



WOMEN'S STUDIES BULLETIN

January/February 2004

ASSOCIATE OF THE MONTH

Our associate in the spotlight for this bulletin is Lesley Rigg of the geography department. Rigg began her career as a biogeographer at York University in Toronto, where she received her B.A. Although she began her undergraduate coursework in anthropology, she quickly changed her major to geography and was able to work with one of the most influential biogeographers in North America. She even had the opportunity to work closely with him in Belize for three months on tropical rainforest research. Upon graduation, she sought a graduate degree in geography at the University of Colorado, Boulder. During her master's education, Rigg began to realize the presence of gender in geography. She became very interested in the way women see things and phrase questions in science. She also discovered that more often women pursued the human geography specialty, and fewer women were in what became her specialty, physical geography. Even within her field, gender differences emerged as more women focused on the biology emphasis of physical geography. Although Rigg remained intrigued with human geography and feminist writings within the field, the opportunity she received to finish her graduate work at the University of Melbourne sealed her fate as a biogeographer. At Melbourne, Rigg began her research on trees and on a project that she still pursues today.

Her dissertation research continues on New Caledonia, an island off the coast of Australia. Here, she has a set of study plots in a "biodiversity hotspot." She is specifically interested in one tree species, which is literally a living dinosaur. In fact, the BBC used her plots to make a film on dinosaurs, actually superimposing computer images of dinosaurs on the backdrop of her trees and foliage. She recently visited New Caledonia using a grant from Women's International Science Collaboration Program, which supports women's collaborative research in foreign lands.

A second project that she and her husband research together is on the upper shore of Lake Superior in Canada. Here, they study regeneration and the migration potential of Sugar Maples. Because of climate changes

and pollution increases, Rigg and her husband study how the Sugar Maple adjusts and competes with encroaching species from the south and with the sturdy conifers in the northern limits. Her third area of research focuses on McHenry County, a local project, where Rigg explores the management of oak woodlands with several graduate students.

At NIU, Rigg has been a Women's Studies associate for two years, serving on the executive committee this year. As an associate, her strong interest in women in science can be more formally actualized. Rigg is continually looking for opportunities to mentor female students because she realizes the enormous impact that mentors had on her career progress, and she believes that her presence in geography encourages female students to persevere in science. In fact, she often has more female graduate assistants than males, despite women's minority status in geography.

Rigg's service to Women's Studies also includes hosting an event for Women's History Month. On Thursday, March 4, from 4:45 – 5:45 p.m., she will teach self-defense techniques in Anderson 102, using her skills as a karate black belt. Her black-belt training is just one more example of how a mentor has influenced her life.

For more information on Rigg's research and teaching, visit her webpage at

http://globe.geog.niu.edu/Rigg_03.htm.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH PREVIEW

This March, NIU will celebrate Women's *Movements* with a busy line-up of events that include both physical and social movement. To kick off the month, Susan Stephens of WNIJ will present on the Rockford Peaches on March 1. We also have 3 workshops and a dance performance co-sponsored with Kinesiology and Employee Wellness. NIU faculty will teach self-defense, yoga, and exercise ball training and also perform a montage of dances at the Wellness Fair on March 24. Watch for the announcements in the upcoming Employee Wellness brochures! Women's Alliance will bring back the Vagina Monologues on March 4-6, and will also hold

the very popular Vagina Seminar.

Our theme is best featured by our two colloquium speakers, Karen Eliot, Associate Professor of Dance at the Ohio State University, and Nancy Naples, Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at the University of Connecticut, who will lecture on dance and feminist activism, respectively. Finally, we close the month with Pink Bloque, a street dance protest group from Chicago, which will lead a workshop on "dancing in dissent."

We also have several other exciting events planned for March. Our calendar is available on our website for viewing and downloading at:

<http://www.clas.niu.edu/wstudies/whm2004.htm>.

This year you can preview the beautiful final poster on our website, available in pdf format. Lisa Mayse-Lillig, the designer, won this year's poster contest sponsored by the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women. Printed poster calendars will also be mailed in February.

TRAVEL FUNDS FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES STUDENTS

Every year, the Women's Studies program has a limited amount of funding to help students travel to conferences.

With the National Women's Studies Conference in Milwaukee in June 2004 and a major activism conference in Ohio this spring, we anticipate an unusually high number of requests (information on these and other conferences is available from the Women's Studies office). To ensure fairness, we plan to review all the requests at the same time. Therefore, if you are planning to request travel funds, please complete an application form (available in Reavis 103 or our website:

<http://www.clas.niu.edu/wstudies/> by February 20.

NWSA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

This year's NWSA Conference will be held June 17-20, 2004, in Milwaukee, WI. The theme, Women in the Middle: Borders, Barriers, Intersections, reflects the many ways that women may find themselves caught in the middle—between generations, between demands of family and work, aging parents and children, various aspects of their own identity, and groups in which they are active. The conference is hosted by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Center for Women's Studies. For more information, visit:

<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CWS/nwsa/>.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Women for Women International, a non-profit, humanitarian organization, seeks submissions for the second edition of its annual academic journal, *The*

Critical Half, about economic and social issues as they relate to women in international development. The journal is intended as a venue for debate among professionals and practitioners, addressing issues from various viewpoints. Each article is expected to present a theoretical framework as well as the practical implications resulting from its implementation. The journal is targeted to the international development community, including but not limited to government policymakers, the United Nations, international and overseas NGOs, U.S. foundations, and philanthropists. For more information on submission guidelines contact: coser@womenforwomen.org or visit their website at <http://www.womenforwomen.org>. The submission deadline is April 1, 2004.

NEW WORK STUDY STUDENT

Kendra Ashcroft, a first year Early Childhood Education major, is our new student worker. She is from Collinsville, IL. She has spent summers working for Habitat for Humanity and enjoys scrapbooking, camping, traveling, and horseback riding. Welcome, Kendra!

GRADUATE TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

The Women's Studies program will be hiring one or more graduate teaching assistants for 2004-2005. Applications will be available some time in February. Please contact the office if you are interested in applying.

BIENNIAL CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN

The Biennial Conference for Women, "Women in Progress," is scheduled for April 8-9 in Urbana, IL. Many students and employees of NIU have attended this conference in previous years and have found it to be professionally and personally rewarding. Speakers at this year's conference include Suze Orman, Star Jones, Soledad O'Brien and David Baldacci. For conference and registration information, visit www.theconferenceforwomen.com.

SUMMER COURSE OFFERINGS

- WOMS 430.P1L/COMS 496RL/WOMS 510.P1L/COMS 660L, Special Topics in Women's Studies: Gender Images in Popular Culture (Instructors: Keehner and Self)

The following courses can be taken with approval of the director.

- ILAS.P 390 Internship in Women's Studies
- WOMS 439.P1, Independent Study in Women's Studies
- ILAS 502.P, Internship in Women's Studies
- WOMS 539.P1, Independent Study in Women's

Studies