

# The Women's Library



## Newsletter

### The Women's Library

#### Aims



The Women's Library will comprise a lending library, a reference library and an information exchange and community centre.



The Women's Library will house print and non-print material by, for and about women such as:

- texts that are required reading for courses offered at Sydney tertiary institutions that address the status of women, including Lesbians;
- published and unpublished papers and theses;
- published and unpublished works of fiction, with emphasis on fiction produced by Australian Women, particularly Lesbians;
- published and unpublished works of non-fiction, with particular attention to collecting in areas of special interest to Lesbian and feminist Women;
- journals, with particular emphasis on journals produced by Australian Lesbians and feminists;
- ephemera;
- photographs, letters, diaries, posters; and
- audio visual material.



The Women's Library will be a safe and supportive space, where women, including Lesbians, can relax, read, study and exchange information.



The Women's Library will be a resource particularly for researchers and students concerned with addressing the status of women, including Lesbians.



TWL Inc. will raise funds through donations, grants and activities of a commercial nature to maintain The Women's Library.



TWL Inc. will house The Women's Library in an appropriate and accessible location.



*from The Women's Library Constitution 1996*

### The Best Little Bookstore in Newtown:

TWL's second hand bookstore has an eclectic and amazing collection of books of many genres, topics and content—from romance to travel., from mystery to new age.

All books sell for \$2 so come in and grab a bargain and support the library while you do it. \$2 is a small price for entertainment and you will be surprised by the variety of our wares!

**At: The Women's Library  
8-10 Brown Street,  
NEWTOWN. 9557 7060**

**W** The library is funded from membership fees, sponsorship, donations, grants and fundraising events. While City of Sydney Council is very supportive of us, we don't receive any external funding.

**O** There are three choices of financially supporting the library:

**L** Individual membership

**F** WOLF sponsorship

One off donations

We are currently seeking sponsorship from women within the community. We offer WOLF (Women's Library Friends) Sponsorship, please see attached form. The Women's Library is a registered charity and donations over \$2 are tax deductible. As a WOLF sponsor you will receive a tax receipt at the end of the financial year for your tax records.

**W  
O  
L  
F**

# Volunteers: Very Very Important Women!

## Convenors Corner

The Spring Fling was a huge success, and I can't thank everyone enough for the time and energy everyone put into making it so. We had over 70 people attend our celebration, and what a wonderful sense of community it created. Some of the women attending had been involved with the library when it was first set up, and they were very positive about the space and organization. The performers were fantastic, and thanks to Jody for MCing. Well done everyone!

The TWL Herstory had many positive comments, and women were delighted to see their writing from the Storying Our Lives Project in print. The TWL Herstory is a limited edition publication, and there are only 5 copies left. This is a wonderful record of the libraries history, and only costs \$10, so if you would like one you had better hurry. If you can't make it in to the library, we can post it to you at an additional cost of \$2.50 for postage.

It was also wonderful to see the inaugural TWL awards presented to such committed women. Some of the recipients seemed quite surprised to have been nominated, Glenniffer was speechless with her nomination for commitment to TWL, Jeannie had no idea she was everyone's favourite lesbian, and Vicki was the women's community choice. Congratulations to all. We will be asking you for nominations in the 2009 volunteer award in our next newsletter.

The library has had a face lift with the purchase and installation of new computers.

Stay well and safe

Fiona Davidson

## Project Coordinator's Report

Welcome to the TWL newsletter. Every two months we will bring you news of the library, book reviews, hopefully some creative writing and information about events in the area for women and topics of interest and concern to women.

Our most exciting news this year has been receiving a volunteer grant from FACSIA—much much appreciated

This was assisted by a grant from the matching Grants Program through the City of Sydney and that has made it possible to replace our almost antique computers. This has speeded up our processes and also allows us to provide decent internet access to volunteers and library users. If like many of us who remember the typewriter, you are a little unsure about computers we have a great group running monthly at the library called 'Oestrogen doesn't rot your keyboard..'

Another group we have that is a lot of fun is Creativity and Conversation the second Saturday of the month between 1.30 pm and 4p.m. This is a friendly and occasionally hilarious group. Bring any creative project you are working on, or use our materials and join in a friendly talk about a multitude of topics.

We can always use new volunteers and anyone interested can contact me on 0407223760 or leave a message at the library.

Thanks to all our volunteers and all the women who support TWL.

*Shirley Kent*

Thanks to all our dedicated volunteers:

, Alyce, , Carolyn, Ceci, Duane, Fiona, Fran, Gabrielle, Gail, Glenniffer, Helen, Hilary, Janet, Jennifer, Kathy Kay, Liz, Lynne, Miriam, Renee, Shirley, Spider, Sue, and Tracy.

## **Quotes of the Month:**

Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, "I will try again tomorrow." **Mary Anne Radmacher**

**Books can be dangerous. The best ones should be labelled 'this could change your life'**

Helen Exley

Book Review

“Infidel” by Ayaan Hirsi Ali is one of those books like “Desert Flower” by Waris Dirri. It inspires you to the core of your soul, and makes you realize how incredibly strong and resourceful our Somalian sisters are. When women like Ayaan refuse to be silenced in such extremely oppressive circumstances it is a testament to this strength and willpower. For Ayaan to speak out about her and other women’s oppression has meant literally that she can be killed. A film that she was making with a Dutch man Theo van Gogh, exposing domestic violence, rape of a woman by her brother, floggings of women and unhappy arranged marriages, resulted in Theo being murdered by an Islamic extremist and Ayaan was told that she would be next. In the film Ayaan and Theo talk about the acts of violence against Muslim women being performed and justified by the perpetrators in the name of God. Here in Australia, men may make similar justifications, however all violence against women is based in misogyny and there are never any excuses. Religion, alcohol, stress etc are only excuses.

It is easy to become very complacent in our ‘comfort zones’ in Australia even though many of us do suffer adversity. I cannot imagine what it would be like to live through civil war, female circumcision, extreme poverty, fleeing as a refugee, plus coupled with this ‘international’ female issues such as domestic violence and rape.

Ayaan talks about the women in her family having very few rights regarding anything. These misogynistic viewpoints are extreme but are also held by millions of men the world over, regardless of a man’s religion age and economic status. There are many Anglo Australian men who think that it is okay to mercilessly beat their partner and rape them, and can also be supported by family and community (when people stay silent, or pressure a woman to stay in a situation).

Thank you to the goddess that there are women like Ayaan Hirsi Ali who is brave enough to talk about her real life. It is not fiction. It is real. She has had to move to the USA for her safety, but at least there she does not have to have body guards.

Don’t deny yourself reading this book thinking that it may be too confronting. It is guaranteed to inspire you, and get you thinking about what really matters.

Lynne

Claymore

Drunkards, junkies, filth, drear and ill repute;  
Dark alleyways, cracked roads, dilapidated buildings

—  
Do you wonder why I gladly call this place home?  
Take a look through my eyes and see.

Try looking past all the fault you perceive,  
To simply seeing what is there.

It’s not all bad.  
It may not be that good, but it’s not all bad.

Try waking up one morning, and just listening to the  
birds

No matter what the worries of the world, they con-  
tinue to sing.  
Their calls sweeten the air and drown out the traffic  
And drunken laughter of the louts next door.

Look past the dirt and filth and try to find  
Where the tulips grow where the trees abound.  
Is it so filthy where delicate flora thrives?  
If they can flourish under this land’s sun then cannot  
we?

Smiles are rare here, sure.  
We are all hardened nihilist.  
We find nothing to smile about in Claymore.  
We’re so beaten down by the confines of a corrupt  
society.  
We’re too scared to have our heads in the clouds.

But whose fault is that? Our own or fate’s?  
Shall we choose our won paths here or let destiny  
decide?  
Don’t believe that because of your roots here, you  
can’t become something.  
I come from here too, and one day I plan to be some-  
thing big.

I was educated by the scoldings of Claymore  
Primary’s wrathful tutors,  
Was then torn apart by the vicious youth of  
Eaglevale High.  
Yet I held my own. The meagre suburb is still dear to  
my heart.  
It might be nothing special to you, but to me, it’s  
home.

Jennifer Jones  
Year 11  
Eaglevale High.

*(From ‘Storying Our Lives’  
A booklet produced by TWL)*

We're On The Web:  
www.thewomenslibrary.org.au

## Noticeboard -Events and Groups for Women

### **Lesbian Open House:**

Tuesday Nights at  
The Women's Library  
8-10 Brown Street,  
NEWTOWN  
7p.m –8p.m  
A friendly discussion  
group for same sex  
attracted women.

### **ART SPACE:**

Are you a woman  
artist? Would you like to  
exhibit in a friendly space?  
"Off The Wall' Artspace" is  
available free for women  
artists.  
Contact the library for details

### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED.**

Bored? Love Books? Want to  
gain some experience and meet  
new women?  
Volunteers are always needed at  
TWL! Training provided.  
For information contact the  
library on 9557 7060

### **Older Women's Network (OWN)**

87 Lower Fort Street, MILLERS POINT  
Activities, groups and information for older women  
Contact: 02 9247 7046

### **Groups at TWL:**

***Creativity and Conversation:***  
**2nd Saturday of each month**  
**1.00p.m-3.00p.m**

***Lesbian Open House:***  
**Every Tuesday evening at 7**

***Writing Group:*** Third Monday of each  
month 7p.m

***Oestrogen Doesn't Rot Your***  
***Keyboard***  
**4th Saturday of the Month**

***Lesbian Cancer Support Group:***  
**4th Wednesday of each month.**  
**Contact Siri at ACON**  
**92062007**

### **Domestic Violence Support Group:**

For women who have experienced any form of domestic violence.  
This group runs weekly for eight weeks at different times through-  
out the year.  
For information contact:  
Nicole or Ilknur on 9560 7788

If you would like to advertise a group or program  
for women in our regular  
newsletter please  
contact Shirley on 0407 223 760

Generously Supported By:

**CITY OF SYDNEY** 

Donations over \$2 are  
tax deductible.

**CITY OF SYDNEY** 