



The Lesbian Edition

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Volume 2 Number 1

Call this the issue that wouldn't quit! Every time we were ready to wrap, there would be another news story we couldn't resist. So this issue is long on books and rich in news. To keep it manageable, we'll send the news first as #13, followed by the books, as issue #14 a few days later. Features include the [rebirth of Spinsters Ink](#), a rant about conservatives' reactions to the news that [Abraham Lincoln wasn't straight](#), and a round-up of [book-related travel opportunities](#).

Yours in spreading the words,
Carol

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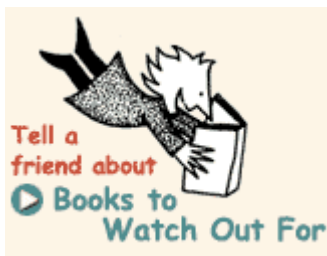
Books To Watch Out For

Mary Cheney has signed up to write the first book for Threshold, Simon & Schuster's new imprint targeted at the conservative book market. The imprint is headed by long-time Republican strategist and Cheney family friend Mary Matalin.

It should be a very, um, interesting book and interesting to see where Cheney draws the lines as she ends her silence. In making the announcement Matalin said that Cheney was barred from discussing her personal life while working as a top aide on her father's 2000 and 2004 campaigns but that the memoir will give her an opportunity to speak her mind. Cheney's statement said "The first time I campaigned with my father, I was 8 years old... I've been involved with campaigns as a family member, a staffer and, though I certainly never intended it, as a political target for the other side." Ouch! Don't look for wildly progressive politics.

Is Dick Cheney lining up to run for President in 2008? If so, getting Mary's "gay story" out of the way well before the election is probably his best bet.

Look for the book in 2006.



About BTWOF

Books To Watch Out For publishes monthly e-letters celebrating books on various topics. Each issue includes new book announcements, brief reviews, commentary, news and, yes, good book gossip.

The Lesbian Edition

covers both lesbian books and the

whole range of books lesbians like to read. It covers news of both the women in print movement and mainstream publishing. Written and compiled by Carol Seajay.

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The Gay Men's Edition

announces and reviews new books by and about gay men as well as other books of interest and gay publishing news. Written and compiled by Richard Labonte.

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More Books for Women

will launch in 2005.

- » [Click here](#) to be notified when it launches.

Q. How does BTWOF define "a lesbian book?"

A. We think that any book that belongs to a lesbian is a lesbian book, just as any bike that belongs to a girl is "a girl's bike."

BTWOF: The Lesbian Edition

covers a wide range of books likely to be of interest to our readers as well as books with lesbian content and books by lesbian writers.

Advertising & Sponsorships

BTWOF is financed by subscriptions, rather than advertising or book sales. Publishers and individuals who wish to help launch BTWOF are invited to sponsor any of the first 12 issues. Write to [Mozelle Mathews](#) for sponsorship information.

Housekeeping

If you want to change your BTWOF email address or other contact information, [click here](#) to update:

- » your subscriber profile
- » whatever has changed.

Finding BTWOF

BTWOF is published by Carol Seajay and Books To Watch Out

Dorothy Allison is finishing a new book, working title: *She Who* – or maybe *Sanctuary*. It focuses on three women - Cassie, a twenty-three-year-old who survived a nearly fatal assault in a parking garage in San Francisco, her mother Barbara, who became an anti-violence activist after her daughter's attack, and Margaret, a sixty-year-old ex-nun who runs a goat farm on the California coast. Stay tuned!



Lesbian Publishing in Taiwan

Must Muster Publishing is the world's first Chinese-language lesbian publishing house and is the first gay or lesbian publisher to exhibit at the Taipei International Book Exhibit. That might be gutsy enough for most publishers – but founder Lin Han-yu is also reported to have set precedent by refusing to put "R" (restricted to people over 18) labels and seals on her publications.

"Our books focus on various issues of lesbianism," she told the *Taipei Times*. "Sex only makes up a small part and is touched on only slightly. Since the contents contain nothing restricted, we will not label the books nor have them sealed."

The article also reported that she launched the press in 2000 "Without any resources or knowing any writers," after looking for lesbian books and finding only a church publication saying that homosexuality is a sin... "Volunteers staffed her booth since she cannot afford to hire employees. She makes around US\$300 a month and is in debt to the tune of US\$9,500, but she is not worried about the future. Lin said she would publish at least 100 books before she would even consider giving up."

If your Chinese is up to speed, learn more about Must Muster at <http://www.2her.com.tw/>.

Spinsters Re-Inked by Bella Connection

"It is my sincere desire to preserve the original mission and unique voice of Spinsters Ink by continuing to make available some of its previous titles and offering new titles under the Spinsters Ink name and logo in the spirit of honoring a name that has long been at the heart of so many in the feminist and lesbian publishing community." – Linda Hill



The word a couple of months ago was that Spinsters was closing, but the press has found a new home and champion in Bella Books' co-owner Linda Hill. Spinsters had been for sale for some time when then-owner Sharon Silvas and Hovis Publishing Company decided, in the face of Sharon's failing health, to close the press late in 2004. Hill is part of a small group that is taking on the Spinsters name and logo and its remaindered inventory.

Hill & company plan to continue in the Spinsters tradition of publishing works by both lesbians and non-lesbians that address significant issues in women's lives from a feminist perspective – books that name crucial issues and encourage change and growth. They have announced plans to release at least six new Spinsters titles in 2005 with a mix that includes mysteries, nonfiction, and women's fiction.

Rights to books previously published by Spinsters have reverted to the authors, and authors were offered the option of taking royalty payment in books (at 40% discount plus shipping). The remaining copies of books went to Hill's consortium and will continue to be available from Spinsters. Hill reports that she is in negotiation with a number of Spinsters Ink authors and that some may continue to publish under the auspices of the new company.

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Send books for review consideration for the **Lesbian Edition** to the San Francisco address above.

Send books for review consideration for the **Gay Men's Edition** directly to Richard Labonte at
7-A Drummond St W
Perth, ON K7H 2J3
Canada.



Spinsters and Bella will remain separate entities, and Hill will work actively with both houses. Both will continue to publish in their own traditions, with minimal overlap between the two. The reincarnated Spinsters, for example, will not publish lesbian romances. But it will benefit from access to Bella's infrastructures: warehousing, production, and marketing and distribution channels.

Spinsters was founded in upstate New York by Maureen Brady and Judith McDaniel in 1978 to publish feminist books. In 1982 it moved to San Francisco where Sherry Thomas took up publishing operation. In 1986 the press merged with Aunt Lute Books (which Joan Pinkvoss had recently moved to San Francisco from Iowa City) and became Spinsters/Aunt Lute Book Company. The presses separated again in 1990 as the Aunt Lute Foundation became a separate, non-profit publishing house. Spinsters Ink moved to Minnesota in 1992 where it thrived under the care of Joan Drury and the team she assembled in Minneapolis and Duluth. In 2001, after almost a decade of stability, the press was sold to Hovis Publishing in Denver, where it was managed, primarily, by Sharon Silvas despite various ownership changes and financial difficulties. Under Silvas' tenure the press published new titles by Sally Miller Gearhart (*The Kanshou* and *The Magister*, and reprinted *The Wanderground*) and Anita Mason (*Angel*, *The Racket*, *The Yellow Cathedral*).

Sharon Silvas, who had owned Spinsters since 2003, was facing serious health issues and, having been unable to sell the press, formally closed her incarnation of Spinsters at the end of 2004. She continues to publish *Colorado Woman News* as a web magazine at <http://www.coloradowoman.com/>.

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BTWOF Interview: Linda Hill on the Spinsters Ink/Bella Connection

BTWOF: Spinsters has been through a lot of owners during its 27-year tenure as a leading feminist publisher. What's your vision for the press? What do you want to do with it?

Linda Hill: We plan to give it new life and to let it flourish. It's almost easier to say right now what the press *won't* be – rather than what it *will* be. That's primarily because this is a very new acquisition and we have so many details to work out. At this point, we know that it will not be another Bella Books and that there will be little overlap between the two presses in terms of what they publish. Spinsters will publish fiction and nonfiction by and about women, but, unlike Bella, all of the books won't necessarily be lesbian specific.

What kind of books are you looking for? When will Spinsters start accepting submissions?

We're already accepting manuscripts. So far we don't have specific submission guidelines, but we expect to have details like that complete and available on the Spinsters website before too long.

We're looking for both fiction and nonfiction. For fiction, we're looking for stories and storytellers whose work does not fall into traditional genre categories such as romance or erotica. The work might speak to the broader social and cultural issues facing women and their relationships – or it may just be a really great story. We're looking for both lesbian and women's fiction. We would also like to see some good young adult fiction as well. We also expect to have a mystery series or two.

In terms of nonfiction, the door is wide open. We're looking for relevant, informative manuscripts that address current events, health and well-being, or have significant biographical or historical relevance for women.

What titles do you have lined up for Spinsters? When will the first books be coming? Can you say anything about other titles in the works?

Fortunately at Bella, we receive quite a number of queries and manuscripts each day. From that pool, we have accepted manuscripts from three authors for Spinsters so far. We're in the middle of contract negotiations with two and so we can't announce those titles quite yet.

The first author and titles that the new Spinsters Ink will launch is Jennifer L. Jordan. Her last novel, ***Commitment to Die***, is a Lammy nominee this year from Bean Pole Books. Spinsters will pick up ***Commitment to Die*** and will soon be publishing the rest of the books in the Kristin Ashe mystery series. Jennifer is an exceptional writer, and we're thrilled that she has come on board to help us launch the new Spinsters mystery line.

How will Spinsters benefit from Bella's infrastructure?

The good news for Spinsters (and now I'm back to wearing my Bella hat) is that we already have a strong infrastructure in place and Spinsters will be able to share many of the resources that would normally take a new publishing house months to develop and put into place. We already have a fine production staff of editors, proofers, typesetters and cover designers. We already have a large warehouse staffed with capable people who pride themselves on exceptional customer service. We already have existing distribution and marketing channels that will simply pick up the Spinsters line in a way that will ultimately become transparent.

Spinsters can share all of these resources that should allow it to hit the ground running. That doesn't mean we won't be expanding, though. We're actively looking to add to our production staff as well as the staff in our warehouse and offices to handle the additional work that another press will bring.

How will this expansion affect Bella?

The addition of Spinsters will not alter or reduce Bella's production schedule or our commitment to produce the same type of popular fiction that has made Bella so successful thus far.

That said, we suffer from what I'm sure many houses suffer from – too much to do and not enough staff to do it all. So the biggest change overall will be in staffing. There will be new opportunities for others to take on different roles within the organization.

How much of Spinsters' remaindered inventory did you buy?

We picked up the majority of the remaindered inventory from Spinsters, although we haven't yet taken physical possession of it. At this point it's uncertain what we'll be able to make available to bookstores. Many of the rights reverted back to the authors. We are just beginning to contact the individual authors and are hopeful that we will be able to work with some toward keeping their work with us. It's always a difficult situation when something like this happens and, unfortunately, it's the authors who often suffer the brunt of it all. We hope to remedy that as much as possible.

In what other directions is the consortium expanding?

Oh my! I don't think we have enough space or time here! We're growing and expanding in all kinds of ways.

In December of last year we absorbed the inventory from Rising Tide Press. Unfortunately, over time many of these titles will have to be remaindered. But the good news is that we've already brought a couple of the Rising Tide authors over to Bella, and we expect more to follow. We're hopeful that over time we'll develop long-term relationships with a number of the old RTP authors and with their readers as well.

Probably the biggest area of expansion will be in distribution. Over the past year, I've spent quite a lot of time talking with a number of small press publishers, and I've heard the same sentiment echoed from each and every one of them. Everyone seems to suffer from poor distribution and representation in the independent bookstores and also at the big chains. There's also a complaint of a lack of cohesive foreign and direct sales.

We decided to see if we could partner with some of the other presses to find a solution to benefit each of us. As a result, we've begun to develop unique relationships with both publishers and wholesalers. We've formed a new company, Bella Distribution, that we believe will provide promotional and distribution services to publishers that just didn't have access to those services in the past.

Specifically, Bella Distribution plans to provide marketing and product to individuals, bookstores, and wholesalers world-wide. We plan to leverage the relationships and distribution channels we already have in place to help gain more exposure for our small press partners.

I should be clear that the publishers we'll be distributing are in no way owned or acquired by us. They are wholly separate publishers. We expect that this new model will be one of cooperative use of common resources in an effort to broaden the market for everyone.

We're already making titles from other publishers available to bookstores and individuals. One way we're doing this is through the introduction of Bella's Bookshelf (currently on our website) where we highlight and promote specific titles from publishers with whom we've partnered.

The first publisher with whom we've partnered is Bold Strokes Books, which publishes the prolific – and best-selling author – Radclyffe. Len Barot, president of Bold Strokes, has graciously worked with us as we go through growing pains and work out some of the kinks in the process.

The response from other publishers has been quite good and we already have a waiting list of publishers who are interested in partnering with us as well. Realistically, though, I don't expect that we'll take on more publishers before June of this year. That should give us enough time to correct any issues we identify and to have our plans fully developed.

So is the Bella Consortium (or whatever we should call it) really going to take over the entire lesbian publishing industry?

You've heard that rumor too? Ha! I've heard grumbings from some areas that Bella is '*gobbling up publishers*' left and right. Of course that's not how I see it at all! We have never gone out looking for houses that might be closing or looking to relinquish their inventory. So far we've been in the very fortunate position of being able to help out some of our fellow publishers when we've been contacted. In the case of Rising Tide and Spinsters – even though the situations are quite different – our goal has been to give the existing authors a new home where they can feel part of a family, where they know their work will be welcome, and where they will be respected. And frankly, where they know their royalties will be paid! In the case of Spinsters, we have every intention of keeping and growing the long-standing tradition of the press.

We're fortunate. Barbara Grier and Donna McBride created a foundation and passed a legacy on to us for which I feel a tremendous gratitude, and a certain responsibility. They have mentored us and given us a blueprint that seems to be working just fine. I am often reminded that things could be a whole lot harder for us, particularly as I see the struggles that others are going through.

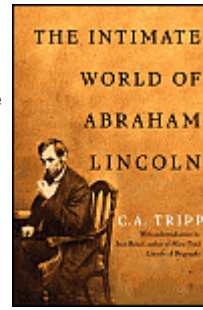
The truth is that all of us absolutely love what we're doing. We want to work with others as much as possible toward our goals – which seem far more common than they are different. In recent months I've been asked a lot about how it is that we can work so hard to promote a competitor. That seems so ridiculous to me. Our growing relationship with other publishers is an entirely reciprocal process. We believe that by helping to introduce books from other publishers to our readers, we're seriously growing the reader pool. Bringing together loyal readers and a diverse array of authors benefits every publisher and author involved.

We have so many customers who have read every single one of our books, who call everyday, asking us to please recommend another book to them. They don't care if we published it or not – they just trust us enough to point them toward another good book and another good story. We're just determined to make sure they always have one waiting.



Abe Liked Boys

The hoopla surrounding the publication of **The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln**, in which CA Tripp (*The Homosexual Matrix*) makes a compelling case for Lincoln's bi - if not primarily gay – sexuality, is so notable because it's so absent.



As if we're to believe this, "Oh really, so what?" non-response to the book.

Or the, "Well, he wasn't really gay – 'gay' didn't exist back then" response.

Or (and this is my favorite) the "Well, men coming against other men's thighs was just a good, clean way for men who weren't married to get sexual release" response.

Of course it doesn't matter that Lincoln was gay (or bisexual), or that he had sex with men, or that all the people he loved most were men (except, perhaps, to his chronically unhappy wife, to whom it undoubtedly mattered greatly). What is the homophobic right going to do, go back in time and repeal the Emancipation Proclamation? Lose the Civil War? ("Oh, Abraham Lincoln was gay?! Well, in that case, let's just divide this country into the Industrial North and the Southern Agrarian States, return the Louisiana Purchase to France and the Southwest and all of California to Mexico and blow this whole westward expansion/manifest destiny/global power thing and get back to an America untainted by homosexuals living their lives!") Not hardly! (But maybe not such a bad idea, given this country's dominance in the global village.)

But this silence from the people who led the stampede to impeach Clinton for having a sex life outside of marriage? Why is it that they want to talk about Clinton's sex life but not Lincoln's?

It's not Lincoln's sexuality that matters – it's the silence that matters. And the hypocrisy.

Would today's Don't Ask/Don't Tell military expel President and Commander in Chief Abraham Lincoln from its ranks? (And how did we get from "coming against another man's thighs is just a good clean way for men to get sexual release" during "his" war to immediate discharge during ours?)

Will the military, in the face of this national hero's sexuality, update its policy to "mutual masturbation is fine for parties of both (all) sexualities, but penetration-without-a-license-is-grounds-for-discharge"? – And then discharge all the soldiers, regardless of sexual orientation, from Massachusetts as a preventative? Will Bush's Pentagon refuse to go to war with soldiers from Canada and any European nations that allow gays to marry or fight in their armies?

Can we demand that every homophobe who enjoyed Lincoln's Birthday or President's Day school holidays as a kid (or as an adult) now return to school for an equal number of hours of gay-inclusive history lessons?

And what are the black churches currently being courted by the Religious Right as part of its anti-gay marriage constitutional amendment campaign going to do with the fact that The Great Emancipator was on the Down Low?

How many zillion pages of text have been devoted to Lincoln's life and impact on our country without mentioning this one small matter of how he stood "outside the box" and how *that* standing may have influenced his ability to comprehend the complexities of his time? How many children make it through school without learning about a single gay hero while hearing "queer" as an epitaph on the playground every single day?

Those are the silences that need to end. CA Tripp's **The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln** takes us several steps in that direction. \$27, Free Press.



One *Faygeleh* Has Been Removed From This Story

Can you say satire?



Apparently the publishers of the Dick and Jane readers can't. BTWOF's sources reveal that Pearson Education is suing Little, Brown and Company over the publication of **Yiddish With Dick and Jane** for suggesting that their innocent childhood characters could grow up to commit adultery, live in the closet, and some third abomination which escapes me at the moment... And that's *after* Little, Brown deleted the word "*faygeleh*" from the primer, on the advice of some of the more conservative reviewers.

Not to panic: "*Faygeleh*" was to be included in the sequel. But the sequel's chances of getting published, we're told, melted with the lawsuit. The lawsuit hasn't a snowball's chance in hell – satire does have its constitutional protections – but if it squelches the sequel, it will have done its tacky job even without the legal win.

But the gay themes are still there: Sally has a mustache and teaches Transgressive Feminist Ceramics in Berkeley, and Dick's golf buddy swings both ways, giving Sally a chance to explain a few things to Dick... \$14.95, Little, Brown.

VidLits for *Dick and Jane*

As fun as all that is, I have to admit that I liked the movie even better. (*What movie?*) Well, it isn't exactly a movie, it's a VidLit. (*A what?*) A VidLit, a new form of, well, video literature, that some very smart folks – Liz Dubelman and Paca Thomas - are using to create 2-5 minute long animated ads for books - kind of like movie trailers - that anyone with DSL can watch and forward to their friends. And, in my humble opinion, this is one case where the "movie" is even better than the book.

Check it out on their website:

<http://www.vidlit.com/>.

And check out Dubelman's short story, "Craziest," while you're there. And the VidLit about vidlets under Editors Notes: <http://www.vidlit.com/editor/>.

And, not only is it fun, it's been a very effective marketing campaign. The VidLit team sends out email about each new vidlet, but the real buzz comes from people forwarding them on to friends because, well, they're fun. *Dick and Jane's* weekly sales doubled (or tripled, depending on who you talk to) when the vidlet was released – and the video had been viewed a mere (as of January) two million times. Now *that's* a marketing campaign! I'm dreaming of one for **Books To Watch Out For**. If you know anyone with some cash to throw at such a project, send them my way!



Jane Rule Sighting

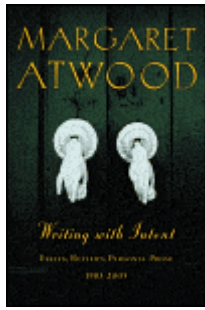
Curve's February issue featured a (much too short) interview with Jane Rule to celebrate *Desert of the Heart's* 40th anniversary. They also asked her about the secrets of her 45 year relationship with Helen Sonthoff and gay marriage: "*Let us into the cage? We should be opening it up and letting our friends out. None of my heterosexual friends are married; they're much more sensible than that,*" was her reply.

You can order a copy from *Curve* at

<http://www.curvemag.com/>.



Atwood: Not Made in the USofA



For a wild ride of an interview with Margaret Atwood, allegedly about her recent essay collection, **Moving Targets**, click the link below. The interview is rich with advice for writers and Atwood's wicked humor. **Moving Targets: Writing With Intent, 1982-2004** was published in Canada last fall by Anansi Press and has just been released in the U.S. by Carroll & Graf as **Writing with Intent: Essays, Reviews, Personal Prose 1983-2005**. \$26, 425 pages.

http://www.maisonneuve.org/article.php?article_id=415



Bookstore News

Mary Byrne, who was for many years the key staff organizer for the National Women's Music Festival, is now co-owner of Out Word Bound Bookstore in Indianapolis, with long-time store owner Tammara Tracy.

<http://www.outwordbound.com/>.

Denver's 20-year-old institution The Book Garden has new owners, Debbie Trunkenbolz and Crystal Hamilton. Store founder Kasha Songer has moved into real estate full-time. Both of the new owners are longtime customers of the bookstore and Hamilton, to complete the circle, comes from a real estate background. They've renamed the store Sisters Books: A Women's Book & Gift Store. Check it out at: www.sistersbooksonline.com.



Booking Your Travel

There's a rich mix of dyke- and dyke-friendly book-oriented trips and events out there this year. Here are a few lesbian specific, lesbian-inclusive, and feminist-but-not-specifically-lesbian book holiday opportunities:

Olivians and Writers and Nature, Oh My!

I've never been drawn to the idea of cruises but this one floats my boat: Start with Olivia's "basic" Inland Coast cruise (Vancouver to Alaska), add some of our finest lesbian writers – Sarah Waters, Dorothy Allison, Jewelle Gomez, Katherine V. Forrest, and Michelle Tea – to the entertainment menu, gather a shipload of book-loving lesbians, add a complement of musicians, say Suede, Wishing Chair and Sweet Baby Jai, and set sail!

May 8-15, 2005.

Details at <http://www.olivia.com/cruises/description.cfm?tripld=32> or call 800.631.6277.

Saints & Sinners

Saints & Sinners, "an alternative literary festival for the LGBT community, their friends, and all readers and writers," has earned a reputation for being a sweet, warm, friendly, welcoming community of writers – with excellent workshops – during its brief history. This year's festival will feature Val McDermid, Poppy Z. Brite, Sarah Schulman, Radclyffe, Ellen Hart, J.M. Redmann, Carolyn Gage, and a host of other GLBTQ writers, editors, publishers, and reviewers. Everyone gets into the act, alternately sharing information and listening to and learning from their peers. S&S will also host InsightOut's Violet Quill awards this year.

Dates: May 13-15.

Details at: <http://sasfest.org/index.php>.

The Unknown Universe of WisCon

WisCon, "the world's only feminist science fiction convention," celebrates every imaginable intersection of women and science fiction. It's a veritable feast of readings, workshops, serious conversations, rampant craziness, midnight readings, parties, art exhibits, and bake sales. There's an academic

track, a kids' track, and room for teens to invent their own programming. Talk writing, hobnob with your favorite science fiction writers - this year's Guests of Honor are Gwyneth Jones and Robin McKinley, and I heard Mary Doria Russell say she was going just to hang out - it's one of the ultimate literary vacations.

Dates: May 27-30 in Madison, Wisconsin.

<http://sf3.org/wiscon/>.

WisCon, PO Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701.

Golden Crown in New Orleans

The science fiction worlds are rich with "cons" for both writers and readers of every conceivable fantasy/science fiction stripe, and I've wondered why the idea has never really caught on among the lesbian and feminist lit sets. We have music festivals everywhere, why not lit festivals? Well, Golden Crown intends to start one:

The Golden Crown Literary Society is a newish organization to support lesbian literature that's grown out of the über-Xena, publish-it-yourself, and print-on-demand lesbian writing communities and an emerging generation of more lesbian publishing companies. In any case, the first GCLS Convention (for publishers, authors, readers, supporters and fans) will feature panels, seminars, and workshops focused on encouraging and advancing the art of publishing. The conference, which will be held in June in New Orleans, will also host the Golden Crown Literary Awards.

Karen Kallmaker is the keynote speaker. Look for workshops featuring Lori Lake, Radclyffe, KG MacGregor, Robin Alexander, Lynn Ames, Jessica Casavant, Jean Stewart, Verda Foster, Kathy Smith, and Cathy LeNoir as well as editors Judith P. Stelbaum, Stacia Seaman, Shelley Thrasher, and the odd lawyer and private eye to advise writers on their particular professions...

Dates: June 24-26.

More about GCLS at <http://www.gclscon.com>.

Conference details: <http://www.gclscon.com/Schedule.htm>.

Fire & Ink -- Austin

More details to come, but it's never too early to block off time on your calendar. Fire & Ink II: A Writers Festival for GLBT People of African Descent will be in Austin October 6-9. The first Fire & Ink, already a legend, was, to all reports, an amazing conference with a "family reunion" feeling. Launching the second conference is a victory in tenacity: lead organizer Lisa C. Moore's apartment burned down just days before the first conference, destroying most of the records and mailing lists for the conference, the RedBone Press office, and everything she owned. And it has taken serious organizing and arduous fundraising to get this conference back on its feet, so celebrate that tenacity along with the writing and writers...

For more info or to sign up for the mailing list:

<http://www.fireandink.org/index.html>.

To donate funds to help finance the conference:

<https://w1216.securedweb.net/Lambdalit/>

FireandInk/fireandinkform.htm.

Tuscany, Anyone?

Writer (and Spinsters Ink co-founder) Maureen Brady (*Ginger's Fire*, *Folly*, and *Give Me Your Good Ear*) is offering a fiction writing workshop for writers of all levels in Chioistro, Tuscany, under the auspices of The New York Writers Workshop. The workshop includes private tutorial and critique of up to 40 pages of work submitted in advance...

Dates: June 11-18.

For details:

<http://www.ilchiostro.com/Tuscany-Fiction.htm>.

Or email Maureen Brady at meb4444@prodigy.net.

Just want to fall in love with the environs?

<http://www.ilchiostro.com/Tuscany-Accomm.htm>.



The Green River with Pam Houston

Wow! The Green River, canoeing, and a writing workshop with Pam Houston. What a combination! "Writing Down the River" is sponsored by the Women's Wilderness Institute. The Green is a lovely, gentle river running through one of Utah's most gorgeous canyons, suitable for beginning canoeists and for balancing a pad of paper while drifting...
Sept. 20-24, \$875.

<http://www.womenswilderness.org/>.

303.938.9191 or write WWI, 2885 East Aurora Suite 23, Boulder, CO 80303.
Read a review of Pam Houston's *Sight Hound* from the last issue of [BTWOF](#).

Book Groups on the Road

Glenda Martin and Mollie Hoben have been hosting "reading retreats" for several years under the auspices of their *BookWomen* newsletter and the Minnesota Women's Press. A Reading Retreat? Visualize a book group meeting that lasts for several days. Now they've taken the idea on the road. They'll take you canoeing on the Green River ("Books Afloat") in October, to England's Lake District in September for nature walks to discuss women writers whose work has been shaped in this countryside – or consider Boston or Sedona in June, Michigan (with a focus on comparing books to the movies made of them) in September, Carmel (CA) in November, Minnesota in the Fall, or the Northern Minnesota woods over the New Year. All retreats feature quiet peaceful surroundings, good food, and the company of book-loving, travel-loving women.

Dates and details at <http://www.womenspress.com/books/retreats.html>.

Or write Reading on the Road, Minnesota Women's Press, 771 Raymond Ave., St. Paul, MN 55114.

Iceland for Writers

Judith Niemi and Women in the Wilderness are running a trip to Iceland for writers "and others" May 26-June 3. WW also does writers workshops throughout the year combined with various canoeing, dog-sledding, and other retreats into the natural world, several of which are particularly for cancer survivors. Get more information at:

Women in the Wilderness, 566 Ottawa Ave., St. Paul, MN 55107;
651.227.2284, judith@womeninthewilderness.com.



What They're Reading at InsightOut Book Club

Each issue we ask a different bookseller what they're reading... This issue we checked in with the InsightOut Book Club to see what the gals were picking up there:



Women's Bestsellers

1. **All the Wrong Places** by Karin Kallmaker
2. **Cat's Eyewitness** by Rita Mae Brown & Sneaky Pie Brown
3. **As I Lay Dying: A Rehoboth Beach Memoir** by Fay Jacobs
4. **True Secrets of Lesbian Desire** by Renate Stendhal
5. **Ultimate Lesbian Erotica 2005** edited by Nicole Foster

6. **Dinah! Three Decades of Sex, Golf, and Rock 'n' Roll** by Michele Kort
 7. **Dyke Drama: Your Guide to Getting Out Alive** by Leslie Lange
 8. **Death by Discount** by Mary Vermillion
 9. **The Intersection of Law and Desire** by J.M. Redmann
 10. **Is Your Cat Gay?** by Charles Krelloff & Patty Brown; Drawings by Victoria Roberts
- You can find more info about InsightOut at <http://www.insightoutbooks.com> or write:
ISO, PO Box 6430, Camp Hill, PA 17001-9227.



Writing Wanted

Barbara Johnson and Therese Szymanski are looking for hot tales of lesbian love for a new Bella anthology **The Perfect Valentine: Erotic Valentine's Lesbian Love Stories**. Deadline: June 1. Details at <http://www.bellabooks.com/valentinecallforsubs.pdf>.

Sinister Wisdom editor Frances Day has issued a call for material for an issue on Lesbian Mothers and Grandmothers. Guest editor of this issue will be Merry Gangemi. Deadline: May 1. Contact Merry at 985 East Hill Road, Marshfield, VT 05658, or email mgangemi@sover.net.

Raymond Luczak (*Eyes of Desire: A Deaf Gay & Lesbian Reader*) is seeking true stories, short fiction, stage plays, poetry, essays, and interviews about the deaf and signing GLBT experience in English or ASL (on VHS or DVD) for *Eyes of Desire 2: A Deaf GLBT Reader*. Deadline: August 31, 2005. www.raymondluczak.com/eod2 for details or email eod@raymondluczak.com.

Looking for Lesbians

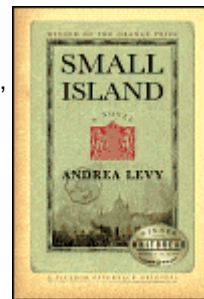
Editor Don Weise has three lesbian titles in the pipeline at Carroll & Graf (Kate Clinton's *What the L?*, Marcia Gallo's history of the Daughters of Bilitis, and Cheryl Clarke's *Days of Good Looks*) and wants more. In an interview with Richard Labonte in the current issue of **BTWOF: The Gay Men's Edition** Don elaborates on a shortage of lesbian projects: "Sadly, I've received almost no lesbian-themed submissions from agents. I'd absolutely love to see more lesbian history and biography in particular... I'm also looking for young lesbian writers, fiction in particular and with an edge whenever possible." See [Books To Watch Out For: The Gay Men's Edition #14](#) to read the interview about Don's publishing career at Cleis and what he's doing now at Carroll and Graf.



Awards

The Orange & Whitbread Prizes

Andrea Levy won the Orange Prize, the Whitbread Best Novel Award and the Whitbread Book of the Year Award, and the Eurasia Region of the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for **Small Island**. It will be published in paperback in the U.S. in April (\$14, St. Martin's). Susan Fletcher won Whitbread's First Novel Award for **Eve Green** (\$23.95, Norton). The first is a fierce exploration of class, race, and sex in post-war Britain, the second a coming-of-age story.



National Book Critics Circle Awards

Marilynne Robinson won the fiction prize for *Gilead*. The poetry prize went to Adrienne Rich for *The School Among the Ruins*.

The Alice B's

This year's Alice B. Medal winners are [Sarah Dreher](#), [Katherine V. Forrest](#)

and [Ellen Hart](#).

The award is given annually to writers whose careers are distinguished by consistently well-written stories about lesbians. The award was funded by an anonymous donor for the purpose of thanking writers for their contribution to the lesbian community, culture, and identity. The prize includes the Medal, a lapel pin, and \$500. Last year's recipients were Peggy J. Herring, Karin Kallmaker, and Radclyffe.

Violet Quill

This year's Violet Quill Award went to **Through It Came Bright Colors** by Trebor Healey. The Award is for new voices and is sponsored by InsightOut Book Club and carries a \$1000 prize. The shortlisted titles were: **Naughty Little Secrets** by Mary Wilbon, **Half-Life** by Aaron Krach, **Van Allen's Ecstasy** by Jim Tushinski, **Father's Day** by Philip Galanes, and **The View from Stalin's Head** by Aaron Hamburger.

Stonewall Awards 2005

The 2005 Barbara Gittings Book Award in Literature will be awarded to Colm Tóibín for **The Master** (Scribner). The other nominees were:

I Am My Own Wife: A Play by Doug Wright (Faber & Faber)

The Line of Beauty by Alan Hollinghurst (Bloomsbury)

Luna by Julie Anne Peters (Megan Tingley Books/Little, Brown)

The Seahorse Year by Stacey D'Erasmus (Houghton Mifflin)



The 2005 Israel Fishman Book Award for Nonfiction will go to Joan Roughgarden for **Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and in People** (University of California Press). The other nominees were:

Beyond Shame: Reclaiming the Abandoned History of Radical Gay Sexuality by Patrick Moore (Beacon Press)

Both: A Portrait in Two Parts by Douglas Crase (Pantheon)

Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim by David Sedaris (Little, Brown)

Warrior Poet: a Biography of Audre Lorde by Alexis DeVeaux (W.W. Norton)

The Stonewall Awards are sponsored by the GLBT Round Table of the American Library Association (ALA). They will be presented at the American Library Association meetings in June.

The Publishing Triangle Award Finalists Named

The Judy Grahn Award for Lesbian Nonfiction

Alexis De Veaux, *Warrior Poet: A Life of Audre Lorde* (W.W. Norton)

Alison Smith, *Name All the Animals* (Scribner)

Evelyn C. White, *Alice Walker: A Life* (W.W. Norton)

The Randy Shilts Award for Gay Nonfiction

David Carter, *Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked the Gay Revolution* (St. Martin's Press)

David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (University of Chicago Press)

Graham Robb, *Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century* (W.W. Norton)

The Ferro-Grumley Award for Fiction: Women

Stacey D'Erasmus, *A Seahorse Year* (Houghton Mifflin)

Emma Donoghue, *Life Mask* (Harcourt)

Heather Lewis, *Notice* (Serpent's Tail)

The Ferro-Grumley Awards for Fiction: Men

Adam Berlin, *Belmondo Style* (St. Martin's Press)

Colm Tóibín, *The Master* (Scribner)

Jim Tushinski, *Van Allen's Ecstasy* (Southern Tier Editions/Harrington Park Press)

The Audre Lorde Award for Lesbian Poetry

Adrienne Rich, *The School Among the Ruins* (W.W. Norton)

Lee Ann Roripaugh, *Year of the Snake* (Southern Illinois University Press)
Maureen Seaton, *Venus Examines Her Breast* (Carnegie Mellon University Press)

The Publishing Triangle Award for Gay Male Poetry

Ron Mohring, *Survivable World* (Word Works)
Carl Phillips, *The Rest of Love* (Farrar Straus Giroux)
D. A. Powell, *Cocktails* (Graywolf)

The Publishing Triangle Awards will be presented May 10 in NYC along with the Bill Whitehead Award for Lifetime Achievement, the Publishing Triangle Leadership Award, and playwrighting awards from the Robert Chesley Foundation.



Letters

Dear BTWOF,
I love *Magician's Assistant* and often recommend it to library patrons. I've used it twice in book groups to good success. When I read it some years ago I just *assumed* Patchett was a lesbian. I was pretty surprised to find out she wasn't... and then even more surprised after I read about her relationship with Grealy! Oh well...

I am assisting our local feminist bookstore, A Room of One's Own (Madison, WI), with their 30 year anniversary. They are hosting a silent auction to help raise money to create a fund to bring in more authors and artists (*a la* Women and Children First in Chicago). Do you have a "Books to Watch Out For" T-shirt, baseball cap, or the like you could donate to the auction...?? It would be greatly appreciated!
Thanks for all your work on BTWOF—I not only enjoy it, I find it terrifically useful.
--Liz Dannenbaum
Thanks! We don't yet have wearables, but we're glad to donate a subscription to the auction. –Carol

Skirting the Amazon

Dear Friends,
In 2004, Amazon.com gave 61% of its political donations to Republicans! It seems strange to me that a bookseller should support the party of fundamentalists, creationists, book-banners and privacy-violators, but that is unfortunately the case. Click here for details:
<http://www.freenortheast.com/ltred.php>.
--Katha Pollit
Actually Amazon.com is more of a big-box retailer than a bookseller. Meanwhile the megalith has devised a new strategy for maximizing profit – I mean “customer loyalty and market share” – It's offering customers a chance to pay Amazon \$79 upfront, in the form of a “membership fee,” to get “free” shipping. Now that might be a deal if Amazon.com didn't already offer so many free-shipping deals. But, like the book discounts, you can expect those deals to disappear as the competition disappears and as people get used to paying these add-on fees. But you gotta respect the innovation: most bookstore memberships get the customers a discount on books, but Amazon is redefining “membership” to mean prepaying for shipping – a cost one doesn't have to consider when shopping locally. Awesome! But there are plenty of responsible, lesbian, gay, feminist and other indie stores out there that give 0% of their income to anti-gay, anti-women Republicans and who actively build community, instead of destroying it. –Carol





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