



THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY

NEWS LETTER

VOL. 4 NO. 3

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

INTERNET COMES TO TWL

WHAT IS THE INTERNET?

The INTERNET!! You must be almost sick to death of this word by now. Every dinner party you go to, every party you go to, people huddle together in groups mumbling words to one another that make you feel like an alien.

Words that sound like the acronym of secret societies - ftp, tcp/ip, protocols, hypertext, http, Telnet, W-W-WHAT?!! What are these weirdos talking about and why are they so smug?

Well if you don't know, its time you found out! The Women's Library is about to connect to the Net, which means access, workshops and newsletter updates for interested members.

Because the Internet is expanding into the domain of business and education, women should claim and expand their presence on the Net. 'TO KNOW' is to be at a distinct advantage in the power stakes in this society, and women have always been encouraged to keep their distance in these affairs.

A new survey done by Interactive Publishing Alert, IPA - 1995 Survey of Women On Line, sponsored by Apple Computer, canvassed 300 American women, providing an investigation of why women go online, what they do and what turns them off-line. It was mainly geared towards marketers, online publishers and service providers (the companies that sell Internet connections).

In an executive summary of their findings (available on the Internet for US\$450.00!) they found that the biggest barriers to women going online were time and money NOT technical difficulties or fears. They logged on frequently, were willing to pay for the privilege and knew their bands from their bits.

The article on page 6 of the newsletter is an attempt to introduce some of the main concepts of the Internet, which can be divided into about five major areas:

- Electronic mail
- Telnet
- ftp (and Archie)
- Gopher (and Veronica), and
- The World Wide Web



I hope you find it interesting, particularly as you'll be able to put the information to good use at The Women's Library soon.

LESLEY NGATAI



Happy Birthday TWL!
LISA SCHOUW performing at The Women's Library First Birthday Party

OPENING HOURS

TUESDAY TO FRIDAY - 11AM TO 8PM

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY - 11AM TO 5PM

CLOSED ON MONDAYS

73 GARDEN ST, ALEXANDRIA

PHONE (02) 319 0529

THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY SOCIAL NIGHTS - SECOND THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH
THE NEXT ONE IS ON SEPTEMBER 14TH AT THE LEICHHARDT HOTEL FROM 7.00PM
COME ALONG AND MEET OTHER VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS!

TWL INFOPAGE

How The Women's Library works

■ MEMBERSHIP

You must become a member of The Women's Library to be eligible to borrow books.

Membership fees per year are:

- \$50 funded institutions
- \$30 unfunded institutions and waged individuals
- \$20 unwaged individuals
- \$5 high school students

■ LOAN PERIOD

Two weeks for all books except required Women's Studies texts, which can be borrowed for one week. Videos can be borrowed for one week only.

■ LOAN DEPOSIT

Members must lodge a \$10 deposit with us before borrowing. This deposit is retained by The Women's Library if a book is not returned or is returned damaged. It may also be retained if a book becomes very overdue. This deposit is held by The Women's Library until you are no longer a member. Members who have done volunteer work for the library on a number of occasions (active members) are exempt from this deposit.

■ PERIODICALS

Serials, magazines, journals and reference materials cannot be borrowed, but may be read in the library. We have a photocopier for library users.

■ BORROWING BOOKS

Members can borrow up to six books at a time. The Women's Library houses required reading for Women's Studies courses. Only three titles can be borrowed from this collection at any one time.

■ BORROWING VIDEOS

Videos are available for loan by members for a period of one week and require a refundable holding deposit for each loan of \$50 for institutions and \$20 for individual members.

■ RENEWALS

Loans may be renewed in person or by phone, unless they are on reserve.

Ways You Can Support The Women's Library

■ BECOME A MEMBER

Please fill out the form attached to this newsletter, and become a member of The Women's Library. At this stage The Women's Library is unfunded and membership fees keep the library alive.

As a member you are entitled to borrow books from the library and receive The Women's Library Newsletter four times a year.

■ BUY A BOOK TO JOIN THE LIBRARY

You can buy a book to donate to The Women's Library in lieu of membership fees.

THIS IS HOW YOU DO IT...

The only books we can accept in place of fees should be purchased from the list of titles lodged with The Feminist Bookshop (address below).

This list contains titles that are required reading for Women's Studies courses, and this system will ensure that we do not receive multiple copies of some titles and no copies of others. Simply bring your book, membership form and receipt to The Women's Library during opening hours and we will be happy to process your membership on the spot.

■ BOOK DONATIONS

If you would like to donate books for the library's collection, drop off points are:

- The Women's Library
73 Garden Street, Alexandria
- The Feminist Bookshop
Shop 9, Orange Grove Plaza, Balmain Road, Lilyfield

Please contact us on 319 0529 if you need us to pick up your donation. Please note that 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.

■ TAX DEDUCTIBILITY

To make it more inviting for you to donate money to The Women's Library, your donations are tax deductible. Similarly you can donate a collection of books (which must be valued by an approved valuer) or any item that has been purchased by you within the last twelve months, and claim the value of that donation as a deduction on your tax return.

■ BEQUESTS

Maybe you would like to consider making provisions for leaving your personal library and/or a donation to The Women's Library in your will. Please contact the library if you need details on how to do this.

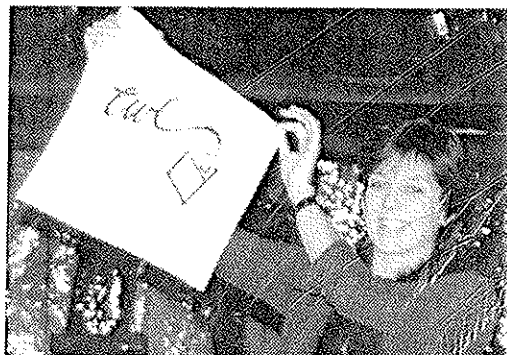
NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION

EDITORS VICKI HARDING & VICTORIA HUNT

TYPING KATE GOSS

DESIGN & PRODUCTION INGRID URH

**FOR JUST \$5
THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY BAG
COULD BE YOURS!!**



TWL BAG displayed by VICKI HARDING

Here's a Chance to buy your own library book bag (or shopping bag or handbag – it's pretty versatile!) featuring the very special WOMEN'S LIBRARY LOGO. The bag is 38cm wide and 41cm long. It has two handles and is made of calico. The WOMEN'S LIBRARY LOGO is printed on one side in a dark purple ink.

WHERE DO YOU GET IT?!

- You can buy a bag when you next drop into The Women's Library at 73 Garden Street, Alexandria
- Or, send payment to PO Box 271, Newtown, 2042, and we will be happy to send bag(s) to a nominated address. Please fill in the form and send with payment.

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

NUMBER OF BAGS PAYMENT ENCLOSED \$.....

\$5 PER BAG INCLUDES POSTAGE

CAN YOU HELP...

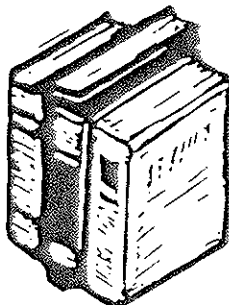
The Women's Library recognises the importance of having a comprehensive collection of books for adult survivors of:

- CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE
- RITUAL ABUSE
- PHYSICAL ABUSE
- RAPE
- EMOTIONAL ABUSE
- INCEST

If you have any books on these issues that you no longer require, please donate them to The Women's Library, so that they can be of benefit to other women. Thank you.

(Additional copies of *Courage to Heal* are not required. Books for adolescents and children are welcome.)

**THE WOMEN'S
LIBRARY
BOOKFAIR**



**SATURDAY
7 OCTOBER
10AM - 4PM
KING STREET
NEWTOWN
(CORNER OF
AUSTRALIA ST)**

**ONCE AGAIN THERE WILL BE
A LARGE RANGE OF BOOKS FOR SALE,
INCLUDING MANY DUPLICATE
FEMINIST AND LESBIAN TITLES.
IF YOU HAVE ANY BOOKS
THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE
TO THE BOOKFAIR,
PLEASE BRING THEM TO THE LIBRARY
BEFORE SATURDAY 7 OCTOBER**

*The Women's Library
Aims*

To house a comprehensive range of feminist and lesbian novels, texts, journals and magazines, and in particular to house all Australian lesbian books and magazines



To house all required reading for tertiary courses in Sydney that focus on women's issues



To house the works of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women



To house a collection relevant to women of non-English speaking backgrounds



To provide a comfortable and accessible space for borrowing, reading and relaxing



To act as a local women's resource centre



To provide a children's room with a range of great children's books

DEAR EDITOR...

RE THE REVIEW OF BEYOND BLOOD (MAY 1995)

Perhaps in addition to the letters and diaries of Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson, Judith Ion should read the letters and diaries of Virginia Woolf, Lady Sackville, Violet (Keppel) Trefusis, and Victoria Glendinning's biography of Vita, as well as understand something of Edwardian attitudes to marriage and sexuality.

In those days it was de rigeur for sapphists and homosexuals to marry in order to avoid scandal, and no doubt many of these marriages were successful. Harold Nicolson was a practising homosexual at the time of marriage, and Vita had already embarked (with Rosamund Grosvenor) upon the long series of lesbian liaisons that were to preoccupy her for the rest of her days.

Although she ultimately developed a deep and dependent emotional attachment to Harold, at the time of their engagement she was very confused about her feelings, writing, "I don't remember ever having been so unhappy. Only today have I begun to understand that I do not love him."

The couple ceased to have sexual relations with each other soon after the birth of the children, at the time when Harold had contracted VD from a male lover. Following Vita's affair with Violet Trefusis, it was Lady Sackville who insisted she return to the marriage for the sake of social decorum.

Louise Wakeling and I did not need to reclaim Harold and Vita as "role models from the past". They proclaim their own duality and chosen lifestyle again and again in their writings. To recognise this is neither dangerous nor dishonest, and we feel quite inaccurately represented in this regard, in an otherwise thoughtful review.

MARGARET BRADSTOCK

RE THE COMMENTS BY MARGARET BRADSTOCK RE MY REVIEW OF BEYOND BLOOD

I do not take issue with any of the points made by Margaret Bradstock in her response to my earlier review of *Beyond Blood*. Perhaps the problem here is one of misunderstanding rather than disagreement? Perhaps the fault of a word limit and a limited context in both instances?

I am in fact familiar with all of the aforementioned works (and a few more!) but didn't think that a book review was quite the place to list them. And indeed the phrase I found (find?) problematic in *Beyond Blood* is not problematic alongside these additional remarks.

Without the additional context I do however find the following comment misleading: "...more politicised lesbians and gay men find they have never been so united as when it comes to parenting children. This has historical precedents in the marriage of convenience - Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson, for example, married to escape social censure and to engender children" (p.4, my emphasis). To me, this implies Vita and Harold's marriage was a deliberate act carried out consciously by them in the face of repressive Edwardian society.

To quote Vita in a letter she wrote to Harold in 1960: "When we married, you were older than I was, and far better informed. I was young, and very innocent, I knew nothing of homosexuality. I didn't even know that such a thing existed, either between men or between women. You should have told me. You should have warned me. You should have told me about yourself, and warned me that the same sort of thing was likely to happen to myself. It would have saved us a lot of trouble and misunderstanding. But I simply didn't know."

These are not the words of a woman who, aware of her self and her husband's homosexual tendencies, married in order to avoid scandal. This is not to deny that Vita had been passionately involved with Rosamund by the time of her marriage, but is rather an indication that theory and practice (the label and the action) had not yet merged for her. In this sense her marriage was not one of convenience. These were indeed complex times, and Vita and Harold did indeed lead complex lives. It is precisely because their marriage was unique, fascinating, devoted and role-challenging that I remain uncomfortable with the one-dimensional interpretation I found in the introduction to *Beyond Blood*.

JUDITH ION

WRITING AWARDS

SCARLET STILETTO AWARD

2ND ANNUAL WOMEN'S CRIME & MYSTERY
SHORT STORY COMPETITION

CLOSING DATE - 31 AUGUST 1995

FIRST PRIZE - \$500 AND TROPHY

ENQUIRIES - SUE TURNBULL (03) 437 1508

1996 NITA B KIBBLE AWARD

PUBLISHED BOOK OF FICTION OR NON-FICTION
CLASSIFIED AS "LIFE WRITING"

CLOSING DATE - 30 NOVEMBER 1995

FIRST PRIZE - \$15,000

ENQUIRIES - DONNA GREAVES (02) 229 9866

NITA MAY DOBBIE AWARD

FOR FIRST PUBLISHED BOOK

CLOSING DATE - 30 NOVEMBER 1995

FIRST PRIZE - \$5,000

ENQUIRIES - DONNA GREAVES (02) 229 9866

HQ/DYMOCKS SHORT STORY CONTEST

PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED SHORT STORY
OF LESS THAN 3500 WORDS

CLOSING DATE - 16 OCTOBER 1995

FIRST PRIZE - \$5,000 AND PUBLICATION IN HQ

ENQUIRIES - SARAH BURNS (02) 282 8267

RAFFLE RESULTS

PENNY CROFTS	PARAGLIDING JUMP WITH UP AND AWAY
ANNETTE MOORE	5 DOUBLE PASSES TO MANDOLIN
LEANNE MILES	POPPY MAKE-UP
ROSEMARY FOY	DINNER AT TRUFFLES AT BOWRAL
DEBORAH STEVENSON	HQ MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION
BRONWYN WINTER	FEMINIST BOOKSHOP VOUCHER
CARA HARLUM	POLYMORPH BODY ART VOUCHER
PHIL BROWN	BELVOIR STREET THEATRE TICKETS
RAYMOND CARBONARO	BOOKS FROM RANDOM HOUSE
SAMANTHA BEATY	BODYSHOP BASKET

THANKS TO ALL LIBRARY MEMBERS WHO SOLD
RAFFLE TICKETS - WE RAISED AN AMAZING \$3000,
AND COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!



SHOP 14, BRONKA ARCADE

Spring Street, Bondi Junction

SYDNEY NSW 2022

PH [02] 389 1683 FAX [02] 387 8231

THANK YOU

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Attamini, Nerida Wood, Nicola O'Shea, Rody Myers, Ros Feltham, Ruth Carman, Sandra Coleman, Shirry Rebolledo, Simone Ford, Stephanie Sparke, Sue Williamson, Trish Spears, Ulka Ozakin, Ute Greiving, Wendy Holz

FIRST BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

The Women's Library Committee and Allison Lee, Alvin Wong, Amanda Elliot, Annie, Belvoir Street Theatre, Bob, The Bodyshop, Cathy Gallagher, Christine Petschler, Cindy, Deborah Paull, Emily Clarke, Eva Cox, Feminist Bookshop, Fiesta Carrera, Helen, HQ Magazine, Jen Anderson, Jools Graeme, Kate Fearnall-Heath, Kym Hodder, Lisa Schouw, Maja Berilazic, Mandolin Cinema, Marny Kilby, Maureen Cooney, Meredith Connie, Meryl, Nicola O'Shea, Paula Wallace, Penny Price, Poppy Make-Up, Polymorph, Random House, Rita Haddad, Rita Harding, Robin Gist, Robyn Scott, Sharon Deeham, Sharon Luke, Sherri Hilario, Simone Ford, Stephanie Sparke, Steve, Sue, Suzanne Delaney, Swift & Moore, Truffles in Bowral, Up and Away, and everyone else who assisted in making the night a great success

WOMEN'S STUDIES FORUMS

CO-ORDINATORS – Annabelle Lukin and Anneliese French
Jeanne Ellard, Nicole Moore, Pat

Parker, Trish Farrar, Berinda Larney, Allison Best, Emili Ballou, Allison Lee, Peta Donald

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NEWSLETTER – Ingrid Urh
PARTY MATERIAL – Jill Segedin

FACILITATION OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKSHOPS

Jayne Wells

DONATION OF WHITEBOARD

Gleebooks

LOAN OF CLOAKROOM SUPPLIES

Anti-Violence Project

LOAN OF LAMINATING EQUIPMENT

Penny Pitcairn,
University of NSW Student Guild
Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras

SPECIAL DONATIONS

Cameron at Bulldog Books (several editions of *Lesbian Review of Books*), Joan Poole (*Ms magazine* on an ongoing basis), Jane Moore (a very large collection)

SPECIAL WELCOME TO NEW

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS – Myra Flynn, Donna Wilcox

PLANT MAINTENANCE

Glennifer Roberts, Arvai



MEMBERSHIP FORM

To become a member of THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY please fill out this form and enclose a cheque or money order payable to THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY INC. Membership fees are \$30 for the fully waged and \$20 for others.

Donation of a new title specified on a list at The Feminist Bookshop will be accepted in place of the membership fee.

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS.

NAME DATE

ADDRESS

POSTCODE PHONE (HOME) (WORK)

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY?

FEE ENCLOSED: \$50 FUNDED INSTITUTIONS PER YEAR \$30 WAGED PER YEAR
 \$20 UNWAGED PER YEAR \$5 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PER YEAR

PLEASE RETURN this form to THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY INC. PO BOX 271, NEWTOWN 2042

DEMISTIFYING THE INTERNET

WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED ...LOVE!!!

Two simple definitions of the Internet (thanks to ULSTRAIN Web Page from Sydney University):

- "International network of computers" – this is the easiest way to remember what the word stands for and gives you an idea of what it is
- "A community of people who have chosen to share information" – this is the spirit of the Internet

More technically, the Internet can be seen as a "global communications network connecting millions of people via their computers, through a standard set of rules, conventions or protocols". (We're talking computer rules, how machines communicate with each other, not rules and regulations for the users).

The Internet is hard to sum up except in a general sense, because there are so many different services available, but as the light bulbs start to go on, the one word that should be flashing more than any other is COMMUNICATION.

So, what sort of information can you access?

Everything and anything really, from the entire holdings of the largest library in America via their catalogue, through writing personal letters to your girlfriend in LA, to being able to transfer software from a computer in Washington to your machine at home – FREE!

INTERNET APPLICATIONS (OR, "I'M CONNECTED, NOW WHAT?")

So, what can you do on the Internet?

Internet activities can be divided into five main categories. What you can do depends on the sort of hardware, software and type of connection you have.

1] ELECTRONIC MAIL

E-Mail is THE single most used application on the Internet today.

The IPA Survey mentioned on page 1 of this newsletter found that 237 of the 300 women surveyed chose swapping e-mail with their friends and family as their most used online application. The process of sending and receiving mail is pretty easy. You can use it to write to friends or business colleagues or to tell President Chirac what you think of the French testing at Murora Atoll. There's even a World Wide Web page you can go to and register your opinion in an online survey.

There are several Mail programs – *Eudora*, *Pop Mail*, *Quick Mail* and *Pine*. They all basically do the

same thing – you can send and receive mail, forward messages you receive to others and create a distribution list so the program automatically sends the same message to a group of people without you having to type out their e-mail addresses every time. You can even attach documents, spreadsheets, graphics, or diagrams to e-mail messages and send those. E-mail is quicker than faxing or traditional postal services (cutely called "snail mail") as messages can be sent and received within minutes.

The best thing about e-mail is that the person to whom you are sending the message doesn't have to be present to receive it, the program stores it and it is read at the recipient's leisure.

2] TELNET (GIBBS & SMITH, P88)

Telnet makes it possible to use remote computers as if they were the computer in front of you. This is great if all you've got is an IBM 386 and the computer you've Telnetted to is a major main frame. With Telnet you can have access to whatever the remote computer has access to.

Telnet is most often used to let remote users search large, complex databases. It's also the way to connect to hundreds of library catalogues around the world. All you need to know is the Telnet address of the remote computer you want to connect to.

For example if you Telnet to the address orac.lib.uts.edu.au you'll be able to search the UTS Library Catalogue to see if a book is in before jumping on a bus. You can also search all NSW University catalogues by going to unilinc.edu.au. Most Telnet addresses have passwords or logins as well. If you are a PhD student, your library may give you these – see your supervisor.

If you are at Uni you can access the Internet and don't need to pay for a connection (they're already set up in the PC Labs in the faculties).

But if you want to dial up from home you'll need a computer, a modem (the faster, the better – V32bis is good) and an account with the computing people at your Uni.

3] GOPHER

Gopher is a much more convenient way to use Telnet because you don't need to remember the Internet address of the machine you want to contact. Once you enter the Gopher address (eg. info.anu.edu.au) you can tunnel through the Internet via a series of menus.

Gopher puts a lot of Internet tools together like ftp and Telnet, so that once you've found something of interest Gopher handles all the changing of utilities, addresses, transferring of data, etc., without you even thinking about it. So really it does live up to its name GO-FER.

The only drawback with Gopher is that you really need to have some idea of where the information is, whether it be a University, publication or document. You are offered screen after screen of choices arranged into a hierarchy of menus, enough to send any self-respecting Pisces out the door.

So thank God for Veronica, not the raven haired super-bitch of the Archie comics fame, but a neat tool for searching "Gopher-space", using keywords.

4] ftp (FILE TRANSFER PROTOCOL)

As the name suggests, this is the Internet tool for transferring files between computers. Using a standard protocol, ftp works regardless of the type of computer you're using, or the type of machine at the other end.

The kinds of things you can ftp range from the latest version of *Netscape* (a World Wide Web browser), full text from an electronic journal, census material, the entire text of *Alice in Wonderland*, the *Book of Mormon* or even, yep, you guessed it, that sweet little book you find in hotel rooms! You can even get images from NASA.

But what most people ftp are software programs for DOS, Windows, Macintosh or UNIX. Some software is free ('free-ware') and other software is what's called 'share-ware', which the authors distribute to users of the Internet in return for a small registration fee, if you like it and want to continue using it.

In return you receive an official license to use the product as well as a manual and/or bonus software/updates. (This is the spirit of the Internet at work but it only works, of course, if you are honest and pay the rego. Some really great software products have disappeared from the Net simply because the vendors haven't been paid for the services they are providing.)

So then, you use ftp to transfer files from one machine to another. Once again there's a tool to make things easier. The Veronica equivalent for ftp is called Archie (surprise!!).

With Archie you can type in a keyword(s) and it will find you ftp sites for files on your topic of interest. This makes thousands of files available to anyone who wants them.

5] WORLD WIDE WEB

So although Gopher is a powerful tool for navigating the Internet, there's yet another way to get around - the World Wide Web.

One way to think of the Internet is that its

information is organised into pages and these pages of information are written with a special tool called hypertext. Hypertext is data that has links to other data. When you're looking at a page of hypertext you'll see some of the text is either highlighted, coloured, underlined or all of these.

Using the idea of point and click navigation, you simply use your mouse to click on these hypertext links and that page of information is brought to your screen.

So there you go. I have tried to provide you with an overview of something that is very difficult to explain, and in trying to do so I have no doubt confused you even more. To help remedy this I'll leave you with a list of books that might help clarify things a bit.

If you want to form your own ideas about the uses/abuses/future of the Internet and especially if you want to use it, you'll need to take a day off from everything, make a few pots of mind stimulating tea, curl up with the cat and read!

There are a lot of concepts to tackle and a lot of jargon to abseil down and, unless you are willing to fork out \$75 to \$700 for an Internet course, the best way to learn is read and practice if you can get access. Having someone to guide and facilitate is also really helpful, and I hope in this light, this piece has been useful.

LESLEY NGATAI

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SOURCES USED IN THIS ARTICLE

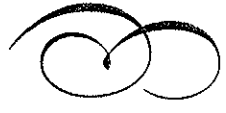
- GIBBS, Mark and SMITH, Richard (eds) - *Navigating the Internet*, Sams Publishing USA, 1993
- HAHN, Harley and STOUT, Rick (eds) - *The Internet Complete Reference*, McGraw Hill USA, 1994

RECOMMENDED READING

- BACZEWSKI, Phillip et al - *The Internet Unleashed*, Sams Publishing USA, 1994
Very good. Contains a Macintosh disk that simulates an online session. Has "Internet Hunt" type example, especially informative chapter about Gopher.
Held at UTS Library (City)
- EBBS, G and HOREY, J - *The Australian Internet Book*, Woodslane Press, Australia, 1995
Reviews of this say it's up-to-date, comprehensive, clear and detailed. It includes lots of screen captures, many of them showing features of the WWW. It sticks to what's locally available; refreshingly non-American.
Held at UTS Library (Kuring-Gai)
- GALLIN, A - *Everybody's Guide to the Internet*, MIT Press, USA, 1994
Held at UTS Library (City)
- *The Internet Yellow Pages*, IDG Books, USA, 1995
Make sure you get the 1995 edition
Held at UTS Library (City)
On order at UNSW and Sydney University



REVIEWS



Here is a sample of the kind of books you can find in *The Women's Library*. All of the following titles have been donated by the publishers or the author. Thank you to the following publishers, authors and reviewers for your support.

HEDDY AND ME
SUSAN VARGA
PENGUIN BOOKS, 1994
Donated by the author

This book was winner of the *Fellowship of Australian Writers Christina Stead Award-Biography-1995*, and deservedly so. It is a richly detailed account of the life of a family of Hungarian Jews who lived through the black years of the Holocaust, and their subsequent migration to Sydney in the 1950s.

It provides a vivid picture of fear and hatred, but also of loving family bonds. It is a quite wonderful celebration of the strength of human beings.

Heddy, Varga's mother, is a spirited and vigorous woman, shaped by her culturally rich Hungarian Jewish values. Heddy candidly recalls her early life, and the details that she recalls make for rich memoirs. She is a force to be reckoned with, a strong individual who adapted in order to keep her family intact and safe through horrendous times. She is, above all, a survivor.

Heddy's survival skills, transported to 1950's Sydney, enabled her to start again, creating a comfortable, safe niche for her family in an alien culture. The family's European background and experiences were in stark contrast to the life of Varga's schoolfriends, and provided the springboard to the author's reaching out to seek an identity of her own.

It's Heddy's biography, but it is also a vehicle through which Susan Varga seeks answers to questions about herself and her relationship to her mother.

Varga's description of her journey as an adult to Budapest with her mother is poignant. It vividly reveals her development of insights into her mother's background, and Varga's own origins. This experience brought the author and her mother to a new and closer understanding, and acceptance of each other.

Heddy and Me is a wonderful book. Varga tells the story well. Read it!

ELIZABETH SMEDLEY

WOMEN, MADNESS AND MEDICINE
DENISE RUSSELL
POLITY PRESS, 1995
Donated by the author

Denise Russell's *Women, Madness and Medicine* is predicated on her belief that biological psychiatry is harmful, particularly to women. The book is provocative, rich in ideas and it will stir argument if not violent disagreement on all sides of feminism.

Russell tries to break down all black and white notions of sanity and insanity. She argues that many of our

problems are societal, not physiological and that much unhappiness or 'madness' in our society is based on repression and oppression. She questions many of our assumptions and prejudices towards depression, schizophrenia, the battered woman syndrome, criminality and madness and the creative process.

In the first chapter she charts the history of psychiatry and how it took over from the church as a moral arbiter. During the industrial revolution many women through hardship and poverty were often unjustly labelled as mad and thrown into institutions. Their reproductive functions were thought to be the source of their madness.

On the controversial topic of premenstrual syndrome she advocates an alternative view "that the changes the woman experiences in the premenstrual phase may give her the motivation and energy to make positive alterations in her life." She is against lawyers introducing premenstrual syndrome as a defence in cases of violence and accuses them of "medicalizing criminality".

In one of the most moving sections of the book, Russell shows how many creative writers, such as Sylvia Plath, Zelda Fitzgerald, Janet Frame and Virginia Woolfe, were thought to be mad. But, in most cases, Russell shows us, these women were the victims of abuse and misunderstanding, who often had their ambitions thwarted by men.

I did not always agree with Russell's views, in particular her conclusions about schizophrenia and medication, but she backs her arguments with thorough research, and she certainly makes us think about alternatives to biological psychiatry.

JUDY CLIFFORD

THE STRAIGHT WOMAN'S GUIDE TO LESBIANISM
MIKAYA HEART
TOUGH DOVE BOOKS, USA 1994

The conundrum of this book's title is catching. A book on lesbianism - for straight women? Are straight women interested in lesbianism? Isn't it just a little titillation for them? Well of course many lesbians were converted to the ranks from the wilderness of heterosexuality.

The Straight Woman's Guide is not evangelical, nor is it polemical. It is a straight forward guide to what it is like being a lesbian. It is quite likely that more lesbians than straight women will read this book because lesbians like to read about themselves. Surrounded by a heterosexist culture we gravitate to anything which reflects our self.

Lesbians will enjoy this book. It is a concise, apt summary of who we are. The author Mikaya Heart says in her introduction, "I gave up trying to convey an impartial picture of lesbianism half way through the first chapter. This book is written from my viewpoint." Yet I found this book to be relatively unbiased or partisan. She deals with controversial subjects such as separatism and sadomasochism by simply describing them and stating that there are for and against positions taken by lesbians.

Sometimes I squirmed a little when she presented parts of lesbian culture I am not comfortable with in such a blase fashion. Yet I was happy to see that controversial positions I take were presented but not condemned.

This is a book for everyone – including heterosexual women. It explodes common myths perpetrated against lesbians. It is inviting without glamorising lesbianism. It is educational for those with little knowledge or understanding of what lesbianism is all about. A book for mum, your sister, a workmate or even a baby lesbian who needs some insight into her new culture. Saves lesbians answering all those same old questions.

The author describes lesbian oppression, lesbian sex, lesbian politics, lesbian social life and more, all in a slim volume of 72 pages that won't strain anyone's attention span. The book is interspersed with quotes from lesbians and cartoons by Jesse Cougar which break up the text.

Mikaya Heart is an unapologetic lesbian who doesn't hesitate to portray the strength of lesbians. In the section where she describes the many non-lesbian specific social issues that lesbians have been in the forefront of fighting she says, "A woman who has the strength of character it takes to live as an out lesbian in this world is probably willing to put herself on the line whenever she feels it necessary." (p.49)

Lesbians will find this book useful and fun. I hope some heterosexual women will be inspired to buy it for themselves. Lesbians have concerned themselves with heterosexual women's business for so long this is a chance for het women to repay the compliment.

CHRIS SITKA

SMALL REBELLIONS

LOUISE WAKELING AND MARGARET BRADSTOCK
WENTWORTH BOOKS, 1984

Donated by the authors

Small Rebellions is a friendly collection of wonderful poems. I say friendly, because the poems draw the reader in to an intimate world, and make her feel a valued confidante of the poets.

The poets have vastly different styles of writing. Louise Katherine Wakeling is a great user of alliteration, and paints beautiful, ethereal pictures with her words. Her poetry, despite its modern themes, has an almost metaphysical feel about it. Religious references are used heavily and effectively, and there are a few visits to Lesbos and Sappho, too.

I must admit that I didn't understand a lot of Wakeling's poetry, but enjoyed it for the feel in my mouth and for how rounded it sounded when read aloud.

Margaret Bradstock, on the other hand, writes with, and of, a gritty realism. We must have a similar background – I could recognise the scenes and smells of the places she paints – scenes of everyday life, and everyday emotions, which are anything but ordinary.

Together we visited places like Cooma, and the generic Australian coastal town; the loss of children to boredom, technology and big business; the exquisite touch of a lover; and the difficult but welcome leaving behind of a straight life.

I approached reading and reviewing *Small Rebellions* with a degree of hesitation. It had been years since I had

picked up a book of poetry, and poetry can be intimidating. But I enjoyed the experience, and opened my mind to other less pragmatic ideas. So even if poetry isn't what you'd normally pick up off the shelf at The Women's Library, don't go past this one. But a couple of weeks probably won't be enough – this is one to savour.

ANNETTE MOORE

WHAT NO MAN HAD EVER DONE BEFORE

JULIET PEERS

DAWN REVIEW PRESS, VICTORIA, 1992

Donated by the author

This is an account and an analysis of the gang rape of a woman named Mary Jane Hicks, and the ensuing publicity and trial in Australia in 1886. Whilst the subject matter is not one which women in general find easy reading, this book retells a small piece of history with the knowledge that it has been recorded through men's eyes.

In doing so it gives some insights into our country's past which we don't have access to in mainstream history books. It addresses some of the values behind the narrators of the time, such as newspaper writers and editors. The book also looks at the media representations of women at the time, and the effect of these on the trial.

Peers infers that the legal system has improved, in that present day laws forbid the kind of character assassination that most women who attempted to take men through the legal system for rape suffered in the past.

She also comments that Mary Jane Hicks was treated differently to other women in the same period who accused men of rape and attempted to seek justice through the law system. Further analysis of the way our legal system has been set up, and whose interests it serves, as well as women's rights in that system, would have been interesting, in order to draw these aspects together.

Peers has focused on a specific incident at a specific time in history, and some of the dynamics of power between different groups. It would have been useful to draw connections to previous times in history, or to the present century, where these same dynamics and values surrounded women in the public domain.

For me, a by-product of reading this book is its confirmation of present day reality. It details the means and methods patriarchy used to shore up its bastions of power and to keep a group of people subordinate. The methods used in 1886 haven't changed much to those still



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used in the present day, and neither have the arguments used to justify the dominance of women. Understanding these values and reasons behind the acts perpetrated in the name of that system in the past, gives women foresight for their own protection in the present and future.

What No Man Had Ever Done Before is a re-writing of history that is essential for women to reclaim and to redefine our present-day image, by looking at the images mainstream history gives us of women (if indeed, women are represented at all in history). Peers looks at the institution of rape and the role it plays in controlling women, as well as the disposability of women, and their invisibility, and the common portrayal of them as passive recipients of male acts of power.

Any women growing up in the last fifty years, right up to the present day would be intimately acquainted with these concepts and their impacts on their life. I would have liked to see the book go further in its analysis. However, this book provides the basis for women in consciousness raising groups, or on their own, to develop their own analysis and their understanding of their world.

DENISE FINNEGAN

**BODIES THAT MATTER:
ON THE DISCURSIVE LIMITS OF 'SEX'**

JUDITH BUTLER

ROUTLEDGE, LONDON, 1993

Donated by the Law Book Company

This is a demanding book, but, one which is worth the effort reading. Judith Butler's philosophical sophistication and high level of sustained and rigorous argument make this book both original and challenging.

In the introduction, Butler asks whether there is a way to link the questions of the materiality of the body to the performativity of gender, and how the category of "sex" figures within such a relationship. She then proceeds to challenge many accepted presumptions about sexuality and subversions throughout the book.

She engages with an extensive range of texts using her political and intellectual insights to utilise the work of significant thinkers within the domains of post-structuralism, feminism and psychoanalysis bringing exciting interpretations to her readings.

Notions of agency, identity, intentionality and "the subject" are reconceptualised considering an expanded and broad-ranging theory of performance as citation and gender as iteration.

I must admit I found the book difficult to "get into". However, this was more my fault than that of the book. For me, anyway, this is not a book to put down and to take up from time to time. One needs to maintain a continuous dialogue with this text. When (prompted by the deadline for this review) I made my mind up to read it as a whole, the book was read in one sitting.

Judith Butler's writing style and intellectual rigour does take some getting used to. She alludes to this on page 99. The text of the book, itself, is 242 pages long and is supplemented by extensive end notes. An index of names is included. One small gripe is that an index of topics would have been useful. Yet, this omission is probably countermanded by the nature of the book needing to be read as a whole rather than "dipped into" in a haphazard manner.

This book will be of interest in the domains of feminism, cultural studies, philosophy, political theory, psychoanalysis and gender studies, though some background knowledge in these areas would be advantageous to the reader.

MAREE RAFTOS

OUT OF LINE

THE DEPARTMENT FOR WOMEN AND THE STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES ARE CURRENTLY PRESENTING A MAJOR EXHIBITION TITLED:
OUT OF LINE : 25 YEARS OF WOMEN'S POSTERS 1970-1995

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"15 more years testing in the Pacific?"
PAM DEBENHAM
Tinsheds, 1984

THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES WILL BE HOLDING A SPECIAL MEMBER'S VIEWING OF **OUT OF LINE AND THE WORK OF ART** (AN EXHIBITION OF THE WORK OF WOMEN ARTISTS AND WRITERS) IN OCTOBER. PLEASE SEE THE INSERT IN THIS NEWSLETTER OR CALL THE LIBRARY FOR DETAILS ON THIS EVENT



Happy Birthday TWL!
FIESTA CARRERA reading her short story in *Love Cries*, at The Women's Library First Birthday Party

INFORMATION PAGE

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **WOMEN'S ELECTORAL LOBBY AGM**
66 Albion St, Surry Hills
September 10 ENQUIRIES (02) 212 4374
- **NATIONAL WOMEN'S REGISTER
12TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE -
WOMEN WITH A CAUSE**
University of Technology, Sydney
September 16 ENQUIRIES Jenny (02) 351 3638
- **WOMEN AND LAW CONFERENCE -
WORKING FOR WOMEN? - SEX DISCRIMINATION,
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**
University of Sydney Women's Studies Centre
September 22 ENQUIRIES (02) 534 3239
- **FIFTH WOMEN AND LABOUR CONFERENCE**
Macquarie University
September 29 - October 1 ENQUIRIES (02) 850 8861
- **THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY BOOKFAIR**
Corner of King & Australia Sts, Newtown
Saturday, October 7, 10am ENQUIRIES (02) 319 0529
- **THE FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
VIOLENCE AGAINST GAYS AND LESBIANS**
Holme Building, University of Sydney
Oct 27 & 28 ENQUIRIES Glenys Rousel (06) 274 0224
- **THIRD NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH
CONFERENCE**
Australian National University, Canberra
November 17 -19 ENQUIRIES Conference Secretariat
(06) 258 3681
- **WEL NATIONAL CONFERENCE**
St Scholastica's School, Glebe
January 26 - 28 ENQUIRIES (02) 212 4374

RESOURCES RECEIVED

RESOURCES DONATED BY AUTHORS, CONTRIBUTORS, AND EDITORS

- *In Transition* - Deborah Saltman
- *Childbirth Choices* - Adrienne Bennett, Wendi Etherington and Daphne Hewson
- *A Selection of Poems* - Merlyn Swan
- *Poles of Attraction* - Chiesa Irwin
- *The Collective Meeting* - Emily George
- *Profile of a Co-addict* - Emily George
- *The Womyn is Perfected* - Emily George
- *Earth Womyn and Other Short Lesbian Feminist Stories* - Emily George
- *Wahine Toa & the Other Pakehas* - Emily George
- *"What Position Did You Hold in the Women's Liberation Movement, Sister?"* - Emily George
- *Always Start Your Car With Two Bells* - Emily George
- *The Journey* - Emily George
- *Plays* - Emily George
- *Let's Lift the Lid Report* - Albury Community Health Centre
- *Imagining Liberation* - Vera Mackie, University of Western Sydney Women's Research Centre

- *Twenty Years of Choice* - Rosemary Leonard & Claire Bellis, University of Western Sydney Women's Research Centre
- *Anorexia & Theories of the Body* - Catherine Garrett, University of Western Sydney Women's Research Centre
- *Hitting Home (video)* - Women's Health & Sexual Assault Education Unit
- *Serial Sponsorship* - Department for Women
- *Sexual Violence: The Hidden Crime* - Department for Women
- *The Glass Inferno* - Angelika Frend
- *Heartland* - Angelika Frend

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- ANESBWA - Association of Non-English Speaking Background Women of Australia
- *Bulletin of WILPF NSW Branch* (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom)
- Equal Opportunity Tribunal papers
- GLPCI Network (Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition International)
- *National Library of Australia News*
- National Women's Media Centre Newsletter
- Southern Women's Group Newsletter
- Sydney Women's Liberation Newsletter
- *The Performance Space Quarterly*
- WISN (Women Incest Survivors Network)
- Working Women's Centre Newsletter
- *Agenda*
- *Australian Volunteer*
- COAL Newsletter
- *Frontline (ACON Newsletter)*
- *Grapevine*
- *Hooter (OWLS Newsletter)*
- *HQ*
- *Inner Voice*
- *International Solidarity*
- *Lesbiana*
- *Lesbians on the Loose*
- *Mountain Lesbian News*
- *Pink Thylacines*
- *Public Library News*
- *Queensland Pride*
- *Rouge (UK)*
- *Sisters in Crime*
- *Stating Women's Health*
- SWAN Newsletter
- *Sydney Star Observer*
- *WEL Informed*
- *Wicked Women*
- *Women and Work*
- *Women - Church*
- *Women in Focus*
- *Women's News (Ireland)*

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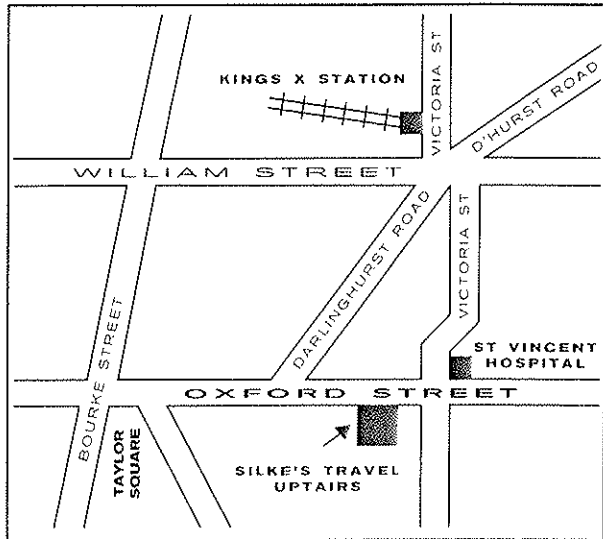
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