



NEWS LETTER

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Your new Management Committee

A new/old management committee was elected at the Annual General Meeting in February. Several of the last committee were available to be re-elected, and we have two new members: Donna, who is going to keep in contact with the volunteers, and Narelle, who is taking charge of developing our website.

Management committee members give their time and energy voluntarily, doing all the background work that keeps the library running. We greatly appreciate the support of the volunteer workers and members, and are happy to hear from you with brickbats or bouquets.

So please feel free to contact committee members about your concerns. If you don't have access to email you can leave a message at the library for any of us.

Convenor

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Other Members

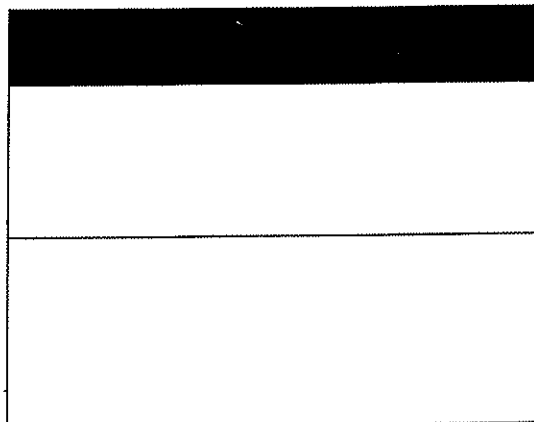
Bronwyn Vost
Email: bronwynv@woollahra.nsw.gov.au

Marie Buxton (contactable at the library)

Stall at Mardi Gras Fair Day

The stall at Mardi Gras Fair Day was an outstanding success this year. We sold a huge number of our surplus books, and raised over \$1400. It was also an excellent publicity opportunity for us, and lots of interest was shown in the Library.

Our deepest thanks go out to Gail and Cynthia and all the volunteers who helped on the day. It's a lot of work, setting up and running the stall, not to mention clearing it up at the end of a long hot day.



Editor's rant

Instead of a Convenor's report this month I thought I would share some of my thoughts about the library and this newsletter.

The Women's Library is a very special place. It has the potential to provide an important ingredient in the women's community in Sydney, and this newsletter is the face of the library that most of you see most often.

I know that this newsletter is appreciated by you, the members, because lots of you have told us so. The difficulty for me is that I want to send it out to you four times a year, but I can't send out blank pages! I struggle to fill every issue with contributions extracted from the women on the management committee, using a technique similar to that used by dentists when pulling teeth, or blackmailers when exerting their fiendish pressure.

So, in the hope of inspiring closet contributors to come out I'd like you to make a stab at answering these questions:

Have you borrowed a book from the library recently that you enjoyed? Write a short review telling us why.

Was there a book that you struggled to finish? Write and tell us why you had that reaction.

Do you have a favourite author? I'd really like to know who she is, what she has written, and why you'd recommend her books to others.

One drawback to being an editor is that people constantly put themselves down when it comes to expressing themselves on paper. "I couldn't write it down," they say, with a shudder. "I'll just tell you about it, and you can write it down." Now, in a perfect world we'd both have lots of spare hours every week to meet and chat about your opinions over a latte or three, and I could make notes, write it up, send you a draft for

approval, take in your changes, send it back to you for final sign-off....

The bad news is that this ain't that world. The good news is that editors can fix up even really messy prose. That's what we do. Think of us as the doctors (or spin doctors) of writing. Send us your ailing grammar, your limping sentences, your malignant spelling, your infectious cliches, and we will straighten them out for you. We can smooth the imperfections, correct the errors and improve the clarity - all without changing your original meaning. (Well, hopefully, not too much, anyway.)

So, what are you waiting for? Send me an email, or drop me a line care of the Library, and you could see your name immortalised in the pages of TWL Newsletter. And don't forget to put your contact details in with your contribution.

I'm clearing my desk for the onslaught!

Cheers

Mary-Helen
Newsletter Editor

Women's Artspace

The high bare walls of the library will soon be covered by women's art again. We are working with a local artist to put together an exhibition later in the year. If you're interested in being involved contact Mary-Helen:

mhw@mira.net or 9518 4661

Watch this space...!

Book reviews

Wild Things by Karin Kallmaker

Too good to leave, too bad to stay: A step by step guide to help you decide whether to stay in or get out of your relationship by Mira Kirshenbaum.

One of the reasons I love The Women's Library is that it has a great big heap of steamy, luscious lesbian romance. All the great names are there, from Jane Rule to Katherine Forrest and Lee Lynch.

I confess that my current favourite is Karin Kallmaker. *Wild Things* is as delicious a morsel as any of her books, whose beautiful and clever central character, Faith, uses her cleverness to avoid falling in love until the age of 34.

The object of her desires, the rich and successful Sydney, is the sister of Faith's boyfriend, the warm and sensitive Eric. Before succumbing to each other's charms in a whelter of steamy, luscious and minutely-described passion (I do hope I'm not giving away too much of the plot here), our heroines must run the gauntlet of many trials. There are Eric's feelings to be considered, and rejection by the church, rejection by the family, and their own fear of public exposure.

I must say that for such a slim volume, these themes and others are dealt with usefully and deftly. I also must say I'm grateful that Karin Kallmaker doesn't tend to put her heroines through the rape-by-rejected-husband ordeals that Katherine Forrest does. Let's hear it for Karin and the warm and sensitive Eric.

Well, now that Faith and Sydney are blissfully united in lifelong union, one of the other strengths of The Women's Library comes into play: a great big pile of seriously sensible books on how to cope with the relationship that you've got yourself into.

In *Too good to leave, too bad to stay* – written, interestingly enough, in the same year as *Wild Things*, 1996 – we'll

discover whether Sydney's riches and success mean that she's actually a "power person" and thus too bad to stay with. And we'll find out whether Faith's persistence in remaining under the same roof as her spectacularly obnoxious parents until the age of 34 is an indication that she suffers from a nasty form of non-communication called "off-the-table-itis".

As the title of her book suggests, Myra Kirshenbaum takes us through a series of steps made up of "diagnostic questions" to get answers on some seriously sensible issues like "Is There Real Love Left?", "Personal Bottom Lines" and "Hurts and Betrayals". The idea is not to add up your score at the end, but to stop agonising once you get to one issue that's simply too good or too bad.

It's a tough old world out there, Faith and Syd, but we're with you all the way.

Bronwyn Vost

Online Book Discussion

There are a huge number of online book discussion groups. Some are devoted to different kinds of books, such as science fiction, romance, horror, crime fiction and so on, and some are centered around a particular author's books (and even her private life!). If you enter the name of your favourite author in any good search engine (www.google.com is my favourite) you will probably turn up many web pages. Some of these might be pages put up by publishers, some will be fan pages, and some of them might lead you to discussion forums.

I have been a member of a US-based feminist online book group that has operated for years, and I think it needs some new Australian members to spark it up! It is called *Bookwoman*, and you can find out how it operates at:

[http://www.womensites.com/
bookwoman/index.html](http://www.womensites.com/bookwoman/index.html)

Mary-Helen Ward

NOTICEBOARD

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Party party party!

All volunteers and members of the library and their friends are invited to join the Management Committee in the Beer Garden of the Bank Hotel (next to Newtown Station) on Sunday 16 June at 3pm.

Shy and don't know anyone? Ring Mary-Helen (9518 4661)

* ☆
Bookshop

Did you know that the Library has an excellent collection of second-hand books for sale at give-away prices. Come in and browse!

☆ ☆
The library website is being developed over the next few weeks at www.womenslibrary.net

Check it out!

Last date for copy to be left at the library or emailed to mhw@mira.net for the next issue:

15 August 2002



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