

# Center

from the

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

## More Work on Welfare Follows Conference

### work, welfare, and politics conference draws 500 participants

As the "Work, Welfare, and Politics" conference sponsored by CSWS earlier this year drew to a close, there was talk among participants of making it an annual event. People were dreaming of listservs and newsletters, new publications and renewed energy for organizing. The event was co-sponsored by CSWS and the Labor Education and Research Center with a grant from the Wayne Morse Chair of Law and Politics. It drew an estimated 500 scholars, activists, policy makers, students, community members, and former and current welfare recipients from the United States and elsewhere on February 28 and 29, and was called a success on many fronts.

"One of the most heartening things about the conference was that researchers, activists, and policy makers really participated in a dialogue with each other," said Sandra Morgen, CSWS director. "It really happened, and that was one of the main things I heard back, that we rarely get a chance to talk across boundaries, and this was a great forum for doing that. In terms of the future, I would say that this is a too-rare occurrence. All of us need to create the conditions where we can talk with each other as opposed to talk to our own constituencies." Another goal of the conference was to shift the nature of the public debate around welfare reform.

"I found the conference a welcome antidote to a kind of public debate or public perception often fostered by the media that welfare reform has been an unmitigated good," Morgen said. "The point of the conference was not to trash welfare reform or to celebrate it, but to look at the mixed outcomes. It was our hope that people responsible for policies and services can build on what has been good about welfare reform and change the course on things that have been bad for poor families."

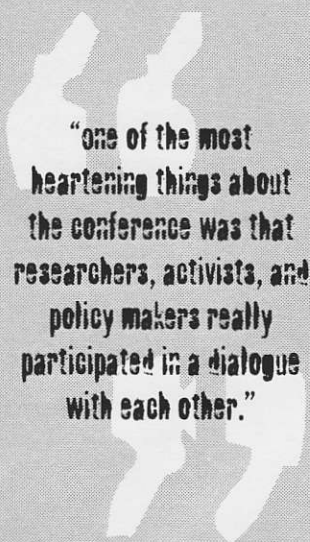
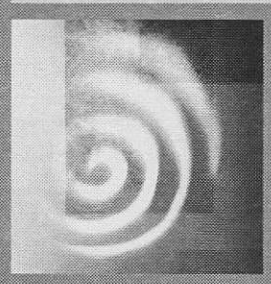
Morgen said that the conference emphasized the importance of the low-wage labor market in the welfare reform debate. "Welfare reform in the absence of significant reform of the low-wage labor market simply consigns many families that leave welfare for work to working poverty," she said. "Another important thing about the conference was having people from twenty-five states talking about what they found in their states, and the results were pretty similar," she said. Reflecting on her own research, which she presented with co-investigator Joan Acker, Morgen said, "The results in Oregon echo what is happening in other states: about two-thirds of the people who leave welfare are employed, and they work a lot of hours. Their pay is very low, so low that in our sample from the interim data two-thirds of the families still had household incomes below the poverty level. And all over the country, even when people manage to get off of cash assistance to work, their need for assistance continues, particularly their need for food stamps and medical care."

Morgen said that CSWS will continue its focus on work and welfare. Morgen, Acker, and conference organizer Terri Heath are completing the final stages of their two-year study on welfare reform in Oregon and will be making a final report in the early fall. A conference publication based on the proceedings is forthcoming as well. Excerpts from keynote and plenary panel speakers are featured on pages six and seven of this newsletter, and expanded versions of the texts will soon be available at the CSWS web site.

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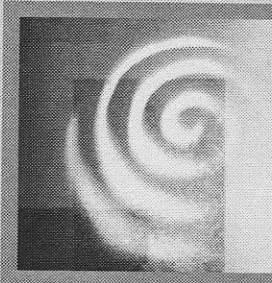
SUMMER



"one of the most heartening things about the conference was that researchers, activists, and policy makers really participated in a dialogue with each other."

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S. Marie Harvey (left) and Sheryl Thorburn Bird.

*S. Marie Harvey, director of research, and Sheryl Thorburn Bird, research associate, are currently writing a proposal to the National Institutes of Health to conduct research on the acceptability of methods for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV among women. In particular, the researchers are seeking a method that is "woman-controlled"—an effective method that a woman can use without her partner's knowledge. In this interview, they discuss some of their goals and strategies for the research project.*

**Q:** What sorts of alternatives are there?

**Harvey:** I'm very interested in women using the diaphragm. Data suggest that the vaginal diaphragm, because it covers the cervix, protects against some STDs.

**Bird:** New products are in development, including new diaphragms and cervical caps. Some people have looked at using the diaphragm where you have it in place for twenty-four hours and take it out once a day to wash it and put it back in. Given the evidence that it does prevent at least some STDs, if it's a method that we can show women would be willing to use, that might provide more rationale for testing the diaphragm for efficacy against HIV.

**Q:** So how will you find out?

**H:** We're proposing to do two studies. The first is a study of women who use diaphragms (with Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research in Portland). Some of them will be current diaphragm users and some will be former diaphragm users, and we will also survey a group from Kaiser that is randomly selected that use other methods. That will be our comparison group.

**Q:** How many women?

**B:** Nine hundred and forty-eight. Five hundred and forty-eight former or current users, and four hundred non-users. By comparing these three groups we will learn who is using diaphragms or not and why.

**H:** We talk about dual methods and dual protection. And a diaphragm offers dual protection because it protects both against STDs and pregnancy. If we can also show, ultimately, that it protects against HIV, it's one method a woman can use (for dual purposes). Because if you use the pill, you will also have to get your partner to use the condom.

**B:** Another advantage is that because the diaphragm is a pregnancy prevention method, when there are power issues, it is easier for a woman to talk to her partner about using a pregnancy prevention method even if it's not really the reason why she wants to use it.

**H:** Study two. We need to look at high-risk women. There are no high-risk women using the diaphragm. Young women don't use the diaphragm. It's not used widely by Latinas or African-Americans. So our approach is to do a multi-method study using focus groups with African-Americans, Latinas, and white women in Los Angeles.

**B:** With the focus groups, we will be getting from them what they know, telling them about the diaphragm, and trying to get their perceptions and ideas about it. Then one of the things we'll be able to do is "What If? What if this protected against HIV? Then what would you think?" Research shows that there are cultural factors that influence people's sexual behavior, so we hope to be able to capture some of that. At the end of the focus groups, we're going to give them coupons for diaphragms. We're going to track the people who redeem their coupons and carry out follow-up interviews and ask them about their actual use. Then we'll be able to compare the people that redeem the coupon and the people who don't, and look at the people who do redeem and see whether their ideas about it before they actually used it are different from their ideas about it after, and get a better understanding of how intentions are associated with actual behaviors.

**Q:** How many people are you talking about?

**B:** We plan to recruit about 200 women. The interview data will be qualitative, but we'll also have questionnaires. From a public health perspective, everything isn't just medical. Diseases have social roots. The social structure of our society is basically what is responsible for much of the health and well-being of the population. The male condom, for instance, is not the answer because not all women can get their partner to use male condoms, and if we don't recognize that then we're never going to be able to prevent STDs among women.

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# The Ecology of Dialogue

By Lynne Fessenden, Project Manager, Ecological Conversations Program

Dialogue comes from the Greek *dialogos*. *Logos* means “the word,” and *dia* means “through” (not two—a dialogue can be among any number of people). Reflecting on the meaning of true dialogue, theoretical physicist David Bohm writes that “the image of this derivation suggests a stream of meaning flowing among us, through us, between us—a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which will emerge some new understanding, something creative.” Bohm believes that by learning to listen to one another, to hear each other’s ideas without judgment, we can ultimately transform our individual and collective conscious.

During winter term, participants in the seminar series for the CSWS-hosted visiting fellows program, Ecological Conversations: Gender, Science, and the Sacred, got a taste of real dialogue. Faculty members and students from diverse areas of campus (English, the Environmental Studies Program, geological sciences, psychology, and law, to name a few) shared ideas and perspectives with visiting scholars Cate Sandilands and Kamala Platt. The program’s first-year theme of gender and ecology highlights questions raised by the convergence of women’s and environmental movements around the globe.

Poet, activist, and comparative literature scholar **Kamala Platt** spoke about her research on the Environmental Justice Poetics of Chicanas and South Asian women. While sharing contemporary narratives, poetry, and art forms (murals, religious icons, and T-shirt designs) that expose and analyze environmental racism, Kamala framed the relationships of ecology and economics in terms of whose rights are being respected and whose neglected. Kamala’s description of life in the colonias along the Mexican border—where recycling everything is a way of life—had the group questioning what “environmentally sound” living actually looks like.

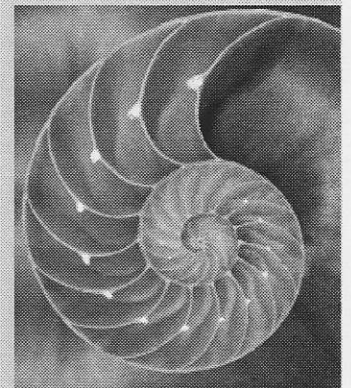
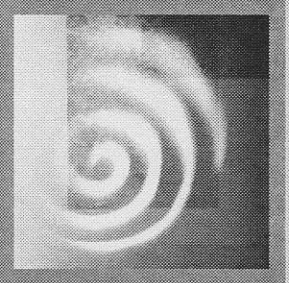
Geologist **Greg Retallack** took us deep into our archetypal connection to landscapes by proposing that soils, like goddesses, deserve our worship. After illustrating the life-giving and life-regulating qualities of soil, Greg described his theory that the goddesses of ancient Greece have personalities that were determined ultimately by the nature of soil. Linking the landscapes of sacred sites to the personalities of deities led us into a discussion of Jungian archetypes, and opened up questions on the use of metaphors in scientific communication, and ultimately to question the definition of life itself.

Political and feminist theorist **Cate Sandilands** led us further along in our connection to “other,” by suggesting that desire may be a key element in the development of an alternative environmental sensibility. Conversation ensued about the importance of touch (vs. sight) to a reoriented practice of eroticism with nature. Cate also sparked discussion on heterosexism’s role in impoverishing erotic experiences of nature, and suggested that “queering” ethics, with a focus on the redeployment of erotic experience, offers a promising accompaniment to a democratic politics.

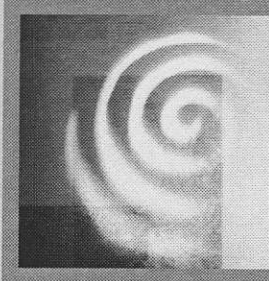
**Robin Collin**, professor of law, expanded on the idea of environmental democracy in discussing the importance of addressing equity and sustainability simultaneously. Robin pointed out the great divide between the literature of sustainability (dominated by white males from privileged institutions) and the literature of environmental justice (primarily by and about people of color). Robin spoke of the inequalities of traditional “risk assessment,” and pointed out that common ground will be attained only when risk assessment is “shared” and entire communities are involved in environmental decision-making. She questioned how equitable environmental decisions can be made when the people most at risk are never at the table.

**Irene Diamond**, associate professor of political science, addressed the knotty problem of naming gendered approaches to ecological issues. She prefers “feminine ecology” to ecofeminism. Irene also raised questions about the interpretation and approaches to the science of reproduction, and brought to the table the concept of human parthenogenesis.

So, we gathered, we spoke, we listened, we questioned, and we seldom agreed. However, we exposed ourselves to new and different perspectives, and hopefully we heard each other.



*“The program’s first-year theme of gender and ecology highlights questions raised by the convergence of women’s and environmental movements around the globe.”*



## New RIG

### Social Sciences Feminist Network

This new RIG is composed of feminist scholars committed to promoting feminist research and scholarly work on a variety of topics within the social sciences. Its mission is to create a supportive network of feminist social scientists that includes not only members of the UO but eventually other institutions as well. The members plan to meet every other week to share and support individual works-in-progress and select topics and readings of mutual interest for discussion. The group also wants to provide support for members' grant writing and create opportunities for collaborative, scholarly work and research. For more information, contact Barbara Sutton, sociology, bsutton@darkwing.uoregon.edu.

## Two RIGS Receive Development Grants

CSWS has approved development grants for two RIGS undertaking major projects. The Gender in Historical and TransNational China RIG will receive \$6,000 to support an international conference, "Gender in Motion: Divisions of Labor and Cultural Change in Late Imperial and Modern China," to be held at the UO in October 2001. The Reclaiming the Past RIG will receive \$3,138 to support 1) a speaker series addressing the development of modernity as a gendered concept across cultures and through time; and 2) a medieval reading group focused on applying post-modern theory to medieval material.

## RIGorous Questions

This spring, CSWS has been conducting an evaluation of the collaborative teams of scholars from the university and community known as Research Interest Groups. Judith Musick, associate director, has headed the project to find out what works and what doesn't work among the RIGs, and to learn more about future directions.

"We don't evaluate by a single standard. If the group is doing what it wants to do, then we're happy," Musick said. "This gives us ideas about what kind of support people need."

RIG activities range from hosting small monthly reading groups to organizing major conferences. Some of the RIGs meet weekly to share research, while others meet once or twice a term. Since the program began five years ago, a few of the original groups have disbanded while others have spawned new groups. Musick estimates that as many as 100 scholars are involved on a regular basis in the dozen RIGs at the center. She anticipates that the RIG program, which offers \$500 per RIG in support each year, will continue. "We have created an avenue for a particular type of collegiality that wouldn't have happened otherwise," she said.

## RIG Directory

### Gender in Historical and TransNational China

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### Jewish Feminist

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### Women and Media

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### Women in Vietnam

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### Women, Work, and Economic Restructuring

Joan Acker, jacker@oregon.uoregon.edu

## Upcoming Events

### June

- 1 Ecological Conversations seminar: Kamala Platt: "Environmental Justice Poetics: Cultural Representations of Environmental Racism from Chicanas and Women in India," 3:00-4:50 p.m., 201 Villard Hall

### October

- 11 New Women Faculty Reception, 3:30-5:30 p.m., Gerlinger Lounge

### November

- 16 Women of Excellence: CSWS and the UO women's basketball team

## Kudos!

**Joan Acker**, Women in the Northwest Initiative, will hold the post of Marie-Jahoda Feminist Professor at Bochum University in Germany in May and June. In addition, her article, "Revisiting Class: Thinking from Gender, Race, and Organization" will appear in the journal *Social Politics* in late spring.

**Lisa Arkin**, CSWS affiliate, will present the paper, "Papa' Chalif: Leading American Dance Education Out of Its Infancy" at the "Dancing in the Millennium" international conference in Washington D.C. in July. Arkin has also received a substantial monetary award from the National Women's Studies Association's Academic Discrimination Task Force this past February recognizing her "courageous fight for justice" to challenge institutional discrimination against women.

**Richard Bear**, Wired RIG, has joined the faculty of the University of Oregon Library as documents and microforms supervisor.

**Annette Bridges**, former Jane Grant Dissertation Award recipient, has received her Ph.D. in comparative literature and is now program coordinator at the Oregon Council for the Humanities in Portland.

**Gaylene Carpenter**, arts and administration, presented the paper, "A Longitudinal Examination of Wants-Out-Of-Life Among Mid-life Adults: Implications for Event Managers" at the Convention/EXPO Summit sponsored by George Washington University and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Her recent publications include articles in *Leisure Research Abstracts*, *Pennsylvania Recreation and Parks*, and the UO on-line journal, <http://add.uoregon.edu/culturework/culturework10.html>.

**Linda F. Ettinger**, applied information management, was the recipient of two grants in January, one federal (\$124,250 from the U.S. Department of Education) and one private (\$57,000 from eCollege.com), to develop AIM Online—the first UO graduate degree to be fully accessible on the web.

An article by **Shari Huhndorf**, English, will be published in the summer issue of the journal *Critical Inquiry*. The article, "Nanook and His Contemporaries: Imagining Eskimos in American Culture, 1897-1922," is included in her book, *Going Native: Figuring the Indian in Modern American Culture*, which is forthcoming from Cornell University Press in spring 2001.

**Anne Dhu McLucas**, dean of the School of Music, is this year's winner of the Bishop Endowment Eugene Arts and Letters Award for her contributions to the enrichment of Eugene's cultural life. The award committee cited her personal artistry, dynamic professional leadership, and her work on committees and boards as well as her promotion of music education and forging of partnerships between the UO and arts organizations as endeavors that have benefited the community.

The book, *Family Law*, by **Leslie Harris**, School of Law, and **Lee Teitelbaum**, was published this spring by Aspen Publishers. In addition, an article by Harris, "The Proposed ALI Child Support Principles," will appear in the fall issue of the *Willamette Law Review*. Recent presentations by Harris include "The Law and Politics of Welfare to Work in Oregon," at the Work,

Welfare, and Politics conference in February, and the "Valuing Families" keynote at the Oregon Coalition on Housing and Homelessness conference in April.

**Ruth Kanagy**, East Asian languages and literatures, presented a paper in March at the American Association of Applied Linguistics conference in Vancouver, B.C. Her paper, "Disciplined Lives, Gendered Selves: Discourses of Initiation in a Tokyo Middle School," is based on ethnographic research at a public middle school in Japan last summer.

**Janet Lee**, women's studies, OSU, published *Comrades and Partners: The Shared Lives of Grace Hutchins and Anna Rochester* with Rowman and Littlefield Press this winter. The book is a joint biography of labor reformers and writers, American Communist Party activists, and life-partners Grace Hutchins and Anna Rochester.

**Denise Matthews**, journalism and communication, has completed the documentary video, *Roll on Columbia—Woody Guthrie and the Bonneville Power Administration* with colleague Mike Majdic. This documentary is about the month that the American folk songwriter spent in 1941 writing twenty-six songs in thirty days. The documentary premiered to a packed and appreciative Knight Library Browsing Room audience and was shown off campus at the Bijou Theatre.

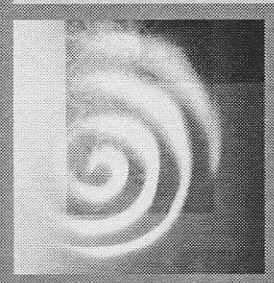
**Deborah Olson**, Violence, Gender, and Society RIG, is the lead author on two articles. "Gender Differences in Supported Employment," co-authored with Andrea Cioffi and Paul Yovanoff, University of Oregon, and David Mank, Indiana University, was published this spring in the journal *Mental Retardation*. The team has had another article, "Employers' Perceptions of Employees with Mental Retardation," accepted in the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*.

**Judith Raiskin**, women's studies, has received an Oregon Humanities Center Teaching Fellowship for 2000-2001 to develop and teach "Literatures and Cultures of the Pacific Islands." In connection with the fellowship she has been awarded the Robert F. and Evelyn Nelson Wulf Professorship in the Humanities for teaching ethical issues. Research for the course began last summer when Raiskin was selected to participate in a National Endowment for the Humanities Institute at the University of Hawai'i on Pacific Island cultures.

**James L. Rice**, Russian and comparative literature, presented the guest lecture "Eros in Dostoevsky's World," at the University of Delaware (Newark) in April. A version of this paper was presented in Russian and published by the Moscow Humanities University last year, with research support from CSWS.

**Nitza Schwabsky**, Women and Leadership in Education RIG, works on issues of gender equity for the ministry of education in Israel and runs a class for teachers called, "Is Gender Equity Possible or Merely Eutopia?"

**Marian Smith**, music, was co-keynote speaker (with Giannardrea Poesio of the University of Surrey) at a meeting of the Scandinavian Dance History Society in Copenhagen in January and gave the address, "Music, Mime, and Meaning in the Nineteenth-Century Ballet."



## Good News!

Do members of your RIG have good news to share? Drop a line to Beth at [piatote@darkwing.uoregon.edu](mailto:piatote@darkwing.uoregon.edu) and put kudos! in the subject line.

## Keynote Speech: The Rich, the Poor, and American Politics



**Frances Fox Piven**

Wayne Morse Chair of Law and Politics  
City University of New York

What the United States, I think, actually suggests is not the model of a country adapting to globalization, but rather the impact of politics, of classic politics, the impact of a politics of a business class on a roll. They're packed smooth by the weakness of popular opposition since the 1970s. Now, the weakness of popular opposition to this rise of business politics in the United States is partly owed to very longstanding features of American politics: our fragmented, weak political parties which privilege interest groups; the weakness of organized labor historically and especially today; our American political culture which has been so susceptible to arguments, I think mystical arguments, about the necessary power of markets, which cannot be interfered with; and also our popular political culture, which has always been poisoned by racism and by our sexual obsessions. It's a slightly nutty country, you know?

But to make this argument let's look again a little more closely at the United States as an economic success story. It's true that American unemployment levels are lower than western European unemployment levels, although that is now changing. Western European unemployment is going down fairly rapidly in countries like Sweden. It has already gone down in the Netherlands. And it is true that American profit levels are up by more than 100 percent since 1990. And CEO pay is up since the 1960s by 481 percent—that's true! Signs of "economic success." But average workers' wages despite the boom are still down from the 1970s by about ten percent; still, despite the boom. The lowest wage workers are now seeing some increases in their take-home pay, but the rise is really quite modest and it's occurring after a two-decade pummeling which drove the earnings of low-wage workers down. So there's only a very modest recovery. The minimum wage is way below what it was in the 1960s and someone earning the minimum wage earns twenty-seven percent less than the poverty level for a family of three. And twenty percent of these low-wage workers have no benefits at all.

So what is this economic success? Well it looks something like this: overall the top one percent of Americans now control forty-two percent of American wealth. That's a pattern familiar to us from the banana republics. Sixty

# work, welfare

The following excerpts are from presentations at the

percent of all gains in after-tax income have also gone to the top one percent. And this also contrasts with western Europe where there has not been this kind of increase in earnings inequality or wealth inequality, just as there has not been the fall in wages which we see in the United States.

## Plenary: Working Out of Poverty?



**Randy Albelda**

University of Massachusetts, Boston

It's not that the mothers aren't job-ready, it's that the jobs aren't mother-ready. What do I mean by that? I mean that this is a match made in hell. Think about it. You're a low-wage employer. What do you want? You want that worker who can deliver the video at four o'clock in the afternoon. You're an employer in the hotel industry, the service industry, the retail industry, you want workers who are unbelievably flexible. This week they can work Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, and next week they can work Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at all different hours. You want an incredibly flexible labor force on beck and call when you need them, at relatively low wages. What do mothers need in jobs? Mothers need the exact opposite. Mothers need to know when they are working, which hours they are working, which days of the week they are working. Why? They need to know where their children are going to be. Furthermore, they need more income than other people because they have to support those children. So this match in the low-wage labor market and mothers with young children is the match made in hell.



**Jared Bernstein**

Economic Policy Institute, Washington, D.C.

What I would like to do is think more broadly about the low-wage labor market and talk about two strains of thought that I've picked up from the conference so far. Two competing thoughts go something like this: when the political system brings you a big lemon

# Work, and politics

is year's Work, Welfare, and Politics conference.

like welfare reform, do you make lemonade with it or do you just reject the premise? Do you try to work within the system to think about policies that will help make welfare reform actually work, or do you try to essentially reverse that decision and come up with something better? Many people may think that is a false dichotomy; that's the first thing I thought: well, you do both. But I'm not sure you can, because those of us, and I put myself in this camp, who are searching for policy solutions are essentially trying to make welfare reform work for single moms and others in the low-wage labor market who are suffering at the hands of this inequitable program. If you're trying to make it work, then I think you have to at least realize the potential that you are trying to learn to live with it.



**Carol Stack**

University of California, Berkeley

Most of the kids who we observed who were making any progress toward escape from minimum wage work were succeeding not in school but in the work place.

In fact, many of them failed to make much progress at work or school until they finally gave up on school—shoved school to the back burner—and focused their energies on their job. They were not happy to leave school, they were not choosing a career that excited them, they were cutting their losses. And when they cut their losses, the only image they had of a clear trajectory is a career track that leads from minimum wage to entry-level crew jobs, through poorly paid low-level management jobs, toward some level of managerial job. They are in a pickle in that the costs and benefits of work and school and school and work are sadly entangled. So coming of age in urban America abounds in perplexities and some of those perplexities are that poor families with working kids who are trying hard, trying many routes out of poverty, end up seeing their kids working the same dead-end jobs right next to them.

## Plenary: The New Welfare Policies and Poverty in the U.S.



**Cheri Honkala**

Kensington Welfare Rights Union, Philadelphia

We are organizing for power in this country, not for pity. We are organizing to find our own voices and to speak on our own behalves.

We don't want a bigger and better welfare program, we want an elimination of poverty, hunger, and homelessness in the United States of America. And we truly believe that this is possible, that we are not crazy, that we are living in a period of history where our dream is attainable. We have been far too passive as a people in this country. We have been unorganized to deal with a crisis that continues to grow daily. Now it's no longer the story of the Cadillac Queen that we're dealing with, and no, I'm sorry to say the problem is much bigger than the welfare recipients. A third of humanity is now being forced to live on less than a dollar day. And over sixty-seven percent of the people who requested emergency food this last year worked. They weren't on the dole. And 44 percent of the homeless this year had jobs. They worked all day long and then they had no place to go back to and call home. And the polarization between wealth and poverty is at a criminal level. The crisis in America today clearly involves me and each and every one of you.



**Adolph Reed**

New School for Social Research, New York

Another analogy with common bi-partisan consensus comes to mind, and that's the bi-partisan consensus of the so-called second-party system that reigned in national politics from 1828 to 1860, because that consensus rested on an unstable agreement not to debate slavery, just as the current bi-partisan consensus rests on not challenging corporate rule and not speaking of the class dynamics that shape the public agenda and its effects on people. The second-party system collapsed when slavery inevitably erupted. And I think that points to what we need to do. The key is that we have to find ways to organize and to build solidarity around interests that are shared broadly among all kinds of people who are seen in the minds of the corporate elite and the ruling class as workers, whether they are themselves working or not. What that means is struggling to create a new, different, and broader notion of who the working class is and who working people are.



## CSWS Staff Kudos

**Cynthia Adams**, research associate, will serve as the principal investigator for a National Institute on Aging grant for her study, "Age, Gender, and Social Context Effects on Narrative Recall." The study examines age and gender differences in narrative recall under the influence of different social contexts. Also, Adams is a co-author (with Nancy Fugate Woods and Ellen Mitchell from the University of Washington) on a paper in press in the journal *Menopause*. The paper, "Memory Functioning Among Midlife Women: Observations from the Seattle Longitudinal Study," compares perceived memory functioning of women of different menopausal stages, and assesses the relationship between perceived memory functioning and education, mood, health, and stress.

**Sheryl Thorburn Bird**, research associate, gave a poster presentation at the Population Association of America annual meeting in Los Angeles in March and received a Poster Award (one of two that were given among fifty). The title was "Mother's Relationship Characteristics and Risk of Low Infant Birth Weight: Data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth." Bird's co-authors were Anjani Chandra from the National Center for Health Statistics, Trude Bennett from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and S. Marie Harvey of CSWS. In addition, Bird gave two presentations at the annual Psychosocial Workshop that is held just before the PAA meeting.

**Jan Emerson**, research associate, has edited, with Hugh Feiss, *Imagining Heaven in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, published by Garland. It includes Emerson's essay, "Harmony, Hierarchy, and the Senses in the Vision of Tundal" and "The Sexual Body in Dante's Celestial Paradise" by Feminist Humanities Project co-director **Gina Psaki** of the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures. In addition, Emerson presented "A Poetry of Science: The Life and Works of Hildegard of Bingen" at Pacific University in Forest Grove and at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Eugene as part of the Oregon Council for the Humanities Chautauqua lecture series. Both events were part of March women's history month celebrations.

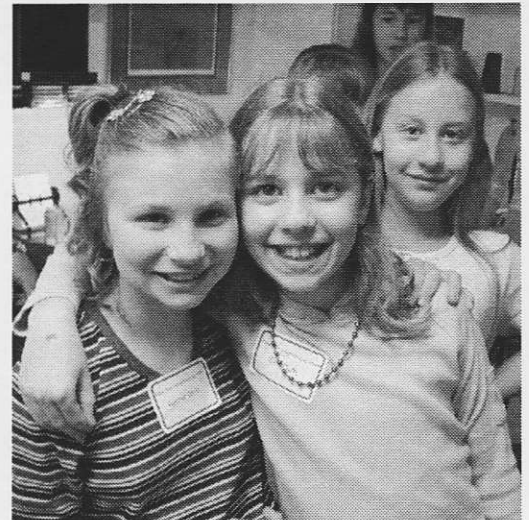
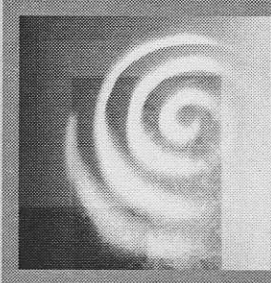
**S. Marie Harvey**, director of research, and Cynthia Adams have completed the interactive CD-

ROM titled "Menopause: A Multimedia Guide for Midlife Women," which was produced with Oregon Center for Applied Science and funded by the National Institute on Aging.

**Shirley Marc**, office manager, participated in a conference on "The Psychology of Health, Immunity, and Disease," sponsored by the National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine in December. Marc gave presentations based on the conference at both the Health RIG and midlife/menopause subgroup meetings in January.

**Nancy Leeper**, GTF, geography, was awarded the 2000 George and Viola Hoffman Award for Research in Eastern Europe by the Association of American Geographers in April. Research for her project, "Bridging the Divide: Women's Associations in Macedonian Peace Processes," will take place in Macedonia during the 2000-2001 academic year.

**Beth Hege Piatote**, research assistant, received the gold award for feature writing in the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education District VIII Juried Awards competition for her article, "Diversity," which appeared last fall in *Oregon Quarterly*.



These girls were caught in a web of fun when members of the Wired Humanities Project gave a workshop on using the Internet during Take Our Daughters to Work day on April 27.

## Computer Questions? We're Here to Help

The staff of the Wired Humanities Project will be available Monday through Friday from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. for free walk-in training and support in using new technologies for humanities teaching and research. During these open house hours, project staff can help you use a variety of programs including:

Adobe Photoshop, Macromedia Dreamweaver, Macromedia Authorware, Macromedia Director, FileMaker, Endnote, ProCite, Textbridge, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, Appleworks, FrontPage2000, Power Point, and more. Staff members can also help you make and edit web pages, scan images, and use a digital camera. The office is equipped with both Windows and Mac platforms.

If you prefer, you can make an appointment in advance by calling the WHP staff at 346-5771. The Wired Humanities Project is located in the UO Annex, 876 E. 12th Avenue (behind the bookstore), Room 4 on the first floor. Our virtual home is <http://fhp.uoregon.edu/>.



# Taking Nature Seriously

In February 2001, CSWS will join forces with the College of Arts and Sciences, the Oregon Humanities Center, and several other university departments in sponsoring *Taking Nature Seriously: Citizens, Science, and Environment*, a national conference designed to build bridges between the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, as well as between academics and activists. The main goals of the conference are to foster dialog that engages the practical and theoretical challenges of "taking nature seriously," to illuminate the value of interdisciplinary and inter-community collaboration, and to envision new models of scholarship and policy that can move us beyond culturally constructed barriers. Keynote speakers include Donna Haraway, Richard Lewontin, Andrew Pickering, and Mary O'Brien. The deadline for abstracts is June 15, 2000. For more information send E-mail to [tns@darkwing.uoregon.edu](mailto:tns@darkwing.uoregon.edu), call (541) 346-5399, or visit the web site at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~tns>

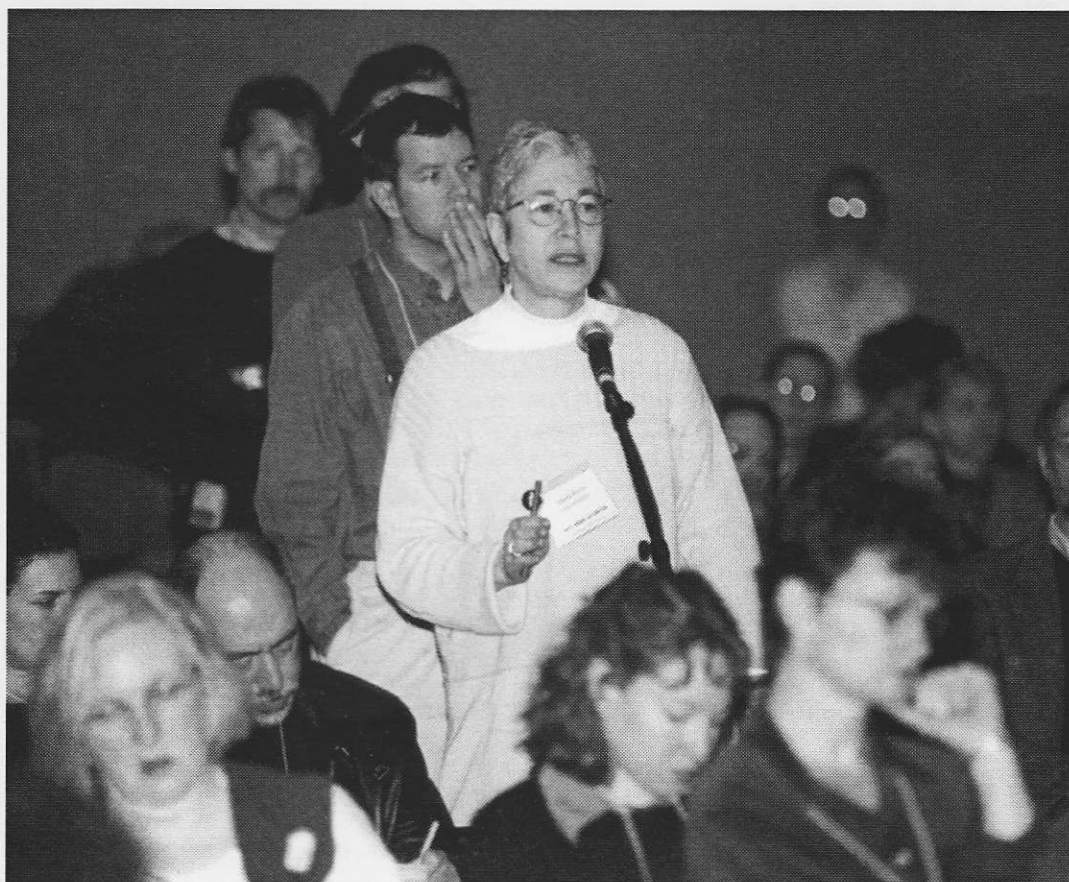
## Hot Topics for Summer School

Sex, science, comedy, and theology are among the topics in course offerings in the Women's Studies Program this summer. Don't miss your opportunity to explore new ideas through these exciting classes:

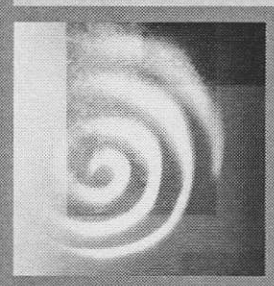
- Science, Technology, and Gender
- Girl Culture: Identity and Literacy
- Female and Multicultural Perspectives on Math
- Feminist Theologies

- Race and Gender in Contemporary Horror Film
- What a Laugh! Women in Comedy
- Women and the Power of Sexual Fantasy
- Women, Disability, and Feminism
- Women's Folk Art: Traditions and Material Culture

For more information, contact the Women's Studies Program at (541) 346-5529.



*There was no shortage of discussion at the Work, Welfare, and Politics conference.*



# 1999 Fall Research Support Grants

By Meredith Roberts Branch

C SWS awarded eight research support grants during the fall funding cycle. We extend congratulations to our eight awardees. The recipients, amounts received, and proposal titles follow:

**Maram Epstein**, assistant professor, East Asian languages and literatures: \$6,000—"May it please the court: Gender and narrative in late-imperial Chinese legal discourse." Through archival research in Beijing, Epstein will examine how much the rhetoric and details of legal cases overlaps with gendered symbolic and aesthetic themes in fiction. This type of literary analysis will help determine how to interpret these texts in the reconstruction of social history.

**Scott Harris**, graduate student, sociology: \$1,000—"The social construction of equality: The case of marriage and beyond." In his dissertation work, Harris hopes to discover the underlying social processes through which the notion of equality is constructed. He will examine this concept by analyzing how different scholars have defined and measured marital inequality and through interviews with a small sample of married individuals.

**Pissamai Homchampa**, graduate student, anthropology: \$1,985—"Self-care practices among industrial workers in Thailand: Gendered knowledge and perceptions of health and wellness in the factory setting." Through interviews, observation, and health assessments, Homchampa will explore the relationship among gender, socioeconomic factors, daily life activities, health promotion, self-care practices, and health status among industrial workers in Thailand. Her project will demonstrate the importance of self-care in the emerging field of industrial health practices, and address how industrial workers negotiate social conditions and lifestyle factors in determining their health.

**Najia Hyder**, graduate student, international studies: \$2,000—"The impact of structural adjustment policies on violence against women in Pakistan." Hyder's project will explore the affect of local implementation of foreign economic policies on women's societal role in Pakistan. Through ethnographic profiles and analyses of nationwide statistical trends in labor force participation and violence against women, Hyder will examine the sexual violence that many women experience when they enter the public sphere.

**Jason Quiring and Kristin Penza**, graduate students, psychology: \$1,488—"Stress sensitization as a predictor of the relationship between life events and major depression." Quiring and Penza will examine the relationship between negative life events and major depressive disorder in women using stress sensitization as a model. The model theorizes that individuals become sensitized to the life stressors, which in turn precipitate depressive episodes.

**Karen Rasmussen**, graduate student, international studies: \$1,848—"An assessment of methods of micro-credit in rural Cambodia." Rasmussen's research will focus on micro-credit programs in Cambodia, a country in which over half of the households are headed by women widowed during the twenty years of civil war. During her field research in Cambodia, she will compare different methods of micro-credit being used and their success at empowering women and decreasing poverty.

**Arlene Stein**, assistant professor, sociology: \$6,000—"Sex, fear, and loathing in an American community." Stein will use this grant to complete her book, an ethnographic study of a small Oregon town that was the site of a divisive battle over homosexuality in 1993-94. Through participant observations, in-depth interviews, and archival research Stein writes about her understanding of the conflict, its impact upon ordinary citizens, and the strategies that were used to diffuse the situation.

**Lea Williams**, graduate student, comparative literature: \$1,500—"Writing on all fronts: Gender, nationalism, and the literature of war." Williams's project examines twentieth-century women's war writings, and explores how cultural and political beliefs and conceptions of gender shape a writer's recital of her memory. By studying texts from different national literatures and periods in this century, Williams will develop a rich discussion of trauma and how the language of witnessing in the twentieth century has been affected by war and genocide.



## Grants

Grant deadlines are closed for the 1999-2000 year. New deadlines and forms will be available in September for 2000-2001.

# Sustaining a Place of Permanence

By Judith Musick, Associate Director

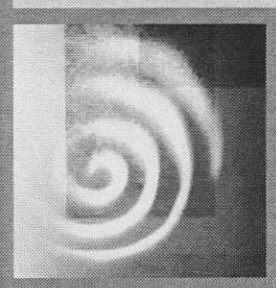
This spring, I will assume ownership of the house that Hannah and I have rented for the past four years. This season also marks my birthday, Hannah's birthday, my mother's seventy-fifth birthday, and the tenth anniversary of my husband's death. This is the heady stuff that runs through my brain as I watch the spring garden come to life and realize that I may be here—in this physical space—for the rest of my life.

How I feel about "my" garden has everything to do with my sense of self and, up until now as a renter, my feelings of impermanence. A personal garden is a place where we can feel limited control regardless of whether we own it. It's a setting that invites us to apply our labor, on our own terms, and where, with luck, we will be able witness some of the results in tangible and glorious form. It is also a place upon which we can project and create our imagined and desired futures.

This is a metaphor for what I believe many women have experienced as academics. For reasons of family, economics, geography, and discrimination in hiring and promotion, many women have not been able to pursue their careers in traditional ways—we have been renters rather than owners. Moving from one place to the next, building and then losing colleagues and research programs, and taking jobs in and out of the academy makes accumulating scholarly expertise and the requisite professional currency difficult if not impossible. We all know that academic careers and knowledge require time to build and, for the builders, at least the illusion of permanence.

Gardens—like jobs—give us some feeling of safety and control. To believe that we will have a garden (or job) long enough to start something and see it bear fruit shapes the choices we make. Like the nomadic gardener of ancient Persia who could take her ornate carpet (garden) from one place to the next, the scholar can take her work with her to any new venue. But if we want scholars to develop their work here, at the University of Oregon, we need to create these same conditions for ownership and investment.

This is what William Harris gave us in 1983. He gave us sufficient funds to establish a place of quasi-permanence for feminist scholars and scholarship. Thanks to Harris's gift and the vision of the founders, the center is a place where faculty and graduate students can invest their labor, experiment with new materials, design unique programs, and project their desired futures. Future gifts add to this critically important sense of permanence and ensure not just the quality of our work but that it will last and be broadly and effectively shared.



## CSWS Publications Order Form

- Please send me a copy of *Valuing Families: The State of Oregon's Families*. Enclosed is my check for \$12 per copy made payable to "UO/CSWS."
- Please put me on the CSWS mailing list to receive newsletters, conference brochures, and other announcements.
- Please note my change of address below.
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## Wide Sargasso Sea

Critical Edition of Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*

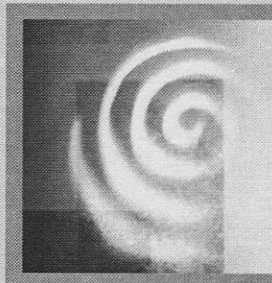
By Judith Raiskin, associate professor,  
women's studies and English

Because I have long admired the work of novelist Jean Rhys (I focused on her in my book on Creole women writers in the Caribbean and South Africa [Minnesota Press, 1996]), I greatly enjoyed editing a critical edition of her novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* for both scholarly and classroom use. Jean Rhys, a native of Dominica, wrote *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a revision of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* focusing her novel not on Jane but on Bertha, the Jamaican mad-woman locked in the attic of an English manor house. Written over the course of twenty-one years and published in 1966, *Wide Sargasso Sea* was immediately recognized as a central novel for those interested in colonialism, Caribbean culture, race, and women's writing. It is set in Jamaica and Dominica between 1839 and 1845 and describes a world of changing power

relations among the English, the Creoles, the free people of color, and the newly emancipated slaves. The novel is considered a literary masterpiece for its simple yet rich language and its innovative narrative structure.

For this Norton Critical Edition, I glossed the text with annotations that assist readers in understanding the historical background, regional and cultural references, and Creole and French phrases necessary for a full appreciation of the novel. In addition to the annotated text, I included generous excerpts from Rhys's correspondence during the novel's long evolution, relevant passages of *Jane Eyre*, and the author's autobiographical impressions of growing up in Dominica. After reading hundreds of articles on the novel, I included twelve that introduce readers to the critical debates that this short work has inspired. Among the critics included are Derek Walcott, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Kenneth Ramchand, Wilson Harris, Sandra Drake, and Berita Parry.

I am gratified to find that the volume is proving useful for Rhys scholars, nonacademic readers, and students in a wide variety of courses; it has just gone into its fourth printing.



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