



**Feminist Task
Force**

The Feminist Task Force—25 Years

Women in Libraries

Volume 24, Number 4

Fall 1995

Women on the Web

What we found on the Internet—and a new FTF presence

The World Wide Web is a graphical interface with the Internet which enables us to access "sites," or "Web pages" if we have an application called a Web Browser. It has only been around a short time but has grown like Jack's beanstalk. It is user-friendly, and creating your own web site or perusing those of others is easy enough to be accessible to many of us who were intimidated by more esoteric means of accessing the Internet. The Feminist Task Force has established a web site at the University of Oregon, thanks to Jill Holman, Reference Librarian at the Science Library there. Point your web browser at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~holman/FTF/ftf.html>.

Here is a *small* sample from a virtually infinite number of sites you might like to check out:

Feminist Fiction, Publishers, and Bookstores:

Small Media And Large—Independent publishers. Lesbian, feminist, Gamelan music, experimental and avant-garde music, gay, political: <http://smallmedia.com/>.

Publications in Women's Studies—http://www.yahoo.com/Social_Science/Women_s_Studies/Publications/.

Catt's Claws—a frequent feminist newsletter: <http://www.lm.com/~lmann/feminist/cattsclaws.html>.

On the Issues—On the Issues is a feminist, humanist magazine of critical thinking, dedicated to fostering collective responsibility for positive social change: <http://www.echonyc.com/~onissues/>.

Feminist Bookstores—indexed list of feminist bookstores in the US and Canada: <http://www.igc.apc.org/women/bookstores/>.

Web of the Spider Woman—Lesbian and Feminist Bookstore list with links to gay, women's, child sexual abuse, American Indian, indigenous and native peoples, Jewish, Irish, Celtic, and other sites that may pique your interest: <http://www.geopages.com/WestHollywood/1027/>.

For Sci-Fi Fans:

Birth of the Fembot—A sci-fi techno-feminist digital book... by a Black Lithuanian Scottish and Irish woman: <http://www.tcm.org/clubhouse/members/ahannan/FEMBOT/fembotpoem.html>.

Issue Highlights

Women on the Web

The World Wide Web has transformed the way we use the Internet—and some of us just found out about that! Here's a guide to some of the best info for women, from our own Web Page.

Book reviews and other notes:

Women's experience in poetry and nonfiction, from some independent presses. Pages 3—5.

And coming up . . .

Midwinter Conference Schedule and more.

Coming in December.

Web, continued from page 1.

More science fiction:

WisCon 20—The Feminist SF Convention, Memorial Weekend of 1996: Guest of Honor: Ursula K. Le Guin: <http://www.cs.wisc.edu/wiscon/>.

Feminist Science Fiction, Fantasy & Utopia—<http://www.uic.edu/~lauramd/sf/femsf.html>.

Another Feminist Science Fiction site—http://www.yahoo.com/Arts/Literature/Science_Fiction_Fantasy_Horror/Feminist_Science_Fiction/.

Feminist Groups:

Feminist Task Force—We have posted directions on how to sign up for the Feminist List, our Internet discussion list for women's issues, and a comprehensive list of links to feminist sites on the web. We will be adding material from *Women in Libraries*: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~holman/FTF/ftf.html>.

Feminist Majority (blanca.com)—The Feminist Majority works for equal representation for women in public office and advocating passage of laws to secure women's equal rights, including access to abortion and birth control without compromising on young women's and poor women's rights: http://blanca.com/lolla/politics/rockforchoice/fem_maj.html.

National Organization for Women (NOW)—http://www.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Organizations/Public_Interest_Groups/Women/National_Organization_for_Women_NOW/

Washington State NOW—Contains the Feminism & the Net—a guide for fun feminist s document, position papers, Irene Stuber's Women of Achievement and Herstory articles and Catt's Claws feminist newsletters: <ftp://ftp.eskimo.com/feminist/>.

Entertainment and Art

Feminist Film Reviews—<http://www.inform.umd.edu:8080/EdRes/Topic/WomensStudies/FilmReviews>.

Dr. Bonzo's Web—A personal weblet with both serious stuff (pointers to Christian resources, eco/feminist /theological sites, places of cultural interest) and less serious stuff (the home page of the Boulder Inquisition, Dr. Bonzo's Anathema of the Week). <http://iglou.com/drbonzo/>.

Evans, Stephanie—Photo-collages of feminist technopagan beings . . . giantesses: <http://cnj.digex.net/~esc/collage1.html>.

Women's Studies, Politics, etc.

Spamily's Politics Page—A collection of links for progressives, feminists, liberals, and anyone else who's interested: <http://www.io.org/~spamily/SocPolEnv.html>.

Social Science: Women's Studies—http://www.yahoo.com/Social_Science/Women_s_Studies/.

Abortion Rights—A strongly pro-choice Web site, a small portion of the Feminist Mailing List Web Site: <http://www.lm.com/~lmann/feminist/abortion.html>.

Abortion Rights & Other Feminist Issues—<http://www.lm.com/~lmann/feminist/feminist.html>.

Feminist Activist Resources on the Net—<http://www.lgc.apc.org/women/feminist.html>.

—J. Holman



Women in Libraries

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Women in Libraries

Women's experiences of every kind

Ordinary life, a nightmare, and some joy

Giving voice to the working class

Sidel, Ruth. *Urban survival: the world of working-class women*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995. Paper. ISBN 0-8032-9239-2. \$10.00.

Sociology Professor Ruth Sidel re-visits her collection of personal narratives of working class women in this 1995 update of her work originally published in 1978. In the introduction, Sidel mentions that life for the eight women she interviewed in the mid-70's was not easy then and is probably more difficult today. The eight women interviewed included two Black women, one Hispanic woman, one who immigrated to the United States from Latin America, a second-generation woman of Italian-American descent, one of Irish-American descent, and two Jewish women. These working class women were employed in traditionally female occupations (e.g., clerical worker, school aide, waitress).

Sidel's methodology in reporting the data makes this collection of personal narratives unique. She chose to send each respondent an edited version of the taped transcript of the interview and allowed them to further edit their comments. In doing so, Sidel claims: "I decided each woman should have ultimate control over her material." In other words, she sought to empower her respondents.

Stories of survival

Each of the eight women tells her story, including her fears, her thoughts about the women's movement, and her concerns for the future. The accounts help the reader feel the anguish of Elinor Thomas who tells of the death of her young son Michael from sickle cell anemia and the despair of Gwen Johnson who longs to earn her high school equivalency certificate so that she could enter a college degree program. These women speak from the trenches of the working class in the United States and detail their struggle for economic survival. Their personal narratives are compelling and raise many questions about the proposed cuts in government funded social welfare programs.

What would make this edition of Sidel's work more meaningful would be an update on each of the women profiled. Do they still feel as powerless and helpless as they did in the mid-70's? Or have their circumstances changed in ways that have improved their lives?

—T. L. Hanson



Women and hate

Brenner, Claudia, with Hannah Ashley. *Eight bullets*. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1995. Cloth, ISBN 1-56341-056-7, \$26.95; paper, ISBN 1-56341-055-9, \$12.95.

Picture two women backpacking, enjoying each other's company alone in the woods on a beautiful May day, their joy and happiness suddenly shattered by a rain of bullets. This is what happened to Claudia Brenner and Rebecca Wight in May 1988 on the Appalachian Trail in Pennsylvania. Wight died, but Brenner lived to share her memories of the attack and its aftermath in this gripping account.

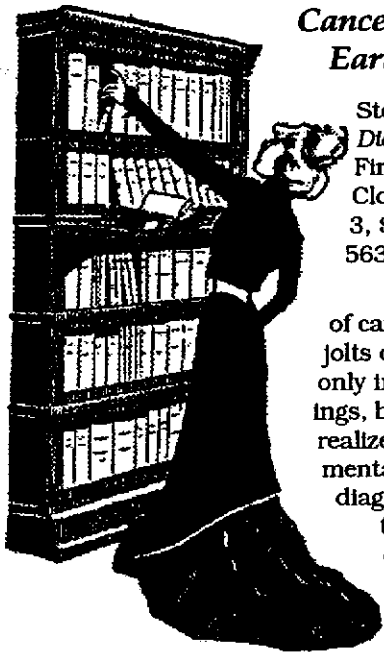
The motive was hate; Brenner and Wight were attacked for being Lesbians and for that reason only. In addition to a detailed account of the crime and subsequent trial, Brenner describes the Lesbian community in upstate New York, and gives us an opportunity to appreciate the closeness and support she found there throughout her recovery and the trial of her attacker. Brenner is an activist against hate crimes and spends a little more time on the soap box than she needs to; her story stands alone.

—M. Tainton

Myers leaves ALA!

A founding FTF member and early Equality Award winner Margaret Myers left ALA on October 13, 1995. She joined the Peace Corps and heads for Botswana on October 31. We wish her all the best, and will sorely miss her for her great support and all the hard work she has done for us.

Bon Voyage, Margaret!



Cancer survival/ Earth's survival

Steingraber, Sandra. *Post-Diagnosis*. New York: Firebrand Books, 1995. Cloth, ISBN 1-56341-058-3, \$20.95; paper, ISBN 1-56341-057-5, \$9.95.

Steingraber, a survivor of cancer in her twenties, jolts our consciousness not only into personal awakenings, but, more importantly, to realize the signals of environmental death. The individual diagnosed with cancer has to confront the realities of radiation assault in much the same way the world must admit the consequences of

atomic bombs and the disposal of chemical waste.

Her language is simultaneously emotionally charged and objective in its documentary style. She achieves this by relying on the reader's appreciation of juxtaposition. The poem "It's True, Isn't It?" is a series of locations connected with atomic tests or accidents—Trinity, White Sands, Hanford, Amarillo, Three Mile Island—and concludes with the question:

What happened to the people of West Africa
who hunted and ate the migrating songbirds
who had flown over a place called

Chernobyl.

The same honesty is expressed in Steingraber's poems on her own illness and treatment. Her anger and determination are palpable as she conducts the reader through the halls of diagnosis, surgery, chemotherapy, bone-scans, and remission. As she unravels "the whole dark tapestry," we can sense clearly that,

This poem is getting angry.
This poem is piecing its weapons together.
This poem is going to rise up out of the under-
ground and seize the means of expression.

Though she decries the "reverence" of women who think they know her through her writing and public readings, Steingraber's words are more than "just poetry." Even if she has survived the dark night of cancer and "doesn't live there anymore," the rest of us need her guidance, her clarity of spirit.

—C. Dudd

Social change

Pratt, Minnie Bruce. *S/HE*. New York: Firebrand Books, 1995. Cloth, ISBN 1-56341-060-5, \$22.95; paper, ISBN 1-56341-059-1, \$10.95.

The introductory essay explains the purpose of the book: to flesh out the author's struggle with the complexities of gender, race, and sexuality. In examining her own life changes from heterosexual mother to her present Lesbian self, Pratt involves us in the mid-century's "great wave of social change."

Though she refers to the collection as "stories," they are personal vignettes—brief invitations to witness a woman's private thoughts as she encounters the people in her life—truckdriver ministers, working women who struggle to be responsible mothers, political allies, right-wingers, childhood passions. Every encounter is laced with the author's attempt to understand the difference between her roles as a female and as a woman. Like her son, she, too, "wrestles with bone and flesh as [s/he] balances his fugitive selves."

The old stereotypes of what a woman should be, how she should look, how she should behave are rapidly disintegrating; their effects, however, linger in our society. Though the language may be too vivid for some readers, Pratt's writing is important: if we are to understand the world's evolution, it is imperative that we recognize and give voice to our own journeys.

—C. Dudd

Popular Culture: Call for Papers

Papers needed for upcoming conference

The Rhetoric and Communication Theory Interest Group of the Texas Speech Communication Association is soliciting papers for a panel, "Women and Rhetoric," for their annual convention set for October 3-5, 1996 in El Paso, Texas. Papers should address gender issues in communication, particularly in popular culture. Please send completed papers of no more than 25 pages, using *APA Style Manual* (4th edition), to Dr. Trudy L. Hanson, WTAMU Box 747, ACT Dept., Canyon, TX 79016 by January 15, 1996.

Acquisitions Notes

Women and work around the world

Gunderson, Morley. *Comparable worth and gender discrimination: an international perspective*. Geneva: International Labour Office, 1994. Paper, ISBN 92-2-108743-3, \$18.00.

In this volume, Morley Gunderson, of the University of Toronto, looks at the definition of comparable worth and the issues involved in the development and implementation of it, and assesses the application of comparable worth policies in the United States and Canada. Finally, he discusses the pros and cons of applying standards of comparable worth to the private sector or to different legal and/or labor market systems.

Appropriate for colleges, upper division and above, where an international viewpoint is desired.

Study covers women's trade unions

Martens, Margaret Hosmer, and Swasti Mitter, editors. *Women in trade unions: organizing the unorganized*. Geneva: International Labour Office, 1994. Paper, ISBN 92-2-108759-X, \$29.95.

The International Labour Office commissioned a series of case studies which have been assembled in this volume. Written primarily by organizers at the national or local level, these studies emphasize practical description rather than theoretical analysis.

The introduction by Swasti Mitter, University of Brighton, UK, provides some theoretical perspective as well as making suggestions for others planning to organize women workers. The case studies are organized into sections on domestic workers, homeworkers, rural women, the self-employed, and women in the export-processing zones of developing nations. Countries studied range from Brazil to Namibia, Australia to Burkino Faso. The book is suitable for research collections with an international perspective.

—B. Ponsford

Censorship group set to challenge ALA policies

All it takes for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing. Read this and decide what your role should be.—Ed.

A new group has formed recently to promote "family-friendly libraries," in direct opposition to American Library Association policies. Called "American Needs Family Friendly Libraries," the group held its official organizational meeting on October 21 in Cincinnati.

A leader in forming the group is Phil Burress, president of Citizens for Community Values, a Cincinnati organization "committed to upholding a quality of life . . . that has, as its foundations, traditional Judeo-Christian values." He is also Chairman of the "Equal Rights, Not Special Rights" Political Action Committee.

In a recruiting letter signed by Karen Jo Gounaud, the group promises to assist citizens "who want to influence their library system at the county, state or national level." The four categories listed as primary concerns include: "1) too much outside influence; 2) policies that permit children to be exposed to harmful material; 3) citizens' and taxpayers' concerns being ignored by local library boards; and 4) selection of materials that do not represent the community standards or community needs."

Dethroning the ALA

The letter declares the ALA to have "policies that have serious flaws," and expresses plans to "deliver alternatives to those policy flaws." The group plans "to challenge the American Library Association the way it needs to be challenged." Gounaud claims that ALA, "though merely a private organization with no legal claim to our neighborhood libraries" has become too influential, and calls for a well-organized effort "to dethrone them from the inappropriate kingdom they created for themselves."

If you would like more information, write Gounaud at 7597 Whisperwood Court, Springfield, VA 22153; her phone is 703-440-9419; fax her church at 703-425-0205. Burress can be reached at 513-733-5775 by phone, or fax 513-733-5794.



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