



# GLBT RT Newsletter

A publication of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered  
Round Table of the American Library Association

<http://www.ala.org/glbtrt>

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## From the Editor

Looks like "From the Co-Chairs" is going to be an occasional column. So, I'll explain how the GLBTRT Newsletter is put together and published by our friends at Haworth Press.

First, each issue, in a box at the lower right corner of the front page, I list the deadlines for the next four issues of the Newsletter. That lets GLBTRT members, officers, and committee chairs know when I need their articles and information.

Some articles and columns are directly solicited. I might ask a committee chair to write up information on a new initiative or an explanation of what their committee has been up to. I may ask for a native in the city where ALA is holding its next meeting or conference to write up a basic guide to the city for GLBT visitors.

Other articles come in from members who want to tell about successful programs or initiatives at their libraries, or to alert colleagues to threats to GLBT library services. I fill in the rest of the publication from press releases.

While I pull together articles and columns, Book Review Editor Lisa Johnston assigns books for review to members of her team. She collects the reviews and sends them to me; I acquire an image of the book covers and pair them up with the reviews.

I use Microsoft Publisher and my own variation on its Eclipse template to lay out the GLBTRT Newsletter. Two to three weeks of occa-

sional work, followed by a frantic week, to put together an issue. Things will be more frantic when late-breaking news (notoriously, final room assignments at Midwinter and Annual) or missed assignments keep me from getting completed articles until close to or after the deadline.

I print a draft .pdf copy to file and email that (with the most recent list of members and addresses that the Membership Committee has managed to finagle from ALA) to Haworth Press. They print off a proof copy; I approve or correct the proof; the Newsletter is mailed directly from Haworth Press. I also send the .pdf to our Webmaster to post on the GLBTRT Web page. A couple weeks later, the Newsletter should be in your mailbox.

The entire cost of printing and mailing the GLBTRT Newsletter is borne by Haworth Press, in exchange for 2 pages of ads in the back. As far as I have been able to tell, we are the only unit in ALA that has an outside publisher do this for us. Hooray for Haworth!

Last issue, Haworth Press also included an advertising flyer in our mailing, for which they paid the GLBTRT over \$800. Basically, that paid for the reception in Seattle.

John Bradford  
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Villa Park (IL) Public Library  
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Librarian, Leather Archives & Museum

## GLBTRT Officers

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Deadlines for the newsletter for the next year (There have been some changes!) will be:

Summer 2007	May 10, 2007
Fall 2007	August 10, 2007
Winter 2007	November 9, 2007
Spring 2008	March 10, 2008

Please try to get your reports, articles, book reviews, etc. in by these dates or let us know if there will be a short delay so room can be saved for them in the newsletter.

### Book Reviews (Pages 7-10):

- A Passion to Preserve
- The End of the World as We Know It
- The Praeger Handbook of Transsexuality
- The Therapist's Notebook for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients
- Bow Grip
- The Age of Cities
- Wicked Angels

## GLBTRT Officer, Councilor Elections

The terms of GLBTRT Co-Chair Norman Eriksen and GLBTRT Treasurer Dustin Larmore end at the close of ALA Annual on June 27, 2007. Eriksen, but not Larmore, is running for re-election.

GLBTRT's three Co-Chair candidates are:

- Norman Eriksen, Assistant Division Manager, Languages, Literature, & Fiction, Brooklyn Public Library
- Bob Jacquay, Director, William K. Sanford Town Library
- KR Roberto, Cataloging Librarian, University of Georgia Libraries

Two candidates are running for Treasurer:

- Emily Edwards, Reference Librarian, Lakes Regional Library
- Dale McNeill, Director of the Community Services Library Department, Queens Public Library

Further, for the first time, this year the GLBTRT will elect a Councilor of its own. Because of an ALA bylaws, GLBTRT will no longer share a Councilor with 10 other Round tables. Instead, we will be able to choose a Councilor of our own, from among our own membership. Three GLBTRT mem-

bers are running for GLBTRT Councilor:

- Andy Johnson, OCLC Questionpoint 24/7 Backup Librarian, formerly Government Documents Librarian, U. of Washington Library
- Rob Ridinger, Chair, Electronic Information Resources, Northern Illinois University
- John Sandstrom, Manager, Collection Development, El Paso Public Library

Candidates recruited by Anne Moore GLBTRT Nominating Chair  
Coordinator for Access Services  
W. E. B. DuBois Library  
University of Massachusetts Amherst

## Three Candidates Ask for GLBTRT Support

Polls opened March 15 for the 2007 American Library Association elections. Months before this, during ALA Midwinter in Seattle, candidates fanned out to make their case to members by visiting meetings of the divisions and round tables.

On the agenda for the GLBTRT Steering Committee 2 were three candidates: Nancy Davenport and James Rettig, both running for ALA President, and Rodney Hersberger, running for ALA Treasurer. (Jo Ann Pinder, also a candidate for ALA Treasurer, did not ask to appear.)

While the GLBTRT did not formally endorse any of these candidates, Rettig and Hersberger each appeared to have struck a

chord with the crowd. Davenport seemed less comfortable campaigning and did not make the same connection.

Rettig pointed up his membership in the GLBTRT and his work at the University of Richmond in support of GLBT students and issues, as well as his general support for a "more inclusive, more fluid ALA."

Davenport declared her support for diversity and intellectual freedom. She is an advocate of "the library of the future" and pledges to help libraries and librarians update and reinvent themselves for the 21st century.

For the past several years, candidates for

ALA President have sought support at GLBTRT's Steering Committee meetings. Hersberger, however, is the first and only candidate for ALA Treasurer to have made the effort. In an amiable discussion, he stressed his managerial, and accounting strengths and promised to bring transparency to ALA's finances.

For more information on the candidates, see their Web sites:

<http://www.nancydavenport.info/>

<http://rettigforala.org/>

<http://rodhersberger.org/>

<http://www.joannpinder.info/>

John Bradford  
Editor, GLBTRT Newsletter  
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Librarian, Leather Archives & Museum

## GLBTRT Members Run for ALA Offices

Again this year, several GLBTRT members are running for ALA Council.

Four members of the GLBTRT are running for election as ALA Councilor-at-Large:

- Dale McNeill, Director of the Community Services Library Department, Queens Public Library
- Jim Simonis, Director of the Library, Le Moyne College
- Manuel Urrizola, Head of Monograph Cataloging, University of California Irvine Libraries
- Thomas L. Wilding, Associate Professor, School of Information Resources & Library Science, University of Arizona

Two GLBTRT members seek re-election for ALA Councilor-at-Large. Running as petition

candidates are:

- KR Roberto, Cataloging Librarian, University of Georgia Libraries
- John DeSantis, Cataloging & Metadata Services Librarian, Dartmouth College

James Rettig, University Librarian, University of Richmond, running for ALA President, is also a member of the GLBTRT.

A complete list of candidates from all parts of the Diversity Council can be found on the next page. Diversity Council Representatives from each of these groups helped compile the list; Nancy Johnston pulled together the names of Council Candidates from GLBTRT.

This list does not comprise an endorsement of any candidates.

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## 2007 ALA Ballot Candidates Who Are Active Members of Diversity Council Constituent Groups

AILA, APALA, BCALA, CALA, GLBTRT, REFORMA, ASCLAs LSSPS

The Diversity Council, a sub-committee of the ALA Council Committee on Diversity (COD), has compiled a list of ALA Presidential and Council Candidates who are active members of the constituent groups of Diversity Council: American Indian Library Association (AILA), Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA), Black Caucus of ALA (BCALA), Chinese-American Librarians Association (CALA), Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Round Table (GLBTRT), the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking (REFORMA) and the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies Libraries Serving Special Populations Section (ASCLAs LSSPS).

This list is intended to make their candidacy known to voters in the 2007 ALA election.

Thanks to all who helped to put this list together!

Jody Gray  
Chair, ALA Diversity Council  
[grayjl@umn.edu](mailto:grayjl@umn.edu)

### diversity @your library

Trevor Dawes	BCALA	James Rettig	GLBT-RT
John DeSantis	GLBT-RT	Rob Ridinger	GLBT-RT
Lois Dye	AILA	Elizabeth Ridler	ASCLAs LSSPS
Loida Garcia-Febo	APALA, REFORMA	KR Roberto	GLBT-RT, REFORMA
Marti Goddard	ASCLAs LSSPS	John Sandstrom	GLBT-RT
Allene F. Hayes	BCALA	Jim Simonis	GLBT-RT
Albie Johnson	BCALA	Glady Smiley Bell	APALA, BCALA
Andy Johnson	GLBT-RT	Manuel Urrizola	APALA, GLBT-RT
Allan M. Kleiman	GLBT-RT	Yolanda Valentin	REFORMA
Em Claire Knowles	APALA, BCALA	Lucie Wall Stylianopoulos	AILA
Carolyn Lowe-Garnes	BCALA	Carlette Washington Hoagland	BCALA
Dale McNeill	GLBT-RT	Thomas Weissinger	BCALA
Cristina D. Ramirez	REFORMA	Thomas T. Wilding	GLBT-RT
Melora Ranney Norman	ASCLAs LSSPS	Liana Zhou	CALA

## Towards a More Inclusive GLBTRT

As we get nearer to the annual ALA elections and the Round Table celebrates our first opportunity to elect our own representative to ALA Council, I want to encourage everyone to carefully read and support the proposal to change the Round Table by-laws to encourage and celebrate our own diversity.

A few years ago now when I was co-chair, Anne Moore and I came to realize that despite changing our name to the GLBT Round Table in 1999 we had not amended our by-laws to reflect that increased inclusivity that name change brought about. Our current by-laws provide for a "male" co-chair paired with a "female" co-chair to coordinate activities for the Round Table. While masculine and feminine gender identities are common to most of us there exist other gender identities outside this binary. By designating our co-chairs as "male" and "female" we are effectively ignoring the T in the GLBT and reducing the opportunity for participation in the Round Table as well as silencing potentially active members voices

through this required acceptance of two genders.

The by-laws change that is being voted on this spring was proposed two years ago now by the Steering Committee. A vote last year was delayed because of communication errors in getting the ballot measure included in the official ALA materials.

I strongly urge you this year to support the proposed change in by-laws that allow for the Round Table to be co-chaired by two people of "differing gender identity". This allows us to maintain a wide variety of viewpoints in our leadership while making our Round Table a welcoming and friendly place for all people of GLBT identity, regardless of their orientation or identity.

Steve Stratton,  
GLBTRT past co-chair, 2001-05  
Head of Collections and Technical Services  
CSU Channel Islands Broome Library

To take the  
GLBTRT  
membership  
survey, go to:

<http://isd.usc.edu/~trimmer/glbtrt/memberprofile.html>

## Get Counted!

The Membership Committee is still collecting responses to the membership profile found on the GLBTRT Website. If you have yet to complete this form, please do so soon! The information we gather will help the RT in its numerous endeavors.

Paul Higdon, Chair  
GLBTRT Membership Committee  
[higdonp@limalibrary.com](mailto:higdonp@limalibrary.com)

## Remembering Barbara Gittings

Barbara Gittings, longtime leader of the GLBT community, died February 18, 2007 after a long battle with breast cancer. She founded the New York chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis in 1958, in the early days of GLBT activism, and marched at the White House and in Philadelphia's Independence Hall in the 1960's. She joined the struggle against the classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder, triumphing in 1973 when the American Psychiatric Association removed the diagnosis from its

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual. Two years later, the American Psychological Society followed their lead.

Perhaps most important to our group, she joined us in the early days of the ALA's Gay Liberation Task Force (now, the GLBTRT). Not a librarian herself, she nonetheless championed the cause of getting GLBT literature into libraries around the country. She helped to establish the Gay Book Award, which evolved into the Stonewall

Awards in GLBT Literature and Non-Fiction—in recognition of which, the Award in Literature was named for her. (The Non-Fiction Award was named for GLTF founder Israel Fishman, who predeceased Barbara by only a few months. In 2003, her work was noted by the American Library Association, which awarded her an honorary lifetime membership.

Please enjoy the following memories of Barbara, who affected so many lives.



I was delighted and honored that Barbara agreed to pose with me at the GLBT Roundtable Social at ALA Midwinter in Philadelphia in 2003.

Jeffrey Beall  
Catalog Librarian  
Auraria Library  
University of Colorado at Denver

It was a pleasure to meet Barbara Gittings at the organizing meeting of our round table in San Francisco. Only recently out myself, I was already in awe of the lady, due to her forceful expression of self-evident truths in the Unitarian produced "About Your Sexuality" materials, a course for people of all ages considering their sexuality and gender role. That material was decades ahead of its time, and has only now been replaced.

She reminded me of the civil rights training I had earlier from Rev. James Lawson prior to the Nashville, Tennessee, sit-ins. Like James, Barbara was aware always of the most effective means to reach the basic goal of equality. If looking like a "church lady" would be effective, she would look like a church lady.

J. McRee (Mac) Elrod

I realized as she stood on the podium preparing to give her keynote address [at the May 2006 GLBT ALMS Conference in Minneapolis] that it was none other than Barbara Gittings whom I had shared the hotel hot tub with the night before. I felt like an osmotic activist. She was happy to meet me, too.

Matt Johnson,  
Taxonomy Analyst  
Exchange Place

I'll always remember the Task Force social we had at our apartment on Fremont Street. It must have been 1985?? I have this memory that Barbara Gittings wore a dress to it, but could that REALLY be true? It was June and very hot as I also remember. Lots of great memories of her, as we all have.

Roland C. Hansen  
Head of Access Services and Planning  
Columbia College Chicago Library

I knew that Barbara Gittings was seriously ill and had expected to hear this news sometime this year, but still it's always a shock when the news comes.

I had the utmost respect and admiration for Barbara and was honoured to have known her. It's ironic that her death occurred so soon after Israel Fishman's [on June 14, 2006], but I'm happy to know that they both lived long enough to see our book awards named after them.

John DeSantis  
Cataloging & Metadata Services Librarian  
Dartmouth College Library

Around 1980 or so, I wrote to the GLTF (though, for history's sake, we should note that it was then the Gay Liberation Task Force) of ALA. I was considering a career in librarianship and was also curious about the ways libraries around the country were or could assist gay people. I was 19 years old at the time. Barbara Gittings wrote back a short note, encouraging me to become a librarian and in general encouraging me. This letter, sent to rural Oklahoma, meant a lot to me. It was just something that Barbara and others did routinely, but that did not change its importance to me.

I might have become a librarian without that letter. There's no way to know (though I was already working in a library). I doubt I would have been focused on the ways libraries could assist every member of their communities without it, though.

Dale McNeill  
Director  
Community Services Library Department  
Queens Public Library

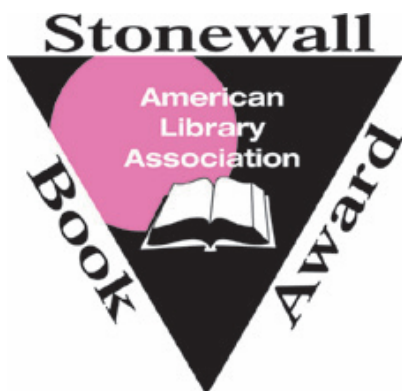




Barbara Gittings receives her honorary lifetime membership from ALA in Toronto, June 2003.

I remember the first time I spoke with Barbara Gittings, back in 1982 when I'd just begun the Advocate Index, and her inviting me to be a speaker with Clare Potter at the 1985 Annual in Chicago—and come out nationally in the process! She was a great lady and gave new meaning to the word "feisty". It's up to us now to keep the work she began going forward. Pax in aeterna, Barbara.

Rob Ridinger  
Chair, Electronic Information Resources,  
Northern Illinois University



As with many members of the RT, I met Barbara Gittings and Kay Lahusen at the social at SF Public in 2002. It seemed a gift to meet her and Kay along with Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon. The following year, Barbara came to both ALA conferences—she came to the social in Philadelphia, which has a GLBT collection named after her. And she was present in Toronto to receive her honorary membership.

It is those events in Toronto which stand out most in my memory. After watching her receive her honorary membership in ALA at the Opening Session, she attended the RT social at city hall and then the awards breakfast. Barbara was bursting with excitement; a GLBT event being held in the city hall of a major city, a GLBT social sponsored by a city councilor; and reveling in marriages taking place in Toronto (Ontario's marriage law had been changed that spring) spoke volumes to the importance and the success of her work to gain rights for gays and lesbians. This is captured for me in a photo of Barbara with Ann Symons, Nancy Garden and her partner Sandy Scott with the Toronto Star headline about gay marriage being legalized. It was incredibly rewarding to see her honored for her work by ALA and honored by seeing barriers removed and laws changed.

Anne L. Moore  
Coordinator for Access Services  
W.E.B. Du Bois Library  
University of Massachusetts Amherst



(From left) ALA Past President Ann Symons, Anne L. Moore, Barbara Gittings, Nancy Garden, and Sandy Scott revel as Canada recognizes same-sex marriage. When this picture was taken in June 2003, Barbara and Kay Lahusen had been together 42 years.

## Stonewall Award, Honor Books Named

On behalf of the Stonewall Book Award Committee, I am pleased to announce the winners of the 2007 Stonewall Book Awards. Andrew Holleran, author of *Grief* (Hyperion), is the winner of the Barbara Gittings Book Award in Literature, and Alison Bechdel, author of *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (Houghton Mifflin), is the winner of the Israel Fishman Book Award for Nonfiction.

The 2007 Stonewall Honor Books in Literature are: *The Manny Files* by Christian Burch (Atheneum Books); *The Night Watch* by Sarah Waters (Riverhead); *Rose of No Man's Land* by Michelle Tea (MacAdam/Cage) and *The Scarecrow's Bible* by Martin Hyatt (Suspect Thoughts Press). The 2007 Stonewall Honor Books in Non-Fiction are: *Covering* by Kenji Yoshino (Random House); *Gay Power: An American Revolution* by David Eisenbach (Carroll & Graf); *Male-Male Intimacy in Early Modern Amer-*

*ica* by William Benemann (Harrington Park Press) and *Mama's Boy, Preacher's Son* by Kevin Jennings (Beacon Press).

The announcement was made January 21 at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Seattle.

This year marks the 36th anniversary of the Stonewall Awards. They will be presented to the winners at the 2007 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., on June 25, 2007. I would like to thank the committee for its hard work this past year and to congratulate Richard DiRusso and Elizabeth Briggs who will assume the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect for 2008. I look forward to seeing you at the awards brunch in D.C.

Robin Imhof, Chair  
2007 Stonewall Book Award Committee  
University of the Pacific  
[rimhof@pacific.edu](mailto:rimhof@pacific.edu)

## WikiProject LGBT Studies Group Improving Wikipedia

You've probably heard of Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia online that anyone can edit. You probably haven't heard that inside Wikipedia, there are many groups of editors who work together in "WikiProjects" to improve specific area, such as films or biographies.

I am Coordinator of WikiProject LGBT Studies, which is currently working to create, maintain, and improve coverage of LGBT people, culture and issues. As with many parts of Wikipedia, many LGBT articles have issues with reliability and comprehensiveness: however, since we began, we have rapidly expanded and improved the articles within our remit.

The WikiProject first got going last November. Since then, we have gained over 130 members with a range of experiences and interests, from lawyers to activists. Our first major action was to implement an assessment program to establish what articles were in our scope and of what quality (this also allows us to watch how well we're doing in our aims) – we have tagged over 5000 articles with our banner, though we estimate there are over 19,000 out there!

With LGBT articles so much the target of homophobes and vandals, we have developed several watch lists to monitor and revert vandalism. We also help out with LGBT categorization and lists. However, our main focus is the improvement of articles, so we have started a translation department for foreign LGBT entries, a peer review process to give feedback on nominated articles, and a monthly collaboration to improve one selected article as much as we can. We also have a unique "Jumpaclass" competition, where people can improve articles to win points throughout the year, with the winner choosing the January collaboration, which has proven surprisingly successful. All these initiatives are working to help us in our goal: good LGBT coverage.



Many of you have fought long and hard for LGBT provision in libraries, and I admire everyone who has struggled for our right to be included in history. LGBT people have been steadily erased from history and encyclopedias for millennia – now, Wikipedia is a chance to correct that. We are the twelfth most visited website in the world, and millions of people view our articles. Never before has there been such an opportunity to disseminate information on such a scale. The LGBT WikiProject is thus working very hard to ensure that users can look up any LGBT article and see a comprehensive, factual, and neutral entry. Already we have articles that are far better than that of normal encyclopedias. Same-sex marriage in Spain, for example, is a Featured Article on Wikipedia – an equivalent article doesn't even exist in the Encyclopedia Britannica. Similarly, one of the greatest things about Wikipedia is that we can be up-to-date with all the latest information: how many ordinary encyclopedias have a List of defense of marriage amendments to U.S. state constitutions by type (another Featured Article)? We are committed to strengthening and expanding all our coverage in the same vein.

Following such an influx of members, we are now beginning to consider specializing, with a dedicated LGBT Publications Taskforce having been proposed. With such expansion on the English Wikipedia, we have been slowly progressing towards the same goals on other Wikimedia projects. An LGBT WikiProject has recently been established on the Spanish Wikipedia, and is quickly settling in. An idea has been mooted for a LGBT history textbook on Wikibooks, though that is still very much in the planning stages. Eventually we would also like to establish an active LGBT presence on Wikibooks, Wikiquote, Wikinews, and Wikiversity at the very least, in as many different languages as possible, though this seems many years away. However, "even the mightiest tree begins with the smallest seed" – in other words, we're working on it.

True, there have been many criticisms of Wikipedia; we are subject to vandalism, POV warriors, and false information. But there's much to be excited about. We're the largest encyclopedia ever assembled, surpassing the Chinese Yongle Encyclopedia which held the record for 600 years. It has been calculated that in approximately 8 years, Wikipedia will be equal to and then surpass the quality of the 1974 Britannica, and this does not take into consideration the number of articles Wikipedia has that Britannica does not. Courts and newspapers are quoting Wikipedia more than ever before. And the best thing? If an article fits our notability guidelines, we'll keep it. LGBT coverage has been reduced and ignored everywhere else – I'm tremendously proud that I can contribute to the sum of ALL human knowledge on Wikipedia and I invite you all to join me.

Dev920

Coordinator, WikiProject LGBT studies  
[dev920@gmail.com](mailto:dev920@gmail.com)

## "Out at the Library" on Tour

"Out at the Library," a traveling panel exhibit based on Out at the Library: Celebrating the James C. Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center, is winding down its national tour of libraries and community centers. New York's LGBT Community Center was the first host of "Out at the Library", followed by the Provincetown Public Library, the Atlanta-Fulton Central Library, and the Swarthmore College Library. The display is

at the Oak Lawn Branch of the Dallas Public Library, through April 1. It then moves to its last stop, the Minneapolis Central Library from April 20-June 30.

The traveling exhibition, comprised of 25 specially-designed panels, offers a rare look into the Hormel Center's unique archives and demonstrates how it ensures the legacy of the LGBT communities. The Hormel Cen-

ter is a public archives at the San Francisco Main Library devoted to collecting, preserving and presenting material on the LGBT experience. To receive more information about the exhibit, please contact project director, Catherine King at [cking@sfpl.org](mailto:cking@sfpl.org).

From Dallas Public Library Press Release, 1/24/2007, and San Francisco Public Library News Release, 2/2/2006

## LA&M Instructs Archivists

The Leather Archives & Museum's latest issue (2006, No. 4) of its quarterly newsletter, *The Leather Times* (ISSN 1552-1915) features a lengthy article, "Caring for our Treasures: A Guide to Preserving your Leather History", with tips on storing and caring for common types of artifacts and documents. This guide includes basic instructions on storing and preserving papers, photos, fabrics, leather, and video-tapes—and has guidelines for restoring

items and mitigating damage.

The article is excerpted from the LA&M's *Archivist's Handbook*, which also includes guidance on the types of materials organizations should collect and preserve. While the LA&M's suggestions were directed at clubs, non-profits, and businesses serving the leather/fetish community, its recommendations should be helpful to any group looking to preserve its history, its docu-

ments, and its artifacts. A copy of the *Archivist's Handbook*, formatted for printing as a 5½ x 8½ inch booklet, can be downloaded from the LA&M's Web site at <http://www.leatherarchives.org/resources/arch.pdf>

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Librarian, Leather Archives & Museum

## National Library Week at the LA&M

The Teri Rose Memorial Library at the Leather Archives & Museum will mark National Library Week (April 15-21, 2007) with a survey of the LA&M membership.

The survey will ask members to select from a list of titles on various aspects of BDSM. Some basic demographic information on the membership will also be

sought. Results will be posted on the LA&M Web site after the survey closes April 21.

Last year during National Library Week, the LA&M asked its members to name their favorite kinky books. The results of that request, available on the LA&M Web site at <http://www.leatherarchives.org/exhibits/reading.htm>, were used to help guide col-

lection development efforts at the Teri Rose Library.

John Bradford  
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Villa Park (IL) Public Library  
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Librarian, Leather Archives & Museum

### Build Your Vita! Write Reviews!

To become a part of the team of reviewers that publish in the GLBTRT Newsletter, or to receive a copy of our guidelines for book reviews, email Book Review Editor Lisa Johnston at: [ljohnston@sbc.edu](mailto:ljohnston@sbc.edu)

## Book Reviews: Non-Fiction

### Passion to Preserve: A Conversation with Will Fellows

"Why are there so many gay librarians?" Since I started library school three years ago, I get asked this question with great regularity by folks outside LibraryLand, queer and straight alike. Within the library world, it's a phenomenon many of us acknowledge, usually only tacitly. Yet it's hardly a coincidence that ALA's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Round Table – founded by the late Israel Fishman as the Task Force on Gay Liberation in 1970, within a year of the Stonewall Rebellion – was the first-ever professional organization for GLBT people. Clearly, our history in the profession is a long and consequential one.

There are frequent discussions in the library literature of librarian stereotypes in popular culture. Women librarians' professional status is typically viewed as impinging on their sexuality in negative ways: they are perceived as unattractive, unmarried, desexualized or (heaven

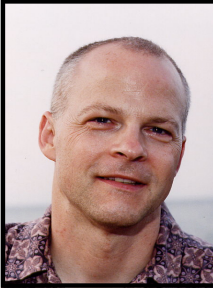
forfend) lesbian. Male librarians have been less subject to speculation in this vein, though the stereotype of deviance from gender and sexual norms still applies. One need only recall the ashen look on Olympia Dukakis's face in the 2004 film *The Librarian: Quest for the Spear* when her handsome but bookish and resolutely single son (played by Noah Wyle) announces that he's been hired to his first job – as a librarian.

The aim of discussions of stereotyping in the library literature is most often to disprove those stereotypes' validity and improve librarians' professional image. Less frequently, there is consideration of the factors that may have given rise to those stereotypes in the first place. Are there really as many queer people in librarianship and allied professions as we think there are? If so, why might that be? Answers to these questions can be difficult to come by. The very existence of GLBT people tends to be

overlooked by conventional survey instruments in the social sciences. Researchers conducting their own surveys may encounter reluctance on the part of professionals to



## Fellows Interview, continued....



Will Fellows is also the author of *Farm Boys: Lives of Gay Men from the Rural Midwest*, a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award in 1997. A writer and educator, he lives with his partner in Milwaukee.

disclose information about their sexuality; many in the United States still live in jurisdictions where they are not afforded the protection of law from discrimination on these grounds in the workplace.

This dearth of information is why Will Fellows's *A Passion to Preserve: Gay Men as Keepers of Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004) is such an important book. From a series of interviews and personal reminiscences of gay men around the United States involved in historic preservation, Fellows makes a challenging argument for gay men's particular social role as custodians of cultural patrimony. In January 2007, Fellows generously entertained a few of my questions about his work, its relation to GLBT librarians, and how his research both affirms and disproves popular suppositions which circumscribe our place in the profession.

**Matt Johnson:** Some librarians have commented on our profession as being "feminized", having structural considerations such as a service orientation and lower pay scale which make it more amenable to women as well as to men whose social status is compromised by their sexuality. You advance a different theory in *A Passion to Preserve*: namely, gay men are prevalent in the field of historic preservation because their "gender atypicality" uniquely disposes them to do this work. Do you feel your interviewees share this view? How has your hypothesis been viewed by critics?

**Will Fellows:** Many gay men are drawn to librarianship primarily because of their essential gender atypicality, their pronounced blend of feminine and masculine qualities. Similarly, many gay men gravitate to other fields that are well populated by women: social work, nursing, cosmetology, fashion design, interior design, and historic preservation, to name a few.

When I asked my preservation-minded interviewees how they would explain the extraordinary involvement of gay men in historic preservation, I heard what became

a predictable litany: Gays often have higher incomes and no children, so they can more easily immerse themselves in costly and laborious restoration projects. Or: Lacking children, gay preservationists are attempting to create something that will live beyond them. Or: Because gay men are socially stigmatized and marginalized, they take on the work of preservation. By taking something degraded and making it whole and beautiful again, they are trying to prove themselves worthy of society's respect and move up the social ladder.

The book shows how all of these armchair explanations collapse under scrutiny. In reality, gay men's contributions in historic preservation are the result of something much deeper and more complex. Their blend of feminine and masculine qualities is a powerful amalgam that makes a lot of wonderful things happen in the world. But the mindset that ignores or denies the gender-blended reality of gay men's lives is bound to persist because it helps many gay men live their lives with less difficulty in a culture that has a particular loathing for males who transgress gender norms.

It was evident that some of my interview subjects recognized that gay men's gender atypicality is related to their passion for preservation, but only a few of them were inclined to say much about it. Of those who spoke about it more freely, some were ambivalent about my publishing their words on the topic. No doubt some of my interviewees were turned off by my focus on gay men's gender atypicality in *A Passion to Preserve*, but others have responded appreciatively. I've received only appreciative communications from readers. Some critics have lauded the book's message while others have reacted with disdain. There's no question that the accumulated scientific evidence on gay male gender identity and expression supports my analysis. It's a case of scientifically correct information being politically incorrect.

**MJ:** What is the place of queer women, if any, in historic preservation?

**WF:** Straight women and gay men are natural collaborators in the historic preservation arena because they embody similar values and sensibilities. The gender atypicality of lesbians takes them in a different direction. One gay preservationist remarked that he seldom saw lesbians with a passion for taking on building restoration projects, but he had been very happy with the work that lesbian contractors had done for him

on his projects.

**MJ:** Many of your contributors have been among the few visible gay men in the small towns and small cities where they live and work. One of them used his position as a preservationist to advance knowledge of local African-American history as well as gay and lesbian rights. Do you believe that these men have an important political role to play in such communities?

**WF:** I didn't ask specifically about my interviewees' political views or engagement. My impressions are that not many of them would describe themselves as activists. Preservation activists, maybe, but not gay rights activists. Few of them were trying to hide their gayness, but most were not inclined to advertise the fact.

Perhaps one significant "political" role that these preservation-minded gay men play in their communities is simply demonstrating the remarkable contributions that gays make when they are able to live their lives authentically. The book's subtitle is "gay men as keepers of culture." As Allan Gurganus commented, "Just as there are postage stamps that celebrate the contributions of black Americans and Jewish Americans to the vitality of American culture, I look forward to the day when the charity and scope of gay Americans are similarly acknowledged, celebrated. Our culture is endlessly, determinedly marginalizing us."

**MJ:** Do you think that the present emphasis on conformity to prevailing social values (including gender role conformity) in gay life, as well as a generation gap in the transmission of knowledge and values due to the AIDS epidemic, mean that we are at risk of losing the gay preservationist tradition you describe?

**WF:** Out of the stream of baby males always being born, preservation-minded gay males will always emerge. The survival of the gay preservationist tradition does not depend on gender norms, nor on the uninterrupted transmission of knowledge and values from one generation of gay men to the next. It depends only on males being born with the right blend of characteristics. From there, they will find their own way and they will find others who share their sensibilities and values. They always have.

Reviewed and interviewed by  
Matt Johnson  
Taxonomy Analyst  
Exchange Place



## Goolrick, Robert. *The End of the World As We Know It: Scenes from a Life.*

Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2007. 224 p. (978-1565124813) 22.95

Come Death, and let thy fingers close my eyes, or if I live, let me forget myself is a quote from Edward II that Goolrick uses as the epigraph to his first book.

Goolrick has written a memoir of his childhood and family in Virginia. The picture he paints of a loving, genteel 1950s family life in Virginia is contrasted by the alcoholism and despair the family saves for their life away from the public. This youth led Goolrick to his own depression and addictions that left him attempting suicide by mutilation at the age of 35 before he checked into a mental hospital for an extended stay.

The weight that Goolrick feels pushing down on him only grows throughout his life as his family refuses to express love to him despite his lavishing time, money, even a new house, on his parents. He relives the death and destruction of his family, parents, their home, and all manner of life about them as they refuse to communicate on anything substantial or discuss the one secret they can not face.

The honesty in the book will pull you into Goolrick's life of pain and shame. Then you will be left at the end amazed at the beauti-

ful writing and horrified by the consequences of the secret the family kept.

Reviewed by Steve Stratton,  
Head of Collections and  
Technical Services  
CSU Channel Islands  
Broome Library



## Heath, Rachel Ann. *The Praeger Handbook of Transsexuality: Changing Gender to Match Mindset.*

Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006. 260p. (ISBN: 0275991768) \$49.95

The past year saw the publication of several works dealing with the issue of transgenderism and transsexuality. One of the most valuable of those is this work, which covers a range of issues related to transsexuality.

Early in the volume, Heath explores the biological and physiological basis for transsexuality, paying close attention of a study an area of the hypothalamus that is characterized by differences in the volume of neurons in the BSTc (bed nucleus of the stria terminalis). While this study examined a small sample and the role of postnatal hormone influences is debated, Heath's detailed examination of these findings is welcome as many recent works have only

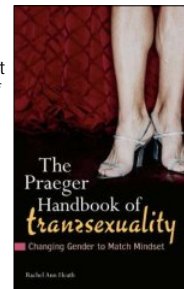
cursorily looked at it if at all.

It covers the spectrum of issues related to transsexuality, including debates over the nature of sexual orientation and transsexuality, as well as excellent summaries of the effects of hormones, surgical procedures and the potential complications that can arise from them, additional procedures such as breast augmentation/mastectomy, speech therapy and surgical options for altering pitch in male-to-female transsexuals. Other chapters cover legal and social issues that confront transsexual men and women.

This is an excellent addition to academic collections, but also is a valuable resource

for public libraries providing a resource not only for transsexuals but also for the education of the general community.

Reviewed by Granuaile O'Flanagan  
Systems Librarian  
Camden-Carroll Library  
Morehead State University



## Whitman, Joy S. and Boyd, Cyndy J. *The Therapist's Notebook for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients: Homework, Handouts, and Activities for Use in Psychotherapy.*

New York: The Haworth Clinical Practice Press, 2003. 310 p. ISBN: 0789012529 \$39.95

This uncommon book takes a practical and hands on approach in dealing with the many challenges of identifying as something other than the majority regarding sexual identity and orientation. Although transgendered people are only mentioned in a handful of entry titles, I believe many of the entries contain enough common themes that apply to transgendered persons while also recognizing their own unique concerns.

The book is organized into four distinct sections. Section one includes topics such as the coming out process, identity formation, internalized homophobia and discrimination. Section two covers relationship issues that include choosing a partner, financial stability, gender roles and negotiations about relationship expectations. Sec-

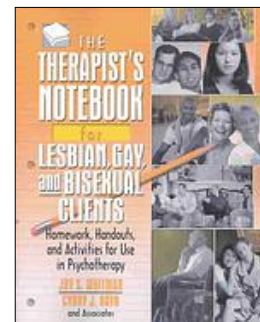
tion three explores issues related to gender, ethnic and sexual identity.

The fourth and final section includes miscellaneous topics such as parenting, religion/spirituality, body image and domestic violence issues. These topics provide homework, handouts and activities for every entry. Each entry includes the type of contribution, objective, rationale for use, instructions, follow up suggestions, contraindications and handouts as appropriate. Additionally, readings and resources for the professional, bibliotherapy sources for the client and references for the entry are included.

This book is in a very readable format and while directed towards psychotherapy practitioners, provides useful and sensible infor-

mation and resources that can be used in a variety of ways. Recommended for larger public and academic libraries for use in educating and creating awareness of the unique needs of GLBT people.

Reviewed by Lisa Forslund  
Assistant Professor  
St. Cloud State University



## Book Reviews: Fiction

### Coyote, Ivan. *Bow Grip*

Vancouver, B.C.: Arsenal Pulp Books, 2006. 221p. ISBN 1551522136 \$16.95



In *Bow Grip*, Ivan Coyote quickly engages the reader in a story that follows Joey, a mechanic, whose wife has left him for another woman and is living in Calgary. The tale begins as Jim, a reclusive character living in a parked bus, approaches Joey with an offer to

trade a beautiful cello for an old car Joey has for sale. When Joey agrees to make the

unusual trade, his life is immediately shaken up and unfolds into surprising new directions.

The car Joey trades unexpectedly breaks down, and he discovers more about its new owner than he bargained for. He quickly repairs it but finds that Jim has already left town without it. The tale unfolds as Joey is compelled to find Jim, who he believes to be in Calgary. In the process of finding Jim, Joey befriends a widower and a single mother who live in the motel he is staying at.

For Joey, Calgary comes to represent the nexus of a new beginning, as he is able to meet with his wife and redefine their relationship. Coyote envelops the reader with her warm characters, laugh-out-loud-by-yourself passages, and the words she uses to illustrate the complexity of being human. This novel is recommended for adult fiction readers.

Reviewed by Natalie Bulick  
Children's Librarian  
Oceanside Public Library

### Grubisic, Brett Josef. *The Age of Cities.*

Vancouver, BC: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2006. 240 p. ISBN: 9781551522128 \$14.95



Written in the dialect of the time (1950s), *The Age of Cities* provides a fictional insight to the mind of a Vancouver-native male school librarian, single and still living at home with his mother. An introvert, Winston doesn't wonder at his

lack of enjoyment of the opposite sex, content to live his bachelor life with his mother

for companionship. It is only by chance that Winston, at the end of the book, comes across other kindred spirits, although Winston never fully recognizes or comes to term with his own identity, who raise questions for a brief moment in Winston's otherwise tranquil life.

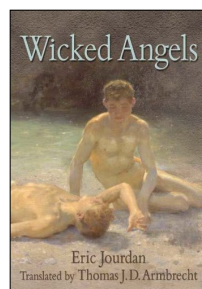
Providing an insight into the day-to-day life of an unknowing gay man, this book moves along slowly, without ever delving into the question of being gay. An unknowing reader might select this book based on the blurb

on the back, and be sorely disappointed by the content. While accurate and interesting for the reader of books such as *Fried Green Tomatoes* at the Whistlestop Café, this book is not appropriate for such readers based on the explicit scene in the last third of the book.

Reviewed by Sara Marcus  
Adjunct Assistant Professor  
Queens College.

### Jourdan, Eric. *Wicked Angels: A Tale of Male Adolescent Passion.*

Translated from the French by Thomas J.D. Armbricht. New York: Southern Tier Editions, An Imprint of the Haworth Press, 2006. xxiii, 120 p. ISBN: 978-1-56023-548-4 \$12.95



Originally written in French (*Mauvais Anges*) and translated seamlessly by J. D. Armbricht, this exploration of coming to terms with true love between two male cousins in France is brought to the English-speaking public,

though banned for 30 years in France.

Exploring the feelings, the lust, the frustrations, the denials, and the acquiescing to love and desire between two young men on

the cusp of adulthood, Jourdan leads the reader through the minds of Pierre and Gerard while living with their fathers in the same house.

Including a detailed history and commentary on the text and its publication history by Armbricht, this volume is not only a work of fiction but also an insight to the censorship occurring in France after World War II. The language incorporated in the book will lead the reader to understand why the book might have been banned, and might even encourage the purchaser to keep the book 'locked up,' yet for those seeking an erotically, yet tastefully charged

book, this is one to keep. For the seeker of fiction, it is recommended to skip the accurate and informing historical aspect in the front as this might deter one seeking simply a good read, while a scholar might be interested only in the introductory materials, while others wanting to learn more will be interested in reading both and will be drawn in by the poetic use of words to create images more vivid than any depicted by a visual artist.

Reviewed by Sara Marcus  
Adjunct Assistant Professor  
Queens College.