

hot flashes

The Feminist Bookstores Network Newsletter

March 1995 Vol. 2 #2

Welcome to Hotflashes #3!

This issue is thick with ideas and successes from other bookstores.

- Thinking about doing fundraising? Herland had a better idea. Kayla and Jennifer threw a New Year's Ball for their community, everyone had a great time and they cleared \$12,000. *See below.*
- Borders opened *across the street* from Sisterhood. And Sisterhood, aided by the media in the LA area, fought back. Sales stayed steady through December. *See page 12.*
- Thinking about implementing a Frequent Reader Discount? Three years into their program New Words thinks it may hurt more than it helps. *See page 3.*
- How can 1400 writers and publishers gather in one place and barely discuss the crisis in bookselling? Mary Ellen Kavanaugh reports from OutWrite. *See page 9.*
- A year or more ago Amazon Bookstore hired Mev Miller as a community networker. Unable to attend the Strategic Planning Conference, Mev wrote up a lot of what she did and sent along samples of support materials — brochures, letters, press releases — that she developed along the way. We've reproduced it all here at the end of this issue. There were so many great ideas that we kept finding ourselves referring to "needing a mev" (an outreach worker) and to "meving" — doing great bookstore promotion. Kasha went back to the Book Garden and hired "a mev" to do 8 hours/week of "meving" for her store. Does it

Continued on page 4

Herland Threw a Party — And Raised \$12,000!

by Beth Morgan

For the second year in a row, Herland (Santa Cruz) threw a Lesbian New Year's Eve Ball for their community, and in one evening managed to raise upwards of \$12,000, enough money to assure that their business loan will be paid off at the end of 1995! Here's the scoop on how Kayla and Jennifer pulled it off and what they learned in the process ...

When Kayla and Jennifer initially came up with the idea, they knew they wanted it to be a "fancy ball" — a place where lesbian women in their community could go on New Year's Eve and feel welcome and celebratory. Their first step was to call around to all the big hotels in the area to find out rental rates and capacity, making sure to inform the hotels that this would be a lesbian event and that they would be selling tickets to offset the

Continued on page 2

Inland's New Return Policy

Thanks to a lot of clear-headed work by Carolyn Gabel and Tollie Miller (Reader's Feast), Inland will be sending you an announcement about their new, revised, returns policy. Carolyn and Tollie discovered, as they were making their post-holiday returns, that Inland had revised their returns policy last fall in such a way that it included a significant penalty for returning backlist. While the new returns terms were printed in Inland's fall catalog, Readers Feast had received no other notice and, after discussing the situation with other booksellers and In-Book publishers, met with David Wilk to discuss the situation. The short version of the story is that the return policy published in the Fall catalog will not be applied and new terms will be announced by letter (in statements, bills, etc.) in April. Carolyn reports that the whole process was very respectful and that, while the new terms will include a 2% penalty on on Inland titles (In-Book titles will be returnable at each store's average InBook discount), they are very satisfied with the changes. ○

Does anyone out there remember ...

what we had in mind at the Strategic Planning Conference when we decided to ask Mev Miller to compile an "anti-chain packet"? This reference was in the notes, but no one seems to recall exactly what it means. If you do, give Mev, Carol or Beth a call!

Herland's Second Annual Lesbian New Year's Eve Ball*

Expenses

Hotel Rental/Dinner . . .	\$8,000
Cheese/Fruit Plate	\$400
DJs/Sound	\$800
Ads/Fliers/Tickets	\$500
Banners/Party Favors . . .	\$450
Raffle Prizes	\$150
Unforeseen	\$250
Total	\$10,550

Revenue

Price per ticket:	\$60
Tickets sold:**	380
Total:	\$22,800

Net Profit: \$12,250

Kayla estimates that both she and Jennifer "donated" approximately 20 hours each into planning the event and making it happen, plus all day the day of the event. Part of this time was the one-hour weekly store meeting they regularly schedule with one another anyway.

*Figures are approximate

**Herland reserved twenty tickets for staff to attend free and/or for promotional purposes.

Herland continued from page 1

cost. This part of the planning happened early — space needs to be booked in January/February of the year *before* the planned event, and exclusive blocks of hotel rooms should be reserved at the same time. Both years Kayla and Jennifer got the hotels to waive rental fees for the party space by agreeing to have the hotel serve dinner. New Year's Eve Ball '93 (NYEB '93) was limited to 100 couples and was held at the Chaminade. Tickets sold out quickly and over 200 women were turned away, so for New Year's Eve Ball '94, (NYEB '94) they booked a larger venue that doubled the capacity of the event (Peachwood's). Kayla reports that both hotels were very interested in tapping into the lesbian/gay market and wanted to be known as gay-friendly places where women might consider holding commitment ceremonies, etc., in the future. Both years, the cost of putting on the event came to about \$11,000 (the Chaminade was pricier than Peachwood's), including dinner, advertising, decorations, and two DJs to do the music. (There were two separate dancing rooms — the Gertrude & Alice Room, playing "romantic" music, jazz and oldies; and the Max & Eli Room, featuring hip-hop and house music.)

Promoting the Ball

To advertise the Lesbian New Year's Eve Balls, Kayla and Jennifer did a direct mailing to the Herland mailing list; sent posters to all Bay Area women's bookstores, lesbian & gay bookstores and gay-friendly places; placed a large ad in the local feminist newspaper; listed on local community radio; and let word-of-mouth do the rest. They specifically decided *not* to advertise in the local mainstream paper — they've suf-

fered backlash from advertising there in the past and didn't want to deal either with harassing phone calls or harassment at the actual event.

Special effort went into making beautiful tickets/brochures to send to women attending the event. The tickets were printed on heavy-stock lavender paper with silver ink, and were sent with a brochure describing dinner options, how to reserve a hotel room for the night of the ball, directions to the hotel, and even the address and phone number of a local woman who makes tuxedos for women!

What They Learned

Kayla made the following observations about NYEB '93 versus '94:

- Bigger is not necessarily better. Having turned away so many women the first year, Herland booked NYEB '94 at Peachwood's larger venue, and requested table-service dinner instead of buffet-style dinner. But despite assurances from Peachwood's that they could handle the event, some women weren't served dinner until 10 PM (Herland received a partial refund for this glitch.) Additionally, the larger event drew women from as far away as Seattle and L.A. — many of these women had never been to Herland and didn't know the event was a fundraiser; they seemed quick to complain about problems that cropped up.

- The bottom line is that the bigger event led to more glitches. Next year Herland will go back to having a smaller event, for local women who support the store year round. Kayla also plans to return to the buffet-style dinner, so that guests can eat on their own schedule.

- Both years the respective hotels broke their agreement to reserve a block of rooms exclusively for Her-

Continued on page 11

The Downside of Frequent Reader Discounts

by Jean MacRae
New Words

In the past several years, some women's and other independent bookstores have implemented various kinds of discount programs as a response to increased competition. In Fall of '91, New Words established a Frequent Reader Discount program the purpose of which was to build customer loyalty at a time when a second women's bookstore had opened in the city and larger bookstores were offering more discounts. Customers receive a stamp for every \$10 they spend, and when they have ten stamps, they are entitled to a 20% discount on their next purchase of up to \$250.

After over three years of experience with this program, New Words can make the following observations: With the exception of the occasional small sale of a card or button bought in order to reach the \$10 increment entitling a customer to a stamp, there is no clear indication that the existence of the frequent reader program has increased sales of merchandise at full price over what they would have been without the program. Whether customers would have bought the books they currently buy at the 20% discount even if they didn't receive a discount, or whether they buy more books because they have the discount is also unknowable.

We do know that the vast majority of sales receiving the discount are sales of under \$100, with more than half of those being sales of under \$50. This suggests that customers are not buying lots of extra books they would not have bought without

the discount. Perhaps most important is that the dollar value of discounts given to customers has grown steadily from year to year to a point where it represents a percentage of sales which is significant to the store.

Customers' comments that they like the discount program is anecdotal evidence that it has perhaps encouraged customers to shop here rather than elsewhere (although it's possible that they like it because it allows them to buy at a lower cost books they would have bought at New Words anyway), but it has done so at the cost of the business.

With respect to the level of the discount, there is a built-in catch: in order to build customer loyalty the discount has to be significant to the customers, but the more significant it is, the more it costs the business. Looking at two extreme cases, it is easy to see that if a store offered a 50% discount on all sales, it would inspire a great deal of loyalty but would be unable to survive. If a store offered a 2% discount to frequent readers the cost might not be great, but such a small discount would have an insignificant impact on customer loyalty.

Is there a happy medium, a discount level at which a store can acquire loyalty but not incur too great a cost? It depends on how many people use the discount and what the discounts amount to. Given the fact that bookstore profits are generally in the range of 1-2%, losses to discounts don't have to be too big to

Continued on page 8

Sidelines Corner

by Kasha Songer
The Book Garden

After a three-and-a-half-day tour of bookstores in the San Francisco region with Carol Seajay (thanks, Carol!), I have many new sidelines to report. My SF trip was one of those benefits I keep mentioning when you become involved in your Regional Booksellers Association or ABA. The trip was free because MPBA was sending me to Palm Springs for a three-day meeting with the ABA Board and other Regional Associations. Oh yes, I squeezed in two-and-a-half days of romping in the ocean as well. Next year I'll be visiting Vancouver compliments of MPBA — call your Regional Association or ABA. Become involved!

And now for the sidelines:

Two Sisters (Palo Alto) was a wonderful surprise. They have the best bookstore energy I've discovered in years. Plus lots of new Goddess art and big woman imagery throughout the store. The displays sparkled — they were well-loved, clean, spacious and original. It reminded me to come home and hug my store. Seajay called it "store petting." She's right. Don't forget to love up your store.

Two Sisters sidelines sources:

- Hawk Dancing Studio (715-265-2756): Good goddesses that fit nicely in your hand. They were wonderfully displayed in a shallow bowl of white rice.

- My Grandmother's Hands (707-528-9039): Kim Soare's leather journals will sell very well! They are

Continued on page 8

Intro continued from page 1

work? Amazon is holding their own — and growing — despite the influx of chains in Minneapolis. Several great new restaurants in the neighborhood are part of the equation, but they sure do have great customer loyalty!

• And at the end of this newsletter you'll find another great article to copy and circulate among your customers reminding them why they want to shop feminist bookstores rather than chain stores.

Elsewhere in the mail, you should have received a mailing from Barb Wieser (Amazon) and Ann Christopherson (Women and Children First) about Feminist Bookstore Days (June 1 & 2) in Chicago and the first mailing on National Feminist Bookstore Week. (Mailing #2 will follow right after this news-

letter.) Ms is running a 2000 word article about feminist bookstores, the chains, and NFBW in their May/June issue — I know 'cause I spent the last week writing it and just sent it off!

Bad news/good news at FBN: We did succeed in getting a green card for Helen, the woman I've been holding FBN's production job for since April 1993. The bad news is that in December, six days after she received her temporary green card (and thus was able to work), she reactivated an old back injury and hasn't been able to work at FBN since. While her injury is healing, it seems quite clear that she won't be able to do extensive computer and paste-up work for a long time to come, and so she has resigned from FBN. Helen provided FBN with a lot of excellent consultation on last year's catalog and we have missed being able to work with

her full time. The good news is that, two weeks after deciding to open the job up again, I was able to hire Kathryn Werhane, a graphic artist and printer with many years of experience in both fields, to be FBN's Production Coordinator. Kathryn has done freelance work for FBN in years past and knows and loves feminist bookstores. I'm excited to be working with her again on a regular basis. She'll join us on April 3 and will start off by laying out the ABA issue of FBN.

And many thanks to Beth, who gathered up all this information and turned it into the newsletter you hold in your hands! —Carol ○



Letters

Dear Carol & Everyone Who Was at the FB-Net Conference in October, I just finished reading all the info on what you accomplished at the meeting. Wonderful! You had great ideas, good strategies, and plans for action. What a fantastic output of work you did. And I love Carol's quote, "We are an intelligent, over-qualified group of people: if we could start our stores in the first place, dealing with the chains shouldn't be that big of a deal."

I'm finally getting excited again!

Joan Denman
Rubyfruit

Dear FBN-ers,
We love the bookmarks; thank you! We did survive moving and computerizing at the same time, but I do not recommend it. We've also come

out of our worst cash flow crisis in recent years, and I think the new location is going to make the difference for us. It is a much more exciting place for us in many ways.

In sisterhood,

Izzy Harbaugh
Mother Kali's

Dear Carol & Beth,
How did you manage getting out such a great newsletter in the midst of all your other projects? It's a marvel. You pulled together, into coherent sentences, the flood of ideas we poured out at the Conference — now the rest of New Words will finally know what went on during those four infamous days! What a productive group, especially with you two at the helm.

My excitement returned as I read

committee reports, and other info and updates. But my sadness was equally strong, reading the letter from Carol and Sally. I knew it was coming, and understand all too well the choices they faced — but we so much hoped they could make it, despite the odds. We're seeing too many sister bookstores in the Northeast close down.

The article in *Women's Review of Books* says it all. This is a piece we'll copy and distribute to customers — and one to quote from in the midst of the perennial conversation with friends that begins, "But what's wrong with shopping at Borders?"

Thanks again for putting together exactly what we need!

—Laura Zimmerman
New Words ○

Buying & Selling Used Books

by Patty Callaghan
Brigit Books

Inspired by several requests for reprints of Patty Callaghan's 1992 FBN article on selling used books, I asked Patty if we could run it again in Hotflashes, and she said, "Sure!" and updated it for us.

Selling used books — the same kinds of books that sell best for you in the rest of the store, plus a few out-of-print finds — is one more way to distinguish your store from the chains. Furthermore, according to ABA's research department, sales in used bookstores nearly doubled during the year studied (April 1992 to March 1993) and, during the same period, independent bookstores lost 4% of their sales to used bookstores. ABA doesn't study feminist bookstores in particular, but I'd bet money that most of us are losing sales to used bookstores, too. And that some of our would-be customers are reading not-particularly-feminist used books because that's what they can find and afford. When it comes to selling used books, the hardest part — and a skill well-worth developing — is saying "no" to the books that you aren't confident will sell quickly. But what you get are: happy customers, increased loyalty, good profits, and another source of income. Well worth the effort!

—Carol

Why Sell Used Books?

Selling used books along with new ones is a win-win-win situation. The woman selling her used books to the bookstore gets cash (hopefully to spend in the store) and makes more room on her shelves for more books; the customer buying the used book saves money; and the bookseller

makes a profit (and benefits in other ways as well).

Recently there was an article in *Publisher's Weekly* by an author whose opinion is that used books "steal" sales from new books. Although *sometimes* this may be the case, I have found used and new books to be different commodities. I have customers who buy *only* used books and who would buy them elsewhere if I didn't have any. Used books help increase foot traffic and increase the possibility you will sell a new book, or other item, to the customer. I also have customers who buy new books and not used even if a used one is available. If a new book comes out by a popular author people don't wait for a used copy. And generally, only new books are given as gifts. Carrying used books helps me expand my stock with books that are out of print, or books I might not have carried as new titles. A reason to sell used lesbian books specifically is that no one else may be doing that in your community and you can make books available to women who cannot afford new copies. I have had customers buy a used book and then want to read other books by that author so they buy some new books. I also use my used book section as a "dumping ground" for new books I can't or don't return and that have been around awhile. Hopefully I can get back what I paid for them. Used books are easy to handle, too. I keep no inventory records on them because they aren't replaced.

One last, but best, reason to sell

Continued on page 6

Brigit Books Breakdown of Sales* 1/94 - 10/94

	BOOKS
New Books	59.9%
Used Books	5.26%
Periodicals	4.18%
Subtotal	69.34%
SIDELINES	
Buttons/Stickers	2.0%
Calendars	0.72%
Cards	6.0%
Tee Shirts	2.69%
Incense	1.38%
Jewelry	5.38%
Music (CDs, cassettes)	8.58%
Subtotal	32.09%
MISC	3.91%

* figures approximate

And Elsewhere ...

Martha Cabrera of Textures in San Antonio started her used books section at the request of customers. Martha's experience is that folks who buy from the used books section are usually on a tight budget. Martha buys at 10-25% of the cover price, depending on age and condition (she gives store credit only — no cash). She sells the books at 50% of cover price — and there's no shipping charges to take a bite out of the profit!

Does your store have a used books section? If so, FB-Net would love to hear how you run it and how well it's working for your store. Drop us a line!

—Beth

Used Books continued from page 5

used books is that it's *fun*. I love seeing again some of the books from the beginning days of the lesbian/feminist movement — from presses like Diana, Daughters, and Persephone — *The First Sex, Mothers and Amazons*, early Judy Grahn. What a rich culture we have!

How To Begin

I started to sell used books, on the advice of my lover, when I first opened, and so publicized it when I advertised. An already existing store could make flyers, advertise in local publications or put out a press release that you're buying used books. Let women know the kinds of books you want to buy. Maybe offer an incentive to get them in to sell you so you can start off the section with enough books. Let them know you pay cash. You can also look in thrift stores and go to used book sales. In the beginning I went to other used bookstores and bought if the price was right. Check your own bookshelves. There are probably some books you could part with. Once you get started and people know you pay a fair price, they will bring in their used books. It seems to run in spurts and I've asked my astrologer about it, but so far we've found no answer in the stars.

Pricing

Buy good quality books only, not marked in, not too dogeared. Your customers will appreciate your selection. If I don't want any or all of someone's books I give them alternative stores to try. Books I sell best used are the same category I sell best new: lesbian novels, "women's studies," women's fiction, spirituality, psychology/recovery and metaphysical. I don't buy used children's books. I only buy magazines if they are out-of-print or popular ones like *Woman of Power* and only in top con-

dition. Trial and error will help you know what to buy. If I'm not here (I do all the buying) they leave the books and I call to tell them their credit. I just keep the adding machine tape with their name and date. Most people don't seem to mind.

Pricing varies from store to store. It may help to look at other stores in your area and find out what they pay. I pay 20% of the cover price for paperbacks and sell them for 60% (or more) of the cover price. I pay only \$2 for hardbacks with dust jackets because I find they sell best for \$4-6. You may have to pay more and may be able to sell them for more. Sometimes I pay a little more for out-of-print books I know I can sell quickly.

I pay cash, give credit, or write a check on occasion. Most people want the credit to use right away, some to use later, and some need the cash for groceries.

Profit on Used and New Books

Lesbian Novel \$8.95

	USED	NEW 40%	NEW 45%
RE-TAIL	6.00	8.95	8.95
COST	1.80	5.37	4.92
PROFIT	4.20	3.58	4.03

Mass Market \$4.95

	USED	NEW 40%	NEW 46%
RE-TAIL	3.00	4.95	4.95
COST	1.00	2.97	2.77
PROFIT	2.00	1.98	2.18

(Freight cost not included.)

The time it takes to handle, say, 20-30 used books is maybe 5-10 minutes to buy, mark the price, and shelve. I also put a red sticker on the spine to distinguish them.

Shelving

I shelve used books separately. Some stores interfile them with new books. The used lesbian books are just across the aisle from the new ones. Other categories I shelve together in another space under categories mentioned above. I use "women's studies" as a used book category because it's a broad category and many used book buyers are browsers. I don't shelve the books in any order within categories (except fiction) because I only have about 1,000 used books and if someone wants a specific title I can usually find it. About once a year or when I need the space I weed the used books and put them on a sale table to get them out the door. It's important to turn them over once in a while.

Two books with additional information are: the *ABA Manual on Book-selling* which has one chapter on selling used books and *The Complete Guide to Starting a Used Bookstore* by Dale L. Gilbert, Chicago Review Press, \$11.95. Although this has a lot of redundant information for an already existing store, there are some useful ideas. He explains how to trade books if you prefer to do it that way.

I have "Used Books" as a department on Booklog and my used sales are between 5-6% of my *total* sales — about 10% of my book sales. My shelves seem to be almost full most of the time, so I'm selling and buying at a uniform pace. If the shelves start to get too full, I become more selective. I'd like to hear ideas from others of you who sell used books or are considering it.

Sharing Section Lists

Donna Niles of Amazon Books reports that she has thus far received three requests for section lists; all three for the list of gay and lesbian youth titles. Each list was sent out promptly, but since there's no vehicle in place for feedback, Donna can only assume that the lists were helpful. —Amazon Books

FB-Net Bookmark Update

The first annual (?) Feminist Bookstore Network bookmark was completed and mailed out to Network stores at the end of November. If you didn't get one, call My Sisters' Words, 315-428-0227.

The bookmark has both the artwork Nicole Hollander did for our current ad and a quotation from Alice Walker. Carolyn at Reader's Feast worked with Ms. Walker and obtained her permission to use the excerpt from her statement in the letter that is circulating to feminist authors regarding supporting feminist bookstores. Amy Bartell of Syracuse Cultural Workers, and an artist in her own right, did the graphics. Amy, who was living in my house at the time, did the work in exchange for November's rent. Here at My Sisters' Words, the bookmarks have been a hit. I've printed them on bright colors and as we hand them out to customers, we talk about the Feminist Bookstore Network.

No store has given me any feedback, so I'm not sure who's using the bookmarks or how they are working. If we're going to do this again, let's think about what works and what doesn't. One last note — the last issue of Hotflashes advised you to send \$5 to me to cover the costs if you didn't pay me in October

at the conference. Not so! I've been repaid by FB-Net, so send your \$5 to FB-Net and clearly mark what the money is for.

Thanks to Harriet, Carolyn, Beth, and Ann for their work and support!

—Mary Ellen Kavanaugh

Reader's Feast "Grandmothered" into FB-Net Membership

The results of the postcard vote to "grandmother" Reader's Feast into Network membership are in, and the ayes have it! Here's the vote breakdown:

- 57 YES (46 YES, 11 "If it's ok with the Steering Committee, it's ok with us")
- 2 NO
- Comments: If we do this for Reader's Feast, we should also admit the Gualala Girls into membership.

Congrats to Reader's Feast! —fbn ○

Great Quotes!

"Find a Feminist Bookstore as near to where you live as possible and go there to find your books and buy as many as possible."

"This is a revolution that has written more in 20 years than most do in 200 years."

—Carolyn G. Heilbrun
Women Reviewing Women Conference
November '93

Keep your business in the community. Keep your community in business!

—Herland Books

Hot Flashes Deadlines

Deadline next issue (#4):
April 27
Deadline #5 (tentative):
June 9

Brilliant Strategies!

Mary Ellen Kavanaugh (My Sisters' Words) runs the following announcement in the store newsletter: Every Thursday and Friday evening between 5-8 PM, we'll hide a \$15 gift certificate in a book somewhere in the store. If you find it, it's yours! And even if you don't find it, you'll certainly find some real gems you might have missed on earlier visits to the store.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Feminist Bookstore Network is to support feminist bookstores. This is a working organization for women-run, women-owned bookstores that are primarily committed to feminist (including lesbian) work. With strong membership, the Feminist Bookstore Network will facilitate stronger communication between feminist bookstores; organize joint projects to benefit member bookstores, provide greater visibility of feminist bookstores to the general bookselling and publishing communities and to the public, provide a united public image for feminist bookstores whenever necessary or desired; serve as a lobbying force for feminist bookstores; and organize Feminist Bookstore days at the ABA. ○

Sidelines continued from page 3

brightly-dyed soft leather with medicine pouches attached to the front cover. Buy these!

- Earthmother Taliswoman (916-235-2717): Andrea creates goddesses from \$4 in a rainbow of colors, to \$150 for glazed goddesses — the beige and copper goddess flies out the door.

- Art & Soul (602-284-1899, area code changes to 520 on June 1, 1995): LeAnn Cortese creates goddess switch plates cut out of metal and hand-painted (see graphic this page). Approximately \$25.

Herland (Santa Cruz) sideline sources:

- Herland has the best hats I've seen! They're from the Feel Good Company (510-548-3467): Julie Stevens is the woman to speak with. My favorite is a bell cap with stick figures of a "Dyke and her Dog" embroidered on the back.

- Ravenwood (800-777-5021): They have black cat candles that will be just right for some stores. These candles sell well at Herland.

Boadecia's (Kensington) has some good sidelines I'm surprised I haven't seen before:

- Freedom Ring Earrings: If you aren't doing business with Gayla G (800-429-5248), then try Diane Manley (510-527-0511). It looks like Diane may give a tad better quality for a slightly lower price.

- Evolution Designs (512-338-9671): It took me a while to find these authentic, slightly-less-expensive Darwin fish stickers.

- Remember Feminist Forge? They're doing clocks now. They're

hard to describe, but I'm taking one home with me. These clocks look like white plaster, lightly brushed with a bright color. Instead of numbers there are 12 tasteful nude women. Write to Carolyn Whitehorn, PO Box 339, Willits CA 95490.

- Runes by Penny Carr (510-848-5966): If you're not sick to death of runes, these caught my fancy. They're small (chiclet sized!), deep bold colors with a matching hand-sewn cloth bag — \$20.

And finally, Lioness Books (Sacramento) has had the courage to try the t-shirt display showing up in music stores. Each t-shirt is wrapped around a square of cardboard then slipped into a ziploc bag. The bags are 12" x 12". Then you file the shirts in cubicles (wire or milk carton) and stack the cubes. It's a little work intensive, but no more rickety racks or losses on dirty shirts. The customers don't pull the shirts out of the bags — that was my concern. I think it's a fresh look for an old sideline. There is no one secret source for the cardboards and ziplocs. Call the bag and cardboard companies in your city. We plan to unwrap the shirt as it's sold. The customer gets to check it out and we can reuse the cardboard and plastic.

—Kasha Songer
The Book Garden ○

Editor's Note: Kasha encourages everyone to call sidelines companies instead of writing to them — writing takes the same amount of money, more time, and less information is gathered. If you disagree and would like addresses run with sidelines in the future, give us a call here at FB-Net headquarters!

Discounts continued from page 3

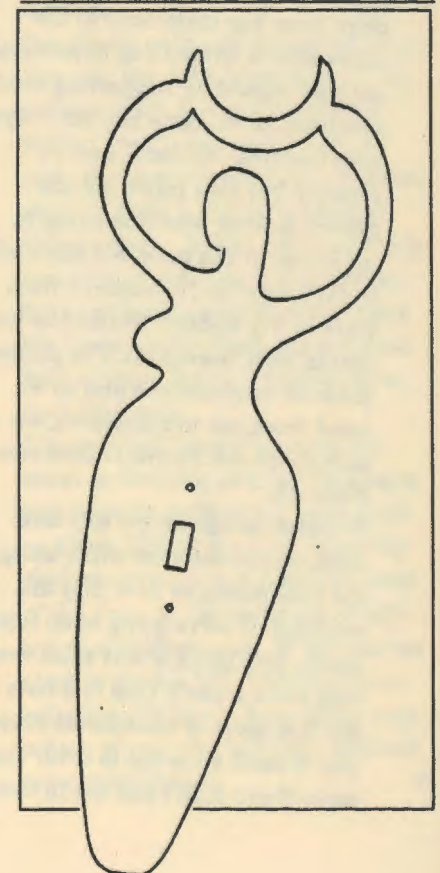
have a negative impact on the business. In order to sustain any loss to discounts, a bookstore probably has to be big enough to achieve some economies of scale, a level of volume which may be too much higher than that of women's bookstores.

The big catch is that the more successful a discount program is, the more it costs the business. If it's not successful, it has little positive impact, and if it is successful, it has a greater negative impact.

Those bookstore owners considering starting a discount program can call New Words for more detailed information on our experience with this program. ○

Note: Does anyone have an analysis of Membership Programs in which customers pay money upfront for a membership and then receive a discount on books? Are these programs cost effective, or do they, too, cut into the bottom line?

—Carol



REPORT FROM OUTWRITE '95

by Mary Ellen Kavanaugh
My Sisters' Words

OutWrite '95 was held in Boston March 3-5. After some friendly encouragement from Carolyn at Reader's Feast and very persuasive encouragement from my girlfriend to "get out of town," I jumped in the car with a friend and made the five hour trip from Syracuse.

The conference was extremely well organized and the digs were luscious. The agenda for the weekend covered topics of interest to writers and publishers, but nary a word about bookselling was offered at any panel. Feeling a bit invisible, I spoke with Carolyn and Tollie, and Laura from New Words in Boston, and we agreed something needed to be said/done. Laura graciously agreed to talk with the organizers, who agreed this had been an oversight and that, because the closing plenary was to be a performance piece, there wasn't much that could be done this year. They did however agree to take this into consideration next year.

Well, I'm stymied. Didn't *anyone* have a clue about the state of bookselling in the U.S. now? Didn't anyone wonder how that might affect publishers or writers? I find it more than odd that at a conference of this size (1400 registrants, including 300 panelists as of 8 PM Friday), no one chose to address at any length the state of bookselling. I did notice some authors taking the opportunity in one-on-one conversations, but it didn't come up much anyplace that I was.

I had two experiences where I felt as if feminist bookstores took a bit of a beating. One of the conference workers told me that her heterosexual sister used to shop in my store when she lived in Syracuse and felt uncomfortable there. She then generalized that well, perhaps it was all feminist bookstores. When I pressed her for details there were none and she finally backed off with "I only had 20 minutes sleep last night." A few hours later at a panel on the generation gap among lesbians, I made the point that in some cities, younger lesbians were identifying with the lesbian/gay movement and therefore spending their money at lesbian/gay bookstores instead of feminist bookstores. A young woman responded that she knows of at least one feminist bookstore that lost its young customers by refusing to carry more cutting-edge stuff (with a reference to S/M stuff). Even though these questions make me feel a twinge defensive, I think the points are well worth considering. How clearly can you identify who your audience is? Who else might your audience be? Are there groups who don't feel welcome in your store? How do we balance carrying what we believe we should carry with what the public wants? Are those two things often different? How do we reconcile that difference?

Opening Plenary

Linda Villarosa (*Body & Soul: The Black Women's Guide to Physical Health and Emotional Well-Being*) and Tony Kushner (*Angels in America*) were the opening speakers. Both were excellent. Villarosa thoughtfully encouraged the lesbian/gay movement to learn lessons from the Civil Rights movement

Continued on page 10

No Comment ...

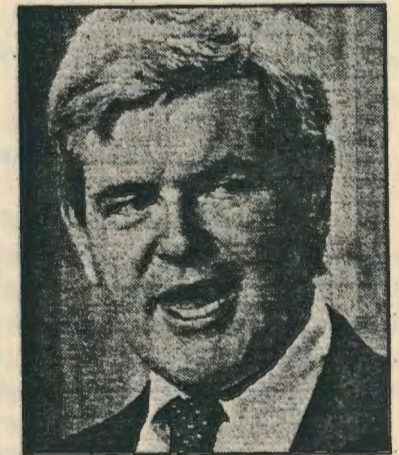
ABA to Newt: Let's Do Lunch

Newt Gingrich will address a "Power Lunch" at the June convention of the American Booksellers Association in Chicago, but Chicago booksellers who were invited to recommend speakers aren't happy with the arrangements.

"We're just insulted that it was done behind our back. And we don't even know when his book is coming out," committee member **Roberto Rubín** told the Washington Post.

ANA executive director **Bernie Rath**, the guy who invited the House majority leader, seems to think that if the committee doesn't like it, they can lump it.

"The committee members were under the impression that they were making all the decisions," Rath told the Post, "but they serve an advisory function. I'm putting together a power lunch. Newt's got a million-copy book coming out in the fall. I asked Newt and he said yes."



Gingrich: an offer he didn't refuse

Reprinted from the *San Francisco Chronicle* Datebook Section, March 7, 1995

OutWrite continued from page 9

of the '60s. She urged white gay activists to forge relationships with black communities and urged all to do better than just ask for a place at the table. She also pointed out that her book is not for Black women only; that white women were free to search its pages for useful information just as Black women have had to search through white women's health books for ages. Right on, Linda!

Because Cherrie Moraga was ill and could not attend to give the Audre Lorde memorial lecture, *A Litany of Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde* was shown. The film by Ada Gay Griffin and Michelle Parkerson has been 10 years in the making and is stunning. Although they did not provide information about distribution, the filmmakers can be reached at Third World Newsreel, 335 W. 38th St., New York, NY 10018, 212-947-9277.

The Panels

The panels were numerous, and since I couldn't be in more than one place at a time, I can only tell you about those I attended.

• **Creative Non-Fiction — A Queer Genre:** This panel was a great opener. Minnie Bruce Pratt said she thinks the great struggle of this century is between "either/or" and "both/and." A great deal of conversation centered around what is truth and can one tell the truth without the facts and about how we are creating our truth every moment out of the chaos around us. It was a good mindstretch for my brain which I fear has become rusty with ISBNs and bill paying and it gave me a great new category for the store (for all those books that aren't exactly fiction or exactly essays or exactly memoirs).

As a side note, I heard a great deal (of complaints) from authors about where their books are shelved in bookstores.

• **Lavender Herrings — Queer Guilt and Mysteries:** This panel was both a disappointment and fun. Apparently someone had suggested that guilt might play some part in our fascination with mysteries. None of the panelists thought so, so that ended that discussion. Sandra Scopetone thought that life was a mess and mysteries were neat, and that may explain their appeal. Someone else (Ellen Hart, maybe) suggested they are modern morality tales. A lot of conversation centered around who is reading lesbian/gay mysteries (straight versus queer).

• **Feminism and Lesbian Writing — Is There a Generation Gap?:** I personally found this one of the better panels. Rachel Pepper (*Deneuve*) claimed young women are more image conscious. Donna Allegra said it hurt to hear young dykes criticize the contributions of those who've been around. She also cautioned dykes not to think that the mainstream is representing us as we are. It was at this panel that I spoke up about feminist bookstores and the discussion mentioned above went on for a while.

• **Gay and Lesbian Fiction Writers Before and After the Boom:** This panel was both irritating and enlightening. All the authors on the panel are published by mainstream houses. Lisa Alther, who claims to be happily out of touch in Vermont, said she did not see any boom happening for lesbians. She said it was dangerous for women to forget their feminism and that women still make only 71 cents to men's dollar and that it must be this 29 cents that is allowing men to buy hardcover books. Carla

Tomaso said she could only tell the story of her own experience of moving from a feminist press to a mainstream press. She dismissed a question someone had asked at a previous panel about the difference between what was being published at feminist presses and what was being published at mainstream presses — too bad; I thought it was a discussion worth pursuing. David Groff, the only (ex) editor on the panel asked how writers are setting their visions. He sees plays as being more expansive than fiction and asked if we have a language to communicate across age differences. He cautioned authors not to be slaves to their market and later briefly explained to the audience why they needed to be buying their books at lesbian/gay stores and not superstores (no mention of feminist stores). An audience member repeated information from another discussion: there seemed to be some agreement between a feminist publisher and a representative from a large house that the print run on lesbian/gay titles is probably about the same whether it occurs at a small press or a larger one.

• **Women in the Shadows — Lesbian Life, Love and Literature Before Stonewall:** This panel warmed the cockles of my little lesbian heart. The great story of the afternoon was from Ann Bannon, who, it turns out, was mentored by Sandra Scopetone and Vin Packer (alias Ann Aldrich alias M.E. Kerr). Bannon surfaced to talk about her life. She was an elegant speaker who advised us "that because someone is masquerading as a housewife in Southern California doesn't mean the fires aren't burning." She called Barbara Grier a national treasure and praised her

Continued on page 11

OutWrite continued from page 10 for saving women's voices. Grier talked about the library she and Donna McBride have donated to the San Francisco Public Library for the archives to be housed there. She also noted that Xerox donated \$250,000 to put all this work on CD ROM and that the NEA has funded \$216,000 to de-acidify the books. Donna said that 78% of what has been catalogued so far has never before been catalogued. Linnea Stetson was the "academic historian" on the panel and thanked Grier and Maida Tilchen for the groundbreaking work each of them has done outside the academy which made it possible for her to even begin to do academic work in the area of lesbian herstory/literature. More than any panel, this one reminded me of why I do the work I do and was a great way to end the conference. The closing plenary was a perfor-

mance by Luis Alfaro, a Mexican-American from L.A. I watched a few minutes of his very exciting show, but had to leave for home. His work looks good and you might want to watch for a visit from him to your home town. ○

Last Minute Mail!

"Keep up the good work! We are already excited about Feminist Bookstores Week."

— *Prairie Moon Bookstore
Palatine, IL*

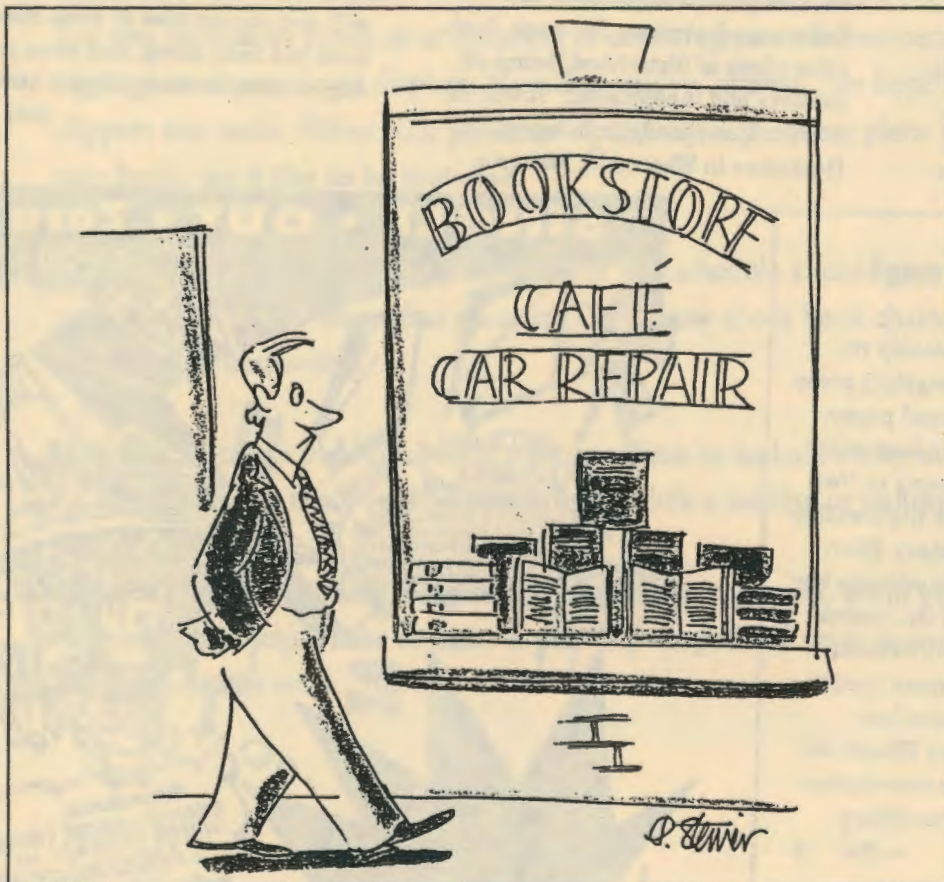
Herland continued from page 2

land guests, resulting in some harassment of women by other guests at the hotels. Kayla and Jennifer will seriously address this issue with management at the Chaminate if they return to the smaller hotel for New Year's Eve Ball '95.

- The first year Herland provided champagne and non-alcoholic champagne at midnight, but this turned out to be quite wasteful; the second year they provided a no-host bar.
- Based on feedback from NYEB '93, Kayla and Jennifer put a lot more energy into decorating and party favors for NYEB '94, and this went over very well with those who attended. (They'd love to find a company that produces environmentally sound party favors and decorations — if you know of any such suppliers, give Herland a call: 408-429-6636.)
- NYEB '93 was professionally videotaped, but Herland didn't keep a formal guestlist, so the effort didn't pay off in terms of selling the video to those who attended (guests were also given the option to be edited from the video). A local photographer set up shop at NYEB '94, taking polaroid shots and selling them to guests. Herland got a percentage of each sale, and the photographer got a lot of community "exposure."

PR Panache

And finally, two strategies that illustrate Herland's flair for good public relations: Since the NYEB is specifically lesbian, Herland will throw a pool party this summer, open to everyone in the Herland community. And instead of trying to parcel out the Peachwood dinner-glitch refund money to women whose dinner was served late, Herland will instead put on a free all-women dance this Spring. ○



Great Press and Great Promotion Get the Job Done for Sisterhood

It's every store's nightmare, and some stores' daily reality, but what really happens when "the chains come marching in?" It can vary from region to region and from store to store. For instance, Valley Women (Fresno) reports that Barnes & Noble moved in and duplicated all of Valley Women's services (including poetry night and other kinds of groups), and that people in Fresno "worship the big store like a cathedral." Carolyn Gabel at Reader's Feast (Hartford) told us that sales — already down 3% from the recession — dropped 12% the minute Borders opened, even though Barnes & Noble had previously opened a store in the area *without* causing a similar drop in business. The difference, says Gabel, is that Borders actively solicits the customer base of Reader's Feast. This story illustrates how crucial it is for feminist bookstores

(and other independents) to *educate the customers they already have*. That kind of education can happen on many fronts, and media exposure of the real issues involved is one crucial strategy. Sisterhood Books in L.A. is a case in point. Even though a Borders opened up across the street from them, through a combined strategy of good press and an intensive promotional effort, their sales stayed steady through December. Here's what the press did for Sisterhood and other local independent bookstores: *The Westside*, a local news section of the *Los Angeles Times*, ran a long and detailed article (by Penelope Moffet) heavily slanted toward Sisterhood. The front page features a full-page, four-color photo of Sisterhood facing off Borders and is captioned, "A War of Words: Sisterhood, an Independent Bookstore in Westwood, Makes a

Stand Against a Big National Chain Opening Across the Street." (We ran a small b&w version of this photo in the Bookstore News column in FBN 17#6). And the *Westsider*, a local L.A. independent paper, ran a smaller article prior to Borders moving in, with a similar front-page photo, lots of info about local independent booksellers who had closed, and several paragraphs about Sisterhood's unique niche in the L.A. bookselling community. The *Lesbian News* and other local papers ran similar articles. But Sisterhood hasn't left it all up to the press — they've launched a concerted promotional effort to educate their community and to draw new business. The next seven pages will give you an idea of what Sisterhood has been doing, and what you might consider doing at your store.

— Beth ○

More Great Press!

My Sisters' Words (Syracuse) recently received some outstanding (and *lengthy!*) press in *The Herald American*, their local paper. The article, by Katherine Scobey, begins by talking about Judith's Room closing in New York City, and goes on to outline the creative and very successful strategies Mary Ellen Kavanaugh has come up with to educate her community about the impact of the chains and to enlist community support to make sure feminist bookselling continues to survive and thrive in New York State (see *Hotflashes* January '95 for Mary Ellen's letter to her community and their overwhelmingly positive response). Congrats Mary Ellen!


— fbn ○





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
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When a woman writer is welcomed by the mainstream press, it gives all of us a sense of accomplishment. Congratulations! At Sisterhood Bookstore we are very excited about your success. 

Like other women's bookstores around the country,  Sisterhood has done a great deal in the last two decades to create an atmosphere of encouragement for women writers—with readings, signings, and prominent displays. Now that you've "arrived", we hope that you will continue to support our work. When your publisher's publicity department plans  a tour to promote your new book, **we'd like to be included.**

Don't assume that the publicity department will schedule a reading or signing at Sisterhood. They probably don't even know that we exist. They know about book chains; they often don't know about independent booksellers.

 So, since the publicity people may not think to include a stop at Sisterhood, will you take the time to tell them that you'd like them to schedule a reading or signing with us? You have power now.

Women's bookstores, and independent booksellers in general, are in great jeopardy in this economy. We need your help. Please consider it part of your political work to see that we're included in your book promotion tour. 

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For twenty-two years, Sisterhood Bookstore has been taking a stand.
Now we are asking you to stand with us.

Through all the years when women's issues were "in" and through all the years when they weren't, we have been here for you. Although there are periodic media announcements that women have at last achieved equality, our overflowing bookshelves, our crowded bulletin boards, and the posters on our walls *tell a different story.*

We would like to be able to continue telling that story. This is why we are asking for your support. Our sales have been down this past year due in part to the recession, the earthquake, and the proliferation of corporate-owned chain bookstores.

Chain "superstores" have become a particular problem in recent years to all independent bookstores. While a chain store may carry some of the same titles we do, perhaps at a lower price, **profit** is always their bottom line, not the concepts and values in the books they are selling. The gender and lesbian studies section in a chain store will disappear the moment it ceases to be profitable. And that decision will be made thousands of miles away at corporate headquarters. Sisterhood Bookstore is a community resource that stands up for women's and gay rights whether or not it is popular to do so.



Our commitment to empowering women will never take a back seat to the profit motive.

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SUPPORT DIVERSITY IN BOOKSELLING! SUPPORT INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORES!

Bookstore chains are in the news again. With the national decline of mall shopping, the big bookstore chains have found themselves in financial trouble. In response to this development, they are striking out at independent book stores by opening up so called "superstores". These stores, modeled loosely on large independents, seek to target the same markets. In many instances the chains open stores next door or across the street from successful independents. Their aim is clearly to ruin these honorable independent stores and displace them.

But do not be fooled by the chains' broad aisles and stained wood veneer book shelves. They are not like independents, and their oligopolistic marketing strategy poses a serious threat to diversity in the book business and in the world of ideas.

The "superstores" are formula stores, managed from a central office with no real links to the local communities. Their employees have high turnover, because they are paid low wages. For the most part, they are not experienced booksellers. Chain book buying for the stores is done at the central offices without regard for the unique character of the communities they serve. In many cases, these are the same buyers who buy for the mass market book stores in the shopping malls. As mass merchants, the chains conceive of ideas as so much "product," to be marketed like cans of tuna.

Retail bookselling is the primary system for the distribution of ideas in our culture. Publishers may discover new writers or brilliant and original intellectuals, but booksellers bring these writers and their ideas to their readers. **We are concerned that the retail distribution of books is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few large corporations.** Economic concentration is occurring in many sectors of the world economy, but we feel that book distribution is unique and critically important to our culture. It is too vital to leave in the hands of a few large corporations.

Bookselling at its best is not just a job: it's a vocation or a calling. Independent booksellers bring their own individual sensibilities to their stores. They are rooted in the communities they serve. Together, independent booksellers guarantee that there will be a diverse market for the broadest range of books, not just for highly commercial bestsellers.

The growth of chain stores has been fueled by secret deals and unfair trade practices, advantages extracted from publishers by the chains' economic clout. The Federal Trade Commission has been investigating these practices for a number of years. These unfair practices have made it more and more difficult for independent stores to compete with these giants on a level playing field.

In the final analysis, the only ally of the independent bookseller is you, the book reading public. In the name of all that we value in our literary culture, do not let the independent bookseller become an endangered species.

We urge you to support your independent bookstores.

Reprinted from Andy Ross, *Cody's Books*, Berkeley, California

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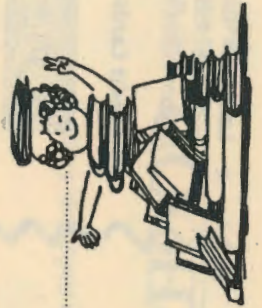
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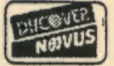


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Get Mev'ed!

A year or more ago Amazon Bookstore hired Mev Miller as a community networker. Unable to attend the Strategic Planning Conference, Mev wrote up a lot of what she did and sent along samples of support materials — brochures, letters, press releases — that she developed along the way. We've reproduced it all here at the end of this issue. There were so many great ideas that we kept finding ourselves referring to "needing a mev" (an outreach worker) and to "meving" — doing great bookstore promotion. Kasha went back to the Book Garden and hired "a mev" to do 8 hours/week of "meving" for her store. Does it work? Amazon is holding their own — and growing — despite the influx of chains in Minneapolis. Several great new restaurants in the neighborhood are part of the equation, but they sure do have great customer loyalty!

There's some wonderful ideas in the following packet. Some are so ready-to-go you can just copy them onto your own stationery and fly with them!

Enormous thanks to Mev and to Amazon Books for putting all of this together and sharing it with the rest of us.

Notes on Community Networking for Feminist Bookstores (as done by Mev at Amazon)

I spend eight hours of time per week at Amazon focusing on community networking (outreach). During these hours, the staff has agreed that I NOT be interrupted with the daily business of the store (no answering phones or working the cash register). Because we have the room off the sales floor, I have my own desk and phone and index cards so that I can do this work in an organized way (a luxury I know few stores probably have!). My job description as first written early included the following items:

- 1) contact feminist/women's organizations in the Twin Cities & outstate areas in order to advise them of the presence of Amazon Bookstore, remind them of our services, find out the kinds of work they do (if not immediately obvious) and establish some kind of on-going contact with them
- 2) contact (and re-contact) university women's studies professors, especially at the Univ. of Minn. but also other area colleges. Also, the women's studies depts., women's centers & other campus organization...ditto #1. As part of this, I also continue to cultivate the professors in order to encourage them to order coursebooks from us
- 3) put together a pamphlet about the stores services and store packet similar to Women & Children First
- 4) update and maintain the bulletin boards, resource books, etc.—develop a sort of "Welcome Packet" for women new to the area which is kept in the store

I've been doing this work for the past year now and the job has expanded a bit beyond the above description. What I will list here are some of the strategies I've used, ideas that the staff has developed, and specific tasks I've done over the past year. They are not listed here in any particular order. Some of them I'm sure you already have done or currently do but it's good for all of us to be reminded periodically of obvious things.

- having focused, uninterrupted time has been a great help. 8 hours still isn't much which means that having it be protected time means I get a lot more done with it

- whoever does this work should be good with details, able to do many things simultaneously, be outrageously creative, have good phone personality, write a good letter, etc. (all the traits necessary for any feminist bookstore worker!)

- IMMEDIATE follow-up (call backs, thank yous, mailed information, etc.) is essential. I split my 8 hours into two 4 hour chunks. It gives people more opportunity to reach me and helps my response time to be a bit quicker. Also, I check in at the store periodically for messages and, because I mostly work at home, the staff knows they can call me for urgent items (and probably I'll call back within a day if I happen to be out).

- I'm trying to train myself (and Barb) to think of more things as newsworthy items that deserve a press release (it's free advertising if you can get the media to use it!). Obviously, you don't want to do everything this way, but I think there's a lot more we can do with it than we know. (See the attached press release I recently did about Amazon's services as an example.) I've put the general outline of a press release into the computer so that when I want to, I can just fill in the particular details

- develop a media list: TV, radio, newspapers, community papers & special interest papers AND DON't FORGET—a lot of organizations have mailing lists and regular newsletters. If they think it's important to their constituency, they include it so send press releases to them too as appropriate!

- we have a monthly newsletter that Barb puts together with new books, events, etc. I try as much as possible to put some community networking item in it: reminder about the resource books, call for volunteers, reminders that we sell books at conferences, etc.

- many of the organizations etc. are on our mailing list in the computer so that they will get our newsletter but I keep my own file box of organizations close at hand (I don't always have access to the computer and, personally, this is one thing I prefer to do the "old-fashioned" way). Items on the card include: organization name, address, phone number, contact person and dated notes about any kind of interaction I have with them including mailings sent

- get hold of any local community directories you can. I have the following: Women's Press Business Directory (contains many women's businesses and organizations), CerNet Directory (contains all the gay and lesbian groups, businesses, etc.), Black Yellow Pages, Asian-American Yellow Pages, First Call for Help (several state regional locations—service organizations compiled by the United Way)—and I'm always looking for more. Advertisements in community papers also have helped me add to my lists

- look through with a watchful eye as many local community papers as you can stand. Around here, there's a lot: 2 gay papers, the women's press, Asian Pages, 2 Native American papers, 2 African-American papers, a paper for the recovery community and more—and as many organizational newsletters that may get mailed to you. I pay special close attention to the women's and gay papers. I look for event advertising, community groups I might not already know about, specific kinds of news—anything that will put me in touch with important groups or individuals. I've been able to glean a lot of information from this and it has provided me with some ideas for other events, etc. that we can do. I also use it as a way to find out who is sponsoring conferences. I contact them so that we can get asked to do sales at their next event! (I also do this too with event flyers that come in from organizations,)

- get on as many mailing lists as you can. I haven't done it yet but a future idea I have is to start putting them in a place where our customers can read these newsletters too!

- keep a log of everything you do and read through it periodically. For one thing, it reminds you of how much you've done, especially when you feel like you've done nothing! Also, it helps remind you of good ideas you once had and helps you remember if you did something in particular or not (especially useful for us aging, getting forgetful types!).

- This is what I did for contacting organizations:

- a) wrote a letter introducing them to the store (copy attached)
- b) followed up with a phone call a few weeks later to see if they had any questions or if there was anything in particular we could do for them at this time - also to update and make sure we had the appropriate contact person
- c) a couple of months later, I sent them a brochure about the store reminding them they could have extra copies for their waiting room (in some cases, I hand delivered multiple copies and I call them periodically to see if they want more!)
- d) at this stage, it's important to get real creative. I don't want to bug them but I do want them to know I'm still interested in them. I created a Hot Flash sheet on which I can write down new titles and send it to the organizations. I try to make it as appropriate, specific and timely as possible (see attached copy). Sometimes, I call them—NOT

OFTEN. Sometimes, I send a note if I notice they got some good press about something (congratulations on... or whatever)

- We give a 10% discount to women's organizations—sometimes this gets extended to non-profits that have specific services for women. With the help of our bookkeeper, I developed a Terms Sheet and "credit app." for organizations wanting to set-up an account with us in addition to buying at organizational discount. I DON'T send this out to everyone—only those who look like they'll really buy or who indicate they have a library or whatever. (Examples attached)
- As I have the time and with the slightest provocation, I will create a bibliography for just about anything! Usually they're short or fairly specific. For example, we've had reason in the past to make one on breast cancer issues. Recently, I updated it and sent it to the various organizations around town that specifically provide services for women with breast cancer (sent along w/ info on setting up an organizational account with us!!). As it turned out, we also sold books at a breast cancer conference and took the bibliographies to that as well. Usually, I create bibliographies upon request of organizations but sometimes I take the initiative and just create them. Recently, I noticed OWL was doing an bus tour for elders on retirement communities. I put together a bibliography of the 5-10 books we had for women on retirement planning etc. and sent it to them. We'll see what happens! Also, if I make a bibliography for a particular organization, I also look around to see who else might be interested in it and send it to them as well. For example, someone wanted a booklist on women with disabilities for an event—I sent copies of it to the two access publications in town for their newsletters and a few other organizations!
- BE SURE your bibliographies have the store name, address and phone number on them, the date they were created, a mention that its a partial list and invite them to the store to see the growing number of titles on the topic, and—if you mailorder—how they can get the book from you if they don't come to the store AND that you're happy to special order any other books that may not be listed or currently in stock!
- create a brochure about the store and its services (Amazon copy attached). Take it with you wherever you go, especially when you sell at events. I try to remember to keep a stash of brochures, newsletters, and business cards in my car because I just never know when I'll find a place to leave them. Encourage staff members to do the same! (We tend NOT to just leave them on the store counter for customers—they are expensive and get used as scrap paper BUT we do have them close by for those times when it's really good to hand them to someone!) I stick them in correspondence all the time as appropriate.
- About conferences: Amazon has done them for years. In the past, we've generally had organizations come to us and we would do them depending on timing, profitability, etc. As we all know, they're hard work, sometimes with little return, create stress on our budgets, backs and staff hours. BUT they do generate goodwill, visibility, new customers and sometimes good sales. After a few months of doing outreach, the staff decided that I should also be the one to coordinate events. The rule is this: if it doesn't cost too much (for the table), isn't too far away, and I can guarantee someone (usually me) to staff it, then (most likely) we'll do it. Of course, there's plenty we turn down. But with me taking more responsibility we are now taking more on. And I am working on cultivating them too—I continually remind organizations that they should ask us to sell books at their events. BUT, BUT, BUT sometimes, we don't have to go but can still be present. Several times this year, we have not gone to events and I have arranged for us to have brochures, bookmarks, newsletters and BIBLIOGRAPHIES at the event. This, at least, gives us some visibility to audiences who may not know us. Also, the store will sometimes take an ad in a program book and invite people to the store with a 10% discount if they bring the ad with them. We do this less often but it works especially well for events when they're at the Mpls. Conference Ctr (within walking distance) or a big hotel near us.

- in addition to setting up conferences, being sure there's staff coverage, etc. I also help the buyers a little bit in deciding what books need to be pulled or ordered. Because I've talked to the people, I sometimes have a better sense of it—and it gives the buyers some relief. The biggest problem, of course, is learning how much to bring, when to know what conferences are likely to really work, and balancing the buying budget all around it! (Barb and Donna can tell you more about this)

- Though Barb does most of the event planning, I sometimes work with her to generate ideas for special things we can do that will appeal to various communities that may not usually come to the store. Some of these events have included:

- Open House for women's organizations
- Riot Grrls Read Out (a hopefully on-going event)
- Patrick was a Patriarch (an anti-St. Pat's day event where we celebrated the goddess)
- International No Diet Day Discussion Group
- with MCASA (a group working against sexual assault) we did a panel discussion and strategy workshop for sexual assault awareness month
- Open House for students and faculty soon after school started its fall session

- we borrowed an old idea from Lammas that came to us via Donna. I created a book prescription pad and sent it to all the area health care providers, therapists, counseling centers, naturopathic providers, etc. We also have a sample on our front bulletin board and encourage therapists to ask for them (some do). Though I've never actually seen a customer walk into the store with the piece of paper in their hands, I have received several letters of praise from health care workers thanking us for them and saying they would use them. In a few months, I plan to call around and see who actually did use them and if they need more. (see attached copy of pad and accompanying letters)

- This is what I did with University Professors:

(we're fortunate to already have several profs who are supportive of the store. They send students on assignments, order coursebooks, and more. They have also been good enough to provide us with contact names and other suggestions.)

a) call the women's center, the women's studies department or any other human resources part of the university that can supply you with a faculty list— both women's studies professors and any others who are supportive. In many universities, women who teach women's studies type courses are actually in other departments—English, History, whatever— so you have to be persistent and always on the watch. Get a course catalogue showing the professors' names if you can. Whenever students come in looking for something, I'll often ask them the name of the professor and add it to my list (it's surprising, though, how many DON'T know the prof's name!!) This has to be done regularly since there's always new faculty. And try to find the TA's too!

b) sent a letter to the prof's introducing them to the store and what we have to offer, encouraging them to order coursebooks from us, and encouraging them to have the students use us as a resource center. etc.

c) it's too hard to get them by phone so I don't try—but periodically send them a personal note if necessary

d) sent them a letter at the end of the school year thanking them for their support throughout the year and reminding them to keep us in mind for the fall semester

e) sent them an invitation to our back-to-school open house

- BE AUDACIOUS. At the beginning of the vacation season, I sent gay-friendly and women travel agents a list of the travel guides we have and other appropriate books (such as canoeing, etc.). With 8th Mtn. and Feminist Press doing more travel books, this ought to grow in the future. I also sent a list of our self-defense books to the local women's martial arts programs.

- Look out for speaking engagements. The Women's Consortium here does a weekly brown bag lunch. They invite women to come over for an hour lunch and they feature an organizational speaker or topic each week. I called up and asked if I could speak on behalf of the bookstore and generally about supporting woman-owned businesses and specifically about chain bookstore competition and the politics etc. Few women showed up that week BUT they always summarize the lunches in their weekly newsletter so what I had to say did get out to a larger audience. I hope to find more such opportunities in the future.

- I've been trying to figure out ways of getting girls into the store as well. The Riot Grrl event was a way of trying to appeal to youth. I'm also hoping to do more with District 202 which is a local organization that services gay/lesbian youth. And with some local VISTA volunteers who were working with a girls program in the parks and recreation system, we started a reading group for girls. They have since decided to meet outside the store but I do occasionally try to get them to an in-store event. They have been doing their own writing and have produced a 'zine so we want to have a launching party for it in the store! I also want to expand this program with the girl scouts and girl power program.

- The store has not typically used volunteers but periodically women ask us if they can help out. I'm starting to take names and phone numbers with the idea of having them help us in certain ways. I especially want to have women feel like the store is important for them and to have them help us to PR and whatever!

- try to work with local organizations about certain theme months. In addition to Black History, Women's History and Lesbian/Gay, there's also assorted others. Earlier in the year, we worked with an organization for Sexual Assault Awareness month. We create a bibliography of books and put it in a display of books along with brochures from the organization. In October, we did it for Lupus Awareness Month. The Lupus Foundation sent us posters and brochures that we put out with books and bibliography. It gives the organization visibility and they love it. In addition, I send to them extra copies of bibliographies and store brochures that they take with them to their events as well!

- whenever I send stuff out to new organizations, I try to follow-up with a phone call

- for general letters, don't put dates on them! that way, you can Xerox a bunch and have them to send out as necessary (BUT —be sure to date press releases!)

- I keep a file of all the correspondence I get back from people.

- we tried a "Design an Amazon Float" contest for gay pride but it didn't work. I'm not sure why. (in exchange for a gift certificate, we asked for designs for a float that we could take in the pride parade.)

- at staff meetings, I try to solicit input and ideas from other staff members about connections, event ideas, resources etc. Because we all travel in different circles, this gives me some insight and ideas that I otherwise wouldn't get. I also try to have staff help me with certain projects as well.

- I think the most useful thing is to have general brainstorming sessions. Also, I tend to have huge, scattered, and outrageous ideas. I purposefully try to think big and broad knowing that there's no way we can possibly do everything. BUT I find it useful to have a pool of ideas and then scale them down to some sort of manageable size. The biggest challenge is to try and get new clientele into the store.

- once you've started this sort of networking project, everything has to happen over and over again. It's important not to drop the ball and to stay as visible as possible—not only to those who are already using the store but for new folks as well.

This is a list of projects that I haven't started yet but hope to tackle in the upcoming year.

- according to one of our staff people who works in corporate America, there's a growing group of women who are coming into feminist consciousness who work in the burbs and don't have a clue about women's bookstores. She and I will strategize on how to reach this crowd. It's possible that a "bookmobile to the burbs" might help and some other clever marketing projects.

- I really want to do some work with women's literacy programs. It seems natural to me that businesses centered around reading and women's words ought to have some contact with the community of new women readers. I'd like our bookstores to be comfortable places for them. I see this project as two-fold. First of all, I'd like to have actual "classes" or tutoring sessions happen at the bookstore. I know this isn't possible for many stores due to space limitations but we have a bit of room and I'd like to make some room for it in the store. Secondly, I want to figure out how we can create feminist literacy materials for women. So much of the work is not only about reading but also about basic life skills information. I know some of the literacy materials do cover issues like women's health, pregnancy etc. but I think there's more that we can do as well (e.g., materials on sexual harassment and violence, self-esteem, women's history and biographies, lesbian reading materials, etc. —I'd like to find one women's publisher willing to help develop this!) I'm planning to do more research on this in the upcoming months.

- I know that some libraries have discretionary budget and that they sometimes buy books through local bookstores. I want one of those stores to be Amazon. Also, I have a contract with 18 women's presses to promote their books into libraries. I'm going to try a pilot project at Amazon and hopefully extend it out to other women's bookstores. My idea is this: to have a reception at the store hosted by Amazon and the women's presses participating in the library project. I will invite librarians to the store so they can know what we have to offer, provide a big display of books of the publishers in the library project, and serve refreshments (in Minn. there's already a library organization working to connect librarians with each other —I will co-sponsor the event with this group). This event will promote the store and promote the women's presses and hopefully encourage them to use Amazon as a resource place to buy their supplement of women's studies books. After I do it here and see how it goes, I will be contacting other stores for similar events.

- Because Minnesota is so big and we're basically it for the state, I want to figure out a way of doing an outstate bookmobile (an idea who's time might never come!) At the very least, I want to expand out mail-order capacity throughout the state. The FBNetwork catalogue might just be a catalyst for that.

- Sponsor events with other community centers in the Twin Cities

- Do some in-store music events that will promote the music that we sell and get women who may not be book buyers into the store for sidelines and music. Also, I want to promote some of the music we sell to dance and meditation groups. I realize that I tend to think ONLY about promoting our books (weird, huh?) but have to remind myself—and others—that we have a lot more to offer!

Amazon

BOOKSTORE

Oldest Feminist Bookstore in the U.S.

Dear Women's Service Provider/Organization:

Greetings from the Amazon Bookstore.

I am writing to you on behalf of the Amazon Bookstore for the purpose of advising (or reminding) you of our services. I would also like to make personal contact with you so as to learn how we can be of on-going assistance to your organization.

As you may know, Amazon is a full-service feminist bookstore which specializes in books, sidelines, and music for all women and girls and their friends. Amazon is the oldest women's bookstore in the United States. As a woman-owned business focused on the words and ideas of women, we have a strong commitment to networking with and serving various women's communities. Therefore, we want to offer several resources to your organization. These include:

- provide a 10% organizational discount on all books ordered
- order books of interest to your organization (special orders)
- provide books and/or book displays for your meetings or conferences
- post flyers or brochures on Amazon's bulletin boards advertising your services, special events, job openings, and so on
- provide ticket sales outlet for women's concerts and other related events
- offer book knowledge and book lists on special topics
- give your organization brochures (in quantity) describing Amazon's services
- mail to you the monthly Amazon newsletter

In the next few weeks, I will contact you by phone to learn how we can be of assistance to your organization. (Or, you may contact me on Mondays at the store.) If you are interested, I am also willing to meet with you and/or your staff for a short information sharing meeting.

We look forward to working with you in the future as a way of providing Minnesotan women with a variety of resources and information.

Sincerely,

Mev Miller
Community Outreach

Amazon Bookstore is located at the north edge of Loring Park, just off Hennepin by Minneapolis Community College.

From St. Paul, take I-94 West to the Lyndale/Hennepin Exit. Go North on Hennepin to Maple (by Basilica of St. Mary). Turn Right on Maple. Turn Right on Harmon Place. We are mid-block on the right side.

From South or North, take I-35 to I-94 West, then follow the directions above.

From the West, take I-94 to Hennepin/Dunwoody. Turn left at bottom of exit. Right on Maple. Right on Harmon Place.

Street meter parking is available.



*Easy walk from Mpls. Convention Ctr.,
Niccollet Mall & Walker Art Ctr.*

Amazon Bookstore
1612 Harmon Place
Minneapolis, MN 55403
612-338-6560

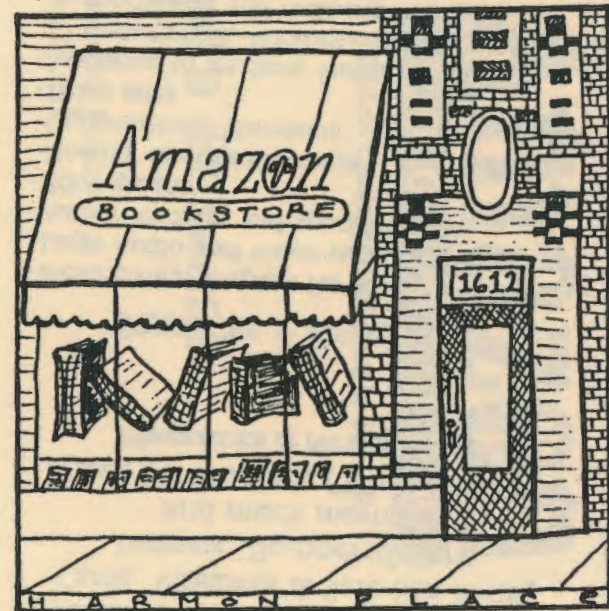
M,W: 10:00-9:00
T,Th,F: 10:00-7:00

Sat: 10:00-6:00 Sun: 10:00-5:00

Amazon Bookstore
1612 Harmon Place
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Amazon

BOOKSTORE



1612 Harmon Place
Minneapolis, MN 55403
612-338-6560

M,W: 10:00-9:00
T,Th,F: 10:00-7:00

Sat: 10:00-6:00 Sun: 10:00-5:00

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Mpls, MN
Permit No. 589

(Folds In thirds)

Amazon

BOOKSTORE

VISIT THE OLDEST FEMINIST BOOKSTORE IN THE COUNTRY AND BROWSE THROUGH OUR EXTENSIVE SELECTION OF BOOKS, MUSIC, AND GIFTS. OUR STAFF IS FRIENDLY AND KNOWLEDGEABLE—ANXIOUS TO HELP WITH YOUR QUESTIONS.

PHILOSOPHY

Amazon Bookstore is a full-service feminist bookstore for all women, girls and their friends. We offer a diversity of books, gifts, music and art by, for and about women. Amazon provides products and services that foster and encourage the strength, wisdom, beauty and diversity of women, girls and our families.

BOOK SECTIONS INCLUDE

Non-racist/Non-sexist Books
for Children
Violence Against Women
Women of Color Fiction/Non-fiction
Health
Parenting & Education
Lesbian Fiction & Culture
Spirituality
Feminist Theory
Ecology/Ecofeminism
International Fiction
Mysteries and Science Fiction
Travel
Poetry
Psychology and Self-Help
Cookbooks
Blank Books and Journals
Sale Books and Reminders
and more....

HERSTORY

In 1970, two industrious women gathered books, manifestos, periodicals and other writings of the emerging women's movement and offered them for sale out of their home. This was the birth of **Amazon Bookstore**. In order to make the information more available, the store moved to the Lesbian Resource Center. Since then, Amazon has had two other storefront homes before moving to our current Loring Park location. In its earliest days, Amazon primarily carried writings on social theory. Later the stock expanded to include fiction and poetry. As the feminist movement grew, affecting every area of women's lives, Amazon grew to accommodate and reflect the new needs. Currently we stock thousands of books by women on a great variety of topics. In our commitment to encourage women artists, we carry a wide selection of unique woman-made gifts and music. The store is owned and run by a worker collective.

*We Carry More Than
Just Books!!!*

Gifts and Art

Jewelry, Pottery, Posters, T-Shirts,
Cards, Vibrators & Safe Sex Items,
Buttons, Bumperstickers,
and much more.....

Music by Women: CD's & Cassettes
Magazines & Newspapers

SERVICES & RESOURCES

- Membership program for store discounts
- Large Audio and Video rental selection
- Author readings and special events
- Book groups
- Monthly discussion groups
- Organizational discounts
- Ticket sales
- Assistance to teachers, women studies departments, libraries—for planning, purchasing and ordering
- Sales at conferences and special events
- Full national & international mail-order service
- Discount on Book of the Month
- Bulletin board and housing book
- Monthly newsletter & mailing list
- Special orders

MC/VISA Welcome
Wheelchair Accessible
Child Friendly/Male Friendly

Amazon

BOOKSTORE

Oldest Feminist Bookstore in the U.S.

For Immediate Release

Contact Person: Mev Miller
612-338-6560

October 10, 1994

Amazon Bookstore Expands Role as Women's Community Center

Minneapolis, MN -- In anticipation of its 25th Anniversary in 1995, Amazon Bookstore (the oldest continuing women's bookstore in the North America) has expanded its commitment to serve women as a community resource center. Founded during the feminist movement in 1970, Amazon Bookstore has continued to serve women not only through its large selection of women's books but by acting as a clearinghouse for information and resources which address the needs of or provide serves to women and children.

To revitalize and continue this tradition, Amazon Bookstore has updated its resource books and bulletin boards, expanded its weekly programming, started several book groups, and added a community networking staff position. Future plans include remodeling the back of the store for additional gathering space, utilizing volunteers,

1612 Harmon Place Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 338-6560

Hours: M,W 10:00 - 9:00, T,Th,F 10:00-7:00
Sat 10:00-6:00, Sun 10:00-5:00

and facilitating more open houses and social gatherings. These activities are welcome additions to the on-going work done by the store: ticket sales, book sales at area conferences, organizational discounts, creation of informational subject lists, mail-order services, monthly newsletter, and much more.

Organizations which serve the needs of or sponsor events for women and children are encouraged to send information to Amazon Bookstore for inclusion in the resource books and to provide event flyers for posting. If you are interested in any of the above listed services or would like someone from the store to come and speak with your organization or staff, please contact Mev Miller, Community Networking Coordinator, 612-338-6560.

Our mission statement: Amazon Bookstore is a full-service feminist bookstore for all women, girls and their friends. It offers a diversity of books, gifts, music and art by, for and about women. Amazon provides products and services that foster and encourage the strength, wisdom, beauty and diversity of women, girls and our families. The store is worker-owned.

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Amazon

BOOKSTORE

Oldest Feminist Bookstore in the U.S.

TERMS AND PROCEDURES FOR ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOUNTS AT THE AMAZON BOOKSTORE

- Organizations qualify for a 10% discount on BOOKS ONLY. (No additional discounts apply.)
- Completed credit form and tax exempt number must be on file at Amazon Bookstore.
- Organizations may also place special orders for books not in stock. PLEASE NOTE, some special order books may not qualify for a discount. Please check with a buyer BEFORE special ordering books. Please allow 4-6 weeks for special orders.
- Books may be purchased in person or by mail or phone.
- We will ship books by UPS if requested. UPS needs a street address to deliver. The shipping and handling charges are \$3.00 for the first book and \$.35 for each additional book.
- Payment may be made to Amazon at time of purchase with a business check.
- Our terms are net 30 days for books purchased on account.
- Make checks payable to: Amazon Bookstore.
- Please remember: We can provide a suggested list of titles on any subject. Also, we are willing to sell books at conferences and special events.

Please do not hesitate to phone if you have additional questions.

Amazon

BOOKSTORE

Oldest Feminist Bookstore in the U.S.

CREDIT FORM FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Date: _____

Organization _____

Shipping Address _____

Billing Address _____

Phone # _____ Fax # _____

Director's Name _____

Contact Person for Accounts Payable _____

Phone # for Accounts Payable _____

Persons authorized to buy books on account at Amazon: _____

Tax Exempt #: _____

Please check all that apply:

non-profit for-profit government agency

privately run other (be specific)

We would most be interested in buying books in the following subject areas: _____

Please put us on the mailing list. yes no

Authorized Signature: _____
(please return this completed form to Kath Sharp at the Amazon Bkstr)

1612 Harmon Place Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 338-6560

Hours: M,Th 10:30 - 9:00, T,W,F 10:30-7:00
Sat 10:30-6:00, Sun 11:00-5:00

R Book Prescription

AN EXAMPLE OF
Bad proof READING -
I forgot the RX ←
on 2nd printing!
ARGH!

Amazon Bookstore
1612 Harmon Place
Minneapolis, MN 55403
612-338-6560

M,W 10:00 - 9:00
T,Th,F 10:00 - 7:00

Sat. 10:00 - 6:00
Sun. 10:00 - 5:00

Amazon

BOOKSTORE

Oldest Feminist Bookstore in the U.S.

Hot Flash!!!

from Amazon Bookstore

This title recently arrived in our bookstore. We thought it might be of interest to your organization.

- Organizational discount: 10%
- With an easy credit application, we can set-up your organization with an account.
- MC/Visa are welcome.
- We are happy to ship books via UPS. The cost is \$3.50 for the 1st book and \$.50 each additional.

For more information on this or any other title, please call us during regular business hours.

Thank you for your on-going support.

1612 Harmon Place Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 338-6560

Hours: M,W 10:00 - 9:00, T,Th,F 10:00-7:00
Sat 10:00-6:00, Sun 10:00-5:00

Amazon

BOOKSTORE

Oldest Feminist Bookstore in the U.S.

Dear Health Care Professional:

I am writing to you on behalf of Amazon Bookstore for the purpose of advising (or reminding) you of our services. As you may know, Amazon Bookstore is a full-service feminist bookstore which specializes in books, gifts, and music for all women and girls and their friends. As a woman-owned business focused on the words and ideas of women, we have a strong commitment to serving various women's communities. Enclosed is a copy of our brochure which explains the many products and services we offer.

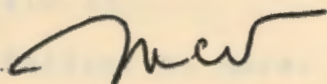
Because of our focus, we are able to carry a very broad range of topics and titles of interest to women and girls. These areas include but are not limited to: self-help and psychology; incest, rape and other forms of violence against women; spirituality and personal growth; issues of midlife and ageing; recovery issues and meditation books; health issues including breast cancer and AIDS and alternative and conventional methods of healing; issues of importance to teenagers such as sexuality, drug use, self-esteem and so on; and much more. If a particular title does not happen to be in stock, we are more than willing to special order it.

We imagine that there are opportunities for you to recommend titles to your clients for their own use. We ask you to please recommend Amazon (if appropriate) as a resource for the types of books mentioned above. If you would like, we can send you additional copies of our brochure to place in your waiting room or on your bulletin board. In addition, we are happy to provide when possible a list of titles available on a specific topic of interest to you.

Amazon frequently hosts author appearances for many different kinds of books. There may be times that you and/or your clients may want to have the opportunity to hear these authors read from their works. These events are announced in our monthly newsletter. Please let us know if we can add you to our mailing list.

Thank you for your interest in the Amazon Bookstore. Please stop by and visit us. If you have additional questions, please don't hesitate to call.

Sincerely,



Mev Miller
Community Outreach

1612 Harmon Place Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 338-6560

Hours: M, ^WTh 10:30 - 9:00, T, ThW, F 10:30-7:00
Sat 10:30-6:00, Sun 11:00-5:00

Amazon

BOOKSTORE

Oldest Feminist Bookstore in the U.S.

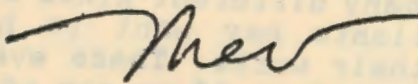
Dear Health Care Provider:

We recently wrote to you about the services provided by Amazon Bookstore. As you know, we carry a wide selection of titles specifically for women on many health related issues. Some of these areas include: eating disorders, chemical dependency and recovery, sexual abuse and violence, cancer and other medical concerns, self-esteem, relationships, spiritual well-being and much more. We invite and encourage you to come and browse our shelves.

We assume there may be times when you recommend to your clients books that you believe would be particularly helpful for them. We are enclosing a "book prescription" pad for your use in jotting down those books. As always, we are happy to special order books that may be out-of-stock or titles that we normally do not carry.

Please let us know if you want more of these notepads. Thank you for your continuing support of Amazon Bookstore.

Sincerely,



Mev Miller
Community Networking

P.S. Our resource book is now up-to-date. We are happy to put your business cards in the card file, place your services flyer in the resource book, and post notices of events and classes on our bulletin boards.

Amazon

BOOKSTORE

Oldest Feminist Bookstore in the U.S.

WOMEN AND BREAST CANCER

The following is a partial list of titles available at Amazon Bookstore on the subject of women and breast cancer. This particular area of women's health is constantly expanding - new books come into the store regularly. Please stop by for a wider selection. We are happy to take special orders for titles you do not find. We will also fill mail or phone orders via UPS.

Medical Information

Breast Cancer: A Handbook, Linda Harris Brown, \$8.95 (A basic guide for gathering information, understanding the diagnosis, and choosing the treatment)

The Breast Cancer Handbook: Taking Control After You've Found a Lump, Joan Swirsky and Barbara Balaban, \$10.00 (*)

Cancer as a Woman's Issue: Scratching the Surface, edited by Midge Stocker, \$10.95 (*)

Challenging the Breast Cancer Legacy: A Program of Emotional Support and Medical Care for Women at Risk, Renee Royak-Schaler and Beryl Lieff Benderly, \$10.00

Choices, Marion Morra & Eve Potts, \$15.00 (The new, most up-to-date sourcebook for cancer information-from medications and modern therapies to the latest research, procedures and diagnostic technologies.)

Confronting Cancer, Constructing Change: New Perspectives on Women and Cancer, edited by Midge Stocker, \$11.95 (*)

Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book, Dr. Susan Love, \$14.95 (*)

Estrogen and Breast Cancer: A Warning to Women, Carol Ann Rinzler, \$22.00

How to Reduce Your Risk of Breast Cancer: Featuring the Revolutionary, Nutritional Guidelines Scientists Believe Can Make a Real Difference, Jon Michnovicz, MD, and Diane Klien, \$21.95

One in Three: Women with Cancer Confront an Epidemic, edited by Judy Brady, \$10.95

Patient No More: The Politics of Breast Cancer, Sharon Batt, \$16.95 (*)

Tamoxifen & Breast Cancer, Michael DeGregorio and Valerie Wiebe, \$10.00

Women Talk About Breast Surgery: From Diagnosis to Recovery, Amy Gross and Dee Ito, \$10.95

1612 Harmon Place Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 338-6560

Hours: M,W 10:00 - 9:00, T,Th,F 10:00-7:00
Sat 10:00-6:00, Sun 10:00-5:00

Personal Stories

Affirmations, Meditations and Encouragements for Women Living with Breast Cancer, Linda Dackman, \$11.00

Breast Cancer Journal: A Century of Petals, Juliet Wittman, \$14.95

Cancer in Two Voices, by Sandra Butler and Barbara Rosenblum, \$12.95 (*)

The Cancer Journals, Audre Lorde, \$7.00 (*)

Examining Myself: One Woman's Story on Breast Cancer Treatment and Recovery, Musa Mayer, \$10.95

My Breast: One's Woman's Story, Joyce Wadler, \$16.95

No Less a Woman: Ten Women Shatter the Myths about Breast Cancer, Deborah Hobler Kahane, MSW, \$11.00

Stories of Hope and Healing: Six Women Confront Breast Cancer, Leslie E. Strong, MD, \$14.95

Recommended General Health Books

All Women Are Healers: A Comprehensive Guide to Natural Healing, Diane Stein, \$12.95

Every Woman's Body: Everything You Need to Know to Make Informed Choices about Your Health, Diana Korte, \$15.00

The Gynecological Sourcebook: Everything You Need to Know About..., M. Sara Rosenthal, \$25.00

The New Our Bodies, Ourselves: Updated and Expanded for the '90s, Boston Women's Health Book Collective, \$20.00

The Ourselves, Growing Older: A Book for Women Over Forty, Paula Doress-Woters and Diana Laskin Siegal, \$18.00

Amazon

BOOKSTORE

Oldest Feminist Bookstore in the U.S.

Dear University Professor:

Greetings from the Amazon Bookstore.

I am writing to you on behalf of the Amazon Bookstore for the purpose of advising (or reminding) you of our services.

As you may know, Amazon is a full-service feminist bookstore which specializes in books, sidelines, and music for all women and girls and their friends. Amazon is the oldest women's bookstore in the United States. As a woman-owned business focused on the feminist words and ideas of women, we have a strong commitment to networking with women professors and students in universities and colleges.

Therefore, we would like to offer several resources to you. These include:

- a depth of feminist and women's writings not usually found in most other bookstores
- a willingness to order coursebooks for your students
- a willingness to offer book knowledge and book lists on special topics
- generally, a shorter lead time to order required or recommended literature for your students
- tax-exemption to students for required texts
- a brochure about Amazon that we can provide in quantity for handout purposes
- monthly Amazon newsletter

We encourage you to use Amazon as a resource center, to advise your students to use us as a resource for feminist books on many topics, and to consider Amazon as a friendly place that will seriously address your feminist book needs. Not only do we carry books, but we also carry magazines and newspapers, gifts, and music by, for, and about women. In addition, our bulletin boards provide space for the community to post events, gatherings, and other information.

If you are interested, I would be willing to meet with you and/or your students for a short information sharing meeting. You are also welcome to arrange a "field trip" to Amazon with your students so that we can show you what we offer.

We look forward to working with you in the future as a way of providing the university and college communities with a variety of feminist and women's resources and information.

Sincerely,

Mev Miller
Community Outreach

1612 Harmon Place Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 338-6560

Hours: M,Th 10:30 - 9:00, T,W,F 10:30-7:00
Sat 10:30-6:00, Sun 11:00-5:00

Amazon

BOOKSTORE

Oldest Feminist Bookstore in the U.S.

May, 1994

Dear University Professor:

As the end of the regular school year comes to a close, we'd like to thank those of you who have supported Amazon Bookstore in a variety of ways throughout this past year. We enjoy being a resource center for you and your students.

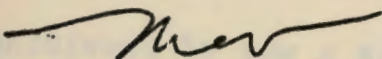
Because we are a feminist bookstore committed to keeping women's words and thoughts available to all women, we ask that you keep us in mind as you make your plans for the next fall semester and school year. We will continue to provide the following services:

- order titles that you'd like to use as coursebooks
- provide recommended lists of new and /or important titles in various subject areas
- provide the opportunity for you to bring students on a "field trip" to the store or attend one of your classes to discuss the herstorical and political importance of women's bookstores and woman-owned businesses as well as provide an overview of the types of books we carry
- sell books at special events or conferences

In September, we plan to hold a special open house for university students and professors. We'll send more information as the time approaches. If you advise us of new faculty members supportive of our efforts, please pass their names on to us so that we may add them to our invitation list.

Whether you're working or playing in the next few months, we hope you enjoy a happy summer. We look forward to seeing you again sometime soon. And, again, thank you for your continuing support.

Sincerely,



Mev Miller
Community Networking

1612 Harmon Place Minneapolis, MN 55403
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Amazon

BOOKSTORE

Oldest Feminist Bookstore in the U.S.

May, 1994

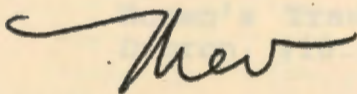
Dear Travel Agent:

We know that this is a busy time of year for travel agents as people begin to make plans for the summer. We also know that you may have lesbian or gay clients who have special requests for places that are lesbian and gay friendly or that specifically cater to their interests and needs.

We regularly stock a rather large selection of titles that would be of interest to the lesbian or gay traveller looking for listings of these kinds of places. We enclose copies of this list for your use. Please feel free to copy it to give to your clients.

Thank you for your support of Amazon Bookstore. Don't hesitate to let us know if we can be of additional help to you in the future. We wish you a prosperous season and a happy summer!

Sincerely,



Mev Miller
Community Networking

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TRAVEL GUIDES AND OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST TO THE TRAVELLER
May 1994

Travel Guides

(All of these guides are lesbian and gay friendly)

Are You Two...Together? Lindsay Van Gelder and Pamela Brandt, \$18.00. A Gay and Lesbian Travel Guide to Europe.

Bent Guide to Gay and Lesbian Canada, Bentbooks, \$9.95

Damrom Address Book, '94, Damron Co., \$13.95. Over 8,000 listings in USA, Canada, and Mexico, mostly focused for gay men.

Goddess Sites: Europe, Anneli Rufus and Kristan Lawson, \$12.95. Discover places where the goddess has been celebrated and worshipped throughout time.

Inn Places, 1994, Worldwide Gay & Lesbian Accommodations, Ferrari, \$14.95. Also contains a RV and camping section.

Places for Women 1994, Ferrari, \$13.00. Oriented for women, it includes international information on hotels, B&B's, tours, local places of interest and much more.

Women Going Places, 1994-5, Zoe, \$14.00. International guide.

Women's Traveller 1994, Guide to USA, Canada, and Caribbean, Damron, \$10.95

Guides especially for those going to Stonewall celebration in NYC

Detour's New York: The Alternative Guide, Joseph Downton & Eva Leonard, \$14.95. (For those who don't necessarily travel the straight and narrow)

Gay and Lesbian Handbook to New York City, Richard Laermer, \$10.95

General Interest for Travellers

Adventures in Good Company, Thalia Zepatos, \$14.95. A second book by the author of *A Journey of One's Own*, contains even more travel advice, especially for those doing outdoors activities.

Australia for Women, Susan Hawthorne (Price unknown- won't be available until July or August) A collection of writings about women's culture in Australia.

Down the Wild River North, Constance Helmericks, \$12.95. The remarkable Arctic wilderness adventure of a woman and her teenage daughters.

A Journey of One's Own, Thalia Zepatos, \$14.95. Uncommon Advice for the Independent Woman Traveler.

Leading Out, Rachel da Silva, \$16.95. Women climbers reaching for the top.

Maiden Voyages, Mary Morris, \$14.00. Writings by women travelers

My Love Affair with England: A Traveler's Memoir, Susan Allen Toth, \$10.00

Older Than Time, Allegra Taylor, \$13.00. A woman travels around the world in search of wisdom.

Rivers Running Free, Judith Niemi and Barb Wieser, \$14.95: Canoeing stories by adventurous women.

Simple Food for the Pack, C. Axcell, \$9.00

Tracks, Robyn Davidson, \$12.00. The exhilarating tale of a willful woman's solo trek across 1,700 miles of Australian outback.

Uncommon Waters, Holly Morris, \$14.95. Women write about fishing.

The Violet Shyness of Their Eyes: Notes from Nepal, Barbara Scot, \$12.95.

McBookstores Make McBucks on McLiterature While Feminist Bookstores Struggle

by Mary Bricker-Jenkins

There is a splendid scene in Leslie Feinberg's novel *Stone Butch Blues* in which the character's emerging feminist consciousness is nurtured by conversations she overhears while lurking in the bookstore aisles near the women's studies section. The scene is reminiscent for many of us who found our first feminist communities in bookstores, which continue to be centers for organizing, networking, and cultural work as well as wellsprings of intellectual development in our communities. But feminist bookstores are endangered today, not only because of the vagaries of the market, but because of the market politics of the publishing and bookselling industries.

All over the country, service-oriented independent bookstores are being squeezed out of the market by corporate chains, which discount heavily and which, once they are established in a community, typically sell a shrinking list of the most marketable (read politically "mainstream," if not conservative) books. The publishing industry responds by shrinking its list of potentially small-market and/or controversial books. Needless to say, mainstream publishers prioritize the most "marketable" manuscripts, and the alternative presses and book distributors are folding faster than flowers after the first frost.

Feminist bookstores are particularly hard hit by these trends. Having a relatively small and specialized customer base — and, by definition, a social change as well as a marketing mission — many are losing customers to the chain stores and experiencing serious cash flow problems. And there is a domino effect: It is primarily feminist bookstores that stock and sell feminist press backlist titles — a primary source of revenue for feminist and other small presses. If feminist bookstores close, who will champion feminist press books, and what will happen to them?

In some cases, feminist bookstores have been deliberately targeted by chains. In Connecticut, a newly opened Borders Books offered a share of its profits to a local AIDS organization that had been closely allied with the community's feminist bookstore for years, which could not offer the level of financial support being offered by Borders. Clear about the corporate agenda, the AIDS organization courageously declined the offer. The Borders chain, a wholly-owned subsidiary of K-Mart, has seized upon the "corporate social responsibility" theme to appeal to the upscale liberal market, for which it also provides a carefully crafted, pre-packaged "ambiance" of a community-based "alternative" bookstore/coffee house. While better than most of the rapacious chain stores (wouldn't you rather eat Ben & Jerry's than Sealtest?), Borders offers a relatively miniscule portion of its profits to community-based groups, and the chain certainly does not have the liberatory social transformation agenda of the feminist bookstores it is attempting to eliminate from our communities. We must not be misled by corporate cleverness in exploiting "alternative" markets: McDonalds may be selling a few healthy-looking salads and experimenting with tofu burgers, but it's the Big Mac that dominates its world-wide market.

Last Fall, the Feminist Bookstore Network (FBN) held a retreat to develop survival strategies. In addition to providing each other technical consultation on marketing and management, the bookstores have undertaken several initiatives in which we, their community members and customers, can participate. Here are some of the ways:

- First and most importantly, buy your books from feminist bookstores. You may pay a few dollars more than you would in the chain stores, but you will be contributing to the survival of feminist discourse and cultural/political action.
- If you don't have a feminist bookstore near you, you can mail order from one. FBN has a stunning catalog of feminist literature which includes a directory of many of the stores and mail-order outlets in the U.S. and Canada. For a copy of the catalog, send \$1 to FBN, PO Box 882554, San Francisco, CA 94188.
- If you teach, ask students to buy their books from feminist bookstores. Most will provide very special service and attention to you and your students about current trends in theory and culture.
- If you're in practice, ask your local feminist bookstore for recommendations for readings for your clients. Many offer special programs and networking on such issues as eating disorders, drug and alcohol recovery, battering, sexual abuse, lesbian identity and family issues, etc. Help your bookstore organize groups and events that will help you and your clients experience the community and cultural dimensions of feminist social work practice.
- Ask your local school and public libraries to order feminist books and to order them from a feminist bookseller. Again, a call to your feminist bookstore will help you select a few titles that need exposure.
- If you write, consider a feminist or small press for your book. Sign the "author'pledge" to support feminist bookstores and presses — for information on the pledge, ask your local feminist bookseller or call FB-Net (415-626-1556).

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