

The Women's Library

N E W S L E T T E R

THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY INC. PO BOX 271 NEWTOWN NSW 2042

Vol. 1 No. 2 MAY 1992

Welcome to *The Women's Library's* second newsletter. It has been a busy three months. Many women have contacted us to offer their skills, support and donations. It is very satisfying to watch things slowly but solidly fall into place.

While we are still working on finding a venue, we have come a long way. We have now determined how our cataloguing system will be set up. We are in the process of organising a fundraising bookfair for July. (See details below.)

We have been granted tax deductability and taxation exemption. We have promoted the library near and far. And we have been happily receiving many precious book and journal donations. What a buzz - to eventually be able to say that *The Women's Library* was set up with the support of thousands of women.

We are learning much from contact with libraries similar to *The Women's Library*. The Feminist Library in London has sent us details of their systems and methods - on which we have based some of ours. In some ways The Feminist Library has provided a model for us.

The Lespar Library in Perth has existed for 11 years. We hope to establish a relationship with the women of Lespar that will benefit both the Perth and Sydney women's communities. There is a lot we can learn from them.

Finally, we are pleased to be working alongside the Jessie Street Women's Library Association. This group is also establishing a women's library in Sydney, but one with quite different aims and methods to *The Women's Library*. We hope to provide further details of our relationship with the Jessie Street Women's Library in our August newsletter.

There are many ways that interested women can contribute to the establishment of *The Women's Library* - these are detailed throughout this newsletter. Right now we are getting together a petition to convince the local councils that thousands of local women believe *The Women's Library* should have a home. If you are interested in collecting signatures, drop us a line and we will send a blank copy to you. *

Vicki Harding



Have you donated a book yet?

So far the library's collection does not include many Women's Studies texts. If you want to donate a book, consider these titles which have been selected from 1992 Women's Studies reading lists - we need them urgently.

Sydney University:

Crossing Boundaries: Feminisms and the Critique of Knowledge B. Caine, M. de Lepervanche & E. Grosz

Feminist Challenges C. Pateman & E. Grosz

Female Desire: Women's Sexuality Today R. Coward

Feminism and Anthropology H. Moore

Theorizing Patriarchy Sylvia Walby

The Sexual Contract Carole Pateman

Feminism Unmodified Catherine McKinnon.

University of NSW:

Feminism and Theatre Sue Ellen Case

The Hidden Gender of Law R. Graycar & J. Morgan

Faces of Feminism O. Banks

Sexual Subversions E. Grosz

Literary Women E. Moers

Women and Writing V. Woolf

How the Vote Was Won D. Spender & C. Hayman

Origins of Feminism J Randall

The response to our *Top Ten Fiction Titles* in the February newsletter was wonderful - the hardcover copies are particularly appreciated. But surprisingly, we did not receive any titles from the non-fiction list. Maybe everyone is finding it difficult to part with their copies of *Codependent No More* and *Courage To Heal*...

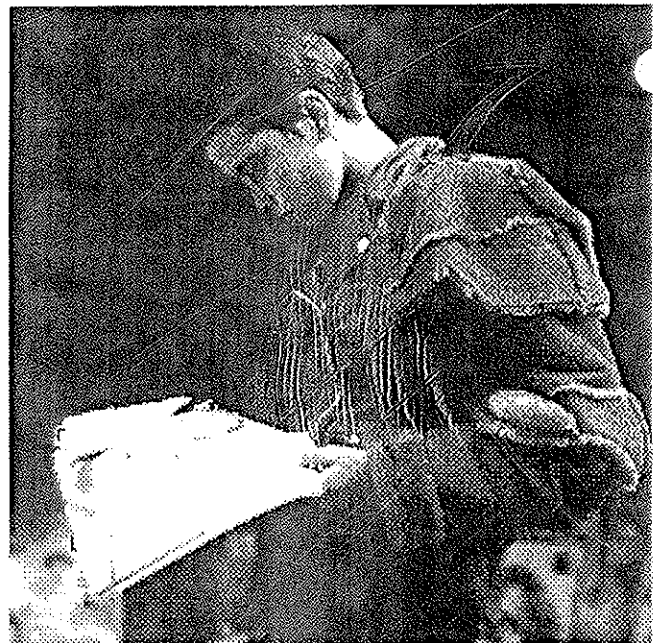
Vicki Harding

Security

In a recent letter, a correspondent from South Australia has raised some interesting points about the wisdom of creating an institution such as *The Women's Library*. She is concerned that the library may not be able to safeguard lesbian materials, in particular, in the event of what she describes as a 'fundamentalist backlash'. What do you think? Is it wise to concentrate sensitive/rare/unique materials in one location? What steps can we take/should we take to protect the collection? Please write to us with your suggestions and/or comments.

Robbie Wilde

Thanks to the International Women's Day Collective who paid the mailout costs of this newsletter.



THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY

BOOK FAIR

SUNDAY 12 JULY 10AM - 4PM

GLEBE PUBLIC SCHOOL HALL

DERWENT STREET (BEHIND GLEBE MARKETS)

ENTRY 50C DONATION

Hundreds of secondhand books will be on sale at bargain prices. This is also your chance to contribute to The Women's Library. Bring any books you can donate to Glebe Public School Hall on Sat 11 July (10am - 2pm) or during the fair on Sun 12 July. Bring either women's books for the library's collection or general titles for us to sell at the fair. See you there!

Book Donations

We are pleased to receive *any* books you would like to donate. Books we do not keep in the collection will be sold to raise funds for the library. If you have books to donate you can:

- ◆ drop them into the book box at the Feminist Bookshop, shop 9 Orange Grove Plaza, Balmain Road Lilyfield
- ◆ drop them into the book box at the Newtown Women's Centre 523 King Street Newtown
- ◆ contact us at PO Box 271 Newtown 2042 and we will tell you how to get them to us or arrange to pick them up.

Please write your name on a slip of paper and put it inside each book you donate as we would like to acknowledge your donation on a sticker which we will place inside each book.

Please note: *The Women's Library* has a no-strings-attached donations policy.

The Women's Library reserves the right to decide whether a donated item will be integrated into the collection, discarded, exchanged or sold.

The Women's Library reserves the right to take whatever steps are necessary to preserve a donated item.

Something else to keep in mind...

Buying a new couch? Throwing the old (but comfy) one away? Very soon we will be on the lookout for comfortable furniture - couches, tables, chairs, shelves, large plants etc. If you are in the position to donate any of these items please let us know. We want the library to be a space where women feel good about lounging around, reading and studying. Of course we will also eventually need handy women - women to help renovate our space. Until we have the space it is hard to know exactly what will be needed, but it would be great to hear from you if you would like to contribute in this way. *

Aims of The Women's Library

- ◆ to house a comprehensive range of feminist and lesbian novels, texts, journals and magazines
- ◆ to house all required reading for tertiary courses in Sydney that focus on women's issues
- ◆ to house all Australian lesbian books and magazines
- ◆ to provide a comfortable space, preferably in the Newtown area, which will be accessible to all women
- ◆ to act as a local women's resource centre

If you would like to receive the next *The Women's Library* newsletter fill in the form below and send it to: The Women's Library Inc. PO Box 271 Newtown NSW 2042. Please enclose a stamp or two.



Please add this name to *The Women's Library* mailing list:

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Phone _____

How did you hear about *The Women's Library*? _____

Fill in the following section if you are interested in becoming a volunteer worker for the library. Indicate which tasks you are interested in and the amount of time you can spare.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> renovating | <input type="checkbox"/> reviewing books |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cataloguing | <input type="checkbox"/> staffing the library | <input type="checkbox"/> helping with mailouts and |
| <input type="checkbox"/> covering books | <input type="checkbox"/> publicity | leaflet drops |

Time available: _____

Please indicate whether you have had any experience with this task.

Thanks. We will contact you as soon as we need to.

The committee

Convenor: Vicki Harding

Secretary: Suzi McConaghy

Treasurer: Julianne Reilly

Members: Roz Hanratty

Judith Fiander

Robbie Wilde (Public Officer)

We need to contact someone who has access to screenprinting services/ resources. Write to us if you think you may be able to help.

Add our address to any mailing list that may be appropriate - we need to be kept informed.

Thanks to ...

There are particular women and organisations we must thank. The IWD Collective have generously sponsored the mailout costs for this newsletter - while all other aspects of the newsletter are donated, postage is a cost that cannot be avoided. We also thank the women who live at The Warehouse in Chippendale for storing books that we are planning to sell at the bookfair - many of which The Cornstalk Bookshop has generously donated. We thank Jennifer Bliss who designed and laid out the newsletter, and Joanne Frare for the photographs. We also appreciate the constant support of the Feminist Bookshop and Newtown Women's Centre where book boxes have been eagerly collecting your donations. Thanks also to women who have offered the committee specialist advice, and of course to the women who continue to donate good quality, exciting books, journals, newsletters and magazines.

University of Sydney Women's Studies Centre

Presents a one-day seminar on

WOMEN & RELIGION

on Sunday 28 June 1992 at Women's College. This will cover a number of religions: Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.

For further information contact
The Women's Studies Centre
University of Sydney
Tel: (02) 692 3638

Review: Pink Ink

From this issue on, you will be able to see which publishers are donating their newest releases to *The Women's Library* - we will publish reviews of each book received. The first review is of *Pink Ink: An Anthology of Lesbian and Gay Writers*, published by Wicked Women. The recommended retail price is \$19.95, and of course, it will be housed in the library.

Saboteurs, offenders, hellhags. Their cunts were hot goods, contraband. The sex they had was mercenary. Their love for each other, a transgression. They began not to believe the femininity they had been taught. The love and hatred made more sense.

from *Lou's Cunt* by Linda Dement

Lou's Cunt is a story of growing up female. It is a story of feminism and art, and the politics of hatred. The main character, like many in this anthology, is an outlaw, hanging out with sluts, freaks and scum, and making art "as icons of a subculture that is an exaggeration of the society it abhors."

Lesbians and gay men are often cast as outlaws in our own families, as Mazz Appleton discovers when she goes home for her sister's wedding in the story titled *A Wedding*. Surrounded by disposable nappies, drunken relatives and women wearing various shades of pink satin, the lesbian protagonist feels alienated from the heterosexual, suburban reality of her family. When her sister finds a snapshot of Mazz in an intimate embrace with her lover, it is an image of herself "that does not belong in this house." The fact of her lesbianism is unacceptable and unspeakable in this context.

SM dykes are considered sexual outlaws by some lesbian feminists. Fiesta Carrera challenges this view in her brilliant satire *Celeste and Martha*, an ironic tale of sadomasochism and revenge in which the innocent schoolgirl Celeste, picked up off the street to be Martha's sex toy, turns out to be "an Animal Liberation operative sent to clear the streets of scum." Celeste extracts her pound of flesh in a revenge fantasy that will amuse and disgust.

Pink Ink offers a taste of the work of 53 lesbian and gay writers from around the country. The book itself could be seen as a kind of outlaw. The manuscript was rejected by several mainstream publishers as being too 'raw', 'unpolished' and unmarketable. Congratulations to Jasper Laybutt, Wicked Women Publications and the Pink Ink editors for having the determination needed to publish this important anthology. *

Jennifer Bliss