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The Women's Studies Newsletter • October 2006
Editors Samantha DeMuro & Michelle Kirms



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WMS Newsletter Director's Column

Welcome back to a new semester at URI!

It's a time of new beginnings, old friends moving on and new ones arriving.

Last spring we said goodbye to Dr. **Donna Bickford** who became the first full-time director of the Women's Center at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Our TA from 2004-06, **Lee Marshall**, is teaching in Providence.

Professor **Jody Lisberger** is our new lecturer, and an advisor to our majors and minors. She is teaching a large lecture class of WMS 150, aided by a team of WMS students who are leading discussion sections. (See pp 5-6)

Our new TA is **Agata Stepien**, an English PhD candidate from Poland.

Last spring we initiated 17 students into our new chapter of the WMS honor society Iota Iota Iota. The society aims to promote interest in Women's Studies. The group had its first meeting last week and talked about possible events such as attending a play at Trinity Repertory Theatre. Other event possibilities for Triota include film viewings, service or action projects, book groups, potluck or pizza parties, trips to museums, theatres or other events, and whatever our members wish. ☺ We hope to initiate a new group in spring 2007. You may be eligible. The requirements are an overall GPA of 3.0 and at least 6 credits of WMS courses. If you qualify and would like to join this group of lively, intelligent students, please send me an e-mail with your name, URI student ID, the WMS courses you have taken.

wmsdir@etal.uri.edu.

What is a feminist? I asked my students in WMS 150 this question. They defined feminism as the belief that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men. All of them believe this, but only one claimed to be a feminist. Why? Because they think that a feminist must also be an activist on behalf of women. What do you think? How do you define feminism? How do you define activism? If you would like to join this discussion, please e-mail the newsletter editor, Sam DeMuro, sdemuro@mail.uri.edu

Mark your calendars: On Tuesday, November 14 from 6-7:15 PM, we will have a dessert reception at the Women's Center, followed by the Eleanor M. and Oscar M. Carlson Lecture (co-sponsored with the Honors Colloquium) performance by Buffy Sainte-Marie and Bill Miller. The reception will honor our December graduates and the winners of WMS scholarships for the 2006-07 academic year. It will also inaugurate a newly forming group, The Friends of URI Women's Studies. Please join us!

Have a great semester!

Karen Stein

Please visit our web page www.uri.edu/artsci/wms

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STUDENTS: THE WMS NEWSLETTER WANTS YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ON ISSUES RELATED TO WOMEN'S STUDIES!

This includes reviews, letters, essay excerpts, creative writing, responses to events, current events, etc. If you or someone you know wishes to contribute, please e-mail sdemuro@mail.uri.edu We're looking forward to hearing from you!

*

Calendar of Events:

October 17, 2006

What: Eleanor M. and Oscar M. Carlson WMS Lecture and the Honors Colloquium
Songs of Social Justice: The Rhetoric of Music
Who: Peggy Seeger, Rosalie Sorrels, and Ronnie Gilbert: *Women in Song*
When: 7:30p.m.
Where: Edwards Auditorium

For other Colloquium events visit: www.uri.edu/hc

*

What: 3rd Annual Out & Proud Queer Film Series
Who: URI GLBT Center
Where: Adams Hall, Room 111
When: **All movies start at 7:30**

October 12, 2006

Transamerica (2005) A pre-operative male-to-female transsexual takes an unexpected journey when she learns that she fathered a son, now a teenage runaway, hustling on the streets of New York.

October 26, 2006

Party Monster (2003) Michael Alig moves to New York, where he becomes an underground legend known for his excessive drug use and outrageous behavior in the club world. When he murders his drug dealer, the power he wields on the club scene makes him feel untouchable, so he doesn't hesitate to boast of the murder. The press thinks it is a publicity stunt. Until Angel's body washes ashore. (Based on a true story)

For a list of the rest of the film series visit

<http://www.uri.edu/glb/GBT%20Center%20Homepage/>

*

URI Theatre Performance

October 12-14 & 19-21 at 7:30p.m.

October 15 & 22 at 3:00p.m.

What: FAT PIG by Neil LaBute

A strong play about body image and prejudice. Sometimes shockingly blunt and cruel. Cow. Slob. Pig. How many insults can you hear before you have to stand up and defend the woman you love? Tom faces just that question when he falls for Helen, a bright, funny, sexy young woman who happens to be generously proportioned and he is forced to explain his own preconceptions of the importance of conventional good looks. Neil LaBute's sharply drawn play not only critiques our slavish adherence to Hollywood ideas of beauty but boldly questions our own ability to change what we dislike about ourselves.

Who: URI Theatre Productions

Where: Fine Arts Center

*

November 30 - December 2 & 7-9, at 7:30p.m.

December 3 & 10, at 3:00p.m.

Who: URI Theatre Productions

What: "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas" book by Larry L. King and Peter Masterson, music and lyrics by Carol Hall

The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas tells the true story of the high-profile closing down of a 130-year-old brothel outside the small town of La Grange, Texas in 1973. However, *Whorehouse* isn't really about sex any more than *Fiddler on the Roof* is about violins. At its most basic, *Whorehouse* isn't how putting life on TV changes it, how it changes people, how the TV camera impacts that which it records. *Whorehouse* is about how lives are ruined by "reality TV" and about how TV can be used to destroy. It's about people in glass houses throwing lots of stones, about one group of people imposing their version of morality on others, and about America's preoccupation with sex.

*

Scholarship Winners for the 2006-2007 Academic Year**The Eleanor M. Carlson Trust Scholarship Criteria:**

Student must be a major or minor in Women's Studies who has completed 24 undergraduate credits in any subject. Additionally, two Women's Studies courses, one of which has a WMS designation, must be completed by the time of the award. Preference will be given to candidates who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- a. high academic achievement
- b. participation in community and/or campus service
- c. financial need

Congratulations to Megan N. Locke, Victoria Morton, and Jessica Poretsky!

Eleanor M. and Oscar M. Carlson Endowed Scholarship for Single Mothers

Criteria:

Student must be a woman who is a single-parent head of household with one or more dependent children. Preference will be given to candidates who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- a. candidates who have followed a non-traditional educational track
- b. candidates with financial need
- c. candidates in good academic standing, with at least 12 credits at the college or university level
- d. Rhode Island residents
- e. candidates pursuing a major or minor in Women's Studies

Congratulations to Kimberly Andrade, Lynn Prentiss, Debra Lewis, Melissa O'Donnell, Kristen M. Whelan, Eileen Ottaviani, Caroline Hutchinson, Melissa Pina, and Judy Perry!

"Mother" Jones Scholarship Criteria:

Student must be a major or minor in Women's Studies who has completed at least two Women's Studies courses, one of which has a WMS designation, by the time of the award. Selection is based on financial need as determined by rankings from the Financial Aid Office. Among students who are equally needy, academic excellence will be the determining factor in the selection.

Congratulations to Jessica Poretsky, who also received the Dorothy F. Donnelly Scholarship!

The Dana Shugar Memorial Scholarship:

The Shugar Memorial Scholarship was established by Dr. Sam and Shirley Shugar in memory of their daughter, Dana R. Shugar (1961-2000), a Professor of English and Women's Studies. Recipients alternate between the English Department and the Women's Studies Program. The WMS Program will select a recipient for the 2007-2008 award. (No application is necessary).

The Eleanor M. Carlson Award:

Given to an outstanding graduating student in Women's Studies whose qualifications may include: contributions to the campus or community; job or family commitment; feminist scholarship or activities; leadership or voluntary service; and academic excellence.

Patricia Farnes Essay Contest Criteria:

The contest is open to all URI undergraduates enrolled for the 2006-2007 academic year. Papers may be submitted by students or nominated by any faculty member. Each student may submit only one paper. Faculty may nominate up to three papers each. Essays will be judged on strength of argument, clarity of writing, quality of writing, and attention to mechanics.

Submissions should be 1,200 to 1,300 words long. Shorter or longer papers will be disqualified automatically.

Scholarships for the 2007-2008 academic year will be awarded in June 2007. See the WMS web page for details and application forms.

<http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/scholarships.php>

****CONGRATULATIONS TO LAST YEAR'S GRADUATES! ****



WMS December 2005 graduates:

Emily Hall
Rebecca Johnson

WMS May 2006 graduates:

Alexis Coppola
Kelly Feeley
Jaime Hill
Lisa McGill
Barbara Stearns
Jessica Tryanow
Melissa Weiss

P.A.G.E. - Promoting Awareness of Gender Equality

URI Students Promoting Awareness of Gender Equality is a strong feminist group. We work to educate the community about issues of inequality, mainly, but not limited to, women's rights. P.A.G.E. has successfully raised awareness of political problems in the United States such as The Global Gag Rule, pay inequality, and biases in women's health. If you find yourself frustrated with the current climate of politics and the way women are treated, then P.A.G.E. is where you need to be! The group meets every Wednesday at 5:30pm in the Memorial Union, Room 354. If you are interested in learning more about the group, please contact P.A.G.E.'s president, Colleen Hayes-Costello at IrishRose_Colleen@yahoo.com or at bruster@mail.uri.edu.

Meet Our WMS150 Discussion Leaders!

Kristen Moody: I am currently a junior here at URI. My majors are Elementary Education and Women's Studies. I am excited about this opportunity because it gives me a way to connect what I've learned in my classes to the individual experiences of my students. I feel that a big part of college is not only learning from your classes, but also learning from fellow professors, instructors, classmates, and students. I am from Pennsylvania and love the falls in New England. After I graduate, I hope to find an elementary education job while working towards a masters in Women's Studies.

Katie Tanner: I am an Elementary Education and Women's Studies double major. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as a discussion leader so far this semester, although it is much different from teaching second grade! It is great going into class every Thursday and hearing students really reacting to the topics that we are discussing and knowing that I am there to aid them in their learning journey. I only hope that my section will continue to go as well as it is now and that my students will gain even more interest in Women's Studies.

Meghan Brady: I'm really excited to be a discussion leader because I'm so passionate about Women's Studies and I think it's opening students' eyes. It might not be that the students are changing their personal ideologies and

becoming hardcore feminists, but it's more about how they're realizing they can look at the world in completely different ways.

Megan Locke: I am a senior, graduating in May and I am majoring in Biology and Women's Studies. I enjoy learning from my students and hearing their viewpoints. It has been a rewarding experience to be a role model to other URI students.

Samantha DeMuro: I am very excited to have the opportunity to be a discussion leader for the lecture course of WMS150 at URI. Many of the students in my section have never taken a Women's Studies class before. It is great for me to hear new opinions, ideas, and interpretations of feminist ideologies and topics. I think I may be learning more than the students!

*

Meet Our New Faculty! Gigi Edwards in Kingston; Lisa Delmonico at CCE

Gigi Edwards is a new instructor in WMS 150. With a B.A. from Harvard in what is probably the university's longest-named field of concentration-- "English and American Literature and Language With an Emphasis on Writing"-- she had a brief stint working at *The New Yorker* magazine and then began a seventeen-year teaching career that included being head of the English department at Columbia Prep School in Manhattan and at Miss Hall's School in Pittsfield, MA. She has also served as a college counselor, has taught writing to adults, and received her Master's in Educational Administration from Teachers College, Columbia University. After spending 18 summers in Rhode Island, she moved here full-time in 2004 with her librarian husband and two daughters, now nearly 11 and 13.

Most recently she has been working as a freelance writer and editor, with articles appearing in *East Side Monthly* and *Rhode Island Monthly*. One of her cover stories won a 2006 Metcalf Diversity in the Media Award, presented annually by Rhode Island for Community & Justice (RICJ). She spent this past summer revising the manuscript of her recently completed novel, set in South County, Rhode Island. She is thrilled to be a WMS instructor this fall, as much for what she is learning as for what she is teaching.

Our New TA!

Agata Stepien, a Ph.D student in English, is writing her dissertation on European Modernism: Beckett, Kafka and Schulz. She's teaching WMS150 for the first time. We are glad to welcome her contributions to WMS!

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Updates on Women's Studies Faculty!

Jody Lisberger is the new full-time lecturer and advisor in WMS, though she is not new to the program or URI. She has previously taught "Race, Class, and Sexuality Seen Through Literature" (WMS 310) and the "Introduction to Women's Studies" (WMS 150). In the English Dept., she's also taught Advanced Fiction, Creative Writing and Publishing, and The Short Story. Jody has a Ph.D. in English, with a specialty in feminist narrative theory, and an M.F.A. in Writing. In addition to teaching for over twenty-five years at several different universities (Brown, Harvard, Tufts, Holy Cross, and Boston University), she's been a journalist, editor, grant writer, potter, and graphic designer. Her story collection, *In the Mercy of Water*, is forthcoming from Fleur-de-Lis Press. She has published stories in several journals and is working on a novel about a cake decorator named Verna Roy.

She's currently submitting for publication a long essay called "Writing Down the Body: What Writers Can Learn From Feminist Theory." She'll also be giving a paper at the 16th Annual Women's Studies Conference at Southern Connecticut State University on Oct. 27-28. The conference theme is "Women's Health: Colonized, Resisted, Reclaimed." Jody's paper is called "DES and Diflucan: Pharmaceutical Marketing Choices--Why Women Need to Take Heed."

Donna Hughes is teaching three courses this semester - WMS490, "Campaigns and Services for Victims of Trafficking and Slavery," a section of WMS350, "Human Rights and Foreign Policy," as well as WMS315, "Feminist Theory and Methodologies." She is currently writing about the difference between trafficking and prostitution and will be speaking about the latest news concerning sex trafficking in the upcoming annual Dana Shugar Colloquium (Spring of 2007).

Lee Marshall is currently finishing her Ph.D and doing research on "writing as an intervention in media violence" - writing as a means to reducing the aggression-promoting effect of television violence." She is currently teaching a section of WMS351, "Women and Violence," and teaching a section of WMS150.

Stephen D. Grubman-Black is teaching WMS150 and WMS360, "Men and Masculinities." He is currently researching and writing on male entitlement and privilege.

Noel-Anne Brennan is teaching two sections of WMS150 this semester, as well as APG310, "Gender and Culture." Gender and Culture = big fun!

★

At the Women's Center: We strive for diversity and are committed to fostering an environment based on equity and mutual respect. This year, we have certainly succeeded in our goal. The thirty-one women living here exemplify the many dimensions of diversity. Diverse in ethnicity, educational background, geography and life experience, these women are representative of our community and our world. They come from many different parts of the United States as well as from different countries: both Alaska and Florida, as well as India, Africa, Japan, and the Caribbean. Although a majority of them major in science and technology, a few are on a different educational path and have majors in film, theatre and elementary education. All of these talented young women help the Women's Center succeed in its mission to create an environment rich in visible role models and free of sexual bias and inequities. If you would like to live at the Women's Center, please contact us at (401)874-2097 or check out our website www.uri.edu/women_center/. Please come by to see for yourself the many amenities that the house offers. We are located on campus at 22 Upper College Road, next to Admissions.

★

Meet Your Editors

Hello all,

My name is Samantha DeMuro and I'm a senior this year, double majoring in Women's Studies and Psychology and minoring in Human Sexuality. I'm graduating a semester early in December, so editing the newsletter this semester is one of the final projects of my Women's Studies major. I would love to see the next few newsletters packed with interesting and creative

student contributions regarding Women's Studies and women's issues, so I'll be working to get URI students involved with that in the coming months.

My passion is learning, questioning, and challenging gender, and looking at life from a feminist perspective. I love diversity and having new experiences open my eyes. Getting involved with Women's Studies at URI has assisted in my development of critical thinking and questioning how the world operates. I truly cannot imagine my life without Women's Studies being a part of it because it has given me the foundation I need to apply feminism to whatever my life may bring!

-Sam

Hi,

I was trying to think of something interesting to start with other than "my name is" because, for one, Sam did it so I'd be a copy-cat, and two, well, one was probably enough. So now that I haven't started that way, I can tell you my name is Michelle, and I'm a senior journalism major here at URI. Despite my best efforts, I'm graduating this May and I hope moving to Boston to get a job at a magazine or newspaper. I've taken a few Women's Studies classes over the years here, and enjoyed all of them so much that I'm hoping to get enough credits to graduate with a WMS minor. My main involvement with this newsletter is the editing part and typing up stuff that's put in front of me. I enjoy editing, but my main passion in journalism is the layout/publication process. I work for the *Cigar* here on campus, doing layout until the wee hours of the morning to make it as fabulous as possible. (The pictures of the cat you see everyday, they don't just put themselves there.)

My other involvement with Women's Studies is interning at a domestic violence resource center as an advocate. Although I just started, I've enjoyed it so far. It's a great feeling to know you might have changed someone's life for the better with just a five-minute phone call.

Since I know you can't get enough of learning all about me, I'll sum it up in just a few words: Jersey, pizza, music, snowboarding, Vans.

Rock on - Kirms.