

From the Co-chairs (Continued)

excluding the Book Awards and Rainbow Project Committees, are 61% male identified and 39% female identified. The Ad-Hoc committee members are 77% male and 23% female identified. The list of official book reviewers for the newsletter is even more skewed at 79% male and 21% female identified. In terms of race and ethnic identity, our active committee membership appears to be all white. I have no idea how this relates to our membership.

I am commenting on this because there has been a little bit of discussion about gender in terms of filling open positions on committees on the Steering Committee Listserv. Some people have stated that gender shouldn't matter, while others, like me feel strongly about the issue. I will admit right now that as one of our Co-Chairs, with a column to write for the newsletter, I have a soapbox to stand on which places me at a bit of an advantage, and I'm using it now to open a discussion that can perhaps be continued at Midwinter.

The particular things I challenge us to think about, beyond the statistics above, are:

- Part of our Statement of Purpose (From Bylaws, under Purpose, item 7);

"remind the membership and leadership of ALA as often as necessary that many librarians, archivists, other information specialists, and library users are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered people; support other minority groups working for adequate representation and equal opportunity within ALA;"

GLBTRT Newsletter (ISSN 1533-7219) is an official publication of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered Round Table of the American Library Association. It appears quarterly in March, June, September, and January.

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Chicago, IL 60611

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

Sarah E. Wright,
GLBTRT Newsletter Editor
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- The fact that our organization was founded during a period of great social change for many oppressed groups, and it seems to me that our requirements for creating gender balance in our Co-Chairs, and on the book awards committee, was informed by the politics of those social movements, and should perhaps be extended to all of our committees as much as possible.

- The fact that we fail in a number of ways to be a truly representative organization: there have been feelings of exclusion expressed by transgender members, and bisexual members may have similar feelings; furthermore, we are not representative of the racial make-up of ALA as a whole.

My hope in raising these issues is not to create discord, but to encourage discussion, and particularly to urge more women and people of color to step forward when we ask for committee members or chairs.

RECRUITING

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE CHAIR

Dale and I are still trying to recruit a Chair, and one or two members for the Fundraising Committee. You don't need to have fundraising experience since you will be working with David Gray who has a good background with fundraising and marketing both in ALA and professionally. Goals for the Fundraising Committee are to develop a fundraising campaign, targeting members of the Round Table, as well as publishers and other organizations. Ideally, the committee will come up with fundraising strategies that can be repeated from year to year. We're looking for a Chair who can attend conferences. Members of the committee can communicate by email during the year.

Nancy Silverrod, Co-Chair
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History of the GLBT-Round Table

Founding 1970

At the 1970 ALA Annual Conference in Detroit, the Action Council of the newly formed Social Responsibilities Round Table was looking to increase direct action by librarians through 'problem oriented task forces'. Suggested topics included alternative books in print, women's liberation and the status of women's librarianship, a bibliography on the peace movement, the place of minorities in librarianship, gay liberation, new approaches to cataloging, and intellectual freedom.

Library Journal's August 1970 issue listed these concerns and announced the formation of the Task Force on Gay Liberation: Newest caucus to form around SRRT's loosely structured, but growing number of issue groups was the Gay Liberation Caucus. The group seeks

rights for homosexuals, and roughly 50 brave souls showed up for its two sessions. The caucus is interested in the problems of homosexuals in society and in the profession, and has under taken a number of projects directed toward developing greater understanding of homosexuality, ending its relegations to classification as "aberrant sexual behavior" and insuring that homosexuals are not discriminated against in employment.

The group held three meetings during the conference, vying for space and time in the SRRT hospitality suite. LJ characterized this suite of rooms in the Sheraton-Cadillac as being "packed around the clock, leaving its four or five week-long occupants bleary-eyed by Friday.

(Continued on page 3)

History of the GLBT-Round Table (Continued)

Almost any night a wandering convention-er could drop in to engage in very heated debate, ad hoc publication, strategy sessions or the preparation of SRRT's daily convention newsletter." Fliers announcing the meetings were entitled 'Gay Lib Power'. The third meeting, advertised as an organizational meeting and social drew 100 people.

After the conference a press release was published (September 15 in *LJ*) setting a meeting for September 13 in New York City (at **Israel Fishman's** apartment). This meeting while having an agenda to 'hammer out a statement of objective' and 'move ahead with some of our plans' was important because it was the first involvement of **Barbara Gittings**, who received a

copy of the press release for her gay news show at WBAI-FM. **Gitting** would assume the coordinator role for the group in 1971 and hold the position until 1986.

Anne L Moore
Special Collections Librarian
W.E.B. du Bois Library
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Website Committee Initiatives

Your GLBTRT Website Committee is: David S. Vess (chair), Gayle Keresey, Amy Hribar, Sara Marcus. Over the coming years we will be working with GLBTRT Membership and Steering Committee on a number of projects to increase our organization's visibility and our services. As always, do send us comments and suggestions. Our contact information is located at:

<<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/glbtrt/oversightgroups/index.cfm>>

Over the last month you may have noticed that the Round Table's home page:

<<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/glbtrt/index.cfm>> has changed a bit. Some content was taken off the main page and placed under the existing navigation bar buttons. There were obvious homes for some of that content but not for all. One long term goal of the website committee is to reshape our organization's website. The plan is not radical but does include reorganizing the content of the site as well as changing the left hand navigation buttons; renaming existing buttons and adding additional ones. Our work will focus on aligning our web site structure to better reflect the mission, work and deliverables of the Round Table. The draft of the developing navigation button scheme is located at:

<<http://connect.ala.org/node/81687>>

Another long term goal is to take care of the legacy (older) code on our existing ALA hosted site. Having valid XHTML (it follows the specifications of the XHTML standard) with clear structure (properly identifies headings, paragraphs, lists, etc. in documents) is important for several reasons. Standards compliant code will better migrate to any future Content Management System (CMS)

ALA implements. At the moment, ALA's CMS system, Serena Collage, is no longer being developed by Serena Software. ALA will continue using this system until it can migrate content to another system. Standards compliant code will position our site for an easier migration. Such code will also position our website to be accessible for people with vision or physical challenges in compliance with a recent ALA resolutions calling for libraries and vendors to begin developing resources and websites with an eye towards accessibility.

An immediate need the group identified is the development of a GLBTRT Committee Volunteer Web Form. This form will soon be up on the GLBTRT web site and will be tweaked over the coming months to accommodate all the needs of our committees. This form will help streamline the volunteer process by providing our members with a clear path to volunteering and help the Steering Committee manage incoming requests. The form in a draft version is located at:

<<http://connect.ala.org/node/77842>>

Currently, members of the Web Committee are working towards establishing a complete online archive of all our organization's Newsletters. This multi-year project will involve locating print versions of past newsletters, assessing both born digital and print Newsletters, building a thorough index, applying quality metadata and structure to the files and making them all available on the GLBTRT website. The work in this project may inform a future project to digitize historical documents of the round table. Our own Sara Marcus came up with this project and is taking the lead on it. Sara has already

completed parts of this project.

Another project our committee identified was the migration of all the GLBTRT Popular Resources to our ALA-hosted CMS and the conversation of these resource pages to valid, XHTML. Our former Website Committee Chair, Keith Trimmer has kindly allowed us to keep these resources on his server space until we make a complete and smooth conversion into ALA's domain. <<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/glbtrt/popularresources/index.cfm>>

The Popular Resources part of our website will also soon be hosting toolkits developed by a wonderful mix of Round Table membership. The toolkits will cover wide range of topics and promise to a great resource. At the moment, Jesse Nachem of the External Relations Committee is working with Shawn Villaincount and Michael Steffens on the GLSEN / GLBTRT Toolkit. Their planning area in Connect is located at: <<http://connect.ala.org/node/78928>> For a complete list of all the projects and group members is being maintained here: <<http://connect.ala.org/node/73681>>

As we get further into the Fall, look for website committee changes on ALA Connect. At the moment, we feel our space is getting a bit cluttered and we will be working closely with Jenny Levine and others on how to better manage and organize the GLBTRT spaces in Connect so that we can get maximum use out of this resource.

David Vess
Website Committee Chair

Member Profile: David Vess



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

I discovered one of my dearest friends and this profession by chance. I was working in the visual resources department of Virginia Commonwealth University's School of the Arts as an undergrad student worker. That semester I was assigned to work with a professor on the images he would need for a book he was writing. One day, while searching for that professor's office, I happened to strike up a conversation with another professor in a nearby office. We started talking. Two hours later he told me I was really, "intense about all this" [he was gesturing at his computer and referring to a few questions I had answered for him about online library catalogs, connecting to other school catalogs, etc.] He told me I should contact a friend of his who ran a school I should consider applying to one day. He described the curriculum and the research of the faculty and I knew I was hooked.

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

Part of my undergraduate financial aid package included a work study position that would give me extra income while in school. Since I was in an art history program I decided to apply for a position in the School of the Arts image library, filing mountains of slides. That place, the collection, the people and their needs became more to me than a source of extra spending money. It was like a small

laboratory where I got to help or watch people (students and faculty) satisfy information needs with information objects. Sometimes the descriptions on the information objects were helpful; sometimes not. I started deconstructing that seemingly simple environment's processes/behaviors (on both sides of the counter) and have never stopped trying to deconstruct and understand all of it.

Tell us about your current job.

My title is rather funny. My mother is convinced I've made it all up and sometimes I wonder if it's real myself it's so fun. I'm the Visiting IMLS Portal Librarian and Assistant Professor of Library Administration at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library. I've been very fortunate to be involved in the work of several grants spearheaded by the amazing William Mischo, our Engineering Librarian. The grants, from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the National Science Foundation (NSF), focus on aspects of metasearch technology (searching distributed systems), interactive information retrieval, user-centered software development and interface design.

<<http://search.grainger.uiuc.edu/IMLS/>>
<<http://search.grainger.uiuc.edu/NSF/>>

Did/do you have a mentor?

So many people contributed to my getting here to this moment in time. So many grade school, middle school and high school teachers held out nets for me on the way when my family couldn't. I've let each of them know they've made a great deal of difference in my life. My mother will always be my mentor. She's not aware of her influence on me at all. Her strength and hope are limitless natural resources. Real strength is a divorced, poor, woman, with no access to education with two kids to care for.

Do you have any heroes in library land?

Karen Schmidt, University Librarian of Illinois Wesleyan University (formerly the Associate University Librarian of Collections at UIUC Library). Sometimes believing in the people around you is the most important thing a person can do.

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

I'm reading tons of books and articles at the moment. They're all for work but I'd still say most are pleasure reading. Something that stands out at the moment is the following wonderful resource. Diane Kelly (2009) "Methods for Evaluating Interactive Information Retrieval Systems with Users", Foundations and Trends in Information Retrieval: Vol. 3: No 1—2, pp 1-224. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1561/1500000012>

What's the best part about being a member of the GLBT-RT?

I love that what I contribute to the GLBTRT (in time or money) could possibly result in one book landing in the hands of one person who really needs it.

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

Yes! I'm the typical Facebook and Twitter user. I'm a junkie. I have accounts on all social networking sites and I'll sign up for any to play.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Anyone with comments or suggestions about the GLBTRT website should get into touch with the Web Committee. At the moment we're waiting for approval of a new navigation bar. We have a space in ALA Connect. <<http://connect.ala.org/node/82952>> The Web Committee and all the committees and Officers of the GLBTRT are listed at: <<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/glbtrt/oversightgroups/index.cfm>>

Build Your Vita! 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: tnectoux@illinois.edu. Or, if journalism is more your style, send in articles about GLBT library services and collections in and around your community.

Support the Stonewall Children & Youth Book Award

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As the GLBT Round Table approaches its 40th anniversary in 2010, this is a good time to reflect on what we have accomplished, look at what is currently in process, and where the future lies.

As the oldest LGBT book awards, the *Stonewall Book Awards*, given since 1971, have honored books in literature and non-fiction almost every year since their inception. With the increase in LGBTQ publishing for children and young adults, we are thrilled to report that a third category of *Stonewall Awards* will be given starting at our 40th Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. in 2010.

That same increase in LGBT Publishing for younger readers has also brought together GLBTRT with SRRT (The Social Responsibilities Round Table), working on an annual list of the best LGBT books for children and young adults called the *Rainbow Project*.

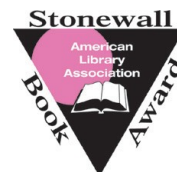
In 2008 we finally reached our fundraising goal of \$75,000 for the Book Awards endowment. Because we have added a third category of award, and because it is necessary to maintain a healthy endowment during these difficult economic times, we need to work toward increasing our book award endowment by another \$75,000.

I know these difficult economic times are affecting all of us, but I am asking each of you to support our *Stonewall Children's & Youth Book Award* this year. Perhaps you will be moved to make your donation as you remember your favorite childhood book or the book that helped you come out —however old you were. Perhaps you will make your donation in memory of a librarian who led you to those books, or inspired you in your career. Perhaps you will make a donation in honor of the children to whom you are a parent, aunt, uncle, or librarian.

We are nearly 900 strong. If each of us donated a mere \$25 dollars, and skipped a lunch out, that would raise over \$22,000. For those of you who can make larger donations of \$50 or \$100, or more, you know we welcome them.

I am making my donation in memory of my son, Elijah, and my elementary school librarians, Miss Davis and Mrs. Graham. Please join me in making a tax-deductible donation to our Book Awards endowment this year.

Your Co-Chair,
Nancy Silverrod



Newsletter Survey

Between February 5 and March 19, 2009, the Newsletter Committee conducted a survey of the GLBT-RT membership. Questions included content, frequency, delivery methods and an open ended question for general suggestions. 248 members responded to the short questionnaire. Regarding content, members wanted more news of the round table; of those surveyed, 3% wanted less, 38% think it is just right, 59% want more news from the round table. Regarding general ALA news, 49% of respondents thought the information provided was right where it should be. 38% wanted more, 20% sought less. The majority of respondents want more book and media reviews. A nominal number wanted less reviews of books and media. The newsletter committee can draw the conclusion from these results that our members want more information on what the GLBTRT is doing, and other related news are presented at an acceptable level to most of those who responded to the survey.

Regarding frequency, our members overwhelmingly want a quarterly newsletter as 87% responded to a quarterly newsletter. There was a small minority seeking more frequent issues; 4 respondents wanted monthly newsletters, 1 wanted an issue every other month, 2 wanted an unspecified more frequent publication and 3 want semi-annual publication. Similarly, there was a majority of respondents in favor of maintaining the newsletter on our website.

(Continued on page 7)

Round Table Members Explore Transgender Issues

The Workshop on Transgender Issues which was presented by GLBTQ Roundtable at ALA in Chicago on Saturday Afternoon July 11, provided an opportunity to learn from our very able leader on the evolution of Transgender awareness and support over the last ten to twenty years in the U.S. I found that the day-long transgender workshop I had attended on my own campus a month before was a good preparation for this one. There is a matter of terminology. How does Queer differ from Gay? Is Gay an acceptable generic term? Who exactly is a Transgender Person? Does shifting gender-pronouns

matter? Then, there was considerable substance. What has been the experience of Transgender persons in terms of being Out in our society? How does the law protect – or not - the civil rights of Transgender persons? What are the insurance implications of medical care for a Transgender person?

There was also a solid content in the group discussion which came within the context of the more formal presentation. How has the Transgender experience played out in various geographic locales? In the workplace, as staff of public libraries, and on college campuses?

What is the Ally Project, and how does it support Transgender persons? From the informal discussion before the workshop focusing on stereotypes in the presentation of GLBTQ persons in positive fiction and other writings, throughout the afternoon, I found the Workshop on Transgender Issues to be quite worthwhile. We need to have a workshop on various GLBTQ issues at every annual conference, at least, I would suggest!

Susan Bennett White
Sociology Librarian
Princeton University Library

It struck me, as I located the basement of the Hilton, that I might be completely lost. The carpet was a little more worn than the beautiful lobby I had just walked through. I had heard about a transgender workshop at Mid-Winter and I made it a priority in order to learn more about the unique concerns of the transgender population. After locating the room and a familiar face, I noticed the number around the table. I believe the intimate nature of the program became an unintended asset. In a small group we were able to meet GLBT-RT colleagues and increase our knowledge about the lives of transgender people in our field.

I work as a youth services librarian in a public library and there are transgender youth in my service area. I feel responsible to all members of my community and

strive to uphold the highest level of service and access to all patrons. I am grateful for Andre's presentation. The words that really imbedded in my mind are "deeply felt identity". Andre spoke about how using the wrong pronoun can affect someone because it does not fit his or her deeply felt identity.

Another topic of discussion was gender reassignment surgery. I was not aware that in order to have surgery, an individual must be diagnosed by a mental health care provider as having gender identity disorder. The current manual for diagnosis, The DSM-IV is being revised. Kenneth J. Zucker was appointed to the DSM-V working group. Dr. Zucker is known for utilizing "reparative therapy". His position at the DSM gives him huge influence on how transgender children will be treated by mental

health and medical professionals.

This session at the annual meeting was invaluable to me because I left with a greater sense of workplace issues for transgender people like health insurance coverage and notifying an IT department of a differently gendered name. I was reminded that the privileges associated with my gender identity are numerous. I traveled to the meeting without my identity being questioned. My identity documents like my passport and driver's license match my identity. I am grateful for the space at the Annual meeting to discuss topics of concern to GLBT and allied librarians and the populations that we serve.

Sarah Wright
Youth Services Librarian
Potomac Community Library

As I was preparing to attend my first Annual Conference (Gasp! Another newbie) I noticed the late listing of a Transgender Issues Workshop sponsored by the

GLBTRT. Even though I've been out as a gay man for 30 years, I recognized my own ignorance about transgender issues. And, as a member of the Diversity Committee

at my workplace, this workshop could contribute to educating my coworkers about the issues and building my own knowledge on these issues. Working at a large

Round Table Members Explore Transgender Issues (Continued)

state university in a rural area of Southeast Ohio brings me in contact with students who might be transitioning. The workshop helped me think about my colleagues, university faculty and staff members and how I and my library in turn might be the information source we're supposed to be.

We assembled in the basement of the Chicago Hilton. Due to a snafu, the workshop was listed for roundtable members only and the attendance amounted to seven. Andre Wilson began the workshop by reminding us to recognize the essence of the person first. He related his experiences in dealing with transitioning, pronouns, identity documents, safe spaces, the "Bathroom" issue, negotiating for health care services for transitioning and a wide range of other issues. He talked about the need for building safe spaces in our workplaces for

those who might be transitioning and be supportive to those who come to our libraries for services, resources and support. He urged us each to think of ways that we can work for more inclusive benefits packages and take the steps needed to begin working in our areas. The small turnout allowed us all to get our questions answered and to reflect on how we might take these next steps in our own workplaces. Personally the workshop was an eye opener. It led me to reflect that even though I have been out for a long time that I have never really thought in any depth about these issues. That I had always known that there were transgender people, I had never given much thought to the kinds of problems that they might have. Because "they" were a "they" and what did that have to do with me? That by not thinking about it, by not being willing to get off my duff and educate myself, I was helping to perpetuate the

stereotypes and general ignorance.

The workshop led me to begin my own education process. To begin by remembering that we are people first who need to be supported and treated with dignity and respect. Then that we need to advocate for these issues in our own places, whether by building collections, building our coworkers awareness of the issues or by advocating with our workplace administrators to make change happen. I hope that the Roundtable will offer this workshop again at our Annual Conference in Washington this year. I would seem to me that there are a large number of our ALA colleagues who would benefit from learning more about the issues and who could become effective and supportive advocates.

Andrew Stuart
Ohio University Libraries
Athens OH

Newsletter Survey (Continued)

72% of respondents favor this method and 62% feel we should announce new issues through GLBTRT-L. Substantial minorities want the Newsletter available through our official blog (31%) or through social networks (29%).

As you may imagine, the suggestions garnered through the open ended question were quite diverse. 75 of the total respondents had suggestions, 31% of which were variations on "I like it the way it is", which is encouraging! Three respondents commented on the availability of GLBT-friendly businesses in conference host cities, and we will be covering that information for Boston in the upcoming Winter issue of the newsletter. A small percentage men-

tioned that they were not notified when a new issue was available.

The remainder of the responses fell into a few broad categories: How to distribute, additional content, and requests for special issues. I hope we are able to respond to some of the ideas for content including more information about and photographs of members professional and personal activities. Requested content also included more news about GLBT issues, not necessarily related to libraries and archives, news/photos on library/archives displays about GLBTRT materials and features on courses, classes, and workshops on GLBT work in archives and libraries. Requested special issues included short special issues before major

conferences, such as PLA and ACRL, an annual issue covering GLBTRT committees and opportunities for volunteering and an annual school library issue. I hope the Newsletter Committee can discuss these options during the all committee meeting on January 16th at Midwinter.

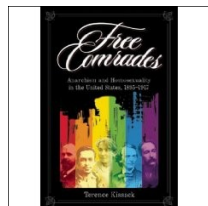
The Newsletter Committee appreciates the response to the survey, and encourages all GLBT-RT members to submit articles and news of interest for future issues. The deadline for submission for the Winter issue is November 30.

Sarah Wright
Newsletter Editor

Book Reviews: Non-Fiction

Kissack, Terence. *Free Comrades: Anarchism and Homosexuality in the United States, 1895 – 1917.*

Oakland, California: AK Press, 2008. 237p. \$17.95. ISBN: 978-1904859116.



I'm always delighted when I read a book that, on first glance, I'd pass over, only to find myself challenged with new material and ideas.

Originating from Terence Kissack's dissertation, completed at the City University of New York, *Free Comrades* examines anarchism's concerns with the conflict between individual freedom and state power, a conflict with which members of the LGBT community will identify.

Kissack possesses a thorough knowledge of anarchist literature, by both American and European writers. He examines the extensive anarchist

writings on varied topics, including the trial of Oscar Wilde, the view that marriage as an institution was an attack on individual freedom, and the changing view of Walt Whitman's sexual orientation between 1895 and 1917.

Based on these and other examinations, Kissack describes the intellectual contributions that many anarchists made toward the changing view of homosexuality, and the subsequent groundwork this laid for the LGBT community. And he makes clear the irony of the anarchist attack on marriage, which—in part—prepared for the current legal efforts for marriage.

Free Comrades is a challenging book,

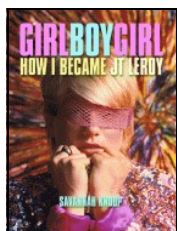
but its importance makes it well worth the effort. It, to the best of my knowledge, breaks new ground in LGBT studies. The index must be used with care as personal names, while alphabetical by surname, are listed with the forename first.

This title is highly recommended for all academic and special libraries that collect for gender studies, US intellectual history, anarchism, and American literature.

Reviewed by Dave Combe

Knoop, Savannah. *Girl Boy Girl: How I became JT Leroy.*

New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2008. softcover. 223p. \$17.95. ISBN: 978-1-58322-851-7



Imagine living a double life. That's not so really hard to envision. But think of doing it as an internationally recognized author who hangs with the likes of Debbie Harry and Winona Ryder. Suppose you stumbled into this because your sister-in-law was in a jam and needed the physical manifestation of her alter-ego, known as JT.

Girl Boy Girl reveals the details of Savannah Knoop's six year experience portraying JT Leroy in the

international literary and party circuit, where she presents herself as a "gay-male-ex-truck-stop-prostitute-turned-literary-wunderkind." While this story has not gained the notoriety other recent literary frauds have been given, it has been covered in the national press.

This memoir is unexpected, and while the storyline is rather fascinating, it leaves the reader with more questions than answers. The author did not quite go deep enough to explain what may very well be too hard to explain without serious discomfort: questioning definitions of gender, sexuality, family, love, and loyalty. Knoop may need a

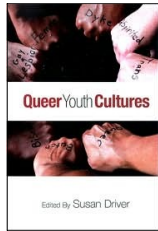
little more time to experience life and, thus, gain enough perspective before she truly understands what happened during what was surely a chaotic time in her young adult years.

I recommend this book to any library seeking to offer the most current and hip books. It might interest those readers who dream about the international literary circuit.

Reviewed by Lisa Forslund
Librarian, North Hennepin Community College

Queer Youth Cultures.

Edited by Susan Driver. State University of New York Press, 2008. softcover. 307p. \$28.00. ISBN:978-0-7914-7338-2.



Susan Driver's *Queer Youth Cultures* is a refreshing, analytical view of contemporary queer youth, seen not as victims or martyrs, but as cultural and political catalysts in the everyday world.

Such diverse cultural practices as lesbian punk rock, zines, on-line dating (The Pink Sofa), drag

performance, and sissy boys are examined by a variety of primarily academic researchers (including several based in Australia). Permeating throughout are the voices and views of queer youth.

The book is divided into three handy sections: 1. "Performative Queer Youth Cultures, Embodiments, and Communities"; 2. "Desiring Youth and Un/Popular Cultures"; and 3. "Transforming Political Action." A photo spread by Cass Bird is also included. And, just in case you are not up-to

-date, "queer youth" encompasses GLBTTIQQ (gay-lesbian-bisexual-transsexual-transgender-intersex-queer-and/or questioning individuals).

Enough said, get this for your library. It fills an important role in any cultural/gay/women's studies collection, and could be a lifeline for the queer youth that grace your doorstep.

Morgan Gwenwald
SUNY New Paltz

Brill, Stephanie and Rachel Pepper. *The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals.*

San Francisco, CA: Cleis Press, 2008. Soft cover. 252p. \$16.95. ISBN: 978-1-57344-318-0

Stephanie Brill and Rachel Pepper's guide for parents of transgender and gender-variant children seeks to fill a gap in both parenting and transgender literature. Building on existing research, as well as the authors' experiences working with families,

the book provides an overview of issues ranging from medical care to negotiating what a child will wear to a formal family event. Brill and Pepper offer a mix of practical suggestions and philosophy to guide and reassure parents at all points in their understanding and acceptance of their



child. Starting with clear discussion of relevant terminology, the book speaks to a broad range of issues. The emphasis is always on love: parents must navigate a course that will allow them to support and unconditionally love their child. The book then offers concrete solutions to common problems (for example, recommending that parents roleplay answering questions from strangers). To address specific challenges, the authors include sample letters for parents to revise, such as a physician's recognition of the child's gender status, which the child can carry to show to authorities. Quotations from parents, children, and community members provide real-life perspectives.

Chapters on educational and medical issues also serve as a guide for professionals working with transgendered or gender-variant children. Rather than recommending a single path, the authors acknowledge the different challenges faced by transgender children and gender-variant children. The authors recognize that all families must start where they're at, but offer practical tools for advocating and parenting.

The Transgender Child is a must for all public libraries.

Reviewed by Kelly McElroy
School of Library Archival and Information Studies
University of British Columbia.

Book Reviews: Fiction

Grant, Storm. *Gym Dandy: A Gay Romance.*

Albion, NY: MLR Press, 2009. softcover. 193 p. \$14.99. ISBN: 978-1-934531-94-5

I don't normally enjoy romance novels, but Storm Grant's *Gym Dandy* is a wonderfully light confection. Set in Toronto, it is the love story of Victor Brighton, a personal trainer, and his gym client, Douglas Newkirk, who comes to accept his sexuality over the course of his relationship with Victor. The novel is geared more toward humor than romance; and although



that humor can be a bit corny, it is never forced. It is also juxtaposed to a surprising complexity in the characters. For example, it is refreshing to find an openly bisexual character, Victor, in a beach read. Too often, bisexuality is ignored in GLBTQ pop culture. Victor's comfort with himself was a pleasant change of pace. The ending was also legitimately surprising, except, of course, for the fact that it's a *happy* ending. Grant offers readers a fun book to take on vacation.

One caveat: there is some Canadian English that might be confusing to American readers, such as "First Nations" and "poutine," but nothing that interrupts the flow of the story or that a curious reader could not easily decipher. Recommended for public libraries with adult romance sections, or those libraries interested in increasing their number of popular GLBTQ titles.

Reviewed by Travis A. Ferrell

Ruff, Shawn Stewart. *Finlater*.

New York: Quote Editions, 2008. paperback. 300p. \$15.50. ISBN: 9781604023954.



Cliffy, a gifted boy from the projects, finds himself one of only a few African-American kids in his accelerated classes at school. In his recently de-segregated school, this is a tough position to maintain. As Cliffy starts to leave behind some of his old crowd, he meets a new friend: a similarly outcast Jewish classmate – Noah. Noah and Cliffy turn their

backs on the persecution at school and their complicated home lives, and turn toward each other.

As the novel progresses, Noah and Cliffy's affection becomes unselfconscious sexual play, and eventually, as each boy grows up a bit, a more self-aware sexual and emotional relationship.

Finlater is Shawn Stewart Ruff's debut novel, and winner of the 2008 Lambda Literary Award for Debut Fiction. Ruff's language is slangy and explicit, and the resulting

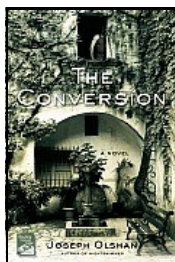
roughness drives the story hard and fast over what might otherwise be drowsy spots in the plot. Although its main character is a young teen, *Finlater* is meant for adult readers; they will enjoy this fast, engaging read that turns a precociously mature eye on teenage love and lust. Ruff will surely continue to grow as a writer, but in *Finlater*, he has already produced a confident and appealing gay coming-of-age novel.

Recommended.

Reviewed by Rose Yndigoyen

Olshan, Joseph. *The Conversion*.

New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2009. paperback. 278 p. \$14.95. ISBN: 9780312565565.



The Conversion is a sexy, classy spin on Henry James's conceit of the young American adrift in Europe. Thirtyish Russell Todaro is the engaging narrator. A translator and would-be writer, Russell has only written a novella because he squanders his creative energies on obsessive liaisons with married men. "Another man, another motorcycle, another country," seems to be his motto. Wealthy Michel takes Russell around Paris on his BMW motorcycle.

Lorenzo, a *carabiniere*, guides Russell through the Tuscan countryside on his Ducati. Russell finds that his American straightforwardness—and his vulnerability—is no match for his European lovers' brutal yet civilized treatment of him.

Left alone after a tragic incident in Paris, Russell accepts a mysterious invitation from the novelist Marina Vezzoli to stay at her villa. He brings with him the manuscript of an unpublished memoir by deceased poet Edward Cannon. Edward believed that living for love had kept Russell from writing anything good. Spurred by Edward's censure, manipulated by Marina, and inspired by his love for language,

especially Italian, Russell finds that he is ripe for the powerful conversion that occurs at the novel's surprising conclusion.

Told in breathtakingly sensuous prose, Russell's story is perfect for fans of Edmund White's *The Married Man* and André Aciman's *Call Me by Your Name*. A finalist for the Stonewall Book Award and the Lambda Literary Award, *The Conversion* is highly recommended for libraries that collect gay fiction of literary quality.

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

Blue, Ally. *Easy*.

Albion: MLR Press, LLC, 2008. 201p. paperback. \$14.99. ISBN-978934531624.



Easy tells the story of Dan Corazon and Stevie Sanger, how they meet and fall in love. Dan lives a quiet life as an employee in a landscaping business. He struggles with the idea of coming out to his best friend and coworker, Carlos. Having been raised by a strict father, and then orphaned as a young man, Dan is independent and protective of his feelings and private life.

Dan meets Stevie when he rescues him from a

dangerous encounter, and the two are immediately drawn to each other. Stevie is a high-demand sex worker, but he decides to give it up once he meets Dan. But because of his "pimp," this isn't easy, and once again Stevie needs Dan's help.

Unfortunately, *Easy*, has several issues that make it impossible to recommend. This book contains many stereotypes that distract from the story. Dan and Carlos' Latino ethnicity is stereotyped in both the dialogue and character development ("Hola" and "Amigo" at the beginning and end of every sentence, for example). Additionally, Stevie's life as a

sex worker is simplified as a life consumed by violence and abuse.

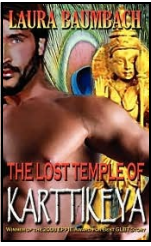
A second aspect of this book that rankles is that it contains racy scenes that, rather than being sexy or exciting, fall short of the mark. When reading erotica, one expects to tolerate an inadequately written or simplified story line for the sake of a good scene, but in the case of *Easy*, the sex scenes fall frustratingly flat due to the writing style.

Reviewed by Jesse Nachem

Lucasfilm Archives

Baumbach, Laura. *The Lost Temple of Karttikeya.*

Albion, NY: MLRPress, 2008. softcover. 194p. \$14.99. ISBN: 978-1-934531-93-8.



The Lost Temple of Karttikeya begins as a love triangle: Brandon, a police officer, is dating Phil, his partner, an older man who is bisexual and who is also seeing a lawyer named Susan. Brandon is shocked to hear through office gossip of Phil's engagement to Susan and abruptly move to the Homicide Division. Phil has also cancelled vacation plans with Brandon in favor of one with Susan, leaving Brandon alone to solve a case of a missing mystical jade object said to help one find his heart's fondest desire. Brandon decides to pursue the object (outside of departmental time)

with Christian, an archaeologist and owner of an antiques store.

Traveling with Christian to India in search of his holy grail, Brandon eventually realizes errors in his commitment with Phil, and begins considering a relationship with Christian. The adventure turns deadly, as Brandon encounters a vampire out for his blood. This gives Christian a chance to save Brandon, which leads to a realization of their undying love for each other.

Laura Baumbach has written a tale of romance, self awareness, adventure, vampires, and true love. This story is also suitable for those in abusive or unequal

relationships. Moreover, the novel is well-researched, and Baumbach intertwines the Hindu legend of Karttikeya with vivid descriptions of India's Landscape.

The Lost Temple of Karttikeya opens with a lengthy and vivid sex scene, which will captivate readers who enjoy this particular genre. It is recommended for libraries with adult romance collections.

Reviewed by Sara Rofofsky Marcus

Electronic Resources Librarian
Queensborough Community College

Alan, Kage. *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to My Sexual Orientation.*

Austin, TX: Zumaya Boundless, 2008 (2003). \$14.99. ISBN 9781934135914.



Home from college for the summer of 1989, but with no car and no girlfriend, nineteen-year-old Andy Stevenson just hoped for a break from his dull Detroit suburban life when he agreed to accompany his addled, cantankerous

grandmother to her brother's fiftieth anniversary party in California. But a chance meeting with his handsome cousin Jordan leads to his first same-sex kiss and a six-day comedic whirlwind that ends up bringing Andy out of the closet.

Kage Alan takes the familiar theme of the vacationing teen who suddenly sexually blooms, and tells it from the point of a gay teen in denial. Andy narrates his own story with self-deprecating humor, but the slapstick antics of his family, the girls of California, and Andy's own impromptu performance at a gay bar lead to several laugh-out-loud moments.

There is tenderness, too. Jordan sweetly engages Andy and patiently helps him shed his Midwestern reserve. When, towards the end of the book, Andy and Jordan make love, Andy's innocent awe and excitement

over what he has been missing leaps out at the reader.

Reviewed by John Bradford
Head, Automation & Technical Services
Villa Park (IL) Public Library

Alan, Kage. *Andy Stevenson vs. The Lord of the Loins.*

Austin, TX: Zumaya Boundless, 2008. \$14.99. ISBN 9781934841006.



Andy returns to college in a small town in western Michigan. The first semester goes by without his secret slipping out—not that he doesn't hint to his friends, just that they are oblivious. Then, Andy's first date since Jordan turns out to be less

than he's hoped for. Andy wants a soul mate; instead, he ends up in a one-night-stand with Tristan, the "Lord of the Loins" of the book's title. When Tristan determines that the reason Andy wants nothing more to do with him is because Andy is still too closeted, he outs Andy to the whole campus—just as Andy has started getting serious with Alan, a cute, but domineering Asian who insists on a discreet relationship.

Andy Stevenson vs. Lord of the Loins has the same slapstick sensibility as *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to My Sexual Orientation*, but Andy is now more mature. His tongue does get the better of him at times—particularly when dealing with Tristan—but his ease with himself allows him

(Continued on Page 12)

Andy Stevenson vs. The Lord of the Loins. (Continued)

to first escape a trap Tristan set for him, then to exact revenge and end Tristan's manipulations for good. Unbound Books first published *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to My Sexual Orientation* in 2003, but the press went out of business in 2006. Zumaya Boundless republished it in 2008 when they released

Andy Stevenson vs. Lord of the Loins. Kage Alan is working on the third volume, which will also be published by Zumaya, and is expected in 2010.

Both books in this series are strongly recommended for all public and academic

libraries. They are acceptable for high school libraries also, but the characters are college age and older.

Reviewed by John Bradford
Head, Automation & Technical Services
Villa Park (IL) Public Library

Book Reviews: Comics & Graphic Novels

Sayers, Joey Alison. *Just So You Know*.

Autobiographical Comics Ser. #1. Oakland, 2009. softcover. [36] pages. \$5.00.



Cartoonist Joey Alison Sayers has the talent—critical in comic art—for getting to a point quickly and making a sharply perceptive observation.

Just So You Know #1 gathers together two years of strips about

Sayers' transition from male to female. Hormones, social acceptance, getting a new ID, and coming out to herself and her parents are all dissected on Sayers' drawing pad.

The most poignant strip may be "Freaking Out the Parents." At a particularly illuminating point in a conversation with her parents, Sayers explains, "I've been horribly depressed for as long as I can remember and for a bunch of years I was getting drunk and using drugs as a coping mechanism." Her parents listen to everything in silence, wearing twin expressions of concern. Their response comes in the last panel: "Wait?! You did drugs?!!" It's a bittersweet moment.

They aren't hurling invective, which is good, but they can't acknowledge what their child is really sharing, and only react to a side issue.

Additionally, Sayers slips in some basic facts about the MTF transition process, which is helpful for *any* library collection. The final page even includes a small glossary to help readers understand, for example, the difference between transgender and transsexual.

Just So You Know #1 is recommended for public and high school libraries. It's available online through Sayers' website: <http://www.jsayers.com/>. Payment is through PayPal.

Reviewed by Ruth Ann Jones
Special Collections Cataloger
Michigan State University Libraries

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