



In this issue...

- [The Title Page](#)
- [The Queer Self-Help Shelves](#)
- [Don't Ask, Don't Tell Tomes](#)
- [Books To Watch Out For](#)
- [A Few Quirky Favorites](#)
- [News, Notes, & Web Connections](#)
- [We're Being OutGoogled](#)
- [Printer-friendly version](#)



About BTWOF

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

The Gay Men's Edition

October/November 2003

Volume 1 Number 2

[back to top](#)

By Richard Labonte

Self-help books, queers in the military, offbeat favorites, intriguing new titles, links to the Web, and a Google Monkey observation: welcome to the second edition of **The Gay Men's Edition of Books to Watch Out For**. This is a work in progress; look for author interviews, a review of reviews, and profiles of publishers in coming issues – after my wedding on Oct. 11. You can meet my partner Asa at www.couttsandking.com/richardandasa.htm - we lived together in San Francisco for more than 10 years, and now we're becoming husband and husband here in Canada....



[back to top](#)

Queer Man, Help Thyself

The range of queer books mirrors closely the range of mainstream books. They got mysteries with cats, we got mysteries with cats; they got sappy romances with happy endings, we got sappy romances with happy endings; they got kids' books (and Harry Potter), we got kids' books (and Harry Potter); they got crossword puzzle books, we got . . . well, we used to have a couple, but they may not be in print. And gosh, do we have self-help books as well. Most of them say the same things over and over again - be good, be good to yourself, be good to others, and trust therapy (after all, a lot of them are written by therapists of one sort or another, from low-caste counselor to full-fledged psychotherapist). From a bibliography of many dozens of titles, I've plucked a handful.

Affirmative Gay Relationships: Key Steps in Finding a Life

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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The Gay Men's Edition

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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More Books for Women

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Partner, by Neil Kaminsky (Harrington Park Press) \$19.95 paper.



Before he wrote this find-a-man how-to, Kaminsky explored the dark side - his first book was **When It's Time to Leave Your Lover: A Guide for Gay Men**. Hmm. Which to read first? I'd go with affirmative, and not just because I'm an optimist; Kaminsky's sage relationship advice acknowledges that finding and sustaining love is darn hard work. Like most of his colleagues in the relationship-support world (Rik Isensee, Eric Marcus, Don Clark, Perry Brass, Brad Gooch, etc.), Kaminsky likes empowerment, but he doesn't get too spiritual about it. He covers such issues as body image, expectations, facing rejection, and emotional vulnerability with varied and actually interesting real-life anecdotes drawn from his therapy practice; and he is unusually realistic about the intricacies of dating, intimacy, and long-term living. Best of all, it's almost a chatty book: he is an LCSW ("licensed clinical social worker"), but eschews jargon for a well-informed but formal tone - something that can't be said for all the queer-interest nonfiction from Harrington Park.

Go here for an excerpt from the book:

<http://www.haworthpress.com/store/product.asp?sid=GXXP90QTJ6308NQL5JA5T5P6NLPQ3GUC&sku=4758&AuthType=2>

The Power of a Partner, by Richard L. Pimental-Habib (Alyson Books) \$15.95 paper.

As long as gay girls and boys fret about finding the perfect Ms. or Mr. Right, there will always be a market for books like Kaminsky's. And if he doesn't have the answers to your yearning questions about companionship, perhaps therapist Pimental-Habib does. After all, it's that hope thing, eternally springing, that churns the self-help bookshelves year after year. His suggestions for "creating and maintaining healthy gay and lesbian relationships" are drawn from 15 years of marriage and family counseling, and he is happily partnered himself. His advice is based on a functional blend of common sense and life experience, two pluses for any book professing to tell anyone how to find what they're longing for. All the basics are covered - from figuring out why you want who you want, to differentiating love from lust, to incorporating friends and families into a relationship, to trusting that therapy can keep a couple together, even to breaking up with grace. Dr. Rick (that's how he refers to himself) is affable, practical, and stern where appropriate, all of which help his how-to medicine go down smoothly.

Go here for an excerpt from the book:

http://www.alyson.com/html/powerofapartner/power_excrpt.html

Boyfriend 101: A Gay Guy's Guide to Finding Romance, by Jim Sullivan (Villard Books) \$12.95 paper.

The serious business of finding true love deserves a serious book.

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Books To Watch Out For

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The Gay Men's Edition.

Use the link below to tell them about **The Lesbian Edition**. (Or send one to yourself to check it out.)



Despite its rather glib title, **Boyfriend 101** is it - thoughtful, thorough, an exhaustive guide to the emotional and physical intricacies of dating, scoring, perchance even settling down with Mr. Right, rather than settling for a Mr. Might As Well For Tonight. Which is not to imply that Sullivan, an experienced New York relationship counselor and "dating coach," is a dull advice writer. There is wit in this well-crafted, quite readable compendium of tips, hints, and wise instruction. But for the most part, the tone is firmly no-nonsense, the sort of caring advice a sensible, sensitive father might impart to his ready-for-romance boy - if straight men were ever comfortable discussing sex and love with their gay sons. Most aren't, so this book - drawn directly from dozens of real lives - is the next best thing, answering such questions as where to meet guys and how to flirt without cruising, set sexual limits, define sexual types, and deal with body image - all the topics covered by Kaminsky and Pimental-Habib, but with a touch more of a cheerleader tone.

Author info: <http://www.boyfriend101.com>



10 Smart Things Gay Men Can Do to Improve Their Lives, by Joe Kort (Alyson Books) \$14.95 paper.

Eat more vegetables; floss more often; read more books - these are just three of the many smart things gay men might well do to improve their lives. A more serious 10 are enumerated in psychotherapist Kort's stern yet sincere and accessible book of the near-same name. The buzzwords are familiar, a litany of self-help tropes and truisms: Affirm Yourself By Coming Out; Resolve Issues With Your Family; Avoid (Or Overcome) Sexual Addiction; Maintain Rewarding Relationships; Commit to a Partner. Well, of course! But, surely, easier said than done. Kort's step-by-step suggestions are a bit heavy on the jargon, but he enlivens his queer life-instruction manual with plenty of entertaining-enough anecdotal material drawn from 16 years of counseling hundreds of gay men. Not much new get-a-better-life ground is broken - common sense is really just common sense, after all. But **10 Smart Things...** is a complete, compact, and confident guide to identifying and overcoming self-defeating behavior - and a useful companion to the more relationship-attuned books. Read, learn, and floss your way to a better life.

Go here for an excerpt from the book:

http://www.alyson.com/html/tensmart/10_excrpt.html

The Soul Beneath the Skin: The Unseen Hearts and Habits of Gay Men, by David Nimmons (St. Martin's) \$23.95 hardcover.

The image - often self-image - of gay men: They are self-absorbed, hypersexual, hedonistic, and promiscuous. The reality, argued with well-researched passion in **The Soul Beneath the Skin**: Contemporary gay men are highly ethical, remarkably nonviolent, heavily involved in both gay and nongay charity and volunteer work, and often happily enmeshed in circles of lovers

and friends that endure for decades. Nimmons' book is much more metaphysical than the others - he has nimbly pulled together personal experience, statistical analysis, and cultural and anthropological studies, then enlivened and enriched his daunting array of facts with an engaging, persuasive philosophy suggesting that gay men ought, for the most part, to be proud of who they are. His optimism is visionary. And - with this book as a text - Nimmons is currently taking his gay-is-great mantra to workshops around America, in which he calls for gays to explore "Manifest Love" - a "national project ... to help gay men find new ways to be with and for each other," a screed articulated in the book's cheerfully gung-ho last chapter, "Men for a New Millennium." Even readers leery of movements, however, will find much to encourage and enlighten them in this dynamic, often witty guide to what the author reads as the elemental goodness of the gay male community.

Author info: www.manifestlove.com

Growing Up Gay in America: Informative and Practical Advice for Teen Guys Questioning Their Sexuality and Growing Up Gay, by Jason R. Rich (Franklin Street Books)
\$11.95 paper.

There is no shortage of enthusiasm in **Growing Up Gay**. Lots of assertive declarative sentences! And exclamation marks! But the exuberant tone of this breezy, usually sensible coming-out guide - perhaps gratingly simplistic for an adult reader - is straightforwardly informative. Rich pitches his advice at an appropriate teenage level, opening with a discussion of sexual orientation, coming out to oneself and then to parents, before discussing the gay social scene, the boyfriends-and-beyond stages of relationships, and the ins and outs of health and sex. The book's emphasis on cyberspace contacts, both in a separate chapter and sprinkled throughout, is excellent. But a wordy chapter on career goals seems oddly out of place, more suitable for a generic how-to guide, and the closing chapter on homosexuality and religion is much less than exhaustive. The lack of a bibliography of other coming-out books, or of titles extending the parents-sex-boyfriend-religion chapters, is a severe shortcoming. And scattering more than a dozen pictures of buff, mostly white male models through the book is surely at odds with the sentiment, repeated several times, that "gay people come in all shapes and sizes." This isn't a perfect book for the questioning young person, but it is an adequate, well-intentioned primer, written with a sincere concern that kids come out okay, and more in touch with the assets of the Internet than other books.

Two of the "classic" self-help writers - and my two favorites, because of the range of their work - are Betty Berzon and Rik Isensee, both of whom have written extensively on coming out and relationships. Berzon is a real old-timer: she was writing about gay

and lesbian lives a quarter century ago; here's a review I wrote for www.PlanetOut.com of Berzon's update of her classic coming-out-wisely book, **Positively Gay**:

Bravo - or Brava - to coming-out-positively pioneer Betty Berzon, for taking the time to update her 1979 handbook for the newly queer. This third edition (the second was in 1992) mixes older essays (by the late John Preston, for example, on the importance of "Telling Our Stories"), with fresher work.



New or updated essays include Robin Podolsky's astute "The Ever Changing Lesbian Social Scene"; Michael Shernoff's generous survey of dating, sex and love: "Gay Men's Sexualities: Reflections at the Dawn of the Millennium"; Rabbi Denise L. Eger's overview of one religion's views on queers: "Judaism: A Time of Change"; and Jonathan A. Wright's dry but practical "Financial Planning: Making the Best Use of Your Money." Berzon, whose own introduction is a clear-headed, from-the-heart call for coming out, touches most all of the gay bases. Opening essays on the broader question of coming to terms with oneself are followed by more focused chapters on partnering, family relationships, aging, religion, practical matters (finances, job security, voting power), youth (though an essay or two by young queers would have added valuable perspective), and, in the section "People of Color: The Special Experiences of Minorities Within a Minority," essays touching on African-American, Latino, Asian Pacific Islander and Native concerns. What's missing? How bisexual women and men, and the transgendered, fit into the queer tapestry; thoughts on how the boom in queer visibility on TV, in film, in music, and through the Internet, have transformed the process of coming out; and a deeper look at particular gay health matters, not just AIDS, but also club drugs, body image and the persistence of alcoholism. As it happens, of course, **Positively Gay** isn't the only primer on coming out at any age, in any era, and what's not in Berzon's soul-centered anthology can be found elsewhere. But hers ought to be among the first any questioning, closeted queer turns to, or is offered, whenever that closet door starts to open. In addition to its wealth of guidance, perspective, and support, the book includes a discussion guide that broadens the value of the anthology for classroom use (we should be so lucky), and almost every essay is followed by a bibliography and an Internet resource listing. It's good the book is back: even into its third decade, it remains the most useful general guide for anyone seeking to out themselves, as well as for their friends and family, and for counselors and other professionals.



Isensee is a couple of queer generations younger than Berzon. And in addition to self-help books, he's written a couple of

young adult novels, a sharp political spoof of the ex-gay ministries, and, most recently, **Spank the Monkey: Reports from the Front Lines of Our Quirky Culture**. I haven't read it yet, but I know Rik, so this cover blurb reads well to me: "A saucy burlesque of the postmodern world, a cosmopolitan compendium of racy rants, fond reminiscence, and irreverent monologues: a sharp satire of human foibles, a lost art in this fretful age of sensitive sensibilities."

Author info: www.rikisensee.com



[back to top](#)


(We Love) Men and Women in Uniforms (Or Not): Don't Ask, Don't Tell Tomes

Did you know that in the aftermath of 09/11, the American military, hypocritical as ever, issued a "stop loss order" to all branches, an order suspending all discharges - including those for same-sex soldiers, sailors, and airmen. On one hand, it was a remarkable order, coming as it did from a generally homophobic administration, notes Gary L. Lehring in **Officially Gay: The Political Construction of Sexuality by the U.S. Military** (Temple University Press, \$19.95 paper); on the other hand, the same thing happened in 1991, for Desert Storm; and Alan Berube's landmark popular history of gays in the military, **Coming Out Under Fire**, made clear that when America needs its queers to die, they're welcome to wear the uniform. Lehring's book is a concise interpretation of both how the military defined homosexuality in the 20th century - and how that shifting interpretation helped shape the gay and lesbian identity movements; its wide-ranging sources (legal, medical, historical, cultural, political) are rather exciting. And accessible, too.



Quite a different book is **Don't Ask, Don't Tell: Debating The Gay Ban in the Military**, edited by Aaron Belkin and Geoffrey Bateman (Lynne Rienner Publishers, \$18.95 paper). It's a choppy read, since much of it is drawn from a pro-and-con conference organized in December, 2000, by the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, around the topic "Don't Ask, Don't Tell: Is the Gay Ban Based on Military Necessity or Prejudice?" Yes and yes, no and no - there are infinite shades of answers to the central questions, though in the main prejudice trounced necessity. Editors Belkin and Bateman acknowledge upfront that their intention was to draw participants from "a critical mass of experts of all political persuasions" - but military-gay opponents from the American Enterprise Institute, the Family Research Council, and several other right-wing "family values" groups mostly declined to attend, perhaps out of fear they might

have to shower with the pro-gay participants. Didacticism abounds, but this is, nonetheless, a useful overview of the ban; and in the chapter "Openly Gay Service Members Tell Their Stories," two gay soldiers are rather riveting.


 Unlike a couple of the fantasy-fodder titles from Harrington Park (**Military Trade** and **A Night in the Barracks** come to mind), **Brothers and Others in Arms: The Making of Love and War in Israeli Combat Units**, by Danny Kaplan (\$19.95 paper) offers substantial food for thought. The first third of Kaplan's insightful study consists of first-person interviews with Israeli combat veterans. With slangy vernacular intact, these voices are more ruminative than naughty in nature - but they leave no doubt that homosexuality and homoerotic play are an integral component of the Israeli military environment. Building on the factual yet often emotional anecdotes, Kaplan - a military veteran and an Israel-based psychologist focusing on gay experiences - uses the academic tools of cultural, historical, and sociological analyses to contrast the more tolerant Israeli take on gays in the military with the hidebound hypocrisy of the U.S. experience. Among his many substantive (and heavily-footnoted) observations is that queers in the Israeli ranks - even in the showers - don't diminish unit morale or combat effectiveness; both suppositions, of course, are at the hysterical core of American military homophobia. (And for a really different take on gay/military books, follow the following link - which itself links to a page with conservative founding father Barry Goldwater writing on gays in the military): <http://www.chosin.com/gbook.html>



[back to top](#)

Books to Watch Out For


Here are a dozen books I'm looking forward to reading. Histories of our lives, of AIDS, of club music interest me; I always did like Judy; I need to read more poetry; I admire Ian Philip's way with words... well, every one of these titles intrigues me.

1. **The Consequence of Sex**, by Robert Reinhart - **A History of Shadows** was an instant gay classic when it was published 20 years ago: the novel was a riveting illumination of the pre-Stonewall generation, its stories told through the linked reminiscences of elderly gay friends. The eleven related short stories in this collection pick up the history of the shadows as AIDS entered the lives of gay men. (Alyson, Nov.) 

2. **When AIDS Began: San Francisco and the Making of an Epidemic**, by Michelle Cochrane - The thesis is provocative but

intriguing: AIDS even in its early American days was not a "gay" disease, but then, as it is increasingly now, an affliction of IV drug use and socio-economic status. (Routledge, Dec.)

3. **Judy Garland: A Portrait in Art and Anecdote**, by John Fricke - For the queer gene in all of us, a heavily illustrated (previously-unpublished pics promised) love letter by an author who has made a career from Garlandia, with a foreword by the star's less notorious daughter, Lorna Luft (Bulfinch Press, Oct.)

 4. **Satyriasis: Literotica 2**, by Ian Philips – “Ian kidnaps Flaubert, Mark Twain, and the Marquis de Sade. He stuffs them in the trunk of his getaway car with a bottle of lube and a wooden paddle. Then he drives them cross-country. His voice is smart, funny, and totally filthy. Yum," says Kirk Read of this second fiction collection from an impishly wicked, or wickedly impish, Bay Area writer. (Suspect Thoughts Press, Oct.)

www.suspectthoughts.com

5. **The Erotic Writer's Market Guide**, by Lawrence Schimel and Rachel Bussel - Market listings accompany advice about breaking into the queer erotica field, from the really trashy to the most literate, in print and on the web. (Circler Press, Jan.)

www.circler.com

6. **Queer Theory and the Jewish Question**, edited by Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Itzkovitz, & Anne Pelligrini - Serious essays on Jewishness and queerness, homophobia and anti-Semitism, and how they interconnect. (Columbia University, Dec.)

7. **Love Saves the Day: A History of American Dance Music Culture, 1970–1979**, by Tim Lawrence - Dance to the music! This is the story of American dance music culture in the 1970s, from its subterranean roots in NoHo and Hell's Kitchen to its gaudy blossoming and polymorphous sexuality in midtown Manhattan and beyond. (Duke University Press, Dec.)

8. **Masquerade: Queer Poetry in America to the End of World War II**, edited by Jim Elledge - Voodoo chants and cowboy songs share the pages with more traditional works by famous and little-known GLBT poets; and we all should be reading more poetry, anyway. (Indiana University Press, Jan.)



9. **P.S. Your Cat Is Dead**, by James Kirkwood - A welcome reprint of a darkly queer comic classic from 1979, with a hapless (but hopeful) protagonist tied up in his kitchen by a bisexual burglar; as a play, it lasted on Broadway for just 21 performances, five previews included. (St. Martin's, Nov.)

10. **Art: A Sex Book**, by John Waters & Bruce Hailey - Waters is notorious for his flamboyant, hilarious films; co-author Hailey is a more sober-sided contributor to *Artforum* magazine; they team up to interpret sex and sexuality within contemporary art; really funny, really smart. (Thames & Hudson, Oct.)

11. **Death Comes Easy: The Gay Times Book of Murder Stories**, edited by Peter Burton - How many ways are there to kill? At least the 30 in this hefty collection of short stories; a couple of the contributors (Steven Saylor, Perry Brass) are well-distributed Americans; but most of the authors collected are UK or Australian writers, and this is a dandy introduction to their work. (GMP, Dec.)

12. **That's Why They're in Cages, People**, by Joel Perry - A really, really, really funny essay collection. Really. (Alyson, Nov.); and for an excerpt from his 2000 collection **Funny That Way**, which you'll want to read if you haven't already, go here:

www.alyson.com/html/funnythatway/1200funny_excerptone.html



[back to top](#)

[back to top](#)

Here are a few of my favorite things

Title of the month:

Icelandic Lives: The Queer Experience, edited by Voon Chin Phua (Harrington Park, \$24.95 paper). Who knew that "the growing literature on Scandinavian homosexuality" could yield such a fascinating footnote.



Cover of the month (and a campy queer classic, too):

 **The Gay Detective**, by Lou Rand (Cleis Press, \$12.95).

Before there was Armistead Maupin's *Tales of the City*, vintage pulp writer Lou Rand delivered this high-camp masterpiece in 1961. Set in Beat-era "gay mecca-in-the-making" San Francisco, the novel's tightly knit plot boasts a sissy gumshoe, his butch ex-marine assistant, a nymphomaniac on the make, and plenty of dishy humor.

Most original anthology:

Stars: Original Stories Based on the Songs of Janis Ian,




edited by Mike Resnick and Janis Ian (DAW Books). Thirty SF writers, including David Gerrold, Spider Robinson, Mercedes Lackey, Diane Duane, Nancy Kress, and Joe Haldeman, based short stories on the lesbian folk-singer's songs; the result is a refreshing and outstanding blend of gay and straight sensibilities. (And while attending the World Science Fiction Convention in Toronto in September, Ian married her long-time partner Patricia Snyder).

Lesbian book now in paper:

The Lost Garden, by Helen Humphreys (WW Norton, \$13.95).


Here's what I wrote about the hardcover last year:

 When spinsterish gardener Gwen Davis leaves a bomb-blitzed London in the spring of 1941, there is nobody in her life she'll miss. She has volunteered for the Women's Land Army, to oversee a gaggle of girls planting potatoes for the war effort on a rural estate occupied by a regiment of Canadian soldiers. For companionship, she has her gardening books and her Virginia Woolf novels. She's a decade older than her charges, moody and melancholy, withdrawn, a woman alone. At the estate, Gwen is attracted to a Canadian officer - but he's gay. She's drawn to a frail, flighty girl - who is pining for her husband missing in action. Seems a downer of a story. Not so. **The Lost Garden** is a joyous, luminous celebration of unexpected passion, of freshly discovered feeling, and, finally, of the memory of a love that will last a lifetime. Humphreys has an impeccable command of the haunting, intimate moment, and complete understanding of the power of subtle imagery.



[back to top](#)

News, Notes, & Web Connections

 For readers seeking a sense of queer fictive history, there's no book better than **Lost Gay Novels: A Reference Guide to Fifty Works from the First Half of the Twentieth Century** (Harrington Park), by Anthony Slide. As Gavin Lambert - a contemporary of Christopher Isherwood's, and still writing - says, it rescues "some fascinating, frequently alarming, and occasionally absurd works of fiction from obscurity." Chapters of the book are appearing in each issue of the *Harrington Gay Men's Literary Quarterly*, less clumsily known as HGMLQ, but this book is best enjoyed as a full-course meal rather than a series of occasional snacks.

For a listing of titles - Rex Stout, James Cain, and John Buchan are there - follow this link; you can download a PDF excerpt, too:

<http://www.haworthpress.com/store/product.asp?sid=GXXP90QTJ6308NQL5JA5T5P6NLPQ3GUC&sku=4754&AuthType=2>

Kinkorama by Simon Sheppard was one of the *Books To Watch Out For* in the last edition of this newsletter; but it's not hitting bookstores until December. So for an early sampling of Simon's sharp, well-informed wit, go to the San Francisco *Bay Guardian's* recent Sex Issue, and his Field Guide to "Stalking the Wild Kink:"
http://www.sfbg.com/37/52/cover_kink.html

For that matter, most of the Sept. 24-30 issue is queer queer queer; there's a guide to the leather-bent Folsom Street Fair; a guide to kinky merchandise outlets, "Fetish Fabulous"; "How to Have Sex in San Francisco: A Beginner's Guide"; and even half the winners of the "Are You Hot?" contest are fagolas of assorted genders. Go to the site, and then use the search function for stories by Sheppard, Karen Solomon, or Melissa Broder:

<http://www.sfbg.com>

In the *Los Angeles Weekly*, playwright Tony Kushner talks on, and on, and on, most entertainingly, about his work, American politics, gay marriage, and queer arts in general:

<http://www.laweekly.com/ink/03/44/theater-morris.php>

Also in the *Weekly*, ask-and-tell entertainment writer Boze Hadleigh tells how and why most of his 15 books unlock the closet doors of any number of dead movie stars:

<http://www.laweekly.com/ink/03/43/books-dumpert.php>

Even though he's gay and a writer (first novel: **The Concrete Sky** from the Southern Tier imprint of Harrington Park), Marshall Moore doesn't want to be known as "a gay writer" - but he certainly respects gay lit as a genre, he says in the *Philadelphia Gay News*:

<http://www.epgn.com/StoryPages/Detour/SkyWriter.html>

And here's an on-line interview with Moore, by Jim Gladstone:

<http://www.suspectthoughts.com/moore2.html>

And at his own site, Moore gets interactive with his fans: click on "News" to read about his travails on a recent East Coast book tour - Hurricane Isabela blew him off course, and Creative Visions bookstore in New York just blew him off:

www.marshallmoore.com



Trebor Healey is having more fun on his book tour for **Through It Came Bright Colors**, also a Southern Tier novel. Read about his Southwest reading and signing experiences:

<http://www.treborhealey.com/travelersjournal.htm>

And for an interview focusing on Healey's spiritual side:

<http://www.gaytoday.com/>

San Francisco poet Thom Gunn is profiled, nicely, in *The*

Guardian newspaper; it seems the country of his birth is finally forgiving him for wearing leather and writing about AIDS:

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,12084,1049728,00.html>

"Almost without exception," says John D'Emilio, "those of us who do gay-and-lesbian history don't get jobs in history departments. If we're lucky, we find appointments in American studies, or in gender studies, as in my own case." The author of a new biography of Bayard Rustin discusses the incremental growth of queer history studies in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*:

<http://chronicle.com/free/v50/i03/03a01401.htm>

And here's a review of his essay collection from 2002:

The World Turned: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and Culture, by John D'Emilio (Duke University), \$18.95 paper.

There is much to nourish the curious queer young mind in **The World Turned**, D'Emilio's wide-ranging collection of a decade's musings on history, politics, and culture. And to challenge it, too, particularly in the author's careful re-assessment of the 1969 Stonewall riot as more a steppingstone along the way to liberation, rather than a convulsive kick-start to it. Some of the nourishment comes from his informative chapters on how pioneering civil rights leader Bayard Rustin's homosexuality angered, puzzled, or shamed his peers, decades before Stonewall. More stems from D'Emilio's refreshing ability to reconsider his earlier views on a number of topics, from the novels of Andrew Holleran and Larry Kramer to the centrality of sex as an element of gay self-identity. Each of the 16 pieces is engaging, thoughtful and lucid – even those delivered as a eulogy for a dead friend, prepared as a paper on the history of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), or presented on a queer biography panel. The grab-bag nature of the book doesn't detract a bit from its steady, sensible assessment of gay life today.



[back to top](#)

We're Being OutGoogled

I use Google several times day, most recently to find the best way to freeze cilantro, an herb I use a lot in cooking, but which is hard to buy fresh in the relatively rural village of Perth, Ontario, where I live.

So a couple of weeks ago, I came across a new beta-testing service, the Google News Alert; type in a few keywords, verify when a query comes to your mailbox that you actually did want anything related to those keywords, and once a day (or whenever the Google News Monkeys come across your keyword) you'll receive an email with a link to the news story.

I've asked for variations on such words as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, homosexual, queer, culture, publishing, arts, books, novels, fiction, bookstores - topics I can mine for this newsletter. That's how I got the Tony Kushner interview (though I read the *LA Weekly* online most weeks when I remember to); I received news of another feminist/gay bookstore closing (My Sister's Words, In Syracuse, New York) that way; news from *The Advocate* about Gray Davis signing benefits legislation for California queers popped in, as did similar stories from Reuters and the Associated Press; and there have been interesting offbeat stories about gays and religion in Kenya and a gay marriage in Russia. Random fun, with some news value.

But for every yay-gay link I've received, there are a dozen links to really rabid religious (mostly) or right wing "news" sites. Like this one, about the "homosexual agenda" taking over the Big Brother and Big Sister organizations: <http://www.americandaily.com/item/2619>. Or this one, about the "gay agenda" turning Gray Davis into, says Lou Sheldon, "Gay Davis": <http://www.chronwatch.com/featured/contentDisplay.asp?aid=4315>

It's easy to focus on the good news. But it's instructive how much bad news is out there...and it is to wonder why there are at least 15 different religious or right-wing newspapers, newsletters, and web sites combed regularly by the Google filters, but almost no queer papers – in the two weeks I've been sampling the service, *The Advocate* and *Windy City Times* have been the only specifically gay news source to show up. Hmmm.

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