



Feminist Task
Force

The Feminist Task Force—25 Years

Women in Libraries

Volume 24, Number 3

May 1995



Annual Conference Meeting Schedule

FTF Meetings

Feminist Task Force meetings:

- Saturday, June 24. 2—4 p.m.,
MCC-E253B
- Monday, June 26. 8—9 a.m.,
Fairmont Ambassador Room

We will be planning the Feminist Author Breakfast and the FTF program for the 1996 annual conference in New York, and furthering our mentorship program for women of color interested in librarianship. If you are interested but cannot attend, contact Deb Gilchrist, Feminist Task Force Coordinator, by phone at 206-964-6553, or by e-mail, dgilchr1@ctc.edu.

Social Responsibility Round Table

Action Council meetings:

- Saturday, June 24, 9:30—11 a.m., Marriott
Purdue-Wilson
- Tuesday, June 27, 9:30—11 a.m., Hyatt-
Regency, Ballroom A South

May 1995

Issue Highlights

For Feminism's Lighter Side:

The Feminist Authors Breakfast is the place to be, Sunday morning at 8 a.m. For details and to order your ticket, see page 3.

25 Years for FTF: See page 8.

Conference Meetings and Programs:

Calendar begins on page 2.

Special summer book review section:

A controversial video on women and the UN, mysteries, and more, from some independent presses. Pages 5—7.

From the Conference Schedule:

Programs and meetings you should know about

Refer to your conference program for changes or corrections.

Friday, June 23.

9:00 a.m.—5:30 p.m. *Reaching Inside—Reaching Out: Supporting Growth in Libraries and Society*. Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Task Force preconference program. Palmer House-PDR 18.

6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m. *Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Book Award Author Reception*. Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Task Force reception. Gerber-Hart.

Saturday, June 24.

8:30 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship (COSWL) meeting. MCC-E260.

9:30—11 a.m. SRRT Action Council meeting. Marriott Purdue-Wilson.

9:30 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Committee on Pay Equity meeting. MCC-E264.

11:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m. **Women's Issues in ALA: Hot Topics and Overview. Introduction to COSWL, FTF, and other groups.** A cosponsored program. MCC-E258. See page 4 for more information on this program.

2—4 p.m. **Feminist Task Force meeting.** MCC-E253B

2:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m. *How to Make \$1,000 a Minute: Negotiating your Salaries and Raises.* Committee on Pay Equity program. MCC-E258.

4:15 p.m.—5:15 p.m. ALA General Membership I meeting. MCC.

Sunday, June 25.

8:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. **Feminist Authors Breakfast: Women and Humor. Feminist Task Force program.** Westin-Windsor/Buckingham. See facing page for more information on this program.

9:30 a.m.—11:00 a.m. *Pushing the Boundaries: Zines and Libraries.* Alternatives in Print Task Force program. Marriott-Northwest/Ohio Street.

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11:30 p.m.—12:30 p.m. LAMA Women Administrators Discussion Group meeting. Swissotel-Grand Ballroom II.

2:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m. COSWL Bibliography Task Force meeting. MCC-E256.

2:00 p.m.—5:30 p.m. *Global Change, Data and Information Systems: Roles of Libraries.* Environment Task Force program. Marriott-Northwest/Ohio Street.

4:30 p.m.—5:30 p.m. COSWL Research Subcommittee meeting. Palmer House-Cresthill Room 11.

(Continued on page 4.)



Women in Libraries

Women in Libraries, the Newsletter of the American Library Association's Feminist Task Force, is published four times a year.

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Subscriptions are \$5 for individuals, \$8 for institutions (prepaid), or \$10 for invoiced subscriptions.

Humor to Start Your Day on Sunday

Humor must be a feminist issue, especially when you combine it with food

Feminist humor writers, a cartoonist and an editor explore the role of humor in women's lives and the feminist movement at the Third Annual Feminist Authors Breakfast, Sunday, June 25, 8 to 11 a.m.

The four speakers are Jorjet Harper, Achy Obejas, Lisa Grayson, and Nicole Ferentz.

Lesbomaniac

Writer, editor, teacher, Jorjet Harper has published in more than thirty journals and magazines. Her new book, *Lesbomania*, is a compilation of her columns which have appeared in the gay and lesbian press around the country.



Lesbomania: Humor, Commentary, and New Evidence that we are Everywhere, published by New Victoria Press, takes a humorous look at life within the lesbian community, its subcultures, issues that divide, sex and romance, and coming out. Many of the columns were first published in

Four feminist humorists serve up humor with your breakfast.

Chicago publications *Outlines* and *Nightlines*. Harper has appeared at Outwrite conferences, Women and Children First Bookstore, the National Women's Music Festival, and the Fifth International Feminist Book Fair in Amsterdam. *Lesbomania* has been performed as a theatrical piece and is available on cassette.

Poet, novelist, and reporter

Achy Obejas is a widely published poet, fiction writer, and journalist. Her poetry has been published in *Condltions*, *Revista Chicano-Riqueña*, and *Beloit Poetry Journal*, among others. She writes a weekly column for the *Chicago Tribune*, and is a regular contributor to *High Performance*, *Chicago Reader*, and *Windy City Times*. Obejas received an NEA fellowship in poetry in 1986 and a Peter Lisagor Award for political reporting for her coverage of the Chicago mayoral elections. In her fictional book, *We came all the way from Cuba so*

you could dress like this?, Obejas writes about uprooted people. Some, like herself, are Latino immigrants and lesbians; others are men, both gay and straight, people with AIDS, addicts, and other people living marginally, just surviving. This book, her first, is published by Cleis Press.

From a literary magazine

An editor of *Primavera* since 1984, Lisa Grayson specializes in revision of fiction: she is also the magazine's designer and production director. Her fiction has appeared in *Mother Jones*, *Pikestaff Forum*, *Chicago Sheet*, and *The Rave Review*. *Primavera*, known as the grande dame of women's literary magazines, is a feminist literary journal featuring fiction, poetry, and art on the experiences of women. Writers published in *Primavera* include Maxine Clair, Louise Erdrich, Lisel Mueller, and Michael Lee West. Originally a project of the University of Chicago Feminist Organization, *Primavera* became a separate student activity in 1975. The magazine severed its ties to the university in 1990 and is now published by nonprofit Movable Type, Inc.

Cartoons for us

Artist, cartoonist, illustrator, graphic designer and teacher, Nicole Ferentz is currently at work on a book about the creative process, *Fundamentally compromised: an unauthorized examination of the life of the creative person*. Her cartoons have been published in Roz Warren's *Mothers!*, *Women's Glibber*, *The Best Contemporary Women's Humor*, *What is this thing called sex?*, *Libido*, *In These Times*, *The Advocate*, *Out/Look*, *Outlines*, *Nightlines*, *Outweek*, *Windy City Times*, and others. She has designed and illustrated a line of lesbian greeting cards for Through Our Eyes, Inc., and has done illustrations for Gerber/Hart Library, Barbara's Bookstore, WBEZ Public Radio, the Museum of Science and Industry, and the Chicago Reader. Ferentz designed and illustrated *The Working Girls' Datebook 1989*, a calendar for lesbians, and she illustrated *The Lesbian Love Advisor*, by Celeste West, published by Cleis Press.

To buy your ticket

You may buy your ticket by mail or at the conference, \$15 in advance or \$18 at the ALA Meal Ticket Counter, \$9 for library school students. To order by mail, send your check, payable to ALA, to Dorothy Granger, Pacific Oaks College Library, 5 Westmoreland Place, Pasadena, CA 91103.

—C. Chapple

Conference Highlights

(Schedule continued from page 2.)

4:30 p.m.—5:30 p.m. Women's Studies Section Membership meeting. Hotel Intercontinental, Americas.

8:00 p.m.—10:00 p.m. *Cuba: Cultural Costs of the Blockade*. International Responsibilities Task Force program. Hyatt-Water Tower.

Monday, June 26.

8—9 a.m. **Feminist Task Force meeting.** Fairmont Ambassador Room

9:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. *New Feminist Research in Library and Information Science: Implications for Libraries*. Women's Studies Section program. Cosponsored by FTF. MCC-E351. See next column this page for more information.

9:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m. Membership meeting. Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Task Force. Swissotel-Grand Ballroom II.

11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. ALA General Membership II meeting. MCC.

2:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m. *Peacemaking in the Schools*. Peace Information Exchange Task Force program. Palmer House, PDR 8.

2:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m. Committee on Pay Equity meeting. Hyatt-Skyway 265.

8:00 p.m.—10:00 p.m. **25th Anniversary Celebration. Feminist Task Force program.** Swissotel-Grand Ballroom I. See page 8 for more information.

Tuesday, June 27.

7:30 a.m.—9:00 a.m. *Annual Awards Breakfast*. Coretta Scott King Award Task Force. Hilton, Grand Ballroom.

9:30—11 a.m. SRRT Action Council meeting. Hyatt-Regency, Ballroom A South

(MCC means McCormick Convention Center.)

Visit Hull House

Sunday, June 25 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. A special free tour of Hull House has been planned for us. In addition to a tour the film "Women of Hull House" will be shown. Special work is being done to gather information related to women in libraries. (Address: 800 S. Halsted—about a 10 minute cab ride from downtown.)

Women's issues in ALA

A tradition of introducing ALA members to women's groups in ALA will take a different form this year. At "Women's Issues in ALA: Hot Topics and Overview," several groups will have tables displaying publications and publicity materials. Come and bring some hot topics you'd like to see explored, such as gender harassment on the Internet, affirmative action, women's issues in the library media, etc.

Groups to be represented include, of course, the Feminist Task Force, with the Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship, LAMA Women Administrators Discussion Group, Committee on Pay Equity, the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Task Force, Women's Studies Section, and RASD Women's Materials and Women Library Users Discussion Group. It will be a great chance for informal networking. Be at the Convention Center, room E258, on Saturday, June 24, 11:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m. We'll continue networking over lunch afterward.

New feminist research

Three scholars present research linking problems in our field to feminist issues at the Women's Studies Section program Monday, June 26, 9—11 a.m. at MCC-E251.

Roma Harris, University of Western Ontario, discusses "Gender relations and information technology," based on her book: *Librarianship: the erosion of a woman's profession*. Harris has studied how information technology is redefining librarianship by ridding it of traits which made it a female-intensive profession. She argues that we must define a new librarianship which will embrace and value female professionalism.

Nancy Becker Johnson, Wayne State University talks on "For want of a nail: implications of bibliographic control and publication prestige." Johnson notes that recent research in library science has applied feminist methodologies to such diverse areas as personal biography and computer architecture, but wonders if this research has been beneficial to women's studies. She looks at two areas, bibliographic control and publication, to see how they keep researchers from contributing directly to the whole of women's studies.

Hope Olson, University of Alberta, speaks on "Patriarchy, hierarchy and subject access." She notes that current patriarchal subject access schemes follow a tradition of assuming that we can describe information by using some universal language. By using feminist deconstruction, she argues against creating new universals and instead proposes strategies for subject access techniques to breach the limits of existing schemes to make room for those previously excluded.

After the talks, three librarians will present their perspectives, pertinent to a variety of library settings. A question and answer session will follow.

Women in Libraries



Whatever you're reading this summer, make your mark or make your escape.

Summer Reading: Review Section, Hot or Cold

Women and the UN

Lasch, Judith, executive producer. *Breaking Barriers: A History of the Status of Women and the Role of the United Nations*. Red Bank, NJ: Lasch Media Productions, 1994. (30 minutes, VHS with discussion guide, \$49.95, Lasch Media Productions, 3 White Street, Red Bank, NJ 07701)

From the opening archive shots of the United Nations, it is hard to miss how few women are in attendance at any UN meetings. Yet the United Nations has created statements concerning the worth of the human person and asking for a recognition of economic and social contributions that women make. In 1946, Eleanor Roosevelt addressed the UN to request that they take a stand recognizing that women don't have full rights of

citizenship. In recent interviews, we find that little has changed. Lasch has several interviews with members of the Non-Government Organizations Forum, to meet in conjunction with the UN Conference on Women. Esther Hymer, UN representative for the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, says "our society needs the full contribution of everyone." David Poindexter, president of Population Communications International, says there is "not a situation of equality anywhere in the world."

Lasch takes a daring stand when she says, first of all, that religious and educational institutions should be leading the way towards equality for women, and next, when she says they are instead lagging behind and resisting any movement towards this goal. "Nowhere is the improvement in the status of women more slow

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than in the places that should set the pace. . . There has been nothing that has done more to constrict women than religious beliefs and teachings."

The video may be used at the UN Conference, and it is important to see. An article in *The Catholic World Report*, February 1995, calls it "an antireligious diatribe." Bill Donohue, of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, was quoted in the article as demanding "that the UN Conference on Women repudiate the video and permanently prevent any showing."

Some women representing religious NGOs were interviewed in the video. The emphasis is on how social and cultural structures and traditions resist change yet must be changed if women are to be included and fully recognized as human beings with equal rights. It sounds like the Catholics can't take the heat.

Time-travel for children

Sreenivasan, Jyotsna. *The moon over Crete*. Duluth, MN: Holy Cow! Press, 1994. Paper, ISBN 0-930100-58-1, \$8.95. Sim Gellman, illustrator.

Lily is 11, trying to deal with sexual harassment from a classmate, not being taken seriously by her parents or even her friends. Fortunately, she has an understanding flute teacher who takes her time-traveling to Crete. Here she makes friends, boys aren't mean, and men and women share equally in duty as well as leisure. This book, for children of Lily's age, is simple and undemanding. Yet it paints a picture of a society where equality is a possibility, a possibility children need to grasp. Lily loves Crete so that she wants to stay, but instead, she returns with a goal: she will do what she can to bring Cretan beliefs to modern life. This is a worthy first effort by author Sreenivasan, and a worthy book for children's collections.

Helping the homeless

Nietzke, Ann. *Natalie on the street*. Corvallis, OR: Calyx Books, 1994. Cloth, ISBN 0-934971-42-0, \$24.95; paper, ISBN 0-934971-41-2, \$14.95.

Ann Nietzke does what most of us are unwilling to do: she provides fundamental aid for a homeless woman. In Nietzke's clear, personal account, she provides what assistance she can to Natalie, a 74-year-old woman who has taken up residence on the sidewalk across from her apartment. Nietzke is without mercy as she describes the trials of Natalie's daily existence. Natalie has no place to keep clean and cannot leave her possessions to relieve herself in private. If you have never thought about the practical details of such an existence, this book makes many things clear. Nietzke provides clean clothes, some of which Natalie accepts and some of which she does not, she provides materials for sponge baths, and she removes her packaged

excrement. Nietzke works in a homeless shelter, so she came to the situation with an understanding of some of these needs. Nevertheless, she spares neither herself nor us. There are no easy solutions, but Nietzke, unlike most of us, does not avert her eyes. Perhaps this account of one struggle will show some of us the way to do more ourselves.

Why shouldn't maidens be angry?

Douglas, Lauren Wright. *A rage of maidens*. Tallahassee, FL: Naiad Press, 1994. Paper, ISBN 1-56280-068-X, \$9.95.

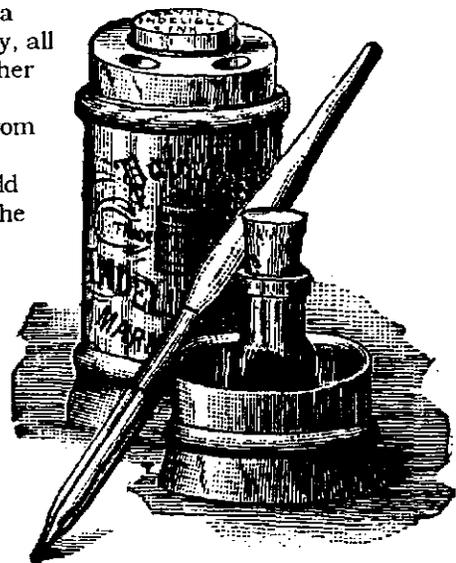
Caitlin Reece is one of those tough, strong, smart, feminine, unexpected detectives that make you say "Yes! We can do that, we can do all of that!" In this latest installment in the Reece series, she is hired to protect a girl, Andy, who witnessed a sexual assault on the latter's sister. Because Andy was the primary witness, the perpetrator has vowed to take revenge when he is released from prison. Now he's out, and Andy is terrified. And apparently he is up to his old tricks, working as a girls' swimming coach at the local youth center. Reece is not a superhero; she is more like a real person with real failings, and, along with a wish to protect Andy, she finds she is not free of vengeful thoughts of her own. Douglas brings it all to a very satisfying conclusion.

After the apocalypse

Cadora, Karen. *Stardust bound*. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1994. Cloth, ISBN 1-56341-053-2, \$18.95; paper, ISBN 1-56341-052-4, \$8.95.

In the future, science is a crime. Because of ecological disaster, astronomers must go underground. Out in the wilderness, a supposedly abandoned observatory is a haven for the lost, the inspired, and the misfit. Quincy Alexander is torn between loyalties to a dying friend, the possibility of new love, and a mysterious legacy, all while she and other scientists try to remain hidden from UniTech, the technocratic world government. At the heart of this struggle lies the fate of the new world order. Short but sweet, *Stardust* portrays the future with an ecological heart.

—M. Tanton



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And what's it good for? A lot!

Luebke, Barbara F. and Mary Ellen Reilly. *Women's Studies Graduates*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1995. Cloth, ISBN 0-807762-75-x; paper, ISBN 0-807762-74-1, \$21.95.

In the 1980s, when a university degree was expected to be utilitarian, i.e., a guarantor of financial stability, even success, the question "What do you do with a Women's Studies major?" was not an unfamiliar one. This book sets out to provide a significant answer by making public the results of a truly random survey of graduates from Women's Studies programs from 142 colleges and universities. Their sample comprised 89 respondents, representing a normal population in family characteristics, role models, geographical location, religious affiliation, education, occupations and incomes, and sexual orientation and relationships. The only surprising element was the low representation of minorities and the absence entirely of Hispanics among the graduates.

They were asked four questions: 1. Why did you major in Women's studies; 2. how has your major affected you professionally since graduation; 3. how has it affected you personally since graduation; and 4. If you had to do it over again, would you major in Women's Studies?

The book compiles and quotes almost verbatim the responses received. I was impressed by the richness and honesty in their words. The individual stories make for worthwhile reading because any stereotypes about either the program or those who sign up are shattered even in the first section which classifies the responses by occupation. The variety of professions represented demonstrates vividly that "their degree is anything but restrictive." Words from an Energy Conservation Manager also educate the reader:

Women's Studies gave me the confidence to enter a non-traditional field-energy conservation-and to understand and diffuse problems that arise when women are entering new or different territory. What I learned was that if I wanted to succeed in a way that was possible and comfortable for me, I had to work to change the criteria for success. . . . Currently I manage a program that has a lot of staff, subcontractors, etc. I run it in a cooperative and open manner, what I consider feminism at work, analyzing power relationships and turning 'power over' into 'power to'. I learned this in Women's Studies.

It was a wise choice to let the respondent's words speak for themselves. In so doing, the authors have created a book of *living* accounts instead of a conventional collection of statistics. Those who dismiss a Women's Studies Program as a consolation for angry women or Gossip for College Credit quickly learn that graduates of the program learn to think critically, to integrate theory and practice, to understand their history and incorporate it into their lives. "These insights made them better at whatever they have done
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since graduation."

This study is the foundation upon which the history of a very young discipline will be based. In addition to the facts, the book assures current students that their major will not only enrich their professional lives but add immeasurably to their personal sense of self.

Poetry from the ashes

Rose, Wendy. *Now poof she is gone*. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1994. Cloth, ISBN 1-56341-049-4, \$18.95; paper, ISBN 1-56341-048-6, \$8.95.

After publishing ten books of poetry, Wendy Rose conquered her "embarrassment, even shame" to share her early poems that she had tucked away. This slim collection encloses a cycle of poems about experience in a "Psycho Ward" where a woman "smolders and explodes" in "the ashes of childhood/grief for pieces lost/of baptismal names"; and poems expressing the search for identity by a person of mixed blood, crying:

As for love, you are too white
for the red, too red for the white.
you are no color
or every color
or a crazy mosaic
and heyyyy-eee-ee!
you will never have a fullblood baby

In her deceptively simple free form, Rose expresses an insight which the reader shares. The book is divided into four sections beginning with the re-entry into life after a psychological debility; the second section, "Memor of the Allen," marks the ongoing struggle of adaptation of the speakers' many selves amongst which is the powerful "Mark My grave with a Stick and Write this Here." In this poem the writer waits for the comets which enlightened ancestors; she keeps "her glasses clean so she'll see them/if they come again, recognize them/if they're small." In the third section, the ache is delicate in the longing to hold to the past. "Time was. . ." The final section may be characterized as the expression of violent hopelessness. Written between 1984-92, the poetry is stronger, the images more vivid than in earlier writing. Ecological realities appear of toxic blood and "dollars./missiles in the ground ready to slash open/the innocent marsh." Increasingly, questions populate the poems until the reader, too, wonders:

Is it crazy to want to unravel
dandelion gone to seed
leaving nothing behind but a dent
or not even that
to touch or burn or remember?

In her preface, Rose confesses that her reluctance to share these poems is because "we are taught. . . that 'great ideas' do not flow from personal issues." If so, I do not know from where they come; I believe that only the voice of the poet can summon us to come into the light of things.

—C. Dudt

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Women in Libraries



Celebrate FTF's 25th!

Celebrate 25 active years of feminism within ALA with slides, Task Force stories, and cheers for FTF's founders, from 8 p.m., Monday, June 26, at the Swissotel Grand Ballroom I. Gorgeous black commemorative T-shirts, sure to be classics, will be on sale. After the program, at about 9:00, we will adjourn for our traditional Women's Night Out. We'll go to the Women and Children First Bookstore and the Woman Wild Art/Gift Gallery for an evening of conversation, refreshments and browsing. Several Chicago area authors will be on hand to autograph books. Both the bookstore and gallery will be open until 11 p.m.

It may be that time again!

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