

Women In Libraries

NEWSLETTER OF THE
ALA/SRRT FEMINIST
TASK FORCE

Volume 17, number 4

April 1988

Editors: Leslie Kahn
& Mary Vela-Creixell

GET OUT THE VOTE: WE ARE THE LEAGUE OF FEMINIST LIBRARIAN VOTERS

The Feminist Task Force endorses for ALA offices:

*Patricia Berger (National Bureau of Standards) for
President-Elect

*Carla Stoffle (Univ. of Michigan) for Treasurer

and for Council:

*Marva DeLoach (Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

*Salvador Guerena (Univ. of California at Santa Barbara)

*David L. Searcy (Atlanta-Fulton Public Library)

*Binnie Tate Wilkin (Univ. of California at Berkeley)

THE WAYS OF WHITE FOLKS : Report by Polly Thistlethwaite

The Friday before the mid-winter conference, a few members and friends of the Feminist Task Force, 19 white women, gathered to participate in a workshop we called WHITE WOMEN WORKING TOGETHER ON PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM. The idea for this day-long session was generated at the Berkeley pre-conference last June. The winter workshop was based on the idea that we white people must be responsible for our racism, that we are obliged to confront ourselves and other whites as both the perpetrators of and the benefactors from our racist society. Too often, whites look to people of color for salvation, guidance, and exoneration from racism without taking thoughtful account of and direct answerability for the racism embedded in our personal and cultural histories.

In addition, some felt that at the Berkeley pre-conference, some of what was not said was as significant as what was said. White women who attended the 1987 pre-conference felt that, in the presence of people of color, we were sometimes slow to admit our own racism. We believed that a "white women's" workshop would generate a different, complementary set of discussion to help us toward becoming anti-racists.

This workshop was designed, then, to focus on our experiences as white women in a racist society. We enlisted guidance from Francie Kendall, the same facilitator involved with the core committee of West Coast women planning the up-coming New Orleans conference-within-a-conference. (See more about this on page 7.)

Francie assigned us homework prior to our meeting in San Antonio. Her background chart structured our responses to messages about, experiences with, and behaviors toward people of color during our childhoods,

adolescences, and adult years. We answered "Questions for White People": Do I think of myself as a racist? How am I benefitting from racism in my library? What price am I paying for racism? And we wrote an essay on the theme, "For me, being white means...." Francie included a bibliography and other exercises demanding our attention to racism.

We started the day with a couple of one-on-one encounter exercises outlined in Katz's White Awareness. We went on to discuss Francie's working definition of racism as power + prejudice, or the ability to put prejudice into action; we then considered the implications for understanding racism in this way. We talked about issues surrounding class and race and about affirmative action, and we shared some of our experiences with racism from our background charts. (Ed. note: Those charts do sound like medical charts, don't they! Very appropriate.) Later in the day, we broke into small groups to think about issues of racism within the profession (e.g., those involving the library press, the role of SRRT, library education, professional hiring, and promotion). We wound up the workshop late Friday night by reflecting on what we'd said, heard, and felt that day. We discussed the implications of meeting as a group of white women. What follows is a collection of reactions from participants in the workshop about the day's events.

--"What well-intentioned white liberal wants to admit she is a racist and a benefactor of a racist system.... I don't like admitting that about myself. But I must if I am to change and become actively anti-racist. I can be an anti-racist racist, but I'm still a racist. One of the teachings that is helpful to me in this process is from Alcoholics Anonymous. A sober alcoholic in AA is referred to as a 'recovering alcoholic.' She is still an alcoholic, but she is 'recovering.' It helps me to think of myself as a 'recovering racist.'

--"I didn't come away with specific strategies, but with an overall awareness of the complexity and pervasiveness of racism. Change comes slowly, and strategies for me are developing awareness, accepting and owning my own whiteness.... These are all first baby steps in what is a long process."

--"There was an advantage in white women coming together to address their racism, in the openness and willingness of the women to talk freely about themselves, their early racist experiences, their doubts, their remaining racist tendencies. But because we could not hear the reactions of people of color to these statements, we did not experience the anguish, the real horror that such stories mean.... And we may even have missed some of our own nuances of racism, some reflections of it in things we said--or didn't say--that might have brought a different reaction from people of color if they had been present."

--"The workshop did make me a little more understanding and tolerant of the variety of experiences of white women in approaching their relationships with people of color and of the many ways in which they have tried to deal with prejudice."

--"The workshop was good.... I felt at a 'disadvantage' of sorts because I hadn't participated in the Berkeley pre-conference. That experience was mighty powerful for the white women who attended. I think it is important to emphasize that this workshop is one little bit of the work we need to do to combat our racism. It is essential that we listen most to people of color, but we need to play a big role in addressing our own racism. We need to take responsibility for ourselves, but as whites we always must be 'monitored' (as someone said in the workshop) by people of color."

NEVER DONE: FTF MEETINGS AT MIDWINTER '88, as culled from notes by
Dee Conkling

*Announcements:

Building Women's Studies Collections: A Resource Guide, prepared by many members of the ARCL Women's Studies Section and edited by Joan Ariel, is now available from CHOICE, 100 Riverview Center, Middletown, CT 06457; \$12.

Women's Studies: A Recommended Core Bibliography, 1980-1985, Abridged Edition, by Catherine R. Loeb, Susan E. Searing, and Esther F. Stineman, has been published by Libraries Unlimited, Box 263, Littleton, CO 80160-0263; in paper for \$23.50.

The Women Library Workers Journal is again being issued on a regular schedule. Publishing articles and reviews, the editors can be contacted at WLW, c/o Women's Resource Center, Bldg. T-9, Room 116, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

The Marguerite Rawalt Resource Center of the Business & Professional Women's Foundation, 2012 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Wash., DC 20036 (202-293-1200), "for and about working women in the United States, tracks women's progress toward economic equity. The Center offers reference and referral services to individuals, government agencies, policy makers, and the media."

*Coalitions:

Look forward at the ALA Annual Convention to a Women's History Tour of New Orleans. Come too to the coalitions program on Sunday, July 10, 9:30-11am, when officers from ALA's women's groups will discuss those organizations' purposes and projects--and welcome you to join them. Officers of these groups now lunch together at each ALA conference to exchange ideas, thanks to the Coalitions Coordinators.



SMALL MIRACLES

Shattered Dreams is Charlotte Fedders' account of her battering by her husband, John, an attorney for the Securities and Exchange Commission. The two are now divorced after sixteen years of marriage. Accusing her of sharing the blame for the dissolution of their marriage, John Fedders demanded 25% of the royalties from sales of the book. On February 1, Maryland Circuit Court Judge James S. McAuliffe decided against that demand. He did, however, decrease John Fedders' alimony payments from \$750 a month to just \$400. The Fedders have five children, all sons and now living with their mother.



WHOSE PRESS IS THIS ANYWAY?

Participants at the ALA preconference against racism decided last summer that we ought to monitor our professional journals for their attitudes on race, gender, and sexual preference. Reports by volunteer examiners were presented at Midwinter. Since no particular methodology had been devised for all to use, rigorous comparison is unavailable, but anecdotal evidence is interesting. Susan Searing will attempt to locate similar surveys from which we may design a set of guidelines and a worksheet; monitors and journal editors may then consult these for standards.

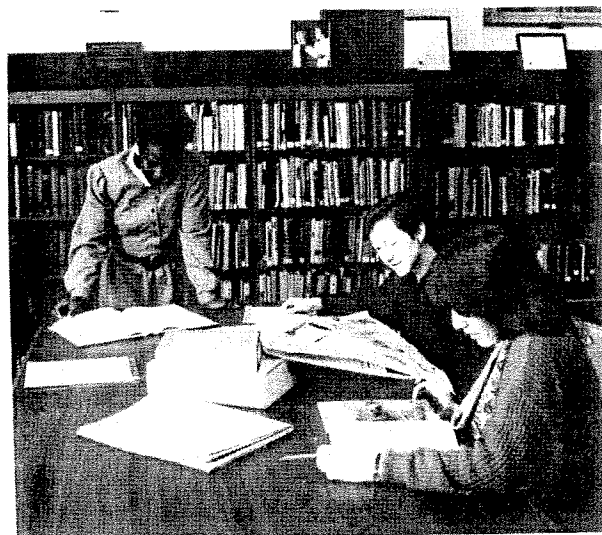
Miriam Crawford scrutinized American Libraries issues from the second half of 1987. She observed that the July/August issue featured an illustration for the "Conference Sketchbook" which "appears to stereotype female librarians (as) shocked at the Gay Pride parade." Of 73 pictures in that issue, 15 were of people of color. The September issue contained 67 pictures, with only 2 of people of color and 4 group shots including some people of color. "I can imagine the editor betting that this would get a reaction from feminists at least," she remarks of a page 745 drawing in the October issue; to illustrate the article, "The Database Jungle: Survival Advice from the Experts," there is a picture that "demonstrates both sexism and racism in its depiction of a terrified woman, outfitted for a safari, in a jungle filled with computer screens with faces that remind one of old cannibal stereotypes." Looking at the "Career Leads" sections, Miriam Crawford found insensitive language around sex, race, and class. Affirmative Action programs were rarely mentioned.

Susan Vaughn and Betty-Carol Sellen examined Library Journal, in which they discovered no multiethnic advertisements and not many showing women, even fewer with people of color. They checked for authors of articles, featured book reviews, editorials, photos on the "People" page, feature ads, graphics, and subjects of articles. It appears that in several issues a reader will find more women than men...only to bump into something as "stupid, agist, and sexist" as that candidate for a book of tasteless jokes, "The Dress," in the August 1987 issue.

Anyone wishing to see the full reports may contact WIL editor Leslie Kahn. Further reports on other periodicals will appear in future issues.

IT ALL COMES DOWN TO YOU

Speaking of Our Press, it's partner changing time again for WOMEN IN LIBRARIES. Both editors, Leslie, responsible for contents, and Mary, in charge of business, will have served our terms by the end of this volume, the next (June) issue. How can we entice you to take your turn? Do you love to find your mailbox full? What about being the first to hear of forthcoming publications? Would you like a forum for sounding off? Have you "a thing" about the scent of freshly printed pages? Are you looking for a commitment? Would you like everybody's addresses? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, do drop a note to FTF Coordinator Polly Thistlethwaite, 2 Washington Square Village, apt. 15-T, New York, NY 10012.



Business • Professional Women's
Foundation Library

WORKING OR WORKED?

Write to Amy Mayers, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, 1625 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20036 for information on the results of an NYU Graduate School of Public Administration study documenting sex and race discrimination in New York City jobs. Funded by the AFSCME, researchers found sizable income differences and job title segregation.

The Women's Occupational Health Resource Center, 117 St. John's Place, Brooklyn, NY 11217, is now publishing a quarterly, the WOHRC News, to raise consciousness about the conditions of women workers; \$12 for individuals, \$25 for institutions.

The University of Texas at Arlington (76019) is conducting a Women and Work conference at the Sheraton Centre Park Hotel May 12-13.

May 14, the Coalition for Labor Union Women will facilitate a rally on the Mall in Washington, DC. The purpose of the demonstration is to gain support for family and work issues such as federal support for childcare and family/medical leave.

ALA's Pay Equity Project is working on a publication to advise libraries on techniques of conducting pay equity studies. The casebook will guide us through the process of gaining library staff support, gathering data, formulating job evaluations, coming to conclusions, and presenting the report. Michele Leber, Fairfax County Library, chairs the Pay Equity Committee. She is a former editor of WOMEN IN LIBRARIES.

The address of the Lesbian Librarians National Network is P.O. Box 2402, Cambridge, MA 02238.

THE ENVELOPE, PLEASE

* The winners of the Gay/Lesbian Book Award are Joan Nestle, for A Restricted Country (Firebrand, \$8.95), and Randy Shilts, for And the Band Played On (St. Martin's, \$24.95). They will receive their prizes and make speeches at ALA's Gay & Lesbian Task Force program in New Orleans July 11 at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.--That's Monday.

Other nominations of special interest to women readers are:

Nonfiction:

Biren, Joan E. (JEB). Making a way: lesbians out front.
 Glad Hag.
 Boston Lesbian Psychologies Collective. Lesbian psychologies.
 Univ. of Illinois.
 Brown, Rita Mae. The poems of Rita Mae Brown. Crossing.
 Corrine, Tee. Dreams of the woman who loved sex. Banned Books.
 Loulan, JoAnn. Lesbian passion. Spinsters/Aunt Lute.
 Pollack, Sandra and Jeanne Vaughn, eds. Politics of the heart:
 a lesbian parenting anthology. Firebrand.
 Ramos, Juanita, ed. Companeras: Latina lesbians (an anthology).
 Latina Women's Educational Resources.

Fiction:

Birtha, Becky. Lover's choice. Seal.
 Bluejay, Jana. It's time: a nuclear novel. Tough Dove.
 Cottrell, Georgia. Shoulders. Firebrand.
 Forrest, Katherine V. Murder at the Nightwood Bar. Naiad.
 Miner, Valerie. All good women. Crossing.
 Moore, Maureen. Fieldwork. Seal.

CARE AND FEEDING

Betty-Carol Sellen is compiling a book of recipes by librarians. If you know of similar volumes, would you advise her of them. She works at the Brooklyn (NY) College Library.

FUNDAMENTALIST FEMINISM

Feminism Lives! publishes irregularly, but subscribers always receive two issues a year along with mailings on a variety of subjects, most recently, child custody and the network of women acting as a kind of underground railroad to hide children abused by their fathers but still receiving court-ordered visits from these fathers. The forthcoming issue on Backlash includes an article by Judith Levine on a subject that we wanted to study, the how-to-catch-a-man literature. The publisher, the Radical Feminist Organizing Committee, 109 Ellerbe, Durham, NC 27704, is committed to the proposition that all oppression starts with sexism. Lively, engaging, enraging, \$10 yearly.

BEHOLD!

For \$20 you can become a charter member of the new National Museum of Women in the Arts, 801 Thirteenth Street NW, Washington, DC 20005.

WITH YOUR BAAAD WOMANSELVES (Hattie Gossett)

Continuing on the theme of Librarians as Colleagues Across Racial Lines, at the 1988 ALA Annual Conference, the Feminist Task Force will study Strategies for Action. The program, on Saturday, July 9, probably from 12:30-4pm, will include a panel of librarians of color speaking about publishing, recruiting and hiring of nonwhite librarians, developing networks and coalitions, and formulating a national agenda of action against racism within our profession. Co-sponsors include the Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship, the Committee on Minority Concerns, the Black Caucus, the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association, the Public Library Association, REFORMA, ALISE, the Chinese-American Librarians Association, and SRRT. The possibilities for keynote speaker are exciting.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Library Outreach Reporter is a bimonthly costing \$18 annually and dedicated to library work with underserved people, with emphasis on disabled, illiterate, and old individuals. Write to the editor at 1671 E. 16th St., suite 226, Brooklyn, NY 11229.

Arranged geographically by state, the Directory of Services for Refugees and Immigrants, by Alan Edward Schorr, is available from the Denali Press of Juneau, Alaska for \$29.95. This book includes community, government, religious, and volunteer organizations and agencies.

FIGHT BACK!

A Mankato State University administrator last fall attended a workshop on marketing presented by the Duffy Design Group, a part of Fallon McElligott advertising agency. Made uncomfortable by workshop references to "bitches" and "whores," she wrote the presenter to protest the negative stereotypes of women, according to an article in Minnesota Women's Press (Dec. 21, 1987). In response, the administrator received a sarcastic letter and a photograph of a Dinka boy attempting to stimulate milk production in a cow. While a letter on her behalf from the Minn. Women's Consortium to the Duffy Design Group received no response, a letter to Fallon McElligott (Nov. 25) provoked two more sarcastic replies to the administrator, Neala Schleuning--these from Patrick Fallon and Tom McElligott (Dec. 7)...Although a formal apology was received by both Schleuning and the Minnesota Women's Consortium in a letter from Fallon dated Dec. 29, the SRRT of the Minnesota Library Association decries the sarcastic, racist, and sexist attitudes expressed by Fallon McElligott and voices its support of the Minnesota Women's Consortium in promoting a positive image of women.--Christopher Dodge, MSSRT

SHARED RESOURCES, SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES is the name of a conference to occur in Florence, Italy under the auspices of the ACRL Western European Studies Section, April 4-8. Eva Sartori of the University of Nebraska organized a session on women's studies. Sarah Pritchard, from LC, will discuss the value of microform collections for western European women's studies. Also on the program are representatives from the Bibliotheque Marguerite Durand, a women's history library in Paris, and from the International Archives for the Women's Movement (located in the Netherlands).

NEWS

Recently appointed Librarian of Congress John Billington has begun a leave of absence to gain a degree in library and information studies. In his place, Jean E. Coleman will direct our national library.

FOWL (Fie on Women Leaders) has organized a pro-strife group in opposition to OWL, the Ohio Women Librarians campaigning against sexism in libraries. The FOWL people promise to restore "family values" to our institutions and to maintain guess-who as the rulers of the roosts.

The FTF program committee announces the cancellation of previously scheduled activities for the July ALA convention. Plan instead to attend the new offering, a fashion gala for recruiting new members. "It's all part of our new image," proclaims FTF coordinator Polly Thistlethwaite. "Now all we need is a new name: feminīst? task? force?--yuck!"

The problem of daycare for children accompanying librarian parents to ALA will find a new solution this summer. Inspired by workfare programs, childcare providers will supervise our little friends in the coliating, stapling, folding, addressing, and mailing of the next issue of WOMEN IN LIBRARIES.

Sign up now for the next American Libraries course in making our libraries more responsive to women, differently abled persons, and people of color.

APRIL FOOL!

DO NOT FORGET

"Librarians as Colleagues Across Racial Lines: Strategies for Action", a program scheduled for the 1988, ALA New Orleans Conference on Saturday, July 9 from 12:30-4:00 P.M.

For further information, contact Betty-Carol Sellen, Gideonse Library, Brooklyn College, Ave. H & Bedford Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11210 Tel. (718) 780-5618. WOMEN IN LIBRARIES, the Newsletter of the American Library Association's Feminist Task Force, is published five times a year, from September to June. Send articles, comments, or books for review to:

Leslie Kahn
2 Manchester, 2A
Newark, NJ 07104

Subscriptions are \$5 for individuals, \$8 for institutions prepaid, \$10 for invoiced subscriptions. Send checks, payable to WOMEN IN LIBRARIES to:

Mary vela-Creixeli
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