

Interview length: 39:31

Took place: June 7th, 2018

Interviewer: Katherine/[Kat] Van Arsdale

Interviewee: Lisa Johnston

Transcriber: Jessica Thorlakson

Kat:

My name is Kat Van Arsdale, and I use she/her pronouns. This interview is taking place on June the 7th, 2018. I am one of the American Library Association's Emerging Leaders for 2018. My group is working on a project with the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table of the American Library Association (also known as the GLBTRT) to help celebrate the Round Table's upcoming 50th anniversary in 2020. This work began in 2017 with another group of Emerging Leaders, who started to gather GLBTRT historical ephemera and created an archive which will be shared through the ALA GLBTRT web page when it is complete. This year we are speaking with individuals who've been involved with the Round Table, past as well as present, and collecting their stories to create a digital archive of oral histories. We will also establish a toolkit so people can continue to contribute oral histories on an ongoing basis.

So Lisa, thank you for sharing your stories with us and the ALA community.

Lisa: Pleasure.

Kat: So I'd like to ask you, to start off, what names and pronouns you would like to use over the course of this interview?

Lisa: I'm Lisa Johnston, I use she, her.

Kat: Wonderful, can you tell us a little bit about yourself, Lisa. Where you're from, what you do?

Lisa: Um, I am currently Director of Library Services at Eckerd College, which is a small liberal arts college in St. Petersburg, Florida. And before that I was associate director for 25 years at Sweet Briar College in Virginia. And before that, at the tender age of 24, I was a reference librarian at Sterling Memorial Library at Yale. I'm kind of from all over. I was born in San Diego, my parents were academics, and grow up mostly in Kentucky and Tennessee.

Kat: Umm. Sooo, can you tell us a little bit about how long you've been affiliated with the Round Table and what has your been in the group, historically?

Lisa: I have been a member of the Round Table since...it was...a kind of, it was a subgroup of the Social Responsibilities Round Table, which was in, umm... oh gosh the late 80s, early 90s, was when I joined, when I was, um, you know, a baby librarian, as I like to say. Annd um, I..I **wanted to join because I wanted to be involved, I wanted to help other librarians,**

**particularly the ones that needed to stay in the closet. Because I was fortunate in that I refused.**

[2:26]

Kat: Hm

[2:29]

Lisa: Lisa, back in the day. Um, I also have, and still have, a keen interest GLBT history and literature. And so I started to go to the social events. I think the first one that I went to was in Dallas in 1989.

Kat: Wow

Lisa: I know. Before you were born, I'm sure.

Kat: [laughs] yep.

Lisa: [laughs] And, um, and I meant some really amazing people. Um, I don't remember all the names, but it just really struck me how friendly everyone was. And, we went, we had, uh, a social, I think, ah, in a hotel ballroom, and they were giving away door prizes that were books that were then the, um, the Gay Book Award- it was pre- the name Stonewall. And I won a couple.. I won a couple books and we all ended up, as you do in library land, in a bar, and we talked the rest of the evening. And I thought "ok, these are my people. I'm stayin" [3:27]. And I wasn't able to go to ALA very much after that, because my, my career sort of took a different trajectory. Um, I think I went in umm..1993. I went to the, uh, book awards brunch. And, well, it kind of was a breakfast because you had to get there, and we're talking about the, you know, the alleged gay agenda, you had to get in line for that thing at 7 A.M.

Kat: [laughs]

Lisa:[laughs] it was pretty hilarious [laughs]. And, um, they had the breakfast for awhile, and by, um.. Yeah 2000 there was, I was always a member of the listservs since the Internet existed. Um, there was, there was a call up for people to join the book awards committee and so I could not resist. And, um, this was back when you had to send in a CV, and you had to have proof of review experience. At that point in my life, I think I'd writing about 20, 26 book reviews. Umm, and i was accepted. And so in San Francisco at Annual in 2001 that was my first experience with the book award committee. And, uh, I stayed [laughs].

Kat: So since you've been involved, since the late 80s, early 90s, how have you seen the Round Table change? I mean, it's been.. a number, I don't want to date you, but a number of years. And what kind of evolution have you seen happen in...in your time with the Round Table?

[5:06]

**Lisa: I think, the, the people in my generation who joined saw both terrible things, and really progressive things happen. And for.. we lost dear friends to to AIDS/HIV. We had members, who lost their husbands to AIDS/HIV. And so there was always...I think a cloud, in among the optimism, of course.** And, a lot of people were not out of the closet.

Kat: Yeah

Lisa: And so you go to these socials, you couldn't always, you know, of course people wanted to take photographs but people were very discreet about asking "would you like a photograph to appear or not in a publication? Or a newsletter?" Or something. [5:54] And, back then there was, I remember the big, um, the champaign to become a Round Table and not just just a branch of the SR..the SRT and that was a very big deal. And I cannot remember what year it was. I am sure you've spoken to people who do. Um, but that was just an incredible thing that happened to us because the work that Barbara Gittings and Israel Fishman had done in the early 70s was actually, it was if it was all coming true and we were going to get all this fabulous publicity and more and more people would want to join, and that happened.

[6:33]

Kat: So, this is not a question on my list

Lisa: Ok

Kat: But, I'm curious, what, can you talk a little bit about during the early days of your membership, there was this aspect for a lot members of being closeted or not feeling comfortable...

Lisa: Umhm

Kat: being out of the closet. How did you all kind of increase membership, or how did people become connecting to the Round Table in this kind of atmosphere of quasi-secrecy?

Lisa: Friends of friends- that happened a lot. There were a lot of straight-identified people, um, supporters, and they would tell their friends. Um, newsletters, people could join via ALA and if they paid their own ALA dues their supervisors would never know what other parts of ALA they were involved in, and that made, I think, things a lot, much easier for some, for some people. Um [pause], and, I know, I just, when you gave the call out for, uh, people to interview, I couldn't resist because I feel like I've seen so much. And I may be one of the middle-aged people [laughs]. Um, yeah, but it, it was really an incredible time to just watch progress and to, as laws changed, in different states, as more and more institutions, both public, private, special libraries, got anti-discrimination clauses through their human resources departments, that's when people started to come out. People would come to the events- they just wouldn't want their pictures taken

Kat: Hm

Lisa: And there was not, it's not like we took roll [laughs]

Kat: Right. Was there..was..so the main concern then was repercussion from employment in the library profession?

Lisa: Um, through a lot of the people that, that I know, it, it was repercussion from employment. And it wasn't always the institution being conservative, it's that maybe that person's supervisor was conservative.

Kat: Umhm

Lisa: Or maybe the person that this, the librarian shared an office with was. It wasn't always, you know, for example, working at a big stated institution in the south, or working at a religiously affiliated institution, um. It wasn't always that a lot of times, it was very personal.

Kat: Hmm. That's interesting. I hadn't considered that kind of interpersonal dynamic in your work-

Lisa: Umhm

Kat: place and how that would have an affect. So, you talked a little bit about some of the socials that you went to, and one of the questions on my list is if you had a favourite memory of a social event with the Round Table.

Lisa: [laughs]

Kat: anything that sticks out from your mind? That you're willing to .. to talk about on recording.

Lisa: [laughs] Well nothing like that happened

Kat: [laughs]

Lisa: Um, to me anyway. And, I don't know. I..I started..I started going to them in the early 2000s because of my involvement with the book award. And, I think, come about...I'd say 2005, that's when I really started to get to know people. That's when I was really taking the time. Because I was a representative for the diversity. It was a diversity group through big ALA, through all of then, um, and I was a representative from the Round Table, and I think that's when I really started to, to meet people. But I don't know if I have an absolute favourite moment. And...hmmm [pause]. Well, you know,I have a couple of really wonderful experiences meeting different people who are still my friends roday. Um, I would say I think if I had to pick one, it was in San Diego, it was Mid-Winter of 2011 and I was chair of the Stonewall Book Award Committee and

we were all at the brewery for social, and the social had happened on the Saturday and so Lewis Day and I, he was the, um, incoming chairperson, then, um, we had to rush rush rush with Jon Amish Son right on this press releases. We did, almost dash, like in a mad run to this brewery of some kind, and where we stood on the balcony, I read out the winners of the awards. And I think that was so special, not just because I was, I was chair and had a fantastic time, a fantastic group of people, but that was when I got to say, and “the children’s award will be announced on Monday morning at the youth media awards.” That was the first one that we were included in, and I got to say “embargo” [laughs].

[11:15]

Kat: and that was in what year?

Lisa: 2011

Kat: only in 2011

Lisa: only then.

Kat: Wow.

Lisa: But, um, the Round Table had raised enough money to add the award and this was before the generosity, um, the Romans/Morgan family. Um, who, now fund the award, um, Larry Romans’ estate and his husband Michael Morgan, but, that was, like, the big start for us..to, to be able to say that, and to be able to read out the, um, the Barbara Gittings books and the Israel Fishman books and the honor books. That was, I think, my favourite. My favourite.

[11:55]

Kat: So

Lisa: [laughs]

Kat: Since getting involved with the book award committee, how have you seen publishing that’s kind of representative of, or books that are written by, LGBT+ identifying folks evolve over time?

Lisa: It has increased. I don’t want to put a number on it. It has increased incredibly, because the last time I was on it, um, I was outgoing chair in 2012 and that was back when there was an outgoing chairperson and then that person would sort of train people how to do things, but that was before the committee was split into three. We read everything and it was nearly manageable, not really, but nearly. Um. But we didn’t divide the awards up. And publishing has boomed so much that, you know, now I see it as a necessity, really. You know, first off, “oh we were tough back then. We read them all!” But [laughs] And now you would kind of have to take the veil to accomplish that. You’d have to negotiate with you supervisor: “I need two days off a week just to keep up with this book award committee” [laughs], which is impossible. So I would

say, it, it's a good thing, um, because small presses are able to advertise more because of the internet, um. A lot of the smaller presses, in particular, now send out pdfs of the books. And of course there was an enormous debate on "is a pdf the actual book"

Kat: Hmm

Lisa: the pagination is different, does it count? And I was one of those people who was pro pdf, because it was less to carry around, for example. The smaller presses don't have that much money to be sending out, you know, 12 copies of somebody's memoir. So. Yeah.

Kat: Do you have a favourite of the last few years that you would recommend to people?

Lisa: Oh my gosh. Oh that's so hard! [pause] Um. [pause] Yeah, I do, um, I have a degree in literature [laughs] and a degree in artistry [laughs]

Kat: Wait. I opened a can of worms!

Lisa: You did [laughs] And, um, I would, I would have say thaaat, if I had to pick one, it was..it was in 2011 when, when I was chair. There. We haven't, we had, um, a wonderful book called *Inseparable...Inseparable* by the Irish writer Emma Donoghue. And, if you don't know her, she's like the lesbian Kant. She has a PhD in English from Cambridge, and she's a professor and all. And she writes a lot of historical fiction. So what she did, she wrote this book of, um, literary essays about the history of queer women in literature. And it was beautifully written. Um, so I think the one that I refer back to often is that one. As much I have loved so many of the other books, that one always comes to the front of my mind, as probably the one that I've, that I've used with, with students who work for us.

[15:13]

Kat: Hm. So that's, it's interesting that you bring that up, because, and I don't know who I'm supposed to be referencing other oral histories in this one but I am going to anyway

Lisa: Do it

Kat: One of the things that was mentioned by another one of our interviewees was in the early days of the Round Table kind of a lack of representation of queer women

Lisa: Umhm

Kat: And if that's an experience that you had and if you could speak to that at all.

[15:36]

Lisa: Yeah, um. I believe..I think maybe it was my first year, 08 or 09, that I served a second time. I served 01 to 03, and then again. And I think also in 01 to 03, um, there weren't that many,

um, queer or transgender women identified people represented, especially in the big publishing houses. And, there were a couple of years when all the winners, or most of them, were male identified people. And, of course we would get called out on that by, you know, our, our beloved, um, colleagues, and..you know, then you.. You have to say, "this is the, this is the pattern in publishing." I don't know if you know the author Sarah Schulman?

Kat: vaguely

Lisa: Yeah. She's super famous. You should follow on Facebook or something. Um, she wrote an essay about that very thing. And she was, I think she's done at least two lectures to the, um, the Round Table brunch or breakfast. She's won a couple of Stonewall awards. But she is a lesbian feminist jewish writer from New York. Fascinating woman. And this is one of the things she would write about.

Kat: Hm

Lisa: the lack of female identified people in, um, queer publishing

[17:02]

Kat: And did you see that ever reflected in, kind of, involvement in the Round Table, or have queer women always, in your view, had a pretty..had a pretty strong tie to the Round Table?

Lisa: Actually, no [laughs]. Um. When I first joined, it was mostly, um, the guys. And in fact in, you know, and I know this is probably going to make people kind of peeved, but it was true, um, someone said to me "oh this is kind of the Boys' Club."

Kat: Hmm

Lisa: But, yet, it was founded by Barbara Gittings. But somehow, you know, I, I guess if you also trace the pattern of leadership in libraries, you know, the the guys get pushed to the top, they get pushed to the supervisory positions, so maybe it's easier for them to be out? Um, and...so I remember the first year that they had a board. I'm on the board now, um, my second time. The first year that they had candidates for this board positions, it was all male identified people. Yeaah. A lot of us were kinda "hmmmm." And so, yeah, now obviously we've kind of made up for that [laughs].

Kat: I was going to say, I saw your meeting at Mid Winter- you guys have a good showing!

Lisa: Oh it's wonderful. Yeah [laughs]. It's more, there's more variety of people now definitely. And it was very very white...

Kat: Hmm

Lisa: There were a couple of, um, men and women of colour, but very few. Now, I remember especially, um, Cecil Hickson, who was very, a very dear friend. He's retired. But yeah, African-American man, he knew, uh, Bayard Rustin, he knew the people in the civil rights movement in the 60s. He was a very stalwart member of the, um, the pre Round Table, oh gosh I can't remember what it was called, exactly.

Kat: The Gay Liberation Task Force?

Lisa: Yeah, the Task Force

Kat: Umhm

Lisa: Yeah. And then the Round Table as well. Um. And there were a couple African-American women, but mostly...white. White, white.

Kat: So one of the things that we're trying to get at in this project is kind of understand...you know, the, the connections that people have made.

Lisa: Umhm

Kat: are there any people that you met along the way, you feel are important to the Round table's history or just to your experience within the group.

Lisa: Oh my god there are so many. Um...[sigh]. I think, it was Anne Moore who really got me involved. I think of her as my older sister. And she.. She's amazing. She's seen the whole history of it. Um, she know everybody, and she's been a really great mentor to the younger people, um, in our profession, and I would.. I would say she's one of the great influences on..on my life and my career. Also Karen Schneider. She's, um, Dean of Libraries at Sonoma State, um, Anne is a special collections librarian at UMass. Um, and also Steve Straumann, who is a social science librarian at UC Channel Islands. But, if.. and Cecil Hickson, who's a retired librarian from New York. If I had to pick four, just several people, who had such an incredible impact, not just on me personally, but professionally and the way I see our profession in the future and in the past, it's those four people.

[20:55]

Kat: Well we're really excited that we get to interview Anne Moore next week.

Lisa: Oh she's awesome.

Kat: I'm a little jealous- my, my colleague Stephen gets to take that interview, and I'm a little bit jealous about it



Lisa: Ugh! [laughs] But you'll get to see it! [laughs]

Kat: I will! I will. I think I'll be transcribing it, so I'll get to do that [laughs]

Lisa: [laughs]

Kat: More importantly

Lisa: Umhm

Kat: You mentioned Barbara Gittings a couple times

Lisa: Yeah

Kat: Can you talk a little bit about her and your understanding or perception of her role in the Round Table.

Lisa: She was the founding mother of us all. And, um, I'm sure somebody else is going to tell you about this, but, in 1971, she had this brilliant idea "let's do a kissing booth," and I think we should do it for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in her honor. I think it'd be hilarious. But this was her stunt and I can't, I think the conference, it was an annual conference, I think it was, oh lord, some place in Texas, and it was very popular. I think that's how she raised, I think it was a dollar, you know, to get a hug or a kiss from Barbara. And I've met her a couple of times and I've felt like "oh, I'm not worthy" [laughs]; it was like that, because she was so instrumental in the, the gay rights movement in the US, you know. She, she was incredible. But, I just met her a couple times and she treated all the younger people in, in the Task Force and then the Round Table like her children. You know, she was very protective. And, she even taught people how to steal food from receptions [laughs]

Kat: [laughs]

Lisa: Cause she knew the younger people didn't have very much money. They're all at ALA trying to eat as much free food as we could [laughs]

Kat: That mission is alive and well. I just got an email from the group listing all the free food at ALA [laughs]

Lisa: That's awesome. [laughs]. But yeah, so I see...I see her as our founding mother. And, I wish I'd gotten to know her better. But, the, when that award, when the fiction award, lit. award, was named after her, that was so profound for me. Because, you should just look her up on YouTube. And you can see interviews with her, you can see her marching in, civ-there were civil

rights marches for our rights in like 1966. She's amazing. Without her we wouldn't, wouldn't exist.

[23:19]

Kat: and the Round Table was found in, correct me if I'm wrong, in I believe 1970?

Lisa: Yeah, Uh huh

Kat: Yeah which makes it one of the older professional organizations, if, I read somewhere but I'm

Lisa: The oldest

Kat: Yes, I was going to say- I don't want to, as a librarian, I don't want to throw out a fact without being 100% sure

Lisa: [laughs]

Kat: But the oldest professional organization for LGBT folks out there.

Lisa: Yeah. In the US, yeah.

Kat: So what do you think it is about the people who either founded this group—I don't want to credit librarianship as a profession—maybe you have a view on that, but what is it do you think created the atmosphere for that, for that to happen?

Lisa: I would think support. Um, [pause]. People needed...um, personal and professional support. And, back, back in the, back in the day, as my students would say, um. [Sigh] because there was just, it was just... it was hard, you know? You'd think, "oh my gosh I have a master's degree, I'm going to be respected," but you can't, you know, but a guy couldn't bring his, his boyfriend to the holiday party at work. And, it created a network for people. And um, it's my ALA family and I know it was for many many others. And it remains that.

Kat: Sooo this is kind of shifting gears a little bit

Lisa: Yeah

Kat: We've, we've heard from other people, um, kind of there perceptions of the role of the Round Table in ALA, generally,

Lisa: Umhm

Kat: Its purpose, and some of the issues that the Round Table is advocating for, or on behalf of, and if you could speak to the role of the Round Table, given its history of advocacy in, in the greater organization and in the profession as a whole.

Lisa: I see, um, you know, advocacy being the most important thing that we do. And that's not just for each other as professionals and for graduate students in our profession. This is for the little five year old kid who figures out he's transgender; what does he get at the library; what programs can his family go to. And, [pause] it's more necessary now than ever, I think. Um. We're advocates for free speech, for intellectual freedom, um. And we, we see everyone as, not just needing information, but it's their right to have good information and, um, to be able to go to the public library and have a selection of different resources to use for, you know, just like, pleasure reading or to go to drag queen story hour, or do archival research, um, on Barbara Gittings or whomever. But, that's the way I see it. I see it as necessary, and, um, I don't think we'll ever be, in our profession or in this country, post gay or whatever. I used to have hope [laughs] but you know, I don't... it's, um, well, depending on the day.  
[26:54]

Kat: [laughs]

Lisa: it's.. I think what we do it very very important, and I'm very proud to be a part of it, even in a small way.

Kat: oh goodness!

Lisa: goodness! [laughs]

Kat: you made me tear up [laughs]

Lisa: [laughs] sorry.

Kat: I don't think I'm supposed to do this in an official archive.

Lisa: [laughs] I'm sure it's happened before

Kat: [nods and smiles]

Lisa: [laughs]

Kat: Veering off topic, but you, you had me so enthralled that I just had to move on to one of my other questions.

Lisa: ok

Kat: Do you feel represented within ALA and within the Round Table? Those are two kind of different questions, but I'd like to know both.

Lisa: I do. Yeah. Um, I feel represented especially within the Round Table. Um. Sometimes ALA I wonder, because of things like partnering with IFLA to have the big conference in a country where it's illegal to be a gay person. Um. And so, I think they could do better, generally, with representing all different types of people in our profession. Um, but yeah I ...I do generally, and I think that, uh, the leadership in ALA, the presidents have been really good, um, involved people, caring people, and not just, um, I don't know, superficially professional 24 hours a day. Um. But, yeah, I'm feeling pretty positive about it because the board actually got Jim Neal to talk about the, the conflict that a lot of us have with going someplace, sending our colleagues someplace like Quelm... and Sharjah [sp? 28:47] for the book fair in the middle east. So, they were willing to talk.

Kat: Really. Can you tell me a little more about that? And, you know, I've heard about

Lisa: Hm

Kat: IFLA and, but I...I'm curious to know more and I'm sure people watching this maybe 50 years from now would be curious to know more.

Lisa: Um. IFLA is the International Federation of Library Associations and every year they meet at a different, international, big city. Um. And, I, it's, there's a group of ALA-they are a lot of gay people that go. I know, I know there were a bunch of guys from the Round Table would go all the time. And, um, they all serve in some sort of official capacity, get elected to a committee, and you go to this thing. And so what, um, the Round Table's trying to do, and, is to tell them that, "you know, even though this is a group of people from all over the world, from all different kinds of nat., library associations, from say, Poland or Australia or China, or whatever, you need to keep in mind that there are gay people there too, whether they're out or not." And, to maybe not, not hold such a great big conference in a place where it's illegal to be yourself. Where you could maybe get beaten up or arrested or worse. Um, and so that's why we really started talking about these things. And, um, I think...I think progress, you know, will, will pretty much be made. Um. We're talking [laughs].

Lisa: So your concern in this, just to have a clarification for, the concern, and it may be both, the kind of ideological, maybe...discomfort with going to a place or holding a conference room meeting in a place that holds these views, or is it truly, like, even just the safety at a basic level of the members, and the gay members, who, who may be in this location.

Lisa: It really all boils down to safety, you know. If one of, one of our guys is perceived as being a gay man, whether or not he is, that can be trouble for him, for her. And, I think safety is really bottom line. I mean, people believe what they believe in their culture and their religious life. But if a country has laws that prohibit you from being yourself, or, you know, prohibit me from taking my wife's arm in the streets, I don't think ALA should be spending a bunch of money to send people there [laughs].

Kat: We've certainly [laughs], we've certainly heard a few things of that nature before

Lisa: Uhhuh [laughs]

Kat: I'll reserve my opinions since I'm supposed to be an interviewer.

Lisa: ok. We'll talk at some reception or something.

Kat: [laughs]

Lisa: [laughs]

Kat: We'll talk. We'll talk [laughs].

Lisa: [laughs]

Kat: So, then. Obviously, you know, we're not at a perfect place in the United States with our perception of queer folks. And, um, we're not in a perfect place in our profession either. Do you think that perception of, of LGBT folks in our profession has changed over time, and how do you think it's changed, and where do you think we're at right now?

Lisa: I think it has changed. Because for a lot of, a lot of people, particularly younger people, it's just not an issue. I know at my school, I work, my liberal arts college is very, um, kind of middle of the road liberal—it's known as a hippie school, it's just not an issue, um, for faculty and staff. You know, of course, there are jerks. Um. But most of the kids are out and proud and there are a lot of gender non-conforming people, um, but I think in our profession, um, it has gotten better- a lot better. And it's because of the laws in the US, and States, but all that started at the institution level for the non-discrimination statements. And I think it has gotten better, and I think we have to work hard to never forget that it was a big job to get there and we have to stay there and we have to get better.

Kat: Do you never worry about, about, forgetting

Lisa: Yes. I've seen it. Not in our profession, but I've seen it with younger people who are not aware that, you know, you couldn't always walk arm in arm with your boy, with your boyfriend, you know, in, in the department store. They, they had no idea. I taught, um, an LGBTQ US history course with a friend of mine for like a month seminar here at, at Eckerd. And, the students were flabbergasted by the history, by what people went through, by, like, for example the red scare in the 50s- people were getting arrested all the time, being fired from government jobs. And, we just have to keep teaching that history, we have to keep teaching the literature, we have to...or this will all be taken for granted and it, especially now, you cannot take it for granted that you're safe, that I got to get married, you know. You cannot ever take that for granted.

[34:28]

Kat: Hm. Well on that note.

Lisa: Yeah

Kat: I have a last Q, um, is there anything we didn't touch on that you would like, would like to talk about?

Lisa: I think that the, um, the, the Round Table is a family. A very welcoming one. And it doesn't matter that somebody...a, we still get asked, "well I don't identify as one of those letters." We don't care [laughs] many of the- and I, so- many people don't identify as anything, or they refuse because it's nobody's damn business. You know, it doesn't matter. It's, it's it's a group. We help each other. We help people get access to information. And, and it's my family at ALA. And there were times that, um, I don't know what I would've done without them, honestly. Yeah. I can count on them.

Kat: so for somebody considering joining, what do you say?

Lisa: Uh huh. Pardon?

Kat: for somebody considering joining the Round Table, a young librarian, fresh out of library school, first library job, why should they join?

Lisa: for the, um, connections, the personal and the professional connections. And because it's really fun and we do good things for people. And um I've never met so many people so fast as as I have with this group of people. And then they know people in like college library sections, and then they know people at PLA, and they know people in this and this and this. And so you're able to get all of these, you know, get, get involved on so many different levels that you didn't even imagine. That, you know, we'll I'm gonna go join ACRL and, you know, do a, do an instruction committee and then that's all you do, and then just add on something, add on, add on the Round Table. It will give you a different perspective, and I think it's very important for librarian, different types of librarians, to spend time together sharing ideas. Very important. I've learned so much from the public librarians, oh my god [laughs].

Kat: Have you! Tell me about it

Lisa: [laughs]

Kat: Pass this on [laughs].

Lisa: Just with.. Um, advocacy programming, especially for people. And, um, different things. Things about personnel issues. You know, not even really having to do with the the community, the LGBTQ community, but just the way things are done at the city level. Different ways of being

an administrator. Things like that. It's not all gay-talk all the time [37:11] And, it's, you know, and and the socials are are fantastic. And, um, I don't know if you've been to one.

Kat: We will all be, I think, every member of our EL team is planning to be at the one in New Orleans.

Lisa: Good. I won't be in New Orleans but I'll be in Seattle.

Kat: all right, well.  
[37:32]

Kat: Alright, well. Hopefully I'll be in Seattle [laughs].

Lisa: [laughs] And I'm bringing my wife—she loves Seattle.

Kat: Oh, wonderful

Lisa: And she's not coming in January. I dragged her to ALA in Chicago and she survived [laughs]

Kat: [indistinguishable] love there [indistinguishable] a lot

Lisa: Uhuh [laughs]

Kat: Anything else you'd like to add, as an addendum?

Lisa: I think this is a fantastic project for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and um, I wish you loads and loads of success. Um, and I, I think may, uh, uh stunt like the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary kissing booth. The, the uh, Barbara Gitting's memorial kissing booth is in order. Um, and to maybe have a little opportunity to people at the gala to answer a question. You know, go around with microphones or something, with a..an iPhone. And, get people t answer a question.

Kat: I think the idea of a story core kind of

Lisa: Oh that was my idea!

Kat: yes! I was going to say I heard it!

Lisa: [laughs]

Kat: And I, as somebody who loves story core

Lisa: Umhm

Kat: I am for it.

Lisa: Yeah. I think, I think it's great and um it's about darn time all this happened with the archives. I still have to go through all my old stuff from book award. I have all these letters and things that are interesting.

Kat: Oh please do send it to us! And we'll get it along to Cara.

Lisa: I will. I will. It's in an old email account, but I've saved it all.

Kat: Well wonderful. I'm going to give the formal conclusion now, which feels awkward.

Lisa: Alright.

Kat: I will. This has been an interview with Lisa Johnston done as part of the oral history project for the 50th anniversary of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table of the American Library Association. This interview took place on June the 7th. Thank you so much for sharing your story, Lisa.

Lisa: Thank you, Kat. It's been a pleasure

Kat: It's been a pleasure

Lisa: Alright.



