

1998

and margins

FALL

# Center *from the*

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY · UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

## CSWS Lands \$250,000 Grant

A proposal to study the intersections of gender, science, and the sacred has brought a \$250,000 Rockefeller Foundation grant to the Center for the Study of Women in Society. The quarter-of-a-million-dollar grant is not only the first Rockefeller grant received by the University of Oregon, it is the first that has ever been awarded in the humanities in the state. The proposal, "Ecological Conversations: Gender, Science, and the Sacred," was originally conceived and developed by the Women and the Environment RIG, under the direction of Irene Diamond, associate professor of political science, and CSWS Director Sandra Morgen. Additional faculty members from English, biology, sociology, landscape architecture, philosophy, history, and other fields, as well as representatives of other RIGs, participated in weekly meetings to draft the final proposal. Diamond and Morgen are co-principal investigators for the project, which will be funded over a four-year period beginning July 1998.

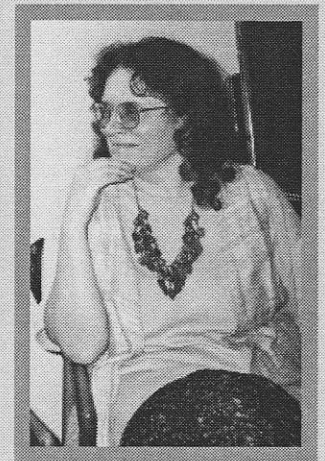
"This will certainly put CSWS on the map in terms of these issues," Diamond said. "One thing it will do is establish the importance of looking at gender and ecology in conjunction with each other. It's just amazing to me how rarely they are looked at together. This gives us the opportunity to bring ecofeminism into the academy and to complicate the conversations we can have about it." Diamond said that one of the strengths of the proposal was the broad range of support for the project from scholars in many disciplines across campus.

The grant is designed to sponsor a number of visiting scholars on campus who will have the opportunity to pursue their own research interests while contributing to the ongoing discussion on the project's main themes. The project is committed to recruiting at least half of the visiting scholars from outside of the United States, particularly from universities and grassroots environmental movements in the developing world. The first year of the project (1998-99) is an organizational period, during which CSWS will appoint a project director and advertise for the visiting scholar positions. Up to three visiting scholars will be selected each year to be in residence on campus. The scholars will be expected to carry out their own research; participate in a bi-weekly seminar with the Women and the Environment RIG; give a public lecture, preferably at a UO conference; participate in the annual CSWS conference; and write a short article for the CSWS newsletter or similar publication.

Each of the program years will focus on a different set of issues relating to the overall theme. According to the proposal, scholars during the first year (1999-2000) will "concentrate on the conceptual and theoretical issues raised by the conjunction of women's movements and environmental movements." Some questions may include: What is the nature of nature? How do we understand ties to place in a world where displacement is increasingly the norm? What are the inter-relationships between human histories and cosmic history?

During the next year (2000-2001), science will come to the fore of the discussion. "[T]he project will address more directly the cultural and social analysis of science and science policy, how science is used and understood by ecological writers and activists, and the ethical issues raised by contemporary biotechnologies," the proposal says. "Our goal here is a lively dialogue that will bring scientists, scholars, and activists together to explore how environmental studies and politics are expanding beyond a Western "scientized" environmentalism, particularly as the voices of ecofeminists, indigenous peoples, and non-Western scientists are increasingly heard." The final year will weave together the themes of the previous years "for the purpose of envisioning understandings of the sacred that meet the challenges of the contemporary world."

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Irene Diamond, associate professor of political science

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## CSWS

By Sandra Morgen, Director

Over the course of the next six months, faculty, students, and staff at the university will have the chance to be part of a campus dialogue about affirmative action. Two major events are being planned that will create a series of opportunities to explore affirmative action and the larger goal of racial and gender equity in this society. Early in the fall Richard Delgado, the Wayne Morse Chairholder for 1998–1999, will speak in various venues on campus and in the community, helping to usher in what the Morse Chair committee plans as a campus dialogue on affirmative action. On February 12, affirmative action will be one of a number of key issues that will be examined in the CSWS-sponsored conference, "Border Lies: Race, Identity and Citizenship."

This campus dialogue comes not one moment too soon. In 1996, California voters passed an initiative that ended affirmative action as state policy. Everyone has probably heard by now that college and university admissions of students of color (with the exception of Asian-Americans) have fallen dramatically in California, and elsewhere where challenges to affirmative action have been successful. This fall voters in Washington state will be voting on an initiative similar to California's proposition 209, with the ballot title, "Washington Civil Rights Initiative."

In the midst of what is sure to be a "sound-bite" approach to political discussion in the wake of the Washington initiative, it is important that we—as citizens of this university and state—carefully consider the merits and limitations of this particular mechanism of promoting equity, as well as the larger political and cultural issues that

frame discussions of race and gender in the United States today.

Curiously, affirmative action is coded primarily as a "race" issue. I say "curiously" because research on the impact of affirmative action shows compellingly that the primary beneficiaries of affirmative action gains have been women, and particularly Euro-American women. It is important that we all develop a better understanding of how affirmative action, in concert with a number of other important policies, helped to promote and sustain institutional changes that resulted in the establishment of CSWS, the Women's Studies Program, the Ethnic Studies Program, and a broadening curriculum and research agenda in most of the programs here at the University of Oregon. One of the things we have learned from research on the political campaign to end affirmative action (such as Lydia Chavez's excellent book *The Color Bind: California's Battle to End Affirmative Action*) is that most people "sit out" the discussion. They know nothing more about the strengths and weaknesses of affirmative action as a social policy after the ballots are counted than they did before the debates even began. A serious, inclusive campus dialogue on affirmative action, and on the academic and other goals it seeks to fulfill, could make our community at the University of Oregon different.

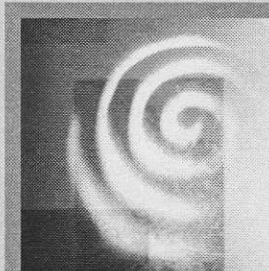
As scholars, we are at our best when we mobilize our collective expertise to explore tough issues facing our society. If we do this well, we can be leaders in envisioning the best policies for our own institution. And we can model an approach to discussion that supplants stereotypes with knowledge; knee-jerk beliefs with considered opinion; and single-issue politics with careful, contextualized exploration of social policy alternatives.

## Rockefeller Grant

*Continued from page 1*

Lynn Szwaja, senior research associate at the Rockefeller Foundation, conducted the site visit prior to the announcement of the award. She praised the quality of the proposal. "The project, dealing with science, religion, and gender, was found to be innovative and breaking new ground in the humanities by our distinguished international panel," she said.

According to CSWS Director Sandi Morgen, CSWS's success in receiving the Rockefeller grant is based on the strength of the excellence of scholarship on gender and the environment here at the University of Oregon. "If you combine the international reputation of Irene Diamond, the outstanding scholarship and reputations of other RIG members such as Molly Westling, Suzanne Clark, and Cheris Kramerae, the strong support we got from so many faculty who have research interests in the environment, and the invaluable critique offered by the Native Communities RIG, it is easy to see why we could write a strong proposal and why I have great hopes for this four-year endeavor," she said. "Our goals are to ask provocative questions, stimulate debate, and foster an inclusive dialogue about gender, science and the sacred."



Sandra Morgen,  
Director, CSWS

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(unless otherwise noted)



# "Border Lies" to Look at the Future of Backlash

"Border Lies: Race, Identity and Citizenship" is the theme of this year's annual RIG-A-Fair, which will focus on the convergent discourses of affirmative action, immigration, and citizenship in the political realm and the recent scholarship on race in the academy. The interdisciplinary symposium, bringing together faculty and students who belong to thirteen Research Interest Groups (RIGs) with leading scholars from off-campus, will be held on Friday, February 12, 1999, in Gerlinger Lounge.

"We chose this conference theme with two main things in mind," said Sandra Morgen, CSWS director. "Clearly, the struggle for racial justice is being fought, in part, over border/boundary issues such as affirmative action and immigration, two 'hot-button' issues in today's political landscape. Within the academy, race is being theorized in increasingly complex and sophisticated ways as critical race theorists, feminists, and scholars in fields such as cultural and ethnic studies break through traditional intellectual boundaries.

"The conference will explore the implications of this scholarship in the context of these highly contested policy issues in order to both envision strategies that promote racial justice and shed light on the significance of these issues for those who seek to better understand and theorize gender, race, class, ethnicity, and citizenship," she said.

Four prominent scholars have been invited to participate in the conference, which will likely feature smaller, break-out roundtable discussions in addition to two

plenary panels. Featured speakers at the conference include three leading scholars whose research is on race, citizenship, and affirmative action: Dorothy Roberts, professor of law at Northwestern University School of Law and author of *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*; Patricia Penn Hilden, professor of ethnic studies at the University of California—Berkeley and author of *When Nickels Were Indians*; and Lydia Chavez, associate professor of journalism at U.C.—Berkeley and author of *The Color Bind: California's Battle to End Affirmative Action*. In addition, UO faculty members and CSWS affiliates Shari Huhndorf, assistant professor, English; Ajuan Mance, assistant professor, English; and Lynn Stephen, professor, anthropology and international studies; have been invited to share their research and theoretical insights at the conference.

The event is still in the early planning stages, but one approach currently under consideration is to hold one plenary session in the morning with panelists and discussion; one break-out session in the afternoon for interdisciplinary roundtable talks; and a final plenary session that would feature a brief presentation synthesizing major issues of the day, followed by more question-and-answer periods and feedback from the earlier roundtables. The conference would end with an informal reception. RIG coordinators, with feedback from their groups, are expected to make final decisions about the format in October.

Plan to join us Friday, February 12.



## CSWS Salon

In preparation for the 1999 RIG-A-Fair, CSWS will be sponsoring a reading and discussion series—salons, if you will—based on the works of invited speakers, such as excerpts from *The Color Bind* by Lydia Chavez and *Killing the Black Body* by Dorothy Roberts; and current essays by Patricia Penn Hilden. The series is still in its planning stages, so watch for details. Give us a call if you want to participate, 346-5015, or drop a line to [csws@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:csws@oregon.uoregon.edu).

## Reception for New Women Faculty

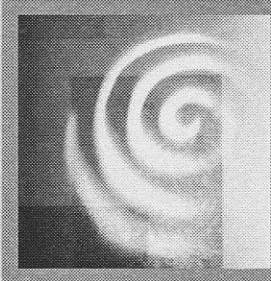
3:30 to 5:00 p.m., Thursday, October 8

The Center for the Study of Women in Society, the Women's Studies Program, and the Women's Faculty Resource Network (WFRN) would like to welcome all new women faculty members with a special reception from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 8, in Gerlinger Lounge.

The program will include brief introductions of the new women faculty members, short presentations by CSWS, the Women's Studies Program, and the WFRN to introduce new faculty members to some of the programs responsible for research, teaching, and institutional advocacy for women and gender; and some good food, drink, and music.

All CSWS Affiliates are invited to come welcome our new colleagues and greet each other upon our return to campus.





Everything you wanted to know about RIGs—you still might have to ask, but here's a start. This year, we're profiling four RIGs in each issue, so readers get a better look into the inspiring and varied activities of the RIGs. Check out the RIG Directory and contact coordinators to get involved with any of the thirteen RIGs sponsored by CSWS.

## Research Interest Groups

### Women's Health and Development

The Women's Health and Development RIG offers its members an interdisciplinary approach to understanding women's health and development over the life cycle. Unlike most RIGs, our membership consists of not only University of Oregon faculty members and graduate students, but includes a large number of community affiliates who share an interest in research about women's health and development. We are also committed to information dissemination that can be utilized by those outside of the academic community who are direct service providers. Our RIG provides an opportunity for building and sustaining open discussions among researchers and community advocates who are committed to improving the lives of women and girls.

We are also unique in that our RIG consists of several subgroups reflecting specific interests within the broad area of women's health and development. With a number of strong, active subgroups, much of our RIG's work occurs within our subgroups. During the upcoming year, each subgroup will be responsible for developing, implementing, and publicizing at least one program that is of interest to RIG members and others.

Each subgroup meets on a regular basis to explore and develop their specific interest. The girls subgroup is interested in collaborative research and dissemination, networking on needs of local girls, and development of community strategies to help girls succeed. The women and violence subgroup explores issues of gender violence across the life span and hopes to develop collaborative projects and strategies with community partners (such as Sexual Assault Support Services and Womenspace) for addressing violence in women's lives. One of our newest groups is the mid-life and menopause subgroup; members have a strong interest in reading and discussing primary research about the effects of menopause on women's health. Currently we are forming a subgroup around the topic of alternative health care.

For more information about the Women's Health and Development RIG, see our Web site at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~csws/> or come to one of our RIG or subgroup meetings.

—Jean Blanchard, coordinator

### Women and Media

The Women and Media RIG looks back on a very successful first year. Our bi-weekly meetings have provided a wonderful opportunity for interdisciplinary discussion. With its interest in the intersection of gender, culture, and media, the group has drawn participants from various areas of the university, including English, sociology, communication studies, women's studies, and political science.

After an initial period of defining the interests of our members and the directions they would like the RIG to take, the first term was devoted to the discussion of images of the breast and mastectomies in the media. The second term was mainly spent with the preparation for the Girls, Generations, and Globalization conference. Our panel was a great success! Approximately forty-five people attended (a mix of university faculty members and students, members of the community, and teenage girls) and engaged in a lively discussion after the viewing of *Daria* (a program centering on the life of a high school girl) and several clips representing contemporary teen shows on TV.

During the spring term several RIG members presented their research, which ranged from daytime TV talk shows and melodrama to the *X-Files* and the Internet. The RIG will continue to feature the work-in-progress of its members.

Goals for the upcoming year include setting up our own Web site with contributions of various kinds (including annotated bibliographies and filmographies and essays) and hosting two film festivals: one for university teachers to preview videos that could be used in the classroom when discussing issues of gender and media; the other in conjunction with the CSWS conference and structured around issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and the media.

New members from the university and the community are welcome! We look forward to stimulating and exciting discussions and projects in the upcoming year. For more information about the Women and Media RIG, contact:

Beate Gersch at  
<[beate@darkwing.uoregon.edu](mailto:beate@darkwing.uoregon.edu)> or  
Ellen Riordan at  
<[eriordan@darkwing.uoregon.edu](mailto:eriordan@darkwing.uoregon.edu)>.

—Beate Gersch, co-coordinator



## Gender in Historical and TransNational China

The Gender in Historical and TransNational China RIG is a multidisciplinary and multi-institutional study group focusing on the study of women and gender in Chinese society. Our RIG includes historians, geographers, political scientists, art historians, and specialists in literature from the UO, Lewis & Clark College, Reed College, and Portland State University. Through regular discussions of recent scholarship, members' work-in-progress reports, and lectures by invited speakers, we are examining women's roles and gender relations in Chinese society, over both time and space. By covering a generous historical span (both the imperial and modern societies), we can investigate changes and continuities in women's history and, more particularly, how the complex interplay of "tradition" and "modernity" colors ongoing debates about gender roles in contemporary China. And, by including the Chinese Diaspora in our understanding of "Chinese society," we are able to study Chinese social practices as they are transplanted to very new contexts in Southeast Asia or the Americas, to research, for example, such topics as the impact of overseas migration on family life and patterns of women's work.

This year the RIG plans to continue its previous pattern of activities—regular discussions, work-in-progress sessions, and invited lectures. In the spring, we will recruit a China scholar to participate in the work-in-progress series developed by the Reclaiming the Past RIG. This year, however, with the support of a RIG development grant, we will focus our attention on planning a conference, tentatively titled "Women and Work in China from Empire to 'Modernity.'" This conference has several goals: to synthesize important work now being done in the China field on women and work; to provide the foundation for new theoretical insights on women and gender roles in late imperial and modern Chinese societies; and to provide a forum for communication between members of our RIG, local scholars of gender in other historical and social contexts, and other American and international scholars working on this topic in the China field.

—Cynthia Brokaw, coordinator

## Women and Gender in Vietnam

This summer, the Women and Gender in Vietnam RIG co-hosted (with the University of Oregon-Vietnam National University Sister University project) a six-week residency of Ta Anh Dao from the Vietnam Women's Union. Dao, who edits the English-language publication, *Women of Vietnam*, studied English at the American English Institute and worked with RIG members on a number of projects. This fall several RIG members will be in Vietnam for research trips. Nguyen Bich (graduate student, EDPM) is gathering data for her dissertation on gender and higher education during September. Tra Phuong Nguyen is spending fall term pursuing her research on the "international brain drain" within Vietnam. Jessica Rothenberg-Aalami plans an intensive research visit during the fall to examine the working conditions of selected factory workers, many of whom are women. Rob Proudfoot, associate professor of international studies and director of the Sister University Project, will lead a field school for selected graduate students in Vietnam this fall.

—Sandra Morgen, coordinator

## RIG Directory

### Gender in Historical and TransNational China

Cynthia Brokaw, cbrokaw@oregon

### Jewish Feminist Theory

Diane Baxter, dbaxter@oregon

Elizabeth Reis, lzreis@darkwing

### Native American Communities

Beth Hege Piatote, piatote@darkwing

### Rationality, Intuition, and Gender

Nancy Tuana, ntuana@darkwing

### Reclaiming the Past

Barbara Altmann, baltmann@oregon

### Sex, Gender, and the Law

Peggy Pascoe, ppasscoe@darkwing

### Wired

Judith Musick, musick@oregon

### Women and the Environment

Irene Diamond, idiamond@oregon

### Women and Gender in Vietnam

Sandra Morgen, smorgen@oregon

### Women and Leadership in Education

Francoise Bodone, fran@darkwing

Nitza Schwabsky, nitzas@oregon

### Women in the Media

Beate Gersch, beate@darkwing

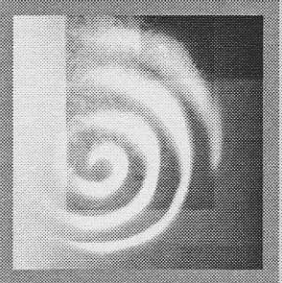
Ellen Riordan, eriordan@darkwing

### Women, Work, and Economic Restructuring

Joan Acker, jacker@oregon

### Women's Health and Development

Jean Blanchard, jlb-gcs@worldnet.att.net



## Kudos!

**Susan Boynton**, music, Reclaiming the Past RIG, is one of two recipients of a 1998–99 National Endowment for the Humanities Postdoctoral Rome Prize Fellowship for Post-Classical Humanistic Studies at the American Academy in Rome.

**Madonna L. Moss**, anthropology, Rationality, Intuition, and Gender RIG, and Jon M. Erlandson, anthropology, published "A Comparative Chronology of Northwest Coast Fishing Features" in *Hidden Dimensions: The Cultural Significance of Wetland Archaeology*.

**Shari Huhndorf**, English, Native American Communities RIG, received a Ford Foundation grant and is on leave 1998–99 to finish her manuscript, *Going Native*.

**S. Marie Harvey**, CSWS, has published the book, *The New Civil War: The Psychology, Culture, and Politics of Abortion*, edited in conjunction with Linda Beckman.

Do members of your RIG have good news to share? Drop a line to Beth at <piatote@darkwing.uoregon.edu> and put "kudos!" in the subject line.



## Initiative Updates

### Women's Health and Aging Research Initiative

Women's Health and Aging Research Initiative (WHARI) members have been busy with several projects over the summer. Meredith Roberts Branch is working with the Western Rivers Girl Scout Council to develop an evaluation for their after-school program for at-risk girls. She will be working with the Girl Scouts in writing proposals to seek external funding for their program.

Cynthia Adams is currently working on two grant applications. She is proposing to the Archstone Foundation to develop a video program on memory and aging. She is also designing a study, to be submitted to the National Institutes on Aging, that will examine the effects of patronizing communication on self-esteem and cognitive competence in older adults. Adams was also invited to speak on memory and menopause at the twenty-second annual Gerontology Conference in Corvallis and at Kaiser-Permanente in Portland.

Sheryl Thorburn Bird and Marie Harvey are co-authors, with Linda Beckman, of an article titled "Emergency Contraceptive Pills: An Exploratory Study of Knowledge and Perceptions Among Mexican Women from Both Sides of the Border" that will be published in a special issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association* on emergency contraception. The article presents results from their recently completed study on the acceptability of emergency contraceptive pills among Mexican women. They are also presenting their findings at the upcoming meetings of the American Psychological Association and the American Public Health Association.

Bird and Harvey have also submitted an application to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) for a study titled "Men, Relationships, and Adult Nonmarital Childbearing."

The proposed study involves conducting focus group interviews with men and women in three cities, focusing on men's role in decision-making, especially pregnancy resolution/abortion, couple dynamics including power with respect to reproductive decisions and behavior, and views about parenthood. They will be submitting another proposal to NICHD this fall.

—Meredith Roberts Branch



### Feminist Humanities Project

The Feminist Humanities Project (FHP) anticipates a wonderfully fruitful year in two major areas of its ongoing endeavors.

First, FHP has created "Teaching the Past in the Present: Gender in History," which is a project comprising CSWS faculty affiliates and local secondary teachers concerned with questions such as: How do we discover and teach about the lives of women and the meaning of gender in pre-modern times? How do we encourage and guide students to make the leap forward into the past? How can we best create links for collaborative research and development of resources among our learning communities in Oregon and elsewhere?

Teaching the Past in the Present's primary goal is to create and disseminate scholarly content and pedagogical materials through course development, multi-media, and team teaching for multiple audiences of teachers and learners. The project focuses on women's spiritual, artistic, and socio-political places, from the medieval music and writings of Hildegard of Bingen in Europe to the influence of Abigail Scott Duniway and nineteenth-century feminist activism in Oregon.

Second, FHP has launched the Virtual Resource Bank (VRB), an evolving electronic database to support the teaching and research of gender in history. VRB gathers syllabi, texts, images, sounds, maps, multi-media, course material, lesson plans, curricula, annotated bibliographies, and other Web site databases and resources to support and enhance the teaching and research needs of interdisciplinary research communities locally, nationally, and internationally. An innovative component of VRB is its creation of "virtual spaces" of women in the past. For example, there will be a "room" filled with the everyday artifacts of twelfth-century abbess Hildegard of Bingen. Her music will be heard and the contents of her bookshelf, closet, paintings, and visions will be seen. Such rooms will be accessible to an audience from grade school to graduate school. Zoe Borovsky, assistant professor of Germanic languages and literature, directs VRB's Web site.

—Hannah Dillon





## Women in the Northwest Research Initiative

During the spring and summer, members of the welfare reform research team (Joan Acker, Kate Barry, Sandra Morgen, Sonja Vegdahl, Jill Weigt, and Suzanne Williams) logged hundreds of hours of observation and interviewing at the three branch offices of Adult and Family Services (AFS, the state welfare agency) in which they are doing ethnographic fieldwork as the first phase of their study of welfare reform in Oregon.

In addition, they worked on a grant proposal that was submitted by AFS to the Department of Health and Human Services for a study of clients who have been diverted from TANF (cash assistance) or who have left TANF either because of securing employment, having their case closed by AFS (for noncompliance), or for other reasons. If they receive the grant they will explore how leaving or being diverted from cash assistance has affected the economic and family

well-being of welfare clients in Oregon.

Bonni Cermak, a history graduate student, received a summer grant from CSWS to write an introductory history of public welfare in Oregon as part of the Women in the Northwest Initiative. Cermak's study traces the evolution of state welfare policy in Oregon from early statehood to the organization of the Department of Human Resources in the early 1970s. More specifically, her study emphasizes how Oregon responded to the changing needs of its population through welfare reforms and the ways in which these reforms were gendered.

Two publishing projects are also underway as part of the initiative. One is the inauguration of a new public policy series called *Policy Matters*. The other involves co-publishing a sourcebook with the Institute for Women's Policy Research in Washington, D.C., called *The Status of Women in Oregon*. See pages 8-9 for a more complete description of these two publishing projects.

—Sandra Morgen

## Staff Update

Several changes have taken place in our staff—including the addition of some new faces in the office—over the past year. For more complete biographies of our staff members, visit our Web site at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~csws/>.

**Sandra Morgen**, director of CSWS, will again serve full-time for CSWS this coming year.

**S. Marie Harvey**, director of research, is commuting to Los Angeles each month to work on her CDC-funded project which involves in-depth interviews with Mexican immigrant couples to assess predictors of sexual risk behavior.

**Judith Musick**, who has worked as director of development since 1996, has been named associate director of CSWS.

**Lin Reilly** has been promoted to accountant and grant administrator.

**Meredith Roberts Branch**, research assistant, most recently served as the project coordinator for the evaluation of a domestic violence prevention project in Hood River. Currently, she is working on several projects related to reproductive health and fertility.

**Beth Hege Piatote**, research assistant, has increased her hours at CSWS, but will continue to teach at the School of Journalism and Communication as an adjunct assistant professor.

**Shirley Marc**, office manager, handles many special projects including Wednesday at Noon talks, conference coordination, and RIG-related functions.

### FEMINIST HUMANITIES PROJECT (FHP) STAFF

**Hannah Dillon** assists the FHP staff in supplying text for the Web site and information for their research needs.

**Dan Gilfillan** began working in June 1998 as a graduate teaching fellow for FHP and CSWS, providing primarily Web site design.

**John Shin** began working as senior research assistant for the FHP in April and is responsible for implementing the Virtual Resource Bank and helping with computer-related projects.

### WOMEN IN THE NORTHWEST INITIATIVE STAFF

**Terri Heath** joins the Welfare Research Project as research associate and project manager. On leave from her job as associate director of the UO's Social Science Instruction Lab, she has done extensive research on family well-being and human services.

### WOMEN'S HEALTH AND AGING RESEARCH INITIATIVE STAFF

**Sheryl Thorburn Bird** begins her second year as a research associate. Her current research projects are: the determinants and consequences of nonmarital childbearing among adult women; racial, ethnic, and sociodemographic differences in birth outcomes; the acceptability of emergency contraceptive pills; and men's involvement in decisions related to pregnancy resolution and abortion.

**Cynthia Adams** is a research associate.



## National Roundtables on Women's Health

A free symposium for college-age women to learn about health issues that will affect them throughout their lives will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on October 26 in the EMU Ballroom. The program is part of the National College Roundtables on Women's Health, and will feature national experts, including S. Marie Harvey of CSWS. The event is co-sponsored by the Women's Health and Aging Research Initiative and the University Health Center's Office of Health Education. For more information, call 346-2728 or send E-mail to: [heaheed@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:heaheed@oregon.uoregon.edu).



# New CSWS Publications Focus on V

## POLICY MATTERS A NEW SERIES

**P**olicy matters. When things improve for women, it is often the result of specific policies, usually policies that arise from the hard work of advocates, organizers, and sometimes, researchers. Public policy can also have devastating effects on the well-being of women and families.

With these truths in mind, CSWS is inaugurating *Policy Matters*, a new series of papers dedicated to social policy issues. The papers envisioned for the series will consider important issues of social and educational policy affecting Oregon women, their families, and communities. The goal of this program is to use the resources of the research center to gather, analyze, and interpret information that can be used by the many different groups who are involved in the development of policies designed to create a brighter future for Oregon's women and the families and communities in which they live.

The first paper of the series, which is due out in the next few months, concerns issues affecting Oregon families. For too long public policy discussions about families have revolved around a nexus of issues coded as "family values." But these "values" seldom include real, day-to-day matters that impact families: availability of affordable, accessible health care and child care; the impact of taxation on both household income and on the availability of services families need; and affordability of housing and labor market and other forces that affect family income.

Leslie Harris, a UO law professor and member of the Sex, Gender, and the Law RIG, has compiled an extensive amount of information about Oregon families which focuses on what families, in all their varieties, need to thrive. Her paper examines a variety of issues affecting the well-being of families, including family composition, family income, the work-family nexus, poverty, minimum wage, taxation, housing, and violence. Harris said that looking at women's lives within the family provides an important perspective. "Many women work in families as well as the marketplace," she said. "To understand the nature of their lives, you have to think about what is happening to families."

The idea for the *Policy Matters* series emerged from the Women in the Northwest Research Initiative. However, future papers for the series will be solicited from beyond the project. A second paper in the series dealing specifically with health care is already scheduled to be written by the Women's Health and Aging Research Initiative.

### Excerpts

#### TAXES

Oregon remains one of twenty states that impose state income tax on single-parent families of three with incomes below the poverty line and one of twenty-one states that impose state income tax on two-parent families of four below the poverty line.

#### INCOME

The average per capita personal income in Oregon in 1996 was \$22,668, 94 percent of the national average. In contrast, the median household income in Oregon in 1995-96 was \$36,470, compared to the national 1996 median of \$35,492.

In the mid-90s, the average income of the richest 20 percent of Oregon families with children was ten times as large as that of the poorest 20 percent and two-and-a-half times as large as that of the middle 20 percent.

#### POVERTY

In Oregon, one-fourth to one-fifth of African Americans, Native Americans, and Asians are poor, while 10 percent of whites are poor. More than one in four Hispanics are poor. National rates are similar.

One-third of child support ordered by a court was not paid in 1995. On average only 43 percent of female-headed families in Oregon received child support or alimony in 1993-97.

#### HOUSING

Relative to wages, the cost of homes in Oregon is among the nation's highest. All of the Oregon communities included in a 1998 national survey ranked among the twenty-five least affordable metropolitan areas in the country. These communities included: Eugene/Springfield, Portland/Vancouver, Medford/Ashland, and Salem.

#### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In 1996, more than 5,000 people were sheltered in an emergency shelter program for at least one night. The need for shelter greatly exceeds capacity. In 1996, the shelters received 12,434 requests for shelter that they could not satisfy because of lack of space.

On average, an adult stays in a shelter 12.18 nights, and a child stays 12.7 nights. The median length of stay is eight nights.





# Women, Families, and Communities

## STATUS OF WOMEN IN OREGON A SOURCEBOOK

CSWS is pleased to announce that we are co-publishing a sourcebook, *The Status of Women in Oregon* with the Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), which produces reports for every state in the nation.

This report uses national data sets to examine five aspects of women's status: political participation, employment and earnings, economic autonomy, reproductive rights, and health. IWPR received a grant from the Ford Foundation to produce these state reports over a period of years.

Given the facts of devolution—that so many major policy issues are now being determined at the state, rather than the federal level—advocates in states have greater opportunities, but also far more serious challenges, in their efforts to improve the lives of women and their families. CSWS was eager to participate actively in this project, in part because of the positive response to our 1993 publication, *Women in Oregon: A Profile from the 1990 Census*, by Margaret Hallock, Sandra Morgen, and Karen Seidel. The response to the book revealed that there is a compelling need for information that can be used by researchers and teachers, policy advocates, legislators, and other elected officials, and the many state offices that offer services to women and families.

Our contributions to *The Status of Women in Oregon* involved underwriting the cost of printing the Oregon report, and forming and coordinating a statewide advisory board that gave feedback on initial drafts of the report. Because IWPR used only national data sets and do not have the advantage of deeply knowing the particular political, social, and economic contexts of policy debates in Oregon, the statewide advisory board was crucial in helping to understand and contextualize some of the findings.

While the final report was not able to incorporate all the feedback from the Oregon Advisory Board, there are some potential long-term benefits of the board having met and talked. According to Board Chair Sandra Morgen, "this very talented group of women, which included policy makers, agency executive staff, grassroots advocates, and university researchers, had the too-rare opportunity to talk about various ways to work more closely together and to become even more effective in working towards our common goals."

### The Good News— and the Bad News

From *The Status of Women in Oregon*, prepared by the Institute for Women's Policy Research, co-published by CSWS

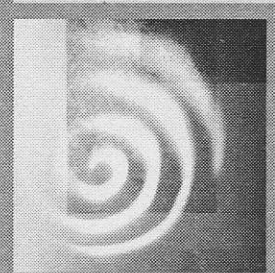
Oregonians can take pride in the fact that some enlightened public policies have led to measurable gains for women. But we have a long way to go. Among the reports troubling findings are that:

- Poverty rates are too high, especially for women raising families on their own;
- There is growing income inequality in the state;
- Women and families of color are much more likely to be poor and have lower-than-average per capita income than white women;
- Some policies most crucial to improving women's status have been under assault.

Compared to the United States, Oregon women have higher rates of voter turnout, health insurance coverage, college experience, unemployment insurance coverage, and growth of women-owned businesses. These successes can be traced to public policies that make a difference. Policies such as raising the minimum wage, the Oregon Health Plan, support of public education (especially K-12), and fostering voter registration and vote-by-mail are examples of specific policies that have helped Oregon women.

Oregon women rank relatively well on indicators of political participation and reproductive rankings, but we fall—precipitously—to the middle of the nation on indicators of economic wellbeing. Middle- and low-income families have seen their share of total state income drop over the past two decades, an 11 percent drop for the middle income group and a 21 percent drop among the poorest families. The wage gap between men and women is higher in Oregon than the country as a whole. Wage gaps between racial and ethnic groups translate into median incomes for families of color that are 75 percent (in the case of Native Americans) and 67 percent (for African Americans and Hispanics) those of white families. More than one of ten women in this state is poor, including 42 percent of female-headed households.

Oregon women benefit from more post-secondary education than women in many other states. But those who do not finish high school or get a G.E.D. and those who do not go to college saw their median annual earnings decline significantly over the last decade.



*The Status of Women in Oregon* will be available from CSWS for \$10. Use the order form on page 15, call us at (541) 346-5015, or E-mail us at <csws@oregon.uoregon.edu> to obtain a copy.





CSWS Research Interest Groups provide not only an arena for collaborative research and formal group projects, but also a forum for networking and discussion of individual research interests, such as those of the following RIG affiliates.

## Research Profile: Molly Johnson

By Beth Hege Piatote

A natural curiosity about how things work is a critical trait in an engineer, so it's no surprise that Molly Johnson wants to know this: how things work in the classroom.

Johnson, an adjunct assistant professor for the past two years in the physics department, has spent the last five years taking apart and rebuilding traditional science pedagogy into collaborative teaching methods, creating environments where students are encouraged to discuss their questions and ideas collaboratively with peers and teachers.

"I firmly believe that a lot of what we know comes from discussing and talking about it," she said. "I perceive such discussion to be largely absent in traditional courses, especially in the sciences, where students are expected to sit passively and hear experts speak. In doing that, they don't necessarily develop an ownership of the discipline. They get very little, if any, practice of talking about the discipline or explaining what they know."

Johnson said instructors often feel they don't have enough time to allow students to talk and construct their own understanding of the material, yet she has found that method to be the most effective in curriculum that she has developed and her colleagues have used. Her research in collaborative learning began in 1993 when she accepted a post-doctorate post at the Center for Innovation and Learning at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where she had just completed her Ph.D. in electrical and computer engineering. In 1996 she brought the methods she learned and developed there to the UO, where she continued to run collaborative classrooms and train graduate students and post-doctoral students to do the same. Johnson also co-created, along with Virginia Stonick, an engineering professor at Oregon State University, an engineering summer camp for middle school and high school girls. The program, called GEEK CHIC (an acronym for Gaining Electrical Engineering Knowledge through Collaborative, Hands-on Instruction, and Computing), began in Portland last year, then expanded to Eugene and Corvallis this summer. During the one-week program, up to twenty-five girls get the opportunity to explore the possibilities of a career in engineering.

"We want to provide girls with a positive experience with technology," Johnson said.

"We want to show that it's relevant to their lives." Hands-on activities at the camp include dismantling and assembling television sets, radios, and answering machines. On the first day of camp, the girls make audio speakers out of yogurt cups, screws, magnets, and wire. By the end of the week, they are building complicated circuits.

"One thing I have observed consistently is that over the course of the week girls gain more confidence in building things and taking things apart," she said. "At the beginning of the week, the girls are hesitant, but by the end, they are more willing to try things. They seem to learn to dig into a project without knowing where it's going to go." Johnson and Stonick are preparing a proposal for the National Science Foundation to continue the GEEK CHIC program in Oregon. Johnson will be leaving the UO this fall to take a tenure-track position at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, but hopes to return in the summer if the program is funded in future years.

## Research Profile: Anne Simons

By Beth Hege Piatote

Say you're a woman between sixteen and forty-six years of age, and you find out that you're pregnant.

Is it good news? Or is it traumatic?

Can you respond to the news with confidence, or might it tip the balance of your life, causing a long slide into depression? Anne Simons, associate professor of psychology, knows from her many years of studying depression that it takes both vulnerability and an event to create depression. She also knows that people have different levels of vulnerability and resiliency.

In her most current project, Simons is working with a team of researchers from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., to better understand the causes and potential treatment strategies for ethnic minority women who are economically disadvantaged in the inner city. "A lot of what we know is limited to studies that have been done looking at women in tertiary care settings, mostly Caucasian women," Simons said. "We don't know if those models or treatments of depression make sense for other groups." The study involves a group of 450 women, aged sixteen to forty-six, who are currently suffering from depression. The women—150 African Americans, 150 Latinas, and 150 Caucasians—were recruited for the study



through family planning clinics. "A lot of people don't know they are depressed or how to seek help," Simons said. "Women coming into the clinics were screened and invited to participate. They were offered their choice of standard treatment, medication, or group therapy for depression."

Simons said one of the unique aspects of the study—besides the fact that it is aimed at serving low-income, minority women—is that participants are not presented with a checklist of potentially stressful situations to respond to. Instead, the women are interviewed, allowing them to define traumatic situations within the context of their lives. "The interview provides more complex information," Simons said. "Maybe it is not what happened, but whether people came through for them. Maybe it is not whether people came through, but whether the right people came through." The study also involves another group of 150 low-income, minority women who are not depressed. Simons said this group can provide information about the process of becoming depressed, and also help clarify reasons why some people get depressed and others don't when confronted with similar life situations.

Simons and her husband, professor of psychology Scott Monroe, are collaborating on the project and have received funding from CSWS. They recently submitted a grant proposal to the National Institute of Health as well. Simons has traveled to Washington, D.C., several times to work with the interviewees, but her main responsibility is in analyzing the data and providing a theoretical framework for the findings.

Simons said that she has chosen depression as an area of study because of its ubiquity among women. "Once you start looking at it, you see that women experience it at a greater rate than men," she said. "That has always interested me—wanting to understand that and to do something about it."

## Research Profile:

### Lynn Stephen

By Beth Hege Piatote

After eleven years of teaching at Northeastern University in Boston, professor Lynn Stephen is moving to the Northwest.

Stephen has accepted a position at the University of Oregon in anthropology with shared teaching in international studies and will be offering courses on Mexico and Latin America. She will also serve on the executive

committee of CSWS.

When she arrives this fall, she plans to begin a new research project on gender and family dynamics in Mixteco farm worker communities in the Northwest. "What interests me about this work is that within the same family it is possible to have people with three different legal statuses. You have men who became residents in 1987 under an immigration reform act and later brought their wives here undocumented. Then their children who were born here are citizens. In this scenario, women have the most vulnerable status of being undocumented. All of them have multiple ethnic and national identities. I'm interested in looking at how these constellations of identities affect dynamics at home and at work, and how it affects their experiences as workers."

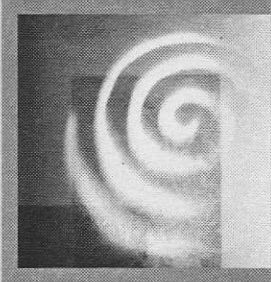
Stephen's interest in the people of Mexico and Latin America is long-standing. As a child growing up in the Chicago area, her parents were active with United Farm Workers. While studying anthropology in college, Stephen worked in Costa Rica. For the past fifteen years, she has spent time living, working, and studying in Oaxaca, Mexico, where she has a large extended family.

Currently, Stephen is finishing a book, *Between NAFTA, Zapata: History, Nationalism, and Indigenous Identity in Mexico*, which looks at cultural responses to the economic restructuring of the North American Free Trade Agreement. "The idea of the book is to look at how people have deployed nationalism and history as a result of economic restructuring," she said. "It is about people's creativity in responding to neo-liberal policies by using culture and history and nationalism as a way of answering the policies, often in contradictory ways." She is also writing about gender, militarization, and human rights violations in the Mexican states of Oaxaca and Chiapas. Her previous books include *Women and Social Movements in Latin America: Power from Below* (1997), *Hear My Testimony: Maria Teresa Tula, Human Rights Activist of El Salvador* (1994), and *Zapotec Women* (1991).

Stephen said she is looking forward to coming to the UO because the school "has a real commitment to liberal arts education, with support for ethnic studies, international studies, and women's studies," and because it will give her the opportunity to form important alliances with labor organizations. "I want to become active in immigrant labor issues," she said. "I'm very excited to be in a part of the United States where I can put my research to use."







### CSWS Executive Committee 1998-99

**Alison Ball**,  
community affiliate

**S. Marie Harvey**,  
anthropology, CSWS

**Ajuan Mance**,  
English

**Sandra Morgen**,  
sociology, CSWS

**Judith Musick**,  
CSWS

**Kathryn Owen**,  
UO Foundation

**Gina Psaki**,  
Romance languages

**Judith Raiskin**,  
Women's Studies Program

**Anne Simons**,  
psychology

**Lynn Stephen**,  
anthropology,  
international studies

**Danielle Marie Torres**,  
graduate student

**Janet Wasko**,  
journalism

## In Memoriam: Marsha Ritzdorf, 1946-98

An extraordinary voice in the struggle for gender, class, and racial equity was lost when Marsha Ritzdorf died on April 28 of complications from an infection. A former associate professor in the Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management at the UO, Ritzdorf also served as acting head of the Women's Studies Program and was a CSWS affiliate and executive committee member.

"Marsha was passionate about women's issues and research on women," said Sandra Morgen, CSWS director. "Coming out of a field where there was so little attention given to gender, she took enormous delight and richly contributed to those spaces on campus where she could explore issues affecting women's lives. She was also very committed to research on race and class and a strong advocate for women's studies and ethnic studies. Her research was highly regarded."

The Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP), which has established a Marsha Ritzdorf Memorial Fund and an annual student award, considered her work groundbreaking. In an ACSP memorial, Patricia Baron Pollak and June Manning Thomas wrote, "She provided intellectual leadership to the field—in both scholarship and collegiality. Her research on the social implications of land use opened our eyes to the connections between land use planning and social policy. . . . She was a compelling voice of conscience for our planning academy . . . [and] steadfast in her attention and dedication to gender and race equality in her numerous and varied roles."

Morgen remembered Ritzdorf as "a straight talker, warm, and extremely passionate about everything. She was generous. She developed a certain cynicism about the slowness of institutional change. There was often an edge to her that came from that, but she wasn't a person who let it get the best of her. She used it to fuel her commitment."

Contributions to the Marsha Ritzdorf Memorial Fund can be made by contacting Patricia Pollak at <PBP3@cornell.edu>. Information about the Marsha Ritzdorf Award can be found at <<http://www.uwm.edu/~frank/acsp/>>.



Marsha Ritzdorf

## Wednesdays at Noon

CSWS is continuing its schedule of interesting talks and workshops on Wednesdays between noon and 1:00 p.m. in the Jane Grant Conference Room, 330 Hendricks Hall. We invite you to join us.

### October 14

Carla Guerron-Montero, graduate student, anthropology, "Women, Gender, and Development in the Afro-Ecuadorian Highlands."

### October 21

CSWS Research Support Grants Workshop for submission deadline of November 16.

### October 28

Tia Hallberg, former UO graduate student, anthropology, "Aspects of Autonomy and Innovation in Rural Indonesian Midwifery."

### November 18

Jacqueline Cruz, assistant professor, Romance languages, "Mujer y vanguardia en España 1918-1936" (Women in the Avant-Garde in Spain 1918-1936).

### December 2

Anita Helle, associate professor, English, Oregon State University (CSWS visiting professor), "Gender and Elegy: End of the Century 'Turns' by Women Poets."

### January 20

Diane Baxter, assistant professor, anthropology, "Gender and National Struggle: Palestinian Women in the West Bank."



## Visiting Scholar to Study Gender, Mourning

Anita Helle, associate professor of English at Oregon State University, will be a CSWS Visiting Scholar this year, working on her book manuscript, *Reinventing Elegy: Gender and the Discourses of Mourning*.

Her work focuses on the gender politics of elegy and mourning and its relation to sub-genres of elegy that have been of particular interest to twentieth-century women poets,

such as youth elegy and breast cancer elegy.

Her research has been supported with a grant from the Lannan Foundation and a fellowship from the Center for the Humanities at Oregon State University. Helle received her Ph.D. from the University of Oregon in 1987 and has taught at Iowa State University and OSU.



## UO Hosts Trauma Meeting

By Jennifer J. Freyd

Traumatic events such as rape, childhood abuse, battering, and war often have profound impacts on the feelings and experiences of those who live through these events. The impact of traumatic events also reverberate throughout whole communities and societies. Understanding the nature of trauma and traumatic stress is thus a fundamental challenge for psychology and related disciplines.

Over and over we see that individual and collective awareness and memory for traumatic events is a deeply perplexing and almost slippery topic; to raise the topic of interpersonal trauma (or large-scale societal traumas like the Holocaust or war-related-rape) is to raise the question of knowledge and belief. Did this event happen? If so, what happened? Do we remember it later? If so, what sort of memory do we have? What impact does memory and awareness of trauma have on healing and prevention?

The challenge of understanding memory and awareness for trauma requires a truly cross-area approach in which knowledge from various fields is brought to bear on these complex and important issues. In July I had the pleasure of contributing toward this current communal effort by directing the 1998 Meeting on Trauma and Cognitive Science, an international conference held at the University of Oregon. I am indebted to many able assistants, including Anne DePrince and Vonda Evans of the UO and also Chris Brewin of the University of London. I am deeply grateful to the Center for the Study of Women in Society, the Institute for Cognitive and Decision Sciences, and the Department of Psychology for co-sponsoring the meeting.

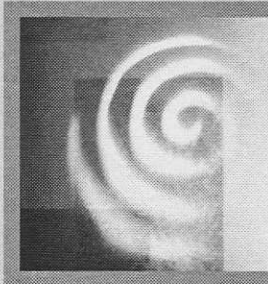
About 150 people attended the meeting presentations on July 17-19. Attendees included faculty and students from the UO, and clinicians and others from around the state and the world. Participants represented the fields of cognitive, developmental, neuroscience, and clinical psychology.

Feminist approaches and concerns were represented in both explicit and implicit ways. Many of the presentations addressed the consequences of forms of abuse that are more frequently perpetrated on females than males, although parallels were also drawn to traumas that males are more likely to experience, such as combat trauma. Topics included the role of cognition in the health consequences of rape; the devastating impact of war on the psyches of veterans and veterans' families; neurological data showing similar changes in brain structure for some victims of childhood sexual abuse and some combat veterans; social influences on children's memory for trauma; research on recovered memories; an intellectual history of traumatic stress studies; and new data on the neurobiology of trauma.

Cross-area work is hard and the topic of trauma is challenging to our intellectual and emotional resources. In this formative meeting, we learned that the precision and rigor of scientific and scholarly approaches, combined with compassion and attention to lived experience, offers great promise for the study of trauma.

Visit the conference Web site at <<http://dynamic.uoregon.edu/traumacnf.html>> for a schedule of talks, our meeting mission statement, short biographies of our speakers, and an order form for purchasing the set of audio tapes from the meeting.





## Grant Program Deadlines for 1998-99

### Executive Grants

Open deadline

### Jane Grant Dissertation Fellowship

May 3, 1999

### CSWS Laurel Awards

April 12, 1999

### Research Support Grants

November 16, 1998 and

April 26, 1999

### RIG Development Grants

Open deadline until

May 14, 1999

### Speakers and Events Grants

Open deadline

### Travel Grants

October 26, 1998 and

April 5, 1999

Deadlines are at 5:00 p.m.

on the date stated. All applications are available outside the CSWS main office door, 340 Hendricks Hall. Or you can request a mailed application by contacting:

csws@oregon.uoregon.edu

or call Shirley Marc, office manager, at 346-5015.

Check our Web site at

<<http://>

[darkwing.uoregon.edu/~csws/grants.html](http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~csws/grants.html)

> for more information on

grants.

# CSWS Grants

By Meredith Roberts Branch

CSWS awarded eight research support grants, two Jane Grant dissertation awards, one Laurel award, and three RIG development grants during the spring funding cycle. We extend our congratulations to the awardees. The recipients, amounts received, and proposal titles are as follows:

## RESEARCH SUPPORT GRANTS

**Barbara Altmann**, associate professor, Romance languages: \$5,335—*Recovering Christine de Pizan Amid her Peers: An Unknown Poem Takes Voice*. Altmann will edit and analyze a poem of the late-fourteenth-century and prove that it can be attributed to the author Christine de Pizan, rather than to her male contemporary Oton de Granson.

**Aletta Biersack**, professor, anthropology: \$6,000—*Gender and Ecology in the New Guinea Highlands*. Drawing on fieldwork and readings in the ecology and feminism/Marxism literature, Biersack will write a book chapter that will use a New Guinea case study to question certain premises of Marxist-informed ecofeminism.

**Louise Bishop**, adjunct assistant professor, honors college: \$6,000—*Reading to Cure, Reading as Cure: the Medicine of Gender*. Through analysis of the fourteenth-century Middle English visionary poem *Piers Plowman*, Bishop will examine how the concepts of gender affect medieval medicine practice

**Linda Fuller**, associate professor, sociology: \$6,000—*Emeralds, Furs, and Sex Tours: Luxury and Global Inequality*. Fuller will explore the growing inequality between the northern and southern nations, with the goal of understanding gender as an integral component. In order to do so, her project focuses on case studies of the production, distribution, and consumption of three luxuries: emeralds from Columbia, furs from Canada, and sex and drug tours from Thailand.

**Bonnie Cermak**, graduate student, history: \$1,000—*Redefining Rape in Paradise: Remembering the Massie Incident*. By examining the Massie incident, in which five Asian/Pacific Islander men were accused of raping the white wife of a naval officer stationed at Pearl Harbor in 1931, Cermak will explore how ideas of race, sexuality, and gender were negotiated in the interwar period.

**Pamela Paaso**, graduate student, political science: \$1,356—*Of Symbolism and Survival: Building a Coalition around Breast Cancer*. This project will attempt to determine whether or not the recent increase in awareness and research about breast cancer over the past two decades has come about due to a loose coalition of diverse activists, or rather a cohesive movement unified by a collective identity.

**Alison Snyder**, assistant professor, architecture: \$6,000—*Women and Placemaking in Traditional and Modern Turkish Villages*. This project will compare domestic architectural styles in three Turkish villages for the purpose of documenting the interplay between social and cultural history and women's roles in the planning and formation of their dwellings and surroundings.

**Pilar Valenzuela**, graduate student, linguistics: \$2,000—*Ainbobo: Unheard Voices of the Amazon Rainforest*. This project will offer Shipibo female leaders the opportunity to communicate their word in their own language, and will access, for the first time, the world of Native Amazonian peoples from the feminine perspective.

## JANE GRANT DISSERTATION AWARDS

**Annette Bridges**, graduate student, comparative literature: \$7,000—*Modern Mignons: Girlhood Subjectivity in Three Novels of the 1940s*. Bridges's project involves a comparative analysis, informed by feminist standpoint theory and archetype theory, that will address questions of race, nationality, and gender identity not only in three specific works, but also in the greater landscape of girlhood as a literary and socio-historical place.

**Patricia Halliday**, graduate student, philosophy: \$7,000—*(Re)Engaging Incest: the Ethics of an Epistemology*. Through Halliday's examination of incest, she will present critiques of current epistemological and ethical theories. She will also develop an ethic of interdependence that will legitimize the testimony of female incest victims and will contribute to undermining the contemporary "normalizations" of incest.

## LAUREL AWARD

**Danielle Torres**, graduate student, applied behavioral and communication sciences: \$2,500—*Ethnic and Gender Issues in Career and Education Development: An Investigation of Mexican American Parent Responses*. This study will investigate the educational and career aspirations and expectations that Mexican-American parents have for their children, and whether or not there is a need for improved accessibility of educational and career information for this population.

## RIG DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Gender in Historical and Transnational China: \$5,072

Reclaiming the Past: \$6,000

Women's Health and Development: \$1,500



## From the Garden: Notes on Development

By Judith Musick, Development Director

As summer ends, I again find myself anticipating the return of the fall frenzy. Have you noticed? There is no gradual build-up to the new term. It simply starts—all at once. The pressure—the speed at which we are all required to respond to each other, to events, to deadlines—goes from zero to one hundred over night. That is how it feels.

New people, new energy, and new ideas are added to the mix. It is a time of renewal and incorporation—a recurring seasonal phenomenon. Would that it would be regular and predictable. But, alas! New things start before I am completely ready to wind up old things. It is like that in my garden. The prolonged rains of “the boy child” created bursts of uncontrollable growth, forcing me to continue spring cleanup well into the summer. I was confused about when to plant new starts, when to sow seeds. And now—with the advent of “the girl child” and while some of my summer plants are finally reaching their peaks—I wonder if it is too soon to plant my fall bulbs. I can’t seem to find the edges of the seasons—as new projects get added to old projects. Thankfully, I don’t have to do everything by myself—nor do I have to worry that the garden will fall apart.

Before the next round of “newness” starts at CSWS, I want to give you my version of a “crop report.” What did we sow and what have we reaped? With our RIGS and initiatives we have committed ourselves to a “build it and they will come” operating philosophy. But is it working?

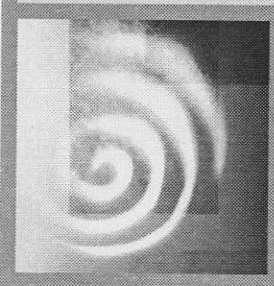
The garden that is CSWS certainly feels like it is thriving. We are bursting the seams of our current physical space and our staff continues to expand. We are launching research projects, creating new partnerships on campus, and sponsoring university-wide conferences, seminars, and speakers.

We are on sound financial ground. With the success of the market, our endowment has grown each of the past three years. We have earned more than we have spent. With money provided by our original benefactor, William Harris, we have matured into a “Center of Excellence” at the University of Oregon—one that is able to support a wide range of faculty and graduate student interests and bring new national and international visibility to the university.

We are increasingly successful in our efforts to secure external funding for the projects that lie outside of our core activities. And we have been able to pursue our initiatives (RIGS, research initiatives, programs, and conferences) while continuing to provide support of faculty and graduate student research. Our budget for next year provides almost \$95,000 for faculty and graduate student grants and fellowships (a 25 percent increase over the 1997–98 allocation).

We have begun new collaborations that will inform much of what we do in the new year. We will work with the women’s basketball team to jointly host a major fundraising event on November 8 (watch for details) and to encourage new research on women in sports.

And we are welcoming new faculty and graduate students. With them will come new ideas, new projects, and commitments to new directions. Diversity of support and participation is key to our envisioned future. I invite you to help with the growth and care of this amazing garden.



If the idea of supporting the activities of CSWS appeals to you, please call Judith Musick or Sandi Morgen at 346-5015 for more information. Please make checks payable to the University of Oregon Foundation and return them to: Center for the Study of Women in Society, 1201 University of Oregon, Eugene OR 97403-1201.

### CSWS Publications Order Form

- Please send me a copy of *The Status of Women in Oregon*. Enclosed is my check for \$10 per copy.
- Please put me on the CSWS mailing list to receive newsletters, conference brochures, and other announcements.
- Please note my change of address below.
- I would like to make a donation. Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you!



## Gender and the Poetics of Excess: Moments of Brocade

*Gender and the Poetics of Excess: Moments of Brocade*, University of Mississippi Press, 1997.

By Karen J. Ford

*Gender and the Poetics of Excess* argues that the poetic excesses of several major female poets are strategies for escaping the inhibiting and sometimes inimical conventions frequently imposed on women writers. The forms of excess vary with each particular poet, but, by conceiving of poetic excess in relation to literary decorum, I establish a shared motivation for such a strategy. Though decorum and excess shift over time and in different cultural situations, their relationship to each other remains strikingly stable, and thus the charges of indecorousness leveled at these poets repeat a fairly fixed set of abstract grievances. Emily Dickinson, Gertrude Stein, Sylvia Plath, Jayne Cortez, and Ntozake Shange all engaged in a poetics of excess as a means of rejecting the limitations and conventions of "female writing" imposed on them by the

larger culture. In resisting conventions for feminine writing, these poets developed radical new poetics, yet their work was typically criticized or dismissed as excessive. Indeed, the chief criticisms of the practitioners of excess I discuss are that they write too much, reveal too much, and push their poetics too far. Readers considered Dickinson's form hysterical and her figures

**In resisting conventions for feminine writing, these poets developed radical new poetics, yet their work was typically criticized or dismissed as excessive.**

tortured, Stein's works repetitive and nonsensical, Plath's tone at once virulent and confessional, Cortez's poems violent and vulgar, and Shange's work vengeful and self-righteous. In extended readings of their poems about poetry and excess, I try to expose the cultural opposition to such an aesthetic and explain the artistic and political necessity for it.



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