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Report from the Cochairs

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REPORT FROM THE COCHAIRS

It has been a busy but exceedingly productive year for this CLAGS Board. Along with the creative series of public conferences, panels, and monthly colloquia mounted by the Program Committee, we have taken on the new challenges of a Fellowship Program generously funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, as well as cosponsorship of the Stonewall History Project. Indeed, as CLAGS continues to develop and expand, we are working overtime to keep up with our success.

In order to ensure that the Board continues to keep pace with the astounding progress CLAGS has made in the last year, we have devoted the last few months to restructuring and redefining our individual and collective roles as Board members. We began by enlarging the size of the Board and welcoming new members, Richard Elovich, Ann Pollinger Haas, David Kahn, Shepherd Raimi, Kendall Thomas, Sharon Thompson, and Gilda Zwerman (see article in this issue). Our special thanks to outgoing Board members Don Mengay, Jeffrey Nunakawa, Amanda Prosser, Althea Smith, Joseph Wittreich, and Ellen Zaltzberg for all their good work and good cheer.

In June, the newly expanded Board held a day-long retreat, facilitated by Kathy Engel of Riptide Communications, during which members further redesigned the structure, function, and composition of its standing committees. Our goal was to enable the committees to more effectively incorporate CLAGS's expanding programmatic activities, as well as to make better use of the diverse experiences and interests of Board members. In an effort to strengthen communications among individual standing committees, the Executive Director, and the full Board... the Executive Committee was expanded to include the chairpersons of each standing committee, as well as the Executive Director and the two Cochairs. However, as CLAGS continues the process of defining itself and its role in the various communities it touches, much remains to be done. Through it all the Board will continue to work to uphold its commitment in all its endeavors to gender balance and multicultural diversity.

-- Esther Katz and Cheryl Clarke



Cheryl Clarke (left) and Esther Katz (right), Cochairs

WRITERS' CONFERENCE

A three-day series of panels and related events will mark the upcoming Lesbian and Gay Writers Weekend from October 16th through October 18th. The event is cosponsored by CLAGS and the Publishing Triangle Writers' Committee and will be held at the CUNY Graduate School at 33 West 42 Street.

There have been a number of recent, and very successful, gay and lesbian writers' conferences, but the October 1992 event is specifically designed to bring together for the first time writers from the New York and Tri-State area.

It is being billed as something between a conference and a festival, with a wide variety of plenary sessions and panel discussions. The organizers of the event emphasize that it will be "very New York-oriented," which means special attention to the city's multicultural mix of ethnic and racial groups, as well as representation of song, theater, comics, film, video, and performance art.

The purpose of this distinctly regional event is to solidify connections within the gay and lesbian writing community and to inspire the development of new talent. Among the writers, editors, and publicists already involved with the conference are Alfred Corn, Jane DeLynn, David Groff, Michele Karlsberg, Ethan Mordden, Felice Picano, and Sarah Schulman.

For further details, contact Eric Brandt at 212-475-2098.

IN THE MAIL

Starting with this issue, CLAGS will be publishing excerpts from letters that come to us from people who write from around the world. The following is an excerpt from a letter from Argentina, June 1992:

"For the past ten years I have been a Gay/Lesbian rights advocate in Argentina, and, more often than not, I have had to face an utter lack of relevant material for study and discussion with my fellow scholars and activists. The main reason was that, isolated as we are from the most active research and resource centers all over the world, we didn't know even of the existence of studies in that vein.

At present there are several groups in Argentina dealing with Gay/Lesbian issues. However, we are still in the pre-history of Gay/Lesbian Studies; we are, if I may call it so, a pre-Stonewall generation ... We have yet to accomplish visibility and a legal framework that will check the ever-present segregatory practices we are the victims of ... Most urgently, we need your recommendations on bibliography. It is vital that we take our first steps ... Rest assured that in helping us learn more about ourselves you're helping thousands."

We get many such letters and in return we try to send books, articles, bibliographies, and of course, warm words of encouragement.