



Women in Libraries

Volume 21, Number 5

September 1992

ALA for Feminists:

The first day of the San Francisco conference gladdened the hearts of all feminist librarians. The President's Program in the afternoon of Saturday included speeches from Gloria Steinem and Patricia Schroeder. Ms. Steinem encouraged us toward a revolution, while Ms. Schroeder encouraged us to participate in the electoral process. The import of both was the responsibility of librarians to effect change.

On Saturday Night, the Feminist Task Force sponsored a talk by sex activist Susie Bright. After a brief and well attended talk, we discussed censorship and the ways in which librarians could help maintain access to sexual information. Susie Bright is proud to be the daughter of a librarian.

On Sunday morning, the Feminist Task Force held its First Annual Feminist Authors Breakfast. This event was sold out. After a hearty breakfast, we heard from the three authors: Dorothy Allison, Sandy Butler and Katherine Forrester. It was an exciting and eclectic group of authors. The presses generously gave every attendee a free signed copy of the book of their choice by these authors in exchange for a ticket stub from the breakfast.

Sunday Afternoon was the first Business Meeting of the Feminist Task Force. We discussed the success of the author breakfast and what we learned from it for future author breakfast organizing. Celeste Tibbets volunteered to continue organizing this event. We hope to find authors in the Louisiana area to participate in the Annual Conference in New Orleans in June 1993. Anyone with ideas should send them to the Feminist listserv (feminist@mitvma.mit.edu) or to Celeste at Atlanta Fulton Public Library, Ivan Allen Dept., 1 Margaret Mitchell Square, Atlanta GA 30303 (tel 404-730-1910). Sending it to the listserv might generate discussion which would be good. The listserv "owner" Theresa Tobin, will send them off to Celeste.

We then talked about the Feminist Read Posters. We can make suggestions to ALA if we want to have an "official" Read poster—we brainstormed a few names that might appeal to ALA: Gloria Steinem, Jodie Foster, Audre Lord, Paule Marshall, Lily Tomlin, Susan Faludi, K.D. Lang. We would hope to persuade whoever is chosen to display a small feminist press title. Amy Beth volunteered to work on this project.

Monday business Meeting: We began preliminary discussion of Women's Night Out for New Orleans.

We heard a report on the mentoring program. It was a limited success this year and we learned quite a bit for the future. TT

Annual Program:

Susie Bright advocates more active role for libraries in combatting censorship

The Feminist Task Force's program, Susie Bright: On Sexuality, Censorship, and Libraries, was a success. Bright addressed a group of about 200 on Saturday night. Sarah Pritchard moderated and introduced Bright, and Sherre Dryden introduced the program. Bright faulted archives and libraries for failing to build truly inclusive collections. For example, she said, serials on erotica are published in limited numbers and are retained in few places. She said libraries should be active in promoting a wider range of such materials and making sure that more readers' needs were being met. Bright spoke frankly about the potential for erotica to stimulate and urged her audience not to fear such responses to a work. One of the fascinating things about erotica, she said, was its ability to affect the viewer on every level, be it emotional, spiritual, intellectual or physical.

She told a tale about having to choose sides during her college years at the University of California at Santa Cruz. A fellow student made a public display of destroying a library book because of images of female bondage that the student thought were objectionable. Though a feminist, Bright couldn't support the destruction and decided at that time that she could not advocate limiting availability of materials.

During the lively question-and-answer period that followed, Bright encouraged libraries to purchase and make available erotic literature and X-rated videotapes. MT

San Francisco Feminist Authors' Breakfast

The Annual Feminist Authors' Breakfast program got off to a great start. In a positive, enthusiastic atmosphere, three feminist authors told approximately 100 rapt listeners about their work, their goals, and the difficulties they had endured. Dorothy Allison, author of Trash and a new work, Bastard Out of Carolina, spoke first, delivering inspiration from the heart.

Kathy Forrest, author of Curious Wine and Murder at the Nightwood Bar, among many, talked about the difficulties of discovering and dealing with her lesbianism in the midst of a hostile culture and the importance of helping each other.

Sandy Butler co-wrote, with her partner, Cancer in Two Voices about their relationship during her lover's terminal bout with breast cancer. She spoke last and talked longest about the experiences she and her lover encountered, and the pain of living through such an agonizing ordeal. She is working on further studies of women's health care.

Madeleine Tainton introduced each speaker and moderated the enthusiastic question-and-answer period following the speakers. After the moving and inspiring presentations, it was hard to bring the event to an end. MT

Meeting notes from the Coordinator

New officers:

Coordinator-elect.... Theresa Tobin
Scribe..... Mary Beth Kendrick
Awareness Amy Beth and Bonita Corliss
Coalitions Jill Ellern
Elections Deb Gilchrist
Mentoring..... Deb Gilchrist
Publisher liaison..... Sherre Dryden
Program Chair Madeleine Tainton
assisted by Mary Beth Kendrick

Projected activities

A Feminist Read, similar to the Gay and Lesbian Read, was suggested as a possible event for future conferences.

The Feminist Read poster project has not been shelved. Amy Beth stepped in to take charge of it. The intent behind the project is to provide alternatives to the ALA "Read" posters picturing celebrities with books, by illustrating alternative styles and representative personalities. For instance, Moon Zappa has been approached.

The publisher liaison position is a new one, assumed by Sherre Dryden. She will coordinate activities with publishers, working to get information to libraries about the materials produced by feminist and other independent presses. To begin with, we would like to ask newsletter subscribers to write to jobbers and ask them to include independent press books. One publisher reminded us not to refer to these presses as "small" but as feminist, women's, or independent presses, so as not to belittle them. We are hoping for assistance from members of the Women's Studies Section of ALA. Other ideas included holding a poster session on how to get jobbers to include materials, providing additional handouts at ALA conferences generally and at FTF events particularly, and approaching book rental outfits such as McNaughton to persuade them to be more inclusive.

Elections

Dee Conkling lost her bid for Action Council but will run again. Who knows why, but Hardy Franklin won the race for ALA President.

Listserv

The Feminist Listserv has 216 people on it now. As new people sign on, each receives a letter that explains the list's purpose. WSS members asked if we should open it to them. After discussion, we agreed to do that and wait to see if the membership were too cumbersome to be handled by one list. We could divide the list later on if it seems to become too specialized.

San Francisco Entertainment

Women's Night Out was at the Cafe San Marcos, which I heard, from those who attended, was interesting. Several FTF members also joined in the Gay Pride Parade, which filled the downtown streets of San Francisco on Sunday with both participant and onlookers.

Next annual authors' breakfast

Sherre Dryden will be working with publishers and the FTF members who are working on planning the next author breakfast to select the authors and get some sponsorship from publishers. Because of ticket and publicity difficulties, we decided to have the breakfasts only at annual. MT

Thanks from the Coordinator

To the publishers who supported the Feminist Authors' Breakfast: Spinsters, Firebrand, and Naiad;

To Sherre Dryden, who took care of arrangements for and introduced one of the most exciting programs we have had at annual in years, with Susie Bright as speaker;

To Sarah Pritchard, for her role in introducing Susie Bright and moderating the question period following, and best of luck to her in her new position as library director at Smith;

To Celeste Tibbetts, for all the splendid work she did in planning the Feminist Authors' Breakfast, and to her and Dotty Granger for handling the tickets and innumerable other details;

To Dotty Granger, who is stepping down as scribe after doing such a great job through so many meetings, and best of luck to her, too, as she pares back some of her ALA involvement to seek another advanced degree;

To Deb Gilchrist and Theresa Tobin, for monitoring elections and for handling many other duties too numerous to mention;

To Julia Phipps Dickinson, for her tireless and excellent work on the newsletter;

And to everyone I don't have space to mention by name, thank you for all the work you have done, and all the time and effort you have devoted to the activities of the Feminist Task Force. Thanks to all of you, we have had one of our most satisfying and stimulating annual conferences.

Thank You!
Madeleine Tainton
Coordinator
301 Roan Drive
Eugene, Oregon 97401

Sexual Harrassment Series

Librarianship has never focused sufficient attention on sexual harrassment in the workplace. The October, 1991, Hill-Thomas Senate hearings barely caused a ripple in the library press.

We may have an opportunity to change that. Efforts are now afoot to get one of librarianship's major journals to agree to run for one year a column (or page) in which women who have been sexually harrassed in the library workplace can anonymously tell their stories. If we can generate enough copy from all segments of the library world (academic, public, school, special libraries/information centers, and library education), we have been told that Anita Hill will consider doing a three paragraph introduction to the series in the first number.

Have you got a story? And would you be willing to recount it anonymously for thousands of librarians?

Please contact:
Christine Jenkins
1115 Jenifer St., Madison, WI 53703 (not on email)
or
Susan Searing
2142 Oakridge Ave., Madison, WI 53706
(searing@macc.wisc.edu).

(If you don't have a story but know someone who does, please encourage them to contact us.) CJ/SS



Women in Libraries

Women in Libraries, the Newsletter of the American Library Association's Feminist Task Force, is published five times a year, from September to June.

Beginning with Volume 22, Number 1, Fall 1992, *Women in Libraries* will be published four times a year.

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Subscriptions are \$5 for individuals, \$8 for institutions prepaid, or \$10 for invoiced subscriptions. Make check payable to *Women in Libraries*.

Contributors: Elaine Brennan, Christine Jenkins, Susan Searing, Theresa Tobin, & Phyllis Holman Weisbard.

Office of Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin

What follows is a partial list of new resources in the series Wisconsin Bibliographies in Women's Studies that may be of interest. These are free upon request and may be ordered either in paper format or electronically through e-mail.

Women and World Literature: a bibliography of anthologies of women's literature in translation, by Carolyn J. Kruse (15 p.)

Issues Related to Women in Management: a selected bibliography, 4th revision, 1992, by Marge Karsten (7 p.)

Brave, Active & Resourceful Females in Picture Books, by Claudia Morrow (11 p.)

Wisconsin Women Writers of Adult Fiction and Poetry, 1962-1992, by Maureen Welch (21 p.)

Finding Funding: grant-getting tips for women, by Phyllis Holman Weisbard (8 p.), reprinted from the winter 1992 issue of FEMINIST COLLECTIONS (V. 13, no. 2).

Other publications of the Office include three available on joint subscription: Feminist Periodicals: a current listing of contents, New Books on Women & Feminism, and Feminist Collections: a quarterly of women's studies resources; and a 202-page annotated bibliography, Women, Race & Ethnicity.

For prices and further information about these publications or others from this office, please contact Phyllis Weisbard at the address, phone number, or e-mail address below.

Thanks,
Phyllis Holman Weisbard
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Women Writers Project

The Women Writers Project at Brown University has been working for almost four years now to put together a textbase of early women writers in English (early being approximately pre-1830 for Britain, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and approximately pre-1850 for North America, Australia, India, South Africa, and other colonies).

Thus far, we have approximately 200 works on line, most of which we make available in hard copies for scholars who want to be able to use them in research and in the classroom, but we're working to increase the accessibility of the electronic version of the texts as well. The paper copies are *not* fully edited and professionally published volumes (yet), but are laser-printed versions that attempt to be faithful to the original printings until such time as scholars prepare new editions. Even in that format, some libraries have chosen to purchase and bind our print-outs, in order to get the books more available to students and faculty. Some of the volumes will be published under a series rubric by Oxford University Press (the first four volumes will be out by December 1992), while others may

remain available forever only through the electronic networks, or as fourth generation xeroxes of microfilms.

One of the early decisions we made about our texts was that we wanted them to be free from dependence on a single machine, operating system, or program. We have thus been encoding all of our texts with what is known as SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language) which is an ISO standard, and which is beginning to be adopted for applications on many different platforms. Unfortunately, this means that the encoded texts can be difficult to read on line until more appropriate software is available (but I know people who are working on the problem).

I'd be happy to give folks more information about the WWP, including the list of texts available, to answer particular questions about how we've decided to add texts to the textbase, or to take suggestions about texts you'd like to have made available. Elaine Brennan, Assistant Director, Women Writers Project, Box 1841, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912 EB

3rd Annual Chicago Walk for the Homeless

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, October 3, 1992 at the First Unitarian Church. The 6-mile walk kicks off at 9:30 a.m. There are six scheduled stops along the way for walkers to learn about a number of service organizations; half of the net proceeds will go to these providers.

The purposes of the walk are to focus media and public attention on the hardships those without homes will face in

the cold winter months ahead, to educate the public about the problems of homelessness and what is currently being done to help, and to raise money for service agencies working to relieve suffering and provide homes.

For more information and pledge sheets, please call 312/271-3119.

Acquisitions Notes

Susie Bright's Sexual Reality: a virtual sex world reader. Cleis Press. ISBN: 0-939416-59-x. \$9.95 paper; ISBN: 0-939416-58-1. \$24.95 cloth.

Back to press for a second printing of 10,000 copies, this book is scheduled to be featured in such media as: Lambda Rising Book Report, Gay Community News, The Advocate, and the San Francisco Sentinel.

Feminist Fatale: voices from the twentysomething generation explore the future of the women's movement. Paula Kamen. Penguin, USA. ISBN: 1-55611-257-2. \$10.95 paperback. 404 pages.

Feminist fatale serves as a unique bridge, demystifying feminism and helping younger readers make personal and political connections to the women's movement which takes into account their own distinct social and political perspectives.

Kamen discusses her generation's views of feminism and aversion to the "F" word, traces the roots of their perceptions, whether from the media or criticism of the past women's movement, addresses a variety of issues that touch the lives of readers, including those of work, family, sexual violence and racism, and reports about a variety of feminist influences distinct to this generation, such as the

mushrooming growth of women's studies, Take Back the Night actions, and the reproductive rights movement.

The Black Anglo-Saxons. Nathan Hare. Third World Press. ISBN: 0-88378-130-1.

In the 1990's, the issues of cultural identity and conformity continue to divide the African-American community. The Black Anglo-Saxons is a searing and thought-provoking analysis of the schisms within the Black community and the impact of integration on the African-American personality.

Written by Dr. Nathan Hare, a prominent Black sociologist, Black Anglo-Saxons is as compelling today as it was in 1965 when it was first published.

Women Make Movies, producer and distributor of multicultural independent films by and about women, annotate over 250 titles in their 1992 catalog. New releases include After the Montreal Massacre, Access Denied (a video addressing reproductive rights), Guerrillas in Our Midst (a documentary portrait of artist group the Guerrilla Girls), and Juggling Gender (what is it like to be a woman with a beard?) 225 Lafayette St., Suite 206, NY NY 10012. Ph: 212-925-0606. Fax: 212-925-2052.

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