The riots that sparked the Gay revolution

40 years ago this month, a revolution unlike any the world had seen before began in New York City’s Greenwich Village neighborhood at a small mafia-owned bar – the Stonewall Inn. An army of Gay nonconformists overpowered the police after a failed attempt to raid the Stonewall Inn incited a riot. Another riot took place the next night, and another several nights later. The world was given a crash course in Gay Survival 101: Yes, when backed into a corner, a drag queen will fight back, groups of effeminate young men can mobilize, and there are far more Lesbians than one may think. It isn’t strange and it isn’t odd, it’s a community – the Gay community.

by Shaun Knittel
SGN Staff Writer

The Stonewall Inn – taken September 1969
The sign in the window reads: “We homosexuals plead with our people to please help maintain peaceful and quiet conduct on the streets of the Village.”
seattle pride 09

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LOVE

EQUALITY

seattle pride parade 09

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Downtown Seattle on 4th Avenue

June 28th, 2009
Celebrating 40 years since Stonewall

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of one of Madelyn’s friends, saw what was occurring and came up behind Mrs. Ogan and exclaimed, “Don’t you touch that child.”

THE YIDDISH GIRL

Madelyn began to follow her, to find any excuse to talk to her, to get closer to the story. As a fiction writer, she was interested in the first moments of love, when it consumes you so deeply that you have no choice but to go with it. Madelyn didn’t want to be a Lesbian; she had learned what a homosexual was through her father’s criminology books. She learned that they were degenerate, perverted, sick, and depraved – things she knew were not true. But Madelyn did not want to be a Lesbian. Through all of this anguish, things between her and the Yiddish girl became much more intense, their connection, their need became closer and closer together. There was no way to avoid it; they needed each other. It was something unexpected, the great tragedy of love itself, it’s real, when its weight was felt, the inevitability of time that it’s remov- ing and tortured, granting itself and you begin to lose yourself in that person completely.

On her 17th birthday, Yiddish Girl took Madelyn to a rock concert. In the middle of the show, the band began making hugely of her her, and as soon as the doors were thrown open, Madelyn raced frantically to Yiddish Girl’s room, grabbing her belongings and her car keys. Madelyn had made the decision then to ride into the river at the edge of campus. She wanted to die, the heartache she felt was immense, and it was then that Yiddish Girl returned, asking, in surprise, where she was going.

“You obviously don’t want me!” Madelyn said to her.

“What did you get that idea?” Yiddish Girl responded. It seemed to be a game, a tease, as all things such as this come across as in the beginning.

“We have to stop seeing one another, or get to know each other better.” It was her last-ditch effort, offering her the excuse, but also her way of introducing the idea of sex. It wasn’t exactly smooth, but she was 17 and well-versed in the mechanics of interaction. Yiddish Girl smiled, locked the door, and moved to her formal precision. She pushed Madelyn onto the bed and started kissing her passionately. Madelyn freaked, and when Yiddish Girl asked her what was wrong, Madelyn said, “I hear my mother calling” and left the room.

Once the romance established itself and began to blossom, the girls found themselves completely entwined and engrossed with one another. “In the beginning it was good, in the beginning…” Madelyn said. In the autumn they went to Yiddish Girl’s home. “It was a great fall day, the air smelled like acorns, and she bought apples and pumpkin pie and ate it on the way there.” Yiddish Girl was five feet tall and her mother was shorter than that. “Four-foot eight in heels and four-foot five with guys,” Yiddish Girl’s mother would say with a strong Eastern Eu- ropean accent. As the relationship wore on, Madelyn began to unravel under the hotbed of scrutiny and rumors. Everyone watched the Universe gossip. Madelyn was going on, but the two girls were so drunk on their love, that they didn’t even need to take the precautions that were necessary in those situations. They were simply at- tached at the hip, going everywhere together. She was no longer a girl, no longer a young woman, but a male student who came into the lab every day, but also her way of introducing the idea of sex. It wasn’t exactly smooth, but she was 17 and well-versed in the mechanics of interaction. Yiddish Girl smiled, locked the door, and moved to her formal precision. She pushed Madelyn onto the bed and started kissing her passionately. Madelyn freaked, and when Yiddish Girl asked her what was wrong, Madelyn said, “I hear my mother calling” and left the room.

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night, Madelyn made her escape and ran to the edge of town, trying to hitchhike away from a life she was ending. She was fortunate when a Gay friend from school pulled over, picked her up, and took her to the Gay Center as a homeless youth. She tried making a living as a "loazy prostitute." She was homeless, living on the streets in the freezing cold, and she had no socks, but those things didn’t matter. "Being young was enough." She was picked up in a bar raid and taken to jail. She wasn’t allowed to be put with the other girls because she was "catching" and she was too young to be put with the women, so they simply chained her to the cellblock. They committed her to a mental hospital, and she knew that they gave shock treatments to homosexuals, and so she learned quickly to do whatever she could to avoid that. "They could do whatever they wanted to my body, but I would not let them get my mind." She learned that murder is absolutely evil; to erase everything that is within someone is completely cruel. Violence is absolutely indefensible.

THE BIRTH OF BIRD-EYES

Eventually she made it to Seattle and began writing for the Seattle Gay News and the Seattle Gay News Service. She loved microbiology and scientific factoids, and like most writers, she was completely allergic to literature classes. At Indiana University, she had studied the sciences and languages and absorbed French, Latin, Greek, and German, and took linguistics and cultural anthropology. "I filled my requirements by taking everything but literature." Years later, Madelyn would get her masters in creative writing from University of Washington. She spent the '70s and '80s working at every lab in the city, and entered into a relationship with a woman named Dee, a relationship that would last 17 years, a relationship she never thought would end. In class, she wrote an essay that would become her first novel, Bird-Eyes, a fiction-meets-real-life account of being committed to an institution as a teenage girl. When the relationship with Dee ended, "because she was suddenly straight!" - Madelyn went back to Indiana, but had to return to Seattle because there was no work in her home state. She had no income, and really wanted to repair her life and make things better with Dee, which would not happen. She began cutting and drinking, and one night, filled with complete despair and heartache, she was going to slit her wrists and swim out into the freezing cold canal by UW's campus. Luckily she was jumped by the police and taken to Harborview Medical Center. She was locked up with people who were deathly ill, and one man, severely disfigured and suffering a brain tumor, tried to rape Madelyn. It took longer, longer than it would have today, to receive help, because no one would pay attention. Luckily the man was stopped in time before any severe damage could be done.

Madelyn had written Bird-Eyes and even had an agent for it, but he could not get it sold. Finally, Madelyn walked into Seal Press here in Seattle, and they bought it 12 hours later. “Aside from a few changes, it was still the same book.” The novel was awarded best first novel from the Lambda Literary Foundation, which recognizes excellence in GLBT literature. St. Martin’s Press became interested and bought Bird-Eyes from Madelyn, as the rights had been reverted back to her, and then it was re-released under their Stonewall edition imprint. They wanted another book from Madelyn, but she gave the option for it to Seal Press, who waited too long to respond. When Madelyn called them herself, they told her, “we don’t publish pornography.” Madelyn was floored. St. Martin’s bought the book, On Ships at Sea.

THE RAVAGES OF ILLNESS

Up until two years ago, Madelyn was writing every day, but the AIDS virus has moved through her body, and though the medicine has done much for her, it has not been able to stop the virus from wreaking havoc on her mind. She has one more book in her, though, and she said this with a youthful sparkle in her eye. She had promised St. Martin’s one more book, and she hopes to get it out of her before this terrible virus takes her completely. This book will be about college in the '60s and what it meant to study science then. “I can’t write about now; I’m not in touch with now, I don’t ex- ist. I don’t exist now, except on the page.”

Madelyn started writing as a little kid, moving through worlds in which she could work things out, a world in which people couldn’t lie. “In order to have this perfect world I was constructing, people couldn’t lie. They simply couldn’t.” As storytellers, as writers of fiction, we always run into those worlds, there’s a hope – not a hope for change, a hope for rights that were wronged, but simply a chance to exist, not on the other side of the glass that separates us from the world, but to be part of it. To live as if we can experience the world completely, and not constantly be trying to understand it and everyone in it. Just to simply be.

AN INFERNO IN THE DARKNESS

Madelyn and I began to come to the end of our conversation. We had spent hours to- gether, and she was growing tired and need ed to rest. When I asked her what she wanted her legacy as a writer to be, what she hoped would be seen years from now, Madelyn, with a slight smirk on her face and her big, soulful eyes wide and brilliant, said to me, “I want to be known for having conveyed the phenomenon of great love. Love for the world, each other, and those individual and consuming passions we feel for one another. To have communicated an extra-average love.”

We parted then, and I as a 24-year-old young Gay man and writer, and she as a woman who has seen so much, gone through so much, seemed to suddenly be standing on that even ground, as writers, as Queers, who had seen the deepest cruelties of those we love, suffered pains brought on by people who claimed to love us, and we still sur vived, and now we stand, and we write. We write because we have to, because we have no other choice. Madelyn Arnold is a writer who should not be forgotten, her words should not be lost somehow somewhere, but instead should burn like a bright flame, an inferno in the darkness. And I certainly think they will.

“Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don’t matter and those who matter don’t mind.”

– Dr. Seuss

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Visit us online www.sgn.org June 26, 2009 Seattle Gay News
A Crisp reign in hell

A look at the life of an inspirational Gay writer

by Marcus James
SGN Contributing Writer

“The very purpose of existence is to reconcile the glowing opinion we hold of ourselves with the appalling things that other people think about us.” – Quentin Crisp

Perhaps no other contemporary writer in the world of modern Queer literature has held such deep appeal and has stated such prophetic and profound truths as Quentin Crisp, a writer who walked so heavily in the footsteps of Oscar Wilde, and yet his own path in the histories of Gay liberation and his contributions to the analogues of literature itself have lost themselves in the scatterings of the LGB movement and the ever-present need for “the next big thing” that seems to motivate the minds and desires of American culture; a culture which, for Crisp himself, held such captivation and a love affair with a savage elegance which was so different from the prim ruthlessness of his native England. He would form his pathway through defiance and bold statements about freedoms of sex and of the mind, forever bending the laws of what it meant to be a man in the early twentieth century, and showing the world what it meant to move through life on his own terms. In 1922 he won a scholarship to a school in England, the author revealed his own constant battle between the gender rules: though he was a woman, exotic, disdainful; in the country which, in many ways, seemed to be the stuff of dreams.

Born Denis Charles Pratt on December 25th, 1908 in Sutton, Surrey, he was the fourth child of solicitor Charles Pratt and Frances Pratt; a former governess. He was a precocious child, growing up in the cold row waterway, and thrived in the nineteenth century that began Quentin’s great love affair with himself, held such captivation and a love for love,” as he said in an interview in 1999, “but only finding degeneration.” His favorite place was the Black Cat, a pub where he would often spend time talking with another friend of his, passing around each other’s lipstick and sipping gingerly on their tea to make it last for hours.

When World War II broke out, Crisp, now quite firm in his incarnation, attempted to join the army, but found it not to be his fate when he was denied by the medical board due to “sexual perversion.” It was this time that introduced him to the culture that he would fall so madly in love with. When those soldier boys, with all of their American pride, came into London, those GIs did not stand a chance against Quentin’s charms, and as they took him about, parading on their arms in the clubs of Soho, he found their carefree ways and overall acceptance intoxicating. It was this that began Quentin’s great love affair with America, and it would become his goal to one day come to the country that seemed to hold such promise and hope for him – a country in which, many ways, seemed to be the stuff of dreams.

In the meantime, as the war went on, he continued to move through the world exactly as he was, with little regard for those who felt offended by his appearance and outwardly, almost theatrical manners. He saw the dim streets of Pinmico with my overcoat wrapped around me as though it were a tailless ermine cape. I had to walk around in public, feeling like a mummy leaving its tomb. As expectation, people reacted with disgust and outrage at his garish appearance and wild manner. They slapped his face as he waited for the bus, they stepped on his toes if he wore sandal, and pretty soon they were simply beating him up. Many, even now, would rethink their tactics, many would decide to conform, to find a way to preserve themselves; that’s human nature, the need for self-preservation, to keep themselves safe from harm, to avoid circumstance that would hinder safety. But Crisp would have none of it.

He saw himself as a missionary on a mission. He was declaring war on a society that told him that his very existence was wrong. This mindset was spread, generation after generation, like a plague, infecting the children that would come after; now was the time, and the great work of his life had begun. It wouldn’t be found in the words he wrote, the things that he said with sharp criticism and slight disdain in interviews; all of those were simply the aftereffects from the quake that was Quentin Crisp himself. No, what he would accomplish, the great revolution that he would begin, would come from the simple act of walking out of his door each day and walking through it, and finding himself back home alive at the end of the night, despite the ugliness that was thrown at him – just to do it all over again.

Fast-forward to 1968. Quentin’s wickedly humorous autobiography, The Naked Civil Servant, debuted, and he was no longer dwindling in his “Soho poverty … [coming] from having the airs and graces of a genius but no talent.” The book made him extremely famous, and his appearance in the arts was developed into a TV-movie starring John Hurt as the writer himself. The film won many accolades and awards, and made Quentin a household figure. He found, suddenly, that his opinions mattered, and his appearance, the thing that had condemned him for so long, yet in those moments he had also helped him feel alive, finally liberated him and gave him a sense of acceptance. In a 1968 documentary, the author revealed his own constant battle between the gender rules: though he was absolutely unapologetic for being Gay, he never stopped recognizing the conflict of what it meant to be a “man,” and the complications that came from being unable to fit into that tight little box. “The great barrier between me and the rest of the world … is my appearance.”

He developed a one-man show, which sold out the Duke of York’s Theatre in London in 1978. Crisp then took the show to New York. His first stay in the Hotel Chelsea coincided with a fire, a robbery, and the death of Nancy Spungen, the on-again-off-again girlfriend of Sex Pistols guitarist Sid Vicious. It wasn’t until the age of 72 that Quen...
have the same problem: how to rebel and himself. He often said, “The young always style came from homosexuals like Quentin perceived as such – the irony being that their these young men were often hostile towards and while they were obviously not Gay, and possessing a generally soft appearance, hair, wearing flashier clothing, tight shirts, growing their ‘60s with hippie guys and mod boys run-

ning around in tight trousers, growing their

thing that has allowed us to walk through the fire, time and again, and has allowed us to find a home. Quentin Crisp spent 90 years being differ-

ent, refusing to fit in, walking the road not taken. He dared to be himself, as colorful as it was, in the time of “the love that dare not speak its name.” His life should be our in-

spiration now, especially in this time of un-
certainty, when presidents who run on hope and change betray us, and we see a divide happen within our community. We should strive to get back to what has been our back-

bone, what formed us as a family in the first place, and ignited us to take a stand 40 years ago in this country: our rich mosaic of color. It’s the flag we wave, it’s the stickers we have on the backs of cars, and as buttons on our bags and shirts. As Quentin once stated, a statement which holds more weight today than perhaps, ever before:

“In an expanding universe, time is on the side of the outcast. Those who once inhab-

ited the suburbs of human contempt find that without changing their address they eventu-

ally live in the metropolis.”

It’s been 40 years since Stonewall, and it

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We see this now, with “scene boys” and “hipsters.” A rejuvenation of mod influence and style, the suddenly too-pretty-for-their-
own-good molding done by Abercrombie & Fitch in the ’90s and early 2000s, and in this merging, it seems that we’re facing some-

thing that Quentin himself had mentioned often: the loss of our own unique identity and form as it is assimilated into the major-

ity. Quentin often asked, “How much are we willing to hand over for simple tolerance? Why should we hand over all that we are as homosexuals, just so we can get a stamp of approval in return?” As much as we would like to belong, to be seen in this world as the same as them, Quentin was an observant force, sitting somewhere on the very edge of culture itself, and from where he stood, he was granted a great vantage point to see everything for what it is, for what it could be, and what it shouldn’t be. He could see that the greatest power was in the fact that we weren’t like the majority; we were on the fringe. We were at the forefront of western culture itself, and in the end, the “majority” wanted to be us, so why did we need to give up all that has made us the unique outsiders that we’ve always been to simply fade into the masses?

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seems a lot of reflecting has been going on within this community, and that cannot be ignored by any of us; I know even for my-

self, with all that we’ve achieved and all that

mously talked to the Atlanta Southern Voice in July of 1999 about the death of Prin-
cess Diana of Wales “She could have been Queen of England, and she was swanning about Paris with Arabs. What disgraceful behavior. Going about saying she wanted to be the queen of hearts. The vulgarity of it is so overpowering.” He was continually in demand from journalists requiring a sound-
bite, and throughout the 1990s his opinions were sought after for a number of topics. Quentin died in 1999 at a friend’s house in Manchester on the eve of the revival of his one-man show, just 10 years shy of 100 – exactly what he had predicted jokingly to his friend and fellow actress, Penny Arcade. It would seem his legacy would be simply that of an actor who had many bit parts in many films and television shows, and that of a storyteller, and yet this could be his greatest tragedy. In many ways, he has been a prophet, seeing the wave of things that happen in this movement, and what has been lost to his legacy are the parallels between our world now and the way it was then. He talked of the phenomenon of the ’60s with hippie guys and mod boys run-

ning around in tight trousers, growing their

hair, wearing flashier clothing, tight shirts, and possessing a generally soft appearance, and while they were obviously not Gay, these young men were often hostile towards Quentin because of their own fears of being perceived as such – the irony being that their style came from homosexuals like Quentin himself. He often said, “The young always have the same problem: how to rebel and conform at the same time. They have now solved this problem by-defying their parents and copying each other.”

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seems a lot of reflecting has been going on within this community, and that cannot be ignored by any of us; I know even for my-

self, with all that we’ve achieved and all that

we have been defeated with, this has been a time of contemplation, and I realize that we’ve been playing their game for so long, trying to assimilate to the majority around us, that we become in danger of losing the thing that has united us: our differences, the thing that has allowed us to walk through the fire, time and again, and has allowed us to find a home. Quentin Crisp spent 90 years being differ-

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thing that Quentin himself had mentioned often: the loss of our own unique identity and form as it is assimilated into the major-

ity. Quentin often asked, “How much are we willing to hand over for simple tolerance? Why should we hand over all that we are as homosexuals, just so we can get a stamp of approval in return?” As much as we would like to belong, to be seen in this world as the same as them, Quentin was an observant force, sitting somewhere on the very edge of culture itself, and from where he stood, he was granted a great vantage point to see everything for what it is, for what it could be, and what it shouldn’t be. He could see that the greatest power was in the fact that we weren’t like the majority; we were on the fringe. We were at the forefront of western culture itself, and in the end, the “majority” wanted to be us, so why did we need to give up all that has made us the unique outsiders that we’ve always been to simply fade into the masses?

It’s been 40 years since Stonewall, and it

seems a lot of reflecting has been going on within this community, and that cannot be ignored by any of us; I know even for my-

self, with all that we’ve achieved and all that
The 12 most important Gay books of all time

by Jesse Monteagudo
SGN Contributing Writer

As many of you know, I have acquired a reputation as an authority on Gay and Lesbian books. This came about because of my lifetime love of books; my personal collection of Gay literature; my work with the Stonewall Library and Archives in Fort Lauderdale; and my book review columns, of which “The Book Nook” (1977-2006) was the best-known. And while “The Book Nook” itself is gone, I continue to write book reviews in a monthly column that appears in AfterElton.com. I contributed to the “Lambda Book Report” a 20th-century’s end list of “100 Books That Changed Our Lives,” which I will send to any reader who e-mails me a request at jessemonteagudo@aol.com. The following list is limited to what in my opinion are the 12 most important Lesbian and Gay books of all time.

1) THE BIBLE

More than any other book, the Bible has shaped Western Civilization’s opinion of homosexuality. Taken out of context, the (mis)interpretation of several Biblical passages were used as an excuse to murder, torture, imprison, rape, batter, ostracize, deride, and discriminate against Lesbians, Gay males and Bisexual people through the centuries. Less noticed are several passages of homoerotic passion: Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathan, and Jesus and his “Beloved Disciple.”

2) THE POEMS OF SAPPHO

(all circa 600 b.c.e.)
The “tenth muse” wrote about the love of women, and in the process made her name and her home (the island of Lesbos) synonymous with female homosexuality. Though most of her poems were lost or destroyed, what remains influenced the works of Amy Lowell, Renee Vivien, Hilda Doolittle, May Sarton, Olga Broumas, Judy Grahn and almost every other woman-loving woman writer that lived. “Sappho floats across the centuries as an island in the sea of writers of the past, a solitary example of a woman writer attempting to define woman’s desire for woman,” writes Jane McIntosh Snyder. “Sappho,” writes Evelyn Gettone, “gave Lesbian love its classic literary expression.”

3) THE SYMPOSIUM OF PLATO

(circa 389 b.c.e.) Plato’s classic dialogue is not only the best exposition of “Greek love” ever written, but it almost made Plato’s teacher Socrates as synonymous with male love as Sappho is to Lesbianism. Socrates and his dinner companions formulate a classic theory of male love: “I know not any greater blessing to a young man who is beginning life than a virile lover, or to the lover than a beloved youth.” The Symposium, writes Byrne R.S. Fone, “is of ... paramount importance in the formation, context, and understanding of the homosexual imagination and its tradition.” Warren Johansson writes, “[Plato’s]

legacy has shaped and even today informs the attitudes of Western man toward love of beauty and its sexual expression.”

4) LEAVES OF GRASS

BY WALT WHITMAN

THIRD EDITION (1860)
The 1860 edition of Whitman’s masterpiece first included the “Calamus” poems that “celebrate the need of comrades.” These poems of democracy and brotherhood did more than venture into “paths untrodden.” They launched the “homosexual tradition in American poetry” that continued with Hart Crane, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Dan-can, Thom Gunn, Edward Field and Gavin Geoffrey Dillard. “The historical Whitman is of no literary interest,” writes Robert K. Martin. “He can vanish and leave behind the spiritual Whitman, the eternal lover, the risen god of male love.” To Edward F. Grier, Whitman was “the poet ... of a culture bound together by love and religious faith in which each person could fulfill his or her own sexual nature.”

5) CITIES OF THE PLAIN

(SODOME ET GOMORRHE) 

BY MARCEL PROUST (1921)

“Cities of the Plain” is Part IV of Proust’s monumental “Remembrance of Things Past,” “one of the greatest works of the twentieth century and of all time” (J.E. Riv-ers). “Proust,” writes Warren Johansson, “was the first major novelist to deal extensively with the theme of homosexuality, and more than any other writer, he bears the responsibility for introducing the topic into the mainstream of modern literature”. By expressing his own “personal, cultural, and aesthetic paradoxes,” Proust took homoex-

6) THE WELL OF LONELINESS

BY RADCLYFFE HALL (1928)

Attempts by British and American authorities to censor this classic of Lesbian love made it more famous than it deserved. Hall, herself a masculine woman whose friends called her “John,” believed in the then-cur-rent “third sex” theory of homosexuality, and her hero, Stephen Gordon, evokes pity...
but not sympathy. “Despite its shortcomings,” writes Jeanette Foster, “The Well of Loneliness made a heroic gesture for tolerance of Lesbian relations among persons of integrity.” Hall’s novel, says Evelyn Gettone, “helped to move Lesbianism into the consciousness of a public which ... had managed until 1928 to ignore the phenomenon almost entirely.”

7) THE HOMOSEXUAL IN AMERICA BY “DONALD WEBSTER CORY” (EDWARD SAGARDIN) (1953)
Cory’s classic “is the result of a quarter of a century of participation in American life as a homosexual.” ... The subjective approach of the book is intended not only to supply a reflection of the broader and more typical group, but to permit the expression of the opinion as seen from within that group.” By doing so, Cory took the topic of homosexuality away from the “experts” and into the hands of those who knew it best: Lesbians and Gay men. According to John D’Emilio, the book that every Lesbian read as part of their coming-out process. Martin and Lyon write their way out of the closet and self-hatred, through Gay male sexism and feminist prejudice, to demand (take that, Newt Gingrich) “Not Tolerance [but] Lesbian Liberation.” Though Del Martin has since left us, Lesbian/Woman remains as her literary monument.

8) HOWLAND OTHER POEMS BY ALLEN GINSBERG (1956)
The Beat Generation, says D’Emilio, “presented a significant challenge to the conformist pressures” of the 1950s. “Through the beats’ example, Gays could perceive themselves as nonconformists rather than deviates, as rebels against stifling norms rather than immature, unstable personalities.” Ginsberg dedicated Howl to his lovers, Jack Kerouac, William Seward Burroughs and Neal Cassady, and his poem is “a description of Gay male sexuality as joyous, delightful, and indeed even holy”. The authorities ensured the book’s popularity by trying to suppress it, but Howl survived it all, paving the way for franker depictions of male love.

9) THE SONG OF THE LOON BY “RICHARD AMORY” (RICHARD LOVE) (1966)
Amory’s “Gay pastoral in five books and an interlude” made Gay history with its explicit depictions of Gay male sex, its positive portraits of Gay men and its poetic, almost mystical vision of a Gay brotherhood that transcended racial and cultural barriers. Activist Jack Nichols called Song of the Loon “an important contribution to Gay culture.” Critic Angelo d’Arcangelo described it as “fantasy ... more taking than the Tolkien books and funnier”, while Gayrotic writer Carl Driver, perhaps taking the novel’s mystical theme too far, called it “sacramental.” Song of the Loon spawned a film, two sequels, a parody, and the “Golden Age” of Gayrotic literature (1966-1974).

10) LESBIAN/WOMAN BY DEL MARTIN AND PHYLISS LYON (1972)
Many “Gay 101” books were written in the wake of the Stonewall Riots and the Gay, Lesbian and feminist movements. I chose Lesbian/Woman for several reasons, the main one being the authors themselves. Lovers since 1953, Martin and Lyon founded the Daughters of Bilitis, the first Lesbian organization, in 1955. Lesbian/Woman, an early winner of the Gay and Lesbian Book Award, became a century of participation in American life as a homosexual phenomenon almost entirely.”

11) CHRISTIANITY, SOCIAL TOLERANCE, AND HOMOSEXUALITY: GAY PEOPLE IN WESTERN EUROPE FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY BY JOHN BOSWELL (1980)
Though the late Professor Boswell’s classic history is an undoubted masterpiece, I include it here for its influence on GLBT studies. Before Boswell, Lesbian and Gay history was the province of self-taught historians like Jonathan Katz. Boswell, who taught history at Yale University, took the Gay science into the groves of Academe, where it has flourished. He and his book paved the way for Allan Berube, George Chauncey, John D’Emilio, Estelle Freedman, Lillian Faderman, Esther Newton and other Lesbian and Gay scholars.

Shilts was one of the first reporters to cover the AIDS epidemic, which eventually took his own life as well as that of too many other Gay writers (including John Bozwell). “Now a major motion picture,” And The Band Played On is a powerful, though controversial, indictment of the denial, prejudice, apathy and foot-dragging that allowed AIDS casualties to mount. “The Band succeeds,” writes Jim Marks, “by weaving the events and people of the AIDS epidemic into a compelling narrative, an unfolding tragedy in which there are few heroes, much deception, and too many dead.”
Footnotes

by Richard Labonte
SGN Contributing Writer

BOOKS TO WATCH OUT FOR

There are reviews (critical assessments of new books), and there are blurbs (those quotes on the back of books). I’m asked to provide a dozen blurbs a year, and respond to a few – only books I quite like. Here are durability of a teenager’s first real love, the ebb and flow of romantic friendship, the perplexities of maturing from boy to man, and the puzzle of how to fit Gay self into a straight world: these eternal Queer questions are explored with astute insight (and bracing erotic interludes) in McDonald’s sensitive sequel to Adam, back in print from BigFib... QUEEROES, by Steven Berezna

three for new novels, imparting my enthusiasm... BETTER THAN EASY, by Nick Alexander (BigFib, $17.99): Can love last? Can Gay men find domestic contentment? Alexander asks and answers pesky questions central to the homo condition in this perceptive novel (part of a series, though it can be read on its own) that showcases the author’s warm wit, wry insight, and commendable knack for crafting Queer characters with real dimension... BLUE SKY ADAM, by Anthony McDonald (BigFib, $17.95): The durability of a teenager’s first real love, the ebb and flow of romantic friendship, the perplexities of maturing from boy to man, and the puzzle of how to fit Gay self into a straight world: these eternal Queer questions are explored with astute insight (and bracing erotic interludes) in McDonald’s sensitive sequel to Adam, back in print from BigFib... QUEEROES, by Steven Berezna million to establish The Jane Rule Endowment for the Study of Human Relationships, named after the Lesbian author and activist who died in 2007. Rule wrote the pioneering Lesbian romance Desert of the Heart in 1964, followed by a dozen more novels and nonfiction titles, including her final book, the Lambda Literary Award-winning essay collection Loving the Difficult, published last year by Hedgegrow Press. The endowment will fund Queer conferences, support LGBT groups and foster programs on sexual orientation and gender studies... A&M BOOKS HAS published a 35th anniversary edition of Sarah Aldridge’s 1974 novel The Latecomers, the first book published by Naiad Press – of which Anyda Marchant (Aldridge’s real name) and life partner Marvel Inez Crawford were cofounders. Both women died in 2006, within months of each other, after a relationship that spanned six decades. The new edition features heartfelt accolades from a bevy of writers, musicians and activists, among them Ann Bannon, Kate Clinton, Katherine V. Forrest, Jewelle Gomez, Ellen Hart, Lee Lynch, Holly Near, Leslea Newman, Radclyffe, Carol Seagay, Ann Allen Shockley and Cris Williamson... GAY AUSTRALIAN WRITER Christos Tsiolkas won the $15,000 Commonwealth Writers’ Prize for his novel The Slap, an eight-character story about the consequences of an adult slapping a young boy; one of the characters is a questioning Queer boy.

Richard Labonte has been reading, editing, selling, and writing about Queer literature since the mid-’70s. He can be reached in care of this publication or at BookMarks@qsyndicate.com.
**Risk shuns stereotypes, gains gravity**

Woman meets woman herein, and romance ensues. But this isn’t one of those dozens-a-year breezy reads crammed onto the Lesbian bookshelves of the nation. It’s a novel with depth and heart and wisdom, with political clarity and spiritual dimension and the promise of forever. Carol Schwarz is a downwardly mobile Berkeley math tutor and feminist activist with a penchant for betting on the horses and rolling the dice at casinos. Z.D., her lover, has an infectious laugh, deals dope and is slowly working her way up the ranks at a paper supply store. They’re everyday dykes, characters with real dimension, not stereotypical rowdy cowgirls or tough detectives. Dykewomon weaves many themes through a narrative that arcs from the mid-’80s to after 9/11: Fat acceptance, class and race consciousness, a mother-daughter connection, enduring friendships, lesbian empowerment, addiction and recovery and—most rewardingly— an inspirational account of the sexual pleasure and emotional sustenance two women can provide each other as caring years pass.

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Wry political sniping from
I Told You So

by Richard Labonte
SGN Contributing Writer

I TOLD YOU SO
BY KATE CLINTON
(BEACON PRESS, $22)

When reactions to a book range from wry smiles through gentle chortles and on to choking guffaws, what’s to say except “hurrah!” Humorist Clinton, speaking hilarious truth to self-righteous power for the past quarter century, has cobbled together 85 standup routines, blog entries, magazine articles and original essays to tart and tender effect. The book was originally completed last July, but the publisher wisely opted to delay publication so Clinton could train her eagle eye for nincompoopery on the election. For example, consider poor Palin:

"Just as eight years ago when the bar was set low for Bush, if Sarah Palin did not burst into flames, she would be proclaimed the winner," Clinton wrote of the debate. Hot-button topics such as Gay marriage (not for her, but why the hell not if you want it?), Gays in the military and religious hypocrisy are fertile fodder for the author’s intelligent-ly caustic ridicule. But Clinton also has the knack of spinning even the small moments of everyday life into comic gold.

Richard Labonte has been reading, editing, selling, and writing about Queer literature since the mid-’70s. He can be reached in care of this publication or at BookMarks@qsyndicate.com.

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CHRIST LIKE
BY EMANUEL XA VIER
(QUEER MOJO PRESS, $14.95)
By his own admission, there’s a lot of Emanuel Xavier in Mikey X, the fiercely self-destructive Puerto Rican club kid, a semi-survivor of horrific boyhood abuse, who poses, vorges, drugs and whore his way through the late ’80s and early ’90s of the gritty Manhattan Gay Latino street scene the author depicts. First published in 1999 and revised for this 10th anniversary edition – “I have made it a bit more of a memoir, though it remains a work of fiction” – the book retains a jagged immediacy despite its chronological distance from the author’s younger experiences. The story’s setting is atmospheric and realistically raw, but there’s a softer side, too, as Mikey struggles to escape the numbing cycle of sex and drugs, finally finding redemption through engagement with a spirituality that’s the antithesis of his Catholic upbringing. As with Andrew Holleran’s Dancer from the Dance – the moneyed, white flip side of Xavier’s street-level demimonde decadence – the novel has evolved since its first publication into a seminal record of a particular Queer culture’s era.

Featured Excerpt
Mikey brought his party atmosphere to the lifeless West Village bookstore with a crank of the volume. He would pump the sound system, insisting that the Gay clientele preferred listening to house music rather than “that tired old elevator crap!” He was always on the phone with one of his sistas when he was not flirting with one of his preferred customers. Instead of asking customers if he could check their bags, he would yell, “Can we snatch your products, please?”

- from Christ Like, by Emanuel Xavier

Richard Labonte has been reading, editing, selling, and writing about Queer literature since the mid-70s. He can be reached in care of this publication or at BookMarks@qsyndicate.com.
Almost immediately following his death in 1978, Harvey Milk became an icon. A skillful puppeteer of the media even in death, Harvey grabbed headlines well into 1979. A few of Harvey’s teammates and former classmates admit to Shilts that when news got back to Woodmere that Harvey was a politician, it was a great shock to them, and he was homosexual was shocking. People just never suspected the former athlete and serviceman of being queer.

The brilliance of the person to person commentary was provided to Shilts by the people who were in the room at the time Harvey was having such conversations; you never once get the sense that maybe it didn’t happen that way. This is important, I think, when reading a biography. I need to know, “Have I really been think, “Have I really been think, “Have I really been think, “Have I really been think, “Have I really been think, “Have I really been think, “Have I really been think, “Have I really been think, “Have I really been think, “Have I really been look into Harvey’s humble beginnings in Woodmere, New Jersey, a Long Island. He was born on May 22, 1930, to William and Minerva Karns Milk, Lithuanian Jews. You learn his grandfather, Morris Milk, helped to organize the first synagogue in the area, and how Milk was considered to be from “good stock.”

The Milks were known for being good people.

Harvey, like many gay men, realized his homosexuality early on, but also realized it was something he had to keep an absolute secret in the 1940s. He would become a closeted gay man for nearly 40 years, courting many girl friends, excelling in sports at both the high school and college level, and becoming a commissioned Naval officer.

As a child, he was teased for his protruding ears, big nose, and oversized feet he was, by all accounts, the class clown. Under his picture in the high school yearbook, it read, “Glimpy Milk [his nickname] – and they say WOMEN are never at a loss for words.”

In the second chapter, Shilts covers the intense relationship between Harvey and Joe Campbell, a love affair lasting longer than any other relationship either man would have with anyone else. You realize that this was a hopeless romantic who showered his lover with gifts, tickets to the opera, and love letters. After the demise of the Campbell affair, Harvey became suitor to Jack McKinley, to whom Harvey also bestows gifts, flowers, and love letters. McKinley is a tortured young man who shows signs of depression. This sort of lover becomes the norm in Harvey’s life, with the exception of Scott Smith, who enters the book in chapter three.

The first four chapters in “Part I: The Years Without Hope” give us a look into Harvey’s humble beginnings in Woodmere, New Jersey, a Long Island. He was born on May 22, 1930, to William and Minerva Karns Milk, Lithuanian Jews. You learn his grandfather, Morris Milk, helped to organize the first synagogue in the area, and how Milk was considered to be from “good stock.”

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All the while, Harvey is deeply in the closet and a stout Republican. The “America: Love It or Leave It” type. Somehow, in 1970, he began to change his political views, grew his hair long, and became a much-sought-after media coverage. Particularly during the Anita Bryant fight and Coors beer boycott, Shilts paints a very vivid picture of a man on a mission, and you’re ready to join him. You almost want to set the book down, walk over to the refrigerator, and pour out any Coors beer and orange juice you have.

What is Harvey’s role? He’s a great political leader, an icon. As the legend of Harvey Milk takes place with Gay Castro as the backdrop, Shilts takes great care to make sure Harvey is still human. I learned so much about him as an average Joe in these chapters of the book. His relationship failing with Scott Smith, his financial woes, and his fears are all brought to light. The legend, as it were, was more human than we often think.

Still, you can’t help but root for Harvey as he takes on San Francisco politics. It’s funny, in a way; you know Harvey is going to win, you know he is going to be elected after trying so hard. As Harvey Volunteer, a group who used to change the course of history for LGBT people forever, but you get so caught up in the brilliance of Shilts’ writing that you totally forget that all and think to yourself, “Gee, I hope he makes it.”

SUPERVISOR HARVEY MILK

As I entered the third part of the book, I realized the profound lessons that less than 100 pages of text, Shilts would document, in detail, Harvey’s days as a city supervisor. I was struck by the way he manages to change the course of history for LGBT people forever, but you get so caught up in the brilliance of Shilts’ writing that you totally forget that all and think to yourself, “Gee, I hope he makes it.”

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Harvey Milk is celebrated because in a little less than a year he made a lasting impact. A majority of text is dedicated to Proposition 6, dubbed the Briggs Initiative. Here is where Harvey shone brightest, publicly debating John Briggs up and down the California coast. In Briggs' neighborhood or in the Castro district, the two went head to head. Of course, in the end good triumphs over evil, but the Briggs Initiative pages are an energetic read.

Dan White, the disgraced city supervisor who ultimately assassinated Mayor George Moscone and Harvey, is picked apart. Shilts finds a number of people who go on record saying they always felt White was dangerous or that something always seemed wrong with him. Leading up to the day he was shot, Harvey told more than one of his aides, “Dan White is a dangerous man.”

For the actual assassination, Shilts writes graphically. It is intense. Ironically enough, the murder scene in Gus Van Sant’s Milk is easier to watch than reading the absolute terror of Dan White’s actions on November 27, 1978. But, like with the rest of the book, you won’t stop reading. You won’t, in a sense, look away.

THE LEGEND BEGINS

The shortest part of the book, “Part IV: The Legend Begins,” deals with the fallout after Harvey and Mayor Moscone’s murder. Acting mayor Diane Feinstein had to choose a replacement for Harvey, the trial of Dan White, the “Twinkie Defense,” and the White Night Riots are discussed at length, and the state of the Gay movement is rationalized.

Fearing he would be assassinated, Harvey recorded a message to Mayor Moscone in 1977. The now famous Harvey Milk recording, known as his political will, is eerily accurate. He describes the type of person who may kill him, and it is almost as if Dan White is in the room with him as he says, “A person who is deeply disturbed.”

Shilts concludes the book with a sort of “whatever happened to…” section. He gives a 1983 update on Harvey’s political allies, his personal friends, and his lovers – most of whom committed suicide or died of AIDS.

The book contains four of Harvey Milk’s greatest speeches in the epilogue. The speeches include a September 10, 1973 speech to the International Longshoreman and Warehousemen’s Union, Harvey’s January 10, 1978 inaugural Dinner speech, his best-known March 10, 1978 Hope speech, and the That’s What America Is speech he gave to nearly 350,000 people at the 1978 Gay Freedom Day Rally. The epilogue also includes a transcript of the 1977 Harvey Milk Political Will recording.

AN IMPORTANT BOOK FOR AN IMPORTANT TIME

The Mayor of Castro Street was Shilts’ first book. He would gain critical acclaim with his 1987 book And the Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic (1980-1985), winning the author the Stonewall Book Award and literary fame. His last book, Conduct Unbecoming: Gays and Lesbians in the US Military: Vietnam to the Persian Gulf, was published in 1993. Shilts and his assistants conducted over 1,000 interviews while researching the book, the last chapter of which Shilts dictated from his hospital bed – the author was dying from Kaposi’s sarcoma brought on by AIDS. Shilts died at age 42 on February 17, 1994.

This book is as important today as it was when it first appeared on bookshelves in 1983. The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk is the perfect gift for any high school or college-aged LGBT student. As a Gay man under 30 years old, I have to say it was an amazing history lesson on Gay life from 1940-1980, a time when so much happened so quickly. From Nazi Germany’s persecution of Gays to police raids to Stonewall, Shilts touches on it with factual accuracy. I learned as much about Gay history as I did about Harvey Milk reading this book. It was refreshing to read about a so-called radical, a man of political action – a Gay superhero, if you will.
by Richard Labonte
SGN Contributing Writer

FIST OF THE SPIDER WOMAN: TALES OF FEAR AND QUEER DESIRE
EDITED BY AMBER DAWN
(ARSENAL PULP PRESS, $17.95)

There’s a thin line between fear and desire, and the contributors to this woman-centric manipulation of the horror genre delight in erasing it. A few of the 16 contributions deal with traditional shivers: For example, Fionna Zedde writes, erotically, about Lesbian vampires, a clichéd theme handled here fiercely. A couple are more campy: Michelle Tea is afraid of pubic lice. But a majority of the stories are deeper, darker and psychologically intense. Among them: Megan Milks’ creepy fantasy, “Slug,” about a woman having sex with that most slimy of creatures; Mette Bach’s “All You Can Be,” about the violation of trust between two women; Aurelia T. Evans’ “In Circles,” an unsettling story about an Intersex woman’s equation of genital corrective surgery and mutilation at the hands of a mystical Bloody Mary; and Suki Lee’s gripping “Sido,” about the emotional violence and physical sexuality of a predatory Parisian landlady.

What most tales have in common is their inversion of the stereotypical damsel-in-distress motif of horror fiction. There are no fair ladies fainting away in this subversive anthology.

Richard Labonte has been reading, editing, selling, and writing about Queer literature since the mid-’70s. He can be reached in care of this publication or at BookMarks@qsyndicate.com.
P R I D E  2 0 0 9
40th Anniversary of Stonewall
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Happy Hour 12PM to 2AM

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June 26, 2009  Seattle Gay News  17
**Nude Male offers more men, more nudity**

by Paul Varnell
Special to the SGN

**THE NUDE MALE: 21ST CENTURY VISIONS COLLECTED BY DAVID LEDDICK**

The male form, and the world’s perception of it, what makes it beautiful, even heart-breaking, has changed often within the past half-century, and of all the artistic windows that we have into this, it seems nothing has better expressed this than photography. The Nude Male: 21st Century Visions, selected by David Leddick is the latest, and one of the most bewitching windows we have into this, containing the most recent depictions of naked men, and providing an opportunity to explore the contrasts and continuities between current male nudes and those of 40-50 years ago.

In recent years Leddick has emerged as an expert on the male nude, publishing a half-dozen books on the topic. In its 256 pages, the new book offers nearly 250 images by a dozen books on the topic. In its 256 pages, the new book offers nearly 250 images by such familiar names in the genre as Tom Bianchi, Reed Massengill, Duane Michaels, Jeff Palmer and Arthur Tress. But the book’s particular virtue is the inclusion of a large number of little-known but obviously talented photographers, such as Philip Pearlstein, who apparently has more formal value.

As promised, the majority of the men are nude, but not all. Some are wearing pants or shorts, pajama bottoms or bikini swimwear. Others are turned slightly away from the camera so the genitals are not visible. This is not necessarily disappointing. This may be a holdover from the earlier period of physique photography, but there is an aesthetic (and erotic) quality to the not-quite-disclosed genitals.

A dozen or more of the men are photographed with robust erections, a marked change from the earlier period when such depictions were illegal. But most are photographed with non-erect penises, although some do seem to have been “fluffed” or partly aroused.

Most of the men are handsome, appropriate enough choices for an editor who has always stressed the importance of male beauty as well as erotic arousability. The remainder are generally interesting in some particular way.

Nor are genitals, revealed or not, the main focus on several photographs. There are a number of “butt-shots” of men’s well-rounded glutes or closeups of anuses. In several of the photographs, the model’s feet are thrust forward to be prominently visible or take up most of the photographic space. Think of it as something for every erotic taste.

Some of the men are handling sports equipment or wearing chains, workbelts, cowboy hats, studded leather belts, or handcuffs, a continuation of the earlier period’s thematic (and erotic) quality to the not-quite-disclosed genitals. An awareness of the artistic tradition that was largely absent from the earlier period. For instance, painter Ross Watson includes Caravaggio’s Eros Triumphant (1602-3) peering over the shoulder of his subject.

Robert Schwartz presents views of the city from above, or through a narrow aperture, reminiscent of the frequent practice of Edward Hopper. Jack Balas actually prints “Edward Hopper in Paris” across one of his paintings, although the point is obscure. Joe Panelli paints in a style reminiscent of Philip Pearlstein, although his models are male and better looking than those of Pearlstein, who apparently has more formal value.

A major value of the book is that it creates a desire to see more of the work of several of these artists and photographers. The book offers just a taste of their work. Happily, a brief appendix gives the website or e-mail address of the artist or the gallery that handles his work. I have not seen this before and it is a welcome innovation.
There is a Queer misfit kid at the core of this intricate debut novel about a tiny Idaho town. But McIntyre, author two years ago of an acclaimed short story collection, You are Not the One, has crafted something far more exhilarating than just another coming-out account. The town of Eula, abutting a high-desert lake, is conservative to the core, culturally disconnected from mid-'80s America and bristling with religious perversion – not an easy place for a lad to come to terms with himself. Enrique finds furtive sensuality with men's workout magazines and in a public bathroom, and adolescent solace in science – he's a geeky Gay Hispanic boy. Meanwhile, he's fumbling with an attraction to Gene, his befuddled peer in the trailer next door, with whom he teams up for an abortive science fair project. That's just one thread among many in this deliciously colorful tapestry of a small town's depressing poverty, pointless pettiness, quirky rivalries, domestic infidelities, desperate drug use, class and race divisions – and occasional quiet triumphs.

Unmotivated at work?
Discover your hidden job perk.

People today are shortchanging themselves – that's the unspoken tragedy of economic recession. The five to 10 percent of Americans who are unemployed and struggling lead the headlines, understandably. But how about those with jobs? The crappy employment market reduces people's expectations around satisfaction, advancement, and pay. "Just be glad you have a job" rolls off everyone's tongue and suddenly you're stagnating. If you're someone who feels stuck, here's one suggestion: Don't assume that your long-term professional goals can't be served by your current job, even if it's not your ideal position. Creating our own personal learning goals (or even suggesting that our managers make them part of company protocol) to support the performance goals we've been given is an easy way to "draft." Learning goals can be motivating. The flip side is that, set inappropriately, they can be intimidating and sometimes even debilitating when we fall short. Traditional performance goals can be motivating. The flip side is that, set inappropriately, they can be intimidating and sometimes even debilitating when we fall short. When juggling your personal and professional lives, work on blending the two, not out there know, everything is connected!

Meanwhile, your employer will benefit from your increased engagement. Traditional performance goals can be motivating. The flip side is that, set inappropriately, they can be intimidating and sometimes even debilitating when we fall short. Performance goals tend to withdraw and perform worse during setbacks. On the other hand, those who set learning goals, according to a study by Drs. Carol Dweck and Heidi Grant of Stanford University, are better able to cope, remain motivated, and achieve more when faced with the setbacks that inevitably occur. You can make good on a learning goal in any economic environment. Imagine a saleswoman, Judy, who decides to add a personal learning goal to her company's goal -- to learn three new selling techniques from the top sellers in the company to help meet her sales quota. Her bottom-line goal is still to sell a thousand widgets. But now, tucked inside that goal, is an additional personal accomplishment that Judy wants to achieve. I believe a company that encourages that kind of commitment to improvement should recognize Judy's achievement for both goals. Even if it doesn't, however, Judy's improved skills make her a better professional for life.

In the long run, I recommend working with a partner to help define and achieve learning goals. You may need someone with more expertise than you to help you decide where to focus and what to learn. Even more importantly, you're more likely to follow through if you have an accountability partner to keep you on track -- or even better, what I call a "lifeline relationship" in my book Who's Got Your Back. That's a relationship so deep and trusting that the person will do whatever it takes to make sure you don't fail -- including kicking your butt when you need it.

Keith Ferrazzi, the world's foremost expert in relationship development, is the author of the #1 bestseller Who's Got Your Back. For more info and Keith's blog, visit keithferrazzi.com.
The perfect book for Nirvanaphiles

by Scott Rice
SGN Contributing Writer

The Rough Guide to Nirvana by local Seattle author Gillian G. Gaar, is a fast-paced telling of Nirvana’s story. The focus, of course, is on Kurt Cobain, the disaffected son of Aberdeen, Washington who went on to briefly rule the music industry before his death in 1994. The book follows Cobain’s journey from beginning to end.

The 250 pages of The Rough Guide to Nirvana are packed with details that Nirvanaphiles will love: detailed bios, discographies, and play lists. Though there is plenty for the serious music fan to love, the book is also user-friendly for the less rabid and less knowledgeable fan like me.

The narrative is linear, concise, and moves along quickly. The more esoteric information is organized in part two, and there is a guide to Nirvana in print and on film in part three.

The sidebars are nicely turned-out, even color-coded. They also contain some of Gaar’s own photographs. In fact, I read the sidebars first like an appetizer and then went back for the main course.

Darwin Porter tears the door off Merv Griffin’s Queer closet with gusto in this resoundingly researched biography. (With a personal connection: As a college senior, Porter hired Griffin to sing at a graduation dance, and the two developed a friendship.) Though often overused, “page-turner” more than applies. Most every paragraph bristles with he-slept-with revelations about Merv, who schmoozed, seduced and made a play for every Tom, Dick and Harry in showbiz – emphasis on the dicks. Seduced as a teenager by Errol Flynn, he cavorted early on with such stars as Montgomery Clift and Marlon Brando (with brief detours to the beds of Judy Garland and Marilyn Monroe) and, later in life, with hired hustlers and porn stars, all the while pretending to be the paramour of glamorous Eva Gabor. Sexual escapades aside, Porter’s insightful assessment of the man’s career arc – from brash boy who staged backyard entertainment, to struggling big band crooner, to king (or queen) of daytime talk shows, to made-by-TV mogul – brims with insider gossip writ large, smart and with great style.

Darwin Porter

This Labor Day weekend, try life as you want it to be. Join 150 gay, trans and bi guys for a weekend of friendship, community-building and fun. It’s CAMP and YOU’RE invited!

www.QCamp.org

Richard Labonte has been reading, editing, selling, and writing about Queer literature since the mid-’70s. He can be reached in care of this publication or at BookMarks@qsyndicate.com.
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Seattle Gay News
www.SGN.Org
The 1969 Gay riots that became known as the Stonewall uprising birthed not only the national Gay movement but also modern-day Gay Pride. The first Gay Pride marches took place in Los Angeles and New York in 1970, commemorating the anniversary of the riots. Today, the number of cities participating in Gay Pride marches is too high to count. This year in Seattle, on the anniversary of Stonewall, we celebrate 40 years of Gay Pride.

Stonewall is important because for the LGBT community, it is our American Revolution. Stonewall is important because for the LGBT community it is the moment where the men who wore dresses dug their heels into the ground and said, “No more!” Enough truly is enough and, minus a few setbacks, we have largely demanded civil rights for our LGBT community, it is our American Revolution. Stonewall is important because for the LGBT community, the place, the physical and social geography, the transportation routes, the time of year, the weather, the unique nature of the Stonewall Inn, and many, many other factors all coincided to create the Stonewall uprising,” said Carter.

Carter may be on to something. Police departments and vice squads — both uniformed and plain-clothed — had conducted thousands or raids on Gay bars since the turn of the century. But something happened at 1:20 on the morning of Saturday, June 28, 1969 when the policemen arrived at the Stonewall Inn’s double doors and announced, “Police! We’re taking the place!” The raid did not go as planned. Bar patrons refused to produce proper identification when dressed as women refused to go with a female cop to the ladies room to verify their sex, and within minutes between 100 and 150 people congregated outside. A scuffle between the police and crowd broke out, which quickly turned into an out-and-out riot. The angry crowd, whose numbers swelled to 500, overpowered the police and their reinforcements, sending them surrendering inside the Stonewall Inn.

Instead, 40 years later, to create the Stonewall Rebellion. The result was Gay Liberation, the first piece of public art commemorating the struggle of GLBT people for equality. It is in Christopher Park at the intersection of Christopher St., Grove St. and W. 4th St. in New York City’s Greenwich Village neighborhood.

In order to write the book as an accurate and in-depth portrayal, Carter conducted countless interviews with participants from both sides of the line — the rioters and the lawmen. “I met many interesting people, but the most interesting person I met was Tommy Lanigan-Schmidt,” he said. “Tommy is one of the most fascinating persons I’ve met in a lifetime in which I’ve been fortunate to meet many amazing people, so much so that I say that I’ve been very lucky to not only have met, but to have worked with, three geniuses: Allen Ginsberg, Peter Townshend, and Tommy.”

Tommy Lanigan-Schmidt, a well-known Gay artist selected by the Whitney Museum for the American Century Show, is recognized as being one of the most important living American artists. But, few know he was part of the crowd of Gay “street youth” who started the Stonewall Riots.
“Life was so hard for these young men that only three, including Tommy, are known to be alive today,” Carter said.

Stonewall, as Carter views it, is very important for Gay youth to know about, because every community needs to have a culture if it is to survive and thrive, and much of the basis of having a culture is to have a shared narrative or history that gives the foundation for answering basic questions: Where do we come from? Why are we here? Where have we been? Where are we going? What are our values? What do we aspire to? What do we stand for? It is, he said, very much a question of identity and of values.

“(Stonewall) is a key event that every LGBT person should know about to some extent and particularly every Gay American,” Carter said, “I also think it is important to see this event as part of the narrative of American history and American civil rights history.”

Another reason that Gay youth should know this history, he said, is that they were the heroes of this story: against all odds, a group of young people no one in America wanted or cared about generated one of the seminal events of American history, changing both the nation and the world forever in profound ways. It was edgy, talented home-less youth who led the rebellion, and it was young women who started the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance, he said.

“Stonewall would not be important had [Stonewall] not come out should come out. As for those who think they can’t come out, then let them give some money anonymously to an LGBT group that is working for our civil rights. There is always a way to contribute.”

It’s been 40 years since the last brick was thrown during the Stonewall uprising. Four decades have come and gone since the “flame queens” and Gay “street kids” uprosted a parking meter and used it as a battering ram on the doors of the Stonewall Inn. Seven U.S. presidents have come and gone since the last police car was set ablaze during the nights of Gay angst on the streets of Greenwich Village. To say that Stonewall made a lasting impression is an understatement. Stonewall allowed us to become who we are as an LGBT community.

On June 1 of this year, President Barack Obama declared June 2009 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month. In a presidential proclamation, Obama cited the Stonewall Riots as a reason to “commit to achieving equal justice under law for LGBT Americans.”

So much has changed within the LGBT community post-Stonewall, yet little remains changed on a federal level. This is why, as we march through the streets of downtown Seattle Sunday on June 28, we must hold a special place in our hearts, as a city, as a community, as proud LGBT people, for Stonewall.

“I wish that every person who reads this article would call his or her representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate and demand that they pass a civil rights bill that includes us,” Carter said. “Forty years after Stonewall, we have the same federal civil rights protections we had four decades ago – zero!”

He said Congress has yet to pass a bill that gives us protection from being fired, leading Carter to ask, “People, where is your anger?”
Happy Gay Pride 2009!

FROM YOUR COMMUNITY RESOURCE

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The Mariposa Club
a teen classic

As they embark on their final year of high school, the Fierce Foursome – Maui, Trini, Isaac, and Liberace – decide to do something big, something that will memorialize their friendships for when they all go their separate ways and begin their new “adult” lives. Having been subjected to their own trials and tribulations for being openly Gay, they set out to create a legacy within the halls of Caliente Valley High School: its first-ever GLBTQ support group, the Mariposa Club. Soon a tragic, homophobic incident occurs, one that strikes the boys too closely, and in the end the entire school and the community itself turns to the Mariposa Club as a way to cope, and derive some sense of understanding out of something that is completely senseless.

Author Rigoberto González has penned a classic young adult book in every way, and it follows in the vein of Alex Sanchez, and this seems to be the book’s unplanned backfire, because at times I would forget and think that I was reading another Alex Sanchez novel. Though written well, and speaking to things that are still current and still relevant, it’s also something that we’ve seen time and time again in young adult novels geared towards the GLBTQ community, and it would be nice to see something different.

As far as this novel goes, it is the perfect read for Gay youth, though the age bracket should be that of the younger set, but nevertheless, The Mariposa Club will surely become a classic for a teen already a member of, or creating, a Gay/Straight Alliance in their own school.
Happy Hours!

Early 2–6pm Late 10pm–Last Call

DRINKS

| 2.50 | Well Drinks          | 2.00 | Bud Light       |
| 4.00 | Heavy Pour Double Well | 3.00 | Microbrews     |
| 3.25 | Premium Drinks       |      |                |
| 4.50 | House Teas           |      |                |
| 2.00 | Dag Daddy Shots      |      |                |
| 4.00 | Wines                |      |                |

FOOD all $3.75

- Misti Isle Angus Beef Sliders
- Tuscan Style Hummus
- Gorgonzola Fries
- Fried Pickles

314 BROADWAY E. IN CAPITOL HILL
Between Men: Volume 2
an amazing collection

by Marcus James
SGN Contributing Writer

BETWEEN MEN: VOLUME 2
BY RICHARD CANNING
(ALYSON BOOKS)

If you liked the first Between Men collection, you will love Between Men: Volume 2. This amazing collection of 19 shorts comes to us from some of the most prolific and groundbreaking authors in not just Gay literature, but literature in general. Richard Canning weeded through story after story to bring us a collection of tales that stand out and says something about modern Gay experience. Of all the stories I read, one stands out the most, and that’s Randall Kenan’s “I Thought I Heard the Shuffle of Angel’s Feet.” In this story, Cicero, on a trip to North Carolina, finds himself moving eerily down memory lane when his car breaks down and he receives help from Tony the tow-truck driver, who is not only straight, but Cicero’s friend from long ago. When Cicero agrees to spend the night at his old friend’s place, Tony reveals a deep, dark secret, a secret that is felt within the reader by the amazing power of Kenan’s words.

Between Men: Volume 2 is a must-read for anyone who appreciates the power of a well-constructed short.
Gay lit in a straight world

by Eric Andrews-Katz
SGW Contributing Writer

Is there a future for Gay literature? Are the lack of newly published “Gay-themed” books a result of economic recession, or do they become obsolete as we enter mainstream society? Before the Gay Revolution (“Gay” representing the entire GLBT community), there was a necessity for these resources, but does acceptance mean losing our original identities and stories to join a societal melting pot?

The first hints of Gay lit appeared in the early 1960s, before Stonewall. These sordid stories of homosexual liaisons were often published under pulp fiction, offering tawdry tales (and covers) of forbidden love. Our closeted forefathers discovered they were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental illness. “These were not alone in a world where homosexuality was illegal and a mental ill...
by Richard Labonte
SGN Contributing Writer

WHAT WE REMEMBER
BY MICHAEL THOMAS FORD
(KENSINGTON BOOKS, $24)

As this flashback-powered mystery opens, small-town sheriff Daniel McCloud has been missing for eight years, leaving behind stoic wife Ada, determined at any emotional cost to hold her family together, and three numbed children, including Gay teenager Billy, destined to grow up Gay and confused. When his body surfaces, Billy’s older brother, James – now a big-city district attorney – returns home to handle the fallout, only to become the prime suspect in his father’s murder. James’ accuser? His surly brother-in-law Nate Derry, now married to his sister, who has borne a grudge ever since James, years back, dated Nate’s beloved – and suddenly pregnant – stepsister. With a chronology that hops nimbly between 1982 and 1991, and with overlapping points of view that spotlight the fallibility of memory and the treachery of lies, Ford’s intricate jigsaw puzzle of a novel zeroes in on the sort of depravity – in this case, heterosexual depravity – that often rots the core of families which, on the surface, appear to be normalcy incarnate.

Richard Labonte has been reading, editing, selling, and writing about Queer literature since the mid-’70s. He can be reached in care of this publication or at BookMarks@qsyndicate.com.

What We Remember
a depraved mystery
Enter as Strangers, Leave as Friends

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