

The Lavender Salon Reader

The newsletter of the Lavender Reading Salon
A gay & lesbian reading club

Volume 1 Number 8

Michael L. Nitz
editor & publisher

January 1994

Meeting Highlights

December's Meeting Capsule

December's meeting was held at Barb's home which was ablaze with a warm Christmas glow, bright Christmas lights and lots of good cheer. Earlier that day, Barb had held a Christmas sing along that I hear was well attended. Several of the members of the LRS were in attendance at both the sing along and the Salon meeting.

During the Salon meeting we sat in a large round circle and read aloud the story *A Christmas Memory* by Truman Capote. While the story does not have any specific gay aspects or connotations, it is illustrative of Capote's early childhood. And it is a warm, wonderful tale. In reading about Capote in Nelson's *Contemporary Gay Authors* it appears that Capote wrote another Christmas short story: "One Christmas." It would be interesting to read that story too sometime

Nelson relates that "Capote's ancestors were plantation slaveholders. His family was enmeshed in collective denial of the complicity of the South in its own disasters." The essay also mentions that Sook, the simple elderly woman who graces *A Christmas Memory*, was in real life "monstrously bigoted against blacks and lived in an unhealthy fantasy land."

Upcoming News

January's Meeting will be held January 16th at Len & Ken's house at 535 N. Meade in Appleton. (See map on page 3.) The book to be discussed is Geoff Ryman's Was.

February's meeting will be held at Pete & Tim's house. A film will be viewed and discussed. The film and the date of the February meeting will be determined at the January meeting.



Making It
Bigtime!

Recently a subscription to the Lavender Salon Reader

and a run of back issues was donated to the Gay & Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California (San Francisco). The Society has a collection of over 2000 gay, lesbian, bisexual, and tv/ts serials and periodicals. It's anticipated that this collection will be deposited at the Gay and Lesbian Center in the new Main Branch of the San Francisco Public Library, due to open in 1995. Congratulations, everyone! We are now a part of documented history!

New Books of Interest at Appleton Public Library

☞ *Contemporary gay American novelists: a bio-bibliographical critical sourcebook*; edited by Emmanuel S. Nelson.

☞ Bawer, Bruce. *A place at the table: the gay individual in American society*.

☞ Blumenfeld, Warren. *Looking at gay and lesbian life*. Updated and expanded edition.

☞ Borhek, Mary. *Coming out to parents: a two-way survival guide for lesbians and gay men and their parents*.

☞ *The lavender screen: the gay and lesbian films: their stars, makers, characters, and critics*.

☞ Herdt, Gilbert. *Children of Horizons: how gay and lesbian teens are leading a new way out*

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

Part two in a series of three
by Margaret L. Colucciello, PhD., RN.

We cared for a patient in a hospital admitted for gender reassignment, that is, male to female transsexualism. The young patient had a history of gender dysphoria (discomfort) since childhood. The surgery consisted of surgical sexual reassignment with skin graft and bilateral breast augmentation mammoplasty. Many factors needed attention in monitoring this patient with this case situation: We needed to assess for blood loss, skin integrity and pain all occurring simultaneously. I would say blood loss and pain were the primary concerns. Blood loss needed much observation not only with pad changes, but also observing hemoglobin and hematocrit laboratory values.

Many psychological issues were also involved - this goes without saying. Imagine entering the hospital a male and then six to seven hours later being a female; despite the fact that the procedure was planned for many months.

This person was very open and talked about her feelings concerning her health and new gender status. She thanked us for explaining everything we were going to do. She said that the other nurses just came in, "did their thing," and left without saying a word. We also made her feel that she was making progress by including her in discussing any assessments and observations that we made. It was surprising for me to hear that the patient had not heard or was taught anything about coughing and deep breathing prior to her surgery; especially since she was to be on bedrest for six straight days! Coughing and deep breathing after any type of surgery are fundamental interventions routinely taught to all surgical patients to prevent complications of pneumonia from occurring.

Another disturbing incident was that some health professionals continued to call the

patient by the pronoun "he" after the gender reassignment. This type of communication was said in front of the patient. It was, I believe, conscious, rude, disrespectful behavior; despicable to our profession. I would even go as far as saying it is a betrayal to our profession in the delivery of quality health care.

Another true scenario:

A young lesbian woman entered the hospital for a hysterectomy. She was in her room the day after the surgery with a group of her female friends. They related to the nurses that it was difficult for the patient to take in food and fluids. No one listened. Without evaluating her intake, or the reason for her inability to eat, the intravenous fluid she was on was discontinued per the physician's orders. Another nurse entered the room shortly thereafter (who coincidentally happened to be a lesbian) and talked with the patient about the problem of why it was difficult to eat, drink and swallow. After an oral assessment, it was discovered the young woman had thrush on her tongue, gums, and on the inner mucous membranes of her cheeks. Thrush is caused by candida albicans, a yeast infection characterized by formation of white patches and ulcers. It can be transmitted through oral sex. No one bothered to perform a physical examination on her admission, or during her stay in the hospital. A call to the physician by our "family" nurse to prescribe Mycostatin, a fungicidal antibiotic, took care of the candida, but not the problem of rejection, isolation and faulty health care reduced to tasks.

Myths about homosexuality are plentiful. Our sexual orientation is only one part of our being a whole person. Like all people, we need to be accepted and treated as whole human beings. It seems to me that still in this country,

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LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY
HOSTS CONFERENCE ON
GAY AND LESBIAN
STUDIES

Lawrence University in Appleton, WI, will be the sight of "Sexuality in the Academy: A Conference on Gay and Lesbian Studies," on January 29, 1994. This will be the third annual B-GLAD (Bisexual, Gay, and Lesbian Awareness Day) conference hosted by Lawrence University's Bisexual, Gay, and Lesbian Awareness. Speakers will include Lawrence University professors and professors from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Yale University.

Professors from Lawrence University will deliver an informal presentation on the influence that Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual issues have on their fields. Topics will include, "Homosexual Elitism in James Merrill's Epic Trilogy," "Constructing and Deconstructing the Visual Language of Homosexuality: the

Art of Charles Demuth and Robert Mapplethorpe," "Perceptions of the Masculine and Feminine: Accepting and Dispelling the Myths," "Sexual Orientation and the Curriculum: It's Time for Heterosexuals to Come Out of the Closet," and "Homosexualities in French Literature." These topics will be presented in the late morning and early afternoon.

Christopher Lane will be speaking on "Controversies of the Sexual." He is an Assistant Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He received his BA. in English Literature and Contemporary Philosophy from the University of East Anglia, Norwich, his MA. in Critical Theory from the University of Sussex, Brighton, and his Ph.D. in Modern British Literature from the University of London. He has published extensively, and his book, "The Ruling Passion: British Homosexual Allegories and the Rhetoric of

Colonial Fantasy" will be published by Duke University Press in 1995. He is the Curriculum Coordinator for the UWM Task Force on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Issues, and the Chair of the UWM Gay and Lesbian Studies

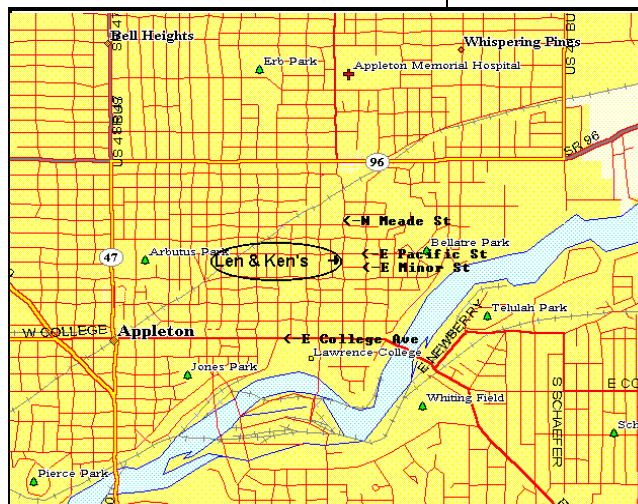
Member Listing

- Barb
- Dan
- Dick
- Gregory
- Jeff
- Jennifer
- Len & Ken
- Linda
- Marge
- Mary B.
- Michael
- Sandy & Debbie
- Sheila

Certificate Program Committee. Mr. Lane will be speaking in the late afternoon.

Jonathan Weinberg will be delivering the keynote address, "Making It Queer: The Gay and Lesbian Presence in Art History." He is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of the History of Art at Yale University. He received his BA. from Yale College and his Ph. D. from the Department of Fine Arts at Harvard University. He is a member of the College Art Association, Gay and Lesbian Caucus. He is also an associate editor of "Genders" published by the University of Texas Press. He has lectured widely and published in journals such as "Journal of Homosexuality," "Art in America," "Genders," and "Arts." His book, "Speaking for Vice: Homosexuality in the Art of Charles Demuth, Marsden Hartley, and the First American Avant-Garde," was just published by Yale University

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Appleton
535 N. Meade Street

(Continued from page 2) *Critical Issues and Trends*
prejudice and discrimination against homosexual persons abound. We are deprived of our civil rights in issues of housing, employment, insurance coverage, the judicial system, child custody, adoption and quality health care.

Yet another situation:

Recently a survey regarding gay and lesbian health care needs was conducted by a group of nurse researchers situated in a university setting. The survey was mailed to nurses in health care agencies in the surrounding area of the university. A nurse did not wish to complete the questionnaire, but returned it to the researchers with a note attached. The note read: "there are better things to research besides this subject."

Let me close this second series with this prose I wrote on betrayal:

Betrayal happens to us as children and as adults; by silence and by lies, broken promises, broken commitments. How difficult it must be to live the life of a betrayer - always guarded, defensive, closed to the universe, closed to self. How can one become truly aware of one's inner self?

But perhaps the acts of betrayal are purposeful and conscious and serve to act as devices toward not becoming a self-knower. Becoming a self-knower, you know, is painful.

The third and last in this series will discuss ways in which we can help individuals in their homophobia; help to alleviate these emotionally disruptive influences in their lives. Am I being idealistic?

[For further information on homophobia in the health care system contact Dr. Colucciello at 414-729-9346.]

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Raspberry Truffle Buttercreams

These cookies were the hit of the December Salon meeting. Dan wanted to share his recipe with you!

Brownie Base

4oz unsweetened chocolate	1/4 tsp salt
1/2 cup butter	1 tsp vanilla
2 cups sugar	4 eggs
1 cup flour	

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 13x9 pan. In a small saucepan melt the chocolate and butter. Remove from heat. In a large bowl beat sugar, vanilla and eggs. Stir in melted chocolate until just blended. Lightly spoon in flour and mix until just blended. Pour into greased pan and spread evenly. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes til set. Let cool.

Filling

1/2 cup seedless raspberry preserves
1/3 cup sugar
2 oz semi-sweet chocolate
1/4 cup water

1 oz unsweetened chocolate
2 eggs
1 cup butter

Spread preserves over completely cooled brownie base. In a small saucepan melt all 3 ounces of chocolate. Remove from heat. Set aside. In another small saucepan mix water and sugar and bring to boil. Boil for 2 full minutes. Remove from heat. In a large bowl, beat eggs till frothy and thick. Slowly add the boiled mixture, mixing continuously to avoid curdling the eggs. Beat 5 minutes on high speed with a mixer. Add softened butter a pat at a time, mixing well. The mixture will seem to go watery/lumpy. Don't worry! Add the semi-cooled chocolate and beat vigorously till mixture is smooth creamy and thick. Spread over raspberry layer.

Glaze

1 oz unsweetened chocolate	1 tbsp butter
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Melt butter and chocolate and drizzle over cream layer with artistic abandon! Chill for 2 hours and cut carefully into 1 inch squares.

(Continued from page 3) Lawrence... Press. He is also a practicing painter, and his work has been exhibited in the Yale University Art Gallery, the Montclair Art Museum, the Marissa del Rey Gallery in New York, and an exhibit curated by Henry Geldszahler at the Dia Foundation in Bridgehampton, Long Island. We will also present the movie "Poison." Inspired by the writings of Jean Genet, "Poison" deftly interweaves three tales-- "Hero," "Horror," and "Homo"--and builds toward a devastating climax. "Hero," shot in mock TV-documentary style, tells a bizarre story of suburban patricide and a miraculous flight from justice; "Horror," filmed like a delirious '50s B-movie melodrama, is the gothic tale of a mad sex experiment which unleashes a disfiguring plague; while the lushly photographed "Homo" explores the obsessive sexual relationship between two prison inmates. A runaway theatrical hit, which made national headlines and the network news when it was attacked by right-wing minister Donald Wildmon, "Poison" is unsettling, unforgettable, and thoroughly entertaining. "Poison" was directed by Todd Haynes.

Due to the generous support of Lawrence University, the conference will be free and open to the public. Lawrence University has a limited number of guest-rooms available for those who wish to stay overnight.

For more information on the conference, call (414) 832-7170, fax (414) 832-7695, e-mail: 90195@lawrence.edu, or write to: BGLA, c/o The InfoDesk, P.O. Box 599, Appleton, WI 54912.

Over the Rainbow
by David V. Barrett

abridged from the original published in
The New Statesman. March 20, 1992.

Imagine that a real little girl called Dorothy lived in Kansas in the 1870s with her Auntie Em and Uncle Henry. Imagine that an unemployed actor called Frank Baum is a substitute teacher at Dorothy's school, and is greatly impressed by the girl. Baum has a fascination with Turkey; his own name, Frank, translates to "Uz" in Turkish.

"It means real and genuine. It means pure and unadulterated...It's the root word for yearning and for homesickness and for all the things that people want. It also happens to be the original name of the Turks. They were a tribe called the Uz, or the Uzbecks. Or the Oz..."

Ryman chronicles Dorothy's childhood in Kansas, then takes us to an asylum in the 1950s, where an old woman called Dotty has confused 70-year-old memories of Kansas. He shows us the early childhood of Frances Gumm, who is to become

Judy Garland, and the filming of the final scenes of *The Wizard of Oz*. And winding through the book, framing these and other stories, is Jonathan, a young present-day Canadian... whose obsessive search for the reality of Oz finally leads him back to Kansas.

Was... is a brilliant study in bitterness, loss and the personal sadness of lives which fail to find the happiness promised in childhood dreams. It is a story of every child's, man's and woman's longing for love, and the betrayal of love that occurs in many sexual relationships. Each one of the book's historical settings... is impeccably researched and brought to grim life.

Like the beginning of the film, this novel is bleakly monochrome. In a marvellous touch, the child Jonathan becomes colour-blind when he loses his belief in Oz. Yet throughout, just over the page, just out of reach, is the end of the rainbow. "Dorothy needed magic... She began to have another fantasy... She was walking backwards through the years, and she was going to walk back home... away from Is, into the land of Was.

In an afterward Ryman warns us to distinguish between reality and fantasy, between history and fiction. *Was...* may be a fictional recreation of the realistic

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(Continued from page 5) *Over the Rainbow* part of a fantasy film, but there is truth in every word of it, whether factual or not. Ryman's imagination and his meticulous care for detail make this an extraordinarily powerful move which should win him the mainstream critical acclaim that he so richly deserves; at the end of this yellow-brick-road, there could even be a Booker.

A Paeon for *Was*

book review by Denise Blank originally
published in *Booklist*, May 15, 1992

Dear Mr. Ryman: Thank you. For an author to take on one of the greatest icons in

American society, *The Wizard of Oz*, is an ominous task, but to then dissect it with such grace and candor and apply it as something more than a mediocre children's saga is frighteningly momentous. Ryman, self-dubbed a fantasy writer in love with realism, points up that unimaginative living and ignorance of history have become normal and that the two must be explored and held in a precarious balance in order to uncover any truth. His spell weaves around stark 1870s Kansas and a real Dorothy Gael, orphaned and abused, who crosses paths with substitute teacher Frank Baum. The story he painstakingly writes for her grows into the 1939 movie

and enmeshes a young Frances Gumm, searching for the same "home," and then follows a Los Angeles actor, figuratively homeless, who is dying of AIDS in 1989. A teenage football star, meeting the elderly Dorothy through his summer job in a sanatorium and awakened by her ravings, becomes an innovative psychiatrist who brings the book around for all the characters searching for "home." Ryman's style is simple yet elegant, highly evocative but never pretentious. Proving his own point, he melds impeccable research and brilliant imaginings so that they are better together than apart. An absolute "must" purchase.