

*A Department of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts*

## **Welcome Laura Briggs, new Chair!**

Our biggest news of all is we welcome our new chair, Laura Briggs. The search committee, ably chaired by Miliann Kang last year, had a tough job selecting a new chair for our department. We had a wonderful pool of applicants and big shoes to fill. After a year of searching and lots of community input we are happy to welcome Laura Briggs to the helm of the WGSS department. Laura Briggs is an internationally known historian of reproductive politics, who in recent years has spoken on the subject of adoption in Barcelona, Rio de Janeiro, Paris, and Mexico City. She has written numerous articles on transnational and transracial adoption in venues from law reviews to history journals to popular books authored by adoptees. Laura is an expert in studies of U.S. empire; US women's history; gender and science and US and Latin America. She is the author of *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico*, the co-author with Diana Marre of *International Adoption: Global Inequalities and the Circulation of Children*. She has another book, *Somebody's Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption*, due out in February from Duke University Press. She also has broad administrative experiences. Laura comes to us from the University of Arizona, where she was chair of women's studies and most recently she was Associate Dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Arizona's loss is our gain. Laura Briggs promises to be an effective advocate and an inspirational leader to bring our department into the future. Laura's Ph.D. is from Brown University's Department of American Civilization, and her Bachelor's degree is from Mount Holyoke College. (!) Laura's research interests are broad ranging, including eugenics, reproductive technologies, and education and technology.

In addition to her stellar academic qualifications, Laura has a long history of activism both within institutions and in the community. She writes for and speaks to both academic and community audiences. She is a collective member of the Tepoztlán Institute for Transnational History and has been active on issues of immigration. This year Laura was a plenary speaker at National Women's Studies Association in November. As if she weren't busy enough, Laura has a partner Jennifer and two children, one adult and one a toddler!

We officially welcomed Laura Briggs at our panel: "They're Cutting...What? Challenges and Opportunities in the Funding Crisis in Public Higher Ed for the "New" Social Justice Fields." See page 6 for details.

### **Chair's Message**

*When I got on the plane to come out to the interview at UMass last March, all I could think was how tired I was. I was leaving my seven-month old son for the third time in three weeks, this time with less than 24 hours home between trips. I was too energized to relax, but promised myself I would sleep on the flight home.*

*When I got back on the plane to go home a day and a half later, I was much too excited to rest. I was sending Craigslist postings to my partner back home about where we could live in the Valley. "I really, really hope I get this job..." I wrote her.*

*What happened in between was that I fell in love all over again with women's studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. I found old friends—Banu Subramaniam, who I'd worked with a decade ago at the University of Arizona; Arlene Avakian, who I'd known for years; Ann Ferguson, whose name was spoken*



with reverence in my circle of friends when I was an undergraduate women's studies major at Mt. Holyoke in the 1980s. Alex Deschamps I had met ten years earlier and I knew her to be a fabulous teacher. New friends, too—I had met Miliann Kang at a conference a few years earlier, and thought her talk there was brilliant. Her new book was on my shelf for books I wanted to try to teach next year, even before the book won all those prizes! And Miliann's book was right next to Dayo Gore's. Svati Shah's work on sex work and migration in Mumbai was new to me, but was riveting—similar to but better than work I done years ago on sex workers in Puerto Rico in the early 20th century. . . As I quickly understood from meeting them, the staff of what had been recently renamed the Department of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies were amazing—very smart people who knew exactly what they were about. Lots of people from the Five College community whom I knew from reproductive politics, queer stuff, and anti-imperialist work met with me or contacted me after my interview.

*I felt like I was home.*

There were plenty of good reasons to want to be at UMass Amherst. On all sorts of external measures—most famously, the US News and World Reports rankings—it's on the rise. And I've only ever wanted to teach at a big state university. I love the diversity of scholars, of research projects, of interesting graduates and undergraduates. Increasingly, as state universities have taken it in the teeth financially in the context first of declining support from federal and state governments, then the recession, my commitment to the project of public higher ed has only grown. Fifty years ago state universities were the red-headed step child of higher education, with private liberal arts colleges and universities like Harvard and Stanford dominating the scene. These days, far more students go to state universities. Their growth has to do with the still unrealized longing, embodied first in the response to the GI Bill and then in the student movements in the sixties, of universal, affordable access to higher education. In fact, paradoxically, more people from lower income households are attending college these days than ever (although that number stopped increasing during the recession), but higher ed tuition keeps rising. All our state institutions are now surviving through student indebtedness, which is an intolerable situation we all have to work toward remedying. But that is work I believe in.

The other thing that made me think this was a place where I could do good work is that there seemed to be an institutional commitment to growing WGSS. At

Arizona, I had been part of a department that had grown steadily over a decade, and we started a Ph.D. program. That seemed like good and valuable experience that I could bring to UMass to strengthen this already strong program.

So, two months ago my partner Jennifer and I packed up three cats, a dog, and baby Jackson and moved to Northampton.

It's been a whirlwind, but what I've found here has more than lived up to my expectations. The associated and affiliated faculty are amazingly supportive of the program, as well as terrific teachers and scholars who are a key part of the undergrad degree and the grad certificate program. There's a talk or arts event I want to go to about every five minutes, it seems. Despite an incredibly rainy fall (that has squelched my optimism about riding my bike a lot here) the Valley is a beautiful place. Jackson can be gender-free boy, running through the halls of the Northampton Parent's Center with a doll without raising anybody's eyebrows. Our Five College women's studies faculty colleagues are full of energy and looking for ways to build initiatives in new intellectual directions, including—with the considerable energy of our new five college faculty member, Angie Willey, alongside Banu Subramaniam here—in Feminist Science Studies. The faculty in the department and the administrative work of the program is as exciting as I hoped—I have real optimism that while it will be uphill work, we can grow this department, the undergrad major, our course offerings, and maybe even offer a Ph.D. in WGSS five or six years from now.

The thing that has surprised me the most, though, is how much I enjoy the students here. I've always loved teaching, and the activist reputation of UMass students is legendary and part of what drew me here in the first place. But I was still surprised by how electric my undergraduate classroom is—full of people who spend a lot of waking hours (and not a few when they should probably be sleeping) at Occupy Wall Street, engaging with anti-foreclosure activism, staffing rape crisis hotlines, organizing marches and otherwise trying to bring a new world into being. I feel lucky to be here. In addition to inquisitive students, this department has stellar faculty, effective staff, loyal alums and dedicated donors. I am happy to be part of this wonderful community.

*Lauren B. J. J.*

## ***Editor's Note about Changes***

What an exciting time for the Department! We are now officially a department. And that is the least of our big news. We sent Arlene Avakian off into the sunset with honors and thanks for her years of service (see article.) Arlene already reports retirement is "great!" We welcome a new faculty member, Angie Willey (see bio and interview on the next page) who is the Five College Feminist Science Studies faculty person. Our returning faculty, of course, continue to win prizes and accolades. Our students, of course, continue to do great things. We have another faculty search, book celebrations and more coming up for 2012! Stay tuned.

## ***Our New Look!***

If you didn't notice our new logo on the title page, take another look. We have a new logo! Don't worry, the iconic "sisterhood is powerful"-- the fist in the women's sign -- will remain painted in our window (as long as Bartlett stands that is.) That painting is an important part of our background and history. With our new name, and our long commitment to intersectional analysis, we think the new logo will represent us better. We will be rolling out the logo slowly as we redesign our website, publications, etc. The logo is largely symbolic, but our office look has changed in a very material and concrete way. We got some limited one time funding to update our office. While we had dreams of reconfiguring our not-real-walls, we only had enough for new furniture. In addition to the furniture (thru Linda's expert organizing) we were able to get the office painted at the same time a lovely color "white heaven." (This was instead of the default UMass beige called "cameo.") Our guess is that the office was last painted in the 1970's. If you visited or called this summer you know that we had to completely empty the office (literally empty, down to the last pencil) and we were crammed for weeks in a hot, airless classroom with one working phone, and all our possessions piled up around us. Over a 5 week period the painters came, the furniture arrived and we have the results. Our new chair, Laura Briggs, has a large new office with impressive matching furniture. The outer office (where you enter) has been reconfigured with a new, clean, modern design. Linda has a better workstation, Nancy has her own office, and Karen has an actual door (which can close for student meetings!) We all relish more privacy, organization, matching furniture and a cleaner workspace. We've switched out our pictures to match the new decor too. Come by and see, you will be amazed!

## ***Enews***

We're working on a new look for our website that will use our brand new logo, so please keep visiting our page. We do love the original logo, so that will be staying on various pages and backgrounds. Arlene Avakian, with the help of one of our certificate students and grad of the program, Erika Arthur spent some time working on a history of the program. It's just about finished and will be part of the "Looking Back" part of our website. ([www.umass.edu/wost](http://www.umass.edu/wost))

## ***Thanks to donors***

Even though our donors have been generous since the program began, we still feel gratified to see those monthly lists of our wonderful friends, alums and supporters. Thank you thank you. We use these donations to present our graduating students with T-shirts, buy snacks for events, and fill in other needs that our state funding doesn't cover. We love the support and we use your funds carefully. Thank you to:

Nancy Arienti  
Lindsey Athanasiou  
Arlene Avakian  
Linda Burt  
Robyn Bagley  
Kristina Bourne  
Laurie Churchill  
Christina Cincotti  
Melanie Desilva  
Jacquelyn Goss  
Donna Kerner  
Aliina Laine  
Alice Nash  
David and Nancy Patteson  
Lynley Rappaport  
Tinker Green Ready  
Diana Riddle  
Renee Sidman  
Lakenya Webster  
Eliza White  
Mary Werowinski  
Wendy Wilde  
Christine Willis

It's easier than ever to donate. If you like to join the ranks of our dedicated donors, you can donate online through UMass and designate our department or you can do it the old-fashioned way by mailing a check to UMass Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies.

<http://www.umass.edu/giving/>

## Welcome Angie Willey!

Angie Willey, Five College Assistant Professor of Feminist Science Studies, received her B.A. in women's studies (Fordham University), her M.S. in gender studies (London School of Economics and Political Science), and her Ph.D. in women's studies (Emory University). Her interests include feminist and queer theories; feminist science studies; feminist epistemologies; and histories of race, gender, and sexuality in science. Her publications include "Christian Nations', 'Polygamic Races', and Women's Rights: Toward a Genealogy of Monogamy and Whiteness" (Sexualities, Dec 2006), "Science Says She's Gotta Have It': Reading for Racial Resonances in Woman-Centered Poly Literature" in an edited volume entitled *Understanding Non-Monogamies* (Routledge, 2009) and "Why Do Voles Fall in Love?": Sexual Dimorphism and Monogamy Gene Research", in an edited volume entitled *Gender and the Science of Difference: Cultural Politics of Contemporary Science and Medicine* (Rutgers, 2011). She is currently working on a book manuscript on the production of normal and abnormal bodies through naturalizing discourses on monogamy and non-monogamy in science and culture. This fall Angie taught **Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Science**, and **Rethinking the Sexual Body**.



### INTERVIEW

#### What are you most looking forward to about coming to our program at UMass Amherst?

Before I arrived I was most looking forward to joining a community of passionate feminist scholars doing really interesting work. Since I arrived I've not been disappointed! The intellectual energy here is palpable. I've been inspired by the stimulating, politically engaged conversations I've had already with my students and faculty and staff colleagues.

#### What do you want students to know about you?

I love teaching. Formal education has played a really important part in my own life and I love being a part of that journey with students. All my degrees are in women's studies or gender studies and I'm always happy to talk with students thinking of majoring in and/or going to grad school in the field.

#### Is there anything else about your background, training or expertise you would like to share with us?

Background: I'm a first-generation college student (I am happy to talk with working class/first generation students considering or pursuing an academic career). Training fun fact: I did an undergraduate certificate in peace and justice studies. Expertise: I have quite a broad knowledge of contemporary feminist theories, in addition to the special interests in science studies, critical race feminisms, and sexualities listed on my profile.

#### And is there anything else you can tell us about other activities you are or have been involved in including special interests, activist projects, etc.?

Special interests: I like old cars and making things – I do a bit of basic woodworking and small sewing projects. I love dogs (and kitties, too) and vegan cooking. Activist projects: My activist engagements tend toward supporting grassroots reproductive justice, prison abolition, and Palestine solidarity organizing in different capacities at different times. I think of "volunteering" or "civic engagement" as part of my activist work – that said, I've done mentoring, court room advocacy, and shelter work.



#### So Long, It's Been Good to Know You!

On a not so celebratory note, **Dayo Gore** will be starting a new position at UC San Diego beginning in Fall 2012. We congratulate her on her new position as associate professor of Ethnic Studies and Critical Gender Studies. We will miss Dayo. We are searching for a new faculty position this year. Stay tuned for advertisements of candidate talks, which will happen early this spring.

**Arlene Avakian** retired and was celebrated at a reception at the Mullins Center. People from far and wide came to celebrate her, ranging from a grateful alum who drove in from New York state to campus and local officials. It is impossible to summarize Arlene's many accomplishments and her enormous impact here at the University. Ellen Story, our state representative, made a special trip from Boston to deliver the resolution that was excerpted below passed by the Massachusetts General Court. We think it summarizes her accomplishments well (see next page):

**Whereas**, Professor Arlene Voski Avakian will celebrate her retirement from the University of Massachusetts Amherst at an event to be held on May 4, 2011, after nearly 38 years of service; and

**Whereas**, Professor Avakian has played a vital role in the development and improvement of the women's studies program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and has inspired hundreds of students through her work; and

**Whereas**, Professor Avakian has been a stalwart champion for women and staunch opponent of racism whose contributions have permanently enhanced the University of Massachusetts Amherst Community; and

**Whereas**, Professor Avakian has displayed an unwavering commitment to interdisciplinary and intersectional analysis in her academic career; and

**Whereas**, Professor Avakian has fought for justice and equality on campus, in her community and worldwide; therefore be it

**Resolved**, that the Massachusetts General Court congratulates Professor Arlene Voski Avakian on the occasion of her retirement from the University of Massachusetts Amherst after nearly 38 years of dedicated service and extends to her its best wishes for continued success in all future endeavors. . .

### ***Searches, Events, Lectures, Outings and that is just the start of the Spring 2011 Report. . .***

Last spring was busy, busy, busy. We had two searches with terrific results (see articles on page 1 and 3 about our accomplished new faculty members.) We marked Arlene's retirement and celebrated her long career here. We had our networking career event in conjunction with AfroAm, STPEC and the Labor Center. Preceding this event was a meeting to welcome community college students thinking of transferring to UMass (held in conjunction with admissions.) We had the Graduate Certificate student presentations. And as always, we celebrated our graduating classes at a festive breakfast. In between all these we brought Noor Al-Qasimi to speak on "Anticipatory Governance, Queer Difference and the Emirati Post-Oil Generation," and Rebecca Jordan-Young whose lecture was entitled "Brain Storm: The Flaws in the Science of Sex Differences." Somehow

we even squeezed in time for a day trip to the Brooklyn Museum of Art, where we were given a special tour and greetings from two UMass alums who work there. Our own Cheri Ehrlich greeted the bus, and we had a special tour of The Dinner Party by Judy Chicago. The trip was sponsored by the Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts, and was spectacularly well organized by Kelly Gray, Undergraduate Success Coordinator for the College of Humanities and Fine Arts.

### ***The Valley Women's History Collaborative***

The Valley Women's History Collaborative (VWHC), a community-based organization in the Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts, has worked successfully on a host of projects. Composed of scholars, students, and community activists, the VWHC has as its mission to gather, preserve and share the history of second wave feminism, lesbian and queer activism and the experience of women in progressive social justice movements in the valley through collecting documents, including oral histories, and placing these in publicly accessible archives. Along with gathering an array of individual stories, the Collaborative's efforts, with public history program and diverse grants support, have primarily focused on the history of the University of Massachusetts' Women's Studies Department (now Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies), the reproductive rights movement (1961-1975), and an ongoing lesbian and feminist softball league project. The work of the Collaborative has spurred several scholarly publications, course development in oral history research, and teaching about contemporary valley feminism. At present, the Collaborative is launching a project on the early years of valley domestic violence shelters and another on generations, undertaking oral histories of older women who directed key organizations, particularly in Hamden and Franklin Counties. All are invited to participate in one or more of the following ways: using archive material in the classroom; attending oral history training for community projects or helping to collect documents and papers for archiving at SCUA (Special Collections & University Archives)



If you are interested in working with the VWHC, please contact Anne Moore, Special Collections Librarian, [amoore@library.umass.edu](mailto:amoore@library.umass.edu) or visit the project's Facebook page.

We hope you had a chance to attend our panel discussion and welcome reception event on October 26, *They're Cutting....What? Challenges and Opportunities Facing the "New" Social Justice Fields in Today's Public Higher Education Funding Crisis*

Panelists **Laura Briggs**, **Max Page** and **Sophia Zaman** discussed the issues and potential problems posed by diminished funding for public higher education. What does this mean for students, for employees, for building intellectual and academic resources? How does it impact the "new" fields of critical social inquiry, like Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies; African-American Studies; and Ethnic Studies? Where are the opportunities and the challenges?

Co-sponsors: Afro American Studies, Center for Multicultural Advancement and Student Success (CMASS), Graduate Student Senate (GSS), The Labor Center, Massachusetts Society of Professors (MSP), Professional Staff Union UMass (PSU-UMA), Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts (PHENOM), Social Thought and Political Economy (STPEC), University Staff Association (USA/MTA/NEA)

### **Works-in-Progress Series**

Our fabulous faculty are presenting their current work. All the talks are 12:30-2:00 in Bartlett 316. Light refreshments and good discussion provided.

**Miliann Kang** spoke in September. Congrats to Miliann on the recognition her book, *The Managed Hand, Race, Gender, and the Body in Beauty Service Work*, (University of California Press, 2010) received. The book has been honored with the following prizes: Oliver Cromwell Cox Award, American Sociological Association Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities Distinguished Book Award, American Sociological Association Section on Sex and Gender Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship Book Award, American Sociological Association Section on Race, Gender, and Class and Sara Whaley Book Prize, National Women's Studies Association

**Svati Shah** spoke in November on "Queer Cities and Rural Uprisings? Mapping New Frames of Modernity in India." Indian LGBTQ social movements have achieved much in the way of media attention, organizational infrastructure, and internationalized support over the past decade. These have resulted in, among other things, the consolidation of urban LGBTQ social networks, in changes to the ways in which gays and lesbians are recognized within the law, and in

establishing a nascent LGBT commercial sector. At the same time, conflicts in rural areas in central and eastern regions of the country between landless agricultural workers, village authorities and the state provide a counter-narrative to that of economic growth and human rights being extended in urban areas. Analyzing these developments in the same frame, this paper explores the ways in which sexuality rights may be understood as a new index of modernity, as was gender to nationalism, as argued by earlier postcolonial critiques of the modern in India. The paper raises these questions through an ethnographic exploration of the discourses of LGBT rights within India's party-affiliated left, of class and political economy within LGBT rights-based movements, and of the production of urban and rural space in India.

Upcoming talks for the spring include:

**Angie Willey**, February 22, 2012

**Banu Subramaniam**, March 28, 2012

**Dayo Gore**, April 25, 2012



### **The Five College Feminist Science Studies Initiative presents a year-long colloquium of research talks and discussion forums**

The first two were held in November: *Imagining Feminist Science Studies: A Roundtable and Discussion* and *Experiments with Gender: New Approaches to Nineteenth-century Race Science* with Britt Rusert (UMass Amherst Dept. of African American Studies)

#### **February 7, 2012**

Race, Gender, and Science in the Classroom: A Student-Faculty Discussion

#### **March 6, 2012**

Difference, Pathology, and the Matter of Love: On the Naturalization of Coupling in Genomic Research  
Angie Willey (UMass Dept. of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies; Hampshire College School of Critical Social Inquiry; and Mount Holyoke College Dept. of Gender Studies) Race, Gender, and Science in the Classroom: A Student-Faculty Discussion

#### **April 3, 2012**

Connective Tissues: Some Thoughts on Gender, Genomics, and the Multispecies Turn  
Jennifer Hamilton (Hampshire College School of Critical Social Inquiry)

For info contact Angie Willey (awilley@wost.umass.edu), Five College Assistant Professor of Feminist Science Studies

## ***Our students do us proud!***

As always our students were well represented during the awards season of last spring. Congratulations to winners of Field Scholarship and Senior Leadership Award. Congratulations to Rosemary Speck, winner of the Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies Book Award for Amherst Regional High School.

## ***New Community Service Learning Section of 201***

Miliann Kang offered a section of WGSS 201: Gender and Difference as a community service learning (CSL) course with an honors option (students do not have to be Commonwealth College or departmental honors students to enroll, but they can fulfill honors requirements through the course). She developed the course as a Learn and Serve Faculty Fellow through the Community Engagement Program of Commonwealth Honors College. Building on a tradition of WGSS courses which incorporate engagement with community organizations, this course focuses on pedagogy, readings and discussion around the challenges of integrating feminist theory and praxis. Students partner with community organizations to work on issues ranging from reproductive justice, immigrant rights, body politics, and food security to access to higher education. For more information see [www.honors.umass.edu/genderanalyses](http://www.honors.umass.edu/genderanalyses). This course will be offered again in Spring 2012.

## ***Undergraduate News***

Beginning to think about future opportunities? Career and educational planning is one way to start; plan to visit career fairs and events, talk to career services [www.umass.edu/careers](http://www.umass.edu/careers), look into domestic exchange, International Programs ([www.umass.edu/ipo](http://www.umass.edu/ipo)), internships and more. And of course, if you haven't done your major or minor paperwork, this is the perfect time to see an advisor and find out more.

## ***Mark your calendars for these events!***

Career Blast 2012:  
Campus Wide Job and Internships Fair  
Wednesday, February 8, 2012  
10:00 am – 3:00 pm  
Campus Center Auditorium

Not-For-Profit and International Career Fair  
Friday, March 9, 2012  
11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.  
Keefe Campus Center, Amherst College

All students interested in learning more about working in the not-for-profit sector or in working abroad are invited to attend this career fair. Refreshments will be served.

There are several career fairs, check career services website for details [www.umass.edu/careers](http://www.umass.edu/careers)

## ***Graduate Certificate News***

There have been a few minor revisions to the Certificate requirements. The interdisciplinary elective course requirement "Feminist Approach to History, Literature and the Social and Natural Sciences" has been changed to "Feminist Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Approaches." This new title expands the disciplinary reach of the requirement but does not change the essential requirement. We have also begun to expand the final project expectations to allow for peer-to-peer feedback and additional mentoring during the writing process. Students planning to complete the Certificate begin meeting as a multidisciplinary writing group in the fall semester. In the spring, students present their research in workshops with outside discussants. These changes are designed to give students structure to their writing process and a vibrant interdisciplinary support network.

## ***Application process***

Students and faculty interested in learning more about the Certificate in Advanced Feminist Studies should contact Nancy Patteson, Graduate Program Coordinator, or Banu Subramaniam, Graduate Program Director in the Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies office, 208 Bartlett Hall. Applications are available on our website and are submitted directly to the UMass Graduate School. Deadline for submitting applications is **February 6, 2012**.

## ***Welcome to our new Certificate students!***

In the spring we accepted 16 applicants into the Certificate Program - our largest class ever! The range of scholarship among our applicants reflected widely diverse disciplines and degrees and we continue to be impressed with the range in scholarship of our applicants.

Save the date for the Graduate Student Reception on Tuesday, January 31, 2012.

We are proud of our current students and our grads. Our alums send us emails, cards, letters, linkedin and facebook messages and occasionally visit. Here is a partial roundup of the latest news and accomplishments, books published, degrees earned and family milestones roughly divided by decades. Congratulations to all!

Several of our alums have been featured in the Daily Hampshire Gazette! Just in the last several months it was great to open the newspaper and see the faces of **Jaime Michaels**, **Ali Diamond**, and **Jessica Berger** gazing back at me. **Jaime Michaels** is the director and producer of Out! For Reel LGBT Film Series which offers monthly showing of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender films. **Alexandra Diamond** manages the Hospice Shop of the Fisher Home in Amherst. **Jessica Berger** was featured in a health supplement on how employers are tackling stress on the job.



### From the 70's and 80's

**Janet Aalfs** has a new book of poetry *Bird of a Thousand Eyes*, Levellers Press. She continues her work as head instructor and director of Valley Women's Martial Arts Institute for Healing and Violence Prevention Strategies.  
<http://www.vwma.org/>

**Susan Cayleff** is a Professor of Women's Studies at San Diego State University and director of the Master's program.

**Linda Geary** is the Assistant Corporation Counsel, Environmental Law Division, New York City Law Department.

**Suzanne Gardinier** writes that she has "...a new book out this year from Sheep Meadow Press, called *Iridium & Selected Poems 1986-2009*. I'm working on a novel about fascism in Manhattan, called *Homeland*, and in the spring, thanks to a release-time grant from Sarah Lawrence, will be working on a book of seven long poems called *Atlas*. Amazing to think that the beautiful UMass Women's Studies program finished educating me thirty years ago now. Still leaning on those lessons, every day."

**Robin Marion** wrote last fall to say she teaches and is the Field Site coordinator for pre practicum Teacher Education students at Westfield State.

**Jan Passion (Dani Burgess)** writes that he is living back in California, working on a new project

"Rapid Nonviolent Accompaniment & Protection Project" which provides protective presence to nonviolent movements under threat, and nonviolent accompaniment to human rights workers, lawyers, journalists, and communities and others whose lives have been threatened. [www.janpassion.org](http://www.janpassion.org)

### 1990's

**Elena Azzoni's** book entitled *A Year Straight: Confessions of a Boy-Crazy Lesbian Beauty Queen* was published this fall by Seal Press. The book received praise in advance of the official publication.  
[www.elenaazzoni.com](http://www.elenaazzoni.com)

**Jessica Sarfaraz Berger (ne Faller)**, is the founder of All Things Relaxation, ([allthingsrelaxation.com](http://allthingsrelaxation.com)) a company that addresses community stress-reduction needs, including seminars, yoga, and workshops. Her first book, *The RelaxAbility Handbook* (an imprint of MegaMaiden Ink) provides stress reduction techniques for all walks of life. She produced a spoken word CD, *Sublime Relaxations Volume I*. On a personal note, she is delighted to announce the 20-year anniversary with her beloved husband, cartoonist Dan Berger (20 years together, 14 years happily married!).

**Melanie DeSilva** is now the Marketing and Recruitment Manager for the University Without Walls, the UMass non-traditional student degree completion program.

**Adam Keigwin**, Chief of Staff for California Senator Leland Yee, is quite busy as a father of two girls and helping his boss in her run for mayor of San Francisco.

**Aliina Laine** wrote: "I am currently an independent Financial Advisor and Insurance Agent. I have my own office in Easthampton. I provide financial services, life insurance, health insurance, disability insurance, and long term care insurance. I have been on the list of the Best of the Valley in the Valley Advocate since 2004"

**Sarah (Gillis) Laxton** has spent the last nine years at Beacon Press in Boston as a Sr. Book Production Coordinator. She has cherished having a career that combined the technical aspects of publishing, while contributing to an independent, non-profit company. Beacon Press publishes books that often challenge the way people think with a particular emphasis on race, gender, class and LGBT issues. When Sarah wrote last summer she, along with her husband, were eagerly awaiting the birth of twin boys.

**Nicole Lisa** wrote "After 10 years of freelance translating I accepted a job at the UN as an editor.

I'm working on a novel for young adults and will be celebrating 9 years of marriage this September."

**Since 2000. . .**

Congratulations **Rosaline Abraham** for getting the 2011 Youth Award by the National Conference for Community and Justice this past summer. Rosaline is featured on the Humanities and Fine Arts website, <http://www.umass.edu/hfa/news/index.html>

**Rachel Bazzett** wrote about her move to Boise, Idaho and her new job as a residential specialist at Women's and Children's Alliance. She is running with others as well as racing (and placing highly!). She is settled into her new housing, enjoying her dog (brown lab mix, one blue eye, 3 legs) and enjoying Boise.

**Lauren Brannon** has moved to North Carolina to start an accelerated nursing program, the first step to becoming a nurse midwife.

**Camile Curtis** writes that she is a student in the Special Education Department here at UMass and a grad assistant in Residence Life. Camille stopped by to pick up course guides to give out in her residence hall. Thanks Camille!

**Tyran Grillo** writes: "I am currently pursuing a Ph.D. in East Asian Literature at Cornell University, where my research has turned to human-animal relations. I am looking at how companion animals (i.e., pets) in Japanese and American literature come to be exploited as repositories for traumatic gendered identities and cultural memory. My WOST work at UMass has greatly informed my methodological and theoretical approach to this topic, and has more than prepared me for the paradigm shifts I hope to bring about. I am living with my wife of one year, Audrey, with whom I am writing a young adult novel. Other literary endeavors include two translations in *Digital Geishas* and *Talking Frogs*, a recently published anthology of Japanese short fiction, as well as a full novel translation, entitled *Murder in the Red Chamber*, due out this fall." Tyran is working on a translation of an under-represented Japanese female writer, running a successful blog entitled *between sound and space*, and playing sax. Tyran adds: "I miss you all and hope the program continues to thrive renewed and unshaken in its inspirational resolve."

**Brianna Johnson** wrote about her summer position at BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life). BELL runs school and summer programming for at-risk students with the goal of getting them to college. Her project was collecting info on resources in Springfield. Her next step--move to Washington, DC for Masters of Public

Administration Program at George Washington.

**Jes Kincman** just moved to Louisiana to begin her MSW work at Tulane, concentrating in disaster mental health.

**Christina Knowles** wrote she "will be beginning a new job at the MA Coalition for the Homeless as their senior policy staffer. During my time at the Mass Chapter of the National Organization for Women, I worked closely with the Coalition and am very excited to be coming on board to work on homelessness and poverty issues. . . (I) am eager to return to the world of advocacy and fighting for progressive change."

**Amy (Buswell) LeBlanc** wrote that is the proud parent of three girls ages 7, 5, and 3 and a baby boy. She is the restaurant manager at a local country club and still pursuing her dream of becoming a midwife.

**Dru Levasseur** got an award in Los Angeles: "Best LGBT Layers Under 40" at the National LGBT Bar Association's 2011 Lavender Law Conference. The award recognizes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender legal professionals under the age of 40 who have distinguished themselves and demonstrated a profound commitment to LGBT equality. Congratulations!

**Ellen Matthews** works at the Hampden County District Attorney's Office. Part of her position is as a Victim Advocate in the Domestic Violence Unit helping clients seeking restraining orders, explaining the process and their rights, and referral services. Her clients come from all different backgrounds, ethnicities, sexual orientations and she added "I definitely think my degree in WGSS as well as my experience at the Everywoman's Center at UMass has helped prepare me for this position. . . WGSS always focused on validating the various experiences of women (and men) within the context of their other social identities." Ellen continues to work on her comedy writing as well.

**Mackenzie Mathieu-Busher** is working with the Cesar Chavez Foundation as an Americorps VISTA member, and running an after-school program for at-risk youth in a rural community near the Mexican border. Next year she is renewing her term of service and relocating to Arizona. She adds "the work is both challenging and exciting."

**Maureen McHugh** wrote that after working as a legislative aide to Connecticut State Senator Gayle Slossberg, she became her campaign manager for a successful reelection campaign. Maureen described the senator as a mentor and role model and added that there is a placard over her desk reading "Well behaved women rarely make history."

**Carla Potts** served as the UMass Press web/promotion manager and internship coordinator for six years. Highlights of her job were not only working with authors to promote their books, but working with students and giving them an opportunity to learn publishing in a hands-on setting. "I created the internship shortly after beginning my work at the press as a way to offer undergraduates a chance to learn about publishing from the ground-up in a small publishing office. It's been an incredible experience not just for our interns, but for me as well, as I get a chance to connect with a group of students at an institution I love so much," said Potts. "I also work independently as a freelance communications specialist doing mostly volunteer work and have just ventured into the world of blogging. Prior to my time as a publicist, I was a newspaper reporter and corporate writer. I found that, while I enjoy being on 'the other side of the fence,' I really missed writing. As a result, I started the blog to keep my writing fresh and made it a goal to try to write more about my life as a working mom and allergy free family. Since then, I have taken on a new role at STCC as their coordinator of media relations and will be returning to a writing position and working with the local media to assure coverage of campus events and programs. I'm really excited to put my journalism hat back on and return to a field I love so much." Check out Carla's blog at <http://carlapotts.blogspot.com/>

**Angela Quitadmo** just completed her Master of Science in Non-Profit Management from Worcester State University, and is now a Financial Aid Counselor with Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester. "After working for the past eleven years in the field of college access for first generation high school students it's a refreshing change to be able to work with a similar population at the collegiate level."

**Parisa Saranj** is a MA candidate at American University School of International Services in Comparative and Regional Studies of The Middle East. She studies women's movements and how they bring about social changes in the Middle East. She writes exclusively about the life of Iranian women and Middle East gender issues on her blog *Voices and Visions*: <http://iranstories.com/>

**Stefana Soitos** is a VISTA (Americorps) Leader with the NYC Coalition Against Hunger. She will be working with the new VISTA members, supporting them, problem solving and doing team building activities.

**Annie Tummino** received her Master's in Library Science & Archives at Queens College in December 2010 and currently manages the Queens College Civil Rights Archive (<http://www.archives.gslis.net/>). She is also

active with the grassroots feminist group, National Women's Liberation ([www.womensliberation.org](http://www.womensliberation.org)).

### News of Our Recent Certificate Graduates

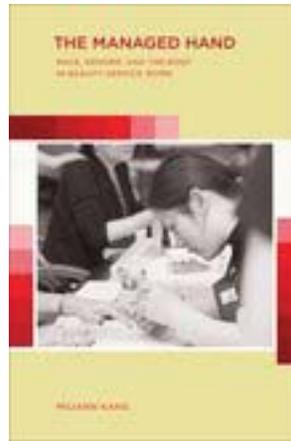
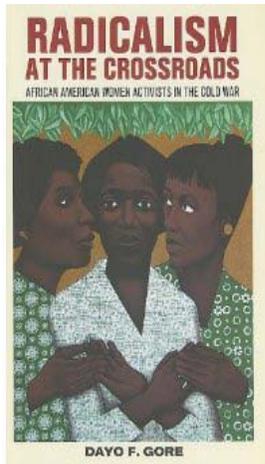
**Kabria Baumgartner** completed her doctoral program in Afro American Studies this summer. Her final project for the Certificate 'Dear Jesus, This is Death: Julia Williams Garnet and African American Womanhood in Late 19th Century America' is the story of an African American woman activist fighting for racial equality and black education. Last year, Kabria received the Spencer Foundation Dissertation Fellowship which gave her a generous stipend to support her final year of dissertation writing. As she says, her job talks "have paid off" and she accepted a tenure track position as Assistant Professor of History at the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio where she will be teaching courses cross listed with their Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department.

**Jolane Flanigan** graduated with a PhD in Communications and completed the Certificate this spring. Her final project 'Egalitarianism Doesn't Mean Gender Equity: A Normative Style of Communication in a Utopian Community' was an ethnographic study of communication theory and intersectional gender analysis to describe and analyze a normative way of communicating in an egalitarian, feminist community. Jolane TA'd for our intro course for several years and she independently taught Gender and Difference: Critical Analyses and the first online version of our intro course last summer. Jolane and family moved back to her home state of Montana this summer where she is a visiting Assistant Professor of Communications at Rocky Mountain College in Billings.

**Katherine "Kat" Jones**, a doctoral candidate in the Sociology Department, graduated with a Certificate in May. Her final project 'Struggling with Abstinence: Negotiating Gender, Race and Sexuality in an Evangelical Youth Ministry' looks at a youth ministry that presents a discourse on premarital abstinence. Kat was a TA for our intro course for several years and a graduate student representative on the department's governing Executive Committee. She hopes to finish up her dissertation for Sociology and secure an academic job in the spring of 2012.

*Alumni news is generally published in the fall. Join our Facebook and LinkedIn groups so you can find one another, network in your far flung locations, and make connections. Keep in touch with the department and let us know what you are doing! We like to brag about you while you are students and then after you graduate!*

*We aren't only proud of our students, our faculty are lively productive scholars. Look for an event celebrating these fabulous books by our terrific faculty. Dayo Gore and Miliann Kang's books are out, Laura Briggs has a monograph forthcoming in February. If you buy these books, and we hope you do, please consider shopping at your local independent bookstore.*



**Coming soon!**

**Our 2011 end-of-year celebration was fun!**



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## ***Thirty Years Ago in This Newsletter***

The program has changed so much in the last decades: our curriculum has changed--all our courses use an intersectional analysis, our faculty has changed, now even our look has changed. But it seems, some things never change--well, maybe we no longer seek gossip from our grads! (from the spring 1981 newsletter)

"1981 graduates. . . please remember that even though you are leaving the program, we are still very interested in what you are doing (and you just thought we were interested in requirements!). We would love to have updates from you (specifically regarding employment--but we like gossip, too. . .) in order that we can tell others what careers Women's Studies graduates choose. . . please remember your beloved WOST Program when those paychecks begin to roll in (and to those of you who already have them rolling in, we do indeed, accept monetary gifts. . ."

***This newsletter is produced online and in written form twice yearly funds permitting. The newsletter is written and edited by Karen Lederer. Design and production by Linda Hillenbrand. Thanks to Laura Briggs, Linda Hillenbrand, Miliann Kang, Nancy Patteson, and Angie Willey for their contributions. Thanks to all our alums for sending us their news.***

## Women's Studies Newsletter



208 Bartlett Hall University of Massachusetts at Amherst 545-9222

February, 1991

### \*\*\*\*\* SPRING COLLOQUIUM SERIES \*\*\*\*\*

The Women's Studies Spring Colloquium Series is now in full bloom (even though nothing outside is). All colloquiums are held in Thompson Hall in the 6th floor lounge at 4 p.m.

March 10 "Women Novelists of the Harlem Renaissance"  
Judith Brantburg, Ph.D. Candidate, English

March 17 "Emily Dickinson's Amherst and Amherst's Emily Dickinson: A Reading"  
Moris Abramson, Theater Dept.

March 31 "Feminists in Politics"  
Alice Bossi, Sociology Dept.

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### SSSS CAREER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS SSSS

Are you worried about your future because you are graduating this May and you wish now that you had taken the Career Planning Course offered last semester (or that you wish that you had paid more attention)? Are you worried about your future even though you are not graduating in May (and feel that you have every right to worry early)? We can't alleviate your worries but we can give you information so that you can have skills to help you on your way. . . The Women's Studies Program is offering a series of workshops throughout the semester for Women's Studies students and other interested students. Turn the page for details. . . . .

By now we all have realized and noted the fact that intermission is over, winter is not, and that Ronald Reagan is President of the United States. That's the bad news. The good news that we in the Women's Studies Program and Community are still working hard to learn, researching, and discussing all there is to know about women's lives and experiences and the lives of both. We in women's studies bring together the bits and pieces of information on women (and our own lives) in all fields and disciplines with types of research methods. And the good news is that our quill grows larger in each new student, each new semester, each new book, paper, and story. . . .

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There have been a few changes in the program since last semester. Susan Brough, who had a half-time teaching position in Women's Studies, resigned from the university in December citing professional, personal, and political reasons for leaving. Susan had taught Women's Studies courses for two years in WASS. She recently was hired to teach law for the Attorney General's office in New York State.

Margo Culley, an assistant professor in the English Department, has become the Coordinator for Women's Studies in the Spring Semester. Cathy Portages returns from her leave-of-absence in Fall.

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