

Lollipop Sweetens Children's Minds

Chapel Hill has the distinction of giving rise to one of the first women's publishing collectives in the country. Lollipop Power, Inc. is a publisher of non-sexist, non-racist, and non-heterosexist children's books.

Lollipop Power has its roots in a 1969 consciousness raising group which sought to address the need for alternative children's books. The primary focus was, and continues to be, combatting the socialization of children into rigid sex roles. The collective was incorporated and published its first book in 1970.

During its 15-year lifespan, Lollipop has published 19 children's books. Some of the stories are fanciful lessons of equity for animals or citizens of imaginary lands, while others deal with the practical realities of daycare centers and, most recently, the empowerment of children to protect themselves from sexual abuse.

Of special interest to the gay and lesbian community are two Lollipop books dealing with lesbianism. In 1983, the collective published Lots of Mommies by Jane Severance. Although lesbianism is not directly referred to in this story of a little girl who lives with her mother and three other women, it is certainly implied. Several years earlier, in 1979, Lollipop published another Jane Severance book, When Megan Went Away, which deals

explicitly with lesbian parenting.

Until recently it was almost impossible to find books with strong female protagonists, books that actively denied sexist stereotyping and certainly books that dealt with lesbian parenting! Anyone attempting to instill these sorts of progressive values in young children is aware of the difficulty of overcoming the negative socializing effects of television, schools, other children and adults, and the majority of children's books.

Lollipop Power has thus set an encouraging precedent. Unfortunately due to decreasing membership and increasing costs, the collective is now in the process of closing down. Yet, on the brighter side, the dream is not shattered, and the number of publishers addressing the issues of sexism, racism, and homophobia has grown in recent years, as has the number of women's presses. In addition to progressive publishers, some mainstream children's literature is slowly getting away from sex role stereotyping as well. Hence there is hope that in the coming years, other publishers will continue in the spirit of Lollipop Power. I am proud to live in a community that gave rise to a collective like Lollipop Power.

For more information, write or call:
Lollipop Power, Inc. 929-4857
P.O. Box 1171
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

-Tonie Goldstein

Gay Voting Habits

Are They Self-Destructive?

Few of us would argue with the proposition that the men and women of the gay community are very often viewed by the "straight" world as nothing more than a huddled mass of clones. So, in light of the 1984 election, the question arises, If we act, dress, look and sound alike, why is it that gay people don't all vote alike?

That's an interesting question, for both gays and non-gays alike. While each of us would dispute the assumptions of typical stereotyping by ignorant observers of our community, perhaps the one consistency it would be reasonable to assume we as a community do share is the tendency to flex our political muscle as a unit on election day.

Your're thinking, What is he talking about? What about the gay voting block in San Francisco? What about the solidarity of the gay community in other cities in the country? It's true that, at least on a local, municipal level, gay people have been known to stand together when their freedoms are at stake.

But that is by no means a given truth. If it were there would be a lot more gay civil rights bills passed by city councils in the United States and a lot less threatening legislation being enacted into law in some of our largest cities.

The Human Rights Campaign Fund represents the interests of the gay and lesbian community in federal races. And what we have witnessed in Congressional, Senatorial, and Presidential elections for the past four years is an apparent absence of a reliable, consistent coalition of lesbian and gay voters.

A large number of men and women in the gay community would argue that a second Reagan administration will not help the cause of gay civil rights in this country. And many would argue that a second term will in fact see ground lost, primarily as an increasingly conservative federal judiciary--particularly the Supreme Court--hears important human rights cases. Yet a substantial number of these same gay men and women voted for the reelection of .
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