

Women In Libraries

NEWSLETTER OF THE
ALA/SRRT FEMINIST
TASK FORCE

Volume 13 Number 4

March 1984

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PATHS TO POWER

The theme of the 1984 Annual Conference of the American Library Association is "Paths to Power." In this issue, Women in Libraries will reflect on some of the possible paths to power: political action, continuing education, working together, recognizing achievements, protecting our health, forming networks, and raising the consciousness of those around us.

The 9to5 Newsletter for January/February 1984 announces the "Working Women's Agenda." This agenda includes ending job discrimination, closing the wage gap between men and women, easing the burdens on the working family, improving economic security for older women, creating safe working conditions, and controlling office automation. Many of these items are directly applicable to an agenda we as women in libraries might adopt, too, as part of our path to power. 9to5 intends to use the Agenda at election time to question candidates about their support of women's issues and see that the right people are elected. They point out that there are 45 million working women in the U.S. today and that we have the highest voter-participation rate of any segment of the U.S. population. 9to5 concludes that working women could decide the outcome of the 1984 elections.

Much of the drudgery of political campaigns is assigned to women, such as registering voters, knocking on doors to deliver campaign literature, and telephoning or writing letters. However, they are not rewarded by being elected to office... around 5% of our congressional seats are held by women and 9% of the state legislators. In addition, their political wishes are often ignored. An article called "Are Women Different Today?" appearing in Public Opinion, May 1982, reported that 51% of women felt too little was spent on improving the nation's education system, as compared to 48% of men. Do we see that expression being translated into more dollars for education? Not in the current federal administration. 73% of women and 61% of men felt government should work vigorously to reduce the income gap between rich and poor. Do we see income taxes restructured to take a larger bite from their riches while easing the tax burden of the poor and middle classes? Nope. 61% of women opposed a return to the draft, while 52% of men favored such an action. Who did the legislators listen to? Pollster Louis Harris has stated that "One of the major developments of the 1980s will be the fullblown emergence of women as a powerful new force in American politics." Is this one of our most direct paths to power? Turn the page for one woman's opinion.

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NOTE: The editors have just come to the awful realization that the first copy of this newsletter sent from Jones to Kahn has been lost in the mail. Sorry for the delay.

WOMEN IN LIBRARIES CAN BE WOMEN IN POLITICS

We have been hearing a lot lately about "the women's vote" from strange quarters; the Reagan faction of the Republican party. They call it "the gender gap" (the use of the word women must be far too explicit for them). What they are talking about is the fact that men voted for Reagan more than women did. And women's approval of President Reagan is about 10 percentage points lower than men's. These are facts not lost on those whose status depends on who enters the voting booth.

Men in politics, from all parties, have "discovered" that many women vote in their own interest and this gives women a unique opportunity in 1984. We must show the politicians, men and women alike, that women not only vote, but they canvass, write press releases, make campaign phone calls, contribute money and office furniture, and attend caucus meetings. In other words, they win support and votes for their candidate. We have the opportunity to make sure the gender gap remains an issue in politics until women are full and equal partners in running the country, the state, the county, and the city. We have this opportunity now!

For 200 plus years, politicians (I reserve the term public servants for the good few) are elected by and act for the minority. Some of my sisters have argued that there are no good candidates to work or vote for, that their votes or efforts will make no difference. It is difficult to live in today's world without such rationalizations, but we cannot afford to cop out this year. In fact, we can run for office ourselves or at least find a candidate our conscience can accept because what we don't do will also count.

After participating in politics for the last twelve years, I have learned one thing for sure...grass roots politics works. Money and media are important; however, it is not only possible but highly probable that we can win against them with a grass roots campaign where a responsible majority work and vote. There is a candidate for you. There is a candidate for whom you can work. The work is no different from what you do every day in your library. Answering a question at the reference desk requires the same skills as answering a question about your candidate at your neighbor's door; cataloging a collection requires the same skills as organizing your candidate's issues files, press releases, and name files; the same skills are used to get travel money out of your director as for raising money for your candidate. Ane your candidate can use the information on issues which is at any librarian's fingertips. It could be the edge that wins the election! You have the skills and your 1984 candidate needs them. If nothing else, spend ten minutes a week writing a letter to every candidate on your ballot from President of the United States to your party precinct captain about your favorite issues. Your candidate may not read it, but it will be counted and its impact felt.

Our theme for National Library Week, April 8 - 14, is "Knowledge is real power." Knowledge is power, but it takes action to make it felt. Show the 1984 politicians your beliefs in action. For feminist information on your national, state, and local political parties and candidates, contact the local or national office of NOW, 425 13th Street N.W., Suite 1048, Washington, D.C. 20004, (202) 347-2279 or the National Women's Political Caucus, 1411 K St., N.W., Suite 1110, Washington, D.C. 20005 (202) 347-4456.

Guest editorial by Mary Lou Goodyear
Chair, Legislative Subcommittee, COSWL

NETWORKING: NWSA

The sixth annual conference of the National Women's Studies Association will take place this year at Douglass College, which is an undergraduate unit of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Douglass is the largest women's college in the country and has a very strong Women's Studies Program. Unfortunately, the dates of the conference, June 24 - 28, coincide with the AIA conference, but the Librarians' Task Force of NWSA is sponsoring an interesting program, nevertheless, and expects a good crowd. A reception for librarians attending the conference is also planned for June 26 from 5 - 7 pm in the Mabel Smith Douglass Library Mezzanine.

The topic of the overall conference is "Steering our Course" Feminist Education in the 80s" and the Librarians' Task Force program is entitled "Taking Action: Smoldering Issues in Feminist Librarianship." Panel speakers will be Jackie Eubanks from Brooklyn College on "Small Presses/Women's Presses: Order Practices in Academe," Jacquelyn Marie from the University of California at Santa Cruz on "Where are Women of Color in Libraries?" and Sue Searing from the University of Wisconsin System on "Special Libraries vs. Integrated Collections: Two Models of Library Support for Women's Studies." Luisa Paster from Princeton will be moderating, and there will be time for open discussion on these and other issues of feminist librarianship. If you are interested in being a panelist, there may still be time to put you into the program if you immediately contact Paster at Princeton University Library, Catalogue Division, Princeton, N.J. 08544 or call (609) 452-5166. You may also obtain more information about the Task Force from the same address and a contribution of a couple of dollars will put you on the mailing list. For more information about NWSA or the conference as a whole, contact: NWSA '84 Conference, Douglass College, Room 4, Lower Level, Voorhees Chapel, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

U.S. FEMINISTS SEEK ENGLISH CONNECTIONS

Seeking both contemporary and historical connections, a small group of U.S. feminists will explore London from May 30 to June 7, 1984. Through London For Feminists, an introduction to the city's feminist resources and current movement, each member of the independently organized group of about 15 women will develop the basis for her own international network. Some will remain to participate in the first-ever International Feminist Book Fair, where a display of thousands of books from more than 200 publishers worldwide will coincide with readings and other events.

Unlike many efforts to link women internationally, London for Feminists will include those who are not necessarily national movement leaders, distinguished scholars, or government representatives. Participants will talk directly with English colleagues and visit the city's basic feminist resource centers: the Women's Research and Resource Center, which tracks feminist research studies and indexes women's studies courses throughout Britain; feminist bookstores and libraries; and take London Women's History Walk. The expense to participants has been kept as low as possible to promote diversity in the group, about \$400 for a week's lodging with breakfast, and organizer fees; plus group airfare. Interested women contact Point of Departure Travel Service, 1660 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley CA 94709.

FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS THROUGH THE COURTS

Linda DeBeau-Melting, a cataloger at the University of Minnesota Library, was denied tenure in 1980 and took her case to the courts, claiming sex discrimination and breach of contract. A couple of months ago, she was awarded tenure by Special Master Viola M. Kanatz, one of three special masters appointed to administer cases arising in the wake of the class-action discrimination case known as Rajender vs the University of Minnesota. It was the first time a court has awarded tenure outright, rather than directing a university to do so. An article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, February 8, 1984, quotes Kanatz as saying, in her 98-page ruling, that courts were charged to review personnel decisions of academic units in the 1972 extension of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and that review is to ensure that tenure and all other personnel decisions "are based upon merit, not upon the impermissible factors of sex, race, or national origin."

An editorial appearing in the Minnesota Daily on February 6, 1984, commented that the Kanatz decision protects the tenure system from corruption and, "in the process, issued a well-deserved insult to the University administration." The nature of library teaching and research is different from the rest of the university, the student newspaper points out. Library teaching involved instructing students how to use resources and research is primarily applied rather than theoretical. The research of DeBeau-Melting included the compilation of well-received bibliographic works. The editorial notes, "It was not the merit of DeBeau-Melting's contributions to her field that was measured but the merit of the field itself. The research and teaching of librarians is indeed peculiar to their field, but that is no reason to assault the tenure that deserving librarians at the University have received in the past."

WIL has received a press release from the Minnesota Education Association announcing that their president, Martha Lee (Marti)Zins, hailed the Kanatz ruling as "emancipation from bondage for females striving for careers in higher education." The leader of the 40,000-member union stated that she felt the decision would make the University of Minnesota quit discriminating against its female employees. Zins said the language in the Kanatz document (developed after a 26-day trial during which 23 witnesses were examined and more than 300 documents were filed) proves that the University "has been a citadel of male chauvinism and one of the last bastions prevailing against the upward mobility of women." Zins quoted the document as saying the discriminatory decision of Eldred Smith, director of the library, was "allowed to move through the system unchallenged because of the deference afforded to administrators in Smith's position by the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. ... No justification for his deferential treatment can be offered other than an intentional decision by Smith to favor males in administrative positions and disfavor females." The reason this case is unique, according to MEA attorney Mark Wine, is that this is the first time since Title VII was passed that a faculty member was granted unconditional tenure, which means that there are no preconditions, following a sex discrimination trial. He continued "this was a very long, very expensive trial. Prior to the trial, the University refused to settle, stating that settlement was not an option. The University spent well in excess of \$100,000 of taxpayers' money to defend an indefensible position - a clear case of discrimination. The result is significant because it sends a message to the University that it cannot continue to treat female employees unfairly and expect to avoid punishment because of its size and academic status."

The Chronicle article quotes DeBeau-Melting as being "overjoyed" with the decision.

PUTTING YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS

The National Women's Political Caucus is setting up a Victory Fund and would like you to contribute. Their literature points out that even more important than the Presidential outcome will be who holds the balance of power in the Congress. The reason this is so important now is that it is likely within the next four years to have anywhere from two to five new Supreme Court justices named by the president and they have to be confirmed by the Senate. New attacks on the right to choice and the ERA will be launched when the new session of Congress begins in January, 1985. Women have an especially tough time raising money; the NWPC Victory Fund is widely regarded as a major source of support for progressive women candidates. Their goal is to recruit 32 new progressive women candidates to run for the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate, women who want a truly balanced, representative government. If you wish to contribute to the Victory Fund, send your check to: NWPC Victory Fund, 1411 K Street, N.W., Suite 1110, Washington, D.C. 20005.

GET OUT THE VOTE

9to5 reminds us that all of our votes count. If you or other women workers you know are not registered to vote, start now so that as many as possible will be eligible to vote in the next election. You can obtain registration affidavits by phoning, writing, or visiting your local board of elections office. In many areas, they are also available at libraries and banks and through party officials such as local committee people or through the League of Women Voters. You must send in your form 30 days before the election.

Make sure that other working women in your area are registered. Ask for several registration forms, and pass them out to friends and neighbors or at your library staff meeting. The forms do not have to be stamped; simply have people fill them out on the spot and drop them in the mail.

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TWO NEW BOOKS ON WOMEN AND POLITICS

When state officials and candidates for legislature and governor ask you, "What do women want?", just hand them a copy of the new book, A Women's Rights Agenda for the States, which is filled with the background information and ideas to be used to build a sound platform on women's issues. Running through every section of the book is the theme that the 1984 elections at both the federal and state level will be important to the fight for women's rights. The book articulates a concrete progressive strategy for states to act on employment and economic issues; family crisis issues; human services and education; and political and human rights. To order your copy, send \$7.95 (plus \$1 for postage and handling) to The Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies, 2000 Florida Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Bella Abzug has a new guide to political power for American women, The Gender Gap. Abzug describes the obstacles and party practices that have kept women out of political office and gives an insider's account of some recent election contests. She analyzes the gender gap, shows why women hold more progressive views than men on key gender gap issues, and presents a winning plan for the defeat of Reagan by utilizing the women's vote. Order from Houghton Mifflin.

VDT UPDATE

The Chronicle of Higher Education, January 4, 1984, reports that unions which are representing college and university employees who use VDTs are trying to negotiate new contracts including protection from the hazards of VDT use. Both Boston University and Cornell clerical workers have been successful in negotiating such a contract, while the University of Washington is still trying to work out guidelines to include in their next contract. The article further states that researchers have been unable to find a direct link between VDT use and health problems, but most agree that use of VDTs causes "physical distress" at least.

Legislation has been introduced in Ohio by State Representative Barbara Pringle, with the support of 9to5 and District 925 of the Service Employees International Union. The legislation would mandate adjustable equipment and work stations, reduced glare and noise, eye examinations, metal shields for machines, and frequent rest periods, and would limit the hours spend at VDT work. It would also establish the right to transfer from VDT work during pregnancy and prohibit the use of VDTs to monitor workers' productivity.

Library Hi Tech News, February, 1984, reports that close to ten million workers now spend at least part of their day, sometimes the entire work day, in front of a VDT. Many workers feel this activity results in problems ranging from eyestrain to psychological stress to fear of radiation hazards.

The American Optometric Association has put out a pamphlet which discusses eye problems including headaches, blurring of vision, itching and burning eyes, eye fatigue, flickering sensations, and double vision. A number of steps can be taken to lessen the effects:

1. Use proper furniture and sit approximately 14 to 20 inches from the screen,
2. Place reading and reference material as close to the screen as possible,
3. Dim the lights to 30 to 50 foot candles,
4. Reduce glare on screens by adjusting lights or hooding screens,
5. Take a 15-minute break after two hours of moderate VDT use or every hour for "high visual demands".
6. Have regular eye examinations.

The pamphlet, "Vision and the VDT Operator," is available free from the American Optometric Association for an SASE to: Communications Division, AOA, 243 N. Lindbergh Blvd, St Louis, MO 63141.

A second pamphlet, published by the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health, Inc, recommends some standards for VDTs because they feel that eye-strain can be increased by poorly designed equipment. Some improvements would be larger characters, operator-adjustable brightness or contrast, and nonflickering characters. NYCOSH urges workers to insist on good maintenance of VDTs and periodical replacement of the tubes. A poorly maintained machine may form a blurred image. A number of suggestions are made for eliminating or reducing such VDT-related complaints as muscle pain, stiff neck, headaches, and insomnia. Copies of the 16-page NYCOSH pamphlet, "Health Protection for Operators of VDTs/CRTs," may be ordered from NYCOSH, 32 Union Square, Room 404, New York, N.Y. 10003. The price is \$1.50 per copy for individuals and \$3.50 postpaid for corporations and institutions.

COMPARABLE WORTH UPDATE

The Chronicle of Higher Education, January 11, 1984, reports that the Washington state comparable worth case is exciting a great deal of interest on campuses across the country. The ruling in the Washington case did not cover faculty members, but there is an argument that the same guidelines would apply to faculty. Most studies show that women and men in the same field or even the same department do not make comparable wages, so the comparable worth rule must surely be applicable in some of those cases. Women faculty in Oregon have a suit pending against the higher education system which raises issues similar to those raised in Washington. In a nutshell, the ruling in the Washington case required that the state expend \$225 million to eliminate pay discrimination against women employees; Washington was judged to be in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which bars sex bias in salaries and fringe benefits.

However, President Reagan's fiscal 1985 budget holds bad news for advocates of comparable worth and for supporters of numerical goals for hiring minorities and women in affirmative action plans, according to the February 15 Chronicle. An analysis of the budget discloses the argument that while the identity of those who would be doing the "dictating" is clear, the standards they would be applying is not clear. It was further argued that the impact of applying a point system in job evaluations would be to elevate the worth of characteristics held by the authors of the systems and to depress the worth of other characteristics, particularly those associated with mechanical skills and physical labor. "This Administration," the article quotes, "is strongly committed to enforcing the Equal Pay Act's guarantee of equal pay for equal work--and to maintaining the freedom employees now enjoy to decide which jobs should be paid more, and which less (to resolve questions of 'comparable worth') through bargaining with their employers." William B. Reynolds, Assistant Attorney General for civil rights, has said he is studying ways the federal government could intervene in Washington's appeal of a district court order to upgrade salaries and provide back pay to women who have been paid substantially less than men performing different jobs of comparable worth. On affirmative action, the budget analysis promised that the Administration would not abandon its highly controversial efforts to simplify and reduce regulations requiring affirmative action by employers with federal contracts.

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RECOGNIZE ACHIEVEMENTS

The Social Responsibilities Round Table/Coretta Scott King Award was established in 1969 during the ALA Annual Conference at Atlantic City. The award is given annually to a Black author and a Black illustrator for an outstanding, inspirational, and educational contribution to literature. It is designed to honor the life and work of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by recognizing Mrs. Coretta Scott King for her courage and determination to continue the work for peace and humanity. To commemorate the fifteenth year of this award, a souvenir book is being published for the 1984 Award Breakfast. The members of the SRRT-CSK Award Task Force are asking you to help make this a special celebration by giving a donation in one of three categories: \$100 (Sponsor), \$50 (Donor), or \$25 (Patron). Please send your tax deductible contribution before May 1 to ALA, SRRT-CSK, 50 E. Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611, Attention: Mary Biblo, Annie Lee Carroll. The names of donors contributing before May 1 will be printed in the souvenir book.

WOMEN IN LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION

Sue Searing, Women's Studies Librarian-at-Large of the University of Wisconsin System, sent WIL a copy of a booklet, Women in Library Administration, which is a collection of the papers and discussions presented at an institute on the Madison campus in November, 1974. The subjects covered: women in library administration in the U.S., libraries and librarians in Norway, Nigeria, and Bulgaria, and professional development in other fields such as law, nursing, and industry. If you want a copy, contact Searing at 112A Memorial Library, 728 State Street, Madison, WI 53706.

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CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

"Preserving Women's History: Archivists and Historians Working Together," is a conference co-sponsored by the Sophia Smith Collection of Smith College and the Schlesinger Library of Radcliffe College. The conference will be held at Smith College on May 30-31, 1984. For more information, contact: Virginia Christenson, The Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA 01063.

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AND THE BAD NEWS IS...

Lung cancer will surpass breast cancer as the number one cancer killer of women by some time in 1984. This somber projection has already been realized in Hawaii, California, Nevada, and Washington. The mortality rate for breast cancer has been leveling off for the last fifteen years. A steady increase in lung cancer is particularly tragic because the major cause, smoking, is preventable!

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE - May 21, 1984. Send articles or comments to Kay Jones, University of New Mexico Library, Albuquerque, NM 87131.

WOMEN IN LIBRARIES, Newsletter of the American Library Association Social Responsibilities Round Table Feminist Task Force, is published 5 times a year from September to June. Subscriptions are \$4 for individuals, \$6 for institutions prepaid, and \$8 for institutions invoiced. Send checks, payable to WOMEN IN LIBRARIES, to:

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