The University of Wisconsin System

Feminist Collections

A
Quarterly of
Women's
Studies
Resources

Special Issue on
Academy/Community
Connections

WOMEN'S
STUDIES
LIBRARIAN

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Women's Studies Librarian

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Women's Studies Librarian
University of Wisconsin System
430 Memorial Library
728 State St.
Madison, WI 53706
Phone: 608-263-5754
Fax: 608-265-2754
Email: wiswsl@doit.wisc.edu

Editors: Phyllis Holman Weisbard, Linda Shult

Graphic design: Daniel Joe

Drawings: Miriam Greenwald

Staff assistance from: Ingrid Markhardt, Valerie Brink, Krista DeBellis, Karen Jacob, Jennifer Kitchak, Christina Stross

Volunteer reader for taping: Helene Frank

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Numerous bibliographies and other informational files are available on the Women's Studies Librarian's World Wide Web site. The URL: http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/WomensStudies/ You'll find information about the office, tables of contents and selected full-text articles from recent issues of *Feminist Collections*, many *Core Lists in Women's Studies* on such topics as aging, feminist pedagogy, film studies, health, lesbian studies, mass media, and women of color in the U.S., a listing of *Wisconsin Bibliographies in Women's Studies*, including full text of a number of them, a catalog of films and videos in the UW System Women's Studies Audiovisual Collection, and links to other selected websites on women and gender as well as to search engines and general databases.

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A Quarterly of Women's Studies Resources

Volume 20, No.3, Spring 1999

Special Issue on Academy/Community Connections

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FROM THE EDITORS

When we first proposed setting aside a special issue of *Feminist Collections* for the topic of "Academy/ Community Connections," little did we know that we were hitting some kind of wave. Even before we could get the Call for Papers out to the appropriate channels, we had news of *Women's Studies Quarterly*'s planned issue (Fall/ Winter 1999) on the same topic. Only a little later, *Feminist Teacher*'s announcement about a similar special issue arrived (Vol. 13, out by December 1999), obviously having been in the planning stage for awhile . What was going on? Why all nearly at the same time?

As it turned out, we were only the tip of an iceberg apparently running through the whole of the academic community. "Service learning" - or whatever a program might be called that engages the college/university with its surrounding community and vice versa in a mutual learning experience - seemed to be some sort of groundswell. In the midst of editing the many wonderful and varied contributions for our own special issue there was announcement on our home campus of our dedicated and admired Dean of Students moving into a new position - that of Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in charge of expanding programs that connect classroom and community. Some eighty courses on the UW-Madison campus already include required community service. In early April, a national conference on the topic was held here, the National Service Learning Conference: "Envisioning Public Service in the 21st Century."

So this special issue of *Feminist Collections* is certainly not unique in talking about academic/community connections, not even within the community of women's studies periodicals. But one reason we took on the subject was that we were unable to find much in the existing literature and thought it was about time women's studies programs and teachers share all the various service learning projects they had been working with for years. We were delighted with the outpouring of contributions, and think you'll find them thought-provoking and inspiring as well. From Catherine Orr's historical study pointing out the original deep connection between the women's community and women's studies, to Kayann Short's description of her students' attempt to raise awareness about the connection between student shopping and the women's community of sweatshop workers abroad, to the delicacies of opening communication between women in poverty and women's studies faculty as detailed by Anne Statham and Katherine Rhoades, you'll find plenty of nourishment for teaching possibilities. Enjoy – and let us know what you think.

P.H.W. & L.S.

CORRECTION

Our sincerest apologies to Nancy Naples, whose book, *Grassroots Warriors: Activist Mothering, Community Work, and the War on Poverty* (New York: Routledge, 1998), was reviewed by Rebecca Young in our Winter 1999 issue (p.3). We somehow christened Nancy with the name Mary, and she only very politely objected when she saw a copy of the review. Thank you, Nancy, for alerting us and best wishes with your book.

THE ENERGIZING TENSION BETWEEN SCHOLARS AND ACTIVISTS

NEGOTIATING CLASS INTERESTS AND ACADEMY-COMMUNITY DIVIDES: THE CASE OF WOMEN'S STUDIES' EMERGENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

by Catherine M. Orr

In February of 1972, a group of students from University Women's Liberation (UWL) on the University of Minnesota campus drew up a proposal for a women's studies department. The proposal claimed that the "systematic oppression of women in society at large is present in all its details at the University." As their vision of women's studies unfolded throughout the proposal, the analysis revealed the inseparability of the university and larger social problems stemming from sexism, racism, and classism. Thus, they asserted, the future department has an "obligation to the entire [Twin Cities] community." UWL's intent, like most other agitators for early women's studies programs, was twofold: to bring the women's movement's radical critiques to yet another bedrock institution in U.S. culture and to transform that institution into one welcoming of all kinds of women. Although explicit connections to larger communities of women beyond the university would serve both intentions, UWL women soon learned that those same connections served to discredit the seriousness and legitimacy of women's studies at Minnesota. In what follows, I use the emergence of women's studies at the University of Minnesota in the early 1970s as a case study to reflect on our institutions' and even our own reluctance to close the academy-community gap in the 1990s.

One crucial element in historicizing the academy-community gap is an understanding of class interests at stake in the mission of higher education. With its emphasis on field specialization, original research, and far-flung disciplines, the university as we know it is a relatively recent invention, coming of age along with the vast industrial expansion and the subsequent rise of the middle class in the mid- to late-nineteenth century.[1] At this point, according to Jerry Herron[2] the university became the institution that conferred "Culture" (with all its connotations of refinement and good breeding) to this new class. The university, then, became a tool of class distinction and offered cultural power, not by aligning itself with previously powerful aristocratic tastes and values, but through the invention of a particular form of expertise. We call those who possess this modern form of expertise "professionals" and lavish on them a vast array of cultural and material rewards. To obtain these rewards, professionals must be trained and socialized – or, in Michel Foucault's words, "disciplined"[3] – to perpetuate this system of exclusion within the context of higher education.

When the women's movement swept through institutions of higher education during the culture wars of the 1960s and 1970s, the academic practices that adhered to these standards of distinction were among feminists' primary targets. They questioned medical professionals' expertise by demanding birth control without moralizing lectures, disputed prevailing legal opinion and theological dictates on abortion rights, and joined with other organizations to counter government and military experts' promotion of the war in Vietnam. Likewise, with courses such as "Auto Mechanics for Women" (a constant reference point for the women I interviewed), UWL's Proposal cum manifesto illustrated a deliberate departure from the university as promoter, not only of sex discrimination, but of professionalized knowledge. Through their public protests and consciousness-raising groups,

these young feminists forged new sites and forms of knowledge production that insisted on the break-down of the academy-community divides that perpetuated gender, class, and, to some extent, race distinctions in U.S. society.

These confrontational methods, although galvanizing to UWL members, were not winning many concessions from the administration. Even those professors and administrators sympathetic to women's studies could not endorse the 1972 UWL proposal. Anne Truax, the Director of the Women's Center in the early 1970s, recalled, "I do remember when [the UWL leaders] came to my office . . . wanting not to have to let them down as much as I felt we had to let them down. First of all, I was sure that no male faculty member was going to get past the first page. Secondly, . . . we had to confine it to academic things."[4] More radical UWL members viewed such "establishment-feminist" responses as Truax's with suspicion. To confine their vision to "academic things" compromised what UWL perceived to be women's studies mission to transform higher education and make it available to various communities of women.

This ideological purity was short-lived. Because of severe retrenchment in the 1972-73 academic year, demands for women's studies in any form could easily be dismissed by way of budget shortfalls. Realizing this, UWL changed course and invited a number of sympathetic faculty to a meeting in December 1972. They admitted that because of its strident tone, the "earlier proposal to seek a women's studies department had been validly criticized and subsequently shelved." Within minutes, an all-faculty steering committee was formed to begin anew the discussion about "the nature and the need for women's studies." A shift in strategy followed: the newly-formed group sought to establish the legitimacy of this emerging field and its presence at Minnesota, not by contesting the university values and practices, but rather by demonstrating women's studies' convergence with them (although many students still disagreed). The new proposal would have to emphasize the similarity between women's studies and other disciplines and "not include derogatory remarks relative to any other college unit or structure."[6]

In this new strategy, the call for community involvement in the women's studies program was repositioned as a liability. Instead, the campus Women's Center was to be the body that handled community needs and, therefore, required no mention in the new proposal. According to Truax, "everybody agreed that if we didn't keep women's studies purely academic, it would not succeed in the climate in [the College of Liberal Arts] at that time. . . . So we were trying to make sure that women's studies was so *damned* pure that nobody could doubt for a minute that it wasn't scholarly and worth pursuing."[7] The divide between the academic functions of the discipline and the outreach functions of the Women's Center had to be maintained. Truax argued that "we didn't try to bridge that gap. The practical stuff was there and being done and the theoretical stuff was there and being done. And individuals could try to work across [that gap], but the same agency didn't have to try to work across. And I still think it's a very good model."[8]

One reason that Truax could be so confident in a model of women's studies that severed formal ties to communities beyond the university was the vibrance and strength of women's movement activity in the Twin Cities at the time women's studies was launched at Minnesota. Feminists in this metropolitan area organized around all kinds of issues including health care, abortion referral and counseling, artistic expression, job segregation, elementary school curriculum, welfare rights, childcare, rape, and women's right to credit. The Lesbian Resource Center had its own vibrant program of services. Twin Cities feminists established the nation's first feminist bookstore and the first battered women's shelter. In the midst of all this feminist activism, a stance demanding that women's studies have a community orientation – especially since it would probably guarantee lack of approval by the necessary university committees – would have been foolish. In addition, the Women's Center was well-funded in the early 1970s and its work in the larger Twin Cities community was well known. Neither Truax nor anyone else anticipated the viciousness of the cutbacks faced by the Center as a result of a more conservative administration at the university in the mid 1970s, cutbacks from which it never fully recovered.

Twenty-five years later, we find ourselves in a very different context, one without a visible and vibrant women's movement and one that seems to promote women's studies advocates' isolation from larger communities of women from whom we and our work might benefit. Rarely do we reap significant institutional rewards (or even acknowledgment!) for such activities as part of our

professional identity. In other words, now that women's studies is, for the most part, a "legitimate" discipline, that legitimacy demands that we join the rest of the professional world by policing the divide between our activities as professional knowledge producers and "others". without such credentialing, especially at research-oriented colleges and universities.

Given this paradoxical history, we should not be surprised that so many of us express a desire to reach out to communities beyond the campus at the same time such outreach seems uncomfortable and strangely burdensome. It is because women's studies was born of a radical critique of the university and simultaneously sought to make higher education its home that our disciplinary identity is fraught with contradictions, making questioning such distinctions difficult and even dangerous. If, however, we do not ask questions – about the history of our own professionalism, about our own class interests, and about how the cultures and practices to which we become accustomed militate against the mandates of our feminism – we lose the admittedly complex foundation upon which the discipline was built. As the UWL women made clear over twenty-five years ago, women's studies demands that we act on our analyses.

NOTES

1. Burton Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: Norton, 1976).
2. Jerry Herron, *Universities and the Myth of Cultural Decline* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1988).
3. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* Alan Sheridan, trans. 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage, 1995).
4. Anne Truax. Personal interview, 1997.
5. WS Committee Minutes 6 Dec. 1972, p.1. Women's Studies Papers (WS). University of Minnesota Archives, Minneapolis, MN.
6. WS Committee Minutes 11 April, 1973, p.1. Women's Studies Papers (WS). University of Minnesota Archives, Minneapolis, MN.
7. Truax.
8. Truax.

For further detail on the women's movement and the establishment of women's studies at the University of Minnesota, see: Becky Swanson Kroll, *Rhetoric and Organizing: The Twin Cities Women's Movement, 1969 to 1976* (Diss., University of Minnesota, 1981); Catherine M. Orr, *Representing Women/Disciplining Feminism: Activism, Professionalism, and Women's Studies* (Diss., University of Minnesota, 1998); and Barbara Scott Winkler, *A Comparative History of Four Women's Studies Programs, 1970 to 1985* (Diss., University of Michigan, 1993).

[*Catherine M. Orr is assistant professor of women's studies at Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin. She is a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota and its Center for Advanced Feminist Studies. Her research and teaching focus on feminist theory, popular culture, and international perspectives on feminist knowledge production.*]

WOMEN'S STUDIES: RETURNING TO OUR ACTIVIST ROOTS AND ACHIEVING TENURE ALONG THE WAY

by Sandra Krajewski

I call myself an activist not an academic, yet in the past twelve years, pursuit of my activist work has helped me become a published, tenured full professor chairing a Women's Studies Department in a conservative Midwestern town of 50,000. So I am an academic of sorts, too. From this double perspective I see that many Women's Studies Programs have an opportunity to come full circle, back to their connections to the community and their activist roots. This opportunity lies, I believe, in choosing to adopt Department status rather than Program status.

Department status has had many advantages for me, for the education of our students, and for the strength of Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Because we have a Department, not a Program, my tenure home is in Women's Studies. Because my appointment is *not* a joint appointment, my scholarship has been judged using Women's Studies values

rather than those of anthropology or sociology *and* Women's Studies. Most Women's Studies faculty still straddle two or more disciplines and multiple sets of values, some of which are incompatible with community activist research. Because I was judged solely by Women's Studies values, I was able to find my research questions by listening to the needs of the community.

My working side by side with community activists and professionals opened up a wealth of service learning projects for our students, too. These projects often led to interesting internships and/or permanent employment through which students have had the opportunity to change our community. Students have been able to see the connection between what they learn in the classroom and what they might want to do after graduation. This has helped attract and retain students in our program, making Women's Studies a vibrant, active force on campus and in the community.

In the beginning, activists taught Women's Studies.

The focus of Women's Studies has changed in its thirty-plus years of existence. Marilyn Boxer, in her 1982 classic essay, "For and About Women: The Theory and Practice of Women's Studies in the United States,"[1] quotes Roberta Salper, who describes the philosophy of the pioneers as an attempt "to understand the world and to change it" (p.72). In the beginning, the collaboration between activists and academics produced courses "led by feminist students, staff, or community women, that sought to understand and to confront the sexism they had experienced in movements for the liberations of other oppressed groups" (p.71). In other words, activists taught Women's Studies at a time when connecting theory and practice meant connecting academic theories and community activism. Theory was informed by the realities of specific struggles in a given community, and was tested by the clarity of the analysis and insight it offered.

As Women's Studies settled into the university, academic credentials became essential to establishing institutional credibility. The field needed to become a respected, credentialed, academic discipline in its own right. Because academic credentials equaled institutional credibility, those credentials became more important to hiring committees than activist accomplishments. In fact, community activism was not just devalued, the women's movement was often shunned. "There was a conscious decision by the Program's original members [at the University of Minnesota] to distance themselves from the women's movement," according to Catherine Orr, who has studied the Minnesota program's history.[2] Here in La Crosse our institutionalization also separated us from the community. As the shelter for battered women opened in 1978, when La Crosse's Women's Studies program was just three years old, our first Women's Studies Director, Judith Kent Green, was told by a university administrator "to stay away from battering – we shouldn't be talking about those sorts of things" (personal communication).

Times have changed. Twenty years later the Women's Studies Department at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse is thriving. Why? For eleven of those years we have had department status, which has allowed us to return to our activist roots, academically. That doesn't mean the abandonment of scholarship; it means the option of doing research that is meaningful to the community. For many years, the "Wisconsin Idea" has promoted mutually beneficial relationships between the university and the community; the community generates problems for the university to solve through its research and expertise, and the university makes education available to all citizens. Here at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, the "Wisconsin Idea" further encourages connection to the community through research and service learning. In this context, I have earned both tenure and promotion through academic activism.

Miriam Greenwald

For example, in the late 1980s, after initiating an intervention and advocacy program for battered women and sexual assault survivors, I saw that self-sufficiency for some battered women leaving relationships necessitated a college degree. Around the

same time, I was looking for a dissertation topic. My colleague, Bets Reedy, and I created a program that prepared women for college and helped them succeed. The program was unique, and to evaluate its effectiveness, we needed to understand the educational barriers these low-income women faced. Doing the research to provide that understanding became the topic of my award-winning dissertation. In subsequent years, I produced a number of publications aimed at describing how the university might made be a more comfortable place for low-income women. Those publications were part of the record that led to my tenure.

Shortly thereafter I learned about another community need. Several La Crosse area middle school teachers wanted to teach about dating violence. While various violence prevention curricula had been in use since the early 1980s, none had been tested with a valid and reliable instrument to see whether the curriculum actually changed knowledge and attitudes about violence. A student in the Masters in Public Health Program decided to use a particular "valid and reliable instrument" as the basis for a thesis. This project opened the door for inclusion in the public schools of a violence prevention curriculum. Several publications, coauthored by me with members of the Health Education department, emerged from the project, and I was made Associate Professor.

Protesting welfare reform as initiated by the Governor of Wisconsin in the form of "Wisconsin Works," or W-2, was consistent with my sense of social justice and respect for humankind. Without education and training included in reform, many people – mostly women – will be unable to support a family. "We don't know what benefits are derived," our legislators complained, "from postsecondary education for women and their families"[3] Four researchers (economist, historian, anthropologist, and the Director of our Single Parent Self-Sufficiency Program) united and were funded for an interdisciplinary study on "The Effects of Education on Low-Income Women," drawn from a survey and interviews of folks who had gone through postsecondary education on public assistance – this is a project that is academic, interdisciplinary, and activist.

Working with the battered women's shelter is another example of collaboration between my scholarly expertise and the community. After chairing the shelter Board for three years, I wanted to be involved in a less visible though still significant way. I also wanted to understand how Wisconsin's new welfare reform was affecting battered women. Collaboration among the shelter, the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and me resulted in a federally funded project that provides for advocacy while collecting research data from battered women receiving public assistance. The ultimate goal of the seventeen-month project is to inform social policy.

As welfare reform (W-2) was becoming a reality, it became clear that many people would be falling through the cracks. The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse joined with other university and community members across the state to form the Women in Poverty Public Education Initiative (WPPEI). This group's intent is to raise public awareness about the harmful stereotypes attributed to the poor and to monitor and ameliorate the impact of W-2 through research and advocacy. I have assisted this project in several ways, including research. In addition, one of our students, through an internship at the Salvation Army, saw that families needed a mentor/advocate to help them succeed. The La Crosse County Department of Health and Human Services now funds this mentoring project, which I supervise. Along those lines, a W-2 Task Force Meeting here in La Crosse noted a need for clean, professional clothing for interviews and employment, and The Clothes Closet was created in a space donated by a church and staffed by volunteers complete with a part-time manager. The Department of Women's Studies sponsors these outreach programs and as Department chair, I supervise them – and along the way, I have become full professor.

The point of all this is that it was my tenure home in Women's Studies that gave me the freedom to seek and gain credit for this work. I am an anthropologist by degree, but what anthropology department would tenure me with research and publications on issues of poverty, domestic violence, and welfare reform? Did I do anthropology? My research designs reveal my training, but otherwise it was sociology, social work, criminology, social policy, and women's studies that I cited. My projects were interdisciplinary, scholarly, and guided by feminist theory.

Working in and with the community is not a rejection of theory and theorizing by any means. In fact, it could be argued that "most fundamental feminist assumptions have arisen from the women's movement in the field and that the field, especially at its

margins, holds the most promise as a site for autonomous feminist theorizing and for ridding social knowledge of its patricentric assumptions."[4]

Although I needed to produce an impressive academic track record, I did not have to do "double-duty" – I did not have to satisfy the tenure and promotion criteria of two different departments. I was able to use my academic activism to satisfy the criteria of the activist-oriented academic discipline of Women's Studies. Choosing department status can help programs come full circle – back to our activist roots.

NOTES

1. Marilyn Boxer, "For and About Women: The Theory and Practice of Women's Studies in the United States," *Reconstructing the Academy: Women's Education and Women's Studies* ed. by Elizabeth Minnich et al., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp.661-695.
2. Catherine Orr, "Women's Studies 25 Years Later," *On Campus With Women* v.27, no.3 (1998), p.5.
3. State Senate Minority Leader Brian Rude and State Representative Mike Huebsch, at Annual Meeting of New Horizons, February, 1996.
4. Linda Christiansen-Ruffman, "Inherited Biases Within Feminism: The 'Patricentric Syndrome' and the 'Either/Or Syndrome' in Sociology," *Feminism: From Pressure to Politics* (Montreal: Black Rose Press, 1989); cited in Christiansen-Ruffman, Linda, "Community Base and Feminist Vision: The Essential Grounding of Science in Women's Community," *Canadian Woman Studies/le cahiers de la femme*, v.13, no.2 (Winter 1993), pps.16-20; cited in Christiansen-Ruffman, Linda, "Feminist Field-based Learning: Theory and Praxis in the Course of Knowledge Creation," *Atlantis* v.22, no.1 (1997), pp.114-118.

[*Sandra Krajewski, Professor and Chair of the Department of Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, is a founding mother of UW-La Crosse's Single Parent Self-Sufficiency Program and Houston County Women's Resources, an education, intervention, and advocacy group for battered women and sexual assault survivors in Minnesota. Currently she is on the Board of Directors of New Horizons Shelter and Women's Center.*]

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ANXIETY

by Janna J. Hansen

Researching my senior thesis traumatized me. I don't mean the usual all-nighters and panic before deadlines, though these occurred as well. The trauma was, for me, intrinsic to the nature of my topic, as I was studying a prominent women's group in the United States' religious right. I do not view these conservative Christian activists as a "brainwashed flock" or, worse, as fanatics who deserve no more than demonization.[1] In fact, I spent most of the first chapter of my Harvard-Radcliffe Women's Studies and Social Studies senior thesis marshalling theorists from Max Weber to Charles Taylor to plead against dismissing these women as irrational actors because of their religion, their gender, or their perceived social status.

Moreover, every woman I interviewed and interacted with in the course of researching this thesis was, without exception, courteous, pleasant, and often quite friendly. In no way was I ever in any sort of danger during this research. Even had portions of my "identity" become more fully known, I would never have been in any physical danger, as other of my colleagues researching militia groups or supremacist groups could truly claim to be. Why, then, was I so thoroughly traumatized? From my first interview with a local member, through a three-day convention in Washington, DC, to the several additional days I spent in the organization's headquarters, I had bouts of anxiety and a lot of general jumpiness.

My anxiety changed from the more existential to the deadline-related as my research ended and my writing began. The trauma of the actual contact with this particular community of women grew further and further away in my mind. After graduation, however, as I contemplated the idea of

publishing my work and bringing the results to a wider audience, I found myself back in a state of anxiety. To publish the work would mean bringing it out of the academic context and to people who might fundamentally disagree with my conclusions and my research; in fact, to the "subjects" I had actually researched.

The nature of my anxiety came from essentially academic ruminations. What were my responsibilities to this community of women? Did I actually expect to illuminate the cultural conflicts that these women both created and felt caught up in? Was there a better way to engage my academic work with the real people and problems I was glimpsing through my research? I had written what I considered a fair and balanced work, tracing the opportunities, ideas, and resources that had led this organization to its specific place in the religious right. I outlined unique reasons why this essentially all-women's group was in ways close to its grassroots support and thus likely to maintain a persistent organizational presence. I had attempted to look at the meanings these women themselves gave to their actions and to understand the fulfillment certain women find in the roles developed by and for them in the religious right. Engagement with the communities I took so much time to understand was, of course, the purpose of my work. Why, then, was I so averse to the process of this engagement?

The answer comes from reflections on my research method. The project included content analysis of religious right literature, statistical analysis of member profiles, and broader historical inquiries. Most difficult, however, were the interviews of organization members and the "participant" observation of organization events. In these contacts I disclosed the nature of the project: "I am writing my senior thesis on what brings women to groups like this one." I was generally asked where I went to school and what my religion was, and I told my interviewees of my university and my Protestantism. The disclosure of my religious background and continuing religious belief made most members leap to assumptions about my politics. These assumptions were clear to me in members' effusion and openness; I was rarely asked for my position on political issues.

If I had offered a fuller accounting of myself and my beliefs, my project would definitely have been more difficult. I would have had to discuss, disagree, and perhaps argue with many members of my study. At the time of my research, nothing seemed less attractive to me. My unease with the project and subsequent reflection, however, convinces me that my approach was flawed. I should have

more fully disclosed my political opinions to those I was researching. I do not think a researcher needs to tell his or her subjects all details about his or her identity and opinions – nor would this be possible or even desirable for the subjects of research who do, after all, generally like to talk about themselves as well. Certainly I would not have argued with people during the interview process. I could, however, have presented some basic political beliefs beforehand and given my subjects the opportunity after the interview to ask me questions.

The most obvious challenge to this more open method is whether it would jeopardize the research itself. Many researchers have relied upon a lack of disclosure to acquire their research data. Kristin Luker's study of attitudes toward abortion provides one of the best examples of a project that benefited from a refusal to disclose personal positions.[2] Another concern for those researching groups whose views are different from their own is for their personal safety and well-being, as noted earlier. The women I interviewed, however, would not have harmed me – though I do believe the violent and hateful imagery of these groups' messages leads directly to violence and hate against certain minority groups. Regardless, an engaged research method would clearly not apply in situations where personal harm is a real possibility.

Excepting dangerous research situations, then, I believe most research accounts would not be compromised by some basic disclosure of the researcher's ideas and beliefs. The women of the organization I studied, for example, were willing to talk to researcher Susan Faludi some years earlier, knowing her political opposition to their own stances.[3] Further, portions of my research may have improved had I been more up-front about my political views. Some of the persons I interviewed assumed I would understand what they were trying to convey with minimal explanation. One woman who was an activist liberal in the 1960s before converting to Christianity told me about her political conversion by stating, "God just began to work on my heart about the views that I had." Attempts on my part to solicit more information were met by similar statements and I could not convince this individual to stretch her memory.

More crucially, however, the question of whether fuller engagement with the community being researched would compromise research data is, perhaps, not the right one to ask. Presenting my opinion to the very nice but very real and opinionated women I encountered in my research would have been tiring, frustrating, and often angering. However, a research method that requires engagement throughout the duration of the project also promotes the easing of power dynamics and the inclusion of the marginalized that draws us into women's studies in the first place. I had chosen my topic, after all, because of my concerns with societal violence and exclusion. A willingness to begin productive, respectful engagement with those with whom I disagree could have been an important part of my undergraduate women's studies experience.

NOTES

1. The "brainwashed flock" demotion comes from Shirley Rogers Radl, *The Invisible Women: Targets of the Religious New Right* (New York: Delacarte Press, 1983) p.168.
2. Kristin Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
3. Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Anchor Books, 1991). I disagree with some of Faludi's method and conclusions regarding this specific organization, but the detail she was able to uncover demonstrates the possibilities of this approach.

[*Despite her anxiety, Janna J. Hansen graduated summa cum laude from Harvard-Radcliffe University. She now works for New York City's Administration for Children's Services and is eyeing both the academy and an MBA.*]

Balancing Feminist Activism(s): Locally, Nationally, in Academia

by Jessica C. Haney

In the spring of 1992, I became a feminist. Though I had embraced feminist ideas years earlier, I had not yet engaged in the crucial component of activism. I have since come to believe that feminism requires nourishment; it cannot simply be a state of mind. Being a feminist means I engage in activities I think will promote positive change for women. In early April during my first year of college, I drove with three friends to Washington, DC, for the "March for Women's Lives." The following weekend, our nascent student-run Women's Resource Center held a mini-conference on women and violence. I heard Kathleen Barry speak, put up signs near the main entrance of campus, went to my first anti-pornography slide show, and received a women's symbol T-shirt as a gift from two student presenters. Additionally, I attended the community-organized "Take Back the Night" march and saw Ani DiFranco perform in our school auditorium. I had become an activist.

After graduation in 1995, I began an internship at the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF) in Washington, DC, organizing college students to attend our conference, "Expo '96 for Women's Empowerment." While some schools brought over fifty students to this national event, it was difficult to interest other groups of students and community activists in attending. One frustrating moment came when a women's center staff member in Massachusetts chided me for asking her to promote the event; she could hardly grapple with local demands, much less consider coming to DC. I acknowledged that everyone had limitations, but reminded her that one of the conference goals was to bring together local activists in order to see how large and diverse feminist movements were and to learn from one another. Without local activists like her, our conference would have less chance of representing the variety of women's interests and efforts in the U.S. Instead of working together, she and I only became frustrated at our inability to reconcile our goals.

A few months later – after I became staff manager of FMF's website – I attended the DC-area "Take Back the Night" march. I ran into one of the "Expo" volunteers who planned to join us for an internship later that month. Surprised to see me alone, she said she had expected to see our whole office out in force at the march. I was struck to realize how surprised *I* would have been to run into any of my colleagues there. Yes, it would make sense that we would support large local activist events. Hadn't we tried to convince women like the one in Massachusetts that it was important to recognize other local feminist efforts? Weren't we creating a special section of the website for Sexual Assault Awareness Month? Hadn't our staff members worked for passage of the Violence Against Women Act? Why was I the only one at the march?

One of the simple answers is that everyone can't be everywhere all the time. When most staff members regularly put in sixty hours a week or more (perhaps even that very Saturday evening), there just isn't enough time to do everything and maintain one's sanity. The staff was busy putting our theory into press releases, speeches, and negotiations or, in my case, putting position statements, action items, and news summaries on the website so people around the world could ostensibly know what was going on. Unless there were some kind of legislative issue at stake, it was difficult to keep up with current issues in academic circles. Yet it seems that my colleagues and I were often so out of touch with issues that weren't of national importance, we didn't even know that local events were happening. I don't think many people expected to get involved in local efforts. I admit that I missed the same march the following year because I had spent the day at the NOW Young Feminist Summit and could not bring myself to go out in the rain to mingle with hundreds of enthusiastic college students. At twenty-four, I already felt too removed from the activist optimism of only four years earlier.

However, in my experience, this problem of compartmentalization plagues feminists in a variety of different spheres. During my first year as a graduate student at the University of Cincinnati, I either had or made little time to look outside the campus. During my second year, as an intern for a local nonprofit affiliated with a feminist bookstore in Cincinnati, I

began to understand how difficult it is to maintain a local organization even when community members have been involved in shaping it for nearly twenty years. I realized what a huge hole would be left in the local feminist and lesbian communities if the bookstore closed. Yet even after a year of graduate work in this city, it wasn't until I started the internship that I became aware of all the feminist resources available in the community. Fortunately, the Center for Women's Studies at UC has a strong programming coordinator, so I was able to get involved at some level without much effort. Yet I was consistently disappointed when my colleagues failed to attend events in large numbers. Now that I have met local activists and see their faces at campus events, I am becoming more heartened about the possibility of bridging the gaps between community activism and classroom theorizing. Many of my colleagues have also become more committed to activism as a result of their own summer internships.

It is crucial to the future of feminist movements that those in positions to influence and educate young feminists expect and demand a commitment to activism at local, national, and international levels. Are my standards too high? Perhaps. Yet as long as students can get by without ever taking a step beyond their classrooms and dorms, little progress will be made. When two professors at a prestigious women's studies master's program can dismiss my ability to participate in their courses because I don't have "the theory," I am concerned that academic efforts in women's studies can atrophy into non-feminist (because they are non-activist) reading rooms. My experience in Washington has greatly enriched my graduate work. FMF's choices related to taking positions and expressing those positions to the public were far from untheorized stabs in the dark. The knowledge I gained at FMF enabled me to be more effective in my summer internship, which in turn strengthened my commitments to feminist activism. I hope that undergraduate and graduate programs can make community involvement a regular part of their curriculum and their overall expectations. While students should not have to feel like they are required to jump through unnecessary hoops – especially when many are financing their own educations – an academic women's studies program with no activism component conveys the idea that feminism is only about ideas, not about *working* with those ideas. I hope that directors of programs and departments – though likely already overworked trying to secure funding and negotiate administrative hurdles – can consider putting the pieces in place for comprehensive degrees and certificates requiring their students to test out in practice what they are asked to think about in the classroom.

NOTE

In addition to its award-winning internship program, the Feminist Majority has a campus connection program called Feminist Majority Leadership Alliances. Information about this program is available at http://www.feminist.org/campus/fun1.html or from the Feminist University Network section of the organization's home page at http://www.feminist.org. Also at this site are daily (M-F) feminist news briefs, links, and many other resources.
The website for the Center for Women's Studies at the University of Cincinnati is http://ucaswww.mcm.uc.edu/womens_studies/

[*Jessica Haney is in her second year of graduate work at the University of Cincinnati where she is working toward master's degrees in English and in Women's Studies. She currently teaches in the English Composition program at UC and plans to pursue a career in education.*]

A Family Therapy Program: The University Meets the Community

by Carolyn Wright

In the beginning, student therapists felt like anomalies on the medical floor. The rigidity of the biomedical system seemed to clash with the therapists' systemic training, which focused on dialogue, processing, and chaos as an opportunity for growth. Nurses were "too busy" when asked questions. Doctors waited six weeks before making the first referral.

It was all part of the growing pains experienced by the Family Therapy Program at Hill Hospital's Health Center. Initially funded through a state grant, the program was created in July, 1992, and staffed by clinical graduate students from the Marriage and Family Therapy Program at a northeastern university. Supervised by the faculty at that university, the program received its referrals from the hospital's healthcare staff, who served a population comprised largely of poor, single women and their children.

In July 1994, Hill Hospital took on the full financial responsibility of the program, but maintained its working relationship with the university. The hospital hired one part-time doctoral candidate therapist – herself a single parent – to work directly under the medical director, coordinating with the M.F.T. program, supervising M.F.T. trainees, doing special program development, and working with medical staff in an informal teaching capacity.

The goal of the program was two-fold: 1) to work closely with the medical team to advocate for families, helping the team understand the problems of working with families and reach appropriate solutions to those problems, and 2) to do in-depth psychotherapy with clients, specifically around how they impact and are impacted by their families and social networks, thereby helping family members live harmoniously with each other. Would the program's feminist therapy ideals and the hierarchical medical model be able to mesh?

Initially, there was skepticism. Medical staff didn't understand the role family therapy could play in the health of their patients. Cases were referred by physicians to other mental health services without notification to the family therapist. The major mental health service affiliated with the hospital was skeptical of this separate family therapy service they had no control over. Clients were wary of young student clinicians. As one mother said, "I felt she was too young to really help out...she wasn't experienced enough. If I had had her mother it might have worked out differently."

Some staff became entrenched when new ideas on collaboration were presented. As one faculty supervisor stated, "I was [strongly affected] by how rigid people can make it really difficult for other people to enter the system and how challenged they are by new blood." Even the language of the service providers differed. Physicians' "patients" were family therapy "clients." There were times we all wondered if this were going to work, as we realized that those in power did not welcome our challenging.

Changing the therapy model: The softer side

The therapists began to realize they needed to join with the medical staff in order to make a difference in the system. They made a concerted effort to connect with the healthcare staff in a gentle, nonconfrontational manner. They attended staff picnics, participated in staff parties, and ate in the staff dining area. Although family therapists had only one small session room in which to work, they decided to hold an open house that brought medical personnel into their territory. Seeds were planted that allowed for a deeper understanding about the work of a family therapist, eliminated hierarchy, and made room for teamwork. Soon staff were engaging in conversations where descriptors - patient and client - were used interchangeably and comfortably.

Traditional therapy was the original plan, but as collaboration increased, initial visits were often conducted in exam rooms, with physicians using therapists as consultants. Medical staff became helpful "bridges" between therapists and clients. An integrated, biopsychosocial model of treating patients evolved with all parts of the system, including the patient/clients, seen as equally important in the healthcare process. As one student therapist related: "(Staff) seemed to develop an openness and

understanding of family therapy. . . . I think we gained respect and were really welcomed as an important part of the program. . . . There seemed to be an understanding that I would work with the whole family. I tend to believe that had to be reflected in the medical practice."

Staff expected that therapists would be there for patients, and began to rely on therapists for personal advice, support, and referrals in times of crisis. The medical director saw family therapy as a tool that prevented staff burn-out. Administrators requested advice from therapists on how to handle staff issues in other areas of the hospital. They requested that therapists run nursing support groups and facilitate staff meetings. Above all else, staff knew that therapists always held matters in confidentiality.

Clinical supervision conferences offered an important opportunity to vent, problem-solve, reflect, and process new ways of working with both staff and clients. Students and supervisors alike began to "demystify" the medical field. "My experience helped me to gain confidence – that I did have something to offer, that I could work with doctors and contribute something they did not know," said one student. The knowledge that physicians are human was new information for many students.

Working with impoverished families is a learning process for most students who don't come from low-income backgrounds. One student related, "I learned about diversity – how to be sensitive to issues which affect . . . lower income mothers and families. I finally had experience working with young children – with medical issues, behavior issues, in families where there were numerous stressors. I learned early on that it is a 'different kind of therapy.'" In the end, one former supervisor stated what we all came to know: "how universal pain is, even though it may look different. This idea that people are so organized by differences and yet you close the door and do therapy and everyone's pain is hurtful."

Client/patients grew to expect that family therapy would always be there for them. "Old friends," therapist and former clients met in the waiting areas and touched base. Therapy was convenient and came to be seen by many as merely part of the healthcare process. As one student stated, ". . . having family therapy in a medical setting takes some of the stigma out of going to therapy. It is just another appointment with another professional in the medical center," but some patients wonder if staff look "down on them" when they arrive for a family therapy session, and worry about confidentiality.

Continuing concerns

When the female medical director announced that family therapy was vital to the center, the other physicians, all women, agreed. The female nursing staff felt left out. As one nurse manager stated, "Staff does not know who is being seen by family therapy or how staff members can help families achieve their goals," in spite of the fact that all health care personnel were women, the traditional, paternal, hierarchical medical model subtly invaded the center. Nursing opinion on psycho-social aspects of families were not valued equally with those of physicians despite the close connection many of the nurses had with families in treatment.

Miriam Greenwald

Managed care insurance issues have unfortunately had negative impact on client compliance. Staff struggle with which insurers cover mental health, require pre-authorization, or allow only therapists on closed lists to be reimbursed. Patients have been sent elsewhere for services. Providers are caught in the middle,

struggling to provide services while attending to the bottom line for their program.

Innovative billing developed from this managed care crisis ultimately improved integration of services between physicians and therapists, but simultaneously negatively affected the family therapy program. In 1998, the program became a satellite of the hospital's traditional mental health services unit for reimbursement purposes, thus fully ending any connection with the university and eliminating all family therapy students. The coordinator eventually left, and a new therapist from the traditional mental health service unit replaced her.

Feminist family therapy together with medical family therapy supports a collaborative team approach to health care, including the voices of patients as participating experts in their own care. Yet nurses, mostly women, are often left out of the biopsychosocial medical team. There is a need for feminist values to transform both the health care delivery system and the training of physicians, nurses, and therapists. Integrated healthcare is still a cutting edge field, and those supervising, organizing, or working in such programs are pioneers. As one faculty member discovered, "Perseverance really help(s)."

Background articles that may assist others developing such a clinical program include:

Rob Senior, "Family Therapy in General Practice: 'We Have a Clinic Here on Friday Afternoons...,' " *Journal of Family Therapy*, v.16, no.3 (August 1994), pp.313-327.

JoEllen Patterson et al., "Training for Collaboration: Suggestions for the Joint Training of Mental Health Clinicians and Family Practice Residents," *Families, Systems, and Health*, v.16, no.1/2 (Spring/Summer 1998), pp.147-158.

Carolyn Wright and Linda Stone Fish, "Feminist Family Therapy: The Battle Against Subtle Sexism" in N. Benokraitis, ed., *Subtle Sexism: Current Practice and Prospects for Change* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997), pp.201-213.

The Collaborative Family Healthcare Coalition may also be a helpful resource: 40 West 12th St., New York, NY 10011-8604; 212-675-2477; email: Staff@CFNcC.org

[*Carolyn I. Wright, Ph.D., is a feminist informed Marriage and Family Therapist in private practice, in Syracuse, New York. She specializes in medical family therapy and collaboration.*]

BEYOND TRADITIONAL ACADEMIC BOUNDARIES

INTEGRATED STUDIES: A SECOND CHANCE FOR WOMEN AT THE ERIE HOUSE

by Adriela Fernandez

It has been argued that one of the highest payoffs for society comes from investment in the education of women. In the aftermath of welfare reform it is of special relevance to have programs that target women for completion of college education and for training in general. This paper highlights the inspiring case of the women at the Erie House, a community center located in the heart of the Latino Barrio in Chicago. In partnership with Governors State University (GSU), this community center becomes a classroom for women, most of whom are Latinas seeking to complete college or begin a Masters degree. As part of the agreement, GSU provides the faculty and academic programs, and all the teaching is done "on site." Three characteristics distinguish this program from others. First, it is targeted primarily towards women. Second, it is the overt objective of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at GSU to put forward the best faculty the College has to offer to teach in this program. Finally, the GSU/Erie House program is distinguished by the nature of the curriculum, which is called Integrative Studies. This multi-disciplinary program emphasizes intellectual rigor as well as life skills.

The students are one of the most exciting and stimulating aspects of this program at the Erie House. It is a committed group, made up largely of women, that defies easy stereotypes about minorities in the U.S. There were thirteen students enrolled at the beginning of the 1998-99 academic year, twelve women and one man. Today there are eleven students, ten females and one male. The average student is a female of color, 32.5 years old, married, with 2 children. Yet these numbers do not tell the story. To do so I will highlight the stories of three students: Maria, Debra, and Gladys.

Maria is a second-generation Latina, born and raised in Chicago. Married to a second-generation Latino man, she has two boys, ages eleven and four. The oldest has been diagnosed with severe attention deficit disorder (ADD) and hyperactivity. The father of Maria's oldest son left her when the son was born, and she began the cycle of living with relatives, fighting depression, and getting by with some public assistance. Yet over seven years she obtained an associate degree in management. Maria has been instrumental in helping her son reintegrate into the mainstream of public education. In doing so, it dawned on her that his only chance to make it was totally connected to his being able to succeed in school. She quickly turned this analysis toward her own situation and vowed to finish a college degree. Today she says: " I just finished my first trimester as a full-time student, and I am completely amazed that I succeeded and at how this program increased the love and respect I have for education and my own capabilities." She works full-time and is learning to balance the combined demands of home, work, and study, but she says: "I plan to continue my education and show my children that education is the key to success."

The case of Debra is another inspiring story. An African-American mother of six children ranging in age from college to middle school, with a disabled husband, she is also a part-time health care worker. Debra has defied all odds to pursue this college degree. Though her high school discouraged her from further studies by conveying in no uncertain terms that she was not "college material," she obtained an associate degree in health care and started a family. After her husband's near-fatal accident at work, she had to learn to fight an unhelpful bureaucratic system and at the same time keep her family together because "there was none else to do it for me or my children." Realizing how much she had helped her oldest son get into college gave her back some of the self-confidence that high school had taken away. Finishing – very successfully – her first full-time trimester as a college student has restored her faith not only in her intellectual capabilities but, as she puts it: "I learned I can really master difficult intellectual tasks, yes, but more importantly, I also learned that there are individuals and institutions connected to education who genuinely care for people

like me. It makes me feel like I really belong in this society."

Gladys, the most socially active of these students, is a second-generation Latina, a mother of three children of which two, now ages eighteen and twelve, have survived. Her second-born was killed in a "hit-and-run" accident at age three. This traumatic event has strongly influenced her choices in work, study, and community involvement. She left college during her second year in 1974 to get married and has been involved in community activities ever since. The most significant was a campaign to bring books to her community, for which she obtained corporate contributions. Articulate and persuasive, Gladys radiates warmth, caring, and compassion. She sees the opportunity to finish a college degree as a personal means of empowerment but also as a potential message to other parents who have lost children to violence: "We can transform our despair and anger at the indifference of this society into positive energy to make this a better place for all children." She chose the program at Erie House because of the integrated curriculum and life skills it offers. In her words: "What we women of color need is a learning environment informed by a multidimensional vision of society. That is, an education that is meaningful and applicable to our life in the community." She adds, "I love the feeling of being part of a community of learners that this program gives me. We learn from each other as much as from our teachers."

Miriam Greenwald

The Erie Neighborhood House (ENH) has provided steadfast support for over a century to individuals, empowering them to take control over their circumstances and create better lives for themselves and their families. In 1870 it opened to serve Scandinavian and German populations. This public changed to Italians and Polish at the beginning of this century, and since the 1960s it has become predominantly Latino and African American. An array of programs ranging from Adult Education to Citizenship to Child Care to Introduction to Technology is offered at the ENH. More than eight thousand people a year are served at the Erie House; these include four hundred children under the age of five in Day Care. About a thousand adults per year, of which sixty-five percent are women, take classes of all types at the ENH. With a staff of a 100 paid employees and 150 volunteers, the ENH is a vital force in the community it serves.

The Integrative Studies Program (ISP) bridges disciplines in the undergraduate learning experience by emphasizing multiple perspectives and comparative, global, interdisciplinary, and intercultural forms of learning. Core courses are scheduled in a two-year sequence and structured to provide a solid, interdisciplinary educational foundation in the arts and sciences, culminating with a senior thesis or project. The Outreach Component is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the ISP. In addition to its "on-Campus" delivery, the College of Arts and Sciences has designed this pilot program to create a community-based academic partnership with the Erie Neighborhood House.

The eleven students interviewed for this research were emphatic in their praise for the program. They all agreed it is demanding to take four courses each trimester, managing house and work at the same time, but are committed to stay for the duration and help one another graduate. They also see GSU and the Erie House willing to help. The opinion of all the professors interviewed is that teaching at the Erie House is one of the most rewarding assignments of their careers. In the words of one: "This is one really committed group of learners; they reminded me each class why I became a teacher." The added burden of one extra commute is more than compensated by the stimulus of the interaction with these students. In similar fashion, the administrators interviewed at the ENH are enthusiastic in their support for the ISP and expressed hope for its continuation after the first group graduates next year. What is needed are more resources – in particular computers and books for the students enrolled in this program – which would insure its effective institutionalization and continuity.

This is an academic program targeted especially to women of color – African-Americans and Latinas in the city of Chicago. It creates a learning environment for women who otherwise could not even conceive of finishing their studies and in the process empowers these learners with effective life skills and a renewed sense of hope. Based on the opinions of students, administrators, and professors, this ongoing project has the potential to become a model for other communities in the country.

[*Adriela Fernandez, mother of two children ages six and twelve, completed her undergraduate studies in economics in her native country, Chile, her graduate work in applied economics (M.S.), and in political science (Ph.D.) in the United States. She is a professor of Latin American Studies at Governors State University in Illinois.*]

"I Want to Be a Cowboy, Sweetheart"*: Music and Women's Studies

by Gerri Gribi

Back in 1957, in Owensboro Kentucky, Dr. Bernard Law approached the sisters at Brescia College about creating a class in contemporary women's studies. His reason? Women patients were presenting vague symptoms, the type which, in the 1950s, generally produced a prescription for Valium. Dr. Law believed that the women's malaise was due primarily to low self-esteem, and was convinced that exposure to women's art, history, literature, and music would do them far more good than drugs.

This story was shared with me about ten years after I'd drawn a similar conclusion about the therapeutic value of folk music and women's history.

I had been singing folk songs ever since I was a little girl, but not until the early 1980s did I realize that most of the traditional "women's" songs I knew (or had ever heard) told one of two stories: either young women were unable to get the man they loved to marry them and went down to the river to drown themselves, OR, having married the man they loved, found out he wasn't the peach they were expecting him to be, so went down to the river and drowned themselves! Then of course there were the murder ballads, in which somebody else killed them.... These "woe-is-me" songs portrayed our foremothers as helpless victims at best, and as co-conspirators in their misery at worst.

Why care about these mossy old ballads? Because folk songs are the legacy of everyday people, the kind of people who didn't have the leisure time or education or money to leave their history behind in written documents, the people who are generally ignored by the history books. Their history comes to us through the oral process of songs and stories.

An historian by education, I knew women had done more with their lives than kill themselves over men, so I set out to find songs showing our foremothers in a more realistic light. Each time I discover a new one, it's like finding a diary hidden away in the attic! "When I Was a Fair Maid" tells of a woman who disguises herself as a man to sneak into the British navy; "Equinoxial and Phoebe" describes a young pioneer husband who swaps roles with his wife for a day, discovering that "women's" work is more than he can handle. In "The Crafty Maid," a woman uses a bawdy double entendre to outwit an assailant, and steals his horse to boot. A Black slave woman protests her situation in "All the Pretty Little Horses," and with "Ma Ho," a Cheyenne woman rocks her baby to sleep.

By 1982, I realized these songs were an ideal vehicle through which to tell the history of women, so I started weaving them together with narrative, stories, and a lot of humor to create programs and workshops. This format works well because, unlike a speech, it allows me the flexibility to "read" my audience and tailor my narrative to meet them at their level of understanding, then take them further. Besides, music has such a delightful way of sneaking past inhibitions and defenses; at times it's helped me get some feminist ideas inside the door.

I've performed in a wide variety of venues, some you'd expect, like women's conferences and college campuses, but also some you wouldn't expect - prisons, for example, both men's and women's; Extension Homemaker conferences, where one woman confided I was the first "live feminist" she'd ever met; health care conferences; convocations of religious orders. Never one to miss a challenge, I've even sung at a few military bases. (Ah...bringing feminist music not merely to men, but to ARMED men!)

No matter what the venue, the effect of the music is the same: people feel empowered, enriched, and most of all, connected to community and to the past. Some people rush up to me after a show, eager to share a personal memory which a particular song prompted, amazed that women were discussing and dealing with the same issues 150 years ago. Others may write years later, when some event triggers a "click." One woman wrote needing a new copy of *Womansong*, saying that her daughter had carted hers off to college. "But I'm not complaining," she assured me, "because it's the only album of mine she's ever wanted to steal."

Ethel Raim, who has done extensive work with Balkan and Eastern European ethnic music, perhaps said it best. "By learning about women's music, you begin to understand much

more deeply your collective unconscious. And that is power. To know it that deeply can help you know where you have to go. When you deal with songs, you're not dealing with issues intellectually. You're dealing on a very gut level, a very emotional level" (*Sing Out!* v.25, no.2, 1976, p.5).

Ah - that "collective unconscious." I was terribly nervous before my first visit to Taycheedah Correctional Institution for Women, in conjunction with a women's studies class taught through the University of Wisconsin Center System. Nothing in my Pollyanna life experience had prepared me for this environment - or so I thought. Within minutes I'd abandoned my painstakingly conceived "Prison show" and found myself performing the same program I'd presented to the Junior League on the previous day - with the same response. Laughter in the same places. Tears in the same places. The same questions, the same need to share personal stories. In the next *Inmate Output Newsletter*, one woman had written, "She has a strong belief in music as therapy and as a source of good. After seeing and hearing her, the audience was living proof of her theories."

"All The Pretty Little Horses" is an antebellum slave song in which a "mammy" laments being taken from her child to care for the master's children. Many of us grew up singing it at camp without knowing the origin. After I sang this at a conference in Wyoming, a woman came to me with tears in her eyes and, holding my hands in her own, said she remembered her mother and grandmother singing that song, and she now also sang it to her children. Until this moment she hadn't realized it was a song of their slave heritage, handed down from generation to generation like an heirloom. She couldn't wait to get home and share this information with her children.

So far I've talked about bringing women's studies into the community, but the opposite connection is equally important. Bringing the community (ie. "popular culture") into the classroom helps students realize women's studies is not simply an isolated academic exercise, but has real-world applications. When I perform at a campus, I like to arrange a class visit or lecture in addition to my concert. When I spoke to a women's studies class at Franklin College in Indiana, students were required to keep journals as part of the course, and the instructor, Sam Rhodes, shared some excerpts with me several months later. He began by writing: "Your visit made quite an impression. Four different women in the class commented in their journals that your visit made them feel more supported and proud of women's history. Two of the men in the class now call themselves 'feminists' though they never would have considered such a thing in the past." One woman had written: "Too often women are seen as delicate creatures who cannot and often do not want to live without a man. Gribi's songs showed women who were clever and assertive, hard working, enduring and still likable. I enjoyed the song about Phoebe and her husband who changed places for a day. I'll bet men would be in for a rude awakening if they could truly change places."

I'd also sung "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be A Soldier," a pop song from 1915. Though not woman-authored, it expresses a widely-held sentiment of the period for, until the U.S. entered WWI, it was one of the best-selling songs in the nation. I use it to discuss the women's peace movement in general, and Jeannette Rankin in particular, and one student recorded these impressions in her journal: "Hearing the songs that they sang gives us a little more incite [sic] into their lives. The song about a woman not wanting to send her son off to war was almost shocking to me. Just about all the information I've gotten about past U.S. wars (accept, [sic] of course, the Vietnam war) seemed to imply that nearly everyone was in support of these wars. It's great to hear that there were people who protested war in the early 20th century."

Miriam Greenwald

When interviewed, I'm inevitably asked to name my favorite song. Actually, my favorite varies from day to day, depending upon the time and place and mood, and I will add or delete songs from my program as the situation warrants, because these songs aren't merely historical curiosities, they are living, breathing entities. Before a

concert at Silverlake College in Wisconsin, I learned that a wake was being held in the convent that night for one of the sisters. So I sang "Sister Thou Wast Mild and Lovely," a haunting Primitive Baptist hymn in which women lament the death, but celebrate the life, of a departed friend. Bridging the gulf of time, culture, and religious denomination, the song achieved one of the therapeutic effects of music – helping us cry.

As Ethel Raim said, that's power.

[*Gerri Gribi is a singer/historian/storyteller who has been touring North America for some twenty years. Using resources ranging from the Library of Congress Archive of Folk Culture to a porch in West Virginia, her research has unearthed songs that portray our foremothers more realistically than the "victims" they appear as in some traditional "women's" songs. She has appeared on television and radio and has written for scholarly and popular publications. She maintains an annotated and frequently updated website of women's and folk music resources at http://www.dct.com/~gribi*

Gribi's most recent CD, The Womansong Collection, *offers more than seventy minutes of traditional, early-composed, and original songs with positive images of women, and includes a sixteen-page booklet with lyrics and historical notes. She is offering this $20 value CD to readers of* Feminist Collections *for a special price of $12 including postage. Make check or money order payable to Lilyfern Records, P.O. Box 8021, Green Bay, WI 54308, being sure to mention* Feminist Collections.]

* The title refers playfully to Patsy Montana's 1935 hit "I Want to Be a Cowboy's Sweetheart" because, Gribi believes, the altered title more accurately suits the spirit of the song.

Talking Across Differences: A Symposium for Dialogue Between Academics and Activists

by Deborah Uman and Elisabeth Sheff

Historically, Women's Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder has been isolated from the rest of the campus, not attaining an independent major until the spring of 1998. With no graduate program, feminist scholars were left with few means to connect with others doing similar work. "Talking Across Differences: The Second Annual Feminist Symposium" was organized by an interdisciplinary team of CU graduate students to give university and community members an opportunity to present and discuss their ideas, while considering the role of Women's studies beyond the institution. The first Symposium focused on bridging disciplinary boundaries, and the goal of the second was to embrace the community to include a greater diversity of feminist perspectives. This paper addresses the challenges and successes of past conferences and considers strategies for creating more dynamic and interactive conferences in the future.

The academic discipline of women's studies grew out of the political actions of feminists and Civil Rights workers. Moreover, women's studies has had a significant impact on society, raising awareness about issues such as sexual assault, domestic violence, and job discrimination. In their book *Professing Feminism: Cautionary Tales from the Strange World of Women's Studies,* Daphne Patai and Noretta Koertge document some of the conflicts surfacing from the pairing of scholarship and activism that characterizes many women's studies programs today. Noting that after the 1960s feminist academics were "often accused of being ivory-towered recluses."[1] Patai and Koertge suggest that currently women's studies departments employ several self-defeating practices such as academic separatism and deferral of educational aims to political activism. We disagree.While Patai and Koertge's task was to chart the short-comings of women's studies, our goal in organizing the "Talking Across Differences" Symposium was to build on the strengths of an academic discipline that is committed to the principles of equity and justice, to

show how vital women's studies and feminist scholarship are both to the purpose of a university and to the workings of the community at large.

Our decision to broaden the Symposium to include community members and activists was based on the understanding that feminist scholarship should be informed by the experiences of women and men working for gender equity and that activist practices would benefit from discussing the theoretical constructs about gender that are voiced by academics. By holding the Symposium in a university setting, it was difficult not to privilege the academy over the community, but we tried to create a welcoming environment, publicizing the event widely, inviting individuals and organizations to attend and present, and offering a variety of programs including panels, workshops, and performances. Participants included students and faculty from numerous departments, local performers and business people, and representatives from organizations such as the Women's Resource Center and the Coalition for Healthy Sexuality. A sociology graduate student and Coordinator of the Sexual Health Education Program at the University of Colorado, Adina Nack was involved with the Symposium in several ways, serving on the organizing committee and participating in a panel on building feminist coalitions. Encouraged by the energy of audience members who spoke of their interests in many types of feminist activism, Nack explained that her Symposium work gave her the opportunity both to network with other like-minded individuals and to hone her organizational skills for later professional use. As both community organizer and graduate student, Nack found that the Symposium provided her with "affirmation that the combination of scholarship and activism is a legitimate goal," and she thinks of the conference as an "inspiration" that encourages other women and men to consider the significant connections between the academic discipline of women's studies and the practice of feminist work in our communities.

Rather than reproducing the university model of education in which the holder of information bequeaths knowledge onto the receiver, we worked to promote the mutual exchange of ideas in which we could all learn from each other. For example, the plenary session brought together three speakers who came to the Symposium with very different perspectives on feminism and its functions. Abby Ferber, a professor of sociology at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, used a theoretical approach to investigate the racial and gendered stereotypes promoted by white supremacists. A local author and advocate for women in poverty, Rickie Salinger, spoke of the basic rights of reproduction and motherhood that are denied to poor women, while Mary Churchill talked of her work both as a women's studies professor at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and as faculty advisor for a group of Native American students who were protesting the university's poor record on recruitment and retention of students of color. Although the speakers did not plan their talks as complementary, each talk informed the next, so that Ferber's explanation of stereotypical cartoons underscored Salinger's emphasis on the political rhetoric that demonizes poor women, and Salinger's invective against complacency anticipated Churchill's discussion of her role as a scholar who must also be concerned with the workings of the university as a whole. At the reception following the presentation (and we believe food is integral to good conversation), speakers and audience members alike considered how the separate threads of the three talks could be woven together and how scholarship and activism are both necessary for social change. These conversations continued throughout the weekend as we listened to talks about mothers in the academy, participated in workshops on coalition building, and questioned ourselves about the role race and racism has played in the classroom.

While our successes were numerous, we also faced several challenges in the planning and implementation of the Symposium. One of the dilemmas confronting conference coordinators is that the form of presentations at an academic conference may seem restrictive to non-academics. For the third symposium, "Building Bridges," we have made an effort to vary the format of the presentations, including roundtable discussions and workshops, since it was the traditional academic panels that had the smallest community attendance. Similarly, planning committee members have been contacting community activists personally and bringing information to community groups who may be interested in the Symposium. Finally, rather than having both an opening and a closing plenary session this year, we will conclude the conference with a feminist film festival in an attempt not only to attract a larger and more varied audience, but also to offer area artists

an appealing forum in which to participate.

An even greater challenge to fostering dialogue across differences is the lack of racial and ethnic diversity in Colorado as a whole, and Boulder and the University of Colorado in particular. While our plenary speakers were quite diverse, the majority of those in attendance at the Symposium were white and middle class. Many of the women of color who came to the Symposium to present their work left soon after their presentations rather than attending other panels. Women of color have rightfully criticized the feminist movement in the U.S. for its racist ideology, so as organizers of the event we were sensitive to the preponderance of white women attending. For this year's Symposium, members of the planning committee have been attending the meetings and events of diverse groups on campus in an effort to make contact with people of color on the Boulder campus. We have also been in contact with faculty of color, seeking their advice and involvement in the Symposium. Since sister schools in the area are more diverse than CU Boulder – especially the Auraria campus in Denver – we have been in contact with students and faculty at these schools, seeking submissions for presentations and workshops as well as advice regarding plenary speakers. We hope for co-sponsorship with Auraria at some point, envisioning an event spanning both campuses.

Finally, one of the remaining difficulties facing the Symposium is its complete dependence on feminist graduate students. Adina Nack identified this lack of institutionalization as the greatest challenge for the future of the Symposium. Women's Studies faculty not only have more administrative clout, but extensive contacts with other campuses in the area as well, and could offer long-term continuity that graduate students cannot. Greater faculty involvement in the Symposium would provide members of the Women's Studies Department a ready-made opportunity to combine their own scholarship with activism, as well as a framework in which to mentor feminist graduate students. As we look ahead to organizing future feminist symposiums, we hope to continue to build and strengthen these coalitions between women of color and white women, between faculty and students, and between activists and academics, all the while exploring the role of women's studies in the university and in our communities.

NOTES

1. Daphne Patai and Noretta Koertge, *Professing Feminism: Cautionary Tales from the Strange World of Women's Studies* (New York: BasicBooks, 1994), p.5.

[*A doctoral candidate in the Department of English at the University of Colorado, Boulder, Deborah Uman is writing her dissertation on gender and translation in Renaissance England. As an activist, she has helped secure permanent funding for the University of Colorado Women's Resource Center, served as a rape crisis hotline counselor, and currently works as an advocate for women in poverty.*]

[*Elisabeth Sheff is in her third year of a Ph.D. program in Sociology at the University of Colorado in Boulder, focusing on gender, sexuality, and the family. In addition to researching women in sustainable energy and alternative family structures, Ms. Sheff has coordinated two consecutive years of the Interdisciplinary Feminist Symposium, a feminist conference at CU.*]

CAN WE TALK? COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN ACADEMICS AND ACTIVISTS

by Anne Statham and Katherine Rhoades

Across the nation, higher education institutions are clamoring to create university/community partnerships, a practice embraced more or less from the beginning by academic feminism. Though Women's Studies programs stand at the forefront of this movement, they still struggle to form community collaborations that inform the core of their work. The Women and Poverty Public Education Initiative (WPPEI), a state-wide University of Wisconsin Women's Studies Consortium Outreach project supported through grants from private foundations, provides one exception to this pattern. As "graying" feminists with over sixty-five years of combined activist and academic experience between us, we offer a glimpse of WPPEI's tensions and triumphs by drawing on writings and records of conversations of WPPEI members. We hope our reflection will serve as a possible starting point for others interested in "walking our walk."

Amid initiatives at both state and national levels toward "reform" of the country's welfare support system, in 1994 groups including women's studies faculty and women from the poverty community in eight Wisconsin cities developed a community-driven agenda aimed at ensuring that voices from the poverty community are heard in debates about welfare reform. Participating faculty bridge theory with practice in striving to develop equal partnerships with women from the community. Cooperative activities include public speaking, video production, workshops, collaborative research and writing, and dialogue with policy makers.

The tensions in our work

Tensions within our group often arise from our different material positions. The community women tend to focus on the practical ends of our efforts, while the academic women focus more on the implications for feminist theory and process. This difference emerges in approaches to our key activity, conducting research to dispel myths and stereotypes about women and poverty. One WPPEI poverty leader said this:

> The collaborative method of research forces a conflict between two distant perspectives, the academic reality and the reality of lived experience. . . [as] researchers and activists often have different personalities. They sometimes have different goals and objectives. Their opinion[s] about how things should be done or what needs to be done vary greatly at times.

Our group also struggles with issues around methodology (rigor and reliability vs. validity/openness and comfort of participants), the timing of research, and the uses of findings. An academic woman gives a contrasting view of our collaborative as:

> . . .a cacophony of shifting stories that are perpetually mediated by power relations. . . . Ideally, women's studies will provide multiple locations where personal stories may shift collective meanings in productive ways. But this goal must be tempered by an abiding awareness that some voices or stories will be heard more easily than others.

The material disparities that frame our differences in perspective rank as one of our most painful divides. One member who continues to live in poverty states:

> The academics just don't get it. They just don't want to get it. They don't want to really go to the experiences that poor women have.

On the other hand, many of the academics feel inept and helpless as they seek solutions to bridging this gulf.

> I am deeply troubled when I hear my community partner say that she doesn't have enough money to buy food or pay her monthly bills. Even though I know that she is paid fairly for her WPPEI contributions, the fact remains that at the end of the day my material needs are met and often hers are not.

While we experience these differences as real, honoring the artificial boundaries between "activist" and "academic" can create new tensions by

prescribing who can speak and rigidifying what they can say. In our process, women from the poverty community often speak from their lived experiences and frame their remarks in terms of their personal stories. While these personal renderings add incredible depth to our work, at least one woman asserts that telling and retelling her story keeps her stuck in a poverty narrative that she is ready to leave behind.

Honoring activist/academic boundaries also compromises our efforts to meld distinctions between public and private, which we unconsciously replicate in our prescribed regime of speaking. Since the women from the poverty community supply the "personal" stories and the academics usually chime in with "public" discourses, we seriously limit possibilities for sharing a wealth of communication space. For example, one academic, responding to these implicit but nevertheless powerful communication codes, has felt compelled to remain silent about an adult child who is suffering from a chronic disability, even though one of the women in poverty sees her experience with a similar tragedy as an essential aspect of her frequently repeated narrative:

> My story. . .is about living as a mother with a handicapped daughter, sometimes single and some of the time married, going through the death of my husband and my son, fighting the whole system over my benefits, such as social security and pension.

Further, our tendency to categorize someone as either "activist" or "academic" clouds the heterogeneity within the two groups. Participating women's studies faculty occupy quite disparate positions with regard to institutional privilege ranging from a Department chair to a lecturer. Likewise, some of the women from the poverty community have college degrees and are successfully moving out of poverty while others are still struggling to move toward economic self-sufficiency.

The rewards of our work

Some of our most valued successes involve our efforts to topple conventional notions of leadership, group power, and professorial privilege. Sometimes, building effective alternatives has generated heated debates, as many of our members came to the group with conventional notions of group process. In preparing for one meeting devoted to leadership issues, one of the academic leaders wrote partly from frustration:

> I grew up in a family that talked often about my Native American ancestry . . . [where] leadership, while being an honor, [is] also. . .a burden, rather than a privilege. . . [and] individuals designated as leaders are seen as being at the bottom of the pyramid, not at the top, bearing the burden of doing the group's bidding, rather than telling everyone else what to do. . . . In the case of WPPEI, it seems I have been waiting for the group to tell me what you want me to do, and you have been waiting for me to tell you what to do.

One of our biggest rewards has been seeing alternative models take root. One of our community members wrote about her evolution from more traditional notions of leadership:

> My story is about transitions from one mode of leadership to another, of coming to fully understand and implement a feminist collaborative framework. . . . Our team is composed of women rich with the experience and tradition of African American culture. . .the lived reality of poverty and. . .welfare. . .young. . .with limited educational background. I, as a white, older, middle-class woman bring years of experience in education and administrative experience. . . .

For her, the blending of strengths and perspectives creates a more formidable

presence with both those in poverty and with other community members. She says," Our complementary experience can bridge the gap between two worlds and offer a broader interpretation of reality because each brings something unique to the dialogue."

The emergence of shared leadership models is also seen in comments from two of our members from the poverty community:

> I have felt more empowered to join in these projects, and through this work have found the courage to go back to school and take college courses. . . . My work with WPPEI has helped me see my struggle more clearly and given me more confidence in helping myself and others.
>
> . . .I once felt like I was nothing and now it is great to look back and see how much I've grown. . . . Support from the outside encourages and pushes you and helps you keep going when times are bad. Empowerment comes from somewhere within but can be helped from the outside. It's like a flower that blooms. It's there, but the sun and rain had to help it to open. . . .

Our work has led us to re-examine "teaching" – its location and practice – in equally exciting ways. Three of our members – one teaching in a four-year institution, another in a two-year college, the other in a health care center where she conducts workshops with and for women who are affected by welfare reform – wrote in a co-authored article:

> All of us have been teaching activism – helping those who wish to work for social change to become more effective. [In] our discussions in WPPEI. . .we came to recognize that although we work in very different settings, we share similar goals for helping some of our students become more active members of their communities.

As WPPEI partners come to see more commonalities in the work they do, the possibilities for cross-fertilization grow tremendously. Such opportunities are especially important for feminist scholars seeking to transform traditional process. The questions come easier than the answers. Often, we heed the poet R.M. Rilke's advice:

> Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answers.[1]

Won't you join us on our walk as we live the questions in search of that distant day?

[Quotations are taken from things written or said by Laura Wittmann, Anne Statham, Jean Verber, Katherine Rhoades, Rita Seiler, Cindy Klevgard, Mary Kay Schleiter, Kathe Johnson, Janet LaBrie. For a complete listing of relevant papers, reports, and publications, contact Anne Statham at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside.]

NOTES

1. Quoted in Parker Palmer, "Evoking the Spirit," *Educational Leadership* (Dec. 1998/Jan. 1999), p. 8.

[*Anne Statham is Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at University of Wisconsin-Parkside, where she also serves as co-Director of a new HUD funded Community Outreach Partnership Center. She is also Outreach Administrator for the UW Women's Studies Consortium. Her email address is anne.statham@uwp.edu*]

[*Katherine Rhoades is Grant Development Specialist for the School of Education and Assistant Professor, Foundations of Education, at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. She recently coordinated a UW Women's Studies Consortium regional conference on women and poverty on her campus. Her email address is rhoadeka@uwec.edu*]

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN A COMMUNITY CONTEXT

by Margaret Ingram King

Leadership education took a turn toward feminism in the 1990s. The decade's notions about leadership embrace feminist ideals of shared power, reciprocity of influence, and the value of relationships. Feminist pedagogies that value personal experiences enjoy a good fit with college and university service learning and civic leadership programs. Educators are being awakened to injuries foisted upon girls, particularly middle school girls, highlighting a need for female-friendly practices at all levels. Furthermore, the recently recognized interdependence between institutions of higher education and their surrounding communities exemplifies the value of relationships, an idea long associated with women's perspectives.

The confluence of these trends set the stage for a unique women's leadership course at Tulane University. Newcomb College, the coordinate college of Tulane for undergraduate women studying the liberal arts and sciences, wanted to strengthen its leadership development program by bridging the curricular and the co-curricular. The College was ready to extend its mission of educating women to the development of girls as well. Faculty had recently affirmed service learning. Also, Tulane had recently entered a collaborative effort with Xavier University called the Campus Affiliates Program (CAP) which aims to enrich both academy and community by building partnerships and programs involving both.

The time was ripe for "Leadership Development in a Community Context," a two-semester course jointly offered by Psychology and Women's Studies designed to develop the leadership skills of college students through their work in expanding the leadership skills of girls in New Orleans public housing. During the first semester, college students were to consider writings and research about adolescent development, environmental factors affecting young African-American women, and models of collaborative leadership, while carrying out a service learning experience with sixth grade girls. By the end of the first semester, they would be ready to create an affirming and empowering leadership curriculum for the girls. Students would implement this curriculum during the second semester.

Tenets of women's studies pervade the course. The leadership model being used is based on feminist views of shared power. The service learning aspect emphasizes the connectedness of the academy and its surrounding community. The psychology portion of the curriculum focuses on the development of girls. Personal reflections come about through required journaling. Finally, an interdisciplinary and cross-functional group makes up the teaching team.

Teaching team

From the beginning, course development has been collaborative. A professor of developmental psychology who was also a women's studies faculty associate and leader in the CAP program joined a Newcomb College student affairs administrator who taught women's leadership as an adjunct faculty member in women's studies. The teaching team quickly expanded, with invitations accepted by a theater professor, a child development expert, another student affairs professional, a health educator with particular interest in adolescent sexuality, and CAP personnel knowledgeable about the service learning site.

Weekly meetings allow collaboration, reflection, feedback, course development, and personal growth for the teaching team. Interestingly, attempts to employ the collaborative model have made the team its own laboratory for examining ownership, empowerment, and process. In retrospect, development of a functional team might have been enhanced by a clearer articulation of individual expectations, mutual commitments, and common purpose. To date, two of the original eight members have left the group, although both remain engaged in specific ways.

The course curriculum – readings

Although concentrated on developmental psychology and leadership, course readings have been diverse. Sapphire's *Push*[1] injected passion into classroom discussion early on. Then Bronfenbrenner's structure of systems affecting adolescent development[2] provided the framework for exploring the influences of peers, families, schools, sexuality, and racism. Concomitantly, the Social Change Model of Leadership Development,[3] with its focus on individual, group, and community, provided the central lens for looking at leadership.

Synthesis of the material has been a challenge. Students eventually asked that, rather than lecture, class time be spent in bridging readings and the realities of their service learning activities. Journaling also provided a vehicle for synthesis, a process much improved by dropping specific teacher-written questions in favor of individual student determination of topics and content. "As time goes on," one student wrote, "and we see how all of our efforts with our girls are pulling together to make an impact on the sixth grade classrooms, I think we will have a much more defined sense of collaboration." Another student reflected:

> Just like everyone, I think these girls need love and support to develop healthy senses of self. They need to know that they are worthy of anything to which they aspire.... I want to help them, but I don't know how.... I realize that in order to help these girls, I have to have a hold on my incongruences and I must continually work to reconcile them.

Finally, both in-class and take-home examinations required that students relate what they were reading, seeing, and experiencing.

In creating the outline for the second semester curriculum, students sought connections, asking to personalize African-American history in America by learning about the history of their service-learning community and opening themselves to self-examination of racism and classism. Such self-examination enriches leadership development. The class will culminate with reflections on the interconnectedness of individuals, communities, and peoples, ending with another novel, Bebe Moore Campbell's *Brothers and Sisters.*

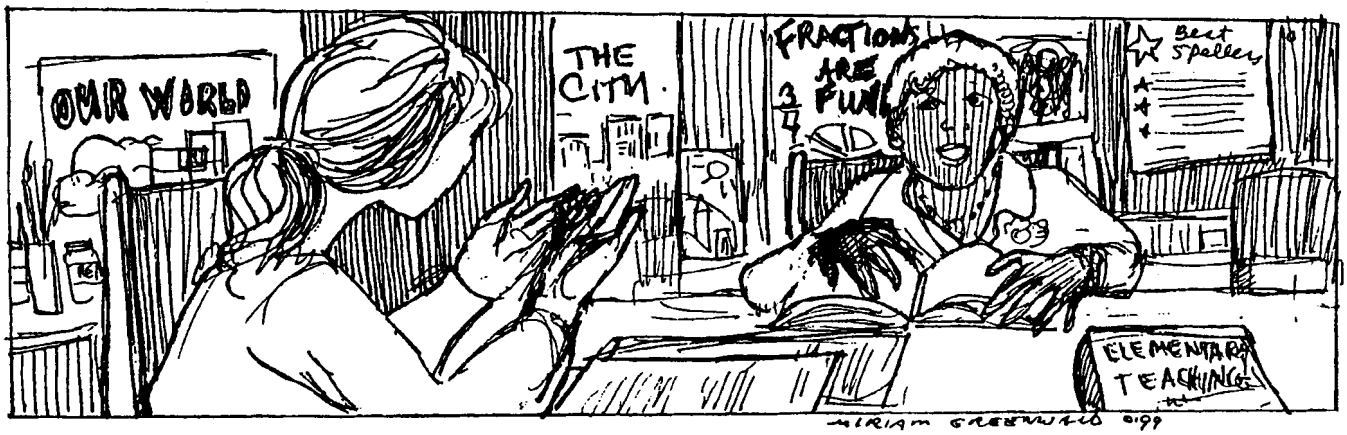
The course curriculum – service learning

A requirement was that each student spend three hours per week working with sixth-grade girls at a middle school serving a public housing community. First semester interactions would familiarize college students with the context of the girls' lives. Second semester would then be spent designing and implementing a leadership program for the girls.

Structuring this process has proven difficult. Service learning hours take place during regular middle school hours, bringing up questions of inattention to boys (solved by students from other classes being assigned to them) and interruption to classroom teaching (addressed on a case by case assessment of student need). College students were paired with middle school girls, but given only broad instructions. The initial discomfort about just what was to be done with the girls during this time dissipated as college students chose to tutor or provide creative activities while establishing caring relationships.

By mid-semester, the teaching team saw the need to more intentionally interject group work into the service learning. College students were divided into three groups, with each to provide a proposal for the girls' leadership program, paying attention to group process as well as task. Group development thus became a vehicle for examining and experiencing collaborative leadership, possibly a process to be repeated with the sixth-graders in the spring.

Service learning observations, reactions, and reflections were chronicled in journals. Over time, journals became primary instruments for classroom and experiential synthesis, student-teacher communication



(especially pertaining to developing relationships between collegians and girls), and personal growth assessments. As one student wrote: "I think our common purpose would probably be served more efficiently if it were defined in a clearer, more cohesive manner. Exactly how are we supposed to turn them into leaders? And if a leader is defined by their com-mitment to change, are we supposed to introduce them to community service?" Another student struggled with her relationship with one of the girls: " For example, I am having a problem with T refusing to speak. I need help with the following questions: What is it about the child's environment or stage of psychological development that makes her respond in such a way? What can I do to gain her trust?"

Students and teachers alike have felt the power of service learning. The setting quickly exposed poverty, highlighted difference, and mirrored white privilege. Collegians were eager but ill-prepared to respond productively. Future classes will orient students to the history, daily lives, and outlooks of the service learning community as well as provide frameworks for understanding their experiences before on-site service learning begins.

Students

Twelve students enrolled fall semester, mostly white undergraduate women, with one African-American, one male, and one graduate student. Only those completing the fall course could enroll in the spring. Seven returned: six white undergraduate women, and one white undergraduate male. The lack of African-American voice among students cannot be mediated sufficiently by fifty percent African-American representation on the teaching team.

Product

Three proposals for a second semester leadership program emerged from the service learning group work. One recommended an arts festival as a medium for the girls' self-expression and affirmation of voice. Another focused on conflict resolution, with particular focus on mediation. Its implementation would progress from team building for the girls to their becoming peer mediators. The third proposed to empower the girls by having them be exposed to female leaders, learn about their community, work to develop group commitment, and explore issues related to their own self-esteem. At the same time, the girls would select and complete a community project, providing them with a positive view of themselves as agents of change in their community. Implementation of the intervention for girls, regardless of the form it takes, will also provide the context for expanding the collegians' understanding and execution of leadership.

Future

At the writing of this article, the Leadership Development in a Community Context course is beginning its second semester. In general, students and faculty alike remain enthusiastic about the concept and committed to the undertaking. Both agree, however, that changes in the structure, content, and logistics would enhance the course. A modest conjecture regarding the future of the course is that it will be refined and institutionalized within the university curriculum. Such modesty downplays its possible impact. This offering has allowed experimentation of collaboration across disciplines, between academics and student affairs, and between community and institution. Thus it could serve as a model of feminist practice for leadership courses, even those outside the women's studies rubric.

NOTES

1. Sapphire, *Push* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997).
2. Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).
3. Higher Education Research Institute, *A Social Change Model of Leadership Development Version III* (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute of the University of California, 1996).
4. Bebe Moore Campbell, *Brothers and Sisters* (New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 1995).

[*Dr. Margaret I. King is the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Adjunct Assistant Professor of Women's Studies at Tulane University. She was formerly Assistant Dean for Newcomb Student Programs at Tulane. She can be reached at miking@mailhost.tcs.tulane.edu.*]

Taking Root, Growing, and Evolving: Reaching Low-Income Women with Education

by Bets Reedy

The connection between the Women's Studies Department at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and the La Crosse community has been growing and evolving for the past ten-plus years. I'd like to first sketch here a brief history of that connection, then comment about what seems to account for our success. In 1988, funding was received from UW System Extension to start the Single Parent Self-Sufficiency Program (SSP), a year-long, college prep program for low-income women. This effort by the Women's Studies department to address what we then called "the feminization of poverty" was intended to allow low-income women to achieve economic self-sufficiency through higher education.

The program worked successfully for a number of years. We regularly ran three sections of the course per year, sending about half of the women who started the program to one of the three local postsecondary institutions. The women did very well in school, averaging above a 3. gpa, with quite a low dropout rate; of the graduates, many are now working professionally in the La Crosse area. During those years, the program staff (another part-time faculty member and I) spent many hours working in the La Crosse community on committees, as members of task forces, and as speakers addressing local groups – civic groups, business groups, agencies, churches, etc. – about the program and the students; eventually, the program became part of the permanent operating budget of UW-La Crosse.

Then, along with the national fervor for "welfare reform," came Wisconsin Works, or W-2. With the introduction of W-2 in Wisconsin, the role of the SSP changed. While recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) had been able to attend school full-time, W-2 participants were required to work forty hours per week, leaving little time for children and household, let alone further education. There were other adjustments, too, so shortly before W-2 went into effect, members of the La Crosse community – agencies, advocates, welfare case workers, churches, legal aid attorneys, the Hmong Mutual Assistance Association, and others – met to discuss the probable impact of the welfare changes. One of the needs described was a source of work-appropriate (and interview-appropriate) clothing for poor women. Out of that need was born – with graduate student Michele Graf as midwife and the Women's Studies department and SSP as sponsors – the Women's Clothes Closet. Professional women donated quality, stylish clothes, a minister donated space in Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, and Michele begged, bullied, and sweet-talked merchants into donating clothes racks, hangers, mirrors, etc. The project was extremely successful; low-income women came, and were outfitted completely (including purses, shoes, jewelry, and matching accessories) with three or four outfits so they could interview for work and start new jobs feeling confident and presentable.

The kind of contact with newly working women engendered by the Clothes Closet led, in 1997, to development of the W-2 Mentoring Program, a cooperative program between the SSP, UW-La Crosse, and La Crosse County Human Services; and Michele Graf was hired to set up the program, plan the training, and recruit mentors. When Michele moved away from the area, an equally energetic and unflappable woman was, fortunately, able to step in and carry on. The purpose of the Mentoring Program is to 1) stabilize families in economic crisis so they can secure and retain employment, and 2) provide trained mentors to help them plan and pursue the road from poverty-level employment to economic self-sufficiency. The first step steadies the family, lending support so they do not feel isolated, and providing a resource person to help them understand the array of services available in the community. Then, the mentee is matched with a trained mentor who can help in the development and implementation of an effective self-help plan. For many, this step means training and/or postsecondary education. Thus, this program now works hand-in-glove with the Self-Sufficiency Program, and we hope to see our first round of students from the Mentoring Program enroll at UW-La Crosse this fall, even if it's on a part-time basis.

The success of these outreach programs stems directly from the

efforts of the staff to foster connections with the La Crosse community. We don't all go in the same directions, but all of us have met, talked with, and collaborated with a very large number of people in the area: local women's groups like the PEO sorority, American Association of University Women (AAUW), etc.; the YMCA and YWCA; Gerard Hall, a Catholic "home for unwed mothers"; local business groups like Rotary, Lions, AVANT business group, Business and Professional Women; New Horizons, the women's shelter; local and state legislators; the Hmong Mutual Assistance Association; local churches and peace and justice activists; local volunteer coordinators; Teen Health; Choices; and others. This is a crucial step, and for many years it required a great deal of our time. Another important factor in our success is the kind of women we've been able to recruit for our Board of Advisors. One member of the SSP Board, for example, has been able to secure for each of our "graduates" who reaches her junior year in college a $1,600 scholarship. Another member has just "found" five computers that we can give to our students – and access to a computer, other than those available in campus computer labs, can really make a difference for a low-income single mother with a couple of small children who has a term paper due at the end of the semester.

Many of the women on our Board are wealthy, influential women whose lives are rather sheltered from the kinds of concerns and problems typical of many of our students. We've been able to bring those groups together – to the mutual enjoyment and enrichment of both (and to the considerable delight of the staff). We assume that similar rich relationships will be developing between mentors and mentees in the Mentoring Program. We already know that some of the mentors were at one time in the position their mentees are now; other mentors have lived comparatively privileged lives with no need for bootstraps. For perhaps very different reasons, mentors from both groups seem to want to give to the community, and the mentoring program allows them to do that, enriching both groups.

Two other factors are crucial in the success of the SSP. First, we always start where our students are coming from (this same point of view characterizes the Mentoring Program). We know that most of these women have barely acknowledged to themselves their dreams of higher education, that most are terrifically intimidated by the UW-L campus. We know they are worried they will appear out of place among the traditional students, be shown up as the dummies they have frequently been told they are. So we start with those concerns, and address them head-on. Second, from the beginning we emphasize the academic content of the program, making it demanding and exciting. During the first semester, the academic focus is on critical reading, thinking, and writing – skills requisite for any academic discipline. Students do not receive grades on their papers; rather, they get detailed comments on the strengths and weaknesses of what they've done. After a few weeks, these students begin to recognize that they are competent thinkers, that they can communicate in class and on paper effectively. One of the great pleasures in being part of this program is watching the spirits of these students soar as they begin to understand they are good students and that immense doors are opening for them onto a wide and exciting future.

That transformation continues to bring us unexpected and astonishing support from individuals – at UW-L and in the larger La Crosse community – who witness it and understand its significance: a UW-L administrator who sends us considerable cash in spanking new bills each Christmas, money to be given anonymously to any student or grad who needs it; a staff person at a local agency who reassures us that the untoward difficulties of working with us are O.K. (she just wants to support what we're doing); a faculty member who simply (and anonymously) wrote a check to cover the tuition of a graduate who ran into unexpected problems.

Our next big tasks are to 1) secure permanent funding for the Mentoring Program, and 2) find effective ways to collaborate with local businesses so that "entry-level" workers can go on for the postsecondary education they – and their families – need. Since there is currently considerable demand for more skilled, highly educated employees, we hope to make this next turn in the evolution of the SSP beneficial for employers, employees – and the community. We intend to maintain the program as a clear path to economic self-sufficiency for our students and a positive contributor to a remarkable, caring community.

[Elizabeth (Bets) Reedy has taught at Rice University and Hope College, has taught Navajo and Hopi adults, lived in the mountains with an old Navajo matriarch/ shepherd/ weaver, and "retired" to full-time sheep farming. She returned to part-time teaching at UW-La Crosse and Viterbo College while continuing to farm. She is concerned with social and environmental justice and sustainable agriculture.]

CONNECTING STUDENTS WITH THE COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP: UNIVERSITY STUDENTS PROVIDING RAPE CRISIS INTERVENTION

by Susan C. Turell

"I have learned more in this class about life than I could have in any other class out of a book."

- a rape crisis intervention student

R-r-r-r-i-n-g. R-r-r-r-i-n-g. "Hello. Rape crisis hotline. How can I help you?" With these words, hotline volunteers begin the process of providing support and healing to sexual assault survivors, their family members, and friends. Without these volunteers, rape crisis programs across the country could not offer this important service. Therefore, recruitment and training of volunteers is of key importance to all such agencies.

The combination of my background in grass roots activism and my career in academia has led to an exciting alliance. For the past three years, I have offered a university course entitled "Rape Crisis Intervention" in collaboration with a local women's center. Over two weekends, graduate and undergraduate students are trained in the basic skills and knowledge needed to provide good quality crisis intervention to sexual assault survivors on a twenty-four-hour hotline.

Due to my involvement in the local women's center, I knew of the continual need for volunteers to staff the hotline, as well as to provide other services. As a faculty member in both psychology and women's studies, I also knew the importance of skill building and activism for students. I contacted the Director of the Rape Crisis Program and began a dialogue about how to meet these needs. We decided the best option was to offer the training as a course for college credit.

This course is designed to train students with a compressed format: the students complete a three-credit, forty-five-hour class in two weekends. Prior to the weekends, the class meets once during the week for an orientation to the course and an overview of violence against women. The two weekends are scheduled at the beginning of each Fall and Spring semester, skipping a weekend in-between. We meet Fridays from 5-9pm, Saturdays and Sundays from 9am-5pm.

The training is essentially the same one that the women's center regularly offers, and is certified by the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA). At the end of the course, the students receive a certificate that they are certified rape crisis advocates. Students have indicated that this is an attractive bonus in taking the course. I organize the training in collaboration with the training director of the women's center. We both teach several topics and bring in speakers where needed. For example, we lecture on crisis intervention skills, information about sexual assault, and psychological reactions to rape, but have law enforcement, medical, and legal speakers discuss the systems that rape survivors encounter.

In addition to the lectures, there are five or six times during the training when students practice their skills by small group role-plays. The scenarios are taken from real hotline calls. Students from previous classes return to meet with each group. The experienced students benefit by realizing how much they know and learned from the class, and the beginning students' anxiety is reduced by realizing that someday, they too will have the knowledge and ability demonstrated by the students who previously completed the course.

After the classroom training is completed, each student observes experienced volunteers for nine hours on the hotline. During the semester, they provide forty-five hours of service on the hotline as the major course requirement. They also are asked to complete a process paper describing their reaction to and growth from this course.

The rewards from this course are many and varied. The women's

center benefits by having a group of twenty to thirty well-trained volunteers each semester. About one-third of the students continue to volunteer beyond the course requirements. They can attend additional training to provide short-term individual counseling, group facilitation, and public speaking. The university benefits due to its increased visibility in the community; some students have enrolled in the university just to take this course.

The students benefit in multiple ways. The most concrete benefits are that many of them continue with internships, independent studies, and jobs for pay at this and other women's centers in the area. The course experience alone adds a valuable item to their resumes upon graduation.

Miriam Greenwald

More abstractly, the students benefit from an increased sense of empowerment through their work. They examine their biases, find their voices, and know they have impacted the world in a positive way. These students may not begin as activists, but that's what they often become; as one said, "I feel compelled to share my knowledge from this class with others. I want to make a difference in any small way that I can for women. This class broke my protective bubble and I am grateful." Another student shared, "Last night (during class weekend) at a party a guy there made a joke about rape. I told him it wasn't funny. He still went on continuing with the joke. At that point I told him that I was working at a rape crisis hotline and that I did not appreciate the joke that he was making. I was firm but not rude. He stopped and said he was sorry. I was always taught not to make a scene. However, at the beginning of class I made a vow that I would not put up with people making obnoxious jokes like that around me. Now that I did this, I feel empowered and strong. I'm glad I stood up for myself and survivors of rape."

The students indicate they learn much about themselves from this course. First, they have to examine their own values and biases about rape. One student poignantly shared, "My close friend (who was raped at 6) would lie about the rape incident and her story would change each time she told it. I felt as though I did not always believe her because her story was too inconsistent. After hearing the survivor panel, I realized why my friend would lie about her traumatic event. After class today, I went home and called her to apologize for not supporting her in the way I should have."

The students often indicate they feel empowered by the course. "Of all the courses that I have taken, I can honestly admit that this was the most influential, empowering, and informative. Besides learning how to help others, I learned how to help myself. Or perhaps, after I learned to help myself, I could more easily help others." The learning from the course is not always easy, "(After a tough call)... this was by far the worst call I had my whole time on the hotline. It left me emotionally drained, but I left feeling like I could do anything. I had finally conquered my fears. I helped a woman in extreme crisis. It was an amazing feeling."

The students also feel like they are making a positive contribution to the community: "I felt that I helped these women but they helped me more. I had no self-confidence in myself regarding the hotline when this began. I now know that I have the strength to do this type of work and it gives me a tremendous amount of joy knowing I have helped someone."

For some, the class is a part of the healing from their own first-hand experiences with sexual trauma. "This class has been cathartic for me. I was raped when I was nineteen years old and still struggle with it today. The class was difficult for me emotionally but I feel I have learned much about myself. It feels good to be in control of my emotions regarding rape. I always felt that I could have somehow prevented it from happening. I now see that it was not any wrong decision I made. This is the first time I have put on paper what happened to me and it has taken me three days to write it. I feel like a load has been lifted off my shoulders."

Courses like this one are powerful tools for social change. Students, survivors, and the greater community all benefit from community partnerships like this course. I urge you to contact your local women's center to develop collaborations like this one. Combining their grass roots expertise with faculty's access to college curricula results in a winning experience for all involved.

[Susan C. Turell is the Convener of Women's Studies and an Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. Her first involvement with the grass roots anti-sexual assault movement began in 1982, and continues to the present. *The author offers many thanks to the Houston Area Women's Center staff for their collaboration in offering this course, and to training coordinator Leigh Ebbesmeyer in particular. In addition, she thanks and acknowledges the students who learn and grow from their involvement in this course, making it the powerful experience that it is. All student quotes are used with permission. For copies of the syllabus and other course materials,contact the author at: University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2700 Bay Area Blvd., Box 326, Houston, TX 77058; email: turell@cl.uh.edu]*

"WHY SHOP? WEEK": SHOPPING, SERVICE-LEARNING, AND STUDENT ACTIVISM

by Kayann Short

First-year students often enter the university with little knowledge of life beyond U.S. borders. To help my students at the University of Colorado's Farrand Academic Program connect their lives with those of women globally, I created a service-learning practicum for my course, Women and Society. "Why Shop? Week" is a consumer awareness project linking individual consumption practices to women's labor and resource exploitation.

"Why Shop? Week" begins the Sunday before Thanksgiving with a community rally to introduce the concept of ethical consumption in the midst of the upcoming holiday shopping frenzy. To reach consumers in the simplest, most direct way, students have refined their message to three main points:

* Know the story behind the product – ask who makes it? who profits from it? who needs it?
* Exercise your economic power
* Consume less – don't buy what you don't need

"Why Shop? Week" students gain organizing skills through maintaining a website and coordinating local outreach events. They work with activists, politicians, and media representatives to share their message with the community and beyond. They analyze how their own role in U.S. consumer culture contributes to international exploitation. Finally, they create an alternative consumer framework focusing on ethical consumption.

"Why Shop? Week" grew out of the United Nations 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women's Platform for Action. Specifically, we focus on two Strategic Objectives in the Platform. The first, Strategic Objective F.1, assigns states responsibility to "[p]romote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources." "Why Shop? Week" serves as a vehicle to educate consumers about salary inequities, gender role segregation, labor discrimination, collective bargaining repression, inhumane working conditions, and inadequate legislative protections for women workers, particularly in U.S. sweatshops and transnational free trade zones. Using information from human rights and women's non-governmental organizations, we attempt to engage in a dialogue with consumers about these issues through our rally, website, and media outreach.

The second Strategic Objective we employ, J.1, calls for an "[i]ncrease [in] the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and

new technologies of communication." The question most frequently asked by students in this project is "Why doesn't anyone know about these problems?" By writing press releases, maintaining media contacts, updating the website, and conducting local radio and newspaper interviews, they experience firsthand the difficulty of accessing media with a complex and unpopular message. One of the lessons learned over the past three years has been the necessity of a "hook," something that catches the media's attention. These days, students protesting anything can seem a novelty, but staging an event that can be filmed or photographed – a "photo-op" – helps attract reporters. They also learn that not all media venues are the same. Our local progressive radio station, for example, not only interviewed us but sent reporters to create a newspiece for Pacifica Network. On the other hand, while one of the Denver TV stations filmed our event, we were pre-empted by coverage of a pet immunization bill and the local football hero's record-setting win.

Our greatest challenge in this project has been to educate consumers about women's rights violations without overwhelming them. People in our well-educated community have some knowledge and curiosity about the world, but do not like feeling guilty or disempowered. More than just learning about a problem, they want to know what to do about it. Of course, the problems we are exposing have been created by huge, faceless governments and corporations against whom individuals often feel powerless. Yet we know from history that individuals can create social change, particularly when acting collectively.

To help consumers consider their own connection in international exploitation, we have designed a brochure, "And You Think You Had Hard Day?", outlining simple steps for making purchasing decisions. We have also created a website with links to allied organizations and campaigns (http://spot.Colorado.EDU/~shortk/whyshop.html). The website includes a postcard that can be sent to corporations asking them to take responsibility for the conditions under which their products – and profits – are made. These postcards and the accompanying list of corporate addresses are available at our rally as well.

One of the most successful components of the project is the decorating of shopping bags to visually capture the attention of shoppers strolling along our pedestrian mall. Hung on large frames and strung along tables and railings, the bags prove the perfect instrument for both showcasing student creativity and inciting consumer engagement. We use ads or photos from fashion magazines to create commentary on global resource disparity, labor exploitation, and worker oppression. For example, one bag featuring a model's body with the superimposed head of a sweatshop worker bears the heading "Miss Free Trade Zone" and includes statistics compiled by groups like the National Labor Committee, UNITE, and Sweatshop Watch.

Sometimes the bags comment on the ads themselves. One responded to the shoe ad slogan "All She Needs" with the question "Is This Really All Women Need?" Many of the bags connect labor exploitation in developing countries with harmful beauty standards in industrialized countries by exposing the dangers of the fashion and diet industries. For example, one bag linked anorexia with resource overconsumption by juxtaposing the emaciated body of a super model with the words "Consume Less. Umm, We Didn't Mean Food." A Web gallery highlighting these bags is planned for next year's project.

Events in previous years have included a Jeopardy-style gameshow featuring categories like "Sweatshops," "Wage and Land Distribution," and "Discrimination," and a skit with a sweatshop on one side of the stage and two college-aged shoppers on the other. The two scenes convened at the end of the skit as the shoppers threw "outdated" clothing out of their closets onto the heads of the exhausted workers. Skits like this are effective in both transmitting information to audiences and provoking discussion of complex issues.

This year students organized a rally at the downtown plaza that included an alternative fashion show entitled "Crimes of Fashion: Are They Worth It?" As models showcasing athletic, young executive, vacation, and evening fashions paraded down the makeshift runway to a driving beat, the first announcer would, for example, hype the chic style of an Adidas running suit, to which the second announcer would respond: "Speaking of jogging, Adidas can jog from country to country as their workers demand more money or better working conditions, while workers in athletic wear factories get their exercise running from the riot police who are sent in at the first sign of organizing."

Besides the fashion show, the rally also initiated community outreach by inviting speakers from the campus group CU Divest and a local social justice group, the Fair Trade Coalition.

The audience was enthralled as a member of the local feminist theater group, Vox Femina, performed "She-Wrecks," the story of a mother so fed up with her children's consumer demands that she turns into a giant dinosaur who devours all technological devices. We plan to expand community involvement each year and hope that someday "Why Shop? Week" will become a national or even international event as other communities organize their own activities.

My main concern in developing "Why Shop? Week" was whether the project would merely reinforce a first world/third world paradigm in which students became the "saviors" of "less fortunate" women in "underdeveloped" countries or whether my students would recognize that the same discriminatory policies and structures exploiting women in export processing zones impact their own lives as well. So far, the latter has been true. First-year students do not feel particularly empowered. While they realize the privileges they have enjoyed as U.S. citizens and consumers, they worry about their futures within what they perceive as an unstable, uncaring global economy. They have had little experience creating social change or speaking out about their beliefs.

"Why Shop? Week" helps my students feel empowered to act collectively and individually. They often remark that the factory workers are young women their own age and find the lack of opportunity afforded these women the epitome of injustice. They view the courageous young women protesting working conditions or organizing for fair wages as role models for their own lives. As one student wrote, "The lives and rights of women would never see improvement if everyone were to ignore what doesn't directly affect them and "Why Shop? Week" is a tool we can use to break the silence. . . . Once consumers are educated and aware of the treatment of women workers in sweatshops they can put their knowledge to work through collective action." The same is true for students: once they understand they can act.

"Why Shop? Week" helps students consider a common, everyday activity – shopping – in a new light. They confront their own involvement in a system that depends upon inequities and discrimination. They gain practical organizing experience and skills, but they also gain knowledge that challenges reigning values and perspectives. This knowledge often leaves students initially uncomfortable and confused, but by working together they start to create a framework from which to approach women's rights on the individual, local, national, and global levels. Many students are inspired to continue their activism or international study, and some return as project interns the following fall. Perhaps most importantly, the project allows them to act as global citizens with an opportunity and a responsibility to speak out about the world in which they live.

[*Kayann Short is a Senior Instructor with the Farrand Academic Program at the University of Colorado-Boulder. Her work focuses on workers' rights in the international human rights arena.*]

When the Community is the Curriculum: Teaching Women's Studies Activisms and Organizations

by Judith McDaniel

"It is common to say that something is good in theory but not in practice. I always want to say, then it is not such a good theory, is it?"
-- Catharine MacKinnon, 1991[1]

Although the stated goals of the "Women's Activisms and Organizations" class are to look at this topic on a local and global level, examine current feminist theory for assistance in explaining students' experiences in organizations, and use their own experiences in analysis of successes and failures, there is also an unstated goal. My hope is that students in this class will come to a personal as well as intellectual understanding of a key concept: that of agency. We discuss agency all semester in a variety of contexts. We stress that agency refers to doing and implies power, that agents act and monitor their actions, that what creates agency is the capacity (not only the intention) to intervene in the world, to have an effect.

This core course in the relatively new M.A. program in Women's Studies at the University of Arizona is divided into three sections: exploring the goals of feminism, examining the mechanisms by which women have tried to achieve these goals, and evaluating how theory and activism have affected one another. As a course requirement, each student volunteers about four hours a week in a local women's organization or an organization doing significant work for women. Organizations and activities that have become part of the Women's Studies curriculum through this arrangement include Planned Parenthood, the lesbian Health Project, a Take Back the Night March, legal assistance to illegal immigrant women victims of domestic violence, the University's Commission on the Status of Women, and assisting in a local woman's political campaign for City Council.

Students enrolled in the "Activisms" class are not considered interns and do not earn credit for their volunteer work. They are not supervised in their volunteer work and there is no on-the-job evaluation process as there would be for an internship. The credit they receive is for the class itself – the volunteer work functions as a laboratory might. In the classroom we analyze and hypothesize; volunteer work in an organization is an opportunity to test, to examine, to experiment with the more abstract work of the classroom.

The process of matching students to an organization can be challenging. Most Women's Studies majors have some experience with activism, but not all do. Many students are new to the university area and need help in finding the right groups.Foreign students may not share a cultural context for "volunteer" work and need to understand what they are being asked to do before they are assisted into a group. While the community benefits from the energy and commitment of the students who enter activist organizations, community members are not necessarily aware of the lessons they are providing students and students are under no obligation to share their hypotheses and evaluations with the organization, although such sharing is encouraged.

By the third week of the semester, I expect all students to be involved with a group and ready to do some analysis and discussion of their experiences. I require two papers and a continuing journal about their experiences in the group. The first paper – to be completed in the first half of the semester – asks students to do some research and place their organizations in a context of feminist activist organizations, both historically and thematically. The second paper comes at the end of the semester and both analyzes the successes and failures of their organizations and begins to construct a theoretical basis for what might constitute a vital, effective feminist organization.

To assist with the journaling, I have created a series of journal prompts[2] to help students focus on relevant issues in the day-to-day operation of the organization and in the larger theoretical framework of achieving the goals of feminism. Part of the class's purpose is to narrow the chasm between activist and theoretical work, and I have not found this to be an easy task. We have trained our students that to be "theoretical" means, of necessity, to be "objective." At first, they seem to have no way to reconcile their participation in an organization with an objective analysis

of that organization. The journal prompts suggest ways for students to think about how an analysis could be informed by an "insider's perspective."

Working in such a variety of organizations, students want to think and talk about what makes an organization "feminist" and what makes a feminist organization effective. We ask questions such as: how should such an organization work? what goals should it have for internal and external work? what criteria should it use to evaluate its work? Inevitably students bring their volunteer experiences into these analyses, along with information from the class readings.

The second journal prompt asks students to examine the power structure of their organization, asking questions about decision-making, hidden power structures, bringing new people into the organization, gender/racial/ethnic patterns, and the dominant ethic or ethos of the group. Students are encouraged to ask questions of other volunteers, to do research when appropriate or possible, and to value and analyze their own subjective experience of coming into the organization.

One of the readings for this prompt is Pauline Bart's "Seizing the Means of Reproduction,"[3] in which she interviews members of the former Jane Collective, which provided illegal abortions during the late 1960s and early 1970s in Chicago. Bart theorizes about why this group was so successful in providing both a service and empowering information for a wide range of women from diverse racial, economic, and educational backgrounds. Several students have been particularly taken with the reality that the Jane Collective could not "keep" an incompetent volunteer without risking the lives of clients and the freedom of volunteers, and thus were quite careful about which women were allowed to become Jane Collective members. The ability to "get rid of" incompetent, unproductive, or disruptive group members has seemed highly desirable to students who perceived that their activist experiences were being limited by volunteers who were not committed to the goals of feminism, not competent to do the work, or – most frequently – doing the work for personal goals not necessarily congruent with the group's achievement of the task. Class discussions explored how students could confront these behaviors and what solutions might suggest themselves.

Another insight students have found in the Pauline Bart article is her comment that when abortion became legal, the Jane Collective disbanded rather than changing its "mission statement" in order to continue. Several student volunteers found themselves in groups that, having fulfilled one mission, had shifted their focus. For a community group focusing on lesbian access to screening for breast and cervical cancer, the shift to a focus on general health care for lesbians was not so natural. As the student volunteer observed, the original group had come together in response to outside funding rather than solely out of community anger and outrage over lesbians' lack of access to these services. Once the service was provided and the money no longer forthcoming, the group was less able to find the energy to continue. The student speculates that this may have been because the original group members had never themselves been denied these services. Most were healthcare providers at some level, so their concern was professional and political, but not immediately personal. Class discussion around this issue was wide-ranging, asking questions about essentializing women's "helping" role, about some activists' tendency to denigrate political commitment that came from a perceived intellectual base, and about strategies to motivate organizations and individuals working in them to create and accept change.

The final journal prompt is based on an article by Starhawk[4] that describes a demonstration and nonviolent disobedience at the Diablo Canyon nuclear power facility in California. The ostensible object of the action was clear and easily understood: to shift public opinion about the opening of the plant and delaying, if not halting, the plant's going online. Another objective, however, had to do with creating community through the use of ritual, symbol, and action. The prompt asks students whether their organizations had the creation of community and empowerment of women as stated or unstated goals, and whether there were other unstated objectives affecting the organization. A student volunteering at the battered women's shelter used this prompt to talk about the failure to empower women when clients were categorized as "good" or "bad" based on how well they followed shelter rules. Shelters, she suggests, must find ways to make individual residents' voices heard when they are creating structures and policies.

Students come to understand intellectually that an agent interacts with systems to change them and is herself changed by that interaction. I have structured the class with the hope

that students will be changed by their interactions with activist organizations, understanding their own agency, their power in whatever structure they may find themselves.

NOTES

1. Catherine MacKinnon, "From Practice to Theory, or What is a White Woman Anyway?" *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* no.4 (1991) pp.1281-1328.

2. Judith McDaniel, "Creating an International Perspective on Local Activism," *Women's Studies Quarterly* v.26, nos.3&4 (Fall/Winter 1999), pp.77-87.

3. Pauline Bart, "Seizing the Means of Reproduction," in *Feminism and Community*, ed. Penny A. Weiss (Temple University Press, 1995).

4. Starhawk, "Ritual as Bonding, Action as Ritual," in *Weaving the Visions*, ed. Judith Plaskow, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989).

[Judith McDaniel is a visiting professor at the University of Arizona. Her work as an activist, including the founding of feminist publishing company Spinsters Ink, and her research on the life of activist Barbara Deming have shaped the development of the Activisms class. Her most recent publications include The Lesbian Couples Guide *(HarperCollins, 1996) and a novel,* Yes I Said Yes I Will *(Naiad, 1997).]*

BUILDING BRIDGES: AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT WITH FEMINIST COMMUNITY AGENCIES

by Anne Marie Pois

"Building bridges" is an apt metaphor for an oral history project that involved students in my Women's Studies/history research course and two local feminist agencies during the spring of 1998 in Boulder, Colorado. Since I coordinate the Women's Studies Internship class at the University and teach U.S. women's history, the idea of doing oral histories within the feminist community emerged as an opportunity for linking students and activists, including those who struggled to create these institutions and those who continue the struggle by adapting them to meet women's needs. The aim was to build bridges between generations of feminists and activists, between the academic and larger feminist communities, and between women's current concerns and activism and the rich history that shaped it and continues to inform it.

I conceived of the project during the summer of 1997 as a service learning component in my research seminar, "The History of Women and Progressive Social Movements." Service learning provided a framework emphasizing the partnership between students and the agencies in exploring their histories by obligating the students to not only transact and utilize oral interviews for their own research papers, but also to provide something concrete in return to "serve" the agencies. A service learning grant through the University paid for the basic supplies and, perhaps more significantly, for transcription services. The students could more effectively focus on the oral history interviews and documentary research without having the added job of transcribing interviews. Together with their supervisors at the agencies, students decided what they could provide to the agencies. In fact, each agency received the transcriptions and tapes of the oral histories, the students' papers, and information brochures. We also donated the tapes and transcripts to The University Archives at the campus library as another "service" I believed important in order to preserve the sources of women's history and facilitate future research.

Careful planning was essential in meeting the goals of the project. First, I contacted two feminist agencies, the Boulder County Safehouse (BCS) and the Boulder Valley Women's Health Center (BVWHC). Both organizations were created by grassroots organizers in the 1970s and have continuously played a significant role in the Boulder community. Cooperation was readily and generously offered because

Women's Studies students had previously proved to be effective interns. We decided to focus first on the founders of the agencies, then proceed with interviews of staff, volunteers, and board members. When the University's Human Research Committee approved my proposal, I could proceed. The crucial step was achieved when six of the nineteen students in the seminar agreed to do the project. By working in teams, students could learn the benefits of collaborative research. Finally, I located a transcriptionist. I mention all these steps to highlight the time and advanced planning essential for coordinating such an oral history project.

An important part of the project was providing students with background in the method and practice of oral history. I continue to work on striking a balance between learning about theoretical concerns and the actual interviewing process, as well as meeting the needs of the students doing documentary research. I recommend articles in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*,[1] which reveal the many issues and concerns involved with doing women's oral histories. To highlight the oral history of women social activists, I show the video *Fundi:The Life of Ella Baker*,[2] which includes interviews of Baker speaking to others about Civil Rights work and of a variety of activists reminiscing about her. In conjunction with the video, students read an oral history selection on Ella Baker.[3] Taken together, these provide a rich introduction to feminist oral history. Articles dealing with the basic "how to" round out the course materials. Of course, students are also encouraged to do a lot of historical background reading on the women's health and battered women's movements. Finally, regular meetings with the student "teams" are necessary to provide guidance and an opportunity for them to voice concerns.

How did this initial oral history project go? Commentary from student and agency participants indicates some bridges were successfully built. Amanda Arthur, a Women's Studies major, was so enthusiastic about her experience at the Boulder County Safehouse that she decided to extend the project and will write her honors thesis using the oral histories. Arthur writes:

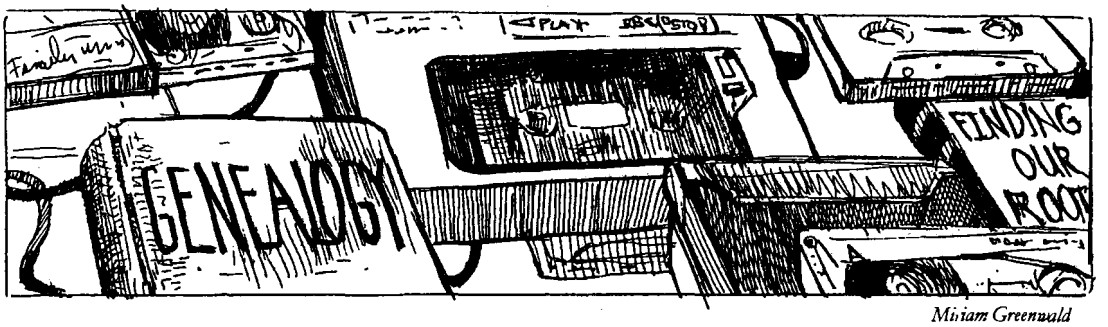
> The basic history of this feminist organization can be gleaned from old newspaper articles and records, however, the real flavor of the Safehouse remains in the hearts and minds of the early founders, staff and volunteers. The oral histories allow me to recreate the founding of the agency and to recognize the women's voices, learning about the process of social change while expanding my own understanding of feminism.
>
> The opportunity to relive the history of the Boulder County Safehouse through twenty richly experienced female voices was, without a doubt, the experience of a lifetime. I was impressed, inspired, and mesmerized by many of their personal stories. By stitching their stories together to create a picture of history, the women teach me new lessons about compassion, strength, and courage.

Anne Tapp, Executive Director of the Safehouse, observes:

> In 1999 Boulder County Safehouse celebrates its twentieth year of operation. The Women's Studies oral history project has provided both a timely and inspired look into the history/herstory of Safehouse. One of the strengths of the project was that it brought together young feminists from academia and seasoned activists from a community-based women's organization....
>
> The project has reconnected Safehouse with its roots. Without this type of project sponsored through Women's Studies it is doubtful that an oral history of Safehouse would have ever been gathered. While the names of some Safehouse foremothers are known as part of the living herstory/legacy of the organization, many of the women who struggled to give life to Safehouse in the late 1970s would easily be forgotten without the efforts of an oral history project.

In one of the actual oral history interviews, Barbara Gould, a former counselor at Safehouse in the late 1970s and 1980s and one of those potentially "forgotten" women, talked about using feminist values:

> We set out to run this organization in a different way and we were very conscious about it and very directed about it. So that we decided from the very beginning that we were going to use the feminist theory in everything that we did and that we were going to run our meetings and organizations with feminist perspective. And that was very challenging



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because there were not models for that then.

There were some unexpected findings in the oral interviews with the founders of the Health Center. Barbara Molfese, Volunteer Coordinator of the Center, writes:

> Those of us who have been affiliated with BVWHC for some time were as astonished as the student interviewers to discover that the founders of the clinic were nearly all men. This fact reminded those of us who are now in middle life that twenty-five years ago there were far fewer women in influential positions, whether in the professions or among community leaders. This awareness came as a shock to the students, but brought home the reality most forcefully....
>
> BVWHC has always enjoyed strong community support, but the oral history project has brought a new awareness that we owe our existence to broad-based community activism and involvement.

One of the original staff members at the Health Center, Linda Weber, recalled her initial experience at the Center this way in an interview:

> I was hired in August or September. They had started organizing the Spring of 73 right after Roe v. Wade. And we were all very driven. All of us had had experience in reality in abortion in one way or another. I can't say we had a whole lot of support from the community. . . . So then we got the building and remodeled it and pushed for the November 1 opening date in 1973. And we had nine volunteers on the first shift and nine volunteers on the second shift. Each one took a patient. I wanted everybody to get a chance to work right away. I wanted them to be able to apply what we had been talking about. And I didn't want them to get overwhelmed.

As for future directions, Safehouse director Tapp suggests that "creation of a 'user-friendly' document/product that can be periodically shared – and amended with new 'history' – would ensure that the project gave us a way to keep our oral history alive." Molfese recommends that we continue the project by including former patients of the Health Center, and I would add, the stories of the women volunteers who developed the Center after its initial founding.

The advice of one early BCS feminist to the student interviewers also seems appropriate, as I, Women's Studies students, and community activists think about the future of the project. She said, "Be calm and know that things happen slowly. . . . Never forget the women who came before you and came before me and came before my mother made it possible to do what we can do."[4]

NOTES

1. Sherna Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds., *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
2. *Fundi: The Story of Ella Baker*, prod. by Joanne Grant. 48 mins. First Run Icarus Rilms, 1986 (video).
3. Ellen Cantarow and Susan O'Malley, "Ella Baker: Organizing for Civil Rights" in *Moving the Mountain: Women Working for Social Change*, ed. Ellen Cantarow (New York: The Feminist Press, 1980), pp.52-93.
4. Oral interview of Barbara Gould by Amanda Arthur and Jami Dennis, March 18, 1998, Boulder, Colorado.

[*Anne Marie Pois is a senior instructor in the Women's Studies Program at the University of Colorado, Boulder. She teaches courses in women's activism and social change movements and her research focuses upon women's peace history.*]

Creating a Women's Studies Internship Course: Building Links with the Community

by Linda Nielsen

Why offer an internships course?

As feminists or as teachers in Women's Studies programs, what do we have to offer our female undergraduates – especially those who do not consider themselves feminists and who have not expressed any interest in Women's Studies courses? As members of a society in which problems such as poverty and domestic violence are on the rise, what do we and our students owe our local communities in terms of our involvement with women and girls who have fewer opportunities in terms of their education, income, and family circumstances?

In 1993, I designed a course entitled "Internships in Women's Studies" in which any student could receive academic credits for certain kinds of volunteer work in the community. While the course attracted only five students the first time it was offered, the yearly enrollment is now close to one hundred. How and why did this come about?

Approaching local organizations

Initially I wrote a letter explaining my ideas for internships to the director of every program and organization that worked with women or girls in the community. I reassured the agencies that very little paperwork would be required on their part, and that I would not interfere with their decisions regarding the kinds of work they needed the students to help with, as long as it was not secretarial. I did, however, ask the agencies to assign each student the major responsibility for at least one aspect of a project so that the student could feel a clear sense of ownership and control. Initially I met with each organization's director and provided her or him with a written description of several kinds of projects I envisioned for students working at their agency.

Within the first three years, I had expanded the students' options to more than a dozen organizations and programs; among them were The Battered Women's Shelter, Rape Victims Program, Planned Parenthood Association, legal aid clinics for battered women, University Health Center's Programs to reduce eating disorders and alcohol abuse, a Halfway House for Women recovering from drug addiction, Aids Task Force, and two prenatal Health Centers for low income Black and Hispanic women. Although the interns' projects differ somewhat from semester to semester depending on each organization's needs at the time, their work has included: accompanying abused women to court and to hospitals, helping mothers get signed up for welfare funds, serving as interpreters for Hispanic women at a prenatal care clinic, creating programs for public access television on women's health issues, and working with elderly women at a center for the aged.

Attracting students

Given that most of the undergraduate students at my university are white, from upper income families, and intent on success in graduate programs and in careers after they graduate, I knew that courses offering opportunities to improve future job skills or increase the chances of getting into good graduate programs would be appealing. Since most of the students are moderate to conservative about social and political issues, the course description and materials could not be too focused on seemingly radical issues such as feminism, abortion, and gay rights. At the same time, I realized that many students and their social organizations were already involving themselves in volunteer work for organizations such as the Boys Club and Project Pumpkin parties for poor children at Halloween.

The course description states that students may register for either thirty hours (two credits) or sixty hours (four credits) of internship work and the course is offered only on a "pass-fail" basis. I give the students a three-page description of the various projects at each agency that they may choose from. After making their choices, they go out to each organization together as a group to work out the exact details of their individual work, the weekly schedule, and whatever training they need beforehand.

Every semester I disseminate the course description on dozens of brightly colored flyers placed in all the student dining halls during class registration days. To attract attention, I put questions such as these in bold print at the top of each flyer: Do you know any woman who has or has had cancer? Do you ever wish there was something you could do to reduce poverty in our

country? Ever wonder whether the medical profession is really for you? Do you know anyone who has an eating disorder? Ever wondered why some girls on this campus stay with a physically abusive boyfriend?

Preparing the students

I also give the students a general overview of the kinds of problems they will be working with, even though each agency does its own training for its specific needs once their interns arrive. During the first few weeks of their internships, I require the students to meet with me as a group to watch a series of documentary films, and provide one reading on the topics discussed in each documentary. Afterwards they write a one-page paper on what information in each film and assigned reading most surprised them. Among the documentaries I have used are: *No Safe Place: Violence against Women and Girls; Pink Triangles: Homophobia and Discrimination Against Gays; Dreamworlds: Violence and Sex on MTV*; and *Fat: Disordered Eating and Self esteem.*

Grading

Since the students' main responsibility is completing sixty hours of volunteer work encompassing an array of different duties and tasks, there is no way to grade their performance other than on a pass-fail basis. When I initially approached agencies about hosting interns, their most common reservation and complaint was that so many volunteers were "more trouble than they were worth" because they often failed to show up when scheduled. Given these concerns, the first page of my syllabus states in big, bold print: "You must honor the schedules and deadlines you agree upon with your internship supervisor. If you fail to arrive on time, fail to show up for work, or fail to turn in written work and reports on time, you will be dropped from your internship." Rather than asking agencies to fill out lengthy evaluations of the intern, I give them a brief form on which they rate the intern as "below average," "average," or "outstanding" in each of these areas: (1) attending all training sessions (2) consistently showing up for work on time & turning in all work on time (3) completing all assigned tasks (4) being enthusiastic and energetic (5) making special contributions to clients, co-workers or the project.

Benefits to students

Through the internship course, students are acquiring skills and attitudes that can rarely be learned in a typical college class, as evidenced by what they themselves have written about their experiences.

First, students acquire skills and attitudes that can help them in their future professions and in graduate school. "I worked as an intern for the mayor. Filling out an absentee ballot was the most I had ever participated in politics. So my internship was extremely eye opening. I have re-focused my career goals and learned how to deal with people who are much older and much more influential than I am." "This internship made me realize how much effort has to be put into helping girls in science and how much resistance there is to educating girls in science. I have now decided to go into teaching after graduate school."

Second, students gain a deeper understanding of how money, politics, race, education, and gender affect the lives of women and girls. "Most of my academic career has been devoted to reading about societal problems. But this internship gave me the chance to have firsthand experience in the efforts being made to reduce our society's social ills." "I felt a sense of pride and accomplishment knowing that I helped victims of domestic violence get legal protection from their abusers. I saw the effects of violence in terms of broken arms, bruised bodies, and eyes swollen shut." "I began to understand the difficulty that low income populations and women in poor health face when it comes to health care."

Third, the students become more aware of the obstacles that women working in political, legal, educational, social service, and medical organizations face day in and day out: "In working with the women at the health center, I realized how much work has to be done and how strong people need to be to handle this work." "It was great to be working with so many talented women. I was irritated though to learn that, even in a medical school, women are still not given the same respect or the same pay as their male counterparts."

Fourth, the students begin to appreciate the privileges of their own lives: "It has been easy for me to become consumed by my secure and sheltered life here at the university. My internship has helped me confront the world outside my sheltered life and to be more humble and more grateful for my many blessings." "The fact is I've seen that America is not a great and free nation for everyone who lives here. For so many, it is a living hell and a constant struggle that seems impossible to overcome."

Needless to say, the internship course has benefitted the community as well. The feedback from the interns' supervisors has been overwhelmingly and consistently positive.

Not only do the agencies appreciate receiving free help from energetic, well-educated, young people, they also gain a more positive image of our predominantly white, private university. Especially in a city with a relatively large minority and low income population, a private, "elite" university can often be perceived as uncaring or uninvolved. In this case, the university's campus is less than a mile from one of the poorest black communities in the state – a neighborhood whose residents are now being helped by many of the students in the internship course.

It is clear that both the male and the female students in the course become exposed to many of the fundamental principles and issues dealt with by feminists and by Women's Studies programs. While initially avoiding words such as feminism or sexism that might drive certain students away, the course ultimately succeeds in leading even the most conservative students into the very heart of such feminist concerns as poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, domestic violence, rape, unwanted pregnancies, and women's health issues.

[*Linda Nielsen is a professor of Adolescent Psychology and Women's Studies at Wake Forest University. In addition to numerous publications in professional journals, a post-doctoral fellowship from the American Association of University Women, and a national writer's award from the Center for Women Scholars, Dr. Nielsen is the author of the college textbook,* Adolescence: A Contemporary View *(Harcourt Brace, 1996), now in its third edition. She is currently working on a book about stepmothers and another about ways to improve relationships between fathers and daughters. Her email address is: Nielsen@wfu.edu*]

WOMEN CHANGING THE WORLD: A COURSE IN COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

by Bronna Romanoff, Chrys Ingraham, Pat Dinkelaker, and Jennifer MacLaughlin

"Social change," a student noted, "occurs one conversation at a time." Breaking down the walls of ignorance and prejudice that sometimes separate the campus from the surrounding community isn't easy, and it takes time, but it can be exciting for students to take the first steps in that direction.

Senior students in the relatively new required course "Women Changing the World," offered at Russell Sage College for women, experience some of those first steps in a team-taught, interdisciplinary core course designed to echo the mission statement of the college: preparing women "in the world, of the world, for the world." Building on the knowledge and skills they have acquired in their disciplinary studies, students examine the ways change works, study the lives of women who have created change globally and locally, and reflect on the link between their own lives, the production of social values, and the relationship of values to the world around them. In class and out, students gain practice in the skills of community organizing.

Beginning in January 1996, the faculty of the Sage Colleges participated in a series of sessions designed to produce a new general education curriculum. The team of faculty who developed two core courses – "Women in the World" (first-year) and "Women Changing the World" (senior level) – agreed they should provide students with a "common experience" that would enhance both campus and community cultures. To this end, the courses require common readings and dedicated classrooms equipped with VCRs and monitors as well as world maps and timelines. Faculty development has been central to the effectiveness of this curriculum. Over a period of weeks and with the assistance of outside speakers and consultants, faculty learn how to collaborate in delivering these courses and become

familiar with a pedagogy that does not require disciplinary expertise but focuses on teaching students to read and think critically.

The development and delivery of the senior course, "Women Changing the World," itself provides a model for campus-community collaboration. The primary objective of the course is to teach the intellectual and organizational skills necessary for undertaking effective change work in the surrounding community. A centerpiece of this course is the change project. In addition to classroom assignments, students are linked with area government and not-for-profit agencies to help implement community projects. Fifty percent of the work for the course is in designing, implementing, evaluating, and presenting the community change project.

Before the start of the academic semester, the course coordinator contacts directors of local community based agencies to solicit their interest and participation in this campus-community endeavor. Agencies submit proposals for student projects adhering to the following guidelines: that projects 1) are focused; 2) are aimed at improving the lives of the residents of our urban community; 3) can be accomplished within the space of a semester; and 4) preferably yield a durable product that is of use to the agency. In this way, community change projects differ from internships, extra-curricular volunteer opportunities, and service learning ventures, which are primarily sustaining roles, ongoing, and not change focused. The course coordinator works with agencies to shape proposals that meet the course guidelines. For instance, when an after-school elementary tutoring program requested students to serve as individual tutors, we were able to design a project that involved students teaching computer literacy skills in the context of developing multicultural and gender awareness. College and elementary students together created an internet multicultural resource guide that was left with the agency for future use.

Agencies are invited to present their proposals to students at an "agency fair" scheduled early in the semester. This is an opportunity for community professionals to come to campus, meet students and faculty, and develop and enrich connections. Student feedback on the agency fair is positive – meeting agency representatives reduces the uncertainty and anxiety the students feel about the forthcoming assignment. Following the agency fair, the students select the projects they find most intriguing or manageable, and select classmates with whom to work.

A secondary objective of the change project is to enhance students' group skills. Small groups of three to five students contact the agencies, negotiate the specifics of the projects that can be reasonably accomplished within the semester, divide the tasks among group members, and begin the project. Work is supervised by the agency representatives. The course faculty are available to provide support, guidance, and troubleshooting if needed. Sample projects have included: helping organize a Take Back the Night rally and march with neighborhood groups; developing a mentoring program for victims of domestic violence; organizing a community-wide student art fair; organizing and presenting a family conference on child abuse; and surveying neighborhood residents' ideas for rehabilitating a dangerous vacant lot.

Initially, student response to the "Women Changing the World" course and the change project was varied, ranging from apprehension to enthusiasm. Students began their projects at a community organization in different states of readiness – for many, the project represented their first experience volunteering in a community agency. At the onset, students were concerned with the inevitable time constraints placed on the change projects: completing their project within the given time frame of one semester and finding enough time in their personal schedules to balance schoolwork, professional jobs, and family lives along with the change project. Students were allowed to form their own groups and choose a project best tailored to fit their interests and time schedules. This relieved many of the reservations students had about the course. Problems we have noted in project implementation include the different schedules of college students and community professionals and the difficulty of telephone contact and agency access. It is important that agencies and student groups each appoint a representative to act as liaison.

Projects that are closed-ended and have specific outcomes appear to have the greatest success and present the best learning experience for the students. The YWCA, for example, has provided students with several opportunities. For two years, student groups have worked on a Take Back the Night rally and march. The students solicited donations of refreshments from the community, marked the route of the march with purple ribbons and dove

stencils, distributed fliers, rallied support on campus, obtained donations of candles, prepared the gym for the rally, and videotaped the rally and march. In another example of an activity, students were responsible for a Family Feast for day care families during the Thanksgiving holidays. Students prepared the menu and solicited donations of food for the dinner that served over one hundred persons, worked on set-up of the gymnasium, and arranged for other students to provide activities for the children. Both of these activities benefitted from the involvement of the students, who brought fresh ideas, new perspectives, and expanded the traditional community organization way of thinking. The students also learned how, for example, to successfully solicit contributions from the community, build support for a public event, estimate the amount of food needed for a hundred people, and plan the kinds of food that would be culturally inclusive. Most importantly, the students were directly involved in the life of the community and, likewise, agencies became directly involved in the life of the college.

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Campus faculty and administrators, including those not directly involved in course delivery, have served as valuable resources to students in areas such as survey methodology, grant writing, and writing for the media. We have found books on community organizing (e.g., *Organizing for Social Change*[1] and *In the Tiger's Mouth*[2]) useful tools. Additionally, students serve as resources for each other. We are developing a central resource file wherein student groups can leave detailed notes on their projects for other semesters' students to consult.

The culmination of the semester's activities is a day-long campus conference intentionally modeled after a professional conference – in concurrent sessions, students make formal presentations about their change projects. Initially anxious about the conference, students spend part of the semester's class time developing oral presentation skills. By the close of the semester, students are able to deliver polished presentations and indicate that this is a valuable aspect of the course. This end-of-the-semester conference provides students with an opportunity to share the results of the project with fellow classmates, professors, and members of the community. Because community leaders are also invited, students utilize the conference as an opportunity to give feedback to the organizations with which they interacted.

Through the change projects, many students have discovered the community outside the campus boundaries, a community with which they had been unfamiliar. Students have achieved personal growth, learning, as one student said, that "anyone willing to make the effort can create change." Another student remarked, "The change projects taught us about respect, dignity, gratitude and humanity. These lessons can't be fully taught or understood in a classroom setting. It was a great reward to touch the lives of others, even for a brief period of time. This experience has left an indelible mark on our lives."

NOTES

1. Kimberley A. Bobo et al., *Organizing for Social Change: A Manual for Activists in the 1990s* (Washington: Seven Locks Press, 1991).
2. Katrina Shields, *In the Tiger's Mouth: An Empowerment Guide for Social Action;* cartoons by Phil Somerville (Philadelphia: New Society, 1994).

[*Bronna D. Romanoff is Associate Professor of Psychology and Chrys Ingraham is Associate Professor of Sociology at The Sage Colleges, Troy, New York. Pat Dinkelaker is Director of the Troy YWCA and Jennifer MacLaughlin is a biochemistry/biology major at The Sage Colleges who has participated in the course "Women Changing the World."*]

Short Takes on Other Academic/ Community Connections

"Isn't Just Being Here Political Enough?" Feminist Action-Oriented Research As A Challenge to Graduate Women's Studies

by Michelle Dodds, Jacky Coates, and Jodi Jensen

[The following is a summary of an article that originally appeared in *Graduate Women's Studies: Visions and Realities* (Inanna Publications and Education, Inc., 1996) and was reprinted in *Feminist Studies* v.24, no.2, Summer 1998, pp.333-346. Used by permission of both publishers.]

As M.A. students in women's studies, we found that attempting to incite social change in the context of the university could be "crazy making" because we would often be obliged to follow the same rules we were simultaneously trying to break. What seemed to become important, even in feminist academic life, was success in course work, a scholarly thesis, competition with colleagues for scarce resources, and rapid degree completion to advance promptly through higher ranks in the university.

To create a forum where women who found themselves in *such* contradictory positions within the academy could reflect on the relationships between activism and educational institutions, we conducted a workshop on feminist action-oriented research at the 1995 York University conference, "Graduate Women's Studies: Visions and Realities." Our purpose was to share strategies for shifting academic work and the university climate "back to" or "on toward" politics.

We defined feminist action-oriented research as research designed to allow people both to understand and to change inequitable distributions of power, knowledge, and resources. It is research for, by, and with communities rather than research *on* communities. It may use non-academic language, be distributed through community groups or even in popular theater, redefine what counts as knowledge.

During our workshop, however, we found the split between activism and academics in women's studies to be far greater than we imagined. Participants objected to action-oriented research on the grounds that it increased workloads, jeopardized funding and career progression, was applicable only to participant-based research, and finally, that just being a woman in the academy was political enough.

These objections assume that feminist academics must choose between material and institutional rewards and commitments to social change. We believe this view posits a false dichotomy. While the founding of women's studies programs involves political vision, commitment, and personal and institutional transformation, many feminist academics are content to find women's studies more and more a part of the educational mainstream. Concern over tenure and advancement has sometimes replaced concern over who continues to be excluded by postsecondary institutions. However, feminist academics are able to use relative privilege to foster social changes that benefit women other than those who are similarly situated.

Graduate women's studies programs have a responsibility to respond to the needs and concerns of a range of communities, inside and outside academic institutions, and to provide graduate students with opportunities to do the same. Examples of such possibilities include: implementing practicum components that relate students' work to women's real lives; offering workshops to build skills in alternate (feminist) pedagogies so that teaching/learning become liberatory acts; developing links with government and funding agencies to identify

research needs and access resources on "women's issues," social services, health, the environment, and the like; encouraging researchers to stretch the limits of academic custom by rewarding alternative methodologies and modes of reporting results; and providing women's studies courses in partnership with community organizations.

Institutional barriers to integrating activism and academics clearly exist, one of them being an academic tradition built on exclusion, hierarchy, and individualism. Graduate women's studies programs, then, have a role to play in adopting strategies that enable students to bring their political commitments in line with their academic work, to further knowledge about women's lives, and to chip away at multiple oppressions.

[*The authors have each completed their M.A. work in Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University. Jacky Coates is now employed in a police-based team as a counselor with battered women. Jodi Jensen currently works in the labor movement in Vancouver, BC. Michelle Dodds works in the women's movement as a Vancouver-based representative for a national women's organization.*]

THE WOMEN'S STUDIES COMMUNITY CONNECTION: A "FRIENDS GROUP"

by Esther Lichti

The idea grew out of conversations that took place at informal weekly "networking" lunches attended by academic and community women in Lubbock, Texas. Because the women from Texas Tech who attended these lunches participated in the Women's Studies Program, aspects of the Program were often discussed, and eventually there was talk of a community organization to support the Women's Studies Program at Texas Tech University. In the fall of 1996, two community leaders, who were frequently acknowledged for their activism and leadership on women's and children's issues, formed the backbone of the new organization and became the first co-chairs of the Women's Studies Community Connection, recruiting for its board a number of prominent civic and political leaders. On November 16, 1996, the steering committee and Chancellor John T. Montford held a joint press conference, at which the Chancellor and his wife became the first dues-paying members of the new organization.

Two years after its formation, WSCC is proving an invaluable resource to the Texas Tech Women's Studies Program. The mentoring project, which matches undergraduate women with community professional women, has served more than fifty students since it began in September 1997. Open to any woman student on the campus, the program draws attention to and often serves as an entry point into the undergraduate minor in Women's Studies. One of the most successful pairings grew out of a student request for a midwife mentor. Although no midwives actually practice within Lubbock County, one does reside here, and she agreed to serve as a mentor. With her assistance, the student was able to begin training to teach childbirth preparation classes and complete her certification as a doula. She has accompanied her mentor on client visits, will attend two midwifery conferences in other parts of the state, and recently assisted at her first delivery. Plans are being developed to extend the mentoring project to target minority student women and minority mentors, to support the University's goal of increasing minority student recruitment and retention.

Women's Studies faculty have answered requests from community organizations for speakers and have provided articles for organizational newsletters and the Chamber of Commerce, increasing the program's (and university's) visibility and helping faculty fulfill their "service" obliga-

tions. WSCC members regularly attend Women's Studies Council meetings, serve on the planning committee for the annual conference, and host an annual reception honoring the faculty and students, to which they invite administrative officials. Plans are now underway to create a program matching community women with newly hired female faculty in a "friendship" program designed to combat the feelings of isolation experienced when moving to a new city, a problem frequently mentioned by junior faculty. This program is expressly designed to assist the University in achieving its goal of greater recruitment and retention of women faculty. The most important benefit to the Program has been the increased visibility afforded it by WSCC both within the community and on the University campus. It is impossible to measure the benefits that accrue when a University administration, actively engaged in a major fundraising and public relations campaign, is reminded by prominent civic leaders that a relatively minor University program serves a unique and important purpose both on the campus and in the community at large.

[*Esther Sundell Lichti received her Ph.D. in Theatre Arts from Texas Tech University and currently serves as Assistant Coordinator of the Women's Studies Program at that institution.*]

EXPLORING ACTIVISM WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

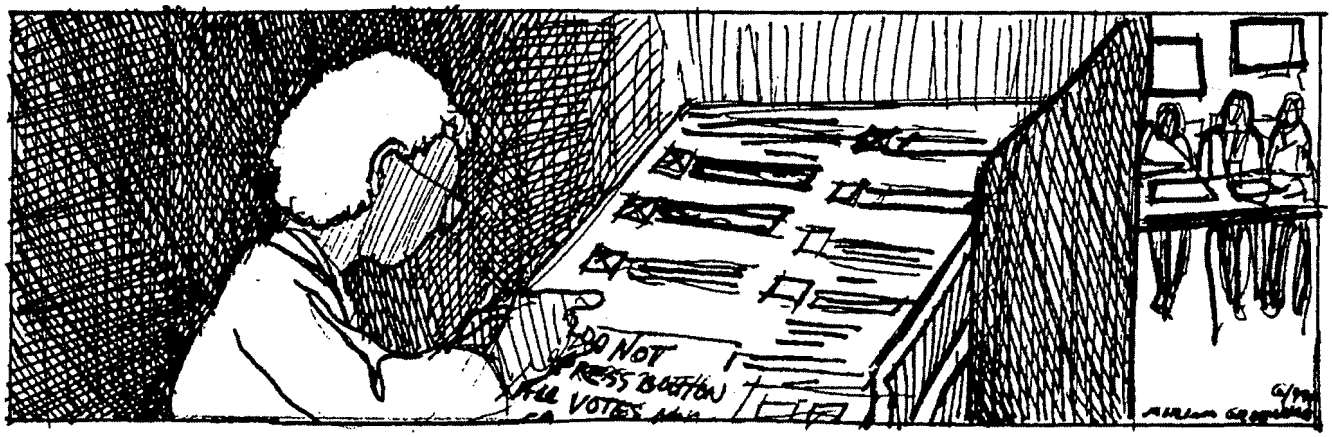
by Jennifer Scanlon

Does one have to live as a pauper to be an activist? Does one have to be willing to die for one's cause to be an activist? Can a person live a "normal" life and still be an activist? The type of questions raised in our senior seminar, Feminism and Activism, revealed a great deal about student life in the 1990s. The course was intended to provide opportunities for graduating seniors – all of whom had pursued a minor or an individualized studies major in women's studies – to explore the uses of feminism outside the classroom and in their chosen professions.

We began the semester by reading Charlayne Hunter Gault's autobiography, *In My Place*, in which she explores her experience as one of the first Black students to integrate higher education in the state of Georgia. Her inspiring story provides a cultural context for the Civil Rights movement and explores the contributions of many civic and religious leaders, as well as members of Gault's own family, to her activism. This book helped us raise initial questions about feminism and activism – about how our philosophies can be carried out in our school and work lives and what moral obligation we have to act on our principles.

Once we had laid a foundation for the topic and its challenges, a series of guest speakers attended the class. To the amazement of the students, each of the invited guests – all faculty at our institution – worked currently or in the past as activists on a number of issues. They provided stories about civil rights, gay rights, disability rights, and anti-violence organizing, among other things. They answered many of the questions we had developed and focused on their own development into activism, the sacrifices they had made, the rewards of their activist work, how they had merged their personal and political interests, the burnout they inevitably experienced, the difficulties of working through differences. The visits by speakers were accompanied by readings, some of which were offered by the speakers and others of which came from our major text, *Feminist Organizations*.[1]

The final component of the class was an activist project. The students chose to work together as one group of seventeen and plan a day on campus to celebrate women. This event took place near the end of the semester and featured poetry readings, musical performances, and a photo exhibit of women on campus and in the community. Hundreds of women on and off



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campus who had made a difference in the lives of these students were given special invitations to attend. In planning the event students divided into groups to take on the many tasks, including developing a 'zine, preparing press releases, getting donations for a reception, organizing the space, developing and distributing posters, etc.

As we read widely and listened to guest speakers, it became apparent that it was not enough to have feminist goals; these had to be combined with acting in a feminist fashion. This turned out to be the greatest challenge to the students. Some had planned other such events and were quick to offer to make phone calls, debate what ideas would work, take on a great deal of responsibility. Others were equally happy to sit on the sidelines. The challenge I offered them was that the grading of the assignment and the success of the class would be based on their ability to integrate feminist process into their feminist product. This led to discussions of process at every meeting and, in the end, a product in which each student felt a great deal of responsibility and pride.

The seminar achieved its goals: students learned more about activism and their activist selves, tried out what we talked about in theory, actively engaged with a wide variety of people and causes, and saw that it is truly possible to be an activist in what had seemed to some the apolitical worlds of campus and community.

NOTES

1. Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin, eds., *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).

[*Jennifer Scanlon is associate professor and director of women's studies at Plattsburgh State University of New York. For the 1998-99 academic year she is a Fulbright Scholar at the Centre for Gender and Development, University of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago.*]

THE WOMEN INVOLVED IN LIVING AND LEARNING PROGRAM: BALANCING THEORY AND PRACTICE, BRIDGING CLASSROOM AND COMMUNITY

by Holly Blake and Allison Kimmich

The Women Involved in Living and Learning (WILL) program was established in 1980 to provide educational and leadership opportunities for women students at the University of Richmond. In a determined effort to bridge the worlds within and beyond the classroom, the WILL program uses a three-pronged, four-year approach to women's education and development:

* Course work in Women's Studies
* Gender-related programs outside of the classroom
* A student-run leadership organization

Each member of WILL earns a minor in Women's Studies, the academic foundation of the program. Required courses in Women's Studies provide WILL students with common intellectual backgrounds and analytical frameworks in order to examine gender and its intersection with race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. Fully one-third of the required courses for WILL explicitly link theory to practice and practice to theory.

Gender-related programming further underscores the theory-practice connection. Students are required to attend at least three gender-related programs every semester. These events address issues students have learned about and discussed in their Women's Studies classes and therefore extend education beyond the traditional classroom setting. In fact, students often read a speaker's work in class, hear her or him discuss the ideas in a lecture, and then engage in small group discussion with the speaker following the public presentation.

Adding the student organization work to this mix of Women's Studies coursework and gender-related programming provides leadership opportunities for students and a structure within which to organize and *do* something about the issues they examine. In response to a talk by Mary Pipher, the author of *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls,* two WILL students decided to establish a mentoring program for middle school girls. They set out to create a junior version of the WILL program that would teach girls to critically analyze gender norms and offer an alternative to the negative images adolescent girls frequently internalize. The mentoring program remains vital today and serves about a dozen girls each semester.

The powerful synergy between Women's Studies coursework, gender-related programming, and a student-run organization over four years promotes social change. WILL provides the community and structure for students to stand up for what they believe in. In spring 1998, two first-year students organized a Young Feminist Conference. Women's Studies coursework provided the academic foundation from which they critically examined possible speakers and workshop topics, and the student organization formed a pool of willing and interested women who served as panel moderators, organized refreshments, and publicized the conference. By every measure, the conference was a success. The words used by one organizer apply to the WILL program overall: "WILL has enabled us all to put ourselves on the line for the things we feel strongly about, and I cannot imagine another lesson learned during my college years that will help me more to find happiness and success in the years to come."

For more information about the WILL program, contact Holly Blake, Director, University of Richmond, Richmond, VA 23173 or email hblake@richmond.edu.

[*Holly Blake has served as the director of the WILL program since 1992, and was recently named Assistant Dean for Women's Education and Development. Blake's research focuses on the life and times of Marie Howland, a nineteenth-century writer and activist committed to the economic independence and sexual self-determination of women.*

Allison Kimmich joined the WILL program as its assistant director in 1998. She has edited a forthcoming collection of essays entitled Women and Autobiography *(Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources) and published other essays on autobiography and feminist pedagogy.*]

World Wide Web Review

Women and Music on the Web

by Nancy M. Lewis

The scant attention to women's role in the composition and performance of music through the ages is well known. There is now a long-awaited move to recognize both women of the past and those currently writing and performing. The Internet has allowed this movement to expand from print to electronic resources, thus increasing the speed and the audience with which information can be shared.

International Alliance for Women in Music
URL: http://music.acu.edu/www/iawm/
Developed/maintained by: Members of the IAWM Web Team
Last updated: Unknown
Date of review: 12/18/98

The International Alliance for Women in Music (IAWM) promotes the composition, performance, and recording of women's music, as well as research on and advocacy for women in music. Their website is comprehensive, with the stated objective of furthering education, communication, and research about women in music.

The beginning student will appreciate the list of historical women composers, with links to additional information. Librarians will be interested in the discographies of recent recordings. Composers and researchers can find calls for scores and papers, lists of festivals and concerts, and useful links to organizations, ensembles, publishers, and bibliographies. Connecting to others interested in women's music is made easy through the IAWM listserv and the "Women's Music Chat Room." There are links to some audio files from IAWM members, but these require a variety of plug-ins to activate. It would be better if the required plug-in for each file were listed, along with ways to download the software.

Online since 1996, the site is updated regularly by a well-organized team of volunteers. The site can be navigated from categories on the home page, through a guided tour (web ring), or with an internal search engine. Although there are many print sources that provide some information on women in music, this site illustrates the power of electronic communication to identify and expand the growing interest in the field.

Early Music Women Composers
URL: http://150.252.8.92/www/iawm/pages/
Developed/maintained by: Sara L. Whitworth
Last updated: 9/11/98
Date of review: 12/18/98

Romantix: Women Composers Born 1760-1899
URL: http://150.252.8.92/www/iawm/pages/romantix.html
Developed/maintained by: Sara L. Whitworth
Last updated: 3/98
Date of review: 12/18/98

Sarah L. Whitworth has created two Web sources that provide information on women composers. The first, Early Music Women Composers, provides lists of composers, by time period, born before about 1765. Of these, forty-five percent have annotated discographies, including Hildegaard of Bingen and Barbara Strozzi. These annotations provide information on available recordings and often include brief biographical notes. Special topical sections appear from time to time; at this writing there is one entitled "Celebration of the Feminine Divine in Women's Early Music," which groups together several composers from the main list. Some sound files are provided, mostly in the MIDI format. Information on downloading and using MIDI is included.

Librarians will appreciate the "Starters Kit," which provides recommendations for a beginning recording collection. The "Reference and Publishers" section links to useful, albeit brief, bibliographies, to information about publishers, and to sites on early music instruments. Illustrations of women's art from comparable time periods are also included.

Whitworth additionally created and maintains Romantix: Women Composers Born 1760-1899. This site

provides both alphabetical and chronological access to lists of composers, with about a third of these linked to lists of recordings. Some entries also have MIDI files, but none has biographical information.

The greatest contribution of each website is its discography of current recordings. This information is not easily accessible in any other one place, so Whitworth's efforts are greatly appreciated.

Women Composers: A Bibliography of Internet Resources
URL: http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/7282/women.html
Last updated: 10/8/98
Date of review: 12/18/98

Lesbian/Feminist Music Links
URL: http://pobox.upenn.edu/~amazon/music.html
Last updated: Unknown
Date of review: 12/18/98

There are many sites that provide lists of links to music written and performed by women. Two that are worth highlighting are Women Composers: A Bibliography of Internet Resources and Lesbian/Feminist Music Links.

Tara Guthrie, Acquisitions/Instructional Services Librarian at Carteret Community College, began the Women Composers site while at library school. This list of links includes sites of individual composers, such as Mary Elizabeth Caldwell and Louise Talma, sites of researchers in the field, links to repertoire lists, performing ensembles, publishers, and lists of women composers. This is a useful page, but the updating is a bit sporadic, with ten percent of the links broken at last viewing.

The Lesbian/Feminist Music Links site is part of the Amazon Country/WXPN radio show web page. These links are divided into three sections: "Music Resources," "Artists' Pages," and "Lesbian and Feminist Choirs." The "Music Resources" section is a good jumping-off point,including publishers, organizations, and further lists of links. All the links in this section were valid. The next two sections, "Artists' Pages" and "Lesbian and Feminist Choirs," provide convenient access to sometimes hard-to-locate sites. However, as seems usual with lists of performers' sites, about twenty-five percent of the links were broken. Also, there is no indication of how often the site is updated.

All the above described sites, and many others, can be found on WSSLINKS (http://www.library.yale.edu/wss/), the web page of the Collection Development Committee, Women's Studies Section, Association of College and Research Libraries, under "Music."

[*Nancy M. Lewis is a musician and a Reference Librarian at Raymond H. Fogler Library, University of Maine, whose specialties include both Women's Studies and Music. She maintains the ACRL's Women's Studies Section music page: http://vega.ursus.maine.edu/lewisn/wsslinks/wommus.htm.*]

BOOKS RECENTLY RECEIVED

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Miriam Greenwald

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WRI includes these databases:

- *Women Studies Abstracts* (1984-present) is compiled and edited by Sara Stauffer Whaley.
- *Women's Studies Database* (1972-present) is compiled by Jeanne Guillaume, Women's Studies Collection Librarian of New College, University of Toronto.
- *New Books on Women & Feminism* (1987-present) is the complete guide to feminist publishing, compiled by the Women Studies Librarian, University of Wisconsin.
- *WAVE: Women's Audiovisuals in English: A Guide to Nonprint Resources in Women's Studies* (1985-90) is a guide to feminist films, videos, audio cassettes, and filmstrips, compiled by the Women Studies Librarian, University of Wisconsin.
- *Women, Race, and Ethnicity: A Bibliography* (1970-90) is an annotated, selective bibliography of books, journals, anthology chapters, and non-print materials, compiled by the Women Studies Librarian, University of Wisconsin.
- *The History of Women and Science, Health, and Technology: A Bibliographic Guide to the Professions and the Disciplines* (1970-95 selective coverage), compiled by the Women Studies Librarian, University of Wisconsin.
- *Indexes to Women's Studies Anthologies* (1980-84, 1985-89) is a keyword index to the chapters in edited women's studies anthologies, compiled by Sara Brownmiller and Ruth Dickstein (2 volume set published in print).
- *European Women from the Renaissance to Yesterday: A Bibliography* (1610-present) is compiled by Judith P. Zimmerman.
- *POPLINE Subset on Women* (1964 and earlier-present) This subset is part of the well- respected POPLINE database produced by the National Library of Medicine; an especially relevant source for reproductive health and "women in development" issues.
- *Women of Color and Southern Women: A Bibliography of Social Science Research* (1975-1995) was produced by the Research Clearinghouse on Women of Color and Southern Women at the University of Memphis in Tennessee.
- *Women's Health and Development: An Annotated Bibliography of Women's Health* (1995) provides records drawn mainly from English-language journals and other holdings of the World Health Organization library in Geneva.