

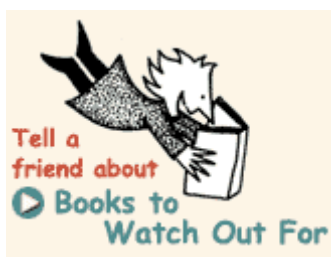


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Books to Watch Out For publishes monthly e-letters celebrating books on various topics. Each issue includes new book announcements, brief reviews, commentary, news and, yes, good book gossip.

The Lesbian Edition

covers both lesbian books and the whole range of books lesbians like to read. It covers news of both the women in print movement and mainstream publishing. Written and compiled by Carol Seajay.

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announces and reviews new books by and about gay men as well as other books of interest and gay publishing news. Written and compiled by Richard Labonte.

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The Gay Men's Edition

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Volume 1 Number 12

By Richard Labonte

Harrington Park is a Big Queer Press

Way back when - late '80s to mid-'90s - queer books were all the rage at major mainstream publishers; gay fiction hardcovers (and even some lesbian titles!) abounded, marketed sometimes overly optimistically to a reading constituency that had been built, one reader at a time, by the first gay bookstores (Oscar Wilde, Glad Day, Giovanni's Room, Lambda Rising, A Different Light) and the early gay publishers (Gay Sunshine, SeaHorse, Grey Fox, Alyson Books, Gay Presses New York).

That was then. Though plenty of fine books by plenty of fine writers are still being published by major houses (veterans like Christopher Bram and Mark Merlis and Paul Russell and David Plante, British exports like Colm Toibin and Andrew Hollinghurst, newcomers like Philip Galanes), most new gay fiction is back where it started - with smaller and with gay-specific presses: Alyson remains one of the largest; Cleis has become much more than a feminist press, with its gay erotica and queer studies titles; and Suspect Thoughts Press in just a couple of years has become the edgy, literate new kid on the block. Among "straight" presses, Kensington has developed a well-branded line of campy and coming-of-age books laced with some literary fiction, Arsenal Pulp is a quarter queer, Green Candy is about one third homo, a number of smaller publishers (Soft Skull, Manic D, Sarabande) regularly include gay books on their lists, and the University of Wisconsin has its ambitious Terrace Books imprint for fiction; and Carroll & Graf has begun an ambitious gay publishing program. (And then there are the dozens and dozens of publish-on-demand titles...)

But all of their queer titles, in total, don't add up to the recent annual queer offering from Haworth Press and its affiliated imprints, Harrington Park Press, Alice Street Editions (the lesbian fiction imprint), and Southern Tier Editions: 89 titles, four issues each of two literary journals, and 10 quarterly gay- and lesbian-interest journals.

More Books for Women

will launch in 2005.

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And about 20 of those are gay fiction / erotica titles, several of which I'll write about here, as I discuss the evolution of Haworth as a major publisher of gay pleasure reading with fiction editor-in-chief Jay Quinn.

But first, some history...

It wasn't all that many years ago that the typical gay-interest Haworth book featured a drab cover, mostly heavy print and washes of dull color, and jargon-heavy essays about often unexplored gay and lesbian issues - and, for queer booksellers, they were a godsend. Even before a number of university presses launched "queer theory" lines (Columbia, Chicago, Wisconsin, to name three of the best), the first Harrington titles delved into topics that there just weren't many books about - S/M, AIDS, gay parenting, bisexuality, gays in education, in the military, in religion.

Most of these books were what Haworth calls "journal separates" - trade editions compiled from its several journals, including, in the beginning, the Journal of Homosexuality and the Journal of Lesbian Studies; these days, there are more than a dozen queer-interest journals among about 120 from Haworth, including journals discussing *Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, *Gay & Lesbian Politics*, *Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy*, *Gay & Lesbian Social Issues*; the *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*; the *Journal of GLBT Issues in Counseling* (coming in 2005); the *Journal of Bisexuality*; and the *International Journal of Transgenderism*. (And the Haworth catalogue of journals is engagingly eclectic in the non-queer categories, too: everything from the *Journal of Applied Aquaculture* to the *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, from *Small Fruits Review* - no, not a gay journal - to the *Journal of Poverty*, to *Slavic & East European Information Resources*.)

(A few years ago, Haworth also started the *Harrington Gay Men's Fiction Quarterly* - as well as the *Harrington Lesbian Fiction Quarterly* - officially part of the journal series, and one of the few off-line markets for short fiction.)

In those first years, three or four trade books were gleaned each season from the journals; in the 2004 Harrington Park Press catalog (that's the Haworth imprint for most queer-interest titles), there are more than 20. Among the more focused are *Queer Theory and Communication: From Disciplining Queers to Queering the Discipline(s)*, edited by Gust A. Yep, Karen Lovaas, and John P. Elia; *Addressing Homophobia and Heterosexism on College Campuses*, edited by Elizabeth P. Cramer; *Research Methods with Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Populations*, edited by William Meezan and James I. Martin; and *Trauma, Stress, and Resilience Among Sexual Minority Women: Rising Like the Phoenix*, edited by Kimberly E. Balsam.

Okay, stop yawning: no matter how small, there's a market for each of these books - and, because Haworth edits, proofs, typesets, and even prints its books in-house, even small print runs (sales in the hundreds, with books kept in print for years) can be profitable.

And not all of the books-from-journals are quite that esoteric: while neither *The Drag Queen Anthology* (Steven P. Schacht with Lisa Underwood) nor *The Drag King Anthology* (Donna Troka, Kathleen LeBesco, Jean Noble) is three-snaps reading, both contain readable, feathers-and-vests essays about their worlds. *Icelandic Lives: The Queer Experience* (Voon Chin Phua) is research-study dry at times, but nonetheless a fascinating look at a thriving, self-contained queer culture. And *Lesbian Ex-Lovers: The Really Long-Term Relationships* (Jacqueline S. Weinstock) uses fiction, personal essays, and poetry in addition to weighty theory to examine how lesbian love evolves - and we guys are waiting for a similar study.

Those are a few of the recent off-prints. In addition, the Harrington Park imprint publishes a growing number of original titles each year - some with respectable sales, good review attention, and a few Lambda Literary Award nominations. Some of the best, or quirkiest, or both, of the past year include:

Anything But Straight, by *Wayne R. Besen* (\$19.95) - A gay activist's compelling look at the shadowy, hypocritical, and destructive "ex-gay" ministries.

Besen's Anything But Straight research:

www.anythingbutstraight.com/learn/eghistory.html

Bear Cookin': The Original Guide to Bear Comfort Foods, by *PJ Gray & Stanley Hunter* (\$12.95) - Did I mention that Haworth Press is eclectic? Did I mention that some of the Harrington Park Press titles are quirky? Indeed: healthy recipes for

"burly bears with big appetites."

Author info (and news of a sequel): www.bearcookin.com

Queer Crips: Disabled Gay Men and Their Stories, edited by Bob Guter & John R. Killacky (\$19.95) - First-person narratives about living with a disability...no self-pity, plenty of pride, and some stirring writing.

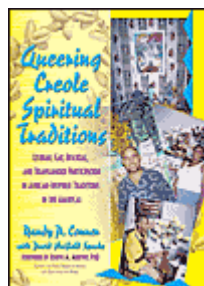
Bent magazine, edited by Guter: www.bentvoices.org



Dangerous Families: Queer Writing on Surviving, edited by Mattilda, aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore (\$17.95) - Like Sycamore's first Harrington anthology (*Tricks and Treats: Sex Workers Write About Their Clients*), this one eschews sociology and research studies for real men and women writing from their hearts about their experiences - here, about how they've healed, or not, or still are, from emotional, physical, and sexual abuse in the bosoms of their families.

An excerpt:

www.mattbernsteinsycamore.com/dangerousfamilies.html



Queering Creole Spiritual Traditions: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Participation in African-Inspired Traditions in the Americas, by Randy P. Connors with David Hatfield Sparks (\$29.95) - Connors and Sparks have worked together on a couple of broader books on the links between gays and spirituality, including *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connection Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*, and - where the seed of their new book is sown - the *Encyclopedia of Queer Myth, Symbol, and Spirit*. Even if you're not particularly spiritual, to say nothing of not Creole, this is a fascinating book about LGBT practitioners of

Yoruba and Vodou religions.

The authors at Lambda Rising:

www.lambdarising.com/NASApp/store/Index.jsp?s=storeevents&eventId=261403

Reeling in the Years: Gay Men's Perspectives on Age and Ageism, by Tim Bergling (\$24.95) - After tackling the queer fear of sissies and self in *Sissyphobia*, Bergling asks the question, "Can older gay men really be friends with younger gay men - and vice versa?" One of the answers: ageism works both ways.

Bergling and others interviewed:

www.nyblade.com/2004/5-21/arts/main/40.cfm

Reclaiming the Sacred: The Bible in Gay and Lesbian Culture, edited by Raymond-Jean Frontain (\$29.95) - More mainstream than the book by Connors and Sparks, this second edition tells how the Bible supports queer spirituality, and how it's wielded by the thumpers as an instrument of oppression.

The book reviewed:

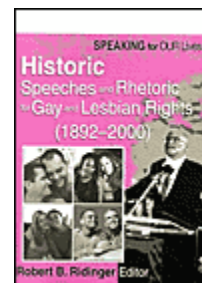
http://w5.usc.edu:9673/review/iglr/review.html?rec_id=740

Restored Selves: Autobiographies of Queer Asian / Pacific Activists, edited by Kevin Kumashiro (\$16.95) - Culture clashes with self in 20 first-person accounts by Asian / Pacific social activists of growing up queer in families where being queer was too often at the root of silent shame.

Speaking For Our Lives: Historic Speeches and Rhetoric for Gay and Lesbian Rights (1892-2000), edited by Robert Ridinger (\$49.95) - Oof; pricey for a paperback - but this labor-of-love compilation of gay words is almost 900 pages long, and it preserves plenty of stirring words, vital for the primary research of historians, from Robert Ingersoll's 1892 address at the funeral of Walt Whitman to Joseph Bean's 2000 talk on "The Future of Leather."

A Gay Today review:

<http://gaytoday.com/reviews/041204re.asp>

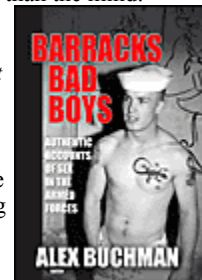


Getting It On Online: Cyberspace, Gay Male Sexuality, and Embodied Identity, by John Edward Campbell (\$19.95) - Serious and sensual sums up this ethnographic study of online communities, drawn from the author's master's thesis, that focuses on "gaychub," "gaymuscle," and "gaymusclebears" internet chat and connections.

Author info: www.knowledgepower.info/id1.html

And, in case you were thinking that the Harrington Park Press imprint is all about thinking, here are a couple of titles focusing more on the body than the mind:

Barracks Bad Boys: Authentic Accounts of Sex in the Armed Forces, edited by Alex Buchman (\$12.95) - This sequel to former U.S. Marine Buchman's earlier book, *A Night in the Barracks*, is partly a stroke book, partly a sexual memoir, and partly a challenge to the military's discomfort with queers in the ranks; among the contributions are a straight, married soldier's account of his one sexual experience with a man; a military "chaser" (think chubby chaser) recalling his favorite sailor-hustlers; and bits from Steven Zeeland's journal about encounters with military men half his age, eager for sex.



Author info: www.alexbuchman.com

A postcard from Zeeland:

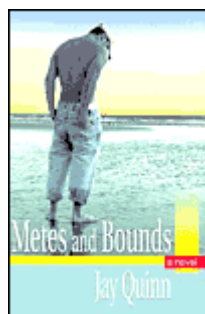
www.seadogphoto.com/html/postcard_from_z.html

Dirty Young Men and Other Gay Stories, by Joseph Itiel (\$10.95) - Itiel is refreshingly frank about his sexual preferences - he's a seasoned sexual tourist, an older gay man excited by younger men who are attracted to him, and willing to pay for what he wants when he has to; in this book, and in *Escort Tales* and *Escapades of a Gay Traveler*, he writes, plainly and honestly, about the sex he's had over the years.

The Tomcat Chronicles: Erotic Adventures of a Gay Liberation Pioneer, by Jack Nichols (\$19.95) - This is one of my ten-best nonfiction titles of 2004, reviewed a couple of newsletters ago: a rare combination of skilled writing, hot sex, and the first stirrings of early gay liberation activism.

But enough about fact; what about the fiction?

The first editor of the Southern Tier Editions imprint was Brian Bouldrey, at one time the editor of the *Best American Gay Fiction* series, and author of several books, including three novels - *The Genius of Desire* (Ballantine Books), *The Boom Economy: Or, Scenes From Clerical Life* (Terrace Books) and *Love, The Magician* - one of the first four Southern Tier titles, along with Steven Beachy's *Distortion*, Paul Reidinger's *The City Kid*, and William Rooney's *Infidelity*. (Reidinger's novel remains a Southern Tier bestseller; see below. In this *SF Bay Guardian* essay, he growls about bad books and Dale Peck: www.sfbg.com/39/04/x_lit_marginalina.html)



Bouldrey was followed by Jay Quinn, who also drew on his own oeuvre and interests for two early titles - *Metes and Bounds*, his coming-of-age story of a Southern surfer, and his first anthology of Southern gay fiction, *Rebel Yell*. In four years, he's overseen more than 50 titles - and the growth of Southern Tier from overlooked upstart to major player. Though a majority of the imprint's titles are fiction, there is some nonfiction as well - most notably, in the past year, Felice Picano's three volumes of memoirs, *Ambidextrous*; *A House on the Ocean*, *A House on the Bay*; and *Men Who Loved Me*, and Jeff Mann's essay / memoir collection, *Edge*.

A few weeks ago, I interviewed Quinn about his work as an editor, overseeing one of the largest gay fiction lists.

Q: There was a time, a few years ago, when Harrington Park was considered a publisher of last resort for gay fiction (that's the sense I got when, in my bookselling days, I recommended the publisher to would-be writers). That's obviously no longer the case - Southern Tier is now a leader in both quality and quantity. How easy was it to achieve that shift in perception - or were you aware of it when you took over the imprint?

A: *I was very much aware of it when I took over the imprint. From the start, Bill Palmer (VP Book Division), Bill Cohen (Publisher) and I all agreed that we were primarily interested in acquiring a broad range of high quality fiction from writers usually shut out of the established publishing world for whatever reason. I read a great deal of really marginal and frankly, poor, work in the beginning in order to find the best work I could get. I knew the task of shifting the perception of Hawthorn being a fiction publisher of last resort could only be accomplished by getting the absolute best work we could and putting it out there. Of course, I had the very real*

responsibility of also making the company money so the work could continue. Overall, I've found that it has not always been easy to meet the dual requirements of recruiting the best writers I could find and also meeting my own sales expectations, but Bill Palmer and Bill Cohen invested a lot of faith and dollars in my vision for what the imprint could grow to become. I am both humbled and pleased to find myself in place after four years with some very real accomplishments in that shift of perception you refer to.

Q: Reprints aside, many of the Southern Tier novelists are first-timers - JG Hayes, Jonathan Cohen, David Pierce, Rob N. Hood, Durrell Owens, Dan Boyle, Jim Tushinski, William Podojil. Is this a conscious editorial preference?

A: Absolutely. I came to the responsibility as editor for the imprint as a writer first. Had it not been for a young associate editor at Putnam – who never stopped championing me and *Metes and Bounds* in the seven years it took to get it published - I never would have become a novelist, much less an editor. Finding myself in the position to say yes or no to many first-time novelists' work, I was informed by the faith someone had in me. I respect the notion of *noblesse oblige*; while I must make critical decisions that include many factors, I consider it an obligation to help deserving unknown writers find their way to an audience.

Q: What's your cull rate - that is, for every novel published, how many are read?

A: I think "considered" is a more accurate term than "read." I often cull simply from synopses. You must understand there is a lot of really marginal work that finds its way to my attention. You could say two out of 15 manuscripts makes its way directly to my hands. Of those, two out of ten I actually read beyond the first 50 or so pages. I think it would be safe to say one out of every 25 submissions gets published. Compared to the industry standard, this is very high. That's an advantage of considering Southern Tier Editions (STE) as a potential publisher.

Q: What's the proportion of over-the-transom (such a quaint image, in this era of editors who work out of their homes - and probably with air conditioners - and what UPS delivery man would dare just toss a manuscript through the window?) as opposed to solicited submissions?

A: I would say the split goes something like this: 2% agent submissions; 20% solicited either by myself or Greg Herren, Bill Palmer, or Bill Cohen; 78% over the transom or slush pile.

Q: And those reprints - Richard Stevenson and Felice Picano, most prominently; plans for any more Stevenson titles? Any other authors in mind?

A: Yes, we are bringing out Jack Fritscher's *Some Dance to Remember* in 2005. I have some other works in mind, but we are not aggressively going after out-of-print works. It's really on a project-by-project basis. None, to my knowledge, of Stevenson's are in the works.

Q: One of Harrington's virtues is its printing flexibility - it can start with low print runs, respond quickly to follow-up printing, and keep a book in print even with relatively low sales. Can you tell me the average / standard first press run for all titles?

A: Most initial press runs are in the neighborhood of 1,500 copies.

Q: And what are the top sellers so far – real numbers would be splendid, but a list of the top five or ten would give a sense of what's working in the marketplace.

A: Here is a list of our cumulative top-ten bestsellers (since the inception of STE, five years ago). The top two have sold over 10,000 copies. Numbers three and four have sold over 5,000 copies. The rest have sold between 2,000 and 5,000 (this list is correct as of 10/22/04).

1. *A Night in the Barracks* – Alex Buchman
2. *Metes and Bounds* – Jay Quinn
3. *The Bear Handbook* - Ray Kampf
4. *Rebel Yell* (Vol. 1) – Jay Quinn, ed.
5. *This Thing Called Courage* – JG Hayes
6. *The Big Book of Misunderstanding* – Jim Gladstone
7. *The City Kid* – Paul Reidinger

8. Sissyphobia – *Tim Bergling*
 9. Huddle – *Dan Boyle*
 10. The Concrete Sky - *Marshall Moore*

Q: The Southern Tier list is eclectic - romance, erotica, coming out, coming of age, science fictional, bearish, literary. Is there any "type" of book you haven't published yet that you're looking for?

A: *Great stories about gay middle-aged adults is something I'd like to see more of. I would really like to have a novel exploring the experience of the Indian peninsula-American perspective, also the Chinese-American perspective. If I could just find a gay Ha Jin and a gay man with the eloquence of Jhumpa Lahiri... more demandingly, I feel the need to hear the voices of Middle-Eastern -American fiction writers in our genre... there is so much unheard out there to hear, to help us understand our increasingly incomprehensible world.*

Q: And what's coming in 2005?

A: *There are 11 titles scheduled for 2005 release as of now, though this is a number dictated by the anticipated production schedule. The actual number may be more, depending on how production (printing and bindery) is cranking them out. It's important to note that all Haworth imprints have seen an increase in titles accepted and contracts secured. For instance, I have accepted 17 titles for STE myself thus far in 2004 (my usual allotment is 12-14). Greg Herren's new Positronic Press imprint (science fiction / fantasy) and also the genres under his acquisition supervision (erotica, mystery, gothic) may account for additional titles.*

Here is what's scheduled for 2005 for STE so far (all are my acquisitions):

Deep Water: A Sailor's Passage - *EM Kahn (novel)*
 The Boys in the Brownstone - *Kevin Scott (novel)*
 Binary: The Best of Both Worlds - *ed. by Sage Vivant and M. Christian (bisexual erotica anthology)*
 Mahu - *Neal S. Placky (novel)*
 Now Batting For Boston - *JG Hayes (second solo short story collection) - I love this one... Hayes is immensely gifted and one of my discoveries. I am very proud of him.*
 Confessions of a Male Nurse - *Richard S. Ferri (memoir)*
 Tales From the Levee - *Martha Miller (creative nonfiction)*
 Trans Figures - *M. Christian (transgender erotica anthology)*
 A Season of Grief - *Bill Valentine (memoir)*
 Some Dance to Remember - *Jack Fritscher (gay fiction "classic" re-issue)*
 The Millionaire of Love - *David Leddick (novel)*

And, from Herren about Positronic Press titles for 2005:

The Haworth Positronic Press will be publishing six titles of gay / lesbian scifi, fantasy and horror per year. We got off to a good start this year with the publication of my own anthology, Shadows of the Night, and that reprint of Felice Picano's classic scifi novel, Dryland's End. In 2005, we are publishing E. Robert Dunn's Echelon's End 3, a fantasy anthology edited by Steve Berman currently titled So Fey!, Max Reynolds' erotic vampire novel Touches of Evil, a collection of horror stories by Victoria A. Brownworth titled Day of the Dead, a vampire novel by M. Christian titled The Very Bloody Marys, and a queer scifi anthology by yours truly.

Our objective is to publish horror, science fiction, and fantasy that not only represents a queer viewpoint in a positive manner but also to publish books with strong characterizations and interesting and original plots and themes. Speculative fiction asks the question "what if?" and allows the queer writer (and the reader) to explore different worlds and cultures in a freer way. HPP is the first imprint to focus on these types of books from a queer perspective; over the years a number of excellent titles have been published through various publishers that are classics in the field - like Steam by Jay B. Laws, The Living One by Lewis Gannett, Kirith Kirin by Jim Grimsley, and anything by Nicola Z. Griffith, but publishers nevertheless seem to shy away from this kind of work.

To read what Harrington Park has to say about all these titles and to get a glimpse ahead to some potential 2006 titles:

www.haworthpressinc.com/store/Dept.asp?find_page=1&dept_id=134&filter=&sid=WG0E8M4CCMFx8LLWGQATK73SDVDN6QLC

For a look at some other Haworth/Harrington/Southern Tier/Alice Street titles:

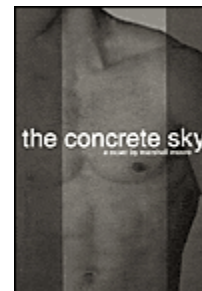
www.haworthpressinc.com/lgbt/default.asp

Some Haworth history:

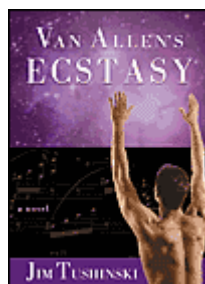
www.haworthpressinc.com/about/default.asp

And here are my own picks for the best reads of Southern Tier fiction titles from 2004:

The Concrete Sky, by Marshall Moore (\$17.95) - This is the only one of the '04 titles to make it on to the cumulative bestseller list above. And it's one of the three best Southern Tier books of the year (*The Tomcat Chronicles* and *Van Allen's Ecstasy* are my other favorites) - part offbeat romance, part murder mystery, part family melodrama, about an engaging young queer whose fierce, weird trip starts when he is committed to a psychiatric institution by a virulently homophobic brother. Moore (whose excellent new collection of supernatural-tinged short stories, *Black Shapes in a Darkened Room*, is just out from Suspect Thoughts Press) is a wry, smart writer.



Author info: www.marshallmoore.com



Van Allen's Ecstasy, by Jim Tushinski (\$16.95) - This is another of my favorites from the past year - and, totally coincidentally, it shares with Moore's novel that its central character (Michael Van Allen, troubled son of artistically talented parents) passes through a mental institution. That's all it has in common with *The Concrete Sky*, (though reading them back to back, as I did, is an interesting experience in assessing how madness is defined). Tushinski's debut novel is a harrowing and compelling descent into one man's world of interior rage, self-reconstruction, and reconciliation with the world. Tushinski's prose, bold and transformative, demands close reading, and rewards it. In fact, it's reminiscent of two early Southern Tier titles, Beachy's *Distortion* and Bouldrey's *Love, the Magician...* And they are two of the authors who blurbbed the book. Beachy called it "a compelling contribution to the literature of madness and identity," and Bouldrey called it "a story about how we are who we are, even without all the memories and connections we depend upon every day to help us define ourselves."

Author info: www.jimtushinski.com

And for an interview with Moore, Tushinski, and two 2003 Southern Tier authors, Dan Boyle and Trebor Healey:

www.erotica-readers.com/ERA/SL/4Voices.htm

The Ice Sculptures: A Novel of Hollywood, by Michael D. Craig (\$15.95) -

Lighter fare here: a fun formula novel about a hunky Hollywood action hero who's living the usual lie - his beard is a stunning actress - until he meets the young man of his dreams. If you know that, before this fiction debut, he wrote *Who's That Girl?* *The Ultimate Madonna Trivia Book* and *The Totally Awesome '80s Pop Music Trivia Book*, you'll have a good sense of this summer-read popsicle.

Whose Eye is On Which Sparrow? by Robert Taylor

(\$14.95) - And this one is more serious than the fun Hollywood coming-out melodrama; it's about a young, married (and white) doctor who falls hard for a young, gay (and black) choir director, with all the Southern ramifications that kind of relationship can stir up - particularly when the good doctor is the scion of a prominent political family. As love stories go, this one is soothingly predictable.



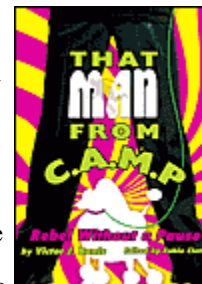
Two theme anthologies are also quite delightful: **Love Under Foot: An Erotic Celebration of Feet**, edited by Greg Wharton & M. Christian (\$19.95), and **Upon a Midnight Clear: Queer Christmas Tales**, edited by Greg Herren (\$14.95). Here's what I had to say (in a blurb for the book, publishers caps retained) about *Under Foot*: "A SIZE 14/XXX ANTHOLOGY... It's all here: the ticklish, tortuous brush of the finger across a sensitive sole; the languorous massage of an aching arch; the arousing sight of a smooth ankle, a calloused heel, ten hot pink nails... EXPLICIT... TITILLATING"; and here's what I had to say (another blurb) about *Midnight Clear*: "THIS STANDOUT COLLECTION OF HOLIDAY-THEMED SHORT STORIES brings



great queer tidings of comfort and joy into the festive season by celebrating found families and new lovers, exploring new traditions and fond memories, and adding dazzling rainbow lights to the trimming of the tree. Some of the stories are witty, some are wistful, some dwell on loneliness and estrangement, some revel in romantic interludes and lusty adventures. But EVERY ONE IS A GIFT WORTH GETTING, AND READING."

And I'll heartily recommend the three reprints from 2004: *Dryland's End*, by Felice Picano (an eye-popping \$34.95 in paper, but 525 pages long); *That Man from C.A.M.P.: Rebel Without a Pause!*, by Victor J. Banis (a hefty \$24.95 in paper, but there are three novels between the covers, and it is 359 pages long); and *Death Trick*, by Richard Stevenson (\$15.95), the first in the sassy and sexy Don Strachey private eye series.

I reviewed the Banis book in an earlier edition of BTWOF - it's classic camp, drawn from a nine-book series written as a gay parody of the James Bond novels, with some panting porn every few pages, and with a highly-sexed secret agent always ready to best the evil homophobes... not a bad role model for pre-Stonewall queers. "For readers just discovering these campy treasures, welcome to a time machine whisking you back to an era - not so long past - where swish had substance, where flaming queens ruled the pulp friction world, and where the gay secret agent always got his man... into bed. Thanks go to the creator of the protean man from C.A.M.P. for the classic memories - and for the reminder that there's a lot more to gay history than dates, demos, and court decisions."



Michael Bronski on tracking down the many names of Victor Banis:

www.baywindows.com/news/2004/07/29/Arts/Notes.On.C.a.m.p-696340.shtml



Picano's science fiction epic is right up the alley for fans of Jim Grimsley (*Kirith Kirin*, *The Ordinary*) and Storm Constantine (the *Wraeththu* series), with a bit of Frank Herbert's *Dune* books and Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* series mixed in, profoundly original for all that, and all queered up for galactically serious fans of far-off times, faraway worlds, fierce warriors, mysterious gods, a universe of wars, and an exciting world-of-wonder aura. *Dryland's End*, a book unlike any of Picano's other novels, was first published by Richard Kasak's Masquerade Books, where it was an odd fit indeed, since Kasak specialized mostly in gay porn, with a few literary-gay novels from Patrick Moore, Stan Leventhal, Kevin Killian and others. Literary as it is, the book just didn't have any real friends in the Masquerade Books catalog; as Picano notes in his generous intro to the book, it received no reviews, sold about 3,000 copies - far fewer than any of his many prose titles - and was quickly out of print.

Author info: www.felicepicano.com (and do download the enthusiastic PrideVision interview of Picano, conducted in February, 2004 in Canada when he was part of an Ottawa / Montreal / Toronto literary festival).

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10 BTWOFs: *Sylvester*, and the Man-Eating Lotus Blossoms

The Fabulous Sylvester: The Legend, the Music, the '70s in San Francisco, by Joshua Gamson - He was born poor, sang large, lived larger, and died young: pop culture enthusiast Gamson tracks queer SF in the '70s through born-to-be fabulous Sylvester, "a pied piper singing in a dazzling falsetto." Sylvester is one of many characters, and occasionally a controversial one, in Pam Tent's *Midnight at the Palace: My Life as a Fabulous Cockette* (Alyson, \$17.95); here, he has a book all his own. (Henry Holt, March, \$26 hardcover)



Acqua Calda, by Keith McDermott - Instead of dying as planned, a New York actor, living humbly with AIDS on the cusp of the protease era, is drawn back into the turbulent world of avant-garde theatre when his eccentric former director hooks him for one more performance. "Hard to believe this is a first novel, so acute are the insights, so achieved is the design, so eloquent is the language," says Edmund White.



Attack of the Man-Eating Lotus Blossoms, by *Justin Chin* - A decade of performance art prose settles restlessly, hilariously, potently, and poignantly onto the pages of this collection of poet and memoirist Chin's live appearances; good stuff, and, best of all, he's not afraid to critique his own work, in a series of insightful introductions to each piece. (Suspect Thoughts Press, April, \$16.95 paper)

To hear Chin read from *Bite Hard*:

<http://anon.salon.speedera.net/anon.salon/mp3s/jchin.mp3>

Scrub Match, by *Bill Eisele* - In *Huddle* Dan Boyle did it with white gay men, football, West Hollywood, and romance. Debut novelist Eisele takes the formula and runs the court with it, in this novel about a black gay man, basketball, San Francisco, and romance. (Kensington Books, April, \$14 paper)

One of These Things is Not Like the Other, by *D. Travers Scott* - When their domineering, demanding, and reclusive dad dies, four identical brothers set out to discover who they really are. One of them is gay - or is it two? And if their mother died giving birth to triplets, who is the fourth son? And when they start dying, who among them is the killer? This is a uniquely spooky horror-tinged thriller from the author of *Execution, Texas: 1987* and the editor of *Strategic Sex*. (Suspect Thoughts Press, April, \$16.95 paper)

Author info, four excerpts: www.dtraversscott.com

Back Where He Started, by *Jay Quinn* - From the editor-in-chief of Harrington Park Press' Southern Tier imprint: a profoundly intelligent and entertaining novel about starting over when your husband leaves you - the man who raised his children - for his female secretary. "Jay Quinn's story - simmering with passion and pain and told with wit and grace - shows us that there are indeed second acts in life and in love. A terrifically textured novel. (And three adults call the man their father jilted after 20 years 'Mom' - now that's a deliciously quirky queer family value!)" That's the blurb I wrote for the book; Paul Russell, Aaron Krach, Jim Gladstone, and Paul Lisicky like it too. (Alyson Books, April, \$24.95 hardcover)

Powertool: The Jeff Stryker Story, by *Jeff Stryker with Fred Goss* - Power tool indeed...the autobiography of gay male porn's most important member - and of the man who used it in 15 films and turned it into a bestselling sex toy. (Alyson Books, May, \$14.95 paper)

Song of the Loon, by *Richard Amory* & **The Young in One Another's Arms**, by *Jane Rule* - Two queer classics, in a new reprint series inspired by Little Sisters bookstore in Vancouver, home to the publisher. Michael Bronski introduces Amory's novel about gay love among Native Americans; Katherine V. Forrest introduces Rule's 1977 novel, published by Doubleday and then available from Naiad for many years, about the camaraderie among strong women. (Arsenal Pulp Press, May, each \$16.95)

My Lucky Star, by *Joe Keenan* - Now that *Frasier* is off the air (Keenan was a longtime writer and then producer), the author of the comic classics *My Blue Heaven* (1987) and *Putting on the Ritz* (1991) has a new novel at last: a Hollywood farce about over-clever young writers who sign a deal to write a screenplay for a married gay star, only to find themselves in a humorous, tangled, and perilous situation involving blackmail, betrayal, indiscreet call boys, a bloodthirsty DA and the single most ill-judged sex act a married megastar has ever committed, according to publisher Little, Brown. That's the good news; bad news is, it's not out for about a year...

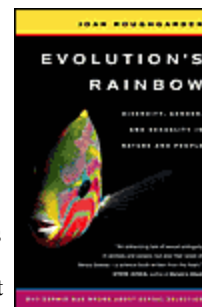


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An Overlooked Book to Watch Out For

PW Newline recently cited its 10 overlooked titles of 2004 - "titles that editors feel deserve a lot more attention than they received." One in 10 is of gay interest; here's what they had to say about it:

Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People, by *Joan Roughgarden (University of California)* - "This brilliant and accessible work of biological criticism has the potential to revolutionize the way readers conceive of gender and sexuality in the natural world. Readers more accustomed to traditional binary categories of gender and sexuality in humans will be surprised at how a multivalent "rainbow" portrait emerges from Roughgarden's rigorously scientific, deeply personal, and insistently ethical point of view." That's about what I thought, too, in my review a few months ago.



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Joseph Hansen: Nothing Mysterious About His Talents

Five days before he died in his sleep, on November 24, Joseph Hansen, 81, was busy writing – and fulminating. Always in tune with the times, he had started a blog, where he posted pungent commentaries on contemporary politics (and baseball) – eight in all, from June, when he started <http://josephhansen.blogspot.com>. Worth reading, if they're still online; in case not, the last (which I had copied to email to a friend) appears below. So does a column about his writing and his activism, written by a close friend just a couple of months before his death...



In many ways, Joe – I'll call him that, friends did, and he was a good friend of A Different Light Bookstore in its early years and, through my reviews of his books, a steady correspondent – was a pioneer's pioneer. His early activism, with ONE and then with the Homosexual Information Center, dated back more than 50 years. His aboveground literary career began in 1970 with *Fadeout*, the first of 12 books in the Dave Brandstetter series, and among the earliest mysteries written by a gay man with a gay protagonist (an insurance claims investigator, but no less hardboiled than his straight compatriots). But even before then, mostly as "James Colton," Joe was doing what so many gay writers did to make a modest living from their talent: writing gay porn. His was vastly more literate than most.

I gobbled up the Brandstetter books, and I sure don't want to dismiss mysteries as second-class lit (they aren't, and I read dozens a year) – but the Hansens I liked best were his highly autobiographical gay-life-story novels, including *A Smile in His Lifetime* (1981), *Job's Year* (1983) – which drew on his relationship with wife Jane – and the three "Nathan Reed" novels, *Jack of Hearts* (1992), *Living Upstairs* (1993), and *The Cutbank Path* (2002).

Those first two non-Brandstetter novels were, stylistically, as good as or better than work by his gay peers, Rechy and Isherwood, or the generation of writers that came after him, Picano and Holleran and Ferro and, eventually, Monette and Bram and Leavitt. But those were the heady days of sexual hedonism and bursting out of the closet, and Joe's fiction – more mature, more complex, and, realistically, more conflicted – wasn't the taste of the day. And, certainly, he was perceived as a "mere" mystery writer, a taint that tarnished the quality and overshadowed the reception of the first two gayly-historical Nathan Reed novels. Joe turned to Xlibris to self-publish the third of the Reed books, for which any publisher of gay fiction who might have published it ought to be embarrassed. For a vivid sense of what it was like to acknowledge queerness in a hostile culture decades before Stonewall, those books can't be beat.

Two Brandstetters – the other is *Death Claims* - are recently available from the Terrace Books imprint of University of Wisconsin Press; *Fadeout* includes a new introduction by Joe to the series he started almost 35 years ago, and brought to a polished and plausible end in 1991, with *A Country of Old Men*. For info: www.wisc.edu/wisconsinpress/books/3790.htm

Joe's charmingly cranky autobiographical profile:

<http://homepage.mac.com/ctgrant/HIC/rogues/hansen.html>

An interview: <http://homepage.mac.com/ctgrant/HIC/rogues/hansen0904.html>

A 1965 short story by "James Colton" from *ONE: The Homosexual Viewpoint* <http://homepage.mac.com/ctgrant/HIC/history/articles/grainger1.html>

Joseph Hansen's last blog entry:

LOSING PRIVATE RYAN

On November eleventh, Veterans Day, the ABC television network chose to air Steven Spielberg's 1995 film Saving Private Ryan as a tribute to Americans who fought and died in World War II. The film comes to grips as few other movies have ever done with the realities of modern combat. Its first 25 minutes are an unflinching depiction of the landing of our troops on D-Day, June 6, 1944, a day of rain, wind, and choppy seas, at Omaha Beach on the Normandy coast, where Germans firing from cliff-top bunkers cut our forces to pieces, many before they could even wade out of the surf. The slaughter was horrifying, and Spielberg shows it in relentless, wrenching detail. The surf is awash with blood.

Saving Private Ryan had been shown several times on network television without incident. But this year a funny thing happened. In George W. Bush country, of course. The Heartlanders got on their crank telephones and rang up their local teevee stations to say that Ryan was not fittin' fer pram tam. The actors use the F word. They do. In this week's Time magazine, an embedded reporter in Fallujah, running in a crouch from street to street with our troops there, has occasion to quote them in moments of crisis. It is now sixty years since World War II, but in the terror and chaos of battle, the F word has not lost favor. Spielberg insisted on it, and in his contracts, he specified that it not be bleeped even on network showings. The Heartlanders don't care. It ain't fittin' fer teevee. Take the movie off.

This is not surprising. What is surprising is that sixty-five outlets knuckled under meekly and showed a different movie to the just-kick-it-in-the-side-if-it-don't-work television sets of the cotton, corn, and taters crowd. The alternative I saw mentioned was Return to Mayberry. Again, no surprise. But the language of Saving Private Ryan was not the only fault the Heartlanders found. The violence was another thing. Say what you want about them, these Born Againers keep their eyes open. There is violence. Since the movie is about a war, anyone else would have expected it. But connecting the dots is a game beyond the skills of these good folk. Hell, connecting the idea of broadcasting a film about war with Veterans Day is plainly out of their mental reach.

I suggest Steven Spielberg's point in showing in detail the butchery of battle was to make us painfully aware that war is stupid and cruel and wasteful and solves nothing. It is conventional for the hero of a movie to survive once the guns grow silent and the smoke of battle clears. The hero of this film, a Captain sent in the interests of Armed Services public relations on the absurd and wasteful mission of finding and saving the fourth son of a widow whose other boys were killed in battle, dies of gunshot wounds in combat gear at the close of this picture. Let us say that the film does not glorify war.

And I submit that perhaps the folk who called up their local television stations had a different agenda from that of sparing the tender ears of their women and children the F word. I submit that they may have been primed by an alert from Warshnon, Dee See, and their adored Prez'dent, who after all is whining daily at all of us to support his brainless and savage assault on the people of Iraq. Events there are going badly right now. There is (gasp!) a lot of violence and bloodshed, and American troops are being killed at a record rate, some of them dismembered, cut in half, disemboweled by machine gun fire - just as shown in Saving Private Ryan. Surely George W. Bush would prefer the Faithful not to put two and two together with the help of Steven Spielberg.

That the television stations (assertedly because they feared FCC reprisal, as in the matter of Janet Jackson's breast) dropped to their knees and knocked their heads on the floor, I find unsettling. If we don't want to watch hideous deaths and maimings on television, we can click on the remote and find gentler matter on another channel. It is our choice. Back in the days when books were the prime source of education and amusement, Hitler's answer was to burn the books he didn't like. Now that (sad to say) television has replaced books, can the President decide which movies it may show and which it would be best if we did not see? Was this a one-time fluke? I hope so. But it might be wise to remember it. It could be coming soon to your local TV outlet.

“That Was a Thrilling Day”: A column by a colleague*Legends**Column One: Joseph Hansen*

By C. Todd White, ©2004

When it came time to choose the first subject for this column, Joseph Hansen came naturally to my mind. From 1970 through the 1990s, Hansen was among the best known of the West Coast gay activists.

Hansen met Martin Block at his twenty-second birthday party, in 1945, and the two formed an enduring friendship. Block would help create ONE Magazine, the nation's first magazine for homosexuals, in 1952. In 1958, a friend introduced Hansen to ONE's senior editor Don Slater, and he soon began writing for the magazine. His first story was "The Corrupter," published in 1963 under the pseudonym James Colton, used due to Slater's insistence. In 1964, National Library Books published his first novel, Lost on Twilight Road, also under the name of Colton.

In 1970, Harper & Row published Fadeout, the first novel in Hansen's own name. Fadeout is a mystery novel that features detective David Brandstetter, a character proven to have appeal with a vast and diverse audience. "My joke," Hansen once said, "was to take the true hard-boiled character in American fiction tradition and make him homosexual. He was going to be a nice man, a good man, and he was going to do his job well." Indeed Brandstetter has done his job well, and Fadeout has thrilled audiences around the world for nearly thirty-five years, with a new edition currently in press. Hansen has currently published over forty books.

Joseph and Jane Hansen were active supporters of ONE, Incorporated in the early '60s, and they sided with Don Slater when the organization divided in 1965. Calling themselves the Tangent Group, their version of ONE Magazine soon became Tangents, which continued publication until 1970. The Tangent Group became incorporated as the Homosexual Information Center [HIC], a California non-profit corporation, in the fall of 1968.

When asked to describe one event during his years of activism that stood out as having been a truly exceptional experience, he first declined, stating: "There have been many, many, many events that have taken us to where we are today. I think pebbles more than boulders have built this mountain, on top of which we stand."

But then he decided to discuss the first gay pride parade, organized by Morris Kight and Christopher Street West in June of 1970 to commemorate the first anniversary of the Stonewall rebellion. Hansen was HIC's representative to the Planning Committee. The first gay pride parade was nothing like today's gala celebration. As Hansen described it, "The parade was super silly, and very ragtag, and nobody had any money for the floats or anything. But they threw on a few sequins, a bit of tulle, and some paint, and they got out there and did the best they could."

The effect, he added, was "electrifying." He recalled standing across the street from the Pickwick Bookshop, where he had worked years before, and seeing his past co-worker Lloyd standing in front of the store watching on. Lloyd saw Hansen and yelled, "JOE! Isn't this wonderful! Isn't this a marvelous day! Can you imagine this ever happening?"

It seemed to Hansen that "the fact of the parade, the fact that nobody threw eggs or rotten tomatoes at it, and nobody jeered—people stood and smiled as it went by—was a huge shock, and a very pleasant one, to people like Lloyd. There were thousands of them in Los Angeles at that time. I think it showed homosexuals that being bold, being brave, and coming out was not going to have the awful results that everybody always feared. That those days were passed, they were behind us. And that was a thrilling day."

For Hansen, the most important role of the early movement was that it let people know that they were not alone, that there were others out there who "shared their predicament." Its greatest accomplishment has been the recent repeal of the sodomy laws by the Supreme Court. "Once the Federal Government said NO to such laws, that was the coup de grâce, that was the principle thing.... That's what we were asking for, to be decriminalized."

It seems that few people today realize that the campaign to decriminalize homosexuality took over fifty years to fight and that it began in Los Angeles. It is hard for us to comprehend the amazing changes in social attitudes since Hansen wrote his first short story for ONE. Fortunately, the books, stories, poems, and art contributed by Joseph and Jane Hansen remain, and these will help us to remember how difficult it was for homosexuals then, and how wildly different things were.

(Reprinted with permission of the author from the Orange County and Long Beach Blade)

Joe is mentioned as a mystery-writer pioneer in this 2003 interview by Christopher Rice of John Morgan Wilson:

www.advocate.com/html/stories/901/901_rice_wilson.asp

And he's cited in Robrt L. Pela's timeline of gay writers, for the debut in 1970 of the Dave Brandstetter books:

www.advocate.com/html/stories/817_8/817_8_gaywriters.asp

A Controversial Kinsey Threesome

Kinsey, Bill Condon's film about Alfred C. Kinsey, the sex researcher who gave us 6 on the queer scale, garnered solid reviews when it opened in a few theatres in November, before widening through December; it's already on the deserves-an-Oscar list. It's also given new life to the screechy passion of one Judith Reisman, who has made it her life's mission to depict Kinsey as a libertine homosexual degenerate masochistic paedophile communist criminal – going so far as to press for a House investigation into his research, labeling his research associates “Nazis,” and demanding that adults she alleges were molested by Kinsey as children come forward to sue... somebody.

A *New Yorker* profile of Reisman:

http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?talk/041206ta_talk_radosh

Reisman's loony vitae:

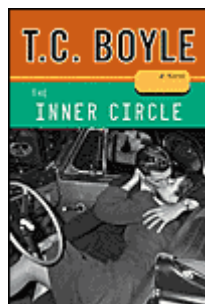
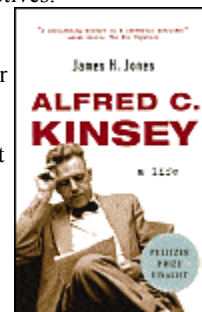
<http://www.drjudithreisman.org/vitae.htm>

The House bill she wants revived:

<http://www.drjudithreisman.org/hr2749.htm>

Two books, one a biography reissued in conjunction with *Kinsey*, the other a recent novel fictionalizing Kinsey's life, offer better-rounded perspectives:

Alfred C. Kinsey: A Life, by James H. Jones (*WW Norton*, \$17.95 paper) – Reissued to coincide with the film, this 900-page bio, nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in 1997, makes clear that Kinsey, though married and with four children, enjoyed sex with men and skewed masochistic in his sex play. These revelations weren't meant to denigrate him as a researcher, but rather to depict, with unsparing honesty, that Kinsey was a complex man committed to exploring the sexual diversity that has always been a part of American culture, no matter how much the bluenoses try to repress it. It's a sensational book, scholarly and intense, but not a sensationalistic one, a very long and profoundly rewarding footnote to the film – and, neither exalting nor denigrating him, a fine antidote to Reisman's venom.



The Inner Circle, by T. Coraghessan Boyle (*Viking*, \$25.95 hardcover) – I let this novel lie around for a couple of months, until reviews of the film *Kinsey* popped up; and when a copy of the Jones reissue arrived (read when it was published seven years ago), the scales were tipped. Good thing: I imagine I let it drift to the bottom of the reading stack because its narrator, the blandly-named John Milk, is straight, married, and uneasy about being a member of Kinsey's “inner circle” of researchers. Sticking pretty close to the facts of the Jones bio, Boyle's fiction depicts Kinsey as both an innovative, inspired, guru-like genius, and a manipulative, self-indulgent, sexual-thrill-seeker – acknowledging the importance and substantial

impact of his findings, with occasional whiffs of reactionary disapproval. And though “Prok,” as Kinsey is called by his acolytes, is certainly central to the story, this is at heart a love story, about how the once-virginal Milk and his young bride Iris navigate their relationship and such personal realities as sex, marriage, jealousy, trust, loyalty, and love.

Boyle on how the book came to be: www.laweekly.com/ink/04/41/books-ulin.php

A sex-phobic reviewer likes the elegant writing:

www.thepedestalmagazine.com/Secure/Content/cb.asp?cbid=4508



We Love Magazines That Love Books

We expect useful book reviews from *Lambda Book Report* – which has become much meatier in recent issues, as editor Lisa Moore settles in – and *Gay & Lesbian Review* – substantial as ever, that one. *Out* and *The Advocate* feature a few reviews each issue, of course, always worth checking out, and sometimes available online (<http://66.161.86.126/reviews.asp?t=book>, for *Out*).

Very little of *Instinct* magazine is available online, and none of the book review material seems to be, which means you'll have to subscribe – or scam a read at the newsstand. Either way, it's worth your time; the reviewers (Joel Perry, Dave White, and Robbie Daw in the October issue, the most recent I've read) are a clever and scrappy lot. *Clay's Way* by Blair Mastbaum (Alyson) is introduced with the headline,

"Teenage Wasteland: One's a skater. One's a surfer. Does love stand a chance? Oh, the angst!" It gets a B; Michael Thomas Ford's *Looking For It* (Kensington) gets a B+. Books with drawings fare better: *Trucker Fags in Denial*, by Jim Goad & Jim Blanchard (Fantographic) is a graphic novel - "an evil-fairy-trucker fairy tale" - about two fag-murdering homophobes who fall in love with each other, though they dare not call it love; it gets an A, and so does *Wake Up Romeo*, by Carlos Marrero (Green Candy), a tongue-in-cheek advice book for lost romantics: "There are some words that go along with the pictures, but don't worry... pretend they're not there and get the basic gist from the cool images," wrote Daw.

Another fun regular feature: "Judging Books By Their Cover," something I always used to do - at least in terms of assessing their sales potential. In *Instinct*, though, the comments can be snippy. Of Jackson Tippett McCrae's book *The Children's Corner* (Dutton Books) - a brilliant short story collection, not particularly gay though homophobia is confronted - they say: "A floating doll's head, a dog in stride, and some nondescript foliage. Stop taking acid, please."

October's issue also gave authors a chance, in 25 words or less, to tell readers why they should buy their books. Coupled with tart comments from the brash boys of *Instinct*, it's a sprightly way to give books some much-needed PR in a few words. Says Orland Outland of his novel *A Serious Person* (Alyson): "Because Ryan Adams and John Mayer fighting over Anderson Cooper in the *Big Brother's* house is a hot idea for a novel." *Instinct* says: "We could not agree more. Anderson Cooper is hotter than a Pop Tart fresh out of the toaster." Alex Sanchez (*So Hard to Say*, Simon & Schuster), William Maltese (*The Slovakian Boy*, Green Candy), William J. Mann (*Gay Pride: A Celebration of All Things Gay and Lesbian*, Citadel Books) and James Spada (*Edwardian Men*, Pond Street Press) also have their say. And, on the same page - an interview with Greg Wharton and Ian Philips of Suspect Thoughts Press. So many words about books, presented in such creative ways...

As for the November issue - Blair Mastbaum is back, as one of the magazine's "Leading Men of 2004," along with Tom Dolby (*The Trouble Boy*). Unfortunately, only the interview with *Queer Eye* guy Carson Kressley is available online - but he has "written" books, too, most recently *Off the Cuff: The Essential Style Guide for Men - and the Women Who Love Them* (Dutton). Uh-huh...

www.instinctmag.com/cover.html

Young Gay America is a new mag aimed at teens; book reviews are promised for the first issue, but the website by the guys responsible for the magazine features a good range of reviews of older and newer books, all written by readers in their teens and early 20s, and ranging from *Sex Rites* by Brandon Fox (Leyland Publications) to *The Straight Mind* by Monique Wittig (Beacon Press):

www.younggayamerica.com/reviews.shtml

As for the magazine itself, which seems calmer than youth-magazine pioneer *XY*, YGA's first issue includes: "How to Capture Your Crush," "Deaf & Gay," "Strategy for Dealing with Locker Room Bullying," and "Brave New World," a look at how America has changed for LGBTQ young people. Young Gay America began on the internet in 2001 as a new media project for young gays, including on-location interviews in towns and cities across North America. The project grew to include the documentary film *Jim in Bold* produced with support by the Matthew Shepard foundation, in 2003. <http://www.ygamag.com/pub/main/main.html>

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Liberal Hope, Queer Abe, and the DNA of Literature

Novelist Michael Nava (the Henry Rios mysteries) sees light, optimistically and through an historical lens, at the end of the Republican election-win tunnel:

www.advocate.com/html/stories/927/927_nava.asp

British writer Drew Gummerson (*The Lodger*, Millivres Books) asked fellow contributors to *Best Gay Erotica 2005* (Cleis Press) to send him erotic short stories - 50 words maximum:

<http://freespace.virgin.net/d.gummerson/erotica.html>

It's not about books, but a Toronto pop critic remembers Jobriath, the openly-gay rocker who out-glittered David Bowie in his day, as a new CD of his music, *Lonely Planet Boy*, is released - compiled by Morrissey, and there's the book hook! Morrissey is the subject of a new biography by Mark Simpson (*Saint Morrissey*,

SAF Publishing):

www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/ArticleNews/TPStory/LAC/20041203/GREEN03/TPEntertainment/Music

Over there in Oregon, Dennis Cooper is interviewed about transgressive literature, new writers he likes, the books he's editing for Akashic, and his August, 2005 novel *God Jr.*, coming from Grove - there's no violence, and it's told in the voice of an adult:

www.oregonlive.com/AandE/pluggedin/index.ssf?/base/entertainment/1101905744101830.xml

The first of Be Beautiful's "yaoi" (male/male romance) graphic novels - boy-loves-boy stuff for teen girls, but now being marketed to gays as well - goes under the microscope:

www.sequentialtart.com/art_1204_5.shtml

I'm scooping myself: in the next BTWOF, I discuss Richard Andreoli's *Mondo Homo: Your Essential Guide to Queer Pop Culture* (Alyson), and interview Dave White and Christopher Rice about why they love books so darn much; meanwhile, the *Village Voice* asks White five quick questions, one of them about books:

www.villagevoice.com/issues/0448/beghtol.php

Doug Ireland previews the forthcoming book from The Free Press by the late C.A. Tripp that absolutely positively for real proves that Abe Lincoln was a tall dark drink of faggy water:

www.laweekly.com/ink/04/50/news-ireland2.php

An interview with Mattilda, aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore, about his several books, most recently *That's Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation* (Soft Skull, \$16.95):

http://www.sfbg.com/39/04/lit_interview_mattilda.html

Steven Petrow remembers Leroy Aarons, founder of the National Lesbian & Gay Journalist Association and author of *Prayers for Bobby*, a book about a family coping with the suicide of a gay son:

www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2004/12/03/EDGPAA4S541.DTL

The DNA of Literature is an easily-accessed, and entirely free, archive of every *Paris Review* interview of the last 50 years; no surprise that homos abound: among them, Capote, Forster, and Henry Green in the '50s; Albee, Burroughs, and Cocteau in the '60s; Auden, Isherwood, and Vidal in the '70s; Ashbery, Bowles, and Puig in the '80s; Gunn, Rorem, and Winterson in the '90s; and Davenport, Howard, and McClatchy in the '00s. The link to each profile provides a picture of the writer, and a pithy quote; here is May Sarton's, from her 1983 interview: "[In old age] there is a childlike innocence, often, that has nothing to do with the childishness of senility. The moments become precious . . ."

www.parisreview.org/literature.php/prmDecade/2000

From Steidl / Edition 7L comes a weighty record of Andy Warhol's contribution to the New Journalism: *Andy Warhol's Interview, Volume One*, a bargain at \$475 – thousands of words he "wrote" for *Interview*, stylishly slipcased and ready to roll:

www.nytimes.com/2004/12/05/magazine/05INTERVIEW.html

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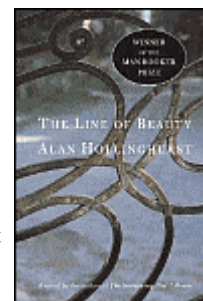
Bestsellers From Our Bookstores

Gay's The Word

London, England

Week of Dec. 5:

1. *The Line of Beauty*, by Alan Hollinghurst - Winner of the Booker Prize, *The Line of Beauty* is still our no 1!
2. *The Way the Crow Flies*, by Ann-Marie MacDonald - A good story and a very clever plot. From the same author who wrote *Fall On Your Knees*.
3. *Sugar Rush*, by Julie Burchill - Warning: Explicit content! it says on the hot pink cover.... maybe that is the reason why it sells in bucket loads ;-)



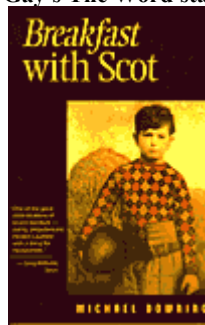
4. *Fresh Men: New Voices in Gay Fiction*, selected by Edmund White & edited by Donald Weise - An extraordinary collection of today's best gay fiction by emerging writers.

5. *Close Up: An Actor Telling Tales*, by John Fraser - The autobiography of John Fraser is a supa-candid-gossip-tastic-expo-valid-dose-worth of Dirk, Sophia, Bette, and Rudy in the sixties.

(Burchill's novel, a teenage lesbian romance, is coming to America from HarperTempest in June, 2005. Fraser's tell-all autobiography is coming to America in April, 2005, from Theatre Communication Group; for an interview with Fraser, and some *bon mots* about Bogarde and Nureyev – who, "bewitching, vulnerable, generous, and above all, scruffy," often made love to Fraser without showering after a performance or workout - among others:

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/news/articles/0,6109,1318096,00.html>)

Gay's The Word staff picks, by Jim...



It's been some time since I've written anything for staff picks which is a disgrace as I read an enormous number of books and am forever recommending titles to customers. Rather than choosing one title, I've decided to pick a number of different books that I've enjoyed and particularly recommend. A gay couple unexpectedly becomes guardians of an 11-year-old boy in **Breakfast with Scot** by Michael Downing (£9.99). This is a very funny novel and captures beautifully the joys and tribulations of parenting and relationships.

Quite different is **The Carnivorous Lamb** by Augustin Gomez-Arcos (£5.95) which was published by GMP in 1986 and won the Prix Hermes. Set in a shuttered house in post-Civil War Spain where ghosts of past rebellion and present defeat taint the air, Ignacio is born. His father stays locked in his study, his mother refuses to acknowledge his existence. Only his brother Antonio is there for him - as a teacher, protector and eventual lover. This is a gutsy tender novel crying out to be filmed by Almodovar.

Bitter Eden by Tatamkhulu Afrika (£11.99) is an autobiographical novel set in a prisoner-of-war camp during WWII. This frank and beautifully written novel deals with three men who see themselves as straight but who must negotiate the emotions that are brought to the surface by the physical closeness of survival in the male-only camps. The complex rituals of camp life and the strange loyalties and deep bonds between the men are compellingly depicted. One of the most passionate books that I've read in some time.

A customer recommended **The Boy in the Lake** by Eric Swanson (£9.99) to me. Going home to Ohio to bury his grandmother, a man remembers back to his childhood and to the arrival of a youth that changed his life forever. Growing up, coming of age, first love and betrayal are all explored in precise understated prose.

Brian Molloy's first novel **The Year of Ice** (£8.99) garnered rave reviews in the States and with good reason. Set in Minneapolis in 1978, the narrator is the happy-go-lucky school jock surrounded by admiring friends, who is hiding a guilty secret as he slowly begins to come to terms with his sexuality. Laugh out loud funny, it deftly captures a whole process that all lesbians and gay men have to deal with.

Comfort and Joy by Jim Grimsley (£8.99) is a poetic and finely wrought novel that explores the difficult journey two men make toward love. Ford McKinney is a handsome, successful doctor raised in a well-to-do Savannah family. His longtime boyfriend, Dan Krell, is a shy hospital administrator with a painful childhood past. When the holidays arrive, they decide it's time to go home together. But the depth of their commitment is tested when Ford's parents cannot reconcile themselves to their son's choices and long-kept family secrets are revealed by a visit to Dan's mother. Grimsley is one of my favourite authors.



(Interesting that most of the picks are older books in the U.S. - but every one of them is worth ferreting from a shelf somewhere, if you haven't read them before. Or you can order them from Gay's the Word:

http://freespace.virgin.net/gays.theword/c_rev.htm)

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Letters (Oops - Bruce Lives!)

Hello to you,
I came across Richard Labonte's very kind review of my book *Denny Smith* - thank you and him for that. But I wanted to point out two things that will be easy to change. First and most important, Bruce Boone is referred to as "the late Bruce Boone." Bruce is not only not late, he is always on time! So, Bruce is alive. Second, when Richard says the book can be ordered by subscription, could you add "also," because it can be found in bookstores too.

Best,
Bob Gluck

Oops, Bob, my apologies to Bruce (I can only assume I was thinking of Steve Abbott... you, Bruce, and Steve are so intertwined with my memories of the early days of A Different Light in SF). I'll resurrect him in the next newsletter, and mention that the book is available in stores as well.

Richard:

I can't thank you enough for mentioning my comic novel, *Blood in My Hairspray*, in your current issue! Your support of all voices is unparalleled and you are doing the industry such an incredible service by scouring the Internet for content. Needless to say, my publicizing *BIMH* continues apace. I know the book will find its audience! Amazon is now pairing it with Augusten Burroughs' *Sellelevision*, it's been featured on three blogs - two in L.A. and one in Hawaii - and celebrating being the #1 book of the month twice at the small local "hip" bookstore here in Ohio. Anyway... keep doing what you do! Thank you again for your support!

Your fan,
Steven Schreibman



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