Hello, everyone!

I hope you all enjoy the first issue of 2005! This is another e-only issue of the newsletter, and I hope you all have been able to access this format without any problems, as switching this format for our non-ALA issues is a significant cost-savings for the Round Table.

The deadline for all submissions for the next issue is May 18th, 2005, so please make sure to have all your book reviews, officer reports, ALA information, and general interest articles sent to me before that time!

Thanks for all of your continued support, and please let me know if there are any questions or comments about the newsletter!

Ken Wells, GLBTRT Newsletter Editor
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GLBTRT Newsletter
A publication of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered Round Table of the American Library Association
http://www.ala.org/glbtrt

Happy Spring. Well, I admit that the weather doesn't feel like spring yet but I'm hopeful that soon the clouds will dry up and I can see the sun again. I know Anne is hoping that the snow stops falling soon so the drive to work gets easier.

I want to draw attention to our programs in Chicago for the annual meeting. We have one program we are putting together "Addressing the Information Needs of Transgender Individuals". This will be a panel of librarians addressing the information needs of the primary subgroups that comprise the Transgendered community (crossdressers, Transsexuals and gender-deviant individuals). This session will also address the sources of information important to members of the trans community. A bibliography will also be developed for the program.

We are also co-sponsoring a program in Chicago with the Office of Diversity entitled "Out of the Margins: GLBT Librarians, Libraries, and Literary Activism". Speakers include: Steven Fullwood, Founder, Black Gay & Lesbian Archive; Reginald Harris, Poet & Librarian, Enoch Pratt Free Library; Natalie Kendall, Librarian, Leather Archives & Museum; tatiana de la tierra, Information Literacy Librarian, University of Buffalo; Joe Tragert, Marketing VP EBSCO Publishing, EBSCO GLBT Life Database Project.

Of course we have the usual Read Aloud as well as the Awards Dinner celebrating the 35th anniversary of the founding of the Round Table. I know that we will have wonderful speakers and award winners at the dinner.

Plans for Chicago call for us to march in the GLBT Pride parade which will be going on during ALA this year. We are looking to either find the banner that was last used by the RT (then Task Force). If changes can not be made to the original banner, then we are looking for volunteers that might be interested in putting together a banner for us to carry in the parade. Contact Anne or if you are interested. More details will be made available the closer we get to conference time, stay tuned.

If you are not a member of our listserv and want to join us for our sporadic conversations and opinions you can go to the ALA electronic list sign up service at http://lp-web.ala.org:8000/. It involves registering but then you can sign onto or off any of the open ALA lists. You can also send a message to our Round Table Secretary Andrew Johnson at afj@u.washington.edu and he can sign you up for the list.

See you soon.

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Anne L. Moore, Coordinator for Access Services
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While we were in Boston we were unable to get to all the items on our agenda. One important item of business is that the ALA policies Committee wanted us to review two ALA policies and provide feedback on the continuation of the policy or changes necessary to those policies.

Policy 54.17 (Gay Rights) currently states

The American Library Association Council reaffirms its support for equal employment opportunity for gay librarians and library workers. The Council recommends that libraries reaffirm their obligation under the Library Bill of Rights to disseminate information representing all points of view on this topic.

Anne and I are suggesting that we recommend changing the wording some.

The American Library Association Council reaffirms its support for equal employment opportunity for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered librarians and library workers. The Council recommends that libraries reaffirm their obligation under the Library Bill of Rights to disseminate information representing all points of view on these topics.

We also want to suggest that ALA update ALA Policy 54.3, the Equal Opportunity Employment policy, to reflect the fact that 4 states and 59 municipalities in the US now offer EEO protections based on gender identity or expression (gender non-conformity) in addition to the other categories of race, sex, sexual orientation, etc… A model statement can be found on Lucent Technologies HR Website. http://www.tgender.net/taw/lucent_eo_ann.html The policy states “prohibit discrimination based on gender identity, characteristics, or expression. This wording is significantly broad enough to protect all people whose gender presentation is nontraditional, including masculine women and feminine men.

Policy 54.20 (AIDS Screening) currently states

The American Library Association opposes mandatory AIDS screening of library employees and advocates employee assistance programs as the best way for library employers to respond to performance deficiencies related to [such illness as] AIDS and AIDS Related Complex (ARC)

Anne and I would like to suggest that this policy be removed. This policy was created in 1988-89 prior to the ADA. HIV and related illness is a protected category under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Job discrimination based upon HIV status or assumed status has been ruled as inappropriate in the job setting. A recent case against Cirque du Soleil is a good example http://www.lambdalegal.org/cgi-bin/iowa/cases/record?record=185 http://www.lambdalegal.org/cgi-bin/iowa/newspress.html?record=1420

If anyone has comments on these policies, please share them with Anne or I, either in a personal e-mail or to the listserv. If there are no comments, then we will forward these comments to the ALA Policies Committee.
Leather Archives & Museum burns mortgage, opens library

To celebrate its recently retired mortgage, the Leather Archives & Museum held a mortgage burning ceremony on February 20, 2005. LA&M President and Founder Chuck Renslow set fire to the papers, before an audience of nearly 200 leahtermen and -women. LA&M Chief Librarian Natalie said, “Having our own building ensures we will not be excluded. Our memories, our belongings and our information about this lifestyle are safe.”

The LA&M retired the mortgage on its building in August, 2004. Over $400,000 was raised from individuals, organization, businesses and private foundations during a seven-year capital campaign to purchase and renovate a 10,000 square foot building at 6418 N. Greenview Avenue, on the north side of Chicago. The LA&M compiles, preserves and maintains historical, archival and literary material and memorabilia dealing with leather and related lifestyles—including but not limited to that of GLBT communities—for historical, educational and research purposes.

The Teri Rose Library at the LA&M also opened that weekend. With over 4000 books and periodicals, the Teri Rose Library serves as a reference and general reading collection of published material on the BDSM/fetish/leather lifestyle. The library will also be made available for club and organization meetings and present ations.

Teri Rose was a Chicago teacher and an active, well-loved member of the leather community. After her unexpected death in 1999, her friends began volunteering labor and fundraising to dedicate the library in her name.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Catherine Ritchie, Dallas Public Library

Cathy Ritchie is the Theatre Librarian at the Dallas (TX) Public Library. She moved to Texas in 2000 after completing a Certificate of Advanced Study at the University of Illinois @ Urbana-Champaign; for her final project, she researched collection development issues regarding GLBT non-fiction. Her earlier years as a public librarian were spent in Minnesota and Illinois, so her recent foray into “Bush Country” has been interesting for her on many fronts!

In her current position, Cathy serves on a system-wide committee formulating GLBT-related programming for Dallas’s Central Library and selected branches. Thanks to the efforts of this group, authors Julie Anne Peters and Alison Bechdel will be appearing in Dallas later this year.

In her spare time, Cathy writes a book review column for the monthly Springfield, Illinois glbt newspaper Prairie Flame, along with other articles and reviews for library magazines and newsletters. She has also recorded books for the blind for over 25 years.

Cathy is also serving on the prize jury selecting the 2004 recipient of the Theatre Library Association Award, given annually to the year’s outstanding book in film or television. Cathy was the only public librarian chosen for the panel this year, making the prospect of evaluating over 100 titles in a two-month period somewhat easier to bear! She looks forward to meeting fellow Round Table members at ALA in Chicago.

Book Review!


David Boyer uses the high school prom to wrap stories about coming out and living as a homosexual. The book is divided into sections with profiles from the 90’s, 80’s, 70’s and 60’s, and back through the 1930’s. Each profile includes the date and place of their high school senior year, pictures and a summary, in their own words, about their senior prom. A postscript gives information on where they are now, and a bit about how they got there. Extras include a style guide, prom trends and a section on how the American idea of a senior prom has spread around the world. Each profile is surprisingly gripping and many make you think of your own high school experience. The pictures will bring knowing nods from older readers and gales of giggles from teens. This book offers a good window into the high school experience and would be a good addition to a YA or high school library collection.

Reviewed by Mark Singer, High School Librarian, retired.
LIFE AS A NORMAL LIBRARIAN
Mari McKeeth
Adult Services Librarian
Normal Public Library, Normal, IL

Yes, you really did read that correctly. I live in Normal—and trust me, I’ve heard just about every joke imaginable. As a lesbian, I’ve always taken a perverse pleasure living in Normal. And as a Les-Brarian working at the Normal Public Library—well, life is so interesting at times.

A few things about Normal and the surrounding area. Normal and Bloomington are “twin cities” with a combined population of over 100,000. We are located in the middle of Central Illinois, in an extraordinarily conservative county. We are home to the Illinois chapter of the Christian Coalition, and over 17,000 voters in McLean County cast a vote for Alan Keyes (!) in the recent election. (Barack Obama did win the county vote…but still!) Anti-gay letters appear regularly in the pages of the local newspaper, and the glbt “community” here is very much underground and disconnected from one another.

The good news is, both Bloomington and Normal city councils recently passed ordinances that include sexual orientation as part of the non-discrimination section of the Municipal Code. Several of the larger employers in the area, including State Farm Insurance and Illinois State University, offer some form of domestic partner benefits. The Advocacy Council for Human Rights is a very public voice to promote equal rights for all citizens of Bloomington-Normal.

And so, the life of a Normal Les-Brarian.

I’ve been at NPL since 1990, and I am very fortunate to work in a positive environment. I am out to everyone at work, and have frankly not experienced any challenges either personally or professionally as a result.

In my particular case, I did not come out to the entire staff until I had worked there for around five years. A few colleagues knew immediately, but not all. This was a conscious choice, made because I am private by nature…and, truthfully, because I was a little worried about how I would be received.

By me choosing not to talk about my personal life, my co-workers got to know me without any “labels” attached. They liked me, and saw that I did my job well. By the time I did come out, any pre-conceived notions that some of the more conservative folks may have had were turned upside down. To their shock—they actually knew a gay person! And they liked that person! Egad! It turned out to be rather educational and instructive for all of us.

My sense is that if I had been a less shy and private person, and had been more “in your face” about my life, things would have gone as well. Who knows. But as it turned out, I have brought girlfriends to work gatherings without comment, have hosted work parties at my home when I had a live-in partner, and recently have been teased mercilessly about having fallen madly in love. I have a photo of Sigourney Weaver squirting herself with a hose near my desk, and no one bats an eye. I am well aware that there are a few staff members who personally believe that my “lifestyle choice” is in fact a sin, and I’m sure that they pray for me on a regular basis. But in terms of how I am treated and included, I have never had a problem. I am very lucky.

Professionally, I am lucky as well. Some of my responsibilities include ordering fiction; my non-fiction selection areas include religion and social issues. I have not experienced any censorship attempts either in-house or from patrons. My non-fiction areas are probably slanted slightly toward the gay-positive side (I should get some sort of workers compensation for having to order Ann Coulter’s works!), but again, no complaints, and the books circulate. The young adult librarian at NPL is excellent and happy to take suggestions, thus the YA collection is really very good in the glbt area. The library does provide copies of “Prairie Flame,” a regional glbt newspaper.

My outreach efforts have been mainly off-site. I haven’t gotten brave enough yet to have a glbt book display, but I have created bibliographies that I have distributed to local organizations. I regularly present programs for the local PFLAG and teen groups, and I pass out my business card and give my name as a contact person for patrons who may want information about glbt issues, but are uncomfortable asking library staff. I have given programs about glbt collection development for librarian groups at the local and state level. And in October, the library hosted a program for local educators and counselors about the Safe Schools Project, and I was one of the speakers. Again, I have never had any problem with my presenting glbt-themed programs as a representative of Normal Public Library. The library administrator truly does an admirable job of keeping his private beliefs about homosexuality out of the workplace, and I appreciate that.

I’d like to conclude with a few thoughts about being very publicly out in the community, and thus out to patrons. I was actually outed in the local newspaper five years ago, as the result of my appointment to the Town of Normal Human Relations Commission. Two members of the City Council voted against my appointment because of their “concern” about my affiliation with Amasong, the lesbian/feminist chorus based in Champaign, and with the Advocacy Council for Human Rights. Their negative votes became newsworthy, and the subsequent article quoted their concerns in detail and outing me.

The reaction of library patrons was fascinating, and very heartening. I can’t recall exact numbers, but there were many patrons in the weeks after the newspaper excitement who simply congratulated me on my appointment. There were many others who engaged me in long conversations about it. They couldn’t understand why these men who had never met me would vote against me. Once again, they hadn’t previously known anything about my private life—but they knew me as a friendly and competent librarian. Several were aware of my music activities in local churches, work with local service organizations, etc. It was incomprehensible to them how ‘that
The members of the GLBTHT Book Award Committee worked diligently this year to identify, review, and select distinctive GLBTQ works this cycle. As is our tradition, a formal announcement of the winners was made during the ALA Midwinter Conference in Boston, Massachusetts this past January.

The 2005 Stonewall Book Award Winners are:

The Barbara Gittings Literature Award: Colm Tóibín, “The Master: Novel” (Scribner)

The Israel Fishman Non-Fiction Award: Joan Roughgarden, “Evolution’s Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and in People” (University of California Press)

The Stonewall honor books in literature are:
“I Am My Own Wife: a Play” by Doug Wright (Faber & Faber)
“The Line of Beauty” by Allan Hollinghurst (Bloomsbury)
“Luna: a Novel” by Julie Anne Peters (Megan Tingley Books, an imprint of Little, Brown and Company)
“The Seahorse Year” by Stacy D’Erasmo (Houghton Mifflin)

The Stonewall honor books in non-fiction are:
“Beyond Shame: Reclaiming the Abandoned History of Radical Gay Sexuality” by Patrick Moore (Beacon Press)
“Both: a Portrait in Two Parts” by Douglas Crase (Pantheon)
“Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim” by David Sedaris (Little, Brown and Company)

“Evolution’s Rainbow” examines core tenets of evolutionary theory. This groundbreaking work challenges long-held views of Darwinian thought about gender and sexuality, and the scientific, medical and cultural assumptions on which they are based. The book is written for a general audience in a highly readable style. Roughgarden is a professor of biological sciences at Stanford University.

The BAC has invited authors Colm Tóibín and Joan Roughgarden to attend our Book Award Gala Dinner during ALA Annual in Chicago.

Members of the 2004 ALA Stonewall Book Award Committee are: Robert L. Jaquay, Albany, N.Y.; Cecil Hixon, New York Public Library; Jeffrey Beall, Denver; Norman Eriksen, Brooklyn Public Library, N.Y.; Roland Hansen, Columbia College, Chicago; Robin Imhof, University of the Pacific, Stockton, Calif.; Michael J. Miller, Queens College / CUNY; Teresa Y. Neely, Ph.D., Baltimore; K.R. Roberto, University of Georgia Libraries; Lindsey Schell, University of Texas, Austin; and Barbara Stevens, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

I especially want to thank Cecil Hixon, Immediate Past Chair, and Bob Jaquay, Incoming Chair, for their invaluable contribution to BAC this year. Additionally, we would like to congratulate Robin Imhof, for her election as Vice Chair.

With best and warmest regards,

Mary Callaghan “Cal” Zunt, Chair
GLBTRT Stonewall Book Award Committee
Cleveland Public Library
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Letters to the editor, correspondence to the above address care of: Ken Wells, GLBTRT Newsletter Editor kenwells@ufl.edu
Conference programs can reach their audience. Local projects on tough topics can succeed. The truth of these statements has been demonstrated at the Mid-Continent Public Library in the last year. At the 2004 PLA Conference in Seattle there was a GLBTRT program entitled “Getting the Green Light for GLBT Services.” Some librarians from MCPL inadvertently met at this program. Spurred by the fact that we had new-found allies a project was born.

Following presentations made at the monthly staff meeting about our conference experiences, it became obvious there was further staff interest. Since that time our group (now totaling six, from different branches and departments) has fielded questions from interested staff, done extensive collection analysis, and successfully approached the library administration to proceed with on-going collection development and staff training. As a result, close to 200 titles (totaling over 1,000 copies) of notable and award winning GLBT titles have been added to the library’s collections, new and forthcoming GLBT titles are a regular feature at monthly material selection meetings, and a presentation has been made to branch managers covering issues and materials for GLBT services. Also, a major bibliography was posted to the library’s Readers Advisory page (http://www.mcpl.lib.mo.us/readers/), along with lists and links to major GLBT literary award sites.

Building on these successes, the project is now expanding. Staff handouts have been converted to html format providing an easily expandable staff education tool, work has begun to compile recommendations for GLBT documentary and feature films, and we hope to conduct another branch manager update. We are also developing strategies for publicity and outreach materials.

Response has been quite positive both from staff and administration, and usage of the newly acquired materials is encouraging. Our experience confirms that if you are thorough, do careful research, and keep your administration informed, very good things can happen. This was the advice that Richard DiRusso and Lynn Evarts gave at the PLA program. It is good advice—and you’d be amazed what can happen.

Lars Hagelin, Special Projects Librarian
projects@mcpl.lib.mo.us
Mid-Continent Public Library
http://www.mcpl.lib.mo.us/


During the summer of 1916, Vincent de l’Étoile, a precocious sixteen-year-old Parisian, experiences a week of upheavals during which he encounters a mind and a body. The mind Vincent encounters is that of Marcel [Proust], a forty-five-year-old writer, whom Vincent meets in a salon. The body Vincent encounters is that of Arthur Valès, a twenty-one-year-old soldier on leave from the trenches in northern France to visit his father, a servant in the de l’Étoile household. Arthur is Vincent’s first man. Vincent instinctively understands everything and follows where Arthur leads. When the week is over, Vincent suffers both the absences of Marcel, who leaves Paris on family business, and Arthur, who returns to the front. Soon after, Arthur’s mother, Blanche, speaks directly to Vincent. Has there ever been a scene between a mother and her son’s male lover such as Besson gives us in this novel? Vincent’s precocity is useless with Blanche, who knows what happened between her son and Vincent. Blanche then tells Vincent a story. Her story is an explosion that changes Vincent’s life forever. Vincent learns that his precocity is no match for the horrors of the war and other shattering realities of the adult world. Beautifully translated from the French, this stunning, intense story of friendship and love between men is unforgettable and is suitable for mature readers.

Reviewed by W. Stephen Breedlove, Reference Librarian/Interlibrary Loan Coordinator, La Salle University Library, Philadelphia, PA

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!

GLBT Round Table 35th Anniversary Dinner
at ALA Annual Convention
Chicago, IL
Monday, June 27, 2005
6:30pm - 9:30pm
Tickets are $70.00 per person

Controversies due to students’ gender identification and sexual orientation are common today. School administrators, teachers, parents and, most of all, by students, face these issues. Clubs, curriculum, reading lists dress code, social events and harassment have all been the focus for community disagreements and sometimes litigation. While sexual orientation and gender identification are not mentioned in the constitution, it does shed light on what can and can’t be done. This brief publication, sponsored by twelve educational organizations, covers both written law and case law to outline practices which insure that students receive the benefits of the rights guaranteed to them. There are still gray areas when courts in various states disagree and states cave passed disagreeing laws. The authors are quick to point out these areas. This publication can be downloaded free from http://nsba.org/cosa/secualorientation. Add a link from your catalog, print a copy and add it to your collection. This is a must for almost every library.


It takes over twenty five pages for the author to supply an understanding of what criteria were used to select the fifty five movies that are profiled in the book. The answer seems to be the author chose his favorite movies. Each film profile supplies the release date, actors and directors and a brief plot summary. Some space is given to explain the “gay” twist each film may offer, but the twist is often way out in left field. A “still” for each film is featured, and a list of similar films is included. All films are carefully footnoted, and there is an extensive index. The real question is “what is the value of this book”? If you are looking for a good movie reference book, this volume would be a good but limited source. If you are looking for a good history of gays and lesbians in film look elsewhere.

Reviewed by Mark Singer, High School Librarian, retired.
TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

DELIVER IMMEDIATELY

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION:

This newsletter is now included in your membership fee to the GLBTRT via your regular ALA membership registration. Just be sure to join the GLBTRT when you renew your membership or initially join.

Subscription questions should be forwarded to the newsletter editor at kenwells@ufl.edu.

Thank you for your support!!