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## SR-SIS Newsletter, vol. 10, no. 3 (June 2000)

*[Note: This online version of the SR-SIS Newsletter doesn't include the Standing Committee on Lesbian and Gay Issues Reception Registration form which was in the original]*

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### Conference Preview

The City of Brotherly Love and the 2000 Philadelphia Annual Meeting promises to have lots to entertain and inform all types of law librarians.

Everyone is encouraged to attend the SR-SIS Business Meeting on Sunday at 4 pm. Both standing committees, The Library Services for Institutionalized Residents standing committee and the Standing Committee on Lesbian and Gay Issues will meet immediately after the general business meeting at 5 pm.

SR-SIS educational programs begin on Sunday prior to the business meeting, so don't wait to hear at the meeting what you should attend. On Sunday at 1 pm, B-5 Taking the Lead in Pro Bono Work, a program coordinated by Camille Broussard will kick off our year. Be sure to attend C-2 Do Our Salaries Reflect Our Leadership? The program is coordinated by Elizabeth Kenney and moderated by John Davey, and starts at 2:15 just before the SR-SIS business meeting. To finish up the conference there is L-2 Hate Crimes: Examining the Issues, coordinated and moderated by Todd Bennett.

Other highlights not to be missed include: the Diversity Symposium: Racial and Sexual Intolerance on Saturday at 2:30 pm and F-2 Leadership in Diversity: The Last Socially Acceptable Prejudice at 4 pm on Monday.

See you there!!

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### Headstart on Program Planning

## **2001/Minneapolis Meeting**

by Ellen Platt

As the annual meeting sneaks closer, and with it the deadline for submission of program ideas for next year's meeting, I call upon everyone to begin thinking of ideas for programs. As incoming Vice Chair/Chair-Elect the honor falls to Carol Billings to coordinate selection of program ideas to put forward on behalf of the SIS. Sooo, please bring those ideas to the meeting, or, if you're not able to attend, send them with someone or directly to me (by email or snailmail).

Remember, the idea doesn't have to be in final form, just submitted. If you need help filling out the official program proposal, just let Carol know; we've got some talented and seasoned program proposers in this SIS who are willing to share their secrets. The main thing is to get the idea for a program and/or the names of some great speakers into the pool.

Some final thoughts:

The saddest thing is a great idea NOT submitted; even if you don't end up submitting the proposal to AALL yourself, let us know about the idea, someone else might be thrilled to see it through.

You don't have to be a member of this SIS to contribute a proposal. If you think it's an issue or area that this SIS should or could sponsor, send it on in; we'll work with you or try to find someone who's interested in running with it.

The best thing is to have to choose among many fine proposals; the worst thing is for this SIS not to sponsor any program ideas (or for me to be forced to make something up so we don't look bad).

We will discuss more about programs during the SR-SIS business meeting Sunday at 4 pm. We had a great year this year, let's do it again!

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### **Passing the Torch**

We are very fortunate to have our new officers, Carol Billings, Vice Chair/ Chair-Elect and Mark Mackler, Secretary/Treasurer. They will each be members of the SR-SIS Executive Board for the next two years. Carol and Mark will be joining Chair, Ellen Platt and Past Chair, John Davey for the 2000-2001 term.

Our thanks to Leslie Campbell and Karen Westwood for all their hard work. They will both leave the Executive Board this year.

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### **From the Chair**

As we approach the Convention in Philadelphia, I am getting more and more excited about all of the events that are coming up with the SIS. We kick off with our first program on Sunday and our Business meeting on Sunday afternoon. Of course the main event this year is our new annual service to the Public School Libraries in our host city. This year's program is "Literacy Builds Independence" and we will have both Tuesday and Wednesday mornings in which to serve this project. Also, there will be book drops placed strategically throughout the Convention Center where everyone can make a children's book donation. Don't forget to check out the SR-SIS Website and look at the list of suggested books which to donate. You can purchase them through most bookstores and bring them to the Convention with you and drop them in a book drop. I certainly hope that everyone will contribute in one of the two ways! We are the sponsors and I hope that all of you will provide a good example to the members of the Association.

Please look at the list of programs we are sponsoring at the Convention and mark your calendars to attend. We need a good turn out for all programs and must provide our strength in numbers. Don't forget also, the Diversity Symposium on Saturday afternoon. We are all invited and encouraged to attend. It should be a worthwhile program based on the people speaking and the issues to be presented. Combining forces with the Diversity group should be fun and interesting for the SIS. I know that several of you are members of both. The business meeting will be your chance to voice your opinions about the SIS and it's future. Bring your ideas and suggestions for next year's programs to this meeting. Plan on attending both the SIS business meeting and one of the two Standing Committee meetings immediately to follow the SIS business meeting. All of those in the Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee mark your calendars for the annual reception on Tuesday night. All members of the SIS are invited to attend and get to know each other in a friendly and fun environment.

I hope that all of you will encourage and stand behind our incoming Chair, Ellen Platt. Ellen has a lot of enthusiasm for the group and has already become involved through her efforts at the SIS Chair Retreat back in the fall. She will have lots of wonderful ideas to bring to the SIS. I am also excited about our newly elected future Chair and Secretary, Carol Billings and Mark Mackler respectively. What a wonderful future we have in store for us with such exemplary leaders!

Let's keep the momentum going and keep this SIS alive and awake! I look forward to seeing you all in Philadelphia!

John Davey

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## **Papa John's Is My Mother**

by Bruce Kleinschmidt

After two weeks of visiting with my sons in Texas, I was constantly struck by the sense of longing in their friends to have adults as their friends and to have more time with their parents. Whether it was Caitlin proclaiming her mom was never home to cook or one of

the parents at a baseball game who honestly thought I commuted from Dallas to work in Indiana, I constantly faced this detachment that looked much like the families of Columbine after their shooting last year. (And I was horrified to see a police officer wearing a loaded gun at my son's middle school.) It's not my intent to belittle the other parents; I have to work very hard at being a divorced dad myself, one that lives several states away from two of his kids. But when I was at the middle school for my youngest son's honors ceremony and taking pictures of the other kids for their parents, who were not there, well it was sad. I later saw one mom who thanked me for the pictures and said she couldn't get off work to be there. I kidded her and said, "Heather, it was no problem for me to fly 900 miles to be here."

Heather is from Scotland and her son Gary is my youngest son's best friend. Gary and Chris like to use three way calling, and Gary, who calls me "Pops" both on the phone and in person, regularly says I talk to him more than his dad. I may. His dad works in Denver. Gary is a particular burden on my heart. He lived in England until he was four and now has lived in 12 different cities around the United States. His parents plan to move again and their home is up for sale. Gary's dad has two different cell phones so that's really amazing, you can call him twice at the same time while he's driving. I wonder how Chris is going to deal with Gary's departure?

My middle son Jamie deals with these mobile friends by going to see them. June will take him to Milwaukee for three weeks with his friend Joe. Joe, shock of shocks, is having some trouble making friends on this move, so he's fortunate my son doesn't mind buying a ticket to fly up to visit and miss three weeks of work.

My oldest son has finished his first year of college at Indiana University and he is somewhat in a shock after going back to Texas and having to deal with his friends who are going nowhere quickly. He was rather hurt when the high school paper carried an editorial making fun of several people Dale enjoyed as friends, who have gone from high school to working full time at a drug store, in low level jobs. I don't mean to condemn his friends from a materialistic stance, but it is hard to see John's son, who dropped out of high school, because I think of how I was involved in helping John get appointed and then elected to a judgeship, and now John avoids me because he is embarrassed that his son has a drug problem. That John's wife is a nurse only makes the situation more ironic. So that son has dropped out of high school and lives at home as a full fledged slacker. I remember him when he rode a little red metal fire truck down the sidewalk. Those day, alas, are long gone.

Or there is Tommy, who works full time as a waiter at Chili's, claiming he's going to the community college, and we all know it's a polite lie. It was very awkward to see him ask Dale how his first year at Indiana went. Dale responded "Well, I had a 3.65 g.p.a. in the honors program and I'm on a full scholarship." Somehow a tip isn't going to ease that sting.

Or there is another John, this one who left college under threat of expulsion for a drug problem. That's my hardest one because I had explain to Dale the laws about being an accessory to certain criminal acts, since John has decided to support himself by selling Ecstasy. What's a loving lawyer dad to do?

But when you ride down the streets west of Central Expressway in McKinney, Texas, you don't see those things. You see very large, very prosperous subdivisions, arrogantly labeled "El Dorado" and "Stonebridge Ranch" along with country clubs, golf courses and very large homes, expensive cars (a Mercedes and an SUV being the current standard) and of course, that pool in the back.

But I know one thing. Saying hello to Rob at the grocery store and having him call out, "Hey, Jamie's dad is here," to the other debate team members, or telling Chase that he played a great game (and he is a gifted catcher), or taking Gary out to brunch on his birthday, well I was able to do all those things. I can't eliminate the emptiness in the lives of these kids, but I can surely make an effort to speak to them by name and watch them glow as they realize that this adult actually acknowledges they exist. It's a start.

Maybe Nancy Reagan was right. Just say "hi!"

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### **Standing Committee Reception**

The 2000 Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee Reception will be held in the William Way Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center located just a few blocks from the Philadelphia Convention Center at 1315 Spruce Street.

Please feel free to invite your friends and colleagues to this reception, to be held from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 18, 2000, as we get reacquainted with old friends and make new ones.

The reception will include stationary buffet style displays of smoked salmon and mascarpone torte with toasted baguette, vegetable crudités (celery, carrots, mushrooms, cherry tomatoes, florets of broccoli and cauliflower, with creamy Parmesan dip), assorted domestic and imported cheese, fresh fruit and breads, white bean and mustard green spread with toasted pita, smoked chicken skewers with dried tomatoes and green olive tapenade, and assorted cookies, brownies and pastries.

The reception fee is \$12, and includes assorted soft drinks, Perrier, beer and wine. Due to logistics involved with Pennsylvania liquor laws, there will be no with a cash bar. This year's event is generously sponsored in part by Lexis®-Nexis®.

A registration form follows this announcement. Registrations \*MUST\* be made RECEIVED by Tuesday, July 11, 2000, so that we can provide the caterer with an accurate count. Please register today!

Opened to the public in July 1997, the William Way Center houses nine community organizations, provides meeting space for 30 regularly scheduled groups, offers its own programs, and provides ballroom space for special events. William Way was a longtime city employee who oversaw the construction of affordable housing throughout the city and was an openly gay man at a time when coming out of the closet often had severe consequences. He was also an advocate for the Philadelphia lesbian and gay community, who played a key role in the establishment of Penguin Place, the

predecessor to this community center. More information on the center can be found at <http://www.waygay.org/>.

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## **Bemis/Flaherty Collection of Poetry**

by Michael Bemis

During the mid Sixties, I began to collect all the published literature by gay men I could find. After a decade of doing this, it became evident to me that I had neither enough money or space to do this, so I would have to specialize. My choice was poetry by gay men; many of the "books", which were self-published or small press products, were inexpensive and small in size. I found books in second hand stores, gay bars, support centers of various kinds for gays, gay bookstores (when they began to appear and flourish, especially in big cities), at rallies and marches and celebrations, and through a network of friends and acquaintances.

The poetry varied from frankly pornographic to militantly political, from elegant and beautifully created classical poetic styles to writing that only the broadest definition of poetry could cover .... and maybe just didn't fit into any other category of writing. Publications were anything from a poem published on the program for a memorial service for an author deceased from AIDS to a collector's coffee table book. I decided that for the most part I would collect only poetry either written in English or translated into English, which meant that most of it was written in USA, Canada, Australia, England, Ireland, Scotland, South Africa, and other English speaking countries. There was no political or cultural reason for this, only practical; although I am multilingual, I travel mainly in English and Spanish speaking countries and I only had so much space or money to use collecting. I also decided not to purchase many of the books published by well established authors such as W.H. Auden who would be available from any major library.

Eventually it dawned on me that my collection of hundreds of items, mostly books but also pamphlets and other oddities were an amazing history from ancient times to now concerning the lives and experiences of gay people in all sorts of societies and through all sorts of events. I decided that it was important to preserve this history and its expression by making sure it was archived in a safe and secure institution which would also make it available for the use and enjoyment of anyone who wished to read and/or study poetry and gay men. I hasten to add here that the only reason the collection is gay men and not women is that space and money dictated that; there are women represented in the collection who either have written about gay men or who are contributors to the many anthologies and magazines in the collection. My decision to donate the collection to the University of Wisconsin came about because I was familiar with their rare books and special collections, having worked as a cataloger and reference librarian in the Sixties under Felix Pollack, the rare book curator, with the private press and little magazines collections that were already there; it seemed that the gay poetry collection would fit comfortably with those materials and the slightly "radical" bent of the collection would certainly not be objected to by UW.

So in 1998 I donated my current collection to UW after some negotiations and the happy decision of an old friend of mine deciding to donate a sustaining endowment fund to help process, maintain, and build the poetry collection in the future as a memorial to a friend of his named James Michael Richard Flaherty .... which is why the collection bears not only my name, but Jim's name. The collection has not been publicized very much as yet, but one of the Special Collections librarians and myself are working on that and hope to make its presence and availability known to those who would be interested in using it; at present, if one accesses the U of W Madcat (<http://madcat.library.wisc.edu/>) which is the catalog and calls up the entries under Bemis, Michael F (me) a brief description and the location of the collection appears. The collection has already been cataloged by the Special Collections staff and is available for use on site although it is not yet on line for general use over the Web or on Madcat.

I have continued to collect (there are over 100 books and maybe 125 poets represented in the new collection) and these books will eventually be added to the ones already at UW. There are 1000 titles and over 1500 poets in the collection at UW. In my retirement, which begins next January, I will undoubtedly travel even more than I do now and continue to search out gay poetry wherever I am; I would enjoy hearing from any of our members who are poets or interested in gay poetry of publications or different places to find publications of such poetry. I am listed in the AALL Directory & Handbook.

Michael Bemis

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### **Editor's Farewell**

It has been a pleasure to serve as editor of this newsletter for the past 3 years. My apologies for the crazy publishing schedule over that time.

And my sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the pages of this newsletter.

I hope there is someone out there who is willing to take on this newsletter for the next year. Please contact Ellen Platt if interested. ([eplatt@scu.edu](mailto:eplatt@scu.edu))

-prano

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*Comments to: [Rebecca Alexander](#)  
Last updated 6 July 2000*