LOVE WINS!
Late this past February 7, in a mostly empty Senate chamber, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Republican from Kentucky, used a rarely invoked rule against one senator’s impugning another to censure Elizabeth Warren, a Democrat from Massachusetts, who had begun to read a historic letter into the official record of the Senate. Defending the maneuver, McConnell explained, “[Warren] was warned. She was given an explanation. Nevertheless, she persisted.” Nevertheless, she persisted: those three words took wing as a flock of tweets, a viral meme, a gaggle of T-shirts, and, according to one UK daily, hundreds of tattoos.

But for the dark miracle of Twitter, nothing was especially new about the moment. American women projected their voices in ever-broader spheres of public life for centuries before Warren took the floor that night: imagining, organizing, demanding, being stifled, sometimes even stifling one another—and again and again persisting in their quest for full citizenship. Their unfinished fight for an equal voice has created countless texts, objects, images, and more. For nearly three-quarters of a century, the Schlesinger Library has collected those materials, documenting the persistent journey of American women from the margins to the center of our national debate, on many sides of many issues. Indeed, the 1986 letter from which Senator Warren was reading on the Senate floor—written by Coretta Scott King to Strom Thurmond, then the Senate Judiciary Committee chair—can be found in slightly expanded form in our collections, part of the Records of the National Organization for Women (to which King sent a copy). We posted King’s letter online the next day, and it was widely shared, although far too subtle for a tweet, much less a tattoo. Those who took the time to read King’s two pages of closely spaced type would have noticed the subtlety of her intellect, the firmness of her stand, the prescience of her argument—and, alas, the persistence of the structural inequalities she lamented some three decades ago.

We live in an era of profound social and political change, change that is at once sudden and deep-rooted. As we struggle to make sense of it all, women’s voices of every political stripe persist, on the Senate floor, in the classroom, in the kitchen, and on the march. At such moments, it becomes especially important to look to our history in order to understand the present and shape the future. In this issue of the newsletter, you’ll read about some of what the Schlesinger is doing to document the tumultuous present as we anticipate our celebration of the library’s 75th anniversary and the decades to come.

—Jane Kamensky
Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation Director
Professor, Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Sciences
She was funny, insightful, and inspiring. The Knafel Center was full on that February afternoon when Jennifer Finney Boylan—born James Boylan—brought her message of empathy and understanding to the Radcliffe Institute at an event sponsored by the Schlesinger Library. “The cause—the root cause—of so much trouble,” Boylan said, “stems from our lack of interest in imagining what the experience of being human is like for people who are not us.”

The author of 15 books, including She’s Not There: A Life in Two Genders (Broadway Books, 2003), the first best-selling work by a transgender American, Boylan is the inaugural Anna Quindlen Writer in Residence at Barnard College of Columbia University. She is also the chair of the board of GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) and a New York Times contributing op-ed writer.

Discussing a timely topic—which bathrooms transgender people should use—Boylan said, “My sense is that the current imbroglio in North Carolina and elsewhere is not really about bathrooms at all. It’s about the fact that plenty of people just don’t like the idea that there are transgender people in the first place and cannot imagine our lives. They think that people who are trans—or different in any way—have somehow come up with the entirety of our existence primarily in order to hurt other people’s feelings.”

In one of the most moving moments of her presentation, Boylan demonstrated and led the audience in practicing the hand movements to sign “transgender.” In American Sign Language, “transgender” used to be the word “sex” signed backwards, but recently the sign has become a closed hand facing down and then opening up like a flower and held over the heart. Boylan emphasized that she has seen people open their hearts on a range of issues “when some otherized soul is revealed to be a member of their own family or a friend.”

At the conclusion of her remarks, Boylan engaged Harvard College students Schuyler Bailar ’19 and Jessica Fournier ’17 in conversation about their experiences on campus. Bailar explained that he was recruited to Harvard by the women’s swim team, where he found an accepting community, but he eventually decided to join the men’s team, which also welcomed him. He is the first openly transgender athlete to compete in the NCAA. Fournier, the first in her family to attend college, is an activist for LGBT issues and Our Harvard Can Do Better, a student organization advocating for the reform of policies regarding campus sexual violence. Responding to Boylan’s question about how queer and trans students have reacted to the results of the presidential election, Bailar and Fournier said students have been supportive of one another. “There’s been an upwelling of solidarity,” Bailar said.

Calling herself “the soccer mom of the movement,” Boylan stressed that the trans community is incredibly diverse. “If you’ve met one trans person, you’ve met one trans person, but that’s the strength of our community.”

—Pat Harrison
Publications Manager
There's no non-creepy way to say this: I've been thinking about girls, particularly little girls, for quite some time. So long, in fact, that it's dubious whether I can even still claim to be a girl myself. And yet I do. So when I pitched four film programs to Schlesinger staff members, perhaps I was secretly hoping they would choose “Girlhood.” I was already well down the rabbit hole. And apparently, I'm not alone.

The boom in “girl culture,” or at least its visibility, has become integral to how we think about post-net youth culture, commerce, and millennial politics. Contemporary girlhood can be identified as strongly with the bohème entrepreneurship and girl-club vibe of Tavi Gevinson (Rookie mag) as with the transnational “girls’ rights are human rights” activism of Malala Yousafzi (I Am Malala). Amid Orensteinian fears of “princess culture,” over-sexualization, cyberbullying, and sexting, this decade has in fact seen girl culture quietly flourish, both online, IRL (in real life), and in many of the stranger spaces between.

Meanwhile, our collective imagination of girls and girlhood occupies an increasingly influential share of contemporary narrative cultures. In the publishing world, the notoriety of the girl has become a story in its own right, with such major media outlets as the Guardian, the New York Times, and NPR noting the sharp increase in book titles across genres featuring the word “Girl.” The notion that fairy tales and princess stories dominate the narrative kingdom of girlhood has always been a myth, but now, it’s hard to deny that girlhood itself has a magic—one as dark as that of any Grimm fairy tale—of its own.

Beyond this, girlhood has developed from something of a historically politicized category—the Victorian cult of girls’ biological innocence and patriarchal fetishes of the girl-child, for example—into an increasingly popular politics of identity. Famously, one is not born but made a woman. What, then, is she in the making? What or who becomes a woman, and why, today, do so many ostensibly grown women prefer to identify or politicize their identities as girls? When third-wave feminist, trans, queer, and post-structuralist theories of sex and gender began to displace “woman” from the center of their politics, did anyone imagine that “girl” would come to take her place? What does girlhood mean in an era of intersectional feminism, post-feminism, or neo-feminist sensibilities?

The Schlesinger Library film series has provided a unique opportunity to explore the power, the precariousness, and the politics of girlhood, by way of the strange, at times mythic, spaces in which our ideas and images of girlhood live—often but not always cinema. Like Lewis Carroll’s Alice, cinematic imaginaries of the girl appear “larger than life and twice as natural.”

If the many faces of Girlhood speak to one idea, it’s that the girl is never quite what she seems. A little girl is not so small when she commands a big screen, big voices, or even bigger audiences. “Girl power” means having power where others least expect it. A girl is magic, and the rest of her is a mystery.

—Katie Kohn

Kohn is a doctoral candidate in film and visual studies in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University.

To read an expanded version of this article, which includes descriptions of the films chosen for the series along with suggestions on the facing page, visit www.radcliffe.harvard.edu.
Katie Kohn has put together a list of suggested titles, based on the different girlhood tropes that she included in the film series. Titles in bold were screened at the Schlesinger Library.

NEW WAVES

And God Created Woman... (Et Dieu... créa la femme) (R. Vadim, 1956)
La Dolce Vita (Federico Fellini, 1960)
Cleó from 5 to 7 (Cléo de 5 à 7) (Agnès Varda, 1962)
Red Desert (Il deserto rosso) (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1964)
Black Girl (La noire de...) (Ousmane Sembène, 1966)
Daisies (Sedmikrásky) (Vera Chytilová, 1966)
Masculin Féminin (Jean-Luc Godard, 1966)
Moolaadé (Ousmane Sembène, 2004)

THE MONSTER

The Bad Seed (Mervyn LeRoy, 1956)
Night of the Living Dead (George A. Romero, 1968)
The Ring (Gore Verbinski, 2002)
Let the Right One In (Låt den rätte komma in) (Tomas Alfredson, 2008)
A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night (Ana Lily Aminpour, 2014)
Gone Girl (David Fincher, 2014)

LITTLE PRINCESSES

Alice (Woody Allen, 1990)
Coraline (Henry Selick, 2009)
Beasts of the Southern Wild (Benh Zeitlin, 2012)
The Hunger Games Film Series
The Twilight Saga

GONE GIRLS/GIRL NOIR

Picnic at Hanging Rock (Peter Weir, 1975)
The Virgin Suicides (Sofia Coppola, 1999)
A Girl Like Her (Amy S. Weber, 2015)
The Fits (Anna Rose Holmer, 2015)
The Silenced (Gyeongseonghakyoo: Sarajin Sonyeodeul) (Hae-young Lee, 2015)

GIRLS GONE WILD

Gone with the Wind (Victor Fleming, 1939)
Spring Breakers (Harmony Korine, 2012)
The Bling Ring (Sofia Coppola, 2013)

WORKING GIRLS

Sabrina (Billy Wilder, 1954)
Working Girl (Mike Nichols, 1988)
Pretty Woman (Garry Marshall, 1990)
Romy and Michele’s High School Reunion (David Mirkin, 1997)
Live Nude Girls Unite! (Julia Query and Vicky Funari, 2000)
Lost in Translation (Sofia Coppola, 2003)
Zero Motivation (Efes beyahasei enosh) (Taya Lavie, 2014)
Writing from the Library

Scholars continue to flock to the Schlesinger to conduct research for their projects. Here, we highlight three recently published books that relied in part on the library’s holdings.

Rosalind Rosenberg


The historian Rosalind Rosenberg has written what could become the definitive biography of Pauli Murray, whose personal papers are housed at the Schlesinger. Although many are familiar with Murray’s activism in the civil rights and women’s movements, this book reveals another aspect of the extraordinary figure: that years before the term “transgender” made it into mainstream consciousness, Murray identified as male. The biography has a mid-April publication date, but trade journals have already praised it. “Assiduous research and clear prose give Murray her due,” said *Kirkus Reviews*. “Placing Murray in historical context with practiced ease, Rosenberg weaves these many threads together into an authoritative narrative that will introduce Murray to many future generations,” said *Publishers Weekly*. “Rosenberg shows how Murray pursued an intersectional activism, repeatedly identifying the ways in which race, class, and gender worked together to constrain opportunity.”

Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz AM ’65, PhD ’69

*A Taste for Provence* (University of Chicago Press, 2016)

Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz—the Sydenham Clark Parsons Professor of American Studies and History emerita at Smith College—investigates how Provence, once considered a French backwater, gained its allure in the postwar period. The *Wall Street Journal* said, “How Provence went from nowhereville to a nouveau-Eden is the subject of Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz’s *A Taste for Provence*, a fascinating survey of the many ways in which business, literature, art, and food fashions shape desires about where to travel and how to live.” At the Schlesinger Library, Horowitz studied cookbooks and *Gourmet* magazine and perused photographs in the Julia Child collection to build her narrative. Look for mentions of Elizabeth David and MFK Fisher, whose papers are housed at the Schlesinger.

Marjorie J. Spruill RI ’07

*Divided We Stand: The Battle Over Women’s Rights and Family Values That Polarized American Politics* (Bloomsbury, 2017)

Marjorie J. Spruill relied on a wealth of materials at the Schlesinger Library while researching this history of battling factions in the women’s movement: feminists and their conservative counterparts. “Spruill remains evenhanded in her treatment, tracing the tensions within each group and among their supporters,” wrote *Publishers Weekly*. “Her rigorous research and intense accuracy will make this an indispensable handbook on the history of the National Women’s Conference and its enduring legacy on American politics.” During the course of her research, which she began as the 2006–2007 Hrdy Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute, Spruill mined the papers of Catherine Shipe East, the records of the National Organization for Women, and materials about Shelah Leader and the National Commission on the Observance of International Women’s Year. Spruill is a professor of history at the University of South Carolina.

—Ivelisse Estrada

Writer/Editor

For a running list, updated monthly, of books researched at the Schlesinger, visit www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/schlesinger-library/collection/new-books.
An intriguing e-mail arrived from a bookseller in January. Would we be interested in purchasing an unusual print that he’d just acquired? Titled “Leaders of the Woman’s Rights Convention Taking an Airing,” it was published in New York by James S. Baillie in 1848. In the scan that the bookseller sent, there were three women in the foreground and a fourth riding away. The dealer speculated that the woman in the center was Elizabeth Cady Stanton. He hadn’t found evidence of the print’s existence anywhere else.

Were we interested? You bet! We forwarded his message to three scholars who are familiar with the iconography of the early women’s movement: Ann Gordon, a research professor emerita in the Department of History at Rutgers University and editor of the papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony; Allison Lange, an assistant professor of history at Wentworth Institute of Technology; and Lisa Tetrault, an associate professor of history at Carnegie Mellon University. All three responded quickly and generously.

None of them had ever seen this print before. All were surprised by such an immediate response to the July 1848 convention at Seneca Falls. They agreed that this image was meant not to flatter but to satirize the women who had attended, portraying them as unfeminine. The women on horseback are riding astride their steeds, not sidesaddle. Those hitched-up skirts and exposed legs? Positively pornographic! Two of the women are disheveled and losing control, undone by headstrong horses.

Could these be caricatures of real women? No one thought that likely. Would a New York lithographer really portray Stanton, the daughter of a state supreme court justice, so crudely? Besides, Stanton in 1848 was a young mother, a nobody, not yet the stout icon she became.

We also looked into Baillie himself. Originally a picture framer, by 1844 he had his own lithography business in New York City, from which he issued a wide variety of popular prints—a few saccharine scenes, but more often patriotic tableaux and cartoons poking fun at politicians. Baillie’s women are almost always allegorical or fictional, though two prints, both from 1848, depict the feminist and abolitionist Abigail Folsom as an old crone. Like those of his contemporaries, Baillie’s prints are chock-full of symbolism.

There is almost certainly symbolism in this print as well. Is the snatching of the bonnet code for something else? What’s up with the woman in the helmet, eyes facing forward? And those whips?

Can you help us decode this print? What clues do you see? Have you seen it before? This might be the one and only copy, but maybe not. Please share your thoughts by e-mailing cara_raskin@radcliffe.harvard.edu.

—Kathryn Allamong Jacob
Johanna-Maria Fraenkel Curator of Manuscripts at the Schlesinger Library
The night before a game, the women’s coach buys T-shirts at the school bookstore and irons the names of her players on the backs. When a new gym is built, the old gym is “given” to the women. A female referee earns half what a male referee earns for officiating the same game. Women’s teams sell candy bars and hold bake sales to pay for travel expenses, while men’s teams travel in buses and planes chartered at their schools’ expense. Welcome to the pre–Title IX world of women’s sports.

Since its passage, in 1972, Title IX has led to a transformative amount of social change, especially in the world of athletics. Where sports were once seen as a privilege, now they are seen as a right. Millions of girls and women have lived their entire lives in a post–Title IX world of opportunities, a hugely different world from that of earlier generations of women who remember gym suits with bloomers and girls’ rules in basketball. Merrily Dean Baker, Princeton’s first female athletic director, captured it perfectly: “I was called a tomboy; my daughters are called athletes.”

Title IX’s impact has not been limited to sports. Broadly designed to address sex discrimination in all aspects of education, the law’s flexible mandate has allowed it to respond creatively to new issues as they arise. In the 1970s, Title IX supported girls who wanted to take shop classes instead of home economics, ended the practice of expelling pregnant students from high school, and challenged arbitrary quotas that limited women’s access to professional schools. Starting in the 1990s, Title IX emerged as an important tool for challenging sexual harassment and sexual violence on campus. More recently, it has entered the national debate about which bathrooms transgender students should be allowed to use in schools. Few if any of these issues were anticipated by the law’s original framers.

The exhibition “Playing Fair? Title IX @ 45” at the Schlesinger Library focuses primarily on the developments and trends in women’s sports to document the law’s far-reaching impact. In 1971, only 295,000 high school girls participated in sports; now the number is above 3.2 million, approximately 40 percent of all high school athletes. Opportunities at the college level showed a similar surge, but women’s sports still lag behind men’s in all measures of participation, resources, and media coverage. Women make up 56 percent of college students but receive less than 44 percent of participation opportunities on campus. Since when is 44 percent considered equal? A celebration of how much has changed must always be balanced by the fact that we still have a long, long way to go to reach gender equity—in sports or in other aspects of American life.

This ongoing struggle is likely to hit some rocky patches in our changed political climate, but even if regulations are diluted or ignored, Title IX and the case law that supports it will remain in force. The discrimination that Title IX was designed to address is bigger and more deeply rooted than any specific administration. Think of us as signing on for the long haul. That’s the hard-won perspective of Bernice Sandler, one of the earliest proponents of Title IX, whose papers are at the Schlesinger: “I believed that if we passed Title IX it would only take a year or two for all the inequities based on sex to be eliminated. After two years, I upped my estimate to five years, then to ten, then to twenty-five, until I realized that we were trying to change very strong patterns of behavior and belief and that changes would take more than my lifetime to accomplish.”

There is no going back to the pre–Title IX days. The progress since the 1970s has meant too much to individual girls and women (and also supportive men and boys) and has been absorbed too deeply into the fabric of modern American life to simply go away. The women’s sports revolution is here to stay, and Title IX played a fundamental role in it. Happy 45th birthday, Title IX!

—Susan Ware
Historian and Schlesinger Library Council Member
Honor Moody, a cataloger, handles posters made by her fourth-grade class, housed in the Schlesinger’s collection. Her own contribution, about Mary Queen of Scots, is on the left.

**Black Women in Sport** by Tina Sloan Green et al., 1981 (Left)

**Tennis for Girls** by Florence A. Ballin, part of Spaulding’s Athletic Library, 1924 (Right)

Ribbon from the Break-the-Red-Tape Run and Rally, June 26, 1978 (Opposite Page)
Marching Forth

On January 21, 2017, more than 200,000 women and men marched in the Boston Women’s March for America in solidarity with the Women’s March in Washington, DC, and more than 700 women’s marches around the world. Dozens of signs from the Boston and Washington marches, made and gathered by staff, students, and activists, reflect the variety of concerns addressed by marchers.

A week later, on January 27, the 44th annual March for Life, organized in opposition to the Supreme Court’s 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion, took place in Washington. Two of the speakers from the library’s “Righting the Record” event last October—Jennifer Marshall, a vice president of the Heritage Foundation, and Charmaine Yoest, senior fellow at the nonprofit American Values, helped us by gathering signs from the March for Life.

All of the signs will be digitized, cataloged, and made widely available so that these vivid, tangible embodiments of women’s activism in our tumultuous moment will march on.
We Shall Over Comb

LOVE WINS!
During the summer of 2020, we will begin seeing designs for a new $20 bill featuring a woman: Harriet Tubman, who led hundreds of slaves to freedom on the Underground Railroad. She will be only the second real woman to appear on the front of our country’s paper currency: Martha Washington was pictured on a one-dollar silver certificate in the 1880s and 1890s.

We can thank Rosie Rios ’87 for leading the charge to return a woman’s image to America’s paper money. As the 43rd treasurer of the United States, from 2009 to 2016, she led the effort to redesign our paper currency. By the summer of 2012, Timothy Geithner, the secretary of the US Department of the Treasury, to whom Rios reported, had approved the concept, but it took another four years to finish the job.

Ever careful about how she describes her work at the Treasury, Rios says, “Let’s just say I had a lot of interactions with people I refer to as ‘preservationists.’” Rios resigned from her government position in 2016 to start an initiative called Empowerment 2020, which she launched at the Radcliffe Institute in December 2016, while working as a visiting scholar and using the resources of the Schlesinger Library.

Phil Wilder, Rios’s high school American history teacher, inspired the first project of Empowerment 2020. Impressed with her work on the currency, he realized that after 35 years of teaching, he had no images of women on his classroom walls. Shortly after he shared this insight with Rios, she started Teachers Righting History, which gives teachers and students the resources to learn about historical American women.

A primary offering is a database of 250 American women—including Alice Coachman, the first African American woman to win an Olympic gold medal, and Henrietta Swan Leavitt, a pioneering astronomer—which Rios and others assembled during the public outreach process to choose an American woman for the $20 bill. The database is available online at teachersrightinghistory.org.

Another aspect of Empowerment 2020 is a project aimed at increasing the number of statues of women in public places. Rios grows heated when she talks about this topic. “Central Park is the most visited urban park in the United States, she says.” Can you name the female statues in the park? There are Mother Goose and Alice in Wonderland. But you have 23 real people, all men.”

Rios reports that New York Life has committed half a million dollars toward funding for the first statue of women in Central Park, which will feature the suffragists Susan B. Antony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Because of her work on this project, Rios was the keynote speaker at the company’s official announcement this past February. The statue will be unveiled in 2020, the 100th anniversary of women’s suffrage.
Rios says that the currency process awakened her to the invisibility of women and led her to these other projects. She began to call herself “an accidental feminist.”

Born in 1965, she was one of nine children raised by their single mother in a conservative Catholic household in northern California. “My first exposure to feminism, whether it was real or perceived, was what we saw on TV,” says Rios. “They were topics that my mother didn’t exactly want us young girls talking about at the dinner table: burning bras, contraception, and abortion. Those weren’t childhood topics in my household. But what I have learned in my adult life is that true feminism was around me the whole time. It was the courage, strength, and perseverance of my mom, who sent all nine of us to college. And I see that same strength and determination in my daughter today.”

Rios worked in her hometown library headquarters during high school, and when she went off to Harvard—the first of her family to attend college out of state—she again worked in libraries and sent money home to help with the other children.

Today, she serves on the Schlesinger Library Council because, she says, “The library is the preeminent institution for research on American women, and it’s an honor to serve Harvard.” She’s no longer an accidental feminist but a very deliberate one, with a newfound purpose.

—Pat Harrison
Publications Manager

Mary Maples Dunn, 1931–2017

Mary Maples Dunn—who served as the Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation Director of the Schlesinger Library from 1995 to 1999—died on March 19. A renowned scholar of American history, she was also a talented administrator who led Radcliffe during its 1999–2000 merger with Harvard, as both acting president of Radcliffe College and then as acting dean of the Radcliffe Institute. She was president of Smith College from 1985 to 1995. Dunn began her career at Bryn Mawr, where she earned her doctorate and stayed on to teach. In all her roles, she was an ardent advocate of women’s education.

“Mary’s way of leadership inspired confidence and insisted on the highest standards of scholarship and programming,” said Lizabeth Cohen, dean of the Radcliffe Institute. “But she did it with a sparkling personality and a twinkling eye.”

When Dunn was hired to lead the Schlesinger, Anne Firor Scott, a pioneer in the field of American women’s history who chaired the library’s search committee for a new director, told the Harvard Crimson, “[Dunn] is an expert on colonial women’s history; she and her husband have edited the papers of William Penn; and she’s a wonderful person.”
For information about upcoming events, please visit www.radcliffe.harvard.edu.

The Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America

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Front cover: A sign from the Boston Women’s March for America, January 2017

Back cover: Women in academic dress marching in a suffrage parade in New York City, 1910, by Jessie Tarbox Beals

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