

# The Lavender Salon Reader

The Newsletter & Literary Review for  
Gay & Lesbian Reading Clubs

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## Club News

### Hardy Boys Book Club Ann Arbor, Michigan

The Hardy Boys Book Club is a book discussion and social group for gay men. We meet every five to six weeks in the Ann Arbor area, but occasionally we have a meeting in the greater Detroit area. We ask people to contribute \$4.00 per year to be on our mailing list.

At our last meeting, Feb. 17, we discussed Paul Monette's autobiography *Becoming a Man*. General appreciation for both the book and the man's life was expressed.

As our meetings tend to have a very social aspect, attention

was focused on a member's recent trip to Club Med Atlantis! Unfortunately, Paul's autobiography couldn't compete with such competition!

At our next meeting, March 24, we will discuss A.M. Holmes' book *Jack*. Randy Shilts' *The Mayor of Castro Street: the life and times of Harvey Milk* will be the focus of April's meeting.

For more information about The Hardy Boys Book Club contact Paul McCullough at (313) 925-1080

### Lavender Reading Salon, Appleton, Wisconsin

The Lavender Reading Salon met February 20th to watch the film *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. The film is an BBC production, based on Jeanette Winterson's novel is the story of a young girl being raised by her fanatically religious mother. The story takes place in a small town somewhere in southern England. While the film found an appreciative audience with us; its length deterred discussion afterwards. Winterson's most recent book,

*Written On the Body*, was published by Knopf in 1992.

1st Year Anniversary!

In March the Lavender Reading Salon celebrates their first anniversary! Congratulations to everyone involved!

At the next meeting, March 20th, we will discuss Essex Hemphill's award winning book of poetry and essays *Ceremonies: prose and poetry*, Plume, 1992. In April we will read the play *Angels in America: part one: Millennium Approaches*, by Tony Kushner.

For more information regarding the Lavender Reading Salon contact Michael Nitz at (414) 738-0497.

### Inside this Issue:

#### Feature

- Is Homophobia Hazardous to Lesbian and Gay Health

#### Book Reviews

- 📖 Contested Closets: the ethics and politics of outing
- 📖 Gays and the Military: Joseph Steffan versus the United States.

#### Salon Cooking!

- Scandinavian Fruit Soup

### Directory of Gay & Lesbian Reading Clubs

#### Phoenix, AZ

📖 (Group yet not named)

#### Ann Arbor, MI

📖 The Hardy Boys Book Club

#### Appleton, WI

📖 Lavender Reading Salon.

#### Madison, WI

📖 The Brown Bag Book Club

📖 Frontiers.

#### Milwaukee, WI

📖 Afterwards Book Club

📖 GAMMA Book Club

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### **Publisher & Editor:**

Michael L. Nitz

### **Editorial Policy**

The Lavender Salon Reader seeks to represent the broad interests of gay & lesbian book clubs; to present a place to share our activities; to provide a forum for the discussion of gay, lesbian and bisexual literature and their related industries. Opinions expressed in reviews of books, videos, and recordings represent those of the authors alone. Publication of names, photographs, or likenesses of any person, organization, event, or business should not be taken as indication of sexual orientation. The Lavender Salon Reader is not responsible for unsolicited materials.

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## Editor's Note

Welcome!

Inside this issue you'll find the concluding article of three by Dr. Margaret Colucciello about homophobia in the medical profession. She has timely ideas on how we as gay people can by using our personal medical issues influence and educate the medical professionals. She addresses the need to be responsible in our dealings with the medical profession. It has been a great pleasure to have Dr. Colucciello share with us her concerns. Reprints of all three articles are available for one dollar.

With this issue of The Lavender Salon Reader we are back on production schedule. At my primary job (the one that pays!) I have been developing a local area computer network. Building that has taken most of my energies. Our numbering has not changed, but the monthly date has skipped a month due to slippage in production of this paper. This will have no effect on paid subscriptions. Due to costs, etc., unpaid subscribers will be dropped from the mailing list after three free issues. So subscribe now! An order coupon is printed on page 5. And drop us a note! We'd love to hear what you think about the LS Reader, and what you would like to see happen to the LS Reader.

Happy Reading!

## Recent Arrivals!

(The following books, recently received from publishers, are available for reviews. If you are interested in writing a review of any of the following contact the editor.)

📖 Borich, Barrie Jean. *Restoring the Color of Roses*. Firebrand Books, 1993.

📖 *Boston Marriages: romantic but asexual, relationships among contemporary lesbians*. Edited by Esther D. Rothblum and Kathleen A. Brehony. University of Massachusetts Press, 1993.

📖 Kettelhack, Guy. *How To Make Love While Conscious: sex and sobriety*. Harper Collins, 1993.

Hadleigh, Boze. *The Lavender Screen: the gay and lesbian films, their stars, makers, characters & critics*. Citadel Press, 1993.

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Critical Issues and Trends: Is Homophobia Hazardous to Lesbian and Gay Health?

Part three in a series of three by Margaret L. Colucciello, Ph.d., Rn.

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**H**ow can we assist individuals in their homophobia? How can we help to alleviate or at the very best lessen these emotionally disruptive feelings and influences in their lives? Is this our responsibility to begin with?

Because of the controversy surrounding homosexuality, many individuals fear revealing their homosexual orientation to health care providers. In several surveys that elicited information from lesbians about their experiences with health care providers, up to 72% reported negative reactions and a significant number perceived change in the way that they were treated after they revealed they were lesbians (Stevens, 1992). These women were concerned that the quality of their medical care would also be compromised.

What can we do to assist in preventing these homophobic reactions to enhance quality health care for all? Is it our responsibility? Yes, I do believe we have a responsibility in re-socializing individuals with homophobic reactions involved in the delivery of health care. Remember the definition of homophobia I presented in the first series: "strong, irrational fear of homosexuals sometimes exacerbated by the fear of homosexual urges within oneself". To cover up feelings of fear or discomfort, individuals exhibit a persona displaying feelings through behaviors as jokes about "queers", ridiculing or disparaging homosexuals, verbally attacking and ostracizing personas with a different sexual orientation. Rigid, gender role stereotyping can readily be seen. Homophobia and general ignorance about homosexuality lead to the perpetuation of myths:

- ∇ Homosexual persons have uncontrollable sexual drives
- ∇ Homosexual persons are usually unstable emotionally
- ∇ Homosexual persons can convert

heterosexuals to homosexuality

- ∇ Lesbian women cannot be good mothers; gay men cannot be good fathers

and the list goes on...

Honest communication can be accomplished to help alleviate the fears, encourage openness and dispel the myths. A way in which we can offer our assistance is to be understanding in realizing that there is a purpose for all behavior. There also is a lack of knowledge about alternate life styles. Some hold the myths to be truths. Supply health care providers, clinics, offices, health agencies, etc. with copies of listings of support and/or counseling groups for gay and lesbians in the area. Many health agencies are unaware of the network systems we have. Providing health professionals with listings of support groups and their purposes helps broaden their sources for appropriate referrals.

A need exists to have the health care provider relate to gays and lesbians as intelligent human beings with feelings, providing more information given in a form that is meaningful without medical jargon. Here are some suggestions when interacting with health care providers:

- ∇ If the health care provider is uncomfortable working with you, do not work with that person(s). Sometimes the best thing to do is to obtain a referral to another person. Develop an awareness of the reactions or stereotype views the person(s) may display.
- ∇ Never establish a contract with a health care provider who wants you to change your sexual orientation. This places you in a vulnerable position and further places you in an obligation to conceal your sexual orientation.
- ∇ Help in recognizing the actual prejudice

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CONTESTED CLOSETS: THE  
ETHICS AND POLITICS OF  
OUTING

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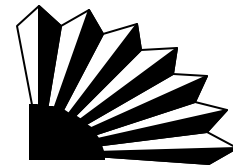
by Larry Gross  
University of Minnesota Press, 1993

As Larry Gross points out in his introduction, "outing" is a practice with "a long past but a short history." *Contested Closets* frames outing as a political tactic with crucial historical connections to the enduring conditions and questions of gay and lesbian life--conditions of visibility (or its lack), of community, of political mobilization, of privacy and of identity. Rather than presenting lesbians and gay men (of many stripes: power-brokers, private individuals, military

personnel, journalists for the straight and gay press, artists...the list goes on) as people on the margins, Gross accounts for our place at the center of social and cultural life. Even as institutions at the core of U. S. society exclude lesbian, gay and bisexual people and refuse to acknowledge our contributions, in many ways our lives have organized their practice. The power (sometimes the threat) of sexual dissent permeates the work and thoughts of journalists, of government officials, of military leaders, sometimes with hostility, other times with extraordinary potential for social transformation.

*Contested Closets* excavates outing in this broad context, offering us a fair-minded but still politically-positioned interpretation of our past and our future. The principal essay is lucidly written to engage scholarly and general readers, and the collection of primary documents preserves an essential record--itself an important gesture in a world where, too often, oppositional texts and documents are lost.

[reviewed by Lisa Henderson



## Salon Cooking! The best of the Potlucks



### Scandinavian Fruit Soup

1 lb prunes, pitted  
1 cup dried apricots  
1 cup golden raisins  
2 qt water  
juice of one lemon  
1/3 cup pearl tapioca (soak beforehand according to the package directions)  
1 cinnamon stick  
1/2 cup sugar  
1 lb can peach halves (with syrup)  
1 lb can pitted tart red cherries (with syrup)  
1 lb can pear slices (with syrup)  
1 lb can pineapple chunks (with syrup)  
1 orange, sliced  
1 lemon, sliced  
1/2 cup cognac or good brandy (not so good is okay too, who can tell?)

Soak prunes, apricots and golden raisins in water with the juice from one lemon for 2 hours. Place

fruit and liquid in a heavy kettle and add the presoaked tapioca. Add the cinnamon stick and sugar and then cook for 1 hour over medium to low heat. Add the four 1 pound cans of fruit and all the juices. Mix and heat (*do not cook*) slowly. Pour into a tureen and add brandy to the soup. Stir. Float orange and lemon slices on top of the fruit. Be sure not to cook any orange or lemon slices with the soup, as the rind leaves a bitter taste. Remove the cinnamon stick and serve warm or cold for breakfast, dinner, dessert or as a fruit sauce over other desserts. Very versatile!  
[Dan Berns]

(Continued from page 3) *Critical Issues...*

and biases that exist (especially in nonmetropolitan areas). The actuality is that homosexual persons do suffer threats of job loss and housing discrimination, and are not paranoid if we give the impression of fear and suspicion. Relate this honestly to health care providers you may come in contact with and wish to indicate your sexual identity.

Become familiar with sources of assistance at the local, state, and national levels. The National Gay Task Force is a rich resource of information. They distribute guidelines for starting self-help groups. They also publish news items, and a directory of services available in towns and cities throughout the

United States. Included in this directory are counseling agencies, bookstores, coffeehouses and religious organizations.

I leave you with a statement from Richard A. Isay: "We prize individuality when it comes to the exercise of a person's aggressive spirit, but were inclined to despise it in the exercise of those aspects of a person's nature that are not perceived as conventionally masculine or feminine."

The National Gay & Lesbian Task force can be reached at the following addresses:

1734 14th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009-4309  
(202) 332-6483; TTY (202) 332-6219, or via the Internet at NGLTF@aol.com.

**Gays and the Military: Joseph Steffan versus the United States.**

M. Wolinsky and K. Sherrill, editors.  
Princeton University Press (1994)

In April 1987 Joseph C. Steffan, one of the ten highest ranking midshipmen in his class at the U.S. Naval Academy, and only six weeks from graduation, was denied his diploma and forced to resign his commission because he answered "Yes, sir" to the question, "I'd like your word, are you a homosexual?" Six years later his cause, and that of other gay men and lesbians seeking

to serve their country by enlistment in the military, has become the subject of intense national controversy.

This unusual and innovative work, based on the litigation strategy and court papers filed in the case of Joseph C. Steffan v. Richard Cheney, Secretary of Defense, et al., brings the resources of clinical psychiatry, clinical and social psychology, cultural history and political science to bear upon the fundamental questions at issue: How is sexual orientation determined? How and why have socially prejudiced stereotypes about

male and female homosexuals developed? Why have gays faced special obstacles in defending themselves against discrimination? How much political power do gays have?

Marc Wolinsky and Kenneth Sherrill argue that gays constitute a politically powerless class that has been unjustly deprived of its constitutional right to equal protection under the law. They have collected here the affidavits filed on behalf of Joseph Steffan in his suit against the United States government, together with the counter-arguments of the Department of Defense and



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the extraordinary opinion of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

Whatever the outcome of the case, presently on appeal to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, this book will stand as a lasting and

indispensable guide to the sources of sexual discrimination.

Marc Wolinsky is a partner of the New York law firm of Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz, and co-counsel to Joseph C. Steffan in association with Lambda Legal Defense and Education

Fund. Kenneth Sherrill is Professor of Political Science and Chair of the College Senate at Hunter College, City University of New York.

[reviewed by Polly Thistlewaite]



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