

# CONTRACT/INVOICE

No 8863

FBN Federal Tax I.D.# 94-3052584

The second annual **Feminist Bookstore Fall Catalog** will circulate to 400,000 feminist book-buying households during the holiday buying season. It will be mailed to all 100,000 *Ms. Magazine* subscribers, to the mailing lists of feminist bookstores, and will be distributed over-the-counter in 130 feminist bookstores.

Shelf-talkers and in-store displays will draw additional attention to catalog titles. Checklists of titles included in the catalog will be mailed to bookstores biweekly during the holiday selling season. Imprinted catalogs and additional copies will be available to feminist bookstores at a nominal cost. Form-velopes will be included in every catalog to facilitate ordering.

The **Feminist Bookstore Fall Catalog** will include both frontlist and backlist titles in a broad range of categories. Special sections will highlight National Jewish Book Month, Multimedia, Women's Lives, Feminist Classics and Children's Books.

I authorize the purchase of the following space(s) in the 1995 **Feminist Bookstore Fall Catalog**.

\_\_\_\_ regular space(s) in interior of catalog @ \$1150 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_ feature space(s) in interior of catalog @ \$2000 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_ consider for front or back cover @ \$2400 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total cost to publisher \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**DEADLINES:**  
 July 7, 1995 Contracts & completed copy worksheets  
 July 21, 1995 Books (or jackets) and **PAYMENT**

Send contract, copy worksheet(s), payment, books (or jackets) to:

**Feminist Bookstore Fall Catalog**  
 Feminist Bookstore News  
 2358 Market Street or P.O. Box 882554  
 San Francisco, CA 94114 San Francisco, CA  
 Attention: Jenn Tust 94188

Phone: 415-626-1556  
 Fax: 415-626-8970

**Questions?**  
 Call Feminist Bookstore News 415-626-1556

**Categories available**

Art & Gift Books	History	Psychology
Children	Humor	Reference
Family & Relationships	Lesbian Fiction	Science Fiction
Feminist Classics	Lesbian Non-Fiction	Spirituality
For the men in your life...	Literature & Drama	Sports & Fitness
For your book group...	Making Change	Theory & Politics
Fiction	MultiMedia	Travel
Health & Recovery	Mysteries	Women & Work
	National Jewish Book Month	Women's Lives
	Poetry	Young Adult
		Other _____

<u>Regular Ads</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Category</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

<u>Feature Ads</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Category</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Consider for front or back cover (Please note if you would like a feature space if cover is not available.)

\_\_\_\_\_

The Spring 1996 Catalog:  
 We would also like to make tentative reservations for the following titles for the Spring 1996 **Feminist Bookstores' Catalog**. (All Spring reservations are tentative and will be confirmed in October, 1995.)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Category</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

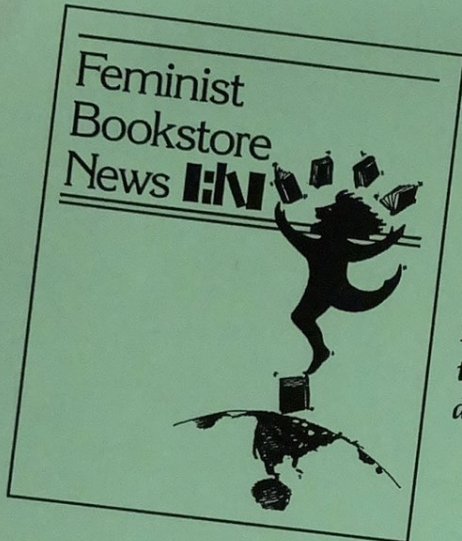
I understand that Feminist Bookstore News reserves the right to make final decisions on titles submitted on this contract.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Publisher \_\_\_\_\_  
 Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Print Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Person for Materials \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

**FBN use:**  
 DH  
 LM  
 MM  
 FBN  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Please pay from this invoice.  
 Please return white copy to FBN, retain the yellow copy for your records, and send the pink copy to your sales rep or FBN.

# FBN for Librarians?



*"FBN is the single most useful publication I receive."*

*Beth Stafford, Women's Studies Librarian, University of Illinois*

*"I buy for the Berkeley Public Library and FBN is my best source."*

*Carole Leita, Berkeley Public Library*

*"No self-respecting library should be without FBN. FBN is an invaluable resource for librarians, and one that everyone involved in selection and collection development should have."*

*Women Library Workers Journal*

## Of Course!

Don't be fooled by the title. *Feminist Bookstore News*, the bimonthly trade magazine for feminist booksellers, is an excellent acquisitions tool for librarians.

Each issue includes 250-300 short book reviews — including announcements of all the new books from the feminist presses, the most interesting books by/about women from the rest of the small and independent presses, and a superb selection of feminist titles from mainstream and university publishers.

And, of course, there's plenty of information about feminist presses, feminist bookstores, and the entire Women-in-Print movement.

If you need to keep up with what women are writing and publishing — or if you're just looking for a good read — FBN is the resource for you. Subscriptions \$70/year. Available from FBN or through FAXON, EBSCO and other subscription agencies.

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## SUBSCRIBE!

Mail to FBN, PO Box 882554, San Francisco CA 94188 or fax 415-642-9995. Please make checks payable to *Feminist Bookstore News*, or give your credit card information below.

- One Year — \$70, prepaid.
- Two Years — \$135, prepaid.
- Please bill us — \$5 charge.
- + \$23/year for international postage.
- + \$10/year for Canadian postage.
- Special trial offer! Half year — \$35, prepaid.
- Sample copy — \$6.
- Gift subscription.

Charge my Visa/Mastercard:

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Send to:** \_\_\_\_\_

Library \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Bill to:** \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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# Feminist Bookstore News

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## Are You Underestimating Us?

The truth is, we did too, for a while. We thought we were a small magazine with limited influence. And our rates reflected that self image.

Then we started hearing how much we mean to our subscribers, how much they depend on us. We did some studies and discovered that for our market, an ad in **FBN** sells more books than ads that cost a lot more in larger publications.

Why? It has to do with how word about a book spreads in the women's community. A bookstore owner gets excited about a book advertized in **FBN**. She spreads the word to her customers, who are actively soliciting her suggestions. They like the book and tell their friends who tell their friends who...but you get the picture. Few women's bookstore staffers make it through every catalog and every issue of Publishers Weekly. But they all read **FBN**. Cover to cover.

Now that we know how important we are, you'll understand if we raise our rates a bit. It will make **FBN** a better magazine, more timely, and an even more powerful influence on the women's bookstore market. Of course, the bottom line is that it will help us help you sell books. Something we've discovered we do very well.

For further information or to reserve space call Carol Seajay or Lorena Boswell at 415-626-1556 or return the enclosed card.





**Feminist Bookstore Week**  
**May 10-18, 1997**

# THIRD ANNUAL FEMINIST BOOKSTORE WEEK — North America —

MAY 10-18, 1997

March 17, 1997

Dear Feminist Booksellers,

Happy (forthcoming) Feminist Bookstore Week!

We evaluated this program this year and the consensus was that, even though FB-Week hasn't been terribly successful at garnering local media attention, and even though we haven't had a lot of national media attention since year #1, FB-Week *does* give us a reason to celebrate ourselves, to promote ourselves to our customers, to remind them how important we are to their lives and ask for their support, and to educate our communities re the importance of supporting feminist & independent bookstores. "Repetition is the key," several bookstores noted, "So let's keep doing it."

So we are.

We hope that every feminist bookstore will celebrate Feminist Bookstore Week and draw attention to your own work and the work of your feminist-bookstore co-workers all across the U.S. and Canada. Your celebration may be as simple as making up bookmarks to give to customers during FB-Week (a great conversation starter that can be followed up by giving customers copies of the education-articles-for-reproduction that are included elsewhere in this packet), a few blow-em-up-yourself posters from Kinko's (originals enclosed) — or as complex as a street fair, a BBQ or a party for yourselves and your customers. Many stores plan special readings and programs centered around FB-Week and two stores (Meristem in Memphis and The Women's Bookstop in Ontario) have even published collections of local writers' work for FB-Week.

Celebrate in whatever way is right for your store — but do celebrate!

**Here's your FB-Week packet. It includes:**

- Take-them-to-the-copy-shop-and-print-them bookmarks (just add your own logo)
- Take-them-to-the-copy-shop-and-blow-them-up FB-Week posters
- Order forms for t-shirts, FB-Week flags, and bumperstickers.
- A "Take the Pledge" poster to promote the Feminist Writers' Pledge
- A copy the Writer's Pledge (which you can copy) onto the back of the Take the Pledge to make a self-explanatory sheet you can use as a handout.
- Ready-to-use "clip-art" FB-Week graphics
- Articles to photocopy to include with your press kit (harried writers are often glad to "crib" a story from someone else's research) *and* to pass out in the store as educational tools.
- Some suggestions for decking out the store for FB-Week.

**Order your t-shirts, flags, bumperstickers ASAP for best results!**

(Continued on back)

## Some FB-Week History & Context

FB-Week was the brainchild of the Feminist Bookstores' Strategic Planning Conference (Fall, 1994). The idea was to create a national event that could generate both national and local media attention and educate our communities about the importance of supporting feminist bookstores.

### The Dates

We chose this time because it includes Mother's Day, because it doesn't conflict with Gay Pride celebrations of National Lesbian and Gay Book Month, it's before the school year ends, and it's before ABA. Unlike most "weeks" it includes two weekends -- so you can center events on Mother's Day or avoid Mother's Day -- whatever works best for your store and your community.

### Decking Out the Store

**1. Print up FB-Week bookmarks and pass them out at the counter.**

**2. Dress for Success! Wear FB-Week t-shirts.** Or better yet, have every staff member wear a FB-Week t-shirt all day, every day, during FB-Week. *That* will get your customers' attention! (Order from WomanMade. Order form enclosed.)

**3. Make FB-Week posters for the window and in-store displays.**

(We don't have the budget to print and mail posters to each store, so we're enclosing an 8 1/2 x 11 FB-Week poster-mock-up that you can take to your local copy-shop and blow up into posters for about \$5. Put them in the window, post them in the store!

**4. Make a Writers' Pledge display.**

Blow up copies of the Writers' Pledge and the "Take the Pledge" poster. Put them in your window or use in-store.

**5. Buy some colorful FB-Week flags for your window and in-store displays.**

Hang them off the bookcases. \$1.75 each. Order with t-shirts. Then carry them in your local Pride March! They're even cheaper than the blow-up posters. (Order from WomanMade. Order form enclosed.)

**6. Buy FB-Week bumperstickers to give away or sell at FB-Week events** — and to use all year around. Tape them to the wall when selling at conferences, put a few in the bathrooms, use them like graffiti — get them out there! Or better yet, make a bumpersticker for your store. (Order from Patty at Brigit Books. Order form enclosed.)

**7. Celebrate Feminist Presses** — make up a list of feminist presses whose titles you stock and offer customers a 10% discount on feminist-press published books during FB-Week.

**8. Order book bags with your logo and address in big letters.** Full Circle and The Book Garden gave bookbags to their best customers and now the customers take their advertising all over town. [Full Circle recommends the 15-ounce shoulder totes (\$3.40 each for 100). Plus \$35 to make the screen. FC put their logo/address on one side, and put the FB-Week logo on the other, so you can have two-sided bags for only \$.20 each. Call Enviro-Tote at 800-233-7254 for more information. Tell them there's a ready-made screen.]

(Continued on next page)

(THIRD ANNUAL FEMINIST BOOKSTORE WEEK, continued)

**FB-Week Goals:**

1. To give our communities an opportunity to celebrate our work and remember how important we are to them.
2. To remind ourselves to celebrate our work, our contributions to our communities, and our successes.
3. To increase credibility, visibility, public awareness, and good will toward your store locally.
4. To raise customer consciousness about where they spend their book dollars and why it's so important *to them* to go the extra mile to shop in your store.
5. To provide a vehicle for stores to get both mainstream and alternative publicity in their own communities and to strengthen media connections to encourage further publicity during the year.
6. To get national publicity for FB-Network stores.
7. To enhance our visibility and credibility as a national force to the publishing industry.

(In other words, to remind those corporate-identified mainstream publishers who are ready to sell independent bookstores down the river — or who have already written off independent bookstores — that feminist bookstores are still here, we're still a presence and a power, and to remind them that we are a strong and viable market (so publish some good books for us!).

...Special thanks to Linda Bourke for the FB-Week graphic, Kathryn Werhane, FBN's Production Coordinator, who produced the FB-Week Materials, to all of the FBN crew who pitched in to make this packet a reality, and to all the feminist booksellers who celebrate FB-Week, and especially to those who returned their evaluations!

Have a wonderful FB-Week! May your celebrations be wonderful, may your community respond by celebrating your work, and may the media give you much free publicity!

And when it's over, don't forget to tell us how FB-Week worked for you and all your ideas for making next year even more effective.

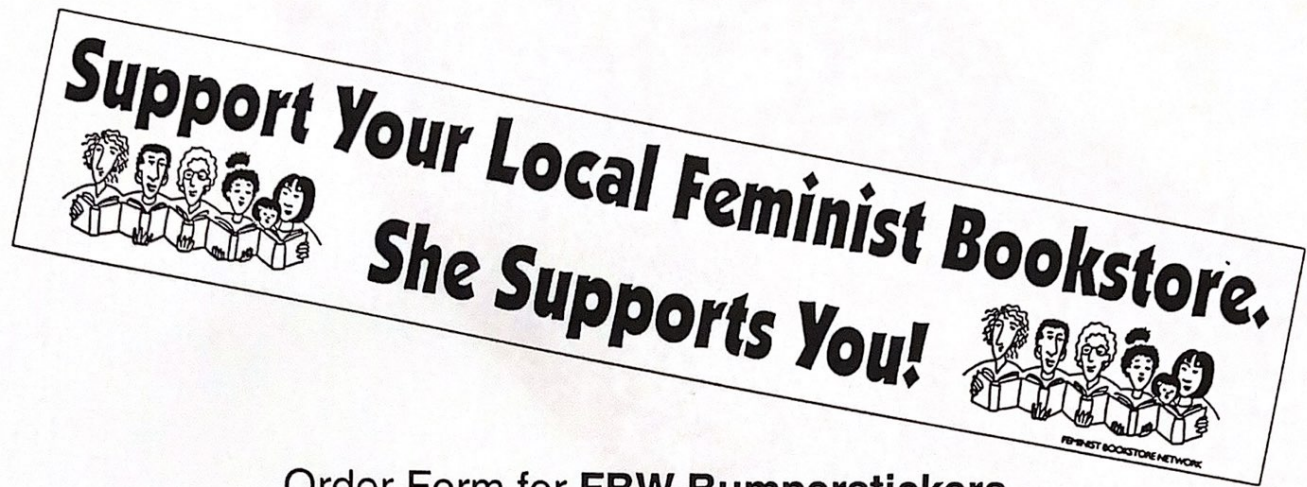
Carol

(Statement of Purpose on back)

## Statement of Purpose

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





## Order Form for FBW Bumperstickers

We're using the same bumperstickers this year as last year and Patty Callaghan (Brigit Books) has once again agreed to do all the fulfillment and coordination. Bumper orders will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Give them away, sell them, use them in your FBW display.**  
 These bumpers are good all year long, so order plenty to give out or sell.  
 Put them on your car or jacket. Post them when you do booktables,  
 use them like graffiti. Stick them everywhere!

Bookstore Name:

Street Address:

City, State, Zip:

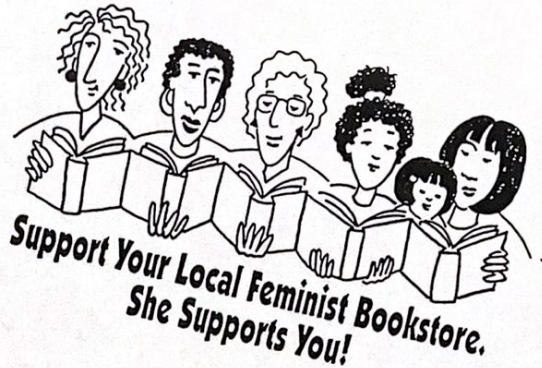
Phone:

Please send us:

Number of Bumpers	Cost	UPS Ground	UPS 3 day	Total ground/3 day
<input type="checkbox"/> 50 bumpers	\$10.00	\$4.00	\$6.00	\$14.00/16.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 100 bumpers	20.00	4.00	7.00	24.00/27.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 150 bumpers	30.00	4.50	8.00	34.50/38.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 200 bumpers	40.00	5.00	9.00	45.00/49.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 250 bumpers	50.00	5.00	10.00	55.00/60.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 300 bumpers	60.00	5.50	10.50	65.50/70.50

Send order with check to Patty Callaghan (make checks out to Patty, not to the store), Brigit Books, 3434 4th St. North, St. Petersburg FL 33704.  
 Phone: 813-552-5775. Fax: 813-526-9058

# Order Form FBW T-Shirts and Flags



*Dress for Success!*

*Make a fashion statement!*

*Take the message to your customers! Wear FBW t-shirts every day during FBW!*

*Buy them for the bookstore workers.*

*Buy extras to sell in the store. Let your customers wear the message all over town.*

*Dress up the window and the store with yellow and lavender FBW flags.*

Womanmade Products is making our FBW t-shirts and FBW flags again this year. Both feature the same graphic and say "Support Your Feminist Bookstore. She Supports You!" Neither have dates, so you can sell the t-shirts all summer, and take the flags to the Pride March. Shirts are Turquoise or Ash (light gray and white mottled) with black lettering. XXXXL shirts are 50/50. M to XXXL are 100% heavy weight pre-shrunk cotton. Flags are 12" X 12" w/ 24" poles; Yellow, Lavender, Hot Pink or Purple.

**Order by April 30 for guaranteed delivery.**

**Orders received after April 30 subject to reality.**

Bookstore Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send us:**

\_\_\_ Yellow Flags \_\_\_ Lavender Flags \_\_\_ Hot Pink Flags \_\_\_ Purple Flags

Total Number of Flags: \_\_\_\_\_ X \$2.75 = \_\_\_\_\_

Size	No.	No.	
Med.	___ Turq.	___ Ash	Total # Med. Shirts X \$7.60 = _____
Large	___ Turq.	___ Ash	Total # Large Shirts X \$7.60 = _____
XL	___ Turq.	___ Ash	Total # X-L Shirts X \$7.60 = _____
XXL	___ Turq.	___ Ash	Total # XXL Shirts X \$8.70 = _____
XXXL	___ Turq.	___ Ash	Total # XXXL Shirts X \$9.10 = _____
XXXXL	___ Turq.	___ Ash	Total # XXXXL Shirts X \$8.95 = _____

Total number of shirts: \_\_\_\_\_ Total cost of shirts: \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping for shirts: \_\_\_\_\_

Total cost of flags: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping: 1-3 shirts: \$3.00; 4-5 shirts: 4.00; 6-7 shirts: 4.25; 8-10 shirts: 4.50  
Over 10 shirts, call for quote. (Charges vary by zone.)

**Send order with prepayment to Becky Bly, Womanmade Products, PO Box 517,  
Seneca Falls NY 13148. Phone: 315-568-9364. Fax/ Attn: Becky 315-568-8622**



# **Support Your Local Feminist Bookstore.**

*3<sup>rd</sup> Annual*

**Feminist Bookstore Week · North America  
MAY 10-18, 1997**

Sponsored by Feminist Bookstore Network



*Celebrate  
the 3rd Annual*  
**Feminist  
Bookstore  
Week**

— North America —

**May 10–18, 1997**

...  
*S*upport Your Local  
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She Supports You!  
...



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**MAY 10-18**



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— North America —  
**MAY 10-18**



*Celebrate the 3rd Annual* **Feminist Bookstore Week**  
— North America —  
**MAY 10-18**

# Take The Pledge

## Writers Support Feminist Bookstores

The Feminist Bookstore Network invites you to "Take the Pledge" to support feminist and other independent bookstores in these times when "independent bookstores have become an endangered species threatened by the rise of corporate-owned superstores that engage in predatory pricing and discount policies."

The pledge reads, in part, "We will remain committed to supporting feminist and independent bookstores.... And we ask readers to do the same. Please shop at feminist and independent bookstores as often as you can — think of it as an investment in freedom of expression and independent thinking."

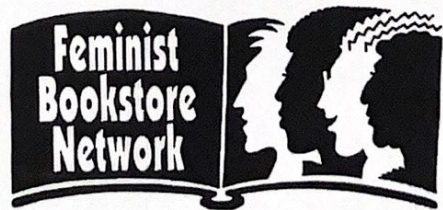
### Signers include:

Gloria Anzaldúa	Sara Paretsky
Dorothy Allison	Joan Nestle
Sandra Cisneros	Margaret Randall
Jewelle Gomez	Adrienne Rich
Nicole Hollander	Gloria Steinem
Barbara Kingsolver	Lily Tomlin
Maxine Hong Kingston	Linda Villarosa
Robin Morgan	Alice Walker . . . and many, many others.

## Feminist Bookstores Support Writers

A project of the Feminist Bookstore Network.  
For additional copies of The Pledge,  
please write to:

The Feminist Bookstore Network  
PO Box 882554, San Francisco CA 94188  
415-642-9993, fax 415-642-9995  
email [FBN@FemBkNews.com](mailto:FBN@FemBkNews.com)



# The Pledge

## Writers Support Feminist Bookstores

As writers, feminists and political activists, we believe in the enormous power of words to inform, inspire and challenge. In order for our words to be read and heard, we must rely on publishers and bookstores to bring our work to the public.

Feminist and other independent bookstores and small presses have been supporting and distributing our books — poetry, novels, essays, plays and photography — for many years. We count on them. They have been publishing and carrying our books because they are owned and run by people who care about ideas and take risks for the sake of social and political change.

Independent bookstores are now an endangered species because of the rise of corporate-owned chain bookstores that engage in predatory pricing and discount policies. The more corporate bookstores control the market, the less likely it will be that they and the publishing industry will take risks on new or controversial ideas and authors — and the more control the corporations will have over what we all read.

Without feminist and other independent bookstores and small presses, some of us could be silenced, and the next generation of writers with important ideas might never be found.

As writers, we pledge the following:

1. We will remain committed to supporting feminist and other independent bookstores.
2. We will seek out local feminist and other independent bookstores in each city or town to do our *first* reading or booksigning.
3. We will donate our time and talents to community events and campaigns that support feminist and other independent bookstores.

And we ask readers to shop at feminist and independent bookstores as often as possible — to think of shopping at feminist bookstores as an investment in freedom of expression and independent thinking.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please copy this pledge and pass it on to other feminist and activist writers.  
Thank you for your support.

A Project of  
**The Feminist Bookstore Network**  
Box 882554 • San Francisco CA 94188  
phone: 415-642-9993 • fax: 415-642-9995 • email: FBN@FemBkNews.com

**SUPPORT YOUR FEMINIST BOOKSTORE. SHE SUPPORTS YOU!**

## Between the Pages: Making a Business of Books

By Anita Lahey

The woman on the phone hadn't been able to find the book she needed anywhere, but she was confident the Vancouver Women's Bookstore would have it in stock or be able to track it down. She was stunned when Kathleen Hudson, a 19-year member of the collective that ran the store, told her no, the store couldn't help her; it would soon be closing. "You can't close!" she exclaimed. "You're my last resort!"

That, Hudson told her, was precisely the bookstore's problem. It had watched itself gradually become surrounded by stores like Costco, Book Warehouse and a newcomer called Bollum Books—which had snatched itself a prime downtown spot at George and Granville—stores that because of their larger size and a growing appreciation of the value of the women's market, were stocking and discounting titles that had traditionally been the backbone of the small, independent women's bookstore: new releases and bestsellers by popular writers like Gloria Steinem and Alice Walker.

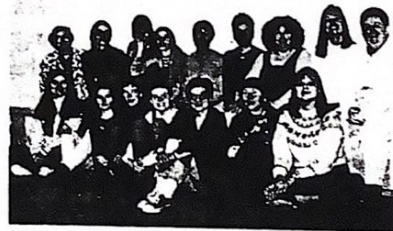
To further illustrate the impact discounters appeared to have on the store's fortunes, Hudson recalls another customer, who said, "I wonder if Bollum's made a difference. I've been going there; it's so close to my work." A quick check in the store's bookstore



*Evelyn Huer, Julie Gagnon and Laura Raynor run Mother Tongue Books in Ottawa.*

club records revealed the woman to be a former regular who hadn't set foot in the store in more than a year.

It had happened. The Vancouver Women's Bookstore, Canada's pioneer and one of the first in North America, a store that was built and sustained on volunteer work for its first 20 years, had certainly become a store people counted



*The Everywoman's Books collective in Victoria.*

on—but largely for the shrinking number books they couldn't buy (or buy more cheaply) elsewhere. The store was coming to the point where it wouldn't be able to maintain its reputable stock. It closed May 31, two months shy of its 23rd birthday.

"A store can't survive being a people's last resort," says Hudson. "When we closed people said 'What are you doing?'" She sighs. "You can't be rude, but your first reaction is, 'Where were they?'"

It's tempting to label the demise of the Vancouver store as a harbinger of things to come elsewhere in Canada.

Consider that another store recently closed in Nanaimo, and the Ottawa Women's Bookstore has been drastically diminished, now displaying a tiny section of books in a space it shares with Vera's Gift Gallery. Carol Seejay, editor and publisher of the *Feminist Bookstore News*, a trade magazine for women's bookstores in Canada and the U.S., says large chains in the U.S. have gobbled up more than 50 percent of the booksellers' market, and is quick to point out that Canada's big neighbour to the south often serves as an ominous yet accurate crystal ball for what's to come here.

Nevertheless, both Seejay and Hudson, as well as the bookstores themselves, offer hope that Vancouver was more a victim of unfortunate circumstances than a warning. The store was, after all, competing in a market that became saturated with women's booksellers in the early 90s. In 1992, a store called Women in Print opened, the third women's shop in a city (Toronto, by comparison, has only one). Group those stores with the well-known Little Sisters, and several others with well-stocked women's sections, including Octopus Books, Sparticus, People's Cop and Book Mantle, and it's no wonder the store had trouble surviving.

Besides, Seejay points out, of the struggling independents in the US, feminist bookstores have so far proven



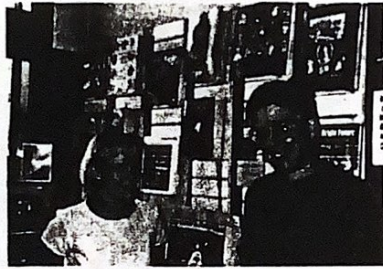
to have the most staying power.

"A large number of independents are going out of business," she says. "But feminist bookstores are hanging in. It may be because women-run businesses tend to be better organized, and the people who run these stores are used to fighting adversaries."

Other women's bookstores in Canada are displaying that same stamina, which stems in part from a determination to maintain a relationship with the customers they depend on for support. The Toronto Women's Bookstore, which itself celebrates its 23rd anniversary this year, was close to shutting down three years ago. But manager Esther Vise says a six-month period of volunteer labour, a Jobs Ontario Community Action Grant and a restructuring of the way the business is run turned the store around. The former collective is still run co-operatively, but is now more structured.

"It's a system of accountability and supervision, but it's also fair-minded," says Vise. So now, where customers had been alienated, sales slumped at an all-time low and the collective spirit lay damaged, the store has four full-time paid staff, is undergoing renovations, has built a new anti-racism section and has expanded sections on feminist theory, disabilities and health. Beyond that, it will soon start a book club, is holding more launches and readings, and has begun distributing bibliographies on subjects like violence against women, shelters, hospitals and other organizations. Vise says these initiatives are based on the knowledge that the store relies on the community.

"Sometimes where bookstores fall down is forgetting that connection with people." Just down Harbord Street from Toronto Women's Bookstore is another shop that understands the need to stay close to its community. A six-year-old store owned by Mary Anderson, Wonderworks is not solely a women's bookstore, but has a major focus on women's spirituality, alternative health and women's music.



Staffers Suzanne Buffam and Dorothy Seaton at *Women in Print* in Vancouver.

Anderson says she hasn't yet noticed an impact from big bookstore mergers, but acknowledges she depends largely on the commitment of her customers.

"People need to understand, you have to shop where you live and where people treat you reasonably, give you good service, and support your values."

Mother Tongue has found a community that seems to do just that. Launched in Ottawa in December 1994 by three women who previously worked at the Ottawa Women's Bookstore, Mother Tongue makes its home on a retail strip several blocks south of downtown Ottawa. The location means affordable rent, proximity to Carleton University (which helped the store build a thriving academic trade), and a community that's been pleasantly surprised to find Mother Tongue within its midst.

"We've cultivated a lot of new customers who never knew the concept of a women's bookstore," says Laura Rayner, who owns the store with Julie Gagnon and Evelyn Huer. Rayner describes the small store as "reader-friendly, with places to sit down." Mother Tongue hosts frequent readings, and plans to carry used books, allowing customers to exchange their own titles for credit.

Rayner acknowledges that operating a fledgling independent bookstore is a bit of a financial nailbiter, but reports healthy sales growth—up 15 percent over last year. She and her partners knew what to expect.

No women's bookstore boasts a bulging bank account, but many say business is good. Everywoman's Books

in Victoria, which is run as a volunteer collective, celebrated its 21st anniversary by installing a computer ordering system and moving into a new home. Nine-year collective member Susan-Rose Slatkoff says it's brighter, more spacious, has more storefront and is better situated. "We get more people coming in off the street since we moved," she says.

Women in Print, the surviving women's bookstore in Vancouver, is owned by Louise Hager and Carol Dale. Experienced booksellers, they run a three-year-old store that pays special attention to lesbian subjects and health titles, particularly breast cancer. They run an active reading program, into which they've invested a small advertising budget. And Calgary's Woman's Place Bookstore, at 14 years, continues on strong. Owner Jacquie Stutt says this year's sales are equal to last year's.

Even Womansline in London, Ontario, a ten-year-old store which was on the verge of closing down last spring, has survived. New owner Sharon Collingwood, a professor who teaches women's studies part-time at the University of Western Ontario, never imagined herself running a bookstore. But a week after she called Womansline to order a book and found out it was going to close if it wasn't sold, she was putting a mortgage on her house.

"I told myself, if you could write a Ph.D. with two kids in diapers, you can do this." Her daughter was just finishing university and the two went into business together. That was in May. The new owners have since moved the store to a busier, larger location across from a popular park. Collingwood, using her carpentry skills, built her sales desk and put up the drywall. She designed the front of the store with a comfortable area where customers can drink coffee and read. She plans to open an Internet station. She admits this year will be tight, but knows a tight year for Womansline is better than none at all.

# VS SUPERSTORES

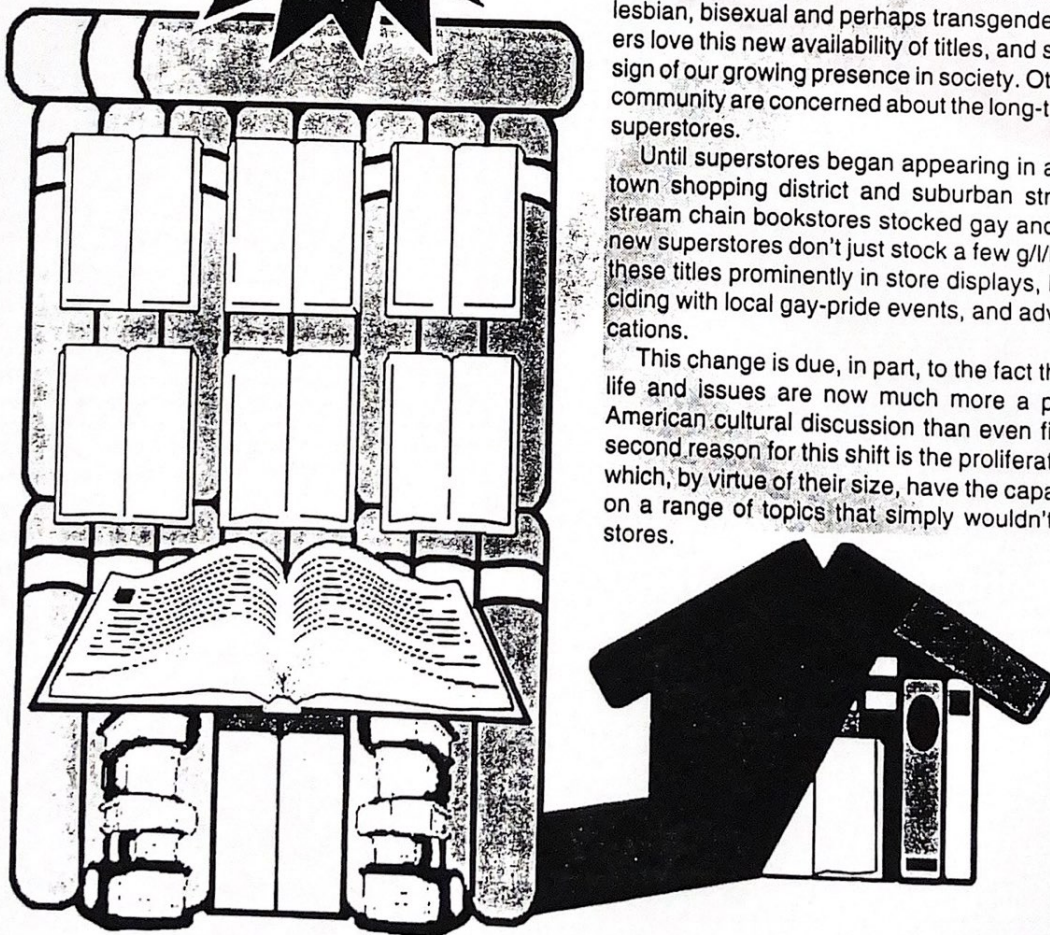
## THE INDEPENDENTS

By Harriet L. Schwartz  
PGN Contributing Writer

Walk into almost any large bookstore, and you will find a couple of shelves — if not an entire bookcase — of gay, lesbian, bisexual and perhaps transgender titles. Some readers love this new availability of titles, and see it as yet another sign of our growing presence in society. Other members of the community are concerned about the long-term impact of these superstores.

Until superstores began appearing in almost every downtown shopping district and suburban strip mall, few mainstream chain bookstores stocked gay and lesbian titles. The new superstores don't just stock a few g/l/b titles; many place these titles prominently in store displays, hold readings coinciding with local gay-pride events, and advertise in gay publications.

This change is due, in part, to the fact that gay and lesbian life and issues are now much more a part of mainstream American cultural discussion than even five years ago. The second reason for this shift is the proliferation of superstores, which, by virtue of their size, have the capacity to stock books on a range of topics that simply wouldn't fit in smaller mall stores.



Jennifer Wolfertz, manager of corporate communication at Barnes & Noble's headquarters in New York City, believes this change is good for the bookselling industry overall, including gay and lesbian publishing.

"While we have an impact, it's a positive impact because we're turning people on to reading and to bookstores," Wolfertz said. "When you introduce a 25,000-square-foot superstore with 150,000 titles and a cafe and events, there's a lot more there to draw the first-time book buyer. That really benefits all bookstores, because once you get someone interested in building a collection, there are many bookstores that have their own niches, and people will visit those as well."

#### The Independents

Carol Seajay sees it differently. Seajay is editor and publisher of *Feminist Bookstore News*, a publication of the Feminist Bookstore Network, based in San Francisco.

"[Superstores] have just about doubled the amount of retail floor space for book sales in America, but what they have not done is doubled the sale of books," Seajay said. "Book sales are up — depending on who's numbers you take — between 6 and 10 percent over that five-year period of time. What that means is that the sale of basically the same amount of books has been divided into many more pieces."

Seajay's concern is that a large number of independent feminist and gay and lesbian bookstores have closed because they couldn't compete with the superstores, and this, in the final analysis, actually *reduces* the numbers of gay and lesbian titles available.

Barnes & Noble leads chain bookstore sales, according to the Dec. 2 issue of *Publisher's Weekly*; Borders, Books-A-Million and Crown are the next big three. Combined, these four stores took in \$3.2 billion

in sales for the first nine months of 1996, according to *Publisher's Weekly*. The same article notes that B&N opened 59 new superstores during the first three quarters of 1996, and planned to have 440 superstores open by the end of the year.

Figures for independent bookstores' sales, openings and closings were unavailable.

#### Co-existence

So, what is the impact on gay and lesbian bookstores? In some cities, superstores seem to be pushing independents out of business. Pittsburgh's Gertrude Stein Memorial Bookstore closed last summer after several years in business, leaving just one other independent store that specializes in gay and lesbian titles. In other cities, specialty bookstores remain, but at the very least, have had to adapt to the new competition.

"My impression is that it's really the suburban superstores that are making a terrific dent in us," said Ed Hermance, owner of Giovanni's Room, 345 S. 12th St. "The superstores are taking 10 percent of the most popular books, and putting them within 2 miles of where you live — instead of 20 miles from where you live — then it's just irresistible."

Hermance said he has increased his advertising, and tries harder to promote that his staff is more knowledgeable about gay and lesbian titles than most superstores' staffs. He also emphasizes that he handles imported books and a range of other titles not available at the chains.

Barnes & Noble's Wolfertz believes this is the other reason that superstores do not necessarily hurt the independents. She maintains that in many cities, B&N stores co-exist with smaller stores, and do not automatically put them out of business. She said that, despite its size, B&N,

in some cases will not have books available, and that staff members then refer customers to the specialty stores.

#### Memories

*Feminist Bookstore News'* Seajay remains pessimistic about the long-term impact of the superstores.

"When a chain comes in, almost all of them tailor their inventory to compete with the existing competition," she claimed. "If there's a gay store and a black bookstore [nearby], they'll put a lot of books in those areas. Whereas, the chain store 15 miles down the road in the next town won't have either of those sections or will have four shelves of African-American books."

"But in the town that has a black bookstore, [the super store] will have six cases, which tells me it's not that they're trying to promote these books nationwide, it tells me they're trying to put these stores out of business. I have no faith that after they've put the competition out of business, they're going to continue to stock in that way."

"I want lesbians and gay men to have a long enough memory to remember that we haven't always had the access to books that we have now, and the best way to preserve that access is to preserve our own community stores. As long as our community stores are there, the chains will compete with them and will stock far more gay and lesbian books. If we lose our gay and lesbian stores, the chains don't have to compete with them and as soon as we're fashionably out, all our books can disappear."

Wolfertz said that Barnes & Noble, like any retailer, opens new stores in high-traffic areas with anticipated or proven bookselling potential. She said B&N stores are stocked to fit the interests of its cus-

tomers, not in response to competition, per se. Wolfertz said as long as there is a market for gay and lesbian titles, the stores will carry them.

#### Many returns

The superstores are also having an impact on publishers, according to Felice Newman, publisher at Cleis Press, a lesbian and gay book publishing company. Newman said the superstores tend to return books to publishers more quickly than independents, who let books stay in stock longer, even when they're not selling at a significant pace. This affects the smaller presses financially, because returns count as credit toward the store's future purchases, which equals less cash flow for the publisher.

Responding to this financial strain, Newman said Cleis is consolidating. Now working out of two locations — Pittsburgh and San Francisco — the Pittsburgh Cleis operation this year will move to San Francisco. Newman is confident Cleis will survive the financial strain, but she, like Seajay, worries about the impact on the availability of gay and lesbian titles.

"That has a very strongly negative impact on our ability as Americans to think and to have diverse ideas and to create culture — whether it's gay culture or it's African-American culture or fine art or even right-wing culture," she said. "When you can't get access to a book that was published six months prior, it's hard to develop culture and serious thought. It's hard to sustain serious political discussion of any kind."

*Harriet L. Schwartz is a Pittsburgh-based writer who covers music and pop culture nationally. Her e-mail address is Schwartz14@aol.com ▼*

# Publishers Weekly®

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*The industry has been in free fall for the last couple of months. Cash flow is difficult for everyone.*

—NAIPR PRESIDENT TERRY HICKS ON CREDIT CRUNCH

BOOKSELLING

28

*Books as Wallpaper? Carol Seajay's View on Returns*

## **bookselling** **DAYBOOK**

### **Books As Wallpaper? An Explanation for Returns**

EMPHASIZING THAT feminist publishers this year are experiencing the same heavy returns as mainstream publishers—with many having months when returns exceed sales—Carol Seajay, editor and publisher of *Feminist Bookstore News*, wrote in the November/December issue that some of the causes are “situational—one-time problems occurring as the industry adapts to ‘just-in-time ordering.’” However, Seajay continued, the expansion of chain superstores at a rate far surpassing the growth of book sales is another key cause for heavy returns and, unlike the other causes, poses longer-term threats to both feminist and mainstream publishers.

“What do you get if you double the sales space in a low-growth industry?” Seajay asked in her article, entitled “Returns: Too Much Wallpaper on a No-Growth Industry.” Her answer: “Basically: wallpaper—books that are used for decoration, books that make stores look full and rich but that can’t possibly sell. And then, when the books begin to get dusty, they’re returned and, inevitably, replaced with newer, fresher titles that will also, in turn, get dusty and turn into returns.”

Seajay predicted that unless book sales increase or shelf space decreases, returns will hover at about 50%. And if “chains continue to expand selling space faster than they drive independents out of business,” returns could rise to 60%–80%.

“The irony is that some (many?) of the publishers who are suddenly on the receiving end of this first wave of returns helped to finance the super-chains’ expansion with new-branch store discounts, sweetheart deals and very-extended credit terms...” Seajay stated. “In the long run, it is going to be the publishers who will have to take a hard look at the situation and recognize that providing wall coverings for seven million square feet of new sales space, which doesn’t generate increased sell-through, is not only not in the best interests of the entire book industry, it is creating a non-viable economic conundrum for the publishers themselves.” —J. M.

# National Feminist Bookstore Week

## Success Stories



By Beth Morgan

Feminist booksellers across the U.S. and Canada celebrated National Feminist Bookstore Week, May 13-20, 1995, and from the reports we've heard so far, the week was an outrageous success! Participation ranged from putting up posters, selling tee-shirts and giving away bookmarks, to a full week of events that made a big local splash. And the press came on board in a big way — local newspapers covered the event, and several radio stations aired Mev Miller's superb documentary *A Labor of Love: A Tribute to 25 Years of Feminist and Lesbian Publishers and Bookstores*. At the national level, *Publishers Weekly* featured NFBW twice, Carol wrote a wonderful full-length article for *Ms. Magazine*, and National Public Radio invited Carol to speak about the state of independent bookselling on *Talk of the Nation*.

The result was a significant increase in visibility for feminist bookstores and a golden opportunity to educate book lovers about the politics of shopping at chain bookstores and the importance of where they

Photo: In Other Words, Portland, Oregon

choose to spend their book-buying dollars.

As we go to press, here's the latest from bookstores all across the country (and if you're not in here, call us and tell us how you celebrated NFBW at your store!)

### Publishing Tie-In

**MERISTEM (Memphis TN):** Audrey May at Meristem was so excited about NFBW she decided to become a publisher! *On Resurrecting Roses*, an anthology of writings by local women authors on the subject of mother/daughter relationships, was published in time for NFBW, and last we heard, every single copy had been snapped up. Meristem also received fabulous support from County Commissioner Linda Rendtorff and City Council Chair Mary Rose McCormick, who each sponsored proclamations in honor of NFBW. Mary Rose came to Meristem's party celebrating their new book, read the proclamation, and then stayed for the whole event.

**THE WOMEN'S BOOKSTOP (Hamilton Ontario):** Renee Albrecht tells us that they put together an anthology especially for NFBW. Local women wrote

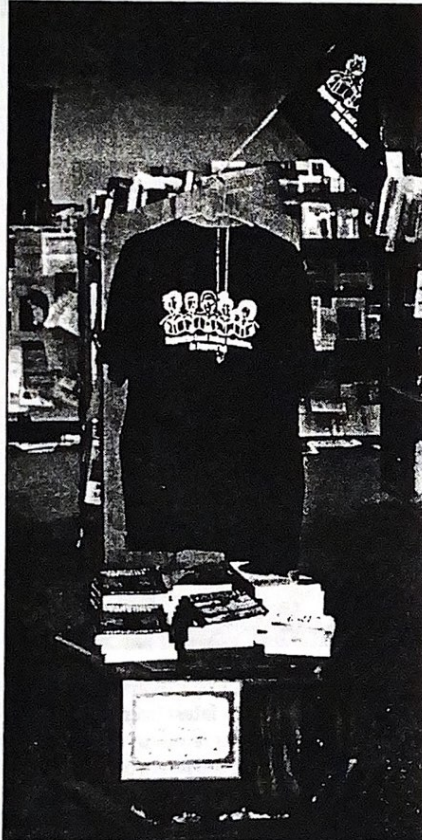


Photo at left and on facing page: Mother Kali's Books, Eugene, Oregon

stories, each of which had a recipe in it; then they held a book launching party at the store, with a performance by local musician Shelley Whitehead.

### Using the Feminist Writers Pledge

**THE READER'S FEAST** (Hartford CT): Tollie Miller and Carolyn Anderson, creators of the Feminist Writers Pledge, report that they blew up the Pledge and the list of signees and posted it in their window, facing in and out. And Mary Kay Blakely, author of *American Mom: Motherhood, Politics and Humble Pie*, and Linda Villarosa (editor of *Essence* magazine) both did readings at the store.

### Special Programming

**ORLANDO BOOKS** (Edmonton Alberta): Owner

Jacqueline Dumas (also an author and a signee of the Feminist Writers Pledge) scheduled three events for NFBW: The Northern Alberta Women's Archives Association, which focuses on women's history and the importance of their contributing memoirs, diaries, etc., to their community archives, gave a presentation in the store; Vjera Boniface, just back from Croatia, presented material she has gathered on how women have grouped together, often crossing ethnic lines, to support each other and oppose the war; and Edmonton Working Women released and discussed their report on job-related sexual harassment.

**PRAIRIE MOON BOOKS** (Arlington Heights IL): A publisher, an editor and a contributor to *The Woman-Centered Economy* (Third Side Press) came for an evening in the store. Their most visible positive result came from people who read about them in *Ms. Magazine*.

**GERTRUDE STEIN MEMORIAL BOOKSHOP** (Pittsburgh PA): At GSMB they declared National Feminist Bookstore Week a week of women's health awareness, and held a safe sex workshop for women and a breast cancer awareness workshop.

### Promoting Feminist Presses

**IN OTHER WORDS** (Portland OR): The Eighth Mountain Press teamed up with In Other Words to create local visibility by sponsoring a 10% discount on all Eighth Mountain Books sold that month and donating enough copies of *Incidents Involving Mirth* (Anna Livia) so that In Other Words could give a free copy of the novel to each customer who purchased *any* book from a feminist press during NFBW. Co-director Catherine Sameh says it was great fun watching customers scout the store for feminist press books they could buy to get their free book! A local feminist author who signed the Feminist Writers Pledge did a reading at the store, and Ruth Gundle (owner of Eighth Mountain Press) taught an evening workshop for writers about getting published. In Other Words also distributed copies of Theresa Corrigan's *Sojourner* article and Carol Seajay's *Ms.* article, and as a result several people volunteered to help out in the store. Catherine reports that without all the advance publicity packets,

posters, buttons, tee-shirts, etc., they never would have had such a successful celebration!

### Open Houses

**CRAZY LADIES** (Cincinnati OH): All books were discounted 15% in honor of NFBW, and on Friday they held an open house from 5 PM to 9 PM, during which they drew for a \$100 gift certificate.

### Getting Media & Rotating Sales

**LIONESS BOOKS** (Sacramento CA): Owner Theresa Corrigan reports that they did their biggest ever newsletter mailing — 4000 copies! — announcing a three-part event, "A Celebration of our Sexuality." Author Robbie Sommers did an evening of performance art; Karla Jay, author of *Lesbian Erotics*, came to the store for a reading; and Dr. Joanne Marrow hosted a free-flowing discussion about female sexuality. Each day of NFBW a different section of the store was on sale at 20% off. In addition, Theresa picked out some select stock (i.e. impressive looking but too late for return), wrapped it up as presents, and gave a present each day to the person who spent the most money at the store (the wrapped presents were displayed, with an explanation). Lioness got more press coverage for NFBW than it has at any other time, but it didn't bring in the hordes of people they would have liked. The academic semester had ended a week previously, so maybe if NFBW comes earlier next year ...

### Having a Good Time

**WOMEN & CHILDREN FIRST** (Chicago IL): Most of what they did was just *fun!* They loved the *Ms.* article — pithy and powerful. The most fun thing they did was to hide a gift certificate in a feminist press book or children's book every day, and then have a limerick that was a clue to where the certificate was hidden. People loved it! They also raffled free store memberships and sets of encyclopedias.

### Street Fair Generates 34% Sales Jump

**THE BOOK GARDEN** (Denver CO): The Book Garden held a two-day street fair for local artists. Fifteen vendors came, as well as political organizations, healing artists and local publications. The fair filled an entire side of the block and down the alley next to The Book Garden. From this fair, they created a media list in their computer which has already come in handy since NFBW. Kasha Songer reports that The Book Garden made an extra \$3-4,000 in sales that week due to the fair. All in all they spent about \$600 promoting NFBW, and it bumped sales up 34% in May!

### Making Feminism Visible

**FULL CIRCLE** (Albuquerque NM): Full Circle did a big window display, hosted several readings, and threw a Solidarity Party for people to celebrate and honor the store, including special invitations to luminaries of the women's community. It was just a party, not a sale, but they did \$900 in business that night. Their community was so pleased with the party that they're still getting thank-you letters for making feminism visible in Albuquerque. All of this despite the fact that Ann and Mary were down with hepatitis during much of the lead time. Mary was

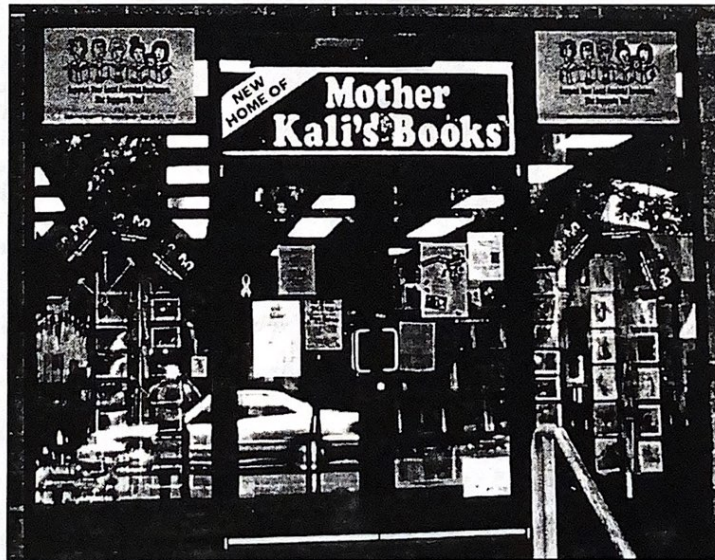




Photo at left and on facing page: Solidarity Party at Full Circle, Albuquerque, New Mexico

back on her feet in time to do a local radio show, followed by an airing of Mev Miller's *A Labor of Love: A Tribute to 25 Years of Feminist and Lesbian Publishers and Bookstores*.

### Standing Room Only

**MY SISTERS' WORDS** (Syracuse NY): In addition to coverage in local newspapers, store owner Mary Ellen Kavanaugh tells us that *My Sisters' Words* was featured in a six-minute spot all its own on the evening news! Her favorite NFBW event was when a local poet read a poem she had written for Marge Piercy, and dedicated it to the bookstore workers because they treated her so well every time she came into the store, whether she spent \$100 or just browsed. But the most popular NFBW event was the night Mary Ellen and her employee Kay Steinmetz read from their current favorite books — to a standing-room-only crowd! Folks are begging them to do it again. And last but not least, the NFBW tee-shirts were a big hit — they sold fifteen shirts in two weeks.

**A WOMAN'S PREROGATIVE** (Ferndale MI): The store held one big event with four local authors, including Beth Brant, and it was by far the most successful reading they've ever had.

**BRIGIT BOOKS** (St. Petersburg FL): Diane Stein, author of fourteen books on healing and women's spirituality (and one of the authors who signed the Feminist Writers Pledge) came to Brigit Books to sign her newest book on May 20th. Attendance was fantastic! The store got some press coverage in local gay/lesbian venues, but not much mainstream press attention. Owner Patty Callaghan also made a map

of all the feminist bookstores in the U.S. and Canada, and gave it out with copies of the *Feminist Bookstores' Fall Catalog*.

### NFBW Book Tables

**AN UNCOMMON VISION** (Wynnewood PA): NFBW coincided with *An Uncommon Vision's* planned participation as a dealer at the annual meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine, in Pittsburgh PA. As an out-of-print specialist in women's history and women's lives, *An Uncommon Vision* had a sales table featuring women in medicine — physicians, nurses, technicians, patients, etc. — in all formats (autobiographies, biographies, novels written by women physicians or nurses, women's textbooks, manuals, diseases relating to women, women's health, photographs, postcards, posters and ephemera). They displayed original posters of WWII nurses and nurse recruitment; original paperback novels from the 1950s and 1960s with medical themes (such as the sexy nurse and the sex starved woman physician who is a closeted lesbian); and original photographs and autobiographies by women physicians and nurses who served as volunteers in Europe during WWII. *An Uncommon Vision* distributed its seventh out-of-print catalog during NFBW, celebrating its third year in business.