



Hello, everyone!

I just wanted to wish you all a **Happy Holidays**, and best of luck in 2006! This past year has been a great year for the round table, and for this newsletter. One of our biggest successes this year was moving the production of the newsletter from our own resources to those of the very generous **Haworth Press**, who

In the fall of 2004, thanks to the initial efforts of a technical services colleague and one of our Central Library's administrators, the Dallas (TX) Public Library's GLBT Adult Programming Committee was born. Because one of our founders was well aware of my interest in all things glbt-related, I was invited to join the group, which eventually included several branch and division assistant managers, a member of our cataloging department, and two administrators.

From a humble beginning of impromptu ideas scribbled on a napkin, we began brainstorming exactly what we hoped to accomplish, and how to make it all happen. Prior to my joining the staff in 2000, the library had produced several popular glbt fiction and non-fiction print bibliographies, but it had been a number of years since any systematic outreach efforts to this particular group had been attempted. So the time was obviously ripe for whatever our "team" could devise.

After several discussions, we decided to tackle the challenge of mounting a series of presentations by glbt authors, to take place on Saturday afternoons during fall 2005 at our Oak Lawn Branch Library, which is located in a Dallas neighborhood home to many glbt citizens and businesses.

Since I had had prior professional dealings with Julie Anne Peters, the award-winning author of the young adult novels Luna and Keeping You a Secret, she was our first choice as a presenter. She was utterly delighted to be part of our efforts, and became our "kick-off" speaker on September 17. The



GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWERS

My goal is that we review many books, both books we recommend and books we do not recommend. These reviews should be professional, combining the best practices of the library profession and our unique perspective as GLBT individuals. Keeping in mind that The Newsletter is not infinitely expandable, these reviews should be between 120 and 180 words long. Yes, some books demand longer reviews because of their complexity, controversial nature or importance. When you feel that a book you are reviewing will need additional space please let me know so I can plan.

Reviews should clearly state what the book is about and include an evaluative section. It is always helpful if you can compare it to other books. The review should end with a clear recommendation and indicate audience. If there are situations or language which may cause problems these should be pointed out. Such situations, language, etc. need should not overly influence the recommendation unless they are inappropriate, extraneous to the book, or badly handled.

I think that LJ and Booklist are good models. The reviews I enjoy reading are from Kirkus, but I would be hard pressed to do one of that literary quality for every book I read.

Below is a sample review for you to consider. More are available upon request, or see other reviews in this issue. Please note the bibliographic form and the form for your byline.

This is a quick set of guidelines to get us through the current issue. Please help me by sending me your comments.

Ray Barber, *Book Review Editor*
rbarber@penncharter.com

Kings & Queens: Queers at the Prom. By David Boyer. Soft Skull Press. 2004. 160 p. paperback (ISBN1-932360-24-7) [306.766]

David Boyer uses the high school prom to wrap stories about coming out and living as a homosexual. The book is divided into sections with profiles from the 90's, 80's, 70's and 60's, and back through the 1930's. Each profile includes the date and place of their high school senior year, pictures and a summary, in their own words, about their senior prom. A postscript gives information on where they are now, and a bit about how they got there. Extras include a style guide, prom trends and a section on how the American idea of a senior prom has spread around the world. Each profile is surprisingly gripping and many make you think of your own high school experience. The pictures will bring knowing nods from older readers and gales of giggles from teens. This book offers a good window into the high school experience and would be a good addition to a YA or high school library collection.

Reviewed by Mark Singer, High School Librarian, retired. into sect2

ALA 2006 Midwinter Conference

January 20-25, 2006

San Antonio, Texas

<http://www.ala.org/ala/eventsandconferencesb/midwinter/2006/home.htm>

GLBTRT Meeting Schedule

Saturday, January 21, 2006

GLBTRT Steering Committee/All Committee Meeting

Date: 1/21/2006 8:00 AM — 12:30 PM

Location: Marriott Rivercenter - Room: Conference Rm. 1

Meeting Type: Open

GLBTRT Book Awards Committee

1:30 PM — 6:00 PM

Location: St. Anthony - Room: Corpus Christi

Meeting Type: Closed

GLBTRT Social

Date: 1/22/2006 6:00 PM — 8:00 PM

Location: San Antonio Public Library, Central Branch, 600 Soledad (about 1 mile from the Convention Center) Options for getting there include a 20 minute walk, a 5 minute cab ride, or a quick ride on the Streetcar Blue Line – <http://www.viainfo.net/Ride/Streetcar.aspx>. If you are driving, there is a city-run parking garage at the library.

Once you arrive at the SAPL, please use the employee entrance, as the library will be closed to the public. Look for the signs to the GLBTRT Social being held on the 3

Sunday, January 22, 2006

GLBTRT Book Awards Committee II

Date: 1/22/2006 1:30 PM — 3:30 PM

Location: St. Anthony - Room: Boardroom

Meeting Type: Closed



Not the Only One: Lesbian and Gay Fiction for Teens.

Edited by Jane Summer. Alyson Books, 2004. 302 pp.
\$13.95 paperback (ISBN: 1555838340) [F]

In the new edition Editor Summer has pulled together a collection of fiction that would appeal to most YA readers



Talk. By Kathe Koja. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 2005. 134pp. \$16.00 hardcover (ISBN: 0374373825).

In alternating chapters, Kit and Lindsay, high school thespians co-starring in a controversial play with a terrorism theme, narrate this less-than-riveting teenage coming out tale. As the play faces possible cancellation, Kit struggles with his feelings for a local musician, along with the age-old question of how and who to tell about his gayness, and Lindsay copes with a breakup from her latest boyfriend. In time, Lindsay becomes romantically drawn to Kit, and he begins to suffer harassment as the truth leaks out. The production becomes a *cause celebre*, and Kit eventually reveals the truth to

Lindsay, who is shocked and repulsed. Unexpectedly, Kit himself finds a new boyfriend. This novel embraces the "teenage male coming out" plot device with good intentions, but pales when compared to recent quality titles on the same theme. Koja's characters lack strong personality or distinctive voices. While this book would suffice in a young adult collection if funds are plentiful, novels by Brent Hartinger or David Levithan should be higher priority purchases.

Reviewed by **Cathy Ritchie**, Theatre Librarian, Dallas (TX) Public Library

Britain Creating Gay Museum

by Peter Moore, 365Gay.com London Bureau

(London) An organization of LGBT historians, educators and art authorities is working with a British government agency to set up a museum of gay history and culture.

Proud Heritage is contacting museums across the UK asking that they examine their collections - and in many cases reassess them - to help create a gay database.

Things collected by museums over the years may not have seemed at the time to have a gay connection. One example is a Welsh collection on Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby.

Known locally as the Ladies of Llangollen, they lived together in a small cottage from 1819 until their deaths in 1829 and 1831, and were renowned for wearing dark riding habits, an eccentric choice of dress for the time.

Recently Proud Heritage worked with the Llangollen Museum to update reference material on the collection.

"They would never have used the word lesbian to describe their relationship but there is no question that they lived together and shared the same bed," Proud Heritage's director Jack Gilbert tells The Guardian. "We think there may well be similar examples in

Juicy Mother. Celebration: Number One. Edited by Jennifer Camper Soft Skull Press. 2005. 86pp. (ISBN: 1932360700).

For anyone interested in GLBTQ graphic novels, *Juicy Mother. Celebration: Number One* is an excellent introduction to the genre. Filled with a stunning selection of artists' works, this compilation provides a wealth of topics and artistic styles to suit most any taste. *Juicy Mother* includes stories of a purely sexual nature to stories with exceptional social depth. The topics range from innocent touching at a sleep-over, to a Muslim lesbian contemplating her identity, to a teddy bear marriage, to a butch dyke's encounter with her now-grown-up, won't-take-no, cousin. Additionally, six contributors participated in a cartoon jam (each artist draws one panel and passes it along) for this issue—one that tackles a number of stereotypes. As a compilation, *Juicy Mother* is for adults-only, but many of the stories would be suitable for a younger crowd as well.

Juicy Mother is a self-proclaimed "home for the stories about the rest of us;" a graphic novel for grown-ups with panels containing explicit sex and graphic nudity. Those who routinely read graphic novels will want to add *Celebration: Number One* to their collection. This alternative comic would be an excellent addition to any graphic novel collection, GLBTQ or otherwise, and should grace the shelves of the adventurous public or academic library.

Reviewed by **Tiffani R. Conner**, University of Connecticut.

other archives, but because people didn't use words like lesbian and gay 200 years ago archivists have either overlooked it or simply don't realize it's there."

The organization is considering an exhibit from the archives of British prisons that would include the door to Oscar Wilde's cell in Reading jail. It is also looking at possible exhibits of campaign material from gay rights fights and a history of gays in the military.

Once Proud Heritage says once it has gathered a national database on gay material it will create a "virtual museum" of lesbian and gay history said Gilbert.

The next step would be the establishment of a museum building. Gilbert said the heavily gay King's Cross area of London would be an ideal location.

The project has the backing of the museums documentation watchdog, MDA. It is the lead organization in the heritage sector and is already working closely with the London Assembly to unearth similar "hidden histories" in the collections of London curators and archivists.

The plan also has the backing of Britain's two largest LGBT civil rights groups: Stonewall and OutRage.

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Reading Genesis: The Beginning of Wisdom. By Leon R. Kass. Free Press, 2003. 720 pp. \$35.00 hardback (ISBN 0743242998)

In the last year there have been several media reports about the influence exerted by Straussians (intellectual followers of the philosopher Leo Strauss) in the Bush administration. Leon R. Kass is often mentioned as one such Straussian luminary and, in fact, he is the chair of the President's Council on Bioethics as well as a distinguished professor at the University of Chicago. Due to his influence, both in the political realm and in the conservative movement, this book, *Reading Genesis: The Beginning of Wisdom*, should be of interest to GLBT librarians.

The parts of the book which deal directly with same-sex affection and sexuality are small. The term "homosexuality" has only two references in the index. However, the subject matter of the book, patriarch correctly understood (as a Straussian might say) should be of central importance to readers of this newsletter. But first, let's look at the treatment of same-sex attraction and sexuality in the work. First, Kass accepts the view that the sin of Sodom is inhospitality toward strangers but he also holds that in the city's sins, inhospitality and violence, are intimately linked to "sexual perversion", which he believes the author of Genesis views as profoundly selfish. He further links same-sex attraction to the incest later committed by Lot's daughters with their father. In the second indexed reference, Kass writes that homosexuality, incest, and bestiality, as well as child sacrifice, are linked by the author(s) of Leviticus as sins particular to the Canaanites and Egypt, and are ones which do not make the correct distinction between like and unlike or between man and woman. Kass holds that a major goal of the Genesis text is to make these distinctions and to reject the worldview of Egypt, the Canaanites, and of cities in general. A final treatment of same-sex attraction and desire, oddly enough not listed in the index, is in Kass's treatment overall of the patriarch, Joseph. Joseph is presented as a failed patriarch because he is a failed father, a failed son, as assimilated to Egyptian ways, and as a leader who lacks foresight. In what is probably the most unnecessary homophobic passage in the book, Kass speculates that Joseph's tendency to weep, particularly upon seeing his younger brother, Benjamin, is an expression of an overly dramatic, effeminate, homosexual personality, and in the case of interaction with Benjamin, perhaps has its origin in Joseph's incestuous feelings for his brother. The book, therefore, repeats what has become a standard right-wing religious view of same-sex attractions, namely, that they are essentially selfish and produce men who are unfit to rule.

It is also important to realize that Kass is religiously respectful but not necessarily believing or devout. He admits in the preface that as much as he wants to believe, and as much as he respect his familial religious traditions, he is not able to do so entirely. He goes on to write, however, that his "sympathies have shifted toward the biblical pole of the age-old tension between Athens and Jerusalem". This, however, is an affirmation open to many interpretations. It might also be viewed as one possible standard Straussian position, and, I argue should be taken as central to our understanding of the book. Religion for most Straussians is a useful tool for producing rightly governed nations, especially ones in which the leaders are able to appropriately combine cunning and prudence. Straussians are also noted for not saying entirely what they mean. In fact, they hide their most important points within the text by means of ambiguous statements, contradictions, and silences about issues which should be raised or clarified. The truth, so hidden, is to be discovered only by the closest reading. My close, suggested reading of this particular text is that Kass presents the development of patriarch in Genesis as a response of one people to a series of questions concerning rule. These questions are ones which Kass and other Straussians believe must arise in all societies that manage to survive. The questions go something like this: How does one reduce the initially ungoverned sexuality of men? How does one turn imprudent young men into somewhat prudent adults? How does one select prudent leaders? How does one turn men, and women, away from their natural inclination to worship the body and toward actions that have positive consequences for future generations? And What sorts of religious teachings get these jobs done? On this reading, Kass's book is an extended, poetic, argument that patriarchy, as brilliantly developed in Genesis, is meant to solve this set of political, not religious, problems. As librarians, we need to be able to place the book within this larger context.

Finally, in order to help librarians do this contextual placing, and to deal with other Straussian texts, I suggest two excellent commentaries on that philosophical tradition. They are Shadia B. Drury's 1997 book, **Leon Strauss and the American Right**, and Anne Norton's more recent, 2004 work, **Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire**.

Reviewed by

The GLBT Round Table needs your time, talent, and energy if our success in contributing toward libraries and library professionalism is to continue. Filling out and sending this form is one way to let the Round Table know about your interest in serving on committees or in a leadership role. We are eager to learn about how you want to work as a part of the Round Table team.

If you have questions, please contact **Lewis Day**, Membership Committee Chair: lewis_day@harvard.edu

Name:
Library/Organization:
Address:
City:
State:
Zip Code:
Phone Number:
Fax Number:
E-Mail address:

On which of these committees would you be willing to serve?

Programming: plans and conducts programs, the annual book award breakfast, and social activities; coordinates logistics and local arrangements for the Annual and Midwinter meetings.

Fundraising: develops goals, prepares budgets, and seeks external funding.

Library Information Clearinghouse: identifies, obtains, and distributes materials related to collecting or cataloging gay, lesbian, or bi-oriented materials for libraries; maintains website.

Newsletter: compiles, produces, and distributes newsletter, including GLBT related book reviews.

Book Awards: reviews materials, selects winner(s), determines appropriate awards.

External Relations: coordinates publicity; disseminates Round Table information to interested parties outside ALA; coordinates Round Table correspondence for communications within ALA; develops membership information.

If you've checked multiple, please indicate order of preference:

On which committees have you served in the past, and in what capacity?

Are you willing to serve in a leadership position with one of the committees? Yes No

If yes, please indicate committee preference?

Are you willing to serve as an elected officer?