



GLBTRT Newsletter

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

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

Vol. 22, No. 4 ♦ Winter 2010

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Youth Media Awards to Include Stonewall

Another prestigious honor is joining the likes of the Newbery and Caldecott Medals-the Stonewall Children's and Young Adult Literature Award, which recognizes an

English-language children's book "of exceptional merit relating to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered experience." The Stonewall Awards for adult books have been around since 1971, and the youth award was presented for the first time in 2010 to *The Vast Fields of Ordinary* by **Nick Burd**, published by the Penguin Group.

Each year the American Library Association (ALA) honors books and media for children and teens. Recognized worldwide for the high quality they represent, the ALA Youth Media Awards guide parents, educators, librarians and others in selecting the best materials for youth. Selected by committees composed of librarians and other literature and media experts, the awards encourage original and creative work in the field of children's and young adult literature and media. The award announcements are made as part of the ALA Midwinter Meeting, held in 2011 at the San Diego Convention Center from January 7 to 11. The award announcements will be made at 7:45 a.m. PST.



The American Library Association (ALA) will provide a free live webcast of its Youth Media Awards. The number of available connections for the Webcast are limited and the broadcast is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Online visitors can view the live Webcast the morning of the announcements. Those interested in following the action live should bookmark <http://alawebcast.unikron.com>. There is an additional link to the webcast from the GLBTRT website <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/glbtrt/index.cfm>.

The award is administered by the ALA's Stonewall Book Awards Committee of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table. The members of the 2011 Stonewall Book Awards Committee are: Chair **Lisa Johnston** of Sweet Briar College in Virginia; **W. Stephen Breedlove** of Connelly Library at La Salle University in Philadelphia; **Amanda Clay** of Lakeview Elementary School in Norman, OK.; **Dave Combe** of Ventura County Library in California; **Lewis Day** of Houghton Library at Harvard University; **Sharon Flesher-Duffy** of Nashua High School Media Center in NH; **Roland Hansen**, of Columbia College Library in Chicago; **Analisa Ornelas** of Innovative Interfaces in San Francisco; **Stephen Patrick** of Jonesborough, TN; **Jason Phillips** of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.; **Roseann Szalkowski** of Skokie Public Library in Illinois; **Gypsey Teague** of Clemson University in South Carolina; **Corwin Watts** of Lincoln Public Schools in Nebraska; and **Rose Yndigoyen** of St. Joseph's College in Brooklyn, NY.

Deadlines for the newsletter for the next year will be:

Spring 2011	March 15, 2011
Summer 2011	May 20, 2011
Fall 2011	August 31, 2011
Winter 2010	November 30, 2011

Please try to get your reports, articles, book reviews, etc. in by these dates or let us know if there will be a short delay so room can be saved for them in the newsletter.

Kid Stuff

About young readers for people who care

We have come a long way since the initial *Kid Stuff* column almost four months ago. Although bullying has long been a serious problem for LGBTQ youth, mainstream America came to notice this after high-profile suicides and homicides in late summer and early fall. The tragedy of Tyler Clementi, 18-year-old Rutgers University freshman and talented violinist who jumped to his death after videos of his intimate relationship with another man were put on the internet was the most public, but other suicides occurred in September because of gender-identity persecution. Raymond Chase, 19; Seth Walsh, 13; Asher Brown, 13; and Bill Lucas Greensberg, 15 are also to be remembered as are 14-year-old freshman Brandon Bitner, who jumped in front of a tractor truck in the early morning of November 5, and 18-year-old Joshua Wilkerson, 18, who was beaten to death and then burned in a hate crime on November 16.

Tragically, authorities who should help LGBTQ youth fail to support them. A Yale University study published in *Pediatrics* reports that lesbian, gay, and bisexual adolescents are 40 times more likely than their straight peers to be punished by schools, law enforcement agencies, and courts. Lesbian and bisexual girls are two to three times more likely to face unequal punishment—suspensions, expulsions, arrests and convictions, and police stops—than heterosexual girls. This disparity is not a result of higher rates of misbehavior among nonheterosexual youth: violent behavior is actually less prevalent among nonheterosexual students than heterosexual students.

The up-side is that activists are working to combat this loss of valuable young people. **Dan Savage has created "It Gets Better Project," a resource of videos from adults, LGBT and straight, telling how being LGBT does get better and better.** GLBTRT also stepped up to help. Speaking OUT is a list of resources about bullying with links to resources for kids in trouble and the people who care about them. <http://www.ala.org/>

[ala/mgrps/rts/qlbtrt/popularresources/bullying.cfm](http://www.ala.org/mgrps/rts/qlbtrt/popularresources/bullying.cfm)

We all know that support for LGBTQ youth is vital. The California Endowment funded study, "Family Acceptance in Adolescence and the Health of LGBT Young Adults," published in the *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, finally proves a clear link between accepting familial attitudes and behaviors toward their lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender children and prevention of depression, substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, and suicide attempts in early adulthood. LGBTQ youth with highly accepting families have shown significantly higher levels of self-esteem and social support in young adulthood. <http://www.365gay.com/news/study-finds-that-family-acceptance-could-save-lgbt-youths/>

Librarians can be a major source in helping young LGBTQ people through sharing books with alternative gender identities as an accepted part of their world. The best starting place to locating such books, of course, is the annual bibliographies from GLBTRT's own **Rainbow Project and its new Stonewall award.**

Adding to GLBTRT's lists, which include only books copyrighted within the past six years, is *Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Teen Literature: A Guide to Reading Interests* by Carlisle K. Webber. In this slim 131-page volume, seven chapters, arranged by genre and subject, provide summaries, suggestions for each book's audience, and key words for about 300 books. Entries include reading levels from middle school through adult/young adult, and a list of terms explains not only traditional ones such as intersex but emerging forms of literature such as femslash and new terms for specific manga. (In another Libraries Unlimited publication, **Martha Cornog and Timothy Perper's *Graphic Novel beyond the Basics: Insights and Issues for Libraries***, one of the appendices focuses on LGBTQ graphic narratives.)

Frequently, collection development requires positive reviews about books on a purchase list. In addition to being recommended in this bibliography, the titles are identified with any YALSA awards or recommended lists. **The last chapter, "LGBTQ Collection Development," includes specifics about handling challenges to these books.** This guide is new, but as it ages, librarians can find information about more recent books from the list of resources such as The Trevor Project, which has an excellent bibliography of its own.

When adding titles to the purchasing list, I highly recommend two books that vividly illustrate the pain suffered by young people in identifying an alternative gender identity. The first, ***Kicked Out***, made me cry. The 25-year-old editor, Sassafras Lowrey, has collected the voices of current homeless LGBTQ youth (currently comprising 40% of **all our country's homeless youth**) and older people who share their stories of survival and abuse after identifying their gender identity with parents. Tales of power gained from the struggles of finding families blend with journeys through the pain of physical and emotional rejection that leads to attempted suicide, prostitution, drugs, and deadly diseases. The impact of reading these narratives cannot be described; the book must be experienced. I thank Homofactus Press for publishing ***Kicked Out***.

Another book, also for both young people and adults, describes one person's journey. **In *Vivek Shraya's God Loves Hair***, illustrated by Juliana Newfeld, short vignettes accompanied by poignant, sometimes abstract illustrations, show a young boy's confusion about sexuality, gender, race, religion, and belonging as he struggles with (as he describes it) growing up brown, pretty, and soft. Shraya says that he **couldn't find himself represented** in literature, so he wrote his own story. He also published the book (godloveshair.com).

No other subject matter relies so heavily on small presses. For example, three-fourths of the nomination list for the first Over the Rainbow Project (LGBT books for adults) come from small presses or are self-published. These books are usually not reviewed in major journals, and without reviews books tend not to be purchased. That makes it imperative for GLBTRT be an advocate for these books. The young people in ***Kicked Out*** are just the tip of the iceberg of those who need advocates. LGBTQ books for young people often end up in the adult section, and adolescents who passed YA reading at the age of 14 need adult books suitable for them. Working with other ALA groups—AASL, ALSC, OIF, PLA, RUSA, YALSA, etc.—can make this happen. More about helping kids in the next column.

—Nel Ward (nelward@charter.net)

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GLBTRT Midwinter Meeting Schedule 2011

Date	Meeting Name	Time	Location
Saturday, January 8, 2011	Rainbow Project Task Force/Committee (SRRT All Task Forces Meeting)	8 – 10am	Hilton San Diego Bayfront (HIL), Room Sapphire H
	Steering Committee I	8 – 10am	Hilton San Diego Bayfront (HIL), Room Cobalt 500
	All-Committees Meeting Time	10:30 – noon	Hilton San Diego Bayfront (HIL), Room Cobalt 503
	Over the Rainbow Committee I	1:30 – 5:30pm	San Diego Marriott Hotel & Marina (MAR), Room Torrey 2
	Rainbow Project Committee I	1:30 – 5:30pm	Hilton San Diego Bayfront (HIL), Room cobalt 504
	Stonewall Book Awards Committee I (closed meeting)	1:30 – 5:30pm	Hilton San Diego Bayfront (HIL), Room cobalt 505
	GLBTRT Social	6:00 – 9:00pm	Rock Bottom Restaurant & Brewery, Downtown Lounge 401 G Street, San Diego, CA 92101
Sunday, January 9, 2011	Over the Rainbow Committee II	10:30 – noon	San Diego Marriott Hotel & Marina (MAR), Room Torrey 2
	Rainbow Project Committee II	10:30 – noon	Hilton San Diego Bayfront (HIL), Room Cobalt 504
	Rainbow Project Committee III	1:30 – 3:30pm	Hilton San Diego Bayfront (HIL), Room Cobalt 504
	Rainbow Project Committee IV	4:00 – 5:30pm	Hilton San Diego Bayfront (HIL), Room Cobalt 504
	Stonewall Book Awards Committee II	4:00 – 5:30pm	Hilton San Diego Bayfront (HIL), Room Cobalt 505
Monday, January 10, 2011	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Observance & Sunrise Celebration (SRRT/BCALA/ALA-OLOS, ALA)	6:30 – 7:30am	San Diego Convention Center (SDCC) Room: 02
	Steering Committee II	8:00 – 10:00am	San Diego Convention Center (SDCC) Room: 27 B

New Glee Poster from ALA Graphics

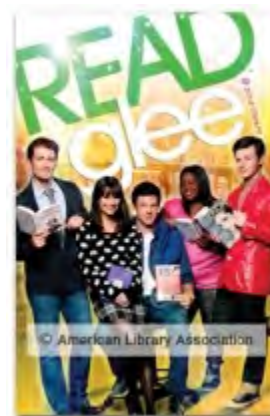
In August members of the GLBTRT discussed through both our listserv and ALA connect a desire for ALA graphics to produce more GLBT products, noting the availability of the Rachel Maddow READ posters. Several suggestions for ALA graphics were listed on ALA connect including gay and lesbian parents reading to kids, group poster of great GLBT writers in history for Pride month and National Coming out day, and Chris Cofer and Jane Lynch of Glee.

Rachel Johnson, director of ALA graphics responded to this discussion, reminding GLBTRT members that posters depicting Margaret Cho, Tim Gunn and David Sedaris were still available. She remarked further that Graphics had been in

contact with FOX publicity for a Glee cast poster.

ALA Graphics has recently released the Glee READ poster and bookmark packs! The poster captures characters Will Schuester (Matthew Morrison), Rachel Berry (Lea Michele), Finn Hudson (Cory Monteith), Mercedes Jones (Amber Riley) and Kurt Hummel (Chris Colfer) in the stacks with a selection of their favorite reads. And rounding out the line, the Glee Bookmark pack features the characters in four different designs.

Find the "Glee" poster and bookmark at the ALA Store where your purchases fund advocacy, awareness and the glee of reading.



Member Profile: Zeke White



is getting information and/or materials to customers.

I also think "working the desk" makes me a better Cataloger. In observing a wide-range of search methods, I'm able to make better (more user-based) cataloging decisions.

Did/do you have a mentor?

I don't have any former mentors but I've certainly been heavily influenced by a few people, mostly from my MLIS program. University of Alabama Reference Librarian, Brett Spencer comes to mind. He is, without question, the most passionate reference librarian I've ever met. He led the Graduate Assistantship Program for a few MLIS students. The Program was well over three years ago and I still call upon that experience and often try to channel Brett's passion and energy.

Dr. Elizabeth Aversa is another informal mentor. She is the Director of UA's MLIS program. She has incredible vision and is able to successfully combine passionate librarianship with a savvy business sense. She's able to retain the soul of librarianship and be smart about it, in the process.

Do you have any heroes in library land?

Judith Krug, for her amazing dedication to Intellectual Freedom, Sanford Berman for his tireless commitment to social justice and for his work in making LC subject headings less racist, sexist, homophobic, etc.

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

I'm not reading anything right now that I would heartily recommend but I will mention a few favorites from 2010 (in no particular order):

- *Travels in Siberia*: Ian Frazier
- *Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter*: Tom Franklin
- *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*

Isabel Wilkerson

- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*: Rebecca Skloot

The Possessed: Adventures with Russian Books and the People who Read Them: Elif Batuman

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

Due to their size, I often find the ALA conferences to be overwhelming. It's easy to get lost in the shuffle. Working within a smaller organization like the GLBTRT allows me to meet new people and work on issues I care about in the process. I'm on the Rainbow Project Committee this year; it's been a great experience. I've been exposed to lots of new authors and I'm working with some excellent committee members. I can't wait to actually meet everyone at MidWinter.

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

I'm a heavy Goodreads user. LOVE it. I prefer it to all other Social network sites. I'm able to learn about books I'd not previously heard about and I love seeing what other people are reading. Feel free to friend me!

I'm an occasional Facebook user. I have a like/hate relationship with it. Sometimes I check it multiple times every day, then I need a break from it and won't check it for weeks.

I think I may have a Twitter account but have never used it. Maybe I'm missing something....

Anything else you'd like to add?

I'm looking forward to MidWinter this year. I've never attended MidWinter and never been to San Diego, so two firsts for me! I was mostly looking forward to warmer weather but it looks like it's actually not going to be that warm in San Diego....but at least it will be warmer than Baltimore!

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

I am a somewhat late arrival to the library world. I've always loved libraries, information and books but pursuing a career as a librarian didn't really occur to me until fairly recently. While living in Atlanta, I decided to start my MLIS through the University of Alabama's (UA) online program, and then finished-up on campus.

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

My first library job was as a part-time student assistant at the University of Alabama's Music Library. It was a great first gig because I got to do a little bit of everything.

Tell us about your current job.

I'm currently a Cataloger for Baltimore County Public Library. I also work as a Reference Librarian at BCPL on weekends. I like combining the behind-the-scenes aspect of cataloging with the immediacy of direct public service. I tend to think of both functions as aiming toward the same goal, but just going about it differently. In both Reference and Cataloging, my primary goal

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First Over the Rainbow Bibliography to be Released

In an attempt to answer the perennial question, "are there any good gay books that I might have wanted to read over the last year," the first Over the Rainbow book bibliography will be announced at the 2011 American Library Association's Mid-winter Meeting in San Diego. The members of the new ad hoc committee of ALA's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT) are in the final process of evaluating 138 books chosen from over 300 titles that were initially examined.

In announcing the new GLBTRT Stonewall Children's and Young Adult Literature Award, ALA President Roberta Stevens said, "Our nation is one of diverse cultures and lifestyles, and it is important for parents, educators, and librarians to have access to quality children's books that represent a spectrum of cultures." It is equally important that adults have access to books that also provide this representation: this is the goal of the Over the Rainbow Project.

Although GLBTQ books have a long publishing history, most have been hidden from view, refused entry into libraries, or miscataloged so that lgbtq content is obscured. For this first list about 75% of the

nominated books are self-published or from small publishers which makes them less obvious to potential readers than books from mainstream publishers. Even in recent years, larger publishers often neglected to mention gay, bisexual, or lesbian characters and content when advertising their books. The Over the Rainbow List can be used as an aide for readers in locating these books and also as a collection development tool for libraries.

This first list will include books published during the 18 months prior to January 2011. It is intended to help librarians and readers in selecting quality books and may be used as a collection development, reader's advisory tool, and recommended reading list for interested librarians and patrons.

Nominated books vary from memoirs and biographies to such genre fiction as mysteries and science fiction. Sequels include **Poppy Brite's stories about New Orleans chefs** and **J.M. Redmann's mystery** featuring Micky Knight, a New Orleans PI. An amazing number of quality biographies published during the past 18 months feature E.M. Forster, W. Somerset Maugham, Vincente Minnelli, Patricia High Smith, Samuel Steward, and Evelyn Waugh. In

the category of short, illustrated books are **Jeff Sheng's *Don't Ask Don't Tell***, a book of photography highlighting gay and lesbians in the military, showing the loneliness and anguish of these people forced to hide their gender identity and **Vivek Shraya's *God Loves Hair***, a picture book about a gay boy whose parents immigrated to Canada from India, telling the story of growing up "different."

For your reading pleasure, the entire list of nominated books is available at <http://www.glbtrt.ala.org/overtherainbow/>

WE ARE ALSO LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS—IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, PLEASE FILL OUT A GLBTRT COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER FORM ONLINE:
<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/glbtrt/committees/form.cfm>

The 2011 Over the Rainbow committee is comprised of **Arla Jones** (Chair), Lawrence, Kan.; **Jane Cothron**, Newport, OR.; **Cecil Hixon**, New York, NY.; **Brent Husher**, Kansas City, MO.; **Jesse Nachem**, Oakland, CA; **Danielle Pollock**, Albuquerque, NM; **Larry Romans**, Nashville, TN; and **Nel Ward**, Newport, OR.

Film Reviews

Changing House

Dir. Z.A. Mortahardjono. Frameline. 2009. 18 min. \$50.00



Changing House chronicles the end of Transy House, a communal living space for transgender women in Brooklyn.

Rusty and Chelsea set out to make their Transy House a safe, welcoming community for trans women in crisis. Single-sex shelters are often unable or unwilling to accommodate and guarantee the safety of transgender people, so Transy House became a rare place where trans women on the streets could find refuge. Unfortunately, the home became a victim of its own success, taking in more women than it could sustainably hold (and more than the couple could handle).

The interviews with the women living in Transy House, including trans activist Sylvia Rivera, are well done and moving. The documentary is a tribute to the couple, and to the supportive, activist history of the house. *Changing House* is recommended for libraries with deep GLBT and documentary collections.

Reviewed by, **Nicole Pasini**
Management Analyst - Training and Staff Development San Mateo County Library

Choice of Love.

Dir. Eirik Andreas Sandaker. Frameline, 2009. 35 min. \$125.00.



The Choice of Love opens with the director, Eirik Andreas Sandaker, acknowledging that his experience as a gay man in Norway has been

relatively easy, and that is why he is interested in better understanding the experiences of gay Muslims in Norway.

Much of the film is spent with Kaltham Alexander Lie, the first openly gay Muslim in Norway. In addition to facing persecution in his native Iraq, Lie also encounters opposition from Muslims in Norway, and his candid recounting of his experiences is moving.

Sandaker also interviews another young gay Muslim, who was persecuted in Somali and fears returning. **The Choice of**

Love is a quick 35 minutes, and does not examine why homosexuality is taboo to many Muslims. **A Jihad for Love** (First Run Features, 2008) and **Gay Muslims** (Channel 4, 2006) would make better, more substantive choices for most library collections.

Reviewed by, Nicole Pasini
Management Analyst - Training and Staff Development San Mateo County Library

No Regret (Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien).

Dir. Marlon T. Riggs. San Francisco, Frameline, 1992. DVD. \$24.99. 38 min.



Although originally released in 1992, this is a newly remastered DVD version of Marlon Riggs' short

reflection on AIDS through the stories of five sero-positive black gay men. Riggs was an important "cultural agitator" whose best known work "Tongues Untied" won numerous awards and stirred up

homophobic reactions from both white conservatives and black activists. As he told **Out/look** magazine in 1991, "When nobody speaks your name, or even knows it, you, knowing it, must be the first to speak it. When the existing history and culture do not acknowledge and address you--do not see or talk to you--you must write a new history, shape a new culture, that will."

Using poetry and music, as well as candid interviews, these men (Michael Lee, Joseph Long, Assoto Saint, Reggie

Williams, and Donald Woods) speak frankly and movingly to the camera about their self-transformation in dealing with the impact of the AIDS epidemic on them personally and on their communities. This is an affordable addition to any library, though I would encourage purchasing "Tongues Untied" and "Ethnic Notions" along with it.

Reviewed by, Morgan Gwenwald
SUNY New Paltz

Plan B.

Dir. Marco Berger. With Manuel Vignau, Lucas Ferraro. Spanish with English subtitles. Wolfe Video, 2010. DVD. 103 min. \$19.95.



After his girlfriend, Laura, starts seeing another man, Bruno decides to get revenge. Laura still sleeps with Bruno occasionally; but when his efforts to get her to

exclusively commit to him fail, Bruno comes up with what he calls Plan B. Having heard gossip (incorrect we find out later) that Pablo, Laura's new boyfriend, had slept with a man, Bruno decides to make everyone think that he and Pablo are a couple. This brief synopsis of the plot might imply that this film is shallow fluff, the kind of film Americans would probably make from such a story. However, **Plan B** is not your typical rom-com or bromance.

Bruno initially gets close to Pablo when they bond over **Blind**, a TV show with which they are both obsessed. Then, at Pablo's invitation, Bruno starts staying over—platonically. They reminisce about when they were twelve years old and did

sleepovers and would stay up late and chat with their friends for hours. Becoming enraptured by their boyish friendship, Bruno at one point asks Pablo, "If you were a toy, which one would you be?" While stoned, the two engaging young men ingeniously deconstruct Peter Pan and Neverland. But eventually, in the words of the director, "what started out as a joke derails."

Astute European reviewers have observed that **Plan B**, even with its Buenos Aires location, is like the comedies of Marivaux (1688-1763), the French playwright, in which a "mental 'game' not only serves as a delaying tactic [between two people], for neither really wants to admit loving the other, but by dealing with every aspect of love except love itself, it becomes a contest in wit and rhetorical expertise" (Felicia Sturzer, "Marivaudage' as Self-Representation," *The French Review* 49, no. 2 (1975): 217).

The finesse with which Berger, who also wrote the script, and his actors pull off this complicated "marivaudage" is astonishing. Manuel Vignau (Bruno) and

Lucas Ferraro (Pablo) give sensitive, unselfconscious performances. The final sequence of the film, in which Bruno and Pablo manage to cast off the "wit and rhetorical expertise" and achieve an honest resolution to their relationship is well worth the wait.

The young Argentinians portrayed in **Plan B** did not experience the dictatorship. They have the freedom to question cultural and sexual restrictions. In 2009, Argentina lifted its ban on gays in the military and in 2010 became the first Latin American country to allow same-sex marriage.

With each viewing of **Plan B** nuances of dialogue and acting will be discovered that were not noticed before. This film is highly recommended to sophisticated viewers and to academic libraries that collect quality GLBT films.

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

Searching 4 Sandeep.

Dir. Poppy Stockwell. New York: Women Make Movies, 2007. DVD. 55 min.



Sydney and the other a closeted Sikh in England. Poppy and Sandeep meet online and, after months of text messages and phone calls, finally meet in person. Will

This documentary follows the progression of a relationship between two women, one an out surfer in

they hit it off face-to-face? Indeed, Poppy moves across the globe to be with Sandeep, who must finally come out to her family.

Filmed entirely by the two women themselves, some of the camerawork is shaky and the editing choppy. Besides presenting a narrative of successful online dating, the film raises issues of coming out, family acceptance, and long-

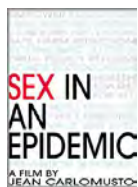
distance and cross-cultural relationships.

People both queer and straight will identify with Poppy and Sandeep's struggle to navigate a new partnership. Some explicit language. Appropriate for any large public library collection.

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

Sex in an Epidemic.

Dir. Jean Carlomusto. New York, Outcast Films, 2010. DVD. \$24.99. 70 min.



This engaging documentary examines, through interviews and media footage, the impact of AIDS on the gay, Latino, and African-American communities and the efforts of sex educators and activists to promote the concept of "safe sex," which was invented as a response to the AIDS crisis.

Carlomusto presents the unfolding story from the early days of the epidemic in New York City at the height of the "sexual revolution" to the Bush administration's increased funding for

abstinence-based sex education. This video provides a frank view of the struggle of activists, educators, and medical people, including Joe Sonnabend, Michael Callen, Richard Berkowitz, Michael Shernoff, Rodger McFarlane, Larry Kramer, and Waheedah Shabazz El, to identify strategies to deal with the disease and the difficulty of addressing sexual practices in the gay community. It shows the growth and impact of Act Up and Gay Men's Health Crisis as the community fought against the silence and inaction of the Reagan and Bush administrations.

Thanks to Jean Carlomusto's video footage from two decades as an AIDS activist, this documentary is incredibly rich with first-hand accounts and historic protests. There isn't a clearer, more honest video of this important--and still challenging--story. It should be included in every library's video collection. More than 1 million people in the US are currently living with AIDS.

*Reviewed by, Morgan Gwenwald
SUNY New Paltz*

Swimming With Lesbians.

Dir. David B. Marshall. With: Madeline Davis, et al. San Francisco: Frameline, 2009. DVD. \$250 (discounted pricing available for K-12 schools, public libraries, and small nonprofits). 67 min.

Swimming with Lesbians follows author, songwriter, and activist Madeline Davis as she works to build an archive of LGBTQ



history. In her seminal 1993 book *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*, Davis immortalized the Buffalo,

New York lesbian community of the mid-20th century. Years later, Davis continues to work to document the history of the Western New York LGBTQ community by building and maintaining an archive of letters, photographs, and other ephemera in the basement of her home. The film mixes interview (with both Davis and other members of that community), footage of Davis collecting and discussing the materials in the archive, and readings of some of the materials from her collection.

The title of the film refers to actual swimming; Davis moved out to the Buffalo suburbs so she could have a swimming pool, and invites her friends over to swim because she believes that lesbians don't care what anyone else looks like. Those ideas of welcoming and acceptance are integral to the film's focus on the importance keeping a community alive through the power of collective memory. The film also explores the ability of physical items to embody those memories and to help us know people long after their death.

At times, the film is extremely personal; Davis shares details of her S/M identity and sheds tears as she talks about friends who have passed on. While in some cases the dramatic reading of archived materials can be somewhat overwrought, these personal elements lend depth to the film, and remind us of the power of the personal to be political. The film also raises important

issues about the institutional protection of gay and lesbian materials, including a scene with a group of archivists from Buffalo State College who become noticeably uncomfortable as Davis describes the contents of her collections.

This film depicts, in Davis' words, "a working class, impoverished rust belt city on the edge of the Midwest," a part of New York that did not immediately see the effects of Stonewall. It reminds us of a time when coming out was literally an issue of life and death, when gay rights marches were faced with citizens armed with chains and bricks.

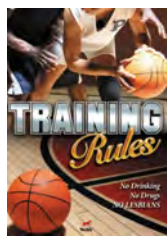
Swimming with Lesbians is recommended, as the film itself plays a role in keeping these memories alive.

*Reviewed by, Caitlin Shanley
Instructional Design and Technology
Librarian
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga*

Training Rules.

Dirs. Dee Mosbacher and Fawn Yacker. Wolf Video, 2010. DVD. 61 min.

"No drinking. No drugs. No lesbians."



These three "training rules" defined coach Rene Portland's Penn State women's basketball program. Not until a lawsuit brought by a former player did the Penn State administration even feign addressing Portland's homophobic and discriminatory

behavior.

Narrated by long distance swimmer Diana Nyad, *Training Rules* is a moving documentary providing interviews with women who were coached and dismissed by Portland during her twenty-seven year tenure at Penn State (1980-2007). Many of these women lost their scholarships, their dreams, and part of their lives while the campus administration and the NCAA turned a blind eye and deaf ear, even after Portland's "rules" became public in a newspaper interview. Such complicit homophobia in women's sports is not new, nor is it unique to Penn State. *Training Rules* demonstrates how

homophobia and homophobic policies negatively affects *all* athletes.

This title is highly recommended for all libraries.

Disclosure: Reviewer attended Penn State when Portland was the women's basketball coach.

Reviewed by, **Amy Hribar**
Science Librarian
University of Minnesota

We Have to Stop Now.

Dir. Robyn Dettman. With. Jill Bennett, Cathy DeBuono, Suzanne Westenhoefer, Anne Noble. Wolf Video, 2010. DVD. 73 min.

Marriage is not an effortless, easy endeavor, as evidenced by the dozens of marriage self-help books currently available. So when successful therapists and partners Kit (Jill Bennett) and Dyna



(Cathy DeBuono) co-author a best-selling marriage manual, it is inevitable that their own marriage begins to fail. In order to keep up appearances and avoid

embarrassment, Kit and Dyna begin couples counseling with a therapist played

by comedian Susan Westenhoefer. To make things worse, the popularity of their book has spurred a documentary about the couple "walking their talk." The film crew follows Kit and Dyna day and night, never giving them a chance to let down their guards, and fuels the increasing tension between them.

In contrast to the idealistic Kit and uptight Dyna is Kit's seemingly less-than-serious stoner sister who provides comic relief as she offers keen observations to and about all three therapists. Mercury must be in retrograde as Kit and Dyna's relationship is at one point reduced to annoying, petty

interactions and the how intentionally relies on clichés to demonstrate the absurdity that often transpires between partners.

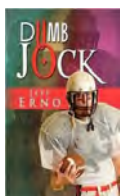
We Have To Stop Now is a subscription-only webisodic "romantic dramedy." Despite the segmented nature of the show, the story flows smoothly and the series has received positive press. *We Have To Stop Now* is a fun film; not a must-buy, but recommended viewing if the budget allows.

Reviewed by, **Amy Hribar**
Science Librarian
University of Minnesota

Book Reviews: Young Adult

Erno, Jeff. *Dumb Jock*.

Xlibris Corp., 2009. paperback. 197p. \$19.99. ISBN: 1441508147.



Fourteen-year-old Jeff Irwin is slightly built, geeky, and timid—a social outcast who's the last to be picked on any team. Not surprisingly, he's smart and makes good grades. He's also in awe of

jocks, one football player in particular. Brett Willson is the seventeen-year-old "dumb jock," the star quarterback who drives a sports car, has a beautiful girlfriend, and is Homecoming King. Yet, Brett is still insecure and has a strong need to be admired by the smaller boy. The two teens are brought together when the gym teacher and football coach, Mr. McDonald, threatens to fail Jeff in PE unless he tutors Brett, and promises to give Jeff an A if Brett succeeds. It turns out that Brett wants to learn and starts doing well in the English Grammar class that he's already failed twice. The

two teens develop a friendship that quickly turns sexual and the tables turn. Jeff goes from being the teacher to the submissive as he services Brett after each study session. Brett needs to be worshiped, and Jeff needs to feel safe and protected.

In a compelling boy-meets-boy, boy-loses-boy coming-of-age story, Jeff is faced with many obstacles: abandonment by his alcoholic father, the death of his mother, and the firing of his favorite teacher because he's gay. Brett is very supportive, kind, and caring during these tragedies, but he's also very afraid of coming out of the closet. He keeps his girlfriend and ignores Jeff in school, and he succumbs to the pressures to be "normal." Over time, it becomes difficult to identify which boy is strong and which is weak.

The well-crafted plot, and well-developed

characters make this a realistic novel. Despite the mild dominant/submissive theme, the sex is mostly left to the imagination, making it suitable for adolescents, as well as adults. For example, one sexual encounter is described simply as "I knelt." Although the book's happy ending may be a fantasy, the romance of *Dumb Jock* will appeal to those who enjoy gay coming-of-age stories. Libraries with comprehensive LGBTQ fiction collections should purchase this title.

The Trevor Project, a national organization dedicated to ending suicide among LGBTQ youth, has selected *Dumb Jock* for its bibliography "Books for Young Gay Men."

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

Book Reviews: Non-fiction

Kinsman, Gary and Patrizia Gentile. *The Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation.*

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010. 584p. \$37.95. paperback. ISBN: 978-07748-1627-1.



Gary Kinsman' and Patrizia Gentile's *The Canadian War on Queers*

is a well documented and detailed sociological history of the Canadian national security organizations' surveillance, investigation, and harassment of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals

from the 1950s to recent years. It concentrates largely on the activities of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but the actions of other federal, military, provincial, and local authorities are also recounted.

The strengths of the book are its emphasis

on state actions, its detailed chronology, and its use of interviews with many who lost their positions within the Canadian civil service and military. Its weakness is its disparate use of social theory. As the authors claim, it is clearly a "history from below."

The book also succeeds in many places as an "institutional ethnography." However, despite a theoretical chapter in which both Foucault and a queer form of historical materialism are referenced, these approaches appear to play little role in the actual account. That being said, the work makes a great complement to Tom Warner's 2002 *Never Going Back: A History of Queer Activism in Canada*, precisely because of the emphasis on national security actors and its

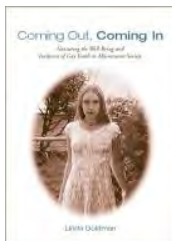
more critical stance toward the Canadian government's present position on gay rights.

Any library holding Warner should purchase this text, and any library interested in modern Canadian history might want to purchase both. It may also be of interest to scholars doing a comparative analysis of United States and Canadian legal treatment of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals.

Reviewed by, **David Woolwine**
Axinn Library
Hofstra University

Goldman, Linda. *Coming Out, Coming In: Nurturing the Well-Being and Inclusion of Gay Youth in Mainstream Society.*

New York: Routledge, 2008. Paperback. 339p. \$29.95. ISBN: 978-0415958240.



In *Coming Out, Coming In*, Linda Goldman presents the dichotomy of "coming out," meaning to disclose one's sexual orientation to others and "coming in," meaning to then move forward into a life of self-acceptance and equality in

mainstream society. In other words, it is the process of moving from a state of exclusion (being on the outside of society) to one of inclusion: being a full and equal member of society, and not being limited by the self-disclosure of coming out.

Goldman offers intervention strategies for those working with LGBT youth, and has compiled important information for those who know or work with gay youth and who want to support them in their transition from a life of exclusion to one of inclusion.

Goldman goes into great detail on ways to provide advocacy in school settings, and includes a section for those in the counseling profession and another that's directed towards family members of LGBT youth. She also provides several vignettes of youths' coming out stories in order to show allies what it's like to be a gay youth.

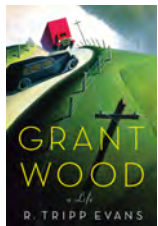
This book is relevant for anyone connected to gay youth, be they family members, friends, educators, counselors, and spiritual and religious organizations. It concludes by offering resources that include books, magazines, school curricula, LGBT support services and organizations, websites, and a list of welcoming religious and spiritual groups.

Coming Out, Coming In is recommended for academic and public libraries.

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

R. Tripp Evans. *Grant Wood: A Life.*

New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010. hardcover. 402p. \$37.50. ISBN: 987-0-307-26629-3.



As much art criticism as biography, this new life of Grant Wood attempts to return a once-celebrated artist to his rightful place as a major figure in twentieth century American art. While *American Gothic* remains an enduring monument, Wood's other work has

fallen into some obscurity.

Wood was born in 1891 in a small Iowa farming community. The son of a strict Quaker who banned fairy tales and children's literature from the home, the imaginative and unathletic boy had the further misfortune of growing up in an era when masculinity was undergoing a strict redefinition by the culture at large. Child-

rearing experts of the day deplored kindness to animals as unmanly, and an interest in books, music, and art were taken as signs that a boy dwelled too much in the feminine sphere. Wood's mother, meanwhile, provided him with a private space beneath the kitchen table where he could draw his pictures unseen. He was ten when his father's death made such subterfuge unnecessary.

(Continued page 10)

R. Tripp Evans. *Grant Wood: A Life*. (continued)

Evans makes much of these beginnings, **scrutinizing a lifetime's worth of paintings** through a distinctly Freudian lens. The index is replete with entries referring to castration, impotence, and incest – **instances of Wood's private and (Evans acknowledges) perhaps unconscious iconography.** The subject of *Victorian Survival*, a portrait in which Wood endows his great aunt with an elongated neck and **velvet choker, "embodies a tumescence that can be maintained only by a choking cock ring."** Writing about *Parson Weems' Fable*, which depicts the young George Washington, his father, and the cherry tree, **Evans points out that Washington's hatchet aims at his father's shadow at the level of the genitals.** The slaves in the background symbolize mother-son incest -- a reflection of **Wood's guilty loyalty to his mother. The slaves' skin color is, moreover, a reference to Wood's father, as it "evokes the color of death."** The rolling hills of Wood's landscapes are invariably a fetishistic

representation of male buttocks, and phallic symbols occur everywhere.

Lest the reader think this is all too much, **Evans turns defensive, writing, "I would argue that such a reaction only highlights our conscious resistance to the psyche's raw and anarchic operations.** My readings **attempt to record what I perceive in Wood's mind's eye."**

The discussion of Wood's place at the forefront of the Regionalist movement of the 1930s is more illuminating. Upheld in some quarters as the very embodiment of wholesome rural American ideals, he was praised in others as an irreverent satirist skewering those same ideals, the visual equivalent of H. L. Mencken. A public acknowledgment of his homosexuality would have meant disaster, and when fellow Regionalist Thomas Hart Benton ranted in print against the "pansies" and "precious fairies" who had taken over the New York

art establishment, Wood fell into line and **commended Benton's remarks as "healthful commentary."**

Throughout *Grant Wood: A Life*, Evans relies **on Wood's unfinished autobiography and the memoirs of the artist's sister where they conform to his surmises, and dismisses them where they do not.** Ultimately, it seems that Grant Wood has been made to **serve someone else's purposes once again.**

Includes 26 color plates, 88 black and white illustrations, 62 pages of notes, an index, and a bibliography.

Recommended for libraries with a strong interest in American art or with extensive GLBT collections.

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

Donoghue, Emma. *Inseparable: Desire Between Women in Literature*.

New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010. hardcover. 271p. \$27.95. ISBN: 9780307270948.



Inseparable is a brilliant, scholarly exploration of how desire between women has been portrayed in the past three centuries in English literature. Emma Donoghue identifies six motifs that have been used to tell these tales of attraction between women—attractions

that are not always lesbian, but often ignored and misinterpreted.

Donoghue's motifs are arranged in chapters:

Travesties, Inseparables, Rivals, Monsters, Detection, and Out, and explore how these plots have changed from generation to generation, reflecting their times and culture. Writers from Ovid, Chaucer and Shakespeare, to Bronte and Dickens, from Zola, Collette, and Radclyffe Hall to Patricia Highsmith, Jewelle Gomez, and Ali Smith are included. Herself a talented novelist and much-admired literary critic, Donoghue dissects this seemingly deep and dusty cannon in an engrossing and amusing text.

There are a number of illustrations included and a selected bibliography that is **arranged by the date of composition "so as to provide a timeline of desire between women in literature."**

Inseparable addresses an overlooked literary tradition and is a necessary addition to every collection on English Literature.

*Reviewed by, Morgan Gwenwald
SUNY New Paltz*

Clark, Don. *Loving Someone Gay*.

Maple Shade, NJ: Lethe Press, 2009. Fifth edition. Hardcover. 285p. \$40.00. ISBN: 978-159021-110-6.



First written over 20 years ago, *Loving Some Gay* has become one of the most respected sources of information about gay people for those who are not members of the gay community. Written in straightforward, non-clinical

language, it seeks to build understanding of **gay people in the "straight" community and is written for loved ones, friends, and colleagues of gay people.** As a starting point in bridging this communication and understanding gap, this book has earned a reputation for rich and detailed information in a format and tone

accessible to everyone.

Don Clark, a clinical psychologist, covers a variety of topics from what it means to be gay and how this affects the development of a gay person, to building support networks and community for gay people, and detailed information for professionals in the community on how they can support and assist gay people. He also strives to move family and friends from simple tolerance and understanding of LGBT persons, to love and acceptance of their gay son or daughter, best friend, or spouse.

Particularly useful for librarians is a chapter

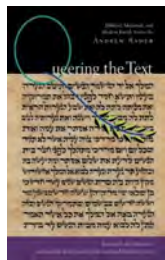
that outlines what educators and librarians can do to support gay people and provide the right information for the LGBT community.

The fifth edition has been completely rewritten and updated, but retains the direct and honest tone of previous editions while adding new resources and information to the mix. Highly recommended for all library collections.

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

Ramer, Andrew. *Queering the Text: Biblical, Medieval, and Modern Jewish Stories.*

Maple Shade, NJ: Lethe Press, 2010. paperback. 278p. \$20.00. ISBN: 978-1959021-183-1.



Co-facilitator for years of a Queer Torah Study at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, in San Francisco, and author of numerous books, including *Angel Answers* and *Revelations for a New Millennium*, as well as a regular columnist for the gay men's journal *White Crane*, Andrew Ramer presents contemporary midrashim, or interpretative tales, on texts from the Old Testament, the "Golden Age" of Spain, and other strands of Jewish tradition.

While the sources in *Queering the Text* are Jewish, the narratives will appeal to anyone familiar with the Bible and other stories. Each entry begins with a quote from the Bible or source, followed by the narrative. Addressing homosexuality in the Bible and the religious aspects of homosexuality in Judaism, as well as providing gay interpretations of the Old Testament

(among other sources), Ramer intends to show a new reading, with a queer-seeking eye, of the texts to bring out what he asserts is already there.

While the title indicates a Jewish slant, this is not always easy to find, which makes the book appropriate for a wider range of audience. Moreover, the interpretations are not always glaringly homosexual, which provides opportunity for discussion that might appeal to those who are not necessarily homosexual-friendly. The prose brings gay Jews, and others in the texts, to life, portraying vivid and complex characters.

Seekers of specifically or blatantly gay materials might be disappointed, but the tasteful nature of this book lends itself well to reading with others who might not be as approving of such a topic otherwise. *Queering the Text* is not for light reading, but rather for serious thought, and knowledge of the source will help in understanding the narrative provided.

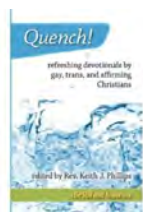
Useful as a secondary source in study of biblical, medieval, and modern Jewish stories, this work would have, nonetheless, been enhanced by its sources being indexed or labeled in the table of contents. Additionally, the book is somewhat biased in that it focuses only on male homosexuality, yet this might be due to the larger occurrences of this in the sources than an intended lack of coverage.

Recommended for public and academic libraries.

*Reviewed by, Sara Rofofsky Marcus
Queensborough Community College Library*

Phillips, Keith J., ed. *Quench! refreshing devotionals by gay, trans, and affirming Christians.*

A Be Still and Know book. Indianapolis: Found Pearl Press, 2009. paperback. \$12.00. 286p. ISBN: 978-0971929623.



Quench! is a spiritually, uplifting, and insightful opus for anyone who is seeking understanding, sacred enlightenment, and unconditional love from the Creator and also a deeper

appreciation for oneself as a same gender loving individual. The introspective devotionals in this work were derived from an online devotional, *Be Still and Know*, which Jesus Metropolitan Community Church began producing in May of 2006.

Indeed, one of the keys to spiritual growth and fulfillment is making the time to commune with our personal Higher Power. To help people with this journey, *Be Still and Know* was created to facilitate this very powerful phase in our lives. By utilizing a particular scripture that revolves around a weekly theme, the writers in *Quench!* take readers on a journey of self-discovery,

sincerity, and revelation. In "Wings," Julie Walsh invites us to let God cover us with His wings when we are feeling sorrow, upset, or hurt, instead of simply retreating by withdrawing from family and friends: "...it is under God's wings where we will discover protection and courage."

"Discernment is allowing the Holy Spirit to lead, guide, and direct our paths." Robert Ferguson's "On the Right Track" discusses how it is easy to become distracted by things that are not of God, and how one of his own biggest personal struggles is to worry. He points to Proverbs 3 that tells individuals that "if we keep our minds trained on the things of God, then our sleep will be peaceful and our worries will seem unimportant." Ferguson ends this engaging piety by reminding readers "to stay in touch with God through study and prayer"; for these age-old tools have proven to be extremely useful in one's hallowed journey.

The unequivocal passages written in this book do not just speak to the restlessness in the hearts and minds of some LGBT people; they also take an affirmative

approach that will resonate with readers, no matter their sexual orientation. Moreover, the echoing voices of the writers stand firm in their walk as spiritual warriors who simply welcome diversity and champion independent thought. They succeed in quenching the reader's spiritual thirst by selflessly sharing their take on what it means to be a follower of Jesus, particularly in this time of unrest all across the world.

Readers will be pleased to find an introduction, content page, and a page that explains how to use *Quench!* Also included are appendices consisting of prayer suggestions, concise author bios, and indexes for topics, scripture, and author.

Quench! is recommended for all library collections, and especially for SGL adults and teens 14 and up.

Reviewed by Michelle D. Dartis, MLS
Indiana University, Indianapolis

Book Reviews: Fiction

Paddie, Dennis. *Ask the Fire*.

Maple Shade, NJ: Lethe Press, 2010. paperback. 372p. \$20.00. ISBN: 978-1-59021-248-6.

Ask the Fire is a complex novel that is set in the summer of 2001 leading up to the terrorist attacks on September 11. Jared Osborne, who came of age in the 1960s countercultural scene in Austin, Texas, is a CIA agent who has spent his career seducing secrets from the Arabs. Now living in the DuPont Circle area of Washington, D.C., Jared is targeted for assassination, and a bodyguard, Moss Lake, is assigned to protect him. Jared is kidnapped by an Arab faction, but is later released. Using his experience and both past and recently acquired knowledge, Jared allows himself to be captured by another Arab group that appears to be readying itself for something big.

A Starbucks located on DuPont Circle serves as a meeting place for the novel's many



characters. The most interesting and complex is Sabine Horvath, a rich Texas Jew who is a longtime friend of Jared's and has just moved to D.C. for social reasons related to the incoming Bush administration. Sabine possesses an art collection that may or may not have been looted by the Nazis from Jews during World War II. She also has connections with Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency. Other interesting characters include Moss Lake, Moss's boyfriends Robert Lambert, Faron Turpin, and Selim Savify, CIA agents Webb Burns and Bronson Talbot, and Sabine's British art curator Sir Quentin Upward.

Throughout the novel are references to Freemasonry and its influence on the layout of the streets and waterworks of D.C. Long passages are dedicated to musings concerning the influence of Freemasonry, the Knights Templar, Hermes Trismegistus, tarot, reincarnation, and other esoteric subjects on gay men throughout history.

While interesting as an explanation of Jared's worldview, they sometimes interrupt the smooth flow of the narrative. Paddie also offers very detailed descriptions of clothing, meals, furniture, and the layouts of homes, such as Sabine's mansion. These also sometimes interrupt the narrative.

Ask the Fire is at its heart a gay espionage novel. However, it is very detailed and sometimes convoluted. Esoteric knowledge bordering on fantasy is an important part of the work. I found it a hard read, but ultimately a fulfilling one. *Ask the Fire* is recommended for large public libraries and those serving gay populations, as well as academic libraries.

Ask the Fire is also available in a Kindle edition.

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

Reed, Rick R. *Bashed: A Love Story*.

Albion, NY: MLR Press, 2009. paperback. 195p. \$14.99. ISBN 978-1-60820-028-3.



A gripping thriller told from multiple points of view, *Bashed* delivers what readers have come to expect from Rick R. Reed: a violent and emotionally wrenching tale of realistic horror. The story is told by three characters: two perpetrators of a horrifying hate crime; and the man who survived the attack.

Donald is a fifty-year-old gay man attempting to recover physically and emotionally from a vicious assault. He and his partner Mark were attacked on a dark Chicago street by three

men wielding aluminum baseball bats. Donald survived, but Mark died from his injuries, leaving Donald alone to process his grief, anger, and fear. It is only when Mark's ghost begins to visit him that Donald begins to heal.

Ronny, the primary assailant is a homophobic sociopath, driven by fear and rage and determined to take the crime one step further. Justin is a troubled sixteen-year-old who realizes too late that his friends are murderers. He struggles with the weight of this knowledge and tries to find a way to make amends.

The three points of view are interwoven to create an action-based story that attempts to illuminate some of the characters' darkest motivations. The violence is graphic, as is the sex, but neither is gratuitous. Fans of Reed's previous work will find this story compelling and satisfying.

Bashed: A Love Story is recommended for public libraries.

Reviewed by, **S. Annelise Adams LII**
Chicago Public Library

Berman, Steve, ed. *Best Gay Stories 2009*.

Maple Shade, NJ: Lethe Press, 2009. hardcover (also available as trade paperback). 281p. \$25.00. ISBN: 978-1590211496.



books of gay

These are great stories, well worth reading. Whether they are the best, others will determine in the future, but they were selected from many by the editor Steve Berman, who included one of his own. Berman founded Lethe Press, in 2001 to focus on "speculative fiction, interest, poetry, spirituality, as

well as classic works of the occult & supernatural." Several of the stories are described as "fantastical," including Berman's own story "Kinder."

Berman's introduction makes it clear that by "gay" he means gay men; all the stories are about gay boys and men. A few of the stories are by well-known authors, but most are by lesser known writers. One interesting feature

of the volume is the ordering of the stories, which--for the most part--is chronological by the age of the main characters, from school boys through retired elderly men, including an elderly couple (together since 1956) one of whose members suffers from Alzheimer's.

(Continued page 13)

Berman, Steve, ed. *Best Gay Stories 2009*. (Continued)

Style and themes are varied. The first story is rather stream of consciousness. A couple of the stories are autobiographical essays. But most are more conventional narratives. Themes run the gamut of gay life. The younger boys suffer bullying and rejection and even rape, but some also advance toward coming out and enjoying gay life. Young and older men suffer--but also enjoy --the ups and downs of gay relationships. AIDS is important in at least one story.

Some stories are sad; some are violent; a few are comical. And others are fun and joyful.

A nice feature of this collection is that, **unlike most anthologies, the reader doesn't** have to skip to the end to learn about each author. Instead, very short bios precede each story. Additionally, the stories are very well written and edited. Not a single typo was encountered. Even if these aren't

the "best" gay stories, they are very good and I recommend this anthology for any library and any reader interested in contemporary gay fiction of the shorter variety.

Reviewed by, James D. Anderson
Professor Emeritus
Rutgers University

Gitlin, Lisa. *I Came Out for This?*

Bywater Books, 2010. 280p. \$14.95. ISBN: 978-1932859737



Lisa Gitlin's *I Came Out for This?* is a coming-out story with many of the typical clichés – first love found and lost, one night stands, and the second lover standing by while you work out the emotional and mental side effects of losing your first lover. In this coming out

story the main character, Joanna Kane, a 45-year-old, tells her tale through a series of 24 monthly journal writings. The unfolding story begins in Cleveland, Ohio, where Joanna meets first lover, Terri, who is visiting family. The reader tags along as Joanna decides to follow Terri to Washington, D.C., even after Terri has ended their sexual relationship, in hopes of winning her back. In the end, Joanna is

able to let go of Terri, and in doing so she finds happiness with Kimba. Along the way, the reader is introduced to a cadre of gay and lesbian characters, ranging from street thugs, Johnny and Guillermo, to Jerome (a gay prostitute), Nicky (a lover of Jerome's), Dee (an advocate of children in the foster care system), and many others.

Gitlin has done an admirable job creating a story that communicates to the reader the **tormented reality of Joanna's two year** journey from new beginnings to an established residence in D.C. with many lesbian and gay friends. Readers will be able to relate at some level with Joanna and her coming out story.

As the story reached its conclusion, this reviewer was glad that the author toned

down the teeth gnashing diatribes by her main character, which had become annoying. While the secondary characters were sketched with broad strokes, Gitlin manages to make them seem real and relevant to the main storyline. This is a good, solid first novel by the author.

I Came Out for This? contains adult language and a few sexually explicit scenes. It is recommended for libraries that have adult GLBTQ fiction collections.

Reviewed by TJ Lusher

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