Open the Doors: Ridgedale Library
Grand Opening Poem, 10.10.99

by Chris Dodge & Solveig Nilsen

We the people of this place,
Having set ourselves to the task,
Having planted an idea and nurtured it into action,
Having committed our resources to the re-creation of this
shape-shifting library,

We the people of this community now open its doors to all.

We the numerous ordinary folks of this place near the shores of
Lake Minnetonka,
Immigrants and native people of the upper Mississippi Valley,
In the county of Hennepin,
The state of Minnesota,
We citizens, inhabitants of Mother Earth,
Open the doors of this library to extraordinary worlds within
and outside its walls.

We had a vision, and we made it live
Brick upon brick,
Glass set in frame:
A building reborn.

We humans did this.
We architects and planners and taxpayers and construction workers,
We had a vision, and we did the work.

We humans did this.
We the excavators, backhoe operators and pile drivers,

We the pipe fitters and cement masons and tin knockers,
We the drywall tapers and layers of tile,
We the interior designers and project planners say:
 "Open these doors!"

We the shelvers of books, we networkers,
We the catalogers, the computer technicians,
We circulation workers say: "Open 'em wide!"

We had a vision and we did the work,
Glass set in frame: a building reborn.

We the painters, we plumbers,
We the rough and finish carpenters,
We glaziers, we electricians,
We had a vision, and we made it live.

We dreamers and doers,
We had a vision, and we made it live.
We the proofreaders, we the poets,
We had a vision and we made it live.
We the people say "Open these doors!"
We the writers, we the children,
We the builders, we the elders say: "Open 'em up!"

We citizen readers, we watchers of films,
We students, we teachers,
We askers of questions,
We publishers, we printers, we musicians,
We diggers, we skiers and skaters and wheelers and dancers,
We the mothers, the daughters, the sons and the fathers say:
 "Open the doors!"

Open these doors for the better,
To the laws of physics and the lives of the saints.

Open these doors to the languages of the world:
Laotian, Norwegian, Swahili, and Russian,
and to the Spanish tongue, and the Ojibwe.
Open these doors to high and low, history and myth,
Sacred and secular, fact and theory.

To all these worlds of possibility:
Open the doors most joyfully!
To a world of true diversity:
black and green, red and white, rural and urban, serious and silly,
To seekers and reachers, to curvy and straight,
to those who suffer and all those outside the lines, we say:

Open these doors with utmost pride and pleasure!

Finally! It’s ready! Come on in!
Shout praise and cheer!
To liberty!
Shout praise and cheer!
To the library!
We say:
Let this place spark our imagination into flame!
Let it fuel our dreams!

We say: Sound the drums!
Open the doors!
Let’s celebrate today!
Celebrate!

The Mystery and the Act: Towards a
YA Human Sexuality Collection

by Teri Weesner

This essay is based on the premise that there is a connection between
young people accessing porn via the internet and their innate curious­
ity about human sexuality and their own bodies. Young people
viewing internet porn have an information need that can be addressed by
youth services librarians and library collections. To ignore this informa­
tion need is just as inaccurate and inappropriate as young people gleaning
their information from internet pornography and cybersex chat. Young
people’s information needs are legitimate and the response of shaming
from librarians is an ineffective tool for teaching, learning or discipline.

Cultural reluctance to educate young people about human sexuality and
cultural reaction of shame and punishment for young people’s experimen­
tation and access to information through the prolific pornography industry
is an intrinsically related combination which fosters unhealthy cultural
human sexuality. Unhealthy in the sense that shame and ignorance become
barriers to people’s healthy and safe concepts and practice of sexuality. A
culture which will not educate itself about sex in order to “protect” itself is
left (on many levels) ironically unprotected.

We relegate a large percent of sexual culture to the pornography industry
and keep it separated as forbidden knowledge. When pornography overex­
tends these boundaries of separateness, as in the case of young people
accessing internet porn, a body of accurate, accessible and respectfully
presented knowledge is needed to turn to.

Go Ask Alice (http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu or the 1998 paper­
back) is one of the best resources I’ve seen in terms of medical accuracy
and honest and respectful responses. Go Ask Alice is not only an indis­
pensable resource of accurate health information for people of any age
with questions but an excellent primer for librarians on honest and respect-