



# Women in Libraries

Volume 31, No. 4

The Feminist Task Force

Fall 2002

## *FTF Meetings Plan for Future Conferences*

Programs about feminist books for young readers, celebrating COSWL's 30th anniversary, and *Revoluting Librarians*—these are some of the ideas for upcoming FTF activities at annual conferences.

The first one, writing and publishing feminist children's books, will be in Toronto in summer of 2003. A panel will feature authors and editors of these books as well as an academic perspective regarding these materials. For FTF's annual conference activity, Jane Cothron will explore a place for Women's Night Out on Monday.

With 2004 a presidential election year, a program connected to the proposed update of the book about *Revoluting Librarians* was considered appropriate.

Discussion initiated by Diedre Conkling about the COSWL anniversary resulted in ideas such as interviews and photographs about the establishment of COSWL, a panel discussion and/or video by and about founding members, and an historical/celebratory activity, possibly at the time designated for *Introduction to Women's Issues in Libraries*. Celeste Tibbets mentioned the online Centennial Memory Book that Atlanta-Fulton County Public Library has as a way of gathering information.

Other activities:: Rory Litwin will host the FTF website on [libr.org](http://libr.org). Jenny Baltes will send choices for a new logo to the listserv. She will also look at the brochure and provide suggestions for revision.

## *Writers Respond to FTF Program, Book List*

Louise Robbins' discussion about Ruth Brown's dismissal in Bartlesville, OK following her efforts to integrate the community (on her own time), elicited the following responses.

Wicky Sleight, director of the Kirkwood (MO) Public Library, wrote that she was blackballed from a club for "society" women in Marshall, MO after inviting "a dynamic black woman minister to join" the local Rotary. Sleight said that she and her husband left the town of 13,000 after being continually ostracized. And this was in 1993!

Linda Jordan of Oklahoma wrote about the Ruth Brown Memorial Award given by OLA/SRRT, "created so the efforts of libraries and their affiliates who are implementing creative responses to social issues to not go unrecognized." Brown's attempts to integrate the library began early in her career. During the 1920s she "showed a commitment toward allowing African-Americans to use the Bartlesville Public Library." In 1946, she helped form the Committee on the Practice of Democracy with a philosophy of nonviolent direct action to confront racism. More information is available from <http://www.osuokc.onenet.net/library/SRRT/rb-maward.htm>

Fred Lipp's, author of *The Caged Birds of Phnom Penh*, wrote to express his pride in being included on the 2002 Amelia Bloomer list of books for young readers. He says about his picture book, "This book led me to set up a nonprofit to put poor and at risk girls back in school in Cambodia." If you have any interest in participating in this endeavor, done with almost 100% volunteers, contact Fred at [fredericklipp@msn.com](mailto:fredericklipp@msn.com); 207-774-72-5; 305 Commercial St., Apt. #312, Portland, ME 04101.

# Notes

## Call for Contributions

From Sara Pete comes the following: "This is a call for submissions for a zine project I am working on with a friend from library school. The title will be *Riot Librarian: Breaking the Binding of Patriarchy since 2001*. It is a zine about feminism, the library, library workers, and the spaces where these things collide. Though this zine will be of interest to feminist library workers, the intended audience will simply be feminists (and those interested in feminism).

"We are looking for drawings, comics, pictures, and writings to include in Issue #1—stories from feminists (contributions from feminists of all genders are welcome) about using the library, working in the library, going to library school, etc. We will also include annotated bibliographies of feminist resources (books, zines, magazines, websites) for feminists to look for at their libraries and to ask their librarians for if they don't find these items.

"We are also looking for advice for feminists from feminist librarians on how to use the library. (As an example, I will give the call number ranges of feminist material according to Dewey and according to LC). We are also interested in critiques of the Dewey and LC classification systems and planning a small article about Melville Dewey and what a jerk he was. (I've been told that prospective students of his library school were expected to send in their measurements and descriptions of their eye colors with their applications!)

"If we decide not to include an entry that we receive, we will write a letter explaining why. We will not edit any entries without first discussing the proposed changes with the contributor. This zine will be put together out of our pocket money, and we may charge a dollar or two to cover copying expenses. (We will be giving away many copies as well.)

"Entries should be short and not bland." Sara can be contacted at [saralibrarian@yahoo.com](mailto:saralibrarian@yahoo.com).

## Send in Your Profile

The ACRL Women's Studies Section Research Committee has begun an initiative to advance our mission of identifying needed research and encouraging collaboration in research related to women's studies and women's studies librarianship. This initiative is called the Research Clearinghouse.

Goals for this project are to (1) create a list of experts who can assist others in research or who can help mentor our new researchers; (2) create a place for members to get feedback on research already in progress; (3) create a network for people who are interested in collaborating on similar research projects; and (4) set an agenda for research in women's studies librarianship by identifying needed research.

How can you participate? Turn to Page 8 for more information.



## Women in Libraries

<http://libr.org/FTF/>

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Send articles, comments, or materials for review, but not subscription questions, to Nel Ward, 107 SW Coast Street, Newport, OR 97365. (541-265-9141; email - [nward@beachhousebb.com](mailto:nward@beachhousebb.com))

Send books for review to Sherre Harrington, Stevenson Library, Vanderbilt University, 419 21st Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37240. For reviewing information, go to <http://staffweb.library.vanderbilt.edu/feministbooks>.

# Women in the Media—Good, Bad, & Invisible

## Advertising

Stuffy, frumpy women—this is no longer the view of female librarians to be found in the advertising pages of current magazines. As shown by two full page ads during the past few months, Margaret (not identified as to library) goes home to her Natural Contours personal vibrator (<http://staffweb.library.vanderbilt.edu/brown/librarians/ad1.html>), and Laura Sophea uses Mack's earplugs ([http://www.macks earplugs.com/x/diving\\_board\\_ad0.jpg](http://www.macks earplugs.com/x/diving_board_ad0.jpg)).

Both ads appeared in *Bust*, a magazine marketed to the 20+ feminist audience. Apparently *Bust* likes librarians: they ran a feature article on "hip hot young librarians" last summer, promoting the field as an interesting, challenging, and fun career for women in their mid-twenties to think about pursuing.

## Music

Barbie gets some freedom. When the 11.5-inch plastic symbol of the American female body, invited Ken to "go party" in the 1977 pop song, "Barbie Girl," Mattel promptly sued—as the company is wont to do.

This time, the U.S. Court of Appeals in San Francisco ruled that the song by the Danish band Aqua is an exercise of free speech and does not violate the trademark of toymaker Mattel Inc. Upholding a lower-court ruling, the three-judge court also rejected MCA Records' defamation claim against Mattel for accusations that compared MCA to a bank robber. In a fitting statement for the case, Judge Alex Kozinski ended his opinion with the comment, "The parties are advised to chill."

"Barbie Girl" was a worldwide hit and the biggest success in the four-year existence of Aqua, which disbanded last year. In a baby-doll voice, lead singer Lene Nystrøm proclaimed, "I'm a blond bimbo girl, in a fantasy world," and implored boyfriend Ken to "make me walk, make me talk, do whatever you please."

After forcing Seal Press to rename a book and remove Barbie illustrations from the cover, Mattel seems to be on a losing streak. Last year, the appeals

court refused to stop a Utah artist from selling picture postcards showing Barbie in sexual poses.

(*San Francisco Chronicle*, 7/25/02)

## Film

The "Anatomically Correct Oscar," featured on a billboard towering over the corner of Highland and Melrose in Hollywood last March, showed him pallid and stocky, covering his crotch next to the tag line, "He's white and male, just like the guys who win!" A project by art-world activists Guerrilla Girls and Alice Locas, a recently formed, secretive group of female filmmakers, the billboard highlighted the fact that a woman has never won the Oscar for best directing. Only two have ever been nominated: Lina Wertmüller for *Seven Beauties* in 1976 and Jane Campion for *The Piano* in 1993.

As stickers from another Guerrilla Girls campaign proclaimed, "The U.S. Senate is more progressive than Hollywood. Female Senators: 9 percent, Female directors: 4 percent." That suggests the extent to which the dreams that radiate off theater screens and into our culture are still almost exclusively the dreams of men.

Conventional wisdom, according to Martha Coolidge, president of the Directors Guild of America and director of such movies as *Rambling Rose* and *Introducing Dorothy Dandridge*, is that men make moviegoing decisions for themselves and for their girlfriends. "The audience that studios have cultivated are young men. Young men, they feel, are easy to please. They seek out action, and then they'll take girls on dates."

No matter how well received a woman's first film is, it rarely generates the kind of frothing excitement with which Hollywood greets a parade of male prodigies such as Quentin Tarantino, Paul Thomas Anderson, and Wes Anderson. "Male executives are looking for fantasy images of their younger selves," says Mary Harron, and this pertains to both the people and the films they celebrate.

The complete article, "Celluloid Ceiling" by Michelle Goldberg, is available at <http://www.alternet.org/print.html?StoryID+13966>.

# Women Gain, Lose Ground in the Battle for Equality

## *Women's Appointments at Princeton Need to Become an Academic Trend*

Last year, Shirley M. Tilghman became the first woman president of Princeton University. One year later more than half of Princeton's top academic jobs are filled by women, little more than three decades after Princeton first admitted women as undergraduates.

Three of the eight presidents of the Ivy League colleges are women, and about 22 percent of college presidents are now women, according to a survey of more than 2,000 colleges by the American Council on Education. This number is more than double the 9.5 percent proportion in 1986 and quadruple the 5 percent in 1975.

But while women are becoming presidents of prestigious research universities such as the University of Pennsylvania, Brown University, and the University of Michigan, the appointment of women as department heads and deans has been spotty, experts say. Also the proportion of women with full-time tenured positions is only 52 percent, compared with about 70 percent among men, nearly the same as 20 years ago.

Why? The reasons vary from outright discrimination by departments still dominated by men to the tired excuse of women's choosing to take time from their careers to raise children. Tilghman believes that the key is to appoint more women as administrators.

Although there is support for these appointments, Hugh M.F. Lewis, a 1941 Princeton graduate, wrote in the 1/30/02 issue of *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, "To save time, I recommend that the trustees promptly convert Princeton to a single-sex, female university and be done with it." Betsy Smith Hellman, a 1993 graduate, responded, "Based on your letter, Mr. Lewis, it is clear that you are no Tiger, you are a dinosaur."

"When the top deans are all men, it doesn't strike most people as odd," said Barbara B. Lazarus, associate provost at Carnegie Mellon University. "But to have all these women at a time when we still use 'woman' as a modifier—we say woman president—is remarkable."

Across the country, women are entering the lowest faculty ranks in numbers almost equal to men: about 45 percent of assistant professors are women.

Yet representation at the top remains low; only 20 percent of full professors are women.

According to Nancy Hopkins, a biology professor who demonstrated three years ago that there was a bias against women in science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "having women in power sends a message to young women that yes, of course, you can become the president of a university, win a Nobel Prize, or do anything."

Up to now we've been telling them that, but no one was showing up."

The above information was taken from "More Women Taking Leadership Roles at Colleges" by Karen W. Arenson (*New York Times*, 7/4/02).

## *Half the NBA Female Referees Fired*

With NBA's unexpected decision to fire Dee Kantner on July 15 after five years on the job, the organization now has only one woman referee. Stu Jackson, NBA vice-president of basketball operations, said that the reason was "strictly performance-based."

Russell Menhart, in "Just One Female NBA Referee Left," speculates on the problems of calling this a "performance-based" decision. As Menhart points out, female referees are evaluated by men used to watching male referees in a system that places a disproportionate value on aggressive, masculine refereeing.

Kantner was also subjected to increased scrutiny as a woman, and the NBA seems to have made no effort to consider whether its existing standards of "good" refereeing were gender-based. "A significant change such as this takes cultural adjustment... and the

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fact that no other female referees have been hired in the past five years represents the ignorance of the dominant part, a pattern seen over and over in many sectors of American society.

For example, to succeed as political figures, women must have power suits and stern faces, ala Madeleine Albright who was described as "tough" or a "fighter." For the complete text of this article go to <http://www.alternet.org/print.html?StoryID=13647>.

# Women Who Make a Difference

## Sanford Berman Social Responsibility Award

Maria Menendez de Moschel, a member of the Support Staff at the Southdale-Hennepin County Library system, has been awarded the 2002 Sanford Berman Social Responsibility Award for her commitment and outreach to the Latino community.

The award was created to honor Sanford Berman, who served as head cataloger at the Hennepin County Library system for 26 years. It is presented annually to an employee who has made a unique and valuable contribution to humanity through his/her work in HCL.

When a grant made it possible to reach out to Richfield, Minnesota's growing Latino community, "Maria instilled wisdom and was the heart and voice in the planning and execution" of the grant, often working evenings and weekends to distribute information about the library and to make connections in the Latino business community.

"She recognized needs, identified community resources, and created an up-to-date list of agencies prepared to work directly and effectively with the immigrant population. She reviewed materials already in HCL, explored the easiest access to those materials using the library's catalog, and checked both online and print catalogs to enhance and expand the collection."

Although the grant program has ended, Maria continues, on her own time, to communicate with Latino organizations and individuals to stay current regarding issues in the community. With her supervisor's approval, she has visited the Legal Aid Society to discuss the resolution of business issues that concern the immigrant community.

She has also developed a list of referrals for victims of illegal business practices and is ever available at the library to act as interpreter for Spanish-speaking patrons. In the words of a colleague who nominated her: "Maria embodies the spirit and expertise that opens the door and makes library services available and understandable to new residents."

Sanford Berman was an invaluable member of

the Social Responsibilities Round Table whose connection to the library system was severed when he dared to speak openly.

## Jackie Eubanks Memorial Award

At age 54, Zoia Horn refused to testify against Fathers Philip and Dan Berrigan for their activities as activists against the war in Vietnam as part of the legendary "Harrisburg Seven" in 1971. According to ALA Councilor and SRRT member Mark Rosenzweig, the Berrigans and others "had been indicted in a fabricated conspiracy case cooked up by the FBI's J. Edgar Hoover. In refusing to testify against them, Horn went to jail."

But this is only one of the reasons that Horn has been given this year's Jackie Eubanks Memorial Award for outstanding advocacy and social responsibility. A former member of the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee in 1977, she helped found the Coalition for the Right to Know in 1980 and "became an activist in attacking barriers to information from library fees to the consolidation of publishing houses," according to Marie Jones, chair of the SRRT Alternatives in Print Task Force.

Horn's "actions helped keep library collections open, facilitating the way for getting material from alternative presses into libraries," said Byron Anderson of the committee that gave Horn the award.

In Pat's Holt's free online column about books and the book industry, "Holt Uncensored," she said, "In the face of the anti-free speech environment created

*In the face of the anti-free speech environment created by the USA Patriot Act, librarians have found a way to reassure the American public that libraries are going to continue doing their job, no matter what.*

the USA Patriot Act and the specter of a Department of Justice that may well punish librarians for protecting patrons' privacy, it seems to me that librarians have found a way to reassure the American public that libraries are going to continue doing their job, no matter what."

She continued, "They send out this message by restating the librarians' 'imperative'—that all libraries must 'guard against impediments to open inquiry,' when they chose this year to give the ALA's highest intellectual freedom award to Zoia Horn.

# Campus Feminists Called 'Kind of a Cult'

## *Anti-Women's-Rights Groups Accuse College Feminists of 'Victimology'*

At schools across the country, feminist activists are speaking out about date rape, the rise of Rohypnol (the "date rape drug"), women's health and safety on campus, and the typically weak response of college officials to the issue. Their reason is that rape and sexual harassment can damage a young woman's life at worst and limit her opportunities at best.

**"...Women's studies classes are "narrow intellectual prisons presided over by matriarchs of mediocrity."**

The Independent Women's Forum, with funding from the top conservative foundations in the country, is leading anti-women's-rights groups with an attack on what they call "victimology" feminism by spreading misinformation to college students.

"Take Back the Campus" is an IWF propaganda campaign initiated last spring and designed to stop progress toward preventing and punishing violence and to discourage young women from identifying as feminists. The campaign refers to campus feminism as a "kind of a cult."

The conservative group's first move was to place ads in college newspapers, challenging what the IWF calls the "myths" of feminism by criticizing statistics on domestic violence and rape, downplaying pay inequity between the sexes, and minimizing the problem of sexual harassment in schools. With questionable statistics and heated rhetoric, the advertisement targets students it says need "deprogramming."

In addition they released their own information arguing that women's sexual freedom and empowerment are making it difficult to find a mate. The IWF-commissioned survey claims that "marriage is a major life goal for the majority of today's college women, and most would like to meet a spouse while at college," and that casual "hooking up" is getting in the way of meeting that spouse while still in school.

For Valentine's Day, the campaign asked students to reject Eve Einsler's play, *The Vagina Monologues*, which addresses how women feel about sex, love, men, other women, rape, war, gynecological exams, and, of course, their vaginas.

According to Laura Flanders in *Working for*

*Change*, the same far-right foundations that created and continue to fund the IWF are paying for the Collegiate Network. This trains and supports conservative college journalists, providing them as free interns to publications like *USA Today* and *The Wall Street Journal*, where they have the opportunity to write opinion pieces promoting right-wing values. Two Collegiate Network interns wrote strikingly similar pieces for *USA Today* and the *Daily Standard* criticizing *The Vagina Monologues* and promoting the IWF's new

web site targeted at young women.

For Women's History Month, the IWF released a report claiming that women's studies textbooks "miseducate" students, including criticism of "bloated" statistics on "battered wives." The author concluded that women's studies classes are "narrow intellectual prisons presided over by matriarchs of mediocrity."

The National Organization for Women is compiling information on domestic violence, rape, and date rape. The first report is available at [www.now.org/issues/violence](http://www.now.org/issues/violence) or by sending a SASE legal-sized envelope to NOW Violence Report, 733 15th St. NW, Ste. 240, Washington, DC 20005.

(*National NOW Times*, Summer 2002)

## ***Iranian Girls Can Shed Scarves, Robes***

For the first time since Muslim clerics took control of the country in the Islamic revolution 23 years ago, girls will be allowed to go without headscarves and robes in all-female schools in Tehran. The move was immediately criticized by religious hard-liners as "encouraging nudity."

(*Oregonian*, 8/3/02)

## ***Restrictive Library Exhibit Policy Repealed***

A year ago, Anchorage Mayor George Wuerch, disturbed by a gay pride exhibit, established a policy banning all exhibits by members of the community to the bottom floor of the library—where there are no books and library patrons do not routinely go.

Last summer, by a unanimous vote of 9-0, the Anchorage Assembly installed a policy recommended by the Library Advisory Board and sponsored by Assembly member, Allan Tesche.

# Court Decisions Remove Some Restrictions

## *Children, Technology and Pornography* *Subject of Two Supreme Court Rulings*

Last spring The Supreme Court handed down decisions on the constitutionality of two laws, one restricting child pornography (the Child Pornography Prevention act, or CPPA) and one on Internet content (the Child Online Protection act, or COPA).

CPPA expanded the definition of child pornography to criminalize "virtual child pornography" or "morphed" child pornography. On April 16, 2002, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed with the Free Speech Coalition that banning images of youthful-looking adults or computer-generated images that appear to depict children but do not is unconstitutional on two counts:

First, the law as written is overbroad, prohibiting otherwise legal, non-obscene images depicting teenagers engaging in sexual activity such as filmed depictions of *Romeo and Juliet* or *Lolita*.

Second, the prohibition on child pornography is based on the link between the creation of the image and the sexual abuse of the children shown in the image. If an image is created by use of computer technology or by photographing adults pretending to be children, there is no basis in the law to ban the image.

Congress passed COPA to replace the Communications Decency act which was held unconstitutional in a 9-0 Supreme Court decision in 1997. COPA prohibits the transmission of any material over the Internet deemed "harmful to minors," if the communication was made for a commercial purpose.

The law was first found unconstitutional on First Amendment rights and then deemed unconstitutional because of its reliance on "contemporary community standards" by the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals. On May 13, 2002, the Supreme Court returned the matter to the 3rd Circuit Court for a fuller consideration of First Amendment rights. All nine justices agreed that the injunction preventing any enforcement of COPA must remain in place while the lower courts further examine COPA's constitutionality.

## **Court Removes Time Limits for Long-Term Job Mistreatment Suits**

The Supreme Court made it easier for victims to complain about long-term job discrimination or harassment, ruling on June 10, 2002 that statutes of limitations do not always apply when shabby treatment is extended over a period of months or years.

In a 5-4 decision, workers who claim a pattern of unfair treatment under the 1964 Civil Rights Act do not have to comply with the usual 180- or 300-day time limitations as long as one of the alleged rights violations occurs within the limits.

The coalition of Clarence Thomas, one of the court's most conservative justices, with the four moderate-to-liberal justices, is noteworthy. "A pattern of workplace discrimination "occurs over a series of days or perhaps years and, in direct contrast to discrete acts, a single act of harassment may not be actionable on its own," wrote Thomas. "such claims are based on the cumulative effect of individual acts."

(*Oregonian*, 6/11/02)

## **And What Would the Court Do with This?**

Republican lawmakers are questioning plans to introduce an HIV-positive Muppet to the *Sesame Street* gang, said the Hollywood trade paper *Daily Variety* on July 15. One day after show executives announced they would develop the as-yet-unnamed character for audiences in AIDS-ravaged South Africa, five members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce said the Muppet would be unwelcome on American TV.

A letter to PBS president, Pat Mitchell, asked such questions as the amount of money PBS dedicates to *Sesame Street*, how much is being earmarked for the new Muppet, whether she will be introduced to the United States, and whether corporate underwriters might participate in the decision-making process.

The letter came from Committee Chairman W.J. "Billy" Tauzin (R-LA), Joe Barton (R-TX), Richard Burr (R-NC), Cliff Stearns (R-FL), and Fred Upton (R-MI)

"We look forward to working with you to ensure that only age and culturally appropriate programs air on PBS," said the letter.

**...only age and culturally appropriate programs air on PBS. . . ."**

## Queens Borough Library Dress Code Turns Back the Time

Nose rings, miniskirts, and sandals on employees. And T-shirts and blue denim as well. These were among the banished in the dress code for the 63 libraries in the Queens borough. The approach is not directed at woman librarians either. Men are required to wear shirts and ties.

The ostensible reason is "an attempt to create a more businesslike atmosphere," said Joanne King, spokeswoman, saying that the dress code was instituted in 1993. It was not prompted by customer complaints.

What do the librarians think? "I agree with the library's general goal of having an attractive and well-groomed work force, but this onerous and draconian policy is not the answer," complained union head John Socha in a letter to library officials.

The union's mostly female members—about 700 of 900 are women—said the policy would reinforce the stereotype of prim, prudish librarians. "It's like

they want to turn back the clock," said library worker Jane Jacobs, 43.

Members of Queens Library Guild Local 1321 demonstrated outside one branch. Hopefully they were able to wear sandals and T-shirts in the hot, humid New York temperatures.

### *Send Your Research Profile to ACRL/WSS*

(cont. from Page 2)

In order to accomplish this we are asking you to fill out a Research Interest Profile online (available at <http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/j/r/jrg15/wss/clrghouse/rip.html>) listing your past areas of research as well as your developing research interests. We will compile this information into a database that can be used to facilitate networking. We hope that the Research Committee will also be able to use this database as a tool to assist us in identifying areas of needed research.

## *Freedoms Disappear As Some Desperately Fight Back*

In the past year, United States citizens have lost many freedoms because the current administration claims that we need more safety. The strategy goes something like this: "it is the leaders of the country who determine policy, and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or parliament or a communist dictatorship. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in every country." This advice comes from Hermann Goering (1893-1945) Nazi Reichsmarschall.

One woman in Congress is fighting this mentality. Barbara Lee (D-CA) has introduced legislation calling for the United States to work through the United Nations to renew arms inspections, assure Iraqi compliance with U.N. resolutions, and to oppose unilateral first strike military action. She needs our support. Let her know if you agree with her.

One source that reports our losses is a report from the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights that states: "Since September 11, 2001, the U.S. government has introduced a series of security laws and practices that contradict the core values and principles on which the American government is founded." "Viewed separately, some of the changes may not seem extreme," said Michael Posner, Executive Director of the Lawyers Committee, "but when you connect the dots, a different picture emerges." To find this picture, read the report at [www.lchr.org/aftersept/loss/report.htm](http://www.lchr.org/aftersept/loss/report.htm). The timeline is available at [www.lchr.org/aftersept/loss/Timeline](http://www.lchr.org/aftersept/loss/Timeline) — A Chronology. pdf. The set of recommendations is at [www.lchr.org/aftersept/loss/RECOMMENDATIONS.pdf](http://www.lchr.org/aftersept/loss/RECOMMENDATIONS.pdf).

From the National Organization for Women (NOW) comes a website called "The Truth about George" (<http://www.thetruthaboutgeorge.com>) which provides current information on anti-women activities as well as Bushisms such as the following: "And when we find children trapped in schools which will not teach and will not change, as a society we must demand something better, because there is no second-rate children in America."

Concerning the Patriot's Act—and a recent brief filed by the Justice Department which states "First Amendment creates no general right of access to government information or operation," Joan E. Berlin, Executive Director of the National Coalition against Censorship says, "It would be patriotic to consider whether, despite their appealing acronyms, some hastily enacted programs threaten the freedoms we value most. It is peculiar, to say the least, for our government to fight terrorists by adopting their techniques—secrecy and intimidation."

One small ray of hope—from Florida of all places. In August, state Circuit Judge P. Kevin Davey struck down Florida's voucher law because the state constitution prohibits public money from going to churches or other "sectarian institutions." Gov. Jeb Bush says the state will appeal.

# Book Talk

## Florida Secretary of State Gives Advice

Former Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris, who gained national attention during the 2000 presidential election recount, is working on a book about her role in the voting fiasco.

*Center of the Storm: Practicing Principled Leadership in Times of Crisis* has been scheduled to hit shelves in September. (Oregonian, 6/2/02)

## Textbooks/Tests Water Down Reading

Texas high school advanced-placement students will be denied the work of four respected historians because conservatives object to two paragraphs in the nearly 1000-page text, *Out of Many*, that explains that prostitution was rampant in cattle towns during the late nineteenth century.

Grace Shore, chair of the Texas State Board of Education, denies the claim that there were 50,000 prostitutes west of the Mississippi. "But even if there were, is that something that should be emphasized?"

Because Texas selects its textbooks on a statewide basis, any possibility of sales is eliminated if the state refuses its content. "Anti-Christian" and "anti-American" are two reasons that books have been rejected. A problem in another book was the statement, "there was scientific consensus that global warming was changing the earth's climate." From Texas' textbook decision comes a "trickle-down" effect on the rest of the country because they purchase a large quantity.

New York, on the other hand, wants young people to read the classics: they just want to leave out the parts that "offend." For example, a book excerpt on English tests has cut out all racial references from an piece in which Anne Dillard, who is white, describes an eye-opening childhood visit to a library on the black side of town. In the other excerpts all references to race, ethnicity, religion, sex, and alcohol are erased. "Gringo" is changed to "American" and "skinny" to "thin." Jews and gays don't exist.

When the Educational Testing Service prepared the Georgia End-of-Course Test, it gutted Anna Quindlen's *How Reading Changed My Life* by deleting the words "slave" and "pornography" because they deal with controversial issues.

## Historian Publishes 'Political Autobiography'

Gerda Lerner, considered a godmother of women's history, wants "to show people that whatever

contribution I could make as a historian and a theoretician of women's history and women's studies came out of my practical life experiences." Thus her memoir, *Fireweed: A Political Autobiography*. The first part of the title comes from the fireweed plant that grows on disturbed soil by roadsides and in fire clearings in the forest; the second, because she views her personal and her political selves as inseparable.

Born of Jewish parents in the in 1920 Vienna, Lerner faced the Nazis before she fled and then joined the Communist Party in the United States. In 1958, she returned to school to take a few college courses and by 1966 had a doctorate in history from Columbia University.

Her considerable reputation rests mostly on virtually creating the field of women's history and then tirelessly agitating to help her female colleagues win respect and find audiences for their work. In 1963, Lerner taught what is believed to be the first postwar college course in women's history at what is now the New School University. In 1972, as a history professor at Sarah Lawrence College, she established the program that became a model for graduate education in women's history.

The road to becoming the first woman to receive the Bruce Catton Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Historical Writing from the Society of American Historians has been unpaved. "I enter graduate school, and they teach me all these great names, all these famous names, and they teach me about a world in which women don't exist. And when I ask about it, one of their favorite sayings was that unfortunately, most women were illiterate."

When asked whether women's studies were still needed, interviewer Felicia R. Lee said that Dr. Lerner laughed. "For 4000 years, men have defined culture by looking at the activities of other men," she said "The minute we started questioning it, the first question was, 'Well, when are you going to stop separating yourself out and mainstream?' Give us another 4000 years, and we'll talk about mainstreaming."

For more about Gerda Lerner, check out "Making History Her Story, Too" (*New York Times*, 7/20/02)

# Book Talk

## New Translation Heightens Sappho's Verse

Sappho left the world only about a thousand lines of her nine volumes of work—erotic, sensual poetry. And according to Dinitia Smith in "The Mystery of Sappho and Her Erotic Legacy" (*New York Times*, 8/26/02) "her verse has been elevated to new heights in a gorgeous translation by the poet Anne Carson."

In *If Not, Winter: Fragments of Sappho*, Carson brings forth "an eroticism from an ancient time when lines between homosexuality and heterosexual-ity were blurred, before distinctions were made and fear and prohibitions came into place."

Earlier works by Carson include *The Beauty of the Husband*, *Plainwater*, and *Men in the Off Hours*. Smith says that *Autobiography of Red*, based on a fragment of the seventh-century B.C. Greek poet Stesichoros, is Carson's best-known work. In this verse novel, a contemporary love story, its mythic counterpart is never far from the surface.

"Who can forget the mother sending her frightened red-monster child off to school after he has been picked on by other children?" says Smith and quoting *Autobiography of Red*. "This would be hard/for you if you were weak/but you're not weak, she said and neatened his little red wings and pushed him/out the door."

## The Slut Story - Singling an Individual Out

When Emily White advertised for girls who had been identified as "the slut of your high school class," she had no idea that the response would be so great. Her original purpose was to write an article about a girl for *The Stranger*, the Seattle weekly paper she edited in the 1990s.

Within two weeks, she received 95 responses and realized that these echoed each other. White began to trace the common thread among the stories with more avenues to explore. "I got so many calls, and the interviews were so intense, that I couldn't narrow it down," says White. "So I wrote a book proposal. Then I quit my day job."

The result is *Fast Girls: Teenage tribes and the Myth of the Slut* which explores the archetype of the slut and the myths that create her, ostracize her, and very often shape her life beyond high school.

Referred to by a cameraman on a popular

national morning show as "the slut author," White discovered that the host was unable to use the word "slut" directly, instead asking White to give the subtitle of the book. An assumption is also that she wrote the

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## . . .the host was unable to use the word "slut" directly. . . .

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book to deal with a slutty past.—something she says was not a motivating factor.

Katia Dunn, book reviewer of *Fast Girls in Bitch* (8/02) and editor at the *Portland Mercury* in Portland, OR, reports that "White knows that her book has been well received in the feminist community; it's among the widely-publicized group of books dealing with 'mean girls'—including Rosalind Wiseman's *Queen Bees and Wannabes* and Rachel Simmon's *Odd Girl Out*."

## June Jordan Loses Fight against Cancer

Poet and political activist June Jordan died last summer. She leaves a legacy of 28 books, mostly poetry and political essays but also a novel, several plays, children's books, and countless articles—a body of work that made her one of the most published African-American writers ever.

Her most recent work, *Some of Us Did Not Die*, shows that there is no death for the ideals that shaped her fights from youthful work against McCarthyism to the more recent calls for a sane response to 9/11.

Thulani Davis quotes Jordan in her obituary in the *Village Voice*: "That confrontation with heavy-weight intolerance carried me through our Civil Rights Resolution and into our resistance to the War against Vietnam, and then into the realm of gender and sexual and sexuality politics. And those strivings, in aggregate, carried me from Brooklyn to Mississippi, to South Africa, to Nicaragua, to Israel, to Palestine, to Lebanon, and to Northern Ireland, and every single one of those embattled baptisms clarified pivotal connections among otherwise apparently disparate victories, or among apparently disparate events of suffering and loss."

We salute June Jordan, 1936-2002, for her courage and creativity.

# Book Talk

## Singer, Writer Dies Suddenly in Bangor

Kay Louise Gardner, world-renowned spiritual leader, musician, composer, and author, died at her Maine home on August 28, 2002. She performed her first composition at the age of four, studied music throughout her childhood, and continued her studies at the University of Michigan.

In 1972, she was a founding member of the feminist and openly lesbian women's band, Lavender Jane. By the early 1980s, Gardner changed her musical focus to the effects of music on the human body and the healing potential of music. Among the results of this study was a textbook, *Sounding the Inner Landscape*, a collection of resources indicating a direction for musicians wishing to develop their music along a spiritual path.

At the time of her death, Kay served as the music director at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Bangor and had just produced Women with Wings' first CD, *Hand in Hand and Heart to Heart*. Kay Gardner was a multi-faceted, gifted and exciting performer, composer, partner, mother, grandmother, friend, and priestess.

Kris Radish. *The Elegant Gathering of White Snows*. Spinsters Ink Books, 2002. 335p. \$14.00.

Eight women living in rural southern Wisconsin have developed close friendships with one another after years of meetings in what their families believe to be a study group. When one woman tells the group that she is pregnant—and that her alcoholic husband is not the father—the women in the group have a huddle (with food and wine) on her kitchen floor.

As the night progresses, the fine spring evening calls the women out for a walk. The eight women head down the road with no planning, no provisions, and no destination in mind.

Word of these women who have left their lives and families hits the news media, and people from across the country find their lives changing. These women's taking time out of their everyday lives to walk with each other frames stories, not only of the individual women in the group but also of women and men who hear about the group walk and decide to change their own lives in response.

This cosy flannel blanket of a novel explores the strength and closeness of friendships among women. I recommend this for cold winter nights or lonely days.—Jane Cothron, Lincoln County (OR) Library District

Michelene Esposito. *Night Diving*. Spinsters Ink Books, 2002. 221p. \$14.00.

Rose Salino, 30 loses her job as a chef and her lesbian lover on the same day. The next day her grandmother dies, and she returns home for the funeral where she sees her childhood best friend and first love, Jessie.

Thousands of small incidents—quick snapshot memories or places and people—fill this heart-wrenching novel. Rose reminds us that this is how life is, one small memory atop another, regardless of all the plans and dreams.

The story is also a family saga as Rose copes with understanding her mother's bipolar disorder and the sexual abuse that Jessie suffers by her father. The result is an honest coming-out and coming-of-age journey.—Sue Hardesty, Newport (OR)

## Evangelical Sales Convert Publishers

With total sales of Evangelical books at \$1.77 billion last year including such best sellers as *What Would Jesus Eat?* and books calling for the mass conversion of Jews, mainstream publishers and distributors are getting into the act, much to the dismay of Christian book sellers.

Some problems? Scholastic, publisher of the Statanic Harry Potter books, promotes the book *Conversations with God for Teens* in which God smiles on lesbianism (To find the problem with witchcraft, check out the popular Evangelical *Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace behind the Magick*.) Zondervan publishes a Bible translation with more gender-neutral language, perhaps the influence of its secular parent, HarperCollins, which also publishes *The New Joy of Gay Sex*. And Ingram, purchaser of Christian competitor Spring Arbor, distributes Madonna's book *Sex* along with the Christian books.

Some authors cave in. In *Paul Walter Wangerin* removed the epithet "God Damn," attributed to Apostle Paul, which originally was in his book

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