

The Lavender Salon Reader

The Newsletter & Literary Review for
Gay & Lesbian Reading Clubs

Volume 1 Number 12
May 1994

\$2.00
Menasha, WI

Club News

AfterWords Book Club, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

AfterWords Book Club will meet at AfterWords at 7:30 p. m. Monday, May 9 to discuss Bruce Bawer's controversial best-seller, *A Place at the Table*. At the April discussion the group suggested adding an additional book, something light and fun to balance Bawer's book, so James Robert Baker's delightful romp, *Tim and Pete* was suggested.

Anyone interested in reading one or both of the titles, or anyone just interested in joining the Book Club is welcome to attend.

Looking ahead to June, the next chosen book will be Margin Duberman's *Stonewall*.

For more information contact AfterWords at 2710 N. Murray Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53211. (414) 963-9089.

Brown Bag Book Club Madison, Wisconsin

The Brown Bag Book Club meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month. April's discussion of Paul Russell's novel *Boys of Life* was one of the most animated we've ever had! This book pushed a lot of people's buttons. Many found the filmmaker, Carlos, very interesting; but is he charismatic or evil? There were comparisons to Polanski and Warhol. And what was the point of the scene where the hero jumps into the river, dries off, then goes to the library.

Our next meeting will be held on May 11. The book of the month is Armistead Maupin's *Maybe the Moon*.

Hardy Boys Book Club Ann Arbor, Michigan

The Hardy Boys Book Club (HBBC) had their regular meeting April 28. The meeting centered on discussion of Randy Shilts' biography of Harvey Milk *The Mayor of Castro Street*. General consensus was that this was Shilt's best book; everyone loved it. (Though our fiction fans were slightly less enthused.) Discussion also incorporated comparison of the book to the film; with the book being more involving and interesting than the film.

Inside this Issue:

Features

- > Letters to the Editor
- > Lavender Puzzler

Book Reviews

- ☞ The AIDS War
- ☞ The Queen's Throat

Salon Cooking!

- > Curried Asparagus

Directory of Gay & Lesbian Reading Clubs

- ☞ **Phoenix, AZ**
(Group yet not named)
- ☞ **Ann Arbor, MI**
- ☞ The Hardy Boys Book Club
Philadelphia, PA
- ☞ Episcopal Gay & Lesbian Book Club
Appleton, WI
- ☞ Lavender Reading Salon.
Madison, WI
- ☞ The Brown Bag Book Club
- ☞ Frontiers.
Milwaukee, WI
- ☞ AfterWords Book Club
(Continued on page 3)

The Lavender Salon Reader

1474 Home Avenue
Menasha, WI 54952
(414)738-0497
appleburg@aol.com (Internet)

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.

Advertising Policy

The Lavender Salon Reader will not accept advertising which is inappropriate to the goals of a literary gay and lesbian publication, which is sexually explicit, or which fails to meet design standards. Publication of an advertisement does not represent endorsement by The Lavender Salon Reader of the goods, services, or claims made by the advertiser. Rates are fifty cents per word.

Vol. 1, no. 12, May 1994 ©1994 by LS Press. All rights reserved. Published monthly (12 issues) by LS Press, 1474 Home Avenue, Menasha, WI 54952 (414) 738-0497. Subscriptions cost \$12.00/12 issues, or \$2.00 a single issue.

Postmaster: Send address changes to The Lavender Salon Reader, 1474 Home

Editor's Note

Welcome!

Friends! This is our twelfth issue of the The Lavender Salon Reader! A lot of changes have taken place during the last year; even within this issue!. One new feature we hope you will enjoy is the Lavender Puzzler. We have also made printing improvements. The Reader is now printed on a 600 dpi laser printer to provide crisp, cleaner text and graphics.

We hope you have enjoyed receiving The Lavender Salon Reader and that you'll continue to subscribe because each issue will bring you reviews, news of your peers, and lots of other exciting changes!

Please write and let us know what you think of The Lavender Salon Reader. Share the Reader with your friends. We are always looking for reviewers! Enjoy!

Letters to the Editor

Dear Mr. Nitz,

Would you please renew my subscription to the Lavender Salon Reader and also enter a gift subscription for my friend.

I enjoy your publication, and especially would like to commend your layout and design - which I find very readable and attractive.

This may be outside your intentions, but I would love to see some pieces on the "older" gay writers - Isherwood is a special favorite of mine - written from a contemporary perspective.

Thank you
Judy Betts

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.)

📖 Dymmoach, Michael Allen. *The Man Who Understood Cats*. St. Martins Press

📖 Forster, Margaret. *Daphne du Maurier: the secret life of the renowned storyteller*. Doubleday.

📖 McCourt, James. *Time Remaining: stories*. Knopf.

📖 Rawley, Donald. *Steaming*. Black Tie Press.

(Continued from page 1) Club News

Our next meeting, June 2nd, will focus on Martin Duberman's *Stonewall* in honor of the 25th anniversary of this historic occasion.

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 April 17 and had a grand time reading Tony Kushner's Pulitzer winning play *Angel's in America: Millennium Approaches*. Those who wanted took parts; a few shy

folk provided our audience. Thus the play provided an opportunity for expression for those among us who are closet actors! Alas, reading the play took up most of the evening, leaving little time for discussion of it. But the experience was different and everyone had a good time. We will have to do another play soon, perhaps part two of *Angels in America: Perestroika* to find out how the tale ends!

At May's meeting we will watch the film *Parting Glances*. which Vito Russo describes as "the most realistic re-creation of the world in which New York gays actually live that has ever been put on the screen.

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

Phoenix, Arizona

Our group in Phoenix met last month and viewed two videos: *Out in Suburbia* (the stories of eleven lesbians) and *Before Stonewall: the making of a gay and lesbian community*. At our next meeting we will be discussing *Hometowns: gay men write about where they belong*. We will also discuss a name for our club!



Salon Cooking! The best of the Potlucks



Curried Asparagus

- 1 pound fresh asparagus, stems discarded, cut in pieces
- 1/2 red pepper, diced
- 1/4 cup margarine, or olive oil
- ground black pepper
- salt
- curry powder

Cut the woody bottoms of the asparagus stalks and discard. Cut the remaining tops in half. Place the asparagus and the diced red pepper in a covered baking dish. Dot with the margarine or oil and season with the ground black pepper, salt and curry powder.

Place the covered dish in a pre-heated oven at 300 degrees and cook for 30 to 45 minutes depending on the degree of doneness, the desired crunch.

Michael Nitz

THE AIDS WAR: Propaganda, Profiteering and Genocide from the Medical-Industrial Complex,

by John Lauritsen

ASKLEPIOS, 1993.

A Battle With Foes, Friends and Fraud

Reviewed by Ben Gardiner
ben@maggadu.queernet.org

AIDS has much resembled war in that it has killed, often in terrible suffering, young men. It came upon us strangely, back in 1981. First there was mystery, and then a series of theories and remedies, followed by controversy.

For several years now, a mere handful of people have been vigorously challenging the "common knowledge" about AIDS -- its cause, its principal treatment, and the discussions that have generally not been happening. Chief writer among these few has been John Lauritsen, author of *Poison by Prescription* and now of *The AIDS War*.

Lauritsen, like the retrovirologist Peter Duesberg who first enunciated a scientist's challenge to the hypothesis that AIDS is caused by a retrovirus now known as HIV, has been subjected to considerable intellectual attack often on a level as morally low as the jeering of teenagers in a public street. Evidently public perception has been dulled, because there has been little or no objection to the school yard tactics used defensively

by powerful government and medical authorities.

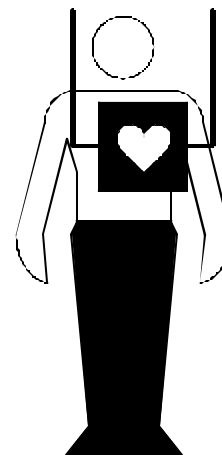
In this new book, Lauritsen offers some fresh material and has added footnotes to update many of his earlier published work on AIDS. For anyone whose heart is held in thrall by doctors and our ever-lovin' government, it may be difficult reading. But for those who want to know details of the mess that has been made of AIDS research, of the spurious and sometimes false bases of many "official" positions on remedies for AIDS, this book provides the raw material and indicates further sources that could be the basis of lawsuits and even criminal proceedings against some of our most revered "AIDS authorities."

The author pulls no punches. Beginning where most of us are, he tackles psychobabble:

"The 'AIDS epidemic' is, among other things, an epidemic of information overload. AIDS technobabble is dumped on us every day by the media: T-cell ratios, CD-4 receptors, DNA, RNA, latency periods, TAT genes, ELISA test, Western Blot test, p-24 antigen test, polymerase chain reaction test, angiogenesis, nucleoside analogues, AZT, ddI, ddC, d4T, macrophages, lentiviruses, reverse transcriptase, apoptosis, and all the rest of it. Over 60,000 papers on 'AIDS' have been published to date -- untold millions of words. Nearly all

are the equivalent of toxic waste, which is to say, both useless and dangerous." (p. 179)

Many people will object to such criticism because, as I have myself seen in San Francisco, we tend to confuse the warm helping hand with the now-almost-brain-dead medically-educated control that sends you bills for repeating remedial activities that don't work. We have paid through the nose for what can now be seen to have been useless treatments. We have even paid to be killed.



These are charges not to be taken lightly. When they are said against someone to whom you go when in pain and in physical trouble, and who gives you comfort and hope, it rubs the wrong way. Most of us, and I am no exception, take a narrow view of things when in pain. The point, at that time, is to stop whatever causes the pain. And the doctors will do that. They have all kinds of anaesthetics and pain-killers at their disposal through your local

The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire

by Wayne Koestenbaum
Vintage Books, 1993

Reviewed by Dick Winslow,
Appleton, Wisconsin.

In the movie Philadelphia, Tom Hanks seems transported out of reality while listening to Maria Callas sing an aria from a French opera; Denzel Washington's reaction is one of complete lack of understanding. *The Queen's Throat*, written by a teacher of English at Yale, tries to describe and justify the extraordinary attraction that opera has for gay men. The book is divided into chapters and then into short sections; the author calls it a "pocket guide" and it contains a large dose of details about the history of opera performance — singers, specific performances, recordings, costumes, arias, characters, musical themes.

The reasons that Koestenbaum finds for this

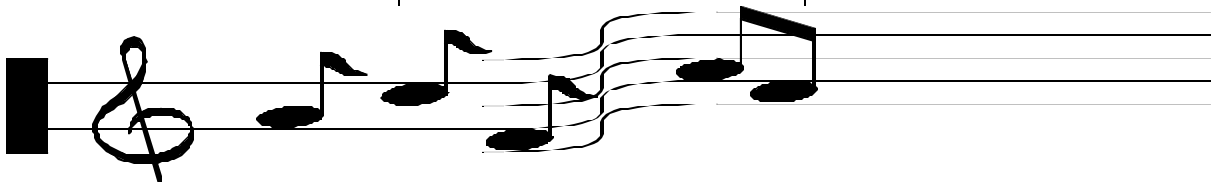
operas involve flamboyant figures in desperate situations; the importance of costume — "the diva dress" implies elegance, exoticism, glamour, disguise; the arias of the female characters reveal their most intimate secrets and feelings, removed from rational discourse; the domination of music and the subordination of words, a tension that exists within gay men; and the throat of the singer, mentioned in the title, is the organ through which emotions and desires are made known.

Koestenbaum's style is sometimes difficult; a sample will give an idea of his writing:

We love (Maria) Callas because she revised her body. In three years she dropped from 210 pounds to 144, and changed from an ugly duckling to glamour queen. Bodies can't always be altered, but Callas' self-revision, like a sex change, makes us believe in the power of wish. (page 139)

border disperse; where we want the body's line to be solid, it is composed of Morse-code dots and dashes. I listen to opera — with its dream of wholeness and reunification — in order to pretend that the body has an outer edge. But isn't opera a dead form, and am I not moribund to treasure it? In opera's demise, I hear echoes of another end: the obsolescence of "homosexuality," the departure from our guidebooks of that lovely, poignant category, "homosexuality," a limited term I still inhabit. (page 192)

Ultimately the attraction of opera for gay men is a mystery; it catches us unawares, we are captivated, we want it to continue but know that it is limited, that in two minutes, or four, or five the ecstasy will be over. In many moments we feel that life is like that, that our disguise will disappear, that the emotions will be taken over by reason, that the thrill that transports will soon end,



fascination are numerous and varied. Opera is not reality — dialogue that is sung not spoken allows for an escape from reality; the

Long ago opera's founders... wanted music and words to cohere, and they also wanted the body to cohere. See flesh's

that the throat won't be able to continue to produce the beauty that is our gift.

(Continued from page 4) The AIDS War pharmacy. They can even pick up a syringe and poke some pain-killer right into you right then and there. We license them, and they are trained, to do that.

What we do not license them to do, but what many of them have become accustomed to doing, is acting without full consideration of the ultimate consequences, and without full consideration of the root condition they are attempting to treat. This was

this uncertainty and doubt by reading either the full-page ads in San Francisco weekly gay papers or by reading articles that appear in the New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal or any other significant newspaper. They will all, without exception, refer to HIV as "the virus that causes AIDS." There is no proof that HIV causes AIDS.

Lauritsen, Duesberg, and even I have been faced with scorn and derision for so much as

chronicled. The fraudulent basis, including details with names and dates, for the FDA licensing of the orphan drug AZT or Retrovir, is spelled out.

Has this war been lost? Has opposition to the widely-accepted positions on HIV, AZT, and other things been squashed? By no means. On the contrary, an increasing number of people have begun to doubt those dogmas. Some say they doubted them all along, but were afraid to speak out. Professor Duesberg, after

"Professor Duesberg and John Lauritsen, have repeatedly asked the same primary questions on subjects that are as elementary to AIDS as the gravity is to the question of what's up and what's down."

all, lost the funding for his research in retrovirus -- the same field that he and Robert Gallo entered over 20 years ago

understandable and excusable in 1981, when nobody really knew what was causing young men to wither and die. But twelve years have gone by, and every kind of remedy has been tried. We should by now have some real information what to do about AIDS.

Lauritsen's book shows, step by step with reprints of articles he wrote since 1983, how fraud has been piled on top of mistakes, how official errors have been covered up with praise and repetition, and how what little the Federal government has done about AIDS has often been useless and even damaging. The hard fact now is that we do not yet know, with true scientific certainty, what causes AIDS, and we do not yet have, beyond the band-aid effect, any remedy that works.

raising the question. Phrases like "It's generally known" or "the weight of evidence shows" or yet "all reputable scientists agree" are used, followed by abusive remarks and ad hominem attacks and innuendos. One of the subtle and most scurrilous of them is to misspell Professor Duesberg's name, making it synonymous with the name of an automobile manufacturer that begins with "d" and ends with "berg," and to tick him off as a "weirdo." I have met Professor Duesberg. He is calm, intellectually quick and eloquent, always polite and coherent.

Events at which Duesberg, and Lauritsen himself, have been vilified without justification are chronicled in this book. The lack of true response to the challenges set against the hypothesis that

and have dominated. The difference is that Robert Gallo, who holds power in government, apparently holds power in the process that determines whose research will be funded, despite the recent fact that he has been under investigation for fraud, and has been receiving \$100,000 a year, according to newspaper accounts, as royalties on the test for antibodies to HIV that is being used all over the U.S.A.

So far, the only murders have been of people with AIDS. So far, no one has gone to jail for fraud, murder or anything like that. And "AIDS celebrities" continue to pontificate about new theories, new drug combinations and other promises of "good things" that always seem to be farther down the road, never here and now — or proved

~~You would never know about~~

~~HIV causes AIDS is also~~

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6) *The AIDS War*

One can only admire the persistence with which, in the face of strong opposition, a scientist like Professor Duesberg and a writer like John Lauritsen, have repeatedly asked the same primary questions on subjects that are as elementary to AIDS as the gravity is to the question of what's up and what's down.

You can't cure something if you don't know the cause, and if you are honest you'd say so.

"The sixth looked around the clinic one day, said to himself "These guys are all dying!" and walked out."

This book will undoubtedly be scorned, as is some of the text on display here, as irrelevant. The thinking behind this is "Don't bother me with FACTS, I'm too busy arguing the TRUTH." Believe me, as an editor, I am really sick of such idiocy, and yet I expect it is human nature to produce it.

From "safe sex" to "clean needles" to AZT, there is simply no reasonable truth in any of it. We need to discuss these things, and that's why there's stuff here on display that I personally do not agree with at all. Callers do discuss these things, and they let loose "no holds barred" with their feelings, and I think that is very healthy.

The book, *The AIDS War*, sets forth a complete history of the significant controversies of the AIDS years, with the possible exception of a furious word battle a few years ago about closing or not closing the baths, which got Melvyn Silverman promoted to bigtime work in AmFAR. It does not take up the paradox of those people who have gone on the lecture

circuit saying they were cured of AIDS and who later drop dead, but it does take up the question of how to begin thinking health and life and stop making a career out of dying. People who want to see this in the book will, and those who persist in suffering will do just that.

Lastly, a personal note. Six men have lived here in my place with AIDS, one at a time. Five of them did more or less what the doctor said. They are all dead. The sixth looked around the clinic one day, said to himself "These guys are all dying!" and walked out. He did several kinds of unorthodox procedures and he stopped doing drugs. He's still alive, eight years later, and doing fine. Though he may think it was the weird stuff (good thoughts, cool water, a confidence-building weekend) that cured him, I tend to see it as what he quit doing that made the difference. Drugs don't bring health. They may save your life in an emergency, but they usually bring to or take from your body in ways that are not healthy.

Neither condoms nor drugs nor reverence for doctors will get you well. You are in control of your life. If not, take control. And if you need convincing, read this book.

AIDS Info BBS 415-626-1246 (free)

YES!!!

Please enter my subscription for The Lavender Salon Reader!

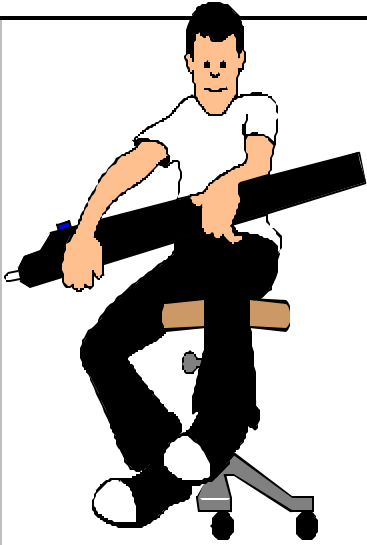


Name _____
Address _____

Enclose check or money order for \$12 for 12 issues of The Lavender Salon Reader: the literary newsletter for gay & lesbian book clubs

Mail coupon with check or money order to
Michael L. Nitz, 1474 Home Avenue, Menasha WI 54952

The Lavender Puzzler



Directions: The text below is an excerpt from a reviewed book. Each letter has been replaced by another. To solve the puzzle, figure out which letter is represented by another and replace all instances of its use. For example in the quote below the letter "c" represents the letter "f". (The answer will be in next months issue.)

"Cdtgsmmbr pbhfxqswnbp pwxz zxefb gboxfb wjba cbxt mbwbowsdr xrm lfrspjibrw. Jspwdtsoxqqa, ifpso jxp gbbm mbcserbm xp iapwbta xrm isxpmx, xp silqsoswrhpp txwjbt wjxr bhlqsoswrhpp, xrm pd yb jxzb jsm srpsmb ifpso; sr ifpso yb oxr odib dfw yswjdfw odisre dfw, yb oxr tbzbxq yswjdfw pxasre x ydtm. Nfbbtp smbrwsca yswj pjxmdy gboxfb ro orb oxr qtdpbofwb x pjxmdy." (Wjb Nfbbp'p Wjtdxw, lxeb 190)



TLSR

1474 Home Avenue
Menasha, WI 54952

Subscribe Now!
Only 2 issues left!