

Association of Libertarian Feminists



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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of ALF is to

- **encourage** women to become economically self-sufficient and psychologically independent
- **publicize** and promote realistic attitudes toward female competence, achievement, and potential
- **oppose** the abridgement of individual rights by any government on account of sex
- **work toward** changing sexist attitudes and behavior exhibited by individuals
- **provide** a libertarian alternative to those aspects of the women's movement that tend to discourage independence and individuality.

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ALF news

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Changing of the ALF Guard

By Sharon Presley

Our readers are no doubt wondering what has happened to ALF and the ALF News. As many of you know, the newsletter has been a volunteer effort, mainly on the part of Joan Kennedy Taylor. However in the past two years, Joan has had to curtail her activities because of a serious illness and has stepped down as National Coordinator and News editor. I have taken over the duties of National Coordinator and Natasha Shebeko will be editing the newsletter. We plan to bring out the newsletter twice a year, which is all our busy schedules can accommodate.

Joan has, over the years, done a tremendous job with the newsletter. I am in awe of her ability to keep it going with interesting and thoughtful articles year after year. Her efforts on behalf of libertarian feminism have been considerable. For her efforts, she deserves far more credit than she has gotten from outside the ALF circle. We wish her renewed health and a long life.

We will continue to bring you news and reviews relevant to individualist and libertarian feminist interests. This issue notes the publication of several books that we hope to review in the future, especially since most libertarian magazines are likely to ignore them.

We also are beginning preliminary work on a conference on the future of the libertarian family. The application of libertarian principles to social and personal relations, let alone the family, as many of you know, has scarcely been touched upon in the libertarian movement. We know that if it is going to be done at all, it will have to be done by ALF. If any of you are interested in participating in the planning or presentation of this conference, please get in touch with me at presley@alf.org.

ALF News

Joan Kennedy Taylor, Sharon Presley and Wendy McElroy were speakers at the Foundation for Economic Freedom (FEE) National Convention in 2002. All three spoke at the ALF panel on "Individualist Feminism: Past, Present and Future" on Saturday, May 4, 2002. Wendy also spoke on "Sexual Harassment and Beyond" earlier in the day. At the FEE Banquet and 30th Anniversary Celebration of Laissez Faire Books on Saturday night, Sharon, who is co-founder of LFB, gave a tribute to John Muller, the founder, and to Andrea Millen Rich, who has sustained Laissez Faire for 20+ years.

Social psychologist Dr. Sharon Presley debated clinical psychologist Dr. Michael Edelstein on "Self-Esteem: Pro and Con" for Jeanie Kennedy's Free Exchange Forum in San Francisco on February 15,

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2003. Dr. Presley extolled the value of the concept of self-esteem, while noting how the term is misused and inappropriately defined. Dr. Edelstein declared that the concept was useless and not helpful in a therapeutic situation. The turnout was one of the best ones FE has had in a long time. Maybe libertarians *are* interested in psychology! The tape is available from the International Society for Individual Liberty (ISIL) web site [www.isil.org].

The ALF web site has a new look and color scheme, thanks to Webmaster Fred Moulton and to Sharon Presley, who is trying out her new web design skills.

new and forthcoming books

Several exciting books of interest to libertarian feminists have been published since the last *ALF News*.

LIBERTY FOR WOMEN: Freedom and Feminism in the Twenty-First Century edited by Wendy McElroy with a Foreword by Wendy Kaminer. Ivan R. Dee, Publishers 2002.

An anthology of writings by contemporary individualist feminists (not necessarily libertarian) covering topics that include the family, violence, work, and technology. Writers who may be familiar to ALF readers include Camille Paglia, Nadine Strossen, Norma Jean Almodovar, Ellen Frankel Paul and Cathy Young. However, notably absent from the book are libertarian feminists Joan Kennedy Taylor and Sharon Presley. Joan was asked to do an article on abortion but it was rejected by an editor at the Independent Institute, the sponsor, on ideological grounds. Sharon, the co-author of the ALF discussion paper on abortion, was not asked to contribute. The book is available from the Independent Institute. See Link on the ALF web site.

For those interested in the history of libertarian feminism, there are two recently published books and one forthcoming.



EMMA GOLDMAN: A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN YEARS, VOLUME ONE: Made for America, 1890-1901. Editor Candace Falk; Associate Editor Barry Patmean; Assistant Editor Jessica Moran; Consulting Editor Robert Cohen; Illustrations Editor Susan Wengraf; Foreword by Leon Litwack. University of

California Press, 2003

The staff of the Emma Goldman Papers, the pre-eminent Goldman archive, has put together the first of what will be the definitive multi-volume work on Goldman's writings. This volume covers Emma's early years and includes works that have not been published in English until now. Themes include anarchism and its possibilities, free speech, education, and the importance of women's freedom. The second volume has just been published.

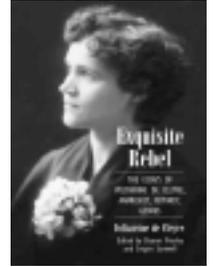
<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/>

FORTHCOMING IN DECEMBER, 2004 from SUNY Press:

THE EXQUISITE REBEL: VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE, ANARCHIST FEMINIST GENIUS

Edited by Sharon Presley and Crispin Sartwell

Voltaireine de Cleyre was the second most famous anarchist feminist, after Emma Goldman, in turn of the 19th/20th century America. Considered by her biographer, noted anarchist historian Paul Avrich, to be a first-class intellect, her writings crackle with passion and devotion to liberty. Topics include anarchism, education, free thought, direct action, and feminism. For further information see: www.voltaireine.org



Other ALF news

Fred Moulton, the ALF webmaster, conducted the Prometheus Awards at the Libertarian Futurist Society meeting at Worldcon 2002. ALF member Karen Michaelson's *Enemy Glory* was one of the nominees for Best Novel of 2001. See *article under books*.



Sharon Presley

Sharon Presley and Wendy McElroy were speakers at the World Freedom Summit sponsored by the International Society for Individual Society in Rotorua, New Zealand in July, 2004. Sharon spoke the 22th on the topic of her book in progress, "Standing Up to Experts and Authorities: How to Avoid Being Manipulated, Intimidated and Abused." Wendy spoke the 26th on "Feminism and Liberty."

Wendy McElroy's web site, ifeminists.com, is taken to task in the current (Vol. 6, No. 1 at www.feminista.com) issue of the online magazine *Feminista!* in "Who's Co-opting Feminism?" by Christy Burbridge. We don't always agree with Wendy's point of view but we think Burbridge is way off base in this critique. With a typical leftist feminist perspective, she fails to understand the destructive and authoritarian nature of government intervention nor does she distinguish between libertarian and conservative feminists. No surprise, alas. However, just for the record, *Feminista!* did reprint Sharon Presley's article, "Feminism in Liberty" in its Vol. 1, No. 2 issue (still online) so it's not all bad.



Wendy McElroy

A new nationwide publication has just been announced entitled *Self Reliance for Women*. According to the press release, this "new publication contains information to empower women to respond to emergencies and simplify their complicated lives. SRFW covers wilderness survival, food preservation, first aid, urban terrorism, traditional lifestyle skills, fighting bureaucracy, home and car maintenance and more." For further information, e-mail Kelly @srfw.com or check out the web site at www.srfw.com.

Dr. Chris Tame, Director of the Libertarian Alliance in England

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From Tor Books

Hecate's Glory

Karen Michalson

Hecate's Glory

Karen Michalson

Tor Books; 480 pp.

\$27.95 (Hardback)

Hecate's Glory was nominated for the 2004 Prometheus Best Novel Award, and was chosen Freedom Book of the Month, Sept., 2003 by Free Market.Net.

"...I died before I awoke, like the old prayer threatens."

From the very onset, Karen Michalson decided that she would write a trilogy. This is an ambitious undertaking for any writer, most certainly so for a novice. But this is no ordinary writer or person. Michalson is a renaissance woman.

Her novels and her music reflect her interest in 19th Century British Literature. It was while Michalson was earning a Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts in English Literature that her graduate work led her towards studying the "politics of privileging realism" over fantasy literature. Her first book, *Victorian Fantasy Literature: Battles With Church & Empire*, was inspired by her studies. It was in this period that Michalson also squeezed in studies in law.

After graduation Michalson taught for two years at the University of Connecticut. She found her calling in writing and music, and gave up teaching to follow it. As if her life were not full enough, she taught herself the guitar and started her own band, Point of Ares, which plays music (which she composes and for which she is bassist and lead singer) that is based on the themes from her novels. The group has released three albums: *The Sorrows of Young Apollo* (1999), *Enemy Glory Darkly*, and *Blessed* (2001) For more information about her

music, see:
arularecords.com

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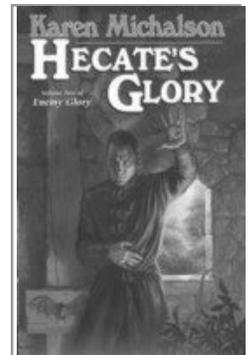
In *Hecate's Glory*, her ill-fated character Llewelyn continues his chilling, spine-tingling deathbed account of an alliance with an evil priest of the goddess Hecate. Hecate, goddess of magic and crossroads, sided with Zeus during the Titan War. Zeus rewarded her loyalty by bestowing upon her power over earth, sea, sky,

and the underworld. Hecate was viewed as being evil, yet at times she would do good. It is this same kind of duality that Llewelyn bears within himself, and sets the course of his actions.

In *Hecate's Glory*, we have a memorable, very compelling anti-hero Llewelyn, who has been pulled to "the dark side" after a devastating betrayal. The novel is a philosophical examination of what is good and evil in general, and how it dwells within us and shapes us and our most revered institutions in particular. This tale is dark indeed, rich in both imagery and character. Michalson stirs the readers' imagination, emotions and intellect— a magical and potent brew.

Living in an era in which authors are churned out for public praise and consumption in assembly line fashion, their mediocrity ignored, it comes as an extremely pleasant surprise to come upon a writer who has a true inborn talent for writing.

It is this writer's opinion is that Michalson's word smithing and story telling is wizardry and magic itself and her books the rarest of all things— the progeny of a true born artist.



Read what critics say about *Hecate's Glory*:

"Brilliant, unforgettable. Poetic. *Hecate's Glory*—like *Enemy Glory*, the first book in Karen Michalson's proposed trilogy, is a masterpiece of fantasy. You don't read these books, you experience them...It's like listening to strange beautiful alien music whose slow, hypnotizing melodies could either originate in or from an ancient long-forgotten race or some madwoman's dreams...dark, cerebral fantasy with enough treachery and revenge to satisfy even the blackest heart."
—Paul Goat Allen, *Editor, Barnes & Noble Review, Feb, 2003*

"*Hecate's Glory* is one of the two most beautifully written books I've read in years. The other is *Enemy Glory*...I don't think a lot of people will appreciate art this fine—but those who can—Wow!...the feel you get after reading some of the passages, the pictures paint in your mind...the very taste of the words on your tongue— it's really amazing... These are not words to simply read, but to savor like fine wine— or maybe burning brandy—that sets one aglow inside...This is what art is about." — Don L. Tigge, *Free Market.Net*

Hecate's Glory is a nominee for the 2004 Prometheus Award. Her first book, *Enemy Glory*, after which the series is named, was also very well received by critics.

—Natasha Shebeko

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forwarded a book review of interest to libertarian feminists. The full review can be found archived at www.eh.net/BookReview

Robert Dimand and Chris Nyland, editors, *The Status of Women in Classical Economic Thought*.

Cheltenham UK: Edward Elgar, 2003. 315 pp. \$95 (hardcover)

"The essays in this volume thus establish that the conventional wisdom that classical thinkers, with few exceptions, which included John Stuart Mill and his wife, Harriet, focused almost exclusively on the economic role of men, and were unconcerned with women, is patently untrue. Each of the contribu-

tors, Annie L. Cot, Evelyn Forget, Peter Groenewegen, Thomas Heenan, and David Levy, in addition to the two editors, provide analyses that enlighten us about the nature of classicists' interest in the sources of gender inequalities, and the possibilities for readdressing them."

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Taking Science Seriously: A Review of a Review by Sharon Presley

I have often taken issue with Cathy Young's articles in the past. In my opinion, she has been all too eager to embrace anti-political correctness (like so many libertarians) simply because it is the anti side. I am often political incorrect too but because I teach critical thinking, I feel obligated to look carefully at the issues and try to objectively weigh the evidence. This sometimes puts me on the side that happens to be politically correct because it happens to be the most reasonable side.

However, a recent book review by Young appearing in the Aug/Sept 2004 issue of *reasononline* is one I mostly applaud. She reviews *Taking Sex Differences Seriously* by Stephen Rhoades, a conservative who teaches public policy (*not, we note, either psychology or biology*). There is a certain danger in commenting on a book one hasn't read yet but Young says enough to tell me that this book is ideologically driven, not scientifically driven, in spite of its pretensions.

While I take issue with her dismissive comments about the "social construction of gender," her review makes excellent points that show she (unlike so many libertarians) knows something about science (and social science). This book, she says, is a conservative attempt to counter what Young calls "the rigid orthodoxy of androgyny." "Unfortu-

nately," she points out, "he mixes genuinely interesting information and analysis with dubious generalizations, slim or anecdotal evidence, and sometimes downright junk science. And his conclusions can be distilled to such hoary precepts — e.g., girls who are too smart or too ambitious will have trouble landing a husband — that one feels like making a beeline for the nearest chapter of the National Organization for Women." Gee, we thought Neanderthals were extinct...

However, Young uses the typical ploys of the ideologue herself. If you look at what psychologists say about gender instead of what political activists say (what does Gloria Steinem know about the complexities of gender research or methodology anyway?), you will find that *they* are not proscribing a "rigid orthodoxy of androgyny" nor do scientists dismiss the social construction of gender as cavalierly as Young does. These irritating points aside, her article has much merit. She deliciously skewers this scientifically sleazy book with the contempt it apparently so richly deserves. [<http://reason.com/0408/co.cy.taking.shtml>]

Dr. Presley teaches critical thinking, psychology of women and other psychology courses at California State University, Hayward. See her new web site (under construction): www.sharonpresley.com

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