations challenge gender roles and expectations in a non-confrontational, but thought provoking way. The last page has a list of questions designed to spark conversations about gender roles, gender expression, and **society's gender norms. The illustrations**

are charming and invite the reader to grab a crayon and get started.

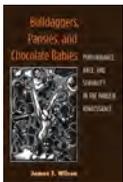
Recommended.

*Reviewed by, Sarah Corvene
Harvard Business School*

Book Reviews: Non-fiction

James F. Wilson. *Bulldaggers, Pansies, and Chocolate Babies: Performance, Race, and Sexuality in the Harlem Renaissance.*

Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2010. Hardcover. 260pp. \$49.50. ISBN: 978-0-472-11725-3.



In his introduction, James Wilson writes that "[s]et within the social and artistic context of the so-called Harlem Renaissance, *Bulldaggers, Pansies, and Chocolate Babies* focuses on the ways in which depictions of blackness and whiteness, male and female, homosexual and heterosexual, highbrow and lowbrow merged and coalesced in the theater and performances of the 1920s and 1930s." Throughout, Wilson keeps the spotlight firmly on the popular entertainment and celebrated figures of the "low" and "queer" renaissances.

The rowdy and sometimes violent rent party was working class in origin, but attracted a diverse crowd, including slumming tourists from downtown. As a relatively protected outlet for social, sexual, and cultural expression, the rent party was the birthplace of enduring comedy acts, dance fads such as the Charleston and the Lindy Hop, and much music that later entered the mainstream.

Originally promoted as masquerades, drag balls were another Harlem institution. By 1933, the largest of these ticketed events attracted nearly 6,000 spectators of different races, classes, and sexual orientations. Drag shows were popular nightclub fare, and audiences flocked to see the appealingly scandalous Sepia Mae West and Sepia Gloria Swanson.

The Broadway sensation *Lulu Belle*, a collaboration between white playwrights Charles MacArthur and Edward Sheldon, featured a large integrated cast, although white actors in blackface took the main roles. Critics alternately denounced the play as morally depraved and praised it as morally instructive, but gay men embraced the doomed but ever-glamorous title character and named a club for her in Harlem.

While elected officials enforced a more or less strict code of censorship on Broadway, Harlem was, Wilson writes, generally permitted to "live up to its image as a place of racial and sexual exotica," since "one of the functions of the ghetto is to provide a controlled site for a certain amount of lawlessness." Harlem churches, however, crusaded against homosexuality, which they regarded as threatening to the family, and conservative black writers **railed against the public's boundless appetite for sexually charged entertainment.**

Wilson devotes his final chapter to Gladys Bentley, a black singer and pianist who began her career as a blueswoman whose bleak laments were securely in the woman-wronged-by-a-man heterosexual tradition. Soon, however, she became known for the unparalleled ribaldry of her popular song parodies, her trademark white tuxedo, and outsized and outspoken personality. She married a white woman in a civil ceremony in New Jersey, and packed the Ubangi Club night after night

with admirers who couldn't seem to get enough. In the 1950s, long after the Great Depression had rendered such carefree fun irrelevant, and an anxious society demanded a strict separation of gender roles, Bentley rejected her former life. In an essay for *Ebony* magazine titled "I Am a Woman Again," she declared it had all been a "living hell." Her only video appearance is from 1958, where she performed as a contestant on *You Bet Your Life* with Groucho Marx. Includes 12 black and white photographs, 34 pages of notes, an index, and a bibliography.

Thoroughly researched and thoroughly accessible, *Bulldaggers, Pansies, and Chocolate Babies* has a broader focus than its title suggests and is recommended for libraries with an interest in GLBT history, U.S. theater history, and African American history.

*Reviewed by, Joyce Meggett
Division Chief for Humanities
Chicago Public Library*

Branson, Helen P. and Will Fellows. *Gay Bar: The Fabulous, True Story of a Daring Woman and Her Boys in the 1950s.*

Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010. 186pp. \$26.95. ISBN: 978-0-299-24850-5



Gay Bar is an excellent combination of historical content and modern context, sprinkled with funny stories throughout. Originally published by Helen Branson in 1957 in a print run of only 1,600 copies, the book was sold through homophile press outlets and at alternative

leaning bookstores. Although that initial run sold out, it was never reprinted. Recently, Will Fellows discovered the book, and his added commentary on the author and the era shines light on the often overlooked period of queer culture after World War II and before the uprisings at Compton's Cafeteria and the Stonewall Inn.

After a failed marriage and several stints as a hostess and manager at other bars, Branson opened her own gay bar in Los Angeles. Several years later, she wrote a small book about "her boys" and the bar, giving insight to the social lives of gay men in the 1950s. Her intention was to give

straight readers an idea of what gay people were actually like, and also to illustrate some of the problems they faced due to discrimination. Although the bar was generally a fun, social place—and many of the vignettes reflect this—Branson was well aware that outside of her establishment most of the customers faced the real threat of losing everything if anyone found out that they were gay. Partly to protect her customers, and partly due to her own prejudices, Branson's neighborhood bar had very strict rules about who was welcome: generally straight-acting men who were introduced by another regular—and who was not: strangers, unaccompanied women, or anyone who was too obviously queer. Within those constraints, her bar became a safe haven for men looking for friends, dates, or even potential jobs.

Interspersed throughout the original chapters, the historical context that Will Fellows adds about both the time frame and about Helen Branson herself makes this a book well worth reading for historical, as well as entertainment purposes. His careful

research explains the social mores of the 1950s, and helps the reader understand how welcome Helen's bar was to the men who met there.

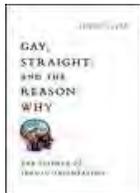
Gay Bar is a quick, pleasant book to read. Branson's writing style is brash and direct, but always friendly. Fellows writes in a similarly accessible style, and the two compliment each other nicely to form a cohesive narrative.

Highly recommended for public libraries, and recommended especially to patrons with an interest in queer pulp novels, as *Gay Bar* adds some historical perspective and depth to the social lives that are found in *The Beebo Brinker Chronicles* and similar period genre fiction.

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

LeVay, Simon. *Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why: The Science of Sexual Orientation.*

Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011. Hardcover. 412p. \$27.95. ISBN: 978-0-19-97376-3.



Simon LeVay's *Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why* is not exactly a follow-up to his 1996 *Queer Science: The Use and Abuse of Research into Homosexuality*. In the earlier work, while covering biological research into the possible origins of sexual

orientation, LeVay also treated the history of sex research, addressed social constructionism, and discussed a variety of social and political issues facing GLBT people and the consequences he saw flowing from biological findings.

Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why focuses almost entirely on summarizing biological research to date on sexual orientation. LeVay presents, evaluates, and ultimately attempts to integrate work from the 1990s onward (including very recent studies) on sex

hormones, genes, brain differences, physiological differences, and birth order ("the older brother effect"). His conclusion is that the prenatal influences of sex hormones, likely facilitated or aided by genetic factors, are the strongest candidates for determining, or strongly influencing, sexual orientation.

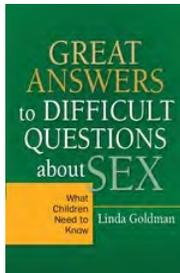
Those who believe that gender is largely, if not entirely, a social construct will be turned off by the centrality of the notions of gender-typical and gender-atypical behavior, for although the terms "typical" and "atypical" may be used in other contexts to refer to statistical norms, here the strong implication is that they are largely biologically-based differences. It is also possible that LeVay may be overstating the strength of those studies that support his general hypothesis. But even for the non-specialist (to whom I imagine this book is primarily addressed)

who reads carefully, it is clear that most of the conclusions reached in specific studies are, in fact, tentative ones often, although not always, based on small samples or having other research design problems. Such objections can, probably, be raised for almost all research that attempts to link complex human behavior to any biological basis. However, regardless of these objections, a book such as this is needed every decade or so. Biologists and neuroscientists have a right to make their case in GLBT studies and it is good to bring all the information together in one place. The book is an essential one.

Reviewed by, **David Woolwine**
Assistant Professor of Library Science and
Reference Librarian
Hofstra University

Goldman, Linda. *Great Answers to Difficult Questions About Sex: What Children Need to Know.*

London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2010. 112p. \$15.95. ISBN: 978-1-84905-804-9.



Talking with children about sex can be intimidating, but this book helps parents and caring adults navigate these conversations in a nurturing way. Goldman provides practical, specific language that describes answers to actual questions that are asked by children of a variety of ages. The case studies provide responses that are age and developmental stage appropriate, offering the "right" amount of detail for a child's developing awareness. While the book is clearly written from the perspective of a heterosexual parent or caregiver, nearly a

third of the questions are dedicated to topics related to sexual orientation, including definitions of "gay" and "transgender," methods through which gay people become parents, different kinds of families, and some discussion of gender roles with toys and clothing.

Great Answers focuses on using appropriate language, using the actual names for body parts instead of nicknames, and being honest, but appropriate when answering questions, which will help reinforce levels of trust between the parent and the child. The author also stresses the importance of cultivating an ongoing, open conversation about sex, creating a progressive dialogue to support a child's curious mind.

This short volume is full of suggestions in a simple question-and-answer format, and provides easy reference and ideas for **answering children's questions.** There are three appendices, including one with a list of web and print resources to supplement information targeted at children and adults.

Great Answers to Difficult Questions About Sex is recommended for collections that offer support for parents or adults working with young and school-age children, as well as for adults who are in search of language to answer a child's questions about sex.

Reviewed by, **Rebekah Kilzer**
Emerging Technologies Librarian
Drexel University

Lenius, Steve. *Life, Leather and the Pursuit of Happiness.*

Minneapolis: Nelson Borhek Press, 2010. Paperback. 322



Since 1995, Steve Lenius has written a column in *Lavender*, Minnesota's LGBT newsmagazine on the leather/BDSM/fetish community. Take note: Lenius **doesn't write in these columns** about whips and chains and ropes and tit clamps, but about the people who use them – and the community **they've built.** Definitely non-graphic, these essays provide a good introduction to leather folk and the leather lifestyle for the non-kinky and the curious, as well as those in the scene.

Because *Lavender* is for all of Minnesota's LGBT population, Lenius does not take an "Inside Baseball" approach. He does not assume his readers will know the difference between top grain and split grain, the ins and outs of club and contest politics, what a lime green hanky means. Instead, he respects the reader, giving appropriate background without over explaining.

From his 15 years writing for *Lavender*, Lenius has selected over 100 of his favorite columns. He resisted the easy route of just arranging the essays chronologically, and his book is much stronger because of its thematic organization. The first sections ease the reader in - what to wear, what to expect in play, community ethics and mores. The bulk of the book, though, is explorations of different aspects of the leather community - history, relationships, clubs and contests, holidays and spiritual life.

The parts of the book that resonated strongest with me are the chapter on leather subcommunities and the chapter on healthy life. The leather subcommunities that he looks at - lesbians, parents, heterosexuals, bisexuals, transgender leather, aging leather folk, and the next generation of leather - all have their own, sometimes conflicting needs and agendas, but Lenius ties them all up together in a

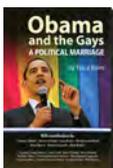
leather jacket big enough to include them all. When Lenius looks at how to be healthy **leatherfolk, he doesn't just stop at safe** sex, or even safe-sane-consensual. He also explores issues like drug use, rape, unsafe play, and mental health – and his empathy for his brothers and sisters in leather bleeds through the page.

This balanced and thoughtful work fills a unique gap in most collections – a way to explain leather to the non-leather community. Essential for public and academic libraries in places with an established or developing leather/BDSM/fetish community. Recommended for all public libraries.

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

Baim, Tracy. *Obama and the Gays: A Political Marriage.*

Chicago: Prairie Avenue Productions, 2010. Paperback. 556pp. \$24.99. ISBN: 978-1453801710



Obama and the Gays is a one-stop source for any and all information relating to GLBT issues and President Obama, beginning with his days as an Illinois State Legislator all the way to the White House and early Presidency. Tracy Baim, a Chicagoan who has been involved with Chicago GLBT media since 1984, has a unique insight to Obama and his

evolution on GLBT issues. She has gathered journalistic information from a wide variety of sources on every topic you can imagine related to Obama and the GLBT community.

Some of the many issues that this book covers are gay marriage, civil unions, hate crimes statutes, issues related to HIV/AIDS, adoption rights, Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT), the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), and

workplace discrimination. Also included are over 50 pages of photographs and other images such as political signs, letters, newspaper clippings, surveys, and questionnaires that Obama filled out (two of which are in his own handwriting from 1996 and 1998).

(Continued Page 11)

Baim, Tracy. *Obama and the Gays: A Political Marriage. (cont.)*

This book is the ultimate source for tracing **the path of Obama's stance on GLBT issues.** Not only does it cover his views and actions, but it tells the story of the climate with which he was dealing at the time, such as the Jeremiah Wright controversy and Prop 8 in California, among other issues affecting his decisions. The book also covers the decisions that his political opponents were making on these same issues, which serves to provide a sense of how Obama measures up when put side-by-

-side on the topics at hand.

Also included are articles from notable GLBT activists, such as Michelangelo Signorile, a gay writer and national talk show host, and Wayne Besen, former spokesman for the Human Rights Campaign and founder of Truth Wins Out; as well as interviews with such people as Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Brian Bond, Deputy Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement, and many many more.

Tracy Baim has done an outstanding job of culminating details from a vast array of sources, which makes this book the definitive guide on Obama and gay issues. I have not seen anything else that comes close. This book is highly recommended for both academic and public libraries.

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

Morris, Michael. *Polaroids: Photographs by Attila Richard Lukacs.*

Vancouver, B.C.: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2010. Hardcover. 175pp. \$55.00. ISBN: 978-1-55152-295-1.



A companion to the 2009 exhibition, this collection of photographs provides a perspective into the preservation and arrangement of the byproducts of the artistic process.

Canadian painter Attila Lukacs spent the 1980s in West Berlin, taking Polaroids of men—hustlers, skinheads, friends—to incorporate into his paintings. The photos themselves were not originally intended as artistic works, although Lukacs did save them with the intention to eventually show

them in public. Indeed, decades later, the Polaroids were displayed in the **Art Gallery of Alberta. Lukacs' friend,** fellow Canadian and painter Michael Morris, compiled and organized the shots into tidy chronological groups. **Morris' role as curator is** acknowledged throughout the book.

In addition to pages of carefully reconstructed series of images, *Polaroids* includes essays by Stan Persky, Michael Turner, and Scott Watson, as well as an interview with the artist by Vince Aletti. The sum is **an exploration not only of Lukacs' work,** but also of Canadian painting,

artistic archives, and the queer art scene of the era.

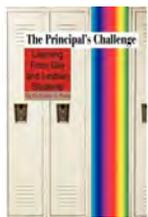
Polaroids is a must for university libraries with any interest in contemporary Canadian art. Note that it is of a rather unwieldy size: **approximately 13" by 17" but only 1" thick.** Most of the photographs feature nude men, and some include Nazi symbolism.

*Reviewed by, Kelly McElroy
Out on the Shelves Library
Vancouver BC*

Pace, Nicholas J. *The Principal's Challenge: Learning from Gay and Lesbian Students.*

Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2009. Paperback. 149pp. No price indicated. ISBN: 978-1-60752-291-1.

There's no question that Nicholas Pace means well. In *The Principal's Challenge*, he chose to write about his experiences as a high school principal so that he and his peers could better understand gay teens and help them make it through to graduation – an admirable goal.



Unfortunately, it's difficult to imagine a large audience for this book. Pace writes for educators, yes, but seemingly for those who don't already know any gay people. That's a pretty small corner of 2011 America. Perhaps a pamphlet or presentation would have made more sense than a book-length work. There is also an issue of privilege and power; the first

section describes Pace's awakening to the issues facing gay teens, and this is difficult to relate to. This straight male administrator with the privilege to be unaware of gay teens' obstacles, or really of gay people at all, has a forum to tell us all **about it. I'm happy that Pace came to realize that this issue is important, but I don't particularly want to read about his journey.**

It doesn't help that *The Principal's Challenge* is poorly written and edited. The middle section consists of bios of eight teens who won a college scholarship named after Matthew Shepard. Pace records their stories as lengthy, bland descriptions of the students' adolescences, whereas anecdotes in the kids' own words would have made for a much more interesting read. A more skillful writer and a more diligent editor **would have ensured that I didn't have to**

read passages such as, "After he gradually came out and was known in school as being gay, a number of others followed suit, perhaps as many as six or eight students. Both Mark's status as the first, as well as that a handful of students followed suit, reasonably soon after seem remarkable."

The final section, and the strongest in the book, is a call to action. Here Pace asks his fellow educators to see gay kids as people, not problems, and to understand that a **school in which queer teens can't achieve is, well, a school where teens can't achieve.**

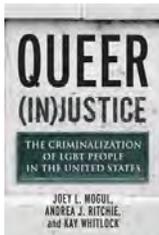
Yes, Pace's heart is in the right place...but you know what they say about good intentions.

*Reviewed by, Daisy Porter
San José Public Library*

Book Reviews: Fiction

Mogul, Joey L., Andrea J. Ritchie and Kay Whitlock. *Queer (In)justice: The Criminalization of LGBT People in the United States*.

Queer Action/Queer Ideas Ser. Boston: Beacon Press, 2011. Hardcover. 216pp. \$27.95. ISBN: 978-0-8070-5116-0.



LGBT persons have long struggled for equality in the United States, often using the courts and justice system in the fight on issues ranging from civil rights to the right to marry a same sex partner, and many works have chronicled this struggle.

Queer (In)justice investigates the struggles that LGBT persons have with the criminal justice system itself, and chronicles what can be done by the LGBT community to fight against the "criminalization of LGBT people" in the United States. The book begins with a short history of the development of laws in this country that are aimed at criminalizing gay, lesbian, and transgender behavior through sodomy laws,

lewd conduct statutes, and the regulation of vagrancy. More often than not, race and class figured prominently in the punishment for these crimes, as people of color and those with little means to defend themselves became the primary victims of abuses of the legal system in this area.

Mogul, Ritchie, and Whitlock have filled the book with examples of how the LGBT community has been mistreated by the criminal justice system, and how issues of race and socioeconomic status coupled with LGBT identity is used to paint the LGBT community as predators, murderous, and inhuman. The book also gives treatment to the American penal system and exposes the inequalities and atrocities suffered there by members of the LGBT population, especially those identifying as transgender. The final chapter of the work provides

recommendations and suggestions on how the LGBT community can organize to ensure that reforms are made in how LGBT persons are treated in the criminal justice system.

Queer (In)justice is recommended for public and academic libraries, especially those containing a strong law or criminal justice collection. It is also recommended for anyone interested in the legal struggles for LGBT rights, especially among minority and immigrant populations.

*Reviewed by, Matthew P. Ciszek
Head Librarian
Penn State Shenango*

Queer TV: Theories, Histories, Politics.

Eds. Glyn Davis and Gary Needham. London: Routledge, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-415-45046-1.



Queer TV: Theories, Histories, Politics is a remarkable collection for the ways in which it expands the terrain of queer television studies. As Davis and Needham note in their introduction, earlier work in the field foregrounded representational critiques (i.e., critiques of "good" or "bad"

representations of queerness or queer characters on popular TV shows), but did not address the kinds of questions raised by scholars working with other media, particularly in film studies. The essays in *Queer TV* attend to this discrepancy, investigating television as a queer medium, offering new models for analyzing viewer experiences, and bringing queer theoretical analyses to bear upon the systems and structures that shape not only what we view but how we view it.

Several chapters offer close readings of

particular episodes of shows with LGB/ queer content (e.g., *Ellen*, *Six Feet Under*, *Torchwood*) in order to ask how aspects of queer experience - like disclosure, non-normative ways of being, and temporal idiosyncrasies - are represented on television, reveal the medium's heteronormative aspects, and can lead us to rethink what counts as "queer" programming. Other chapters focus on technical and structural dimensions of television - including the shift to digital broadcasting, the use of the remote control to "cruise" channels, the sonic components of the viewing experience, and the ways in which programs are scheduled - to explore what's particularly queer about the medium.

This collection is clearly intended for an academic audience already versed in media studies and queer theory; its authors use frameworks derived from Foucault, Sedgwick, Halberstam, Doane, McCarthy,

and McLuhan to articulate their analysis. In-depth understandings of these theorists' work isn't essential for understanding the essays, but would help readers situate the critiques within the broader field of queer theory. The authors' use of examples - from shows with which many readers, American and British, will be familiar -- helps to anchor the theoretical work.

Queer TV would be a valuable asset to postsecondary instruction in queer media studies courses, not only for its content, but also for the way it models different modes of television criticism for those new to the field (or new to bringing queer theory into conversation with TV).

*Reviewed by, Alana Kumbier
Research and Instruction Librarian
Wellesley College*

Marino, Thomas. *Tomorrow May Be Too Late*.

Tommy100, 2009. 388pp. \$24.00. ISBN-13: 978-



One man's story of coming out in the late 1980s, *Tomorrow May Be Too Late* moves quickly from the casual pick-ups of the club scene to an abusive scam of a relationship. Marino meets his boyfriend (also named Tom) and moves in with him despite misgivings

that he is being used for money. Even when **all of his credit cards are in his boyfriend's wallet and he's cosigned on two car loans that he can't afford, Marino ignores his** uneasy feelings and continues the relationship, which increasingly sours as the book continues. The story is frequently interrupted by short descriptions of sexual interactions that neither titillate nor move the narrative forward—although Marino occasionally inserts jarring religious references in the middle of sex scenes to break the monotony. Each encounter is followed by a requisite shower, which left me wondering whether Marino should have

taken time from his busy romantic life to invest in some sort of body wash company.

People of the same generation might appreciate references to popular songs of the time, and it is possible that this book would inspire some reminiscence about youthful adventures to those who have been involved more heavily in the club scene than I have. Marino moonlights as an exotic dancer, and there are some interesting descriptions of that work that distract from his relationship. On the whole, however, the prose falls flat. The reader is well aware that the new boyfriend is bad news from the second date, and waiting for Marino to come to this same conclusion over months of dating has a similar effect to that of watching any acquaintance make poor relationship decisions—after the first few pages of warning bells it starts to seem that anyone who would ignore the red flags deserves what comes later.

That *Tomorrow May Be Too Late* was self-

published is evident from the very beginning. The book suffers from the largest problem of self-published works - the want of a good editor. Marino seems like a nice person, and one that I hope has found happiness in his later life, but the memoir feels self-indulgent and overly long. While well intentioned, it was at times difficult to read and there are far better examples of bad-relationship memoirs (*I Am Not Myself These Days* by Josh Kilmer-Purcell, for one) that provide a more compelling insight into the twists and turns of an abusive relationship. Readers expecting that level of quality will be **disappointed by Marino's efforts.**

I do not recommend this book for library collections, unless there is an interest in collecting all works of GBLTQ memoir, regardless of quality.

Reviewed, by Emily Faulkner
Adult Services Librarian
Chicago Public Library

Book Reviews: Fiction

Pratt, David. *Bob the Book*.

New York: Chelsea StationEditions, 2010.184 pp. \$16.00. ISBN: 9780984470716.



Providing a different view of life, whether gay or otherwise, *Bob the Book* is written from the point of view of a gay book, starting from his waiting to be sold in Greenwich Village, through used book bins, travels to conferences,

his own loves and relationships, and the relationships of his owners and other books he encounters.

Vividly and accurately depicting events in history and relationships, such as relationships gone astray, unrequited love, and book burnings,

this novel takes the users through events that might have already occurred to them, but in a different light. Reading almost like a soap opera with all the relationships, interactions, **and events out of one's control, *Bob the Book*** takes the reader through a roller coaster of emotions – hope, love, triumph, despair, loss, break-ups, and true love.

The personification of the books Bob encounters are true to life, and one can **find any person's characteristics or** quirks portrayed appropriately. Depicting stereotypes and non-stereotypes of the gay and lesbian world, this book does not hesitate to go

into any direction – Orthodox Jews, leather, dangerous relationships, and even thoughts of suicide.

This is a valuable addition to any fiction collection, from young adult and up, as its perspective on life is new and fresh, and also provides an excellent example of personification of a non-living object.

Reviewed by, Sara Rofosky Marcus
Queensborough Community College
Library

Cunningham, Michael. *By Nightfall*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010. Hardcover. 256pp. \$19.99. ISBN: 0374299080.



Peter Harris returns home and hears the shower running. He sees the pink blur of his wife, Rebecca, behind the frosted glass shower door. He looks in. **She's facing away from him, and the shower**

seems to have taken away twenty years. Rebecca is young again. She **turns, surprised, but it isn't Rebecca; it's Ethan, Rebecca's younger brother. He says, "Hey" and is not the least uncomfortable for Peter to see him naked.**

Peter is 44, a handsome and successful second-tier art dealer; Peter's life is filled with the conflict of art vs. commerce -- the practice and ethics of which artists to represent, which artists to feature in his front gallery, which art to sell to which buyer. Peter pursues beauty – both physical and artistic – and youth, and he finds both desire and disillusion.

Peter's wife, Rebecca, is the lovely editor of a small literary journal. Her 23-year-old brother Ethan is so much younger that he is known in the family as Mizzy – the mistake.

He's a beautiful sexy improvident drifter who's shameless and unreliable, a drug addict who comes to stay with them and plans to do "something in the arts."

Rebecca hopes Peter can guide Mizzy toward something respectable in the arts and away from drugs.

However, Peter's in emotional turmoil as he tries to conceal his improper attraction to Mizzy. Peter has been straight his entire life, and he tries to explain his surprising attraction to Mizzy's youth and vitality, to Mizzy's reminding him of Rebecca, to unresolved feelings about his brother who died of AIDS, or to Mizzy as the embodiment of the beauty that he's been looking for in art. When Peter overhears Mizzy on the phone buying drugs, he doesn't let Rebecca know, because she might send Mizzy away.

By Nightfall is told in the third person through Peter's point of view. The title may refer to Peter's growing older and losing his sense of youth. Peter's nocturnal wanderings also demonstrate his loneliness and sense of isolation.

Despite the gay sensibilities in *By Nightfall*,

the only fleshed-out sex scene (so to speak) is a heterosexual one – between Peter and Rebecca. The overtly homosexual action in the novel is limited to just two **kisses, but Peter's internal thoughts** throughout the novel reflect his obsession with Mizzy.

This is Pulitzer-Prize winner Cunningham's seventh novel. He won the Stonewall Literature Award in 1999 for *The Hours* and won a Stonewall honor book award in 1991 for *A Home at the End of the World*. Both books have been made into films.

Cunningham's novels often cover great spans of time and space. *By Nightfall* covers only a few days in a small world, but that world embraces art, commerce, relationships, and marriage, and those days bring about an epiphany for Peter and Rebecca.

Highly recommended for all libraries.

*Reviewed by, Larry Romans
Vanderbilt University Libraries*

Lee, Tanith. *Disturbed by Her Song*.

Maple Shade, NJ: Lethe Press, 2010. Paperback. 186pp. \$18.00. ISBN: 978-1-59021-311-7.



Disturbed by Her Song is a collection of dark, sensual stories ostensibly written by two fictional characters. Writer Tanith Lee "channels" these gay siblings and refers to them as the real authors. She emphasizes in the introduction that she

writes "as and with" the fascinating brother and sister as a creative technique and not as a way to distance herself from the gay

and lesbian experiences chronicled in the book.

The surreal stories are linked by a common gothic undercurrent and take place in gorgeously diverse settings: Victorian Paris; a passenger train barreling through snow-covered Eastern Europe; and Egypt during World War II.

There are hints of ghosts in the French hotel, allusions to lovers haunted by partners they've not yet met, and suggestions that a lithe and sexually voracious man who roams the train at

night may, in fact be a werewolf. The collection successfully eludes any attempts we may make at genre categorization, as it combines the conventions of fantasy, romance, and horror with lyrical language and literary allusions.

This title is cleverly crafted and recommended for most adult collections.

*Reviewed by, S. Annelise Adams
Librarian II
Chicago Public Library*

Walsh, Haley. *Foxe Tail*.

Skyler Foxe Mystery Ser. Albion, NY: MLR Press, 2010. Paperback. 288pp. \$14.99. ISBN: 978-1-60820-234-8.



Skyler Foxe is starting his first year of teaching English literature at his alma mater, James Polk High, located in the conservative Inland Empire of southern California. He is out with his close gay friends Jamie, Phillip, and Rodolfo, and with his best female friend Sidney, a straight detective, but is still in the closet with his mom and colleagues at work. The mystery begins when Skyler and Sidney visit a gay dance club and discover a dead body. It turns out that the body was the gay son of the uptight principal of Skyler's school.

Despite Sidney's warnings to leave investigating to the police Skyler starts to conduct his own investigation of the murder. Complications arise involving a new biology teacher and assistant football

coach named Keith Fletcher, brusque yet gorgeous, and the mysterious fall down some stairs by a calculus teacher. The macho head football coach becomes a suspect as the result of a conversation Skyler overhears. A cell phone and war chalking add further twists to the plot.

Foxe Tail also contains a secondary storyline involving one of Skyler's students and the attempts by Skyler to help him.

Although there could be a few less coincidences in the storyline, *Foxe Tail* is basically a well written mystery novel. The culprit was not apparent to me until near the end of the novel. Skyler is an interesting character. While he is rather naive and irresponsible for a schoolteacher, he takes risks to find the murderer because he is tired of being a victim. Skyler is also single, never has had a steady boyfriend, and is not looking for one. His romantic life consists of one night stands and short term

relationships. There is one short but rather explicit sex scene in the novel.

Foxe Tail is the first gay mystery novel written by Haley Walsh, although she has written historical novels, short stories, and articles under another name. It is the first of three novels in the proposed *Skyler Foxe Mystery* trilogy. Walsh leaves several storylines unresolved in *Foxe Tail*, which are to be resolved in the second and third novels, *Foxe Hunt* and *Foxe Fire*.

Foxe Tail is a delightful read and is recommended for public libraries in tolerant areas and medium-to-large academic libraries.

Foxe Tail is also available in a Kindle edition.

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

Coyote, Ivan E. *Missed Her*.

Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2010. Paperback. 142p. \$16.95. ISBN: 978-1-55152-371-2.



Missed Her is Ivan E. Coyote's sixth solo book, a powerful collection demonstrating Coyote's first-rate story-telling skills and ability to gently weave together topics, including the complexities of family, gender and sexuality, age, community (geographical, queer, and otherwise), and

myriad other issues that all seem to point to the larger idea of finding one's "home" in a complicated world.

These thirty short essays will leave readers wanting more, but with an awareness that they are written with the restraint and intention of an experienced writer and speaker. Coyote's humor and uncanny sense of timing shine through the many serious themes of this book, giving them a lightness that makes for a fun, while emotionally stirring, read. In "Straighten Up," Coyote reflects on her heightened awareness with her appearance and behavior in relation to other people's perceptions of her, and the dangers that can result from her ambiguity. At a pit-stop in rural Northern Ontario, Coyote passes by three men outside, who "stop in mid-

sentence to check me out when I walk by. I nod politely, just enough eye contact to not seem suspicious, but not enough that I am looking for a fight. ... Maybe they saw a dyke; maybe they think I'm a gay man. There was definitely something about me. Goddamn Fleuvog boots" (47). Later, at another pit-stop outside of Alberta, Coyote gets propositioned by a man, who opens by commenting on her dog, and Coyote wonders, "It could have been the little fluffy dog. Maybe that's what he saw. Or the boots. Goddamn Fleuvogs, get me every time" (50).

"All About Herman" highlights Coyote's inclination to allow her subjects to tell their own stories, in a participant/observer role, as she takes us back and forth from present to past through her attempt to record her ninety-year-old grandmother's history. "Lately her musings have grown somehow more poignant, more emotional, full of regrets (130). ... I get the story from her in snapshots, short bursts, late-night kitchen table talk when the lips are loose with the whiskey" (133). Most of the essay is quoted from her grandmother's letters and talks, and seems to channel images from her through Coyote to the reader. As her grandmother talks about her first

tumultuous love, we can envision, through Coyote's eyes, "the propane fireplace on in the living room and she is sitting with her legs tucked up beside her on the couch like she does. ... Newspapers and magazines cover the coffee table, and she has a fresh cup of black tea with cream and sugar in it on the side table, next to a plate empty save for a scattering of toast crumbs" (129).

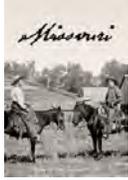
Perhaps the most enjoyable essays in the book are Coyote's playful musings on gender identity, sex, and sexuality, as demonstrated in "Hats Off," "A Butch Roadmap," "Throwing in the Towel," and, of course, "Boner Preservation Society." I don't want to give it away. You will have to read it.

Recommended for any LGBT collection, in school, public, and academic libraries, from adolescent and up.

Reviewed by, **Jesse Nachem**
Records Specialist
University of California in Oakland

Wunnicke, Christine. *Missouri*.

Trans. David Miller. Vancouver, B.C.: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2010. paperback. 134 p. \$12.95. ISBN: 978-1-55152-344-6.



In 1832, court reporter—and conman—Douglas Fortescue publishes a poem of blood and depravity that brings him overnight fame within the effete London literary society. The more fey Douglas becomes, the more society adores him and the more he holds society in contempt. The possibility

of a morals charge against Douglas finally leads his brother Jeremy to drag him to America.

In the same year, thousands of miles away, Cyrus Jenkyns ties a man to a tree, forcing his six-year-old son, Joshua, to kill the man. Among the man's belongings, Joshua finds a book of Byron's poems and forces a preacher to teach him to read. At the age of 14, he takes over the outlaw gang after his father is hanged. During one of their robberies, he steals a second book of poetry, which he reads every day.

The poet's and the outlaw's lives cross during a stagecoach robbery when Joshua, now 16, kidnaps Douglas in front of Jeremy and takes him into the Wild West. The remainder of the short novel describes Jeremy's obsessive search for his brother and the growing love between Douglas and Joshua. The story culminates with a man trying in vain to rescue a brother who does not want to be rescued.

The spare prose of this short novel uses the language of almost two centuries ago and blends the comic and tragic in a zany camp approach. The German culture has long been fascinated with American cowboy life. Wunnicke has authentically depicted nineteenth-century mid-America, replete with sweat, stink, and head lice, showing the freedom of a time and place where men ruled their world. Critics have either loved or hated the book. We loved it. With surprises around each turn of the plot, this

beautiful love story shows two totally opposite and very memorable characters who grow more and more alike throughout their relationship. Chosen as one of the GLBTRT Over the Rainbow Project Top Eleven for 2011, *Missouri* will no doubt become another classic like *Brokeback Mountain*.

Reviewed by, **Larry Romans**
Head, Government Information and Media Services;
Vanderbilt University Libraries

And **Nel Ward**
Co-founder,
GLBTRT Over the Rainbow Project

Alan, Kage. *Operation Thunderspell: Gaylias*.

Austin: Zumaya Boundless, 2010. Paperback. 271pp. 15.99 ISBN: 978-1-936144-12-9.



I am a big fan of Kage Alan's first book *A Funny Thing Happened on my Way to My Sexual Orientation*, so I was very eager to read his latest effort. When I read the back cover of the book I was immediately reminded of a series I've previously read: Fred Hunter's *The Alex Reynolds Mysteries*,

which I thoroughly enjoyed. Both series have lovers who are secret agents for government agencies. The storyline of Alan's novel follows two lovers who go undercover on a secret island that caters to guests who want to experience a master/slave relationship. Think *Exit to Eden* for gays and straights, but with better humor.

Operation Thunderspell opens with our heroes at a dinner party, where they are

trying to extract information from a home office. The action is very fast-paced, as is the dialogue, which I found quite difficult to follow. I could not differentiate between the two main characters, and I briefly wondered whether or not I had missed the first book in the series, which had developed them. This hectic pace, of both action and dialogue, is maintained throughout the novel, which made it a fast read once I got a handle on the main characters.

Following the dinner party, the action moves to the master/slave island in the Pacific, where we're treated to lots of sexual innuendo, but no real sexual activity. For some readers, the sexual innuendo may be all that's needed, but I was disappointed with the lack of intimacy between the main characters.

Another quibble: during the final scene,

there is a message about stereotyping the homosexual community that I found very heavy-handed.

That being said, with all of its faults, I found this book to be an enjoyable read, and I look forward to more in the series -- perhaps even a prequel that will give the history of the couple as they became a couple.

Operation Thunderspell is appropriate for any public library and for all adults. The sexual innuendo might a little much for teens, but I have read YA novels with more actual sex. There is a great deal of violence, but nothing graphic.

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

Maclsaac, Steve. *Shirtlifter #1*.

2nd Edition. Long Beach, CA: Drawn, Out Press, 2010. 32pp. \$5.95. ISBN: 9780979134937. Originally published: Long Beach, CA: Drawn Out Press, 2006.



---. *Shirtlifter #2*. Long Beach, CA: Drawn, Out Press, 2007. 56pp. \$8.95. ISBN: 9780979134913

Maclsaac, Steve, Justin Hall, Fuzzbelly. *Shirtlifter #3*. Long Beach, CA: Drawn, Out Press, 2008. 87pp. \$10.95. ISBN: 9780979134920.

ISBN: 9780979134920.

So far, each issue of *Shirtlifter* tells its tales differently. *Shirtlifter #1* is a 32-page one-shot, first published in black and white. (The second edition was reinked and printed in two colors on better paper.) *Shirtlifter #2* introduced full color, and five of the ten stories are autobiographic vignettes. *Shirtlifter #3* contains the

first three chapters of a new work, "Unpacking," and includes work by two other cartoonists Maclsaac admires. (I'm eagerly awaiting the completion of "Unpacking" in *Shirtlifter #4* and *#5*.)

(Continued page 17).

MacIsaac, Steve. *Shirtlifter #1*. (Cont.)

A strong autobiographic element underlies all MacIsaac's tales. As MacIsaac comments in *Shirtlifter #2*, "Even when writing pure fiction, elements of my life tend to surface." For example, the protagonist in "Unmade Beds," the issue-length story from *Shirtlifter #1*, made his living in Japan teaching English – just like MacIsaac. Whether, fiction or autobiography, though, his plots are poignant and carefully shaped, and the characters are tenderly explored using both narrative and art.

When I first opened *Shirtlifter #1*, I was reminded of Japanese gay erotic manga artist Gengoro Tagame. MacIsaac's art is a little stiffer, his characters more realistic, and his eroticism less fanciful than

Tagame's, but there is a definite resemblance. Both MacIsaac and Tagame have an eye for musclebears, and both pay stronger attention to the characters than the backgrounds, pulling the reader into their very personal stories. *Shirtlifter #2* shows less similarity – MacIsaac experiments with many different styles of drawing and coloring – but *Shirtlifter #3* again reminds me of Tagame.

Fuzzbelly and Justin Hall each penned a short subject to fit between chapters in *Shirtlifter #3*. The brief stories help break up the three chapters by MacIsaac, and they each have styles distinct from each other and from MacIsaac. I appreciated being introduced to the work of Fuzzbelly –

another bear-lover, with a earthier style—and of Justin Hall, who draws more like MacIsaac, but who tells a darker story.

Like Tagame, MacIsaac does not shy away from drawing the male nude or gay men having sex, which could lead to challenges in more conservative communities. I'd recommend the entire series, though, for public libraries serving established and growing GLBT communities, and to academic libraries with collections of GLBT literature or art.

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

Currier, Jameson. *The Wolf at the Door*.

New York: Chelsea Station Editions, 2010. paperback. 273p. ISBN: 978-0-9844707-0-9.



Beware! The spirits of the dead are restless, and Jameson Currier (better known for his short stories) spins a tale of New Orleans' French Quarter in this second novel.

Currier presents the struggle of overweight and harried Avery Greene Dalrymple, as he manages the all-but-dilapidated "Le Petit Paradis." (Misspelling intentional.) Unable to put down the bourbon when coping with the customers, complaints, and otherworldly creatures of

his guesthouse, Dalrymple is stressed beyond his control. But as the past history of Le Petit Paradis and its former occupants slowly comes to light, and is retold through a journal and a previous tenant's research, the ghosts around the place begin to make more sense.

Barely making ends meet and falling behind on much needed repairs, Dalrymple must seek why he is being confronted with so many restless souls. His friends are more than supportive, and he utilizes all of their skills to keep all souls happy, as well as

questioning his own loss of faith.

If you've been pining for Anne Rice's New Orleans, *The Wolf at the Door's* lovable characters (mostly gay men) and spooky happenings might quench your desires. It is a delightful, casual read, and is recommended for public libraries. Adults should treat themselves with this one!

*Reviewed by, Johnnie N. Gray
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