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### Women's Studies Program Newsletter, Fall 2001

University of Montana–Missoula. Department of Women's Studies

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The University of Montana  
*Women's Studies Program*

Liberal Arts Building, Rm 138A  
Missoula, MT 59812, 406.243.2584  
wsprog@selway.umt.edu, www.cas.umt.edu/wsprog

Fall 2001

### Notes from the Directors

This year inaugurates some important innovations and celebrations of landmarks in the Women's Studies Program. The 2001-2002 year marks 30 years since Women's Studies was initiated by faculty across campus in a community symposium in the fall of 1971. It is also the 25th anniversary of the founding of the National Women's Studies Association, in which Judy Smith represented the University of Montana in 1977. It is also the tenth year since the Board of Regents' approval of a major in Women's Studies through the Liberal Studies program, and the extraordinary support provided by President George Dennison to found the only program in Women's Studies in the state of Montana.

We are also happy to announce new leadership in the appointment of Ramona Grey, Associate Professor of Political Science as Program Director. Ramona has organized the Women's Studies Research Forum for the past year, and applied last April to the internal search co-chaired by Jill Bergman and Sara Hayden.

G.G. Weix, who has served as Program Director since 1997 and during an interim period through her sabbatical last year, will be shifting to a new role, as Associate Director, with emphasis on development and fund-raising. This allows the Program to grow and expand, while retaining continuity in the links to foundations, and to the Friends to Women's Studies which has provided constant support throughout the last decade.

The Program has always enjoyed a broad base of participation by faculty members on its Steering Committee, many of whom offer cross-listed courses annually. This year, the Steering Committee takes on increased responsibilities for programming and events, faculty development and scholarships, curriculum and library development. The discussion at the faculty retreat on Sept. 8th ranged from revision of the mission statement to long-range planning for the next decade, including future aims for increased graduate mentorship in Women's Studies across disciplines. (Cont. on next page)



Jessica Thompson, WS student and Ramona Grey, WS Co-Director at the Fall Faculty Reception for women.. September 2001



In 1999, in an interview with The Montanan, we expressed interest in gaining research scholars affiliated with the program. In 2001, we are happy to announce the official research appointment of Dr. Dyan Mazurana (see article), who taught as a visiting professor for WS in Fall 2000, and who brings to the University grant-sponsored international research and consulting for the United Nations Security Council on the effects of peace-keeping on women and girls.

This year also marks the completion of the Montana related research of Dr. Brackette Williams, MacArthur Fellow, who has been our faculty affiliate since 1999. Brackette has visited Montana for the last four years for her comparative study of death penalty cases across 38 states, with a focus on Arizona and Montana. (see related article)

One final and important celebration of the program for the 2001-2002 year will be the completion of the Montana Feminist History Project, directed by Diane Sands and G.G. Weix. Within this effort, the initiative begun last year to research Native American women leaders in Montana will continue with oral histories gathered by Linda Juneau, M.A. candidate in the Anthropology program. Undergraduate students interested in internships participating in this Project have begun researching the reproductive rights movement since the 1970s, the peace movement in Missoula and also the founding and activities of the Women's Center since 1971. We hope these oral histories will be presented and discussed publically in future conferences, as well as permanently stored at the K.Ross Toole Archives in the Mansfield Library by Autumn 2002.

Ramona Grey & G.G. Weix, Co-Directors



Ruth Vanita(LS), Jill Bergman(ENLT), and Heather Bruce(ENT) at the Faculty Retreat

A Presentation by  
**Yolanda Becerra & Jesus Ariza**  
 October 17, 7pm  
 North Urey Lecture Hall, UM  
 Becerra is director of Organization Femenina Popular, a gender & class based organization in Columbia providing services to low-income women & their families since 1972.

## **Women's Studies Capstone Spring '02**

**The Twentieth Century  
 Lesbian/Gay Novel  
 WS494 W 3:10-6:00pm  
 Professor Vanita, LS**

This course examines the rise of lesbian/gay fiction in the twentieth century as a distinct sub-genre of fiction. We will begin with early pioneering texts like Forster's *Maurice* and Hall's *Well of Loneliness*, studying mostly text in English, but also looking at a couple of translated texts. We will also consider some short stories and experimental texts like verse-novels and poetic prose fiction.





## Women's Studies Program 2001-2002

### Co-Directors:

Ramona Grey, PSC  
G.G. Weix, ANTH

### Administrative Assistant:

Dawn Walsh, WS

### Work Study:

Jesse Kirby, ANTH

### Steering Committee:

Hitrud Arens, FLL  
Jill Bergman, ENLT  
Heather Bruce, ENT  
Bari Burke, LAW  
Ione Crummy, FLL  
Maureen Curnow, FLL  
Janet Finn, SW  
Chris Fiore, PSYC  
Carla Grayson, PSYC  
Sara Hayden, COMM  
Anya Jabour, HIST  
Maxine Jacobson, SW  
Dyan Mazurana, WS  
Lorina Quartarone, FLL  
Rita Sommers-Flanagan, COUN  
Ruth Vanita, LS  
Dawn Walsh, WS  
Celia Winkler, SOC

### Sub-Committees Chairs:

#### Programming:

Anya Jabour, HIST  
Maxine Jacobson, SW

#### Curriculum:

Ruth Vanita, LS

#### Faculty Development:

Rita Sommers-Flanagan, COUN

#### Library:

Jill Bergman, ENLT

### Research Appointment:

Dyan Mazurana, Ph.D Women's Studies

### Research Assistant:

Khrista Carlson, BA History

## Congratulations

**Women's Studies Students and Faculty!  
2000-2001 Winners:**

### Student Scholarship:

Sera Bonds, WS  
Jesse Kirby, ANTH

### Faculty Prize:

Ruth Vanita, LS

### Faculty Travel Grant:

Jill Bergman, ENLT  
Linda Gillison, FLL  
Lorina Quartarone, FLL

## A BIG THANK YOU TO THOSE "FRIENDS OF WOMEN'S STUDIES"

WHO GRACIOUSLY GAVE  
FINANCIAL SUPPORT

2000-2001

Janet Finn

Beth Judy

Shelia Skemp

Nickolaus & Regina Vonessen

Carol & Pat Williams

## Montana Feminist History Project

The purpose of the MFHP is to collect and interpret the history of the second wave of feminism in Montana and to create avenues of public education and public discourse about this history.

Interns and volunteers are invited to work on the project. Please contact:  
Diane Sands, Project Director  
251-2001 or hdsands@aol.com



## **The American Association of University Women**

The American Association of University Women is a national organization which promotes education and equity for women and girls. With 150,000 members in more than 1,500 branches, AAUW lobbies and advocates for gender equity, works to institute gender-fair education programs in schools, provides leadership training, promotes multicultural awareness and action, and educates and motivates women to become involved in the electoral process.

AAUW believes that quality public education is the cornerstone of a democratic society, works to promote individual rights, promotes economic and social well being of all persons, promotes the arts and humanities, and supports international policies of peace, justice, human rights, and sustainable development.

For many years, AAUW's voice has influenced legislative debate on critical social issues such as education, sex discrimination, civil rights, reproductive choice, affirmative action, Title IX, welfare reform, vocational education, pay equity, family and medical leave, and health care reform.

AAUW's biennial public policy priorities include:

- \* supporting a strong system of public education that promotes gender equity
- \* achieving economic self sufficiency for all women
- \* guaranteeing equality, individual rights and social justice for a diverse society

The AAUW Education Foundation funds pioneering research on girls and education, community action projects, and fellowships and grants for outstanding women around the globe. The AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund provides funds and a support system for women seeking judicial redress for sex discrimination in higher education.

In Missoula, the AAUW branch meets monthly, educating its members on current social policy issues and local community projects and initiatives. The branch also participates in community forums on issues related to women, and offers two annual scholarships to women enrolled in undergraduate education at UM.

**Membership chair:**

**Cindy Garthwait, 542-1308 or 243-2954**

## **Outfield Alliance & F.A.I.R Update**

At the University of Montana, gay and lesbian relationships are considered invalid when it comes to health benefits. "*The University of Montana does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation for benefits.*" This is an excerpt from the employee discrimination policy that is apparently entirely untrue.

The Outfield Alliance (an organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered faculty and staff) has endured a long struggle to make a domestic partnership policy available that provides healthcare benefits for the partners of gay and lesbian employees. The university currently has a policy to provide benefits for the partners of unmarried heterosexual couples. Last year the statewide benefits committee highly recommended changing the policy to include gays and lesbians, however the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Board of Regents turned down their recommendation. Now the American Civil Liberties Union, (ACLU) has stepped in to help. On behalf of three plaintiffs, they will be filing suit against the State of Montana under the Equal Protection clause of the Montana State Constitution sometime in the next couple of months. The ACLU lawyers believe Montana has one of the strongest constitutions in regards to protection of personal freedoms and feel optimistic about the case. They will be filing suit in Helena district court.

In affiliation with the suit being filed by the ACLU against the University of Montana, a community-wide organization has taken the lead on educating the public about issues facing the GLBT members of our communities. F.A.I.R. (Freedom and Individual Rights) campaign's educational outreach includes producing a video called "Our Faces." The video will portray the faces of Gays, Lesbians and their supporters talking about their lives in Montana. Much of the filming occurred this summer at the PRIDE camp in the Flathead Valley. Further filming and editing will take place this fall. The video is being produced by volunteer labor and on limited funds so contributions are welcome. Carol Snetsinger, [snets@selway.umt.edu](mailto:snets@selway.umt.edu).



## W.O.R.D.: FIFTEEN YEARS OF FEISTY FEMINISM

Women's Opportunity & Resource Development, or WORD, is one of several vibrant, grass-roots organizations bringing a feminist vision of social justice to Missoula and the surrounding community. Founded fifteen years ago by a handful of women involved in The University of Montana's Women's Resource Center, WORD is home to five projects aimed at developing solutions to the problems of poverty, teen pregnancy, family literacy, and the lack of affordable housing in our community. The impact of WORD's work has not gone unnoticed at the local level, but perhaps even more telling of its successes, WORD has been the recipient of numerous national grants and awards. In 1999-2000 alone, WORD's Family BASICS Housing Services was one of 50 programs in the nation to receive a HUD Best Practices Award; WORD's Gearing Up was one of ten programs to receive a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor for Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations, and homeWORD received a national Fannie Mae Award of Excellence.

In addition to its five ongoing programs, WORD is involved in community outreach, often leading to collaboration with students, staff, and faculty from The University of Montana's Women's Center and Women's Studies Program. For example, several members of WORD's staff helped to establish the Vagina Monologues as part of the University's V-Day College Initiative and last year WORD sponsored its first annual Many Faces of Women Event. Held in honor of International Women's day, the event featured a rally during which several international students from UM spoke as well as a celebration involving local performers, an auction of hand-made masks, and international food. Currently WORD is in the process of establishing an endowment

fund to ensure that it will have the financial resources to continue bringing its feminist vision to the Missoula community. With the stability the endowment will bring, WORD should be around for at least another fifteen years, offering us all the opportunity to celebrate its feminist vision and to participate in grassroots feminist activism.

**Sara Hayden**

**WS Faculty & WORD Board Member**

## ANNUAL FALL RECEPTION FOR WOMEN FACULTY



Jill Belsky(SOC), Maxine Jacobson(SW) and Neva Hassenein(EVST)

Since 1993, the Women's Studies Program has been hosting an annual Fall Reception to welcome new and returning women faculty to the University of Montana. This event is an important opportunity for new women faculty to meet up with seasoned women faculty and develop mentoring relationships. The Women's Studies Program would like to thank President Dennison for his support of this event.







## A THANK YOU AND A FAREWELL FROM WS FACULTY AFFILIATE BRACKETTE WILLIAMS

There is an expression, once common, now seldom heard, in my world and others, that some debts make "salt people." It refers to "borrowing" a commodity which was believed to be inappropriate to repay in kind. The exchange creates a form of social symbiosis between the borrower and lender, leaving the borrower permanently in debt to those who provide that commodity. Highest among the many forms of social interaction that produce such debts are those entailed in anthropological research. To the Women's Studies Program, I own up to owing such a debt. The unit offered me an institutional affiliation for a project that was intended for completion within 18 months to two years. In return, nothing was asked of me but that I carry out the project.

As I work now to create a product from that research, I thank the Women's Studies staff for their very kind and open assistance. The Program and the University of Montana provided a home away from home, a port in a storm, that at times threatened to overwhelm energy and emotion. Within the Women Studies faculty, most particularly, I offer thanks to G.G. Weix, who provided a listening ear, comments, advice, contacts, and, above all, conviviality and friendship. I also thank Bari Burke, who offered these critical inputs, as well as lessons in how to locate material in the Law Library. With the joy of bringing the project, finally, to a conclusion, comes the sadness of letting go of patterns of close even if intermittent interaction. I will remain grateful for their willingness to see in a project on killing and classification, focused on the highly problematic "death penalty," the broader links to concerns with problems of social injustices and categorically informed, directed and structured political and economic inequalities which have historically animate, and continue currently to animate, epistemology and pedagogy in Women Studies. Such was not a response to be automatically expected; by no means a foregone conclusion. Given the centrality of the "death penalty" in the project, and the numerical predominance of men subject to that penalty, they could, have concluded, as others proclaim, that "this is not a women's issue. To recognize that the social, political and economic fate of men who kill, and are marked to be killed, is no less a "women's issue" than attention to women and children who kill and are marked to be killed, for such actions are part and parcel of processes that delimit, stabilize, and/or destabilize what we can mean by the concept of the *human*.

Until we meet again between the pages of a "product" made possible by the "kindness of strangers," I say farewell, and may the Women Studies Program fare well in its ongoing efforts to bring critical understanding to the very difficult problems we all face in forming and maintaining relations worthy of the adjective, human.

Brackette F. Williams, Ph.D.  
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellow

Brackette Williams, Ph.D and  
G.G. Weix, WS Co-Director  
September 2001





## **Grant Projects Housed in Women's Studies Focus on Gender and War**

I, Khristopher Carlson, am currently working with Dyan Mazurana on the topic of girl soldiers in militaries, paramilitaries, militias and armed opposition groups (see Spring 2001 WS newsletter). As I write this, Dr. Mazurana is traveling through rural Mozambique meeting with former girl combatants of government and opposition forces, thankful, no doubt, for her witty and insightful translators who fill in where her Portuguese and Changhana drop off. Her research is going well and she has met with many women and girls eager to speak of their experiences during the war there. As one can expect in a country ruined by 16-years of bloody civil war, the social and economic conditions of Mozambique are testing her mettle. While Dr. Mazurana and her research partner Dr. Susan McKay (University of Wyoming) are in Mozambique, I have been working on other projects in addition to our girl soldiers work here in Missoula.

I have been assisting Dr. Mazurana and Dr. Sandra Whitworth (University of York, Canada) in organizing a monumental United Nations' study on the topic of women, peace and security. This UN study was called for in Security Council resolution 1325 in October 2000, with its primary focus on three areas: the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution. Drs. Mazurana and Whitworth, as head consultants, are in the first phase of the study collecting relevant information from UN agencies, NGOs and a pool of international experts on topical areas such as refugee law, economic sanctions,

disarmament and demobilization programs, and women's health and nutrition programs. The study will outline recommendations for implementation by the UN and Member States on improving the incorporation of gender perspectives into peace and security work, with emphasis on human rights and humanitarian assistance, at the international, regional, national and local levels.

I have also been assisting Dr. Mazurana with *Gender, Complex Emergencies, and Peacekeeping: National and International Perspectives*, an anthology with contributions from international feminist on gender, armed conflict, post conflict reconstruction and women's human rights. The book will offer analysis of peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor and Sierra Leone.

Additional fieldwork for the girl soldiers project will be conducted intermittently throughout 2001-2002 in Uganda, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Many thanks for the support and wisdom of G.G. Weix, Dawn Walsh and the rest of the Women's Studies Department. Without their thoughtful insights and patience, our work would be impossible to manage.

### **Practical Ethics Night Presents: "Philosophical Thought on Women Through the Ages"**

**November 16, 7pm  
at Perugia's**

**Program includes:  
the innate nature of woman  
perception of spheres of control  
sex, power, manipulation  
relationships  
music, skits, readings & discussion**



## Feminist Activism at UM: An Opportunity to Get Involved in a Good Cause

### The Women's Center: Take Back the Night

Take Back the Night has moved back to the fall! TBNT is an international protest against violence against women. This year the rally and march is to be held on Friday, October 26 at 7pm at the Courthouse in downtown Missoula. The theme this year is: "Communities Prevent Violence: Trusting Our Roots to Help Us Grow." The power and importance of community in the healing process for a survivor of sexual assault is the focus of this year's event. We all know how important it is to have support when we are going through a difficult time in our lives. The value of a loving community should not be underestimated. When a community unites behind a single cause, the silence ends and the healing process begins. By honoring the courage it takes to be a survivor, the cycle of silence that hides the realities of sexual assault begins to break. TBNT involves an entire week's worth of activities. This year's events are as follows:

**10/22: Mo Trans Dance Concert**  
**10/23: "Dreamworlds," film & discussion**  
**10/24: Bystander Training**  
**10/25: Drawing the Shades Performance**  
**10/26: March, Rally and Speakout**

For event time and place contact the Women's Center at **243-4253**. If you are interested in **becoming a volunteer**, please call the Women's Center.

### Working for Equality & Economic Liberation

WEEL (Working for Equality and Economic Liberation) is a grassroots poverty rights organization. We currently have three chapters in Montana; Helena, Missoula, and the UM campus. The Missoula members and friends meet monthly and October's meeting will take place on Friday the 26th, at 102 McLeod Avenue (Unitarian Fellowship) at 5:30-7pm. WEEL always provides free childcare and dinner (usually a potluck meal). WEEL can be reached at UM at **243-4155** or in Missoula at 543-2530 or try our website at [www.weelempowers.org](http://www.weelempowers.org). We are currently working towards the re-authorization of TANF (Temporary Assistance of Needy Families) for September of 2002.

#### **We need your help.**

WEEL is membership lead and based—we have incredible members with great ideas. One such idea, the AHIC (At Home Infant Care Program) recently passed through the legislature! It enables parents to receive a small stipend to stay at home with their child for up to two years. WEEL uses the empowerment model for organizing. We work together for the betterment of low-income families of all shapes and sizes. Join us at MamaJam, our annual outreach and fund-raising event on Mother's Day weekend.

**Mary Burwell**  
**Missoula Board Member,**  
**WS Student and Mama of two**



## **Sera Bonds Shares her Trip to India and Reflects on her Career as a Women's Studies Student**

I returned to academia three years ago in search of kindred spirits. Tired of reading books about women and talking to myself about injustice, I chose to enroll in the University of Montana's Women's Studies Program. My courses in Women's Studies have led me along a path that I only dreamt of before. The women who have gone before me provide guidance as I forage a path illuminated with the promise of change, equality, freedom of expression and a truer sense of self. I have found camaraderie in Women's Studies courses, where a safe space exists for women, and men who support women, to redefine the rules by which life is lived.

During Fall 2000, I traveled to India, where I experienced a deeper journey of my spirit. I lived with a host family who offered me a crash course in traditional family values, Hindi style. I spent two months studying Hindi, development theory and gender issues. I then spent three months volunteering in the delivery ward of a rural hospital in the shadows of the Himalayan Mountains. While living at the hospital, I lead workshops on family planning and healthy pregnancy and attended many births (I caught my first baby on a cold blustery night! It was magical).

While in India, my beliefs were tested as I struggled to wrap my heart around the magnitude of contrast I experienced with every new day. I experienced each challenge on a visceral level. I realized that every struggle has a purpose and a unique outcome. I came to realize that if I were to continue judging these majestic people through the lens of a western feminist, I would miss the beauty of the gift I was being given. Fortunately, I had learned from Women's Studies curriculum that to truly support one another through challenges, whether they be for equal pay, access to health care or the right to clean water, I had to accept that each woman's choice was her own.

Women's Studies has drawn me to the path of activism. I'm beginning a second year as a staff member for the Women's Center, an entry-level feminist organization at UM. My responsibilities are as diverse as overseeing a volunteer base of thirty students to organizing community events like Take Back the Night (see related article). The community leadership and organizing training I received at the Women's Center has heightened my sense of awareness regarding women's issues.

As a soon to be graduate of UM's Women's Studies Program, I will continue to question, constructively analyze and seek out the pro-active path. My courses in Women's Studies have satisfied the thirst for knowledge that brought me to UM. Now I crave a space to broaden my activist horizons while integrating my women's health background. My next step will be to apply to graduate programs to pursue a career in public health.

Possibly the most important lesson I have learned from my Women's Studies courses at UM has been that feminism wears as many guises as the world wears colors. All women are worthy of respect, support and autonomy. As a 'good feminist,' it's my duty to do all I can to create a world where women are safe to pursue whatever they choose.

**Sera Bonds**  
**Women's Studies**  
**Graduating Senior**

Sera and her new friends  
India, Fall 2000





### **BECOME A FRIEND!**

Support research and scholarship about women, and activities and programs of  
**UM Women's Studies Program**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 sponsor

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 Patron

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ \$Other

As a Friend, you will receive our newsletter and announcements of our programming.

Please make checks payable to **The University of Montana Foundation**  
and note "**Women's Studies**" in the memo portion of your check.

Mail to: UM Foundation, P.O. Box 7159, Missoula, MT 59807-7159      Thank You!      M199

### **National Women's Studies Association 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference**

Celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of NWSA

**June 13-16, 2002 Las Vegas, Nevada**

Hosted by the Women's Studies Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

**Proposal Deadline: November 4, 2001**

**Contact: nwsa2002@nevada.edu or 702.895.1525**

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