



FEMINIST
TASK FORCE

Women in Libraries

Volume 27, Number 3

The Feminist Task Force—25 Years

Summer 1998

Feminist Authors' Breakfast:

"Rhythms of Life,"

June 28, Sunday, at ALA Annual



Now is the time to get your tickets to the Feminist Task Force Author Breakfast, Sunday June 28th at 8:30 a.m. Speaking on the theme Rhythms of Life will be Nancy VanArsdall; Lynn Kanter; Joan Pinkvoss, founder of Aunt Lute Press; and Carol Ann Douglas.

Advance tickets are available:

\$16.00—General admission

\$14.00—Library students

Send your requests and checks made out to Feminist Task Force to:

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Andre Norman Library

Pacific Oaks College

5 Westmoreland Place

Pasadena, CA 91103

E-mail address: d_granger@convene.com

Tickets at the Meal Ticket Desk at the ALA Conference will be \$20.00
The FTF author breakfast is an annual event celebrating the work of feminist authors publishing with independent women's presses.

In this issue:

- ALA Annual Conference news, including:
- Feminist Author Breakfast
- ALA Conference Pocket Calendar and Map, pages 3 and 4

Book Review Section

For your summer reading...



Strohmeier, Sarah. *Barbie Unbound: A Parody of the Barbie Obsession*. Norwich, VT: New Victoria, 1997. Paper, 0-934678-89-8, \$12.95.

Strohmeier does a riotous take-off on the Barbie craze while she has some fun with consciousness-raising. Barbie poses in a series of black & white photographs as "Overweight Outcast Adolescent Barbie," "Grunge Barbie," and "Welfare Queen Barbie." Ken gets to play, too, as he becomes "Mid-Life Crisis Ken," loaded with sports equipment, and "Military Brat Ken," Tailhook participant. There is a section of historical characters, also played by Ken and Barbie, including "J. Edgar Hoover Ken," in drag and shopping, and "Puritanical Barbie" of Salem, "it rhymes with bitch."

Between the sections is an interview with Barbie (although the author points out Barbie can't really talk), where Barbie says "I'm still the same old Barbie," and how her pointy feet appear to keep her perpetually "bound."

Here is Barbie before she turns to grunge: "She abstained from beer because it was too fattening,

and coffee, she feared, would just make her more perky. As for heroin, no way. Once you stuck a needle in her, it was a bear to get out. One time we had to use pliers....But all that changed the day Grunge Barbie met Periodically Depressed Ken."

Each Barbie comes with instructions and discussion questions, and, of course, a range of accessories. The questions deal with pressing social issues, like what color purse J. Edgar Hoover Ken should carry when he takes Barbie to the prom.

It's amazing how familiar we are with Barbie. With a new, more "realistically proportioned" Barbie doll about to be introduced, *Barbie unbound* takes us one step further in bringing her into real life, by making us laugh at how unreal she is.

—M. Tainton

Reviews continued on page 5

Preconference set:

American Indian issues

A pre-conference titled "American Indian Issues and Resources: Tribal Views and Federal Sources" is scheduled to be held Friday, June 26, 1998, in Washington, D. C. The conference is designed to provide librarians working in educational, public, and corporate environments with background and insights on issues of concern to American Indian populations. Tribal and U. S. senatorial leaders will offer their perspectives on issues including sovereignty, property and natural resources rights, gaming, employment, cultural preservation, and the impact of technology on both rural and urban native populations.

Chief Phillip Martin, of the Mississippi Band of the Choctaw Tribe, will make a keynote speech, "Strategies for Dealing with American Indian Economic, Political, and Social concerns. Other speakers will present information management, legal research, historical images, and congressional resources. A reception will follow.

For information, visit the American Indian Library Association website at www.pitt.edu/lmitten/alla.html, or call or write Joan Howland, 612-625-9036, e-mail howla001@tc.umn.edu.



Women in Libraries

<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~holman/FTF/>

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Women in Libraries

ALA Women's Meetings
June 27—June 30, 1998

Saturday, June 27

- 8:00-9:30. **Feminist Task Force Meeting.**
LWS Grand Ball S
- 11:30-12:30. Introduction to Women's Groups,
PLZ-Franklin
- 2:00-4:00. COSWL Mtg., WCC-Rm.7

Sunday, June 28

- 8:30-11:00. **Feminist Task Force Author Breakfast—**
Rhythms of Life, HIL Congressional. See details, page 1.
- 11:30-12:30. WSS All Committees Mtg., MAD Draw. Rm I-II
- 11:30-12:30. LAMA Women Admin. Disc. Grp., WCC Rm. 7
- 2:00-4:00. WSS Exec. Comm. Mtg., QUA-Melborne
- 4:30-5:30. WSS Gen. Membership Mtg., CHIL-Federal
- 4:30-5:30. COSWL Committee Mtg., WCC-Rm.28

Monday, June 29

- 8:00-9:00. **Feminist Task Force Meeting**, RENW-Rm 3
- 7:00—10:00. **Feminist Task Force Women's Night Out**,
SisterSpace and Books. 1515 U Street NW,
Washington DC. Details, page 3.

Tuesday, June 30

- 8:00-9:00. COSWL Mtg., WCC-Rm.2

Hotel key:

- WCC—Washington Convention Center
- CHIL—Capital Hilton
- MAD—The Madison
- QUA—Quality Suites
- RENW—Renaissance Washington
- LWS—Loew's L'Enfant Plaza
- HIL—Holiday Inn on the Hill

Remember the highlights:
• The Feminist Author's Breakfast, Sunday
• Women's Night Out, Monday night.

Pull out and fold up conference calendar and map



ALA in Washington, D. C.

Women's Night Out

Monday June 29th 7:00—10:00 at SISTERSPACE AND BOOKS. 1515 U Street NW, Washington DC 20009; 202-332-3433—You can get there on the Metro Green Line getting off at the U Street Cardozo Station.

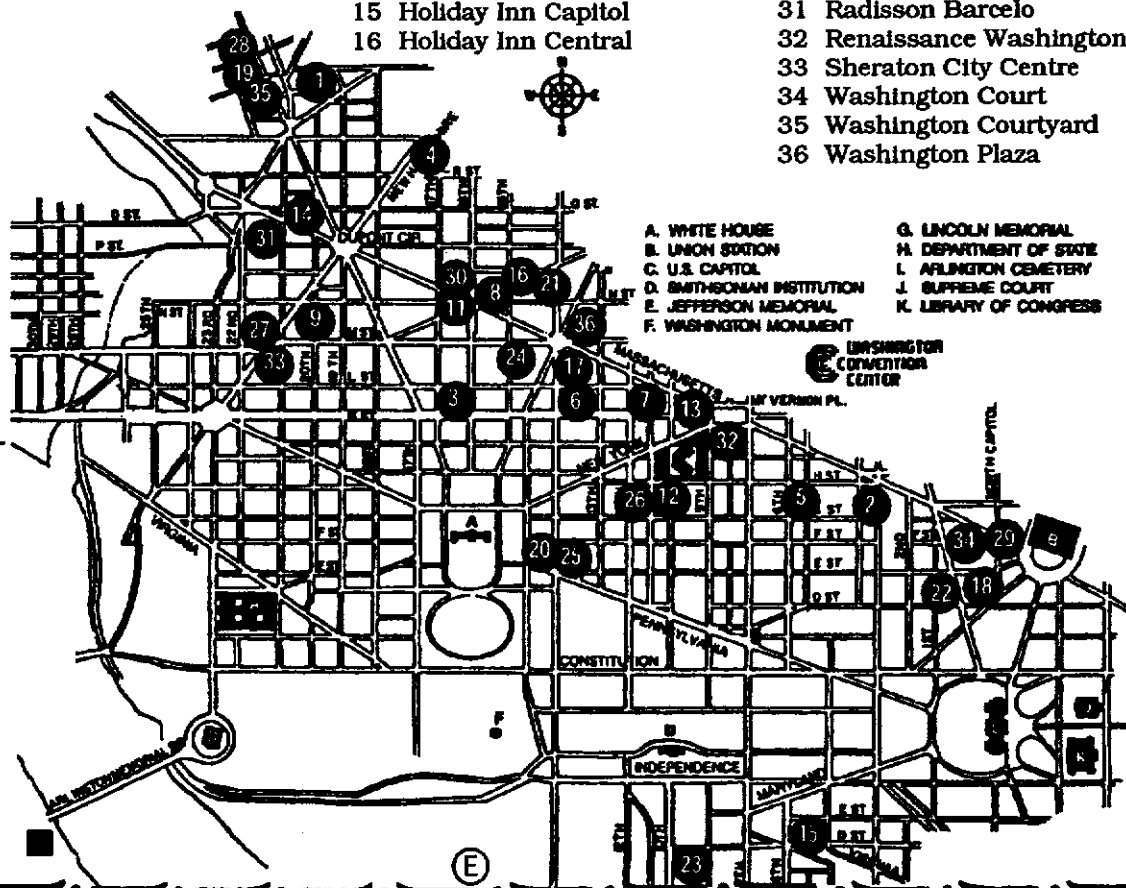
Sisterspace and Books is the nation's only African-American women-owned and -operated bookstore specializing in books by and about African-American women. Sisterspace opened in 1994, stocks more than 3,000 titles, and also sells crafts, posters, postcards, and similar goods.

Amy Tan to speak on Saturday

Amy Tan, best-selling author of *The Joy Luck Club*, will be the keynote speaker at the Annual Conference. She will speak at the Opening General Session, 5:30-7 p.m., Saturday, June 27.

Washington: Key to ALA Hotels

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Washington Hilton | 17 Holiday Inn Downtown |
| 2 Best Western Downtown | 18 Holiday Inn on the Hill |
| 3 Capital Hilton Towers | 19 Hotel Sofitel |
| 4 Carlyle Suites | 20 Hotel Washington |
| 5 Comfort Inn Downtown | 21 Howard Johnson Hotel/Suites |
| 6 Crowne Plaza | 22 Hyatt Regency Capital Hill |
| 7 Days Inn Premier | 23 Loew's L'Enfant Plaza |
| 8 Doubletree Park Terrace | 24 Madison Hotel |
| 9 Embassy Square Summerfield | 25 Marriot |
| 10 Galludet University Conf. Ctr. | 26 Marriot Metro Center |
| 11 Governor's House | 27 Marriot Washington |
| 12 Grand Hyatt Washington | 28 Normandy Hotel |
| 13 Henley Park | 29 Phoenix Park |
| 14 Hilton Embassy Row | 30 Quality Hotel Downtown |
| 15 Holiday Inn Capitol | 31 Radisson Barcelo |
| 16 Holiday Inn Central | 32 Renaissance Washington Main Club |
| | 33 Sheraton City Centre |
| | 34 Washington Court |
| | 35 Washington Courtyard |
| | 36 Washington Plaza |




- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| A. WHITE HOUSE | G. LINCOLN MEMORIAL |
| B. UNION STATION | H. DEPARTMENT OF STATE |
| C. U.S. CAPITOL | I. ARLINGTON CEMETERY |
| D. SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION | J. SUPREME COURT |
| E. JEFFERSON MEMORIAL | K. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS |
| F. WASHINGTON MONUMENT | |

WASHINGTON CONVENTION CENTER

Book Review Section

More summer reading...

Continued from page 2

 Dreher, Sarah. *Solitaire and Brahms*. Norwich, VT: New Victoria, 1997. Paper, ISBN 0-934678-85-5, \$12.95.

Shelby Camden leads a scrumptiously cheery life that will only get better. She's practically a doctor's-wife-to-be, on the verge on her first major promotion as a journalist, and only days away from her 25th birthday. Plus, her chipper "lunch bunch" co-workers help her plot every little turn her successful life takes.

So, why is she so discontent? Perhaps her new neighbor, former enlisted soldier Francis Ellen Jarvis, can help Shelby figure that out.


Sarah Dreher, known for her Stoner McTavish mysteries, crafts this old-fashioned love story, *Solitaire and Brahms*, in Bass Falls, New England, circa the early 1960s. It's neither the safest time nor place for women: "There are things, if you get them wrong, you can end up in a mental hospital." She faced the mirror to apply her make-up and glanced in Shelby's direction, "like shaving your legs." So, you can begin to imagine how it might have been for lesbians.

References to common and stereotypical queer topics saturate *Solitaire* along with random tidbits of yesteryear. These nostalgic details along with generous nature imagery make it a good literary trip for a rainy day:

"The one thing Shelby Camden had always known about herself was that there was something about herself she didn't know. Sometimes she thought she had known it once but forgotten it. And sometimes she thought she had never known it, but was always on the edge of knowing... [until then] ...she leaned back against the celery green Naugahyde sofa and watched a small gray and black bird as it pecked at a tightly-wrapped maple bud."

As Shelby discovers what's budding inside her, Dreher shows some, and reminds others, what loving a lesbian was like in a time of more overt oppression [it reminded me of high school, but with much higher stakes]. What's now considered predictable was once a controlling rumor or an unknown silence. A thought especially worth pondering as we're introduced to each carefully placed character—casual co-workers and "nice day, eh?" neighbors alike. With *Solitaire*, Dreher manages to consistently underscore this turning tide in an uninhibitedly honest, adventure-filled page turner. Whether you approach it for the history or the suspense, it'll make an enjoyable read.

—D. Turner

 Giles, Molly. *Creek Walk and Other Stories*. Watsonville, CA: Papier-Mache, 1996. Cloth, 1-57601-023-6, \$23.

In this collection of short stories, Giles describes relationships between women and significant people in their lives. Gripping in its realism from the first paragraph, the collection makes you feel like you're seeing inside other women's minds.

In the first story, "War," a woman describes how her ex-husband looks after her garden when she is away:

The first things I noticed when I got back were all the dead plants in the yard. It was as if he'd played God with the garden hose, because the bush beans and peas were all right, but the tomatoes and peppers and corn had dried out. I always like to follow his reasoning when I can, and this, I figured, was his passive-aggressive way of killing what he considered Latin vegetables as a way of punishing me for going to Nicaragua. If I'd gone to Belfast he'd have killed the potatoes, if I'd gone to Lebanon he'd have killed the eggplant. You have to know him to understand how his mind works, and then you have to explain it to him because he pretends not to know himself. I don't bother to do this anymore; since the divorce he's on his own. I just observe.

You feel that Giles knows us better than we know ourselves, layers of meaning hiding in the phrase, "I just observe."

In the second story, "Leaving the Colonel," an older woman considers the possibility of leaving her husband, thinking it through as though she were answering questions in an interview. "Talking to Strangers" is a lecture we are given by a murder victim; it is shocking and grim while we recognize our fear. The story resonates with our awareness of the fates of victimized women as we try to live independently.

Giles explores women's lives with sensitivity and truth; she frames authentic portraits of us as wives, mothers, and in-laws.

—M. Tainton



Women in Libraries
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*ALA in Washington—
Conference calendar inside*

Next issue:

- **Conference report:**
*Feminist Authors'
Breakfast, more*
- **Review section: Art and
memory**