



# Women in Libraries

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Volume 20, Number 5

July 1991

## **WE ARE OUR SISTERS' KEEPERS: SUPPORTING SMALL PRESSES AS A FEMINIST ACTIVITY**

The FTF program this year was moderated by Theresa Tobin, with Sherry Thomas from Spinster's Books and Nancy Bereano from Firebrand Books as the keynote speakers.

They both spoke to the fact the "feminist" in feminist publishing has now become the "F" word. Publishers will get more attention because they do lesbian publishing than because they are feminists. The general population really doesn't have a clue as to what it means to be a feminist publisher (many assume lesbian although they may overlap). Basically the small feminist publishers "work together" so that they don't make the same mistakes again and again; they share information, techniques, mailing lists, etc.

They have all come out of a grassroots tradition so, they are very connected with what happens "out there" and are committed to working together in the sense of feeding each other and contributing to each other. In many ways they work as a coalition, giving each other strength and support in a somewhat hostile world, especially as they do the important work of publishing in the areas of multicultural politics or lesbian politics.

The problems lie in the nature of the publishing they do (gay, multicultural, etc.) as well as in the limited access to review sources. Mainstream reviewers don't understand what a woman's book might be! Many also operate

under the misconception that feminist books might have a "limited" appeal. In addition, there is the response of (too) many librarians who say they cannot order from small presses.

Because of these responses, the feminist presses need help in disseminating information, in convincing librarians to not say they "can't get materials from small presses," in showing how versatile their publications can be, etc. The following is a list of things one person can do on their own to help generate interest in small press publications.

One person can: write reviews for other media (be sure to send a copy to the publisher); write a letter to LJ noting the fact that we no longer see reviews of small press publications and how important those books are to our collections; compile bibliographies of small press titles for state association newsletters; write reviews for Publishers Weekly or any of the periodicals you use as a review source; write Kirkus and ask why they don't review small press books (always remember to name the small presses) and let them know of your interest to review.

One person can also write to jobbers to ask them why they don't carry small press titles and to ask that they incorporate them into their approval plan. Don't forget to name the presses which specifically interest you, for ex: Seal, Cleis,

Kitchen Table, Firebrand, Press Gang (Canada), Feminist Press (Canada), Spinsters, Aunt Lute and Naiad. After they begin to carry small press titles, ask them to include small presses in their release list or newsletter.

In an academic library, one person can: work more with multicultural faculty to help them incorporate small press titles into their curriculum; talk with faculty about the availability of feminist books and how to incorporate these titles into their syllabi; encourage patrons to make small press suggestions for purchase.

One person can talk with other acquisition librarians about the acceptability of purchasing from reviews appearing in "alternative" review sources, such as Feminist Bookstore News, Women Library Workers, Women in Libraries, Feminist Collections, Multicultural Review, area newspapers, etc.

One person can talk up a "traveling" exhibit; help plan a staff development around small press publications and the diversity of their publications and how the books can fit a myriad of different topics; talk to each other about a small press book you just read and how it might be useful; make requests at your local public library for a small press title or request it through ILL; help plan small author readings for a group you are involved in; talk with your state library association program planning people to get feminist authors to do state wide tours/talks.

Ideas were generated for some group action such as "alternative read posters" utilizing some of the authors from the feminist/small presses, plan "small" author breakfast for San Antonio, sell tickets to general population.

Dotty Granger  
Pacific Oaks College



## AMERICAN LIBRARIES

In case you haven't noticed, there has not been a tremendous amount of coverage of "women's issues" in AL recently. Dee Conkling

and Sherre Dryden met with Tom Gaughan (editor of American Libraries) for dinner while in Atlanta to see how AL was going to try and reach out to more women and cover issues of interest to female librarians. He never got the point that women's issues impact most everybody, and he did not seem willing to solicit articles on "controversial" topics, etc. He agreed that we should send him articles on these topics (written as if writing to your brother or sister ie: appealing to "lowest common denominator") and he would "consider them" for publication.

So, let's bombard him with articles (as long as they relate to libraries) about the diversity program in your library, or day care for library students, or school librarian layoffs, or loan reduction for public librarians, or conditions of part-time librarians (most women part-timers), or employment practices, or whatever "radical" stuff we deal with.

Also, we should write letters to the editor stating that we've been reading AL for many years and are curious as to why articles on the above named topics seem to never get published.

Dotty Granger  
Pacific Oaks College



## REVIEWS

"Gender: The Enduring Paradox." A Smithsonian Institute Production.

"Men are afraid of women."  
(David Gilmore, cultural anthropologist)

"Men are more powerful--they run the world."  
(Ursula LeGuin, science fiction writer)

In World War I, "they hemorrhaged a generation of young men in France." This country "glorifies expendability but phrases it in courage."  
(Beryl Benderley, author)

Women as well as men can be "competitive, destructive, politically motivated, and interested in power."

(Sara Blaffer Hedy.)

Nurturing--"you have to do it to see what it feels like."

(Kyle Pruitt, child psychologist.)

"Rape is a violation of personhood."

(Beryl Benderley.)

"White women schoolteachers don't know what to do with Black male energy."

(Wanda Coleman, poet.)

These are select quotes from the magnificent television production, "Gender: The Enduring Paradox." At the beginning, a diaphanous-gowned woman dances with a man who has a ballet dancer's body. At first glance, it appears as if this is destined to be a superficial presentation on gender. But, this production is a hard-hitting look at the expectations and possibilities inherent in the concept of gender. The interviews are varied and fascinating.

I used this video with my Introduction to Feminism class. The ensuing discussion was heartening and spirited. This program is sure to come around again on public television stations. Excellent viewing for family, friends, co-workers and anyone else who is willing to frankly examine gender, the enduring paradox.

Nancy Osborne  
SUNY Oswego

Everywoman's Guide to Nutrition. Brown, Judith. University of Minnesota Press, 1991. 0-8166-1500-4. \$19.95.

This is not just "another diet book." It is, in essence, a capsule version of current medical knowledge about nutrition. Brown answers everything from the perennial question, "Do I weigh too much?" to more esoteric topics such as the number of milligrams of magnesium in 1/4 cup of cashews--93mg.

The author reinforces the basis of every successful diet program: "A balanced diet is not formed food

by food...build diets around the recommended number of servings from the basic food groups." One simple chart presents all the food groups, the recommended number of daily servings for children, teenagers, adults and vegetarians, as well as foods (with serving sizes) that fall into each group. Other chapters cover: food safety and additives; human metabolism and balanced diet; known links between food and lifestyle excess and disease; physical fitness; eating disorders; nutrition and reproduction; food advertising claims; and healthy, low-fat recipes.

There are lengthy discussions of carbohydrates, proteins and fats, and vitamins and minerals. While thorough, these are slow and heavy reading. Their placement in the middle of the book tempts the reader to give up somewhere around Table 32, thereby missing vital information placed later in the book.

Chapter 8, "What Works for Weight Control," contains a surprising revelation concerning Protein-sparing Modified Fasts, such as SlimFast. Brown cites medical studies suggesting that these diets "should not be made directly available to the public" because they lead to potentially-dangerous loss of muscle mass. Given the current deluge of advertising for these "diet shakes", this chapter should be required reading for all women.

The author's background as a dietitian and professor is evident in the caliber of research supporting her work. The writing style, however is calm, common-sense and very approachable by the layperson. Illustrations and charts throughout are well-designed and useful.

Kay Lowell  
Univ. at Buffalo

Misogynies: Reflections on Myths and Malice. Smith, Joan. Fawcett Columbine Books, 1989. 0-449-90591-8. \$16.95.

In the 1970's, Peter Sutcliffe, known as the Yorkshire Ripper, terrorized the British Isles with a series of brutal murders. Sutcliffe's prime motive for the murders was his extreme hatred of women. With this motive as a starting point, Joan Smith has created this important collection of essays. Throughout the collection, the question raised is not only why men have such as

overwhelming loathing of women, but what perspectives and attitudes in society foster such feelings. By using the Yorkshire Ripper as a very literal metaphor, Smith analyzes a wide range of subjects from ancient civilizations to contemporary popular culture. She draws on her experiences as a journalist and novelist to construct an admirable interpretation of society as a whole. Each of the sixteen essays in this collection stand on their own, but are compelling taken together because they offer an illuminating overview on the history of sexism.

Of particular note are the essays "Immaculate Misconceptions" and "Gentleman Prefer Dead Blondes." In the former article, the model of the Virgin Mary is used to discuss reproductive rights and how the anti-choice stance has grown out of a religious fervor which is attached to the fear and disgust of women. The latter is a wonderfully insightful essay about the Marilyn Monroe myth, which portrays the star as the "woman-as-blank" that was valued "only for her lack of value."

As Smith concludes the collection, she points out that the book is about "connections" which are intended to display that misogyny is not limited to a small sector of society, "but one of the concealed well-springs of our culture." This collection is an excellent introduction to a feminist interpretation of society as well as a welcomed addition to any general library collection.

David Hellman  
Univ. at Buffalo

Calyx: A Journal of Art and Literature by Women  
ISSN: 0147-1627. Library rate \$22.50/1 volume,  
individuals \$18.50/1 volume.

Included in this gorgeous journal is the work of poets, visual artists and prose writers. The book review section covers reviews of recent books by women writers and a Northwest review section. The impressive review volume included a number of literary translations from Spanish, Vietnamese and Russian. In 1990, the editors received the Literary Magazines Editors Award for excellence, for the second time and it is easy to see why. The cover is a feast for the eyes, though the visual works inside are done in black and white. The works selected for inclusion are quite wonderful, especially the poems. Overall, an exceptional

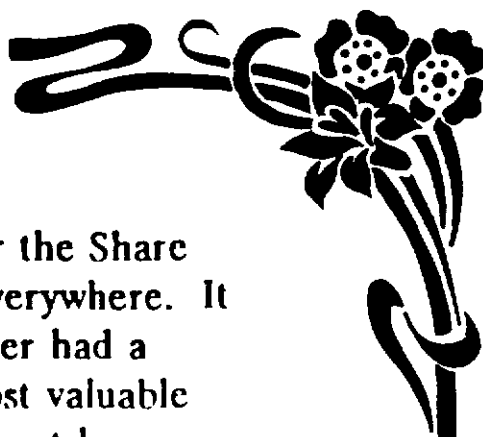
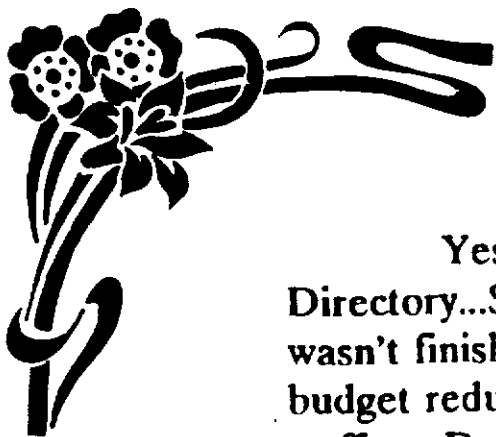
collection of works by women. Indexed by the American Humanities Index, The Annual Index to Poetry in Periodicals, and The Index of American Periodical Verse. Published twice a year, in July and November. Contact: Margarita Donnelly, Managing Editor, P.O. Box B, Corvallis, OR 97339, (503)753-9384.

The Women Who Hate Me Poetry: 1980-1990.  
Allison, Dorothy. Firebrand Books. 1991. 0-932379-98-2/paper, \$8.95. 0-932379-99-0/cloth, \$18.95.

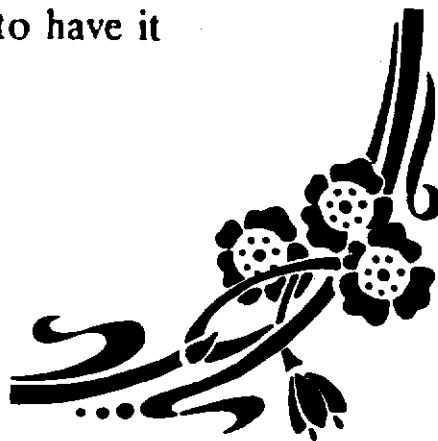
This Firebrand expanded and revised edition of Allison's provocative out-of-print collection, The Women Who Hate Me, makes the reader aware of just how impressive a writer she is. Her work is razor sharp, angry and passionate, as she stands her ground and refuses to duck the hard stuff. Her writing reveals memories and feelings that are still painful and moving, whether the subject is her poor Southern childhood, her family relationships or her lesbian lust, her outlaw sexuality. She writes to the women she loves. This collection is a poignant and powerful record and is the result of speaking the truth. Contact: Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. (607)272-0000.

Transformations: The New Jersey Project Journal.  
Gloucester County College, Sewell, NJ. ISSN: 1052-5017. Individual: 1yr/2 issues, \$10.00. Institution: 1yr/2 issues, \$20.00. No cost for NJ residents and institutions.

This publication is an outgrowth of the New Jersey Project, which seeks to encourage and support the work of faculty, students and staff to integrate issues of women and gender, race/ethnicity, class and sexuality into the curriculum. The review copy (volume 2, number 1/Winter 1991) included essays, research, syllabi and book reviews -- all of which are aimed at making the college curriculum more inclusive. Each of the four essays are well-written and provide exciting ideas on the timely topic of curriculum transformation. An especially interesting article, "Awareness of Diversity: A Classroom Exercise," by Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, discusses the author's use of thought-provoking writing exercises, based on Audre Lorde's poem, "Thanks to Jesse Jackson," to



Yes, the following form is for the Share Directory...Sisters Have Resources Everywhere. It wasn't finished because the proofreader had a budget reduction in her library and lost valuable staff, so Dotty Granger and Deb Gilcrest have taken the next step to attempt to update it BEFORE it goes to print. Why copy it at this point when it is already two years out of date? Please be patient with this tedious process and complete and return the form as indicated. Also, photocopy the form and pass it on to others who might be interested in being listed in the directory. Thanks! The latest goal is to have it ready by San Francisco annual.



## SHARE form

We are in the process of updating the here-to-fore unpublished S.H.A.R.E. (Sisters Have Resources Everywhere) National Directory of Feminist Librarians and Library Workers. If you have moved or changed jobs since first completing the SHARE form please complete this form and note that it is an UPDATE. Pass it on! **PLEASE PRINT!**

new entry \_\_\_\_\_ update \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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TYPE OF LIBRARY/ALTERNATIVE WORKPLACE \_\_\_\_\_  
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PROFESSIONAL SKILLS/  
INTERESTS/PROJECTS OF  
INTEREST \_\_\_\_\_  
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Please return form to: Dotty Granger, Pacific Oaks College  
5 Westmoreland Place, Pasadena, CA 91103. FAX: 818/397-1356.

THANK YOU!!

expose her students to globally diverse views and to show them the "inter-relatedness of the world's populations." An extremely interesting volume, read from cover to cover in one sitting. Contact: The New Jersey Project, Gloucester County College, Library Media Center, Deptford Township, Tanyard Road, R.R. #4, Box 203, Sewell, NJ 08080.



## ACQUISITION NOTES

Women, Racism and Civil Rights is an "Atlanta bibliography" by Mary Beth Souza and Elizabeth Patterson. It is an attempt to pull together resources which are available in the Atlanta area. Anyone interested in purchasing a copy (\$2.00 covers cost and shipping) may contact Dotty Granger at 818/397-1354.

NWSA Journal. A publication of the National Women's Studies Association. Ablex Pub. Price varies with membership. ISSN: 1040-0656.

Now in its third volume, the NWSA Journal publishes scholarship that continues to link feminist theory with teaching and activism. It recognizes the centrality of feminist inquiry and research to transforming individual minds and institutional structures. In addition to essays focusing on feminist scholarship, reviews of books, teaching materials and films, the journal also includes regular features, such as Research in Progress, Review Essays, Biographical Portraits and On Learning and Teaching. Contact: Ablex Pub. Corp., 355 Chestnut St., Norwood, NJ 07648. Tel. #: (201)767-8450, Fax #: (201)767-6717.

**NOTE:** Readers are encouraged to submit manuscripts from an interdisciplinary perspective or that which, although specific to a single discipline, retains broad implications. Articles must be written from a feminist perspective and in accessible language and style. Contact: Mary Jo Wagner, Editor, 1070 Carmack Rd., 091 Pressey Hall, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43210-1002.

Feminist Bookstore News. ISSN: 0741-6555. 6 issues/yr, \$60.00.

The CIA thinks the Women-in-Print network is what holds the women's movement together. So does FBN. Included in each issue is: who's publishing what, what's happening with bookstores, new publishers, and the current issues in the print movement. Each issue includes 200 or more announcements and short reviews (with complete ordering information) of new feminist, gay, lesbian, progressive and Third World titles from the feminist, alternative or small press, university and mainstream publishers. Essential reading anyone interested in developing a good women's section. Contact: FBN, P.O. Box 882554, San Francisco, CA 94188. (415)626-1556.

Women's Rights in International Documents: A Sourcebook with Commentary. Langley, Winston E. McFarland & Co., 1991. 160 pp. 0-89950-548-1. \$29.95.

Langley, a professor of political science at Univ. of Massachusetts - Boston, notes that a number of important women's issues, such as child care, pay equity and reproductive rights, have already been dealt with on an international level through certain human rights documents. This book serves as a documentary source for these documents. Context and perspective on the instruments are provided, enabling readers to assess their impact and to think further about the issues raised by them. Among the seven parts are: the U.N. Charter and the International Bill of Rights; Employment, Remuneration and Education; and Marriage, Family and Children. Each instrument is preceded by a brief summary of its context. The Appendix reproduces two inter-American conventions which bear on women's rights and identifies a number of international conventions of historical importance. Contact: McFarland, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640. (919)246-4460.

WLW Journal. McFarland & Co. ISSN 0272-1996. \$18/1 volume.

Also known as Women Library Workers Journal, WLW has been available for the past ten years on an irregular basis. Now under the management of McFarland and the editorship of Audrey Eaglen,

this quarterly will devote a large segment of each issue to reviews of fiction and non-fiction books authored by women and reviewed from a feminist perspective. Alternative and feminist presses will be well represented in the column. Feature articles on such topics as women's role in the armed forces, will interest librarians, as well as women's groups. Volume 14, no. 1 became available in November 1990. Editorial correspondence to: Audrey Eaglen, Cuyahoga County Public Library, 4510 Memphis Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44144-1999. For subscription information, contact McFarland address above.

Incest: Speaking the Deadly Secret. AIMS Media. Number 8275. Videocassette, 50 mins. 1991. Video/\$195, Rental/\$75.

In this program, members of an incest support group reveal the devastating effects childhood incest has had on them - how it has affected every aspect of their lives. A creative arts therapist, who specializes in the treatment of adult incest survivors, guides the session and narrates the program, explaining recent findings on the subject. The group's testimonies will lend support to other incest victims struggling to confront painful pasts. Its example will signal other incest survivors that they do not have to be alone in their recovery. Contact AIMS Media, (800)367-2467.

Dating Violence: Young Women in Danger. Levy, Barrie, ed. Seal Press, 1991. 1-878067-03-6. \$16.95.

This is the first comprehensive resource to address the plight of teenage women who are being sexually, emotionally or physically abused in their dating relationships. Teens and parents tell their stories, researchers discuss this growing, lethal problem among our youth and finally, counselors and social workers describe their efforts to develop successful, community-based programs that include teen support groups, workshops on "addictive love," teach-ins on date rape and projects in the inner-city schools. Levy holds a M.S.W and is the author of Skills for Violence-Free Relationships: Curriculum for Young People Ages 13-18. Contact: Seal Press, 3131 Western Ave., Suite 410, Seattle, WA 98121-1028, (206)283-7844.

The Forbidden Poems. Birtha, Becky. Seal Press, 1991. 1-878067-01-X. \$10.95.

This volume chronicles a journey of loss and mending. Beginning with poems of her empowerment as an African-American woman and feminist, Birtha then explores the realm of personal grief and loss of a longtime lover. A rich, evocative collection of work that confirms Birtha's place as a poet of emotional depth and power. Contact: address above.

The Children's Crusade. Brown, Rebecca. Seal Press, 1991. 1-878064-04-4. \$8.95.

The author presents an intensely evocative, visionary journey through the hazardous landscape of family relations, with the betrayal of children by their parents at its dark center. The story's young narrator is swept from the nether-nether world of childhood, with its moments of innocent, pure love, into the bleak and manipulative world of adults, where she becomes the go-between for warring parents locked in an increasingly cruel battle. As the story shifts to an allegory that parallels the tragic Children's Crusades of 1212, the initial small frame of domestic turmoil is stretched into a powerful metaphor for betrayal at its most elemental level. Contact: address above.

Just Say Yes. McDaniel, Judith. Firebrand Books. 1991. 0-932379-96-6/paper, \$8.95. 0-932379-97-4/cloth, \$18.95.

This is a lesbian romance with an edge. A funny, sexy novel set in the gay vacation playland of Provincetown, it sorts through the modern issues of love, lust, the lesbian community, homophobia, queer-bashing, drug-running and racism. The dialogue is convincing and the pace is quick. Contact: Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. (607)272-0000.

Food & Spirits. Brant, Beth. Firebrand Books. 1991. 0-932379-92-3/paper, \$8.95. 0-932379-93-1/cloth, \$18.95.

This volume of stories, by gifted Native American writer Brant, offers a moving collection about going home. Home to the physical place where you can walk the same land traveled by you ancestors. Home to the interior space where all



of who you are lives fully. Like her Mohawk tribespeople before her, Brant believes in the power of honoring dreams and fulfilling their prophecy. Her dreams - writing spirits - are the soul of these eight substantial stories. These are tales of endurance and survival, sometimes of triumph, in an inhospitable world. Contact: address above.

Artemis in Echo Park. Healy, Eloise Klein. Firebrand Books. 1991. 0-932379-90-7/paper, \$8.95. 0-932379-91-5/cloth, \$18.95.

Situated in the urban landscape of Los Angeles, this volume of poetry find the mythical amazon goddess at home in the freeway environment. No rediscovered New Age version, this Artemis never left. She embodies the energy that physics tell us changes form but does not disappear. Healy writes with a sophisticated West Coast sensibility, a fiercely lyrical style caught up in the motion of fast cars, earthquake tremors, city animals, and the migrations of the homeless. Like the climate in which lesbian loving occurs - undomesticated and self-defined - Artemis celebrates a different kind of nature poetry. Contact: above address.

The Gilda Stories. Gomez, Jewelle. Firebrand Books. 1991. 0-932379-94-X/paper, \$9.95. 0-932379-95-8/cloth, \$20.95.

This long-awaited novel is a very American odyssey, a romantic adventure. As her Black heroine strides across time, listening to the sounds of the world and trying to add her own voice, she learns that immortality is not simple. Gilda takes us from Southern slavery to Northern racism, from San Francisco at the end of the 19th century to South America at the turn of the 21st. It's a broad, colorful tapestry, full of loud laughter and subtle terror, punctuated by the author's political acumen. Gomez has written an elegant, sensual and naturalistic fantasy - a Black vampire story. Contact: above address.



## Women in Libraries

*The newsletter of the American Library Association's Feminist Task Force, is published five times a year, from September to June.*

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