

# GLBTF NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION OF THE GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL TASK FORCE OF THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES ROUND TABLE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

## From the Editor:

This edition contains information about Midwinter Conference, updates from our co-chairs. Also enclosed here is a flyer regarding the times of the GLBTF meetings during ALA Midwinter in Philadelphia in January 1999. As this went to print, meeting locations were not yet available. Please look for them in your conference program.

An urgent note to book reviewers! Barb Stevens' hard drive crashed. She no longer has your contact information! Please email her again. She has books to go out! Her contact information is found with the book reviews.

A hearty welcome to our new, female co-chair, Shari Clifton! Please see her remarks in this issue. The Book Award Committee is also hard at work. Nominations for the 1998 awards closed in November. The committee will select finalists and announce the winners during Midwinter. Look for the announcement in Cognotes during conference.

Through the efforts of Kenn Bicknell of our External Relations Committee and the GLBTF Co-Chairs the GLBTF responded to the inflammatory letters re: Boy Scouts of America in the September issue of American Libraries. A copy of the letter is included in this issue.

External Relations is also in the process of identifying and contacting dozens of local and national GLB groups' websites so that they may provide links to the ALA GLBTF page. Our presence on the net, relationships with other groups, and possible future collaboration or partnerships will be enhanced through these links. They also continue to monitor the media for news and information regarding our supporters and detractors. These outlets include websites (such as Electronic Frontier Foundation, Family Friendly Libraries), listservs (such as Intellectual Freedom, GAY-LIBN), and traditional print and broadcast media. We heartily welcome others bringing to our attention important matters related to our mission!

Oops! Stephen Stillwell was kind enough to inform me that several other ALA persons of note attended GLBTF events in the past. The 25th anniversary dinner in Chicago was attended by the ALA President, the President-elect, and two of the three candidates for President, the Treasurer, and the Executive Director. Also when Midwinter was in Denver immediately following the passage of Amendment 2, both the President and the acting Executive Director addressed our rally and march. President Miller, confined to a scooter, did not march with us but would have were it not for her disability. Thanks for the correction, Stephen!

Finally, I am using new software to keep track of our mailing list. I know that there have been on going problems, hopefully this will clear them up! See you at conference!

-M. Callaghan "Cal" Zunt  
Newsletter Editor

## The following letter was submitted to American Libraries by the GLBTF in response to two letters in the September 1998 Issue.

The ALA, SRRT, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Task Force (GLBTF) must address the discriminatory statements and misconceptions contained in the two letters from Mr. Garretson and Mr. Burch which are concerned with ALA's policy toward the Boy Scouts of America. (September, 1998 Vol. 29, No. 8 - p. 37).

Mr. Garretson states that "pederasty is so harmful to a child that strong measures must be taken to curb it." It is inaccurate and insulting to associate gay scout leaders and other gay, lesbian, or bisexual persons with pederasty. Indeed, even as demonstrated by his own faulty logic of employing Megan's Law as an example, not all convicted pederasty cases are homosexual in nature. Further fault can be found in his logic regarding homosexuals as Scouts but not Scouting leaders. Is not one of the main objectives of the BSA to train adolescents to become good leaders? Do not those gay scouts get the same training as the non-gay scouts?

Mr. Burch maintains that ALA is "attacking the BSA" and "appeas[ing] its homosexual fringe element," and that "The GL[B]TF has already limited the places we can meet." ALA Council, not the GLBTF, retains the responsibility of determining where the Association will meet. Please note the ALA Constitution and Bylaws section 7.1.1 as adopted by the voting membership of the Association. It reads: "the ALA will enter into conference-site contracts only with organizations and legal bodies in cities, counties, or states that do not by law discriminate against lesbian, gay, and bisexual people," in addition to ethnicity, age, or disability. The GLBTF does not want to "control" who ALA cooperates with, but the GLBTF does have an obligation to speak out when the larger parent organization is not adhering to its own policies and resolutions. We believe that non-discrimination is the right course for the ALA to take and hold fast to in a time where the advances of the Civil Rights Movement are under attack in many places around our country.

Fairness and freedom of expression are not only legal realities but moral necessities both for our country and our professional associations. The GLBTF is proud of its work within the ALA and the community at large. We are especially honored by the liaisons that have been built over the last 28 years within the ALA. We are convinced that the majority of the members of ALA support our work and commitment to the very principles of our profession found clearly stated in ALA policies.

Shari Clifton & Michael J. Miller  
Co-Chairs, ALA/SRRT/GLBTF

## FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

### Michael Miller, Male Co-Chair

As gentle Autumn turns our world to soothing shades of greens, oranges, and reds, I'm hard pressed to concentrate on the work that continues to demand our strict attention in the Task Force, in ALA at large, and in the profession and communities that we serve. I'm pleased to have worked with Kenn Bicknell and my co-chair, Shari Clifton as well as others on a strong response to the sad letters of discrimination in the September issue of American Libraries. (See the response letter elsewhere in this issue.)

These letters combined with the unfortunate occurrence of the murder of Matthew Shepard and, more geographically close to me, the fascistic disruption of the NYC Vigil for Shepard alarm me greatly. The events underscore the need for our organization to continue to grow and, hopefully, effect positive changes in our working environment and in the lives and communities of the places we serve.

The Task Force will respond to the Shepard atrocity with a letter of support to the Shepard family and will produce a bibliography of resources aimed at educating people on the issues of hate crimes and peaceful co-existence as homosexuality. Ann Symons, President of ALA, has said that she will help us promote this project in the Association and has also asked us to submit an article regarding these issues to June/July issue of American Libraries for its Intellectual Freedom theme. Faye Chadwell, Book Award Committee Chair, will take up this important task. Thank you Faye, I know it will be as strong and eloquent as you.

Other needs of the GLBTF include "staffing" needs for our two new committees. To date only two people have volunteered to take on the TF-RT Ad hoc committee assignment. More people are needed in this worthy investigation into our future. Past, present, and future members of the TF (or RT!) are welcome to help deliberate this topic. To date I have had no volunteers for our newly created elections committee. Let's step up to the plate here. It's time to act! We have a responsibility to be heard in this ever-challenged environment in which we live and work. Contact me via the information

routes below. Cheers, not tears! Michael  
Michael J. Miller, MLS, MS  
Co-Chair - ALA/SRRT/GLBTF  
Reference and Electronic Resources Manager  
Dept. of Programs and Special Services -  
Brooklyn Public Library  
Grand Army Plaza Brooklyn, NY 11238  
Voice (718) 230-2715 Fax (718) 622-4091

### Volunteer with the GLBTF !!!

Join us! We are always looking for energetic committee members. Interested candidates must be members of SRRT, and of course ALA. Please mail/email your nominations to the GLBTF at the ALA address on the back of this newsletter, or attend our meetings during conference and see if you would like to volunteer. We look forward to working with you!

### Shari Clifton, Female Co-Chair

As the new female co-chair of the GLBTF I am looking forward to the opportunities that lie ahead. Although a family emergency prevented me from attending the DC conference I am extremely excited at people's responses to the events coordinated by the task force... not to mention green with envy because I couldn't be there.

I would like to second Michael's numerous invitations to new members who wish to get involved with the various TF committees or who wish to serve as a GLBTF officer. Without question the most rewarding professional development work I have done thus far in my career has been the two years I spent on the Book Awards committee. Not only was the work rewarding but rarely have I shared the workload with a group of such talented, articulate individuals. I also developed friendships and professional contacts with librarians from all types of libraries and geographic locales. If you're wondering if you're ready to get your feet wet, jump in! You'll be glad you did!

My predecessors in this position have left me with much to live up to. I have my suspicions that this job is one you feel really competent at about the time your term expires. But as I said before, I'm looking forward to working in a formal role on GLBTF concerns and I can't wait to meet all of you! Questions or comments? Can't wait to volunteer? Call! Write! Email!

Shari Clifton, MLIS  
Co-Chair - ALA/SRRT/GLBTF  
405.271.2036 / shari-clifton@ouhsc.edu  
Assistant Professor/Reference Librarian

## About GLBTF Newsletter

GLBTF Newsletter (ISSN 1045-2893) is an official publication of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association. It appears quarterly in March, June, September and December. Subscriptions are \$10 per year in the U.S.; \$15 for other countries. Send change of address to the editorial address.

Subscription Address: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Task Force,  
OLOS, American Library Association,  
50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

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

GLBTF Newsletter Editor -  
M. Callaghan "Cal" Zunt  
or via email at: cal.zunt@cpl.org

t t t t t t t t t t t t t

Meeting Schedule for the  
Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Task Force  
American Library Association Midwinter Meeting  
Philadelphia, PA

January 28, 1999 - February 3, 1998

t t t t t t t t t t t t t

Tear me out! The following is a schedule of meetings and events for Midwinter. We look forward to seeing you in Philadelphia!  
Please note that some of the meeting dates/times have changed.

Committee/Event	Date/Time	Location
Steering Cmte. I	Fri 1/29 8-10pm	
SRRT All Task Force	Sat 1/30 8-9:30am	
Program Planning I raising External Relations Breakfast Planning (re:Book Award) Nominating	Sat 1/30 8-9:30am	Fund-
SRRT Action Council I	Sat 1/30 9:30-12:30pm	
Book Award	Sat 1/30 2pm-4pm	
2000 Planning	Sat 1/30 2pm-4pm	
Read Aloud Event	Sat 1/30 6pm-8pm	
GLBTF Social	Sat 1/30 6pm-8pm	TBD
Program Planning II and Book Award Breakfast Cmte	Sun 1/31 6pm-8pm	
SRRT Action Council II	Mon 2/1 2pm-4pm	
Steering Cmte II	Tues 2/2 8:30am-11am	

t t t t t t t t t t t t t

t

t t t t t t t t t t t t t

As was noted in the GLBTF Newsletter, at press time the location of one key event is has not yet been finalized at press time: the location of the Midwinter GLBTF Social. Once the location is finalized, the GLBTF will post an announcement on our website and on the two listservs serving GLBT librarians: Gay-Libn and Lezbrian. The site will also be noted on our website at:

[http://calvin.usc.edu/~trimmer/ala\\_hp.html](http://calvin.usc.edu/~trimmer/ala_hp.html) or  
[http://www.ala.org/alaorg/rtables/rtables\\_home.html](http://www.ala.org/alaorg/rtables/rtables_home.html)

Additionally, a flyer indicating the location will be available at the Office of Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS) desk in the ALA office at the Convention Center. Our Social continues to be a highlight of the conference for GLBT librarians. We look forward to seeing you there!

ALA Travel Technology Group: 800-999-0925

#### AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION

The Philadelphia International Airport is eight miles from downtown. The SEPTA Airport Rail Line R1, connects the center city with the airport and operates every half-hour. One-way fare: \$5.

Shuttle Service—Several shuttle bus services operate between the airport and downtown hotels. Generally, service is available on the hour and the half-hour. Call in advance for reservations.

SuperShuttle: 215-551-6600, approximately \$8 per person, one-way. Operates 24 hours.

Taxi Service—operates 24 hours at an approximate cost of \$20 for up to four people.

City Cab: 215-238-5000

Quaker City Cab: 215-728-8000

## ALA Conference Map of Philadelphia:

## Book Reviews

Reviews are a regular feature of the GLBTF Newsletter. If you would like to be a reviewer or receive reviewing guidelines, please contact:

Barbara R. Stevens  
GLBTF Book Review Editor  
Email: [stevenbr@uwec.edu](mailto:stevenbr@uwec.edu)  
715-836-2522 or Fax 715-836-2902

**\*\*\*Urgent Message from Barb to current reviewers: The hard drive on her computer crashed. Please send your contact info to her again. She has books to go out!!! Thanks.\*\*\*\***

LIFE OUTSIDE: THE SIGNORILE REPORT ON GAY MEN: SEX, DRUGS, MUSCLES, AND THE PASSAGE OF LIFE, by Michelangelo Signorile. HarperCollins, 1997 (ISBN 0-06018-761-1)

Here is a work that is both timely and timeless; one which touches upon the most important issues confronting gay men today, yet may be completely alien to a vast majority of their brethren.

Signorile, author of *Queer in America* and *Outing Yourself*, has thoroughly researched and documented the contemporary "cult of masculinity" that has offered acceptance and refuge for a vast number of urban gay men. Although focusing primarily on urban gay male culture, there is a little something for everyone here. History buffs will be interested in how post-Stonewall social networks which evolved into circuit parties.

These events draw gay men from around the country (indeed around the world) to party together in a ritualistic manner. Signorile explains how the "cult" is constantly reinforced through the pressures to conform. A combination of drugs (both steroids and recreational), pursuit of physical perfection, social climbing and making the scene are all factors in this reinforcement. The content of his informal interviews is at times fascinating, depressing, unbelievable, and cynical. The information speaks for itself and is presented without undue editorializing and judgement.

There is, however, an inspiring component to the work. The second part of the book deals with the real "life outside." Non-urban, monogamous gay men are leading lives that can be held up as viable alternatives to the instant gratification and compulsive behavior described in the first half of the book.

Readers will be interested in, and no doubt take issue with, Signorile's conclusions and suggestions for "deprogramming" from the "cult." His writing style is not always first-rate, and he can be repetitive from time to time. Regardless, this work will surely be considered pivotal in launching countless discussions about what it means to be gay and male in America at the end of the century.

Reviewed by Kenn Bicknell, Catalog Librarian,  
Redwood City (Calif.) Public Library

Love Ruins Everything: A Novel, by Karen X. Tulchinsky. Press Gang Publishers, 1998. \$14.95 (ISBN 0-88974-082-8 paper)

Tulchinsky, with an impressive list of anthologies and short stories to her credit, has written an engaging and very funny first novel. Nomi Rabinovitch, a lovable butch living in San Francisco, is in a disintegrating relationship with her WASPy lover, Sapphire. Will our heroine find true love? Don't be misled by the title; this IS a romance combined with a few other plot strategies.

When Nomi flies home to Toronto for her widowed mother's wedding to Murray, we meet the members of her extended and colorful Jewish family. Tulchinsky particularly shines as she deftly sketches the various players. Although they are to some extent stock characters, Tulchinsky's empathy and sense of humor give them real life. A fine ear for dialog and nuances of generational speech patterns adds to the interest. Her virtuosity should make Neil Simon and Woody Allen green with envy.

The narrator's voice shifts, somewhat startlingly, of the way through the novel to Nomi's gay cousin, Henry, a.k.a. Herschel. Henry, an ACTOUT activist, is involved in exposing the U.S. Government's responsibility for starting the AIDS epidemic as an experiment in epidemiology. Although plausible, the conspiracy plot device throws Nomi together with Julie Sakamoto, a woman she has always wanted to date. Shifting back and forth between narrators, the novel ends in Nomi's voice. This book belongs in all adult fiction collections, especially (but not limited to) in those with a strong Judaica component.

Reviewed by, Elizabeth F. Stabler, Librarian, 92nd Street YM&YWHA

The Mythology of Transgression: Homosexuality as Metaphor, by Jamake Highwater. Oxford University Press, 1997. \$25.00. ISBN 0-19-510180-4.

Jamake Highwater, a disciple of Joseph Campbell and author of *The Myth and Sexuality* (NAL 1990), offers here an exploration of homosexuality in the context of what he terms "the mythology of transgression." In so doing, he makes a very sound case for viewing homosexuals as transgressors or "aliens", who should be seen, as well as see themselves, as gifted and natural rather than as sinners and unnatural. That's the good news of this book

Mr. Highwater uses his own story to set the stage for this complex journey. His experiences as an orphan, Native American, and homosexual are used to illustrate how his ignorance, as it were, to any inkling that these things were bad or wrong allowed him to celebrate his special-ness and cultivate his own unique qualities. The fact that he was able to sustain himself as an "outsider on the inside" with comfort is not common, but it's also not unique. Folklore and legends often use the hero's transgression as a means to greater insight, a point the book uses often.

Beginning with an explanation of humankind's societal need to protect or wall itself off from the outsider, Highwater continues to show the inevitable outcome of such instincts when religion and then science are used to substantiate them. By creating and using myths to illustrate their need to control, not inspire, Western society is ultimately charged with breeding homophobia for no other reason than its own protection.

As the book progresses, it is made increasingly clear that the mythologies created centuries ago to support patriarchal agendas no longer work today. According to Highwater, the term homosexuality was actually invented. Once there as a suitable label for the sexual transgressor, as if by magic, homosexuality became debated, analyzed, and eventually vilified.

Although the book gets bogged down at times in the author's scholarly synthesis of centuries of research and opinion, this thesis and conclusions are compelling enough to make it an important addition to the gay studies genre. Incidentally, even though this is not promoted as a self-help guide, the well-researched/ positive information contained here should go a long way to bolster anyone's coming-out process. Perhaps the slogan "Transgression is Power" will be a new call to arms. Recommended for most public and academic libraries.

Reviewed by Robert Jaquay, Director, William K. Stanford Town Library, Loudonville, NY

Women in Love: Portraits of Lesbian Mothers & Their Families. Photographs and interviews by Barbara Seyda with Diana Herrera. Little, Brown and Co., 1998. \$29.95. ISBN 0-8212-2523-5.

It is often said that one picture is worth a thousand words. If that is true, the photographs and text of Women in Love must provide a million word impact as they convey the unique character of each family while dramatically portraying the overriding love and commitment the mothers have for each child.

The 103 black-and-white photographs are themselves serious works of art. Because they are so beautiful, it would be easy to dismiss this work as a "coffee-table" book. However; to do so would be a grave mistake for closer examination of the photographs reveals the warmth, love, and human interaction between all the family members and reinforces the text's message that love does indeed make a family.

As the reader goes beyond the photographs and delves into the narrative one hears each mother's words express their family's unique history, hopes, problems, disappointments, and triumphs. Though the mothers interviewed come from many diverse backgrounds and include many prominent and well-known women, each individual story blends to produce a thought-provoking vision of the daily lives of lesbian mothers. One cannot help but be struck by the amount of thought and planning that has gone into the births and lives of many of these children. Women in Love provides a view that few outside the lesbian community have an opportunity to see and appreciate. It is a message that forces the reader to acknowledge that there are many ways to value the strength and love of families. This is a wonderful antidote to the much-politicized "family values" agenda that we hear so much about today.

Recommended for most public and academic library collections—especially those with a women- or lesbian-studies collections. It also should be a part of personal collections.

Reviewed by, Barbara Stevens, Asst. to the Chancellor for Affirmative Action, UW-Eau Claire (Wis.)

## More notes from 1998 Annual...

### Book Awards Program A Complete Success!

The Third Annual Book Awards Program and Breakfast, held June 29 in Washington, DC, was a complete success! The 165 attendees enjoyed a breakfast of eggs and vegetables, fresh fruit, and assorted pastries and were encouraged by Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA) to participate in the political process on behalf of GLBT issues. Author/Professor David Bergman of Towson University regaled us with his memories of library usage and reinforced the importance of the library as a public institution and conservator of cultural history.

The highlight of the event was the presentation of the 1998 winners of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Book Award. Lucy Jane Bledsoe, winner of the literature award, read from Working Parts, the story of a lesbian bicycle mechanic learning to read at the library and the friendship she forms with her instructor. The importance of reading was further emphasized by photographer and non-fiction award winner Adam Mastoon. His beautiful book, The Shared Heart, combines photographs and interviews with GLBT youth, many of whom turned to reading and libraries as a way to cope with their sexuality.

In addition to these wonderful presentations, which moved the audience between laughter and tears, attendees received a minimum of 4-5 books, due to generous publisher's donations totaling 1,200 books. Eight individuals won free passes to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, which were donated by Ron Kurpiers.

Many thanks to the Breakfast Planning Committee: John DeSantis, Joseph Eagen, Laura Hudson, Daniel Barden, Roland Hansen, and Nicholas Rosselli for all their hard work. The Committee is already planning next year's Breakfast in New Orleans, so mark your calendars for June 28, 1999!

Ellen Bosman 1998 Book Awards Breakfast Program Chair

## Call for Book Nominations

Nominations for the 1999 Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Book Award are now being accepted. The Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Book Award is presented to English-language works published in the year prior to the announcement date by the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Task Force of the American Library Association. All books published in December 1997 or the first eleven months of 1998 are eligible. The award is given in two categories: Literature and Nonfiction.

Nominations for the Book Award may be made by any individual not affiliated with the publisher of the book being nominated. Authors may not nominate their own works. A short statement (30 to 50 words) describing why the book is being nominated must accompany the nomination. This nomination must be submitted to the Book Award Committee Chair by November 30, 1999 and be postmarked by this date or it can not be accepted. Nominations will be accepted by both regular and electronic mail, as well as by fax.

Nominations should be sent to:

Faye A. Chadwell, Chair,  
ALA/SRRT/GLBTF Book Award Committee  
c/o Collection Development  
Knight Library  
1299 University of Oregon  
Eugene OR 97403-1299  
(503) 346-3485 Fax  
email: chadwelf@oregon.uoregon.edu.

## 30th Anniversary Party

The 30th Anniversary Program Planning Committee needs you! During the ALA Annual Conference in 2000 in Chicago, the GLBTF will celebrate its 30th Anniversary. Please help the Planning Committee design the 30th Anniversary Celebration. Email Victor Schill if you are interested in helping at: vschill@stic.lib.tx.us

## Renew Your Subscription to the GLBTF Newsletter

Now!

Please note that your payment of the \$10 annual SRRT/GLBTF membership fee does not include subscription to the GLBTF Newsletter. You must pay a separate \$10 subscription fee; \$15 for all other countries) to receive the GLBTF Newsletter.

Send a check or money order and this form to American Library Association, SRRT/GLBTF, Office of Library Outreach Services, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

The GLBTF Newsletter Committee maintains the subscriber address list. It is confidential and not release to ALA. Subscription questions should be forwarded to the newsletter editor.

t t t t t t

GLBTF WEBSITE !!!

You can reach us on the Wold Wide Web at:  
[http://.www.calvin.usc/~trimmer/ala\\_hp.html](http://.www.calvin.usc/~trimmer/ala_hp.html)

**Attention GLBTF Members!**  
**Is your GLBTF Newsletter Subscription Current?**  
**Will You Be Moving Soon? Please Report Address Changes!**

**SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION:**

Please note that your payment of the \$10 annual SRRT/GLBTF membership fee does not include subscription to the GLBTF Newsletter. You must pay a separate \$10 subscription fee; \$15 for all other countries) to receive the GLBTF Newsletter.

Send a check or money order and this form to American Library Association, SRRT/GLBTF, Office of Library Outreach Services, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

The GLBTF Newsletter Committee maintains the subscriber address list. It is confidential and not release to ALA. Subscription questions should be forwarded to the newsletter editor.

Please enter/renew my subscription.

Enclosed is a check for \$15, payable to ALA/SRRT/GLBTF for a one-year subscription.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

VOLUNTEERS Yes, I would like to volunteer! Please call/email me at: \_\_\_\_\_

GLBTF Newsletter  
M.C. Zunt, Editor  
c/o ALA/SRRT/GLBTF  
OLOS  
50 East Huron St.  
Chicago IL 60611

**TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL**

**DELIVER IMMEDIATELY**

First Class U.S. Mail