



# Women's Studies



UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Lincoln

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NEWSLETTER

Fall 2002

## From the Director

— Joy Ritchie

Women's Studies enjoys outstanding support from our faculty and colleagues in the University and the community. I'm pleased to announce that Dr. Theo Sondregger, Professor *Emerita* of Psychology and Women's Studies has donated over one hundred books from her personal library to the Women's Studies Program. These books will be available soon, along with Women's Studies journals and magazines, in a new reading room of our own on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor of Oldfather adjacent to the Women's Studies Office. We'll be inviting everyone to join us for the opening of the Women's Studies Reading Room.

We also benefit from the energy and expertise of new faculty. As Director of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden **Janice Driesbach** is organizing exhibits and visiting lectureships by contemporary American women artists for the reopening of the gallery and for the next two years. **Mary Anne Holmes**, Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Geology, has received an NSF ADVANCE grant for "Where Are the Women Geoscientist Professors? Overcoming Barriers to Women Geoscientists' Success in Academia." **Marie-Chantal Kalisa**, Assistant Professor of Francophone Studies in the Department of Modern Languages and Ethnic

Studies, is working on a book entitled *Violence in Francophone African and Caribbean Women's Literature*. **Victoria A. O. Smith**, Assistant Professor in the Department of History and Ethnic Studies, will be developing courses in Native American Women's history, a much-needed addition to the curriculum.

Women's Studies also depends on women in community for support. The final colloquium of the fall semester honored the contribution Marcee Metzger has made to all women in our community. Marcee, Director of the Rape Spouse Abuse Crisis Center and the first Melba Cope Community Associate in Women's Studies, spoke about her work as a feminist activist working to end violence against women and children since 1976.

We are already planning exciting Women's Studies Colloquia for the spring semester including a panel of outstanding alumni in a panel "What Can You Do with a Women's Studies Major?" A second colloquium, in conjunction with the International Quilt Studies Symposium, will feature Radke Donnell, an internationally known contemporary art quilt maker who brought feminist perspectives to textile arts. A panel of graduate students will conclude the 2002-03 Colloquium series. "When We Begin with Women" will highlight excellent graduate student research on women, gender, and culture.

I'll be on a Faculty Development Leave next



semester, but the program will thrive with Professor Susan Belasco, as acting director.

## “Terror of Terrorism in the Lives of Caribbean Women:”

A Review by Melissa Swihart

Professor Lynn Bolles, Professor of Women’s Studies, Ethnic Studies and Anthropology at the University of Maryland, spoke at the Women’s Studies Colloquium on Thursday October 24<sup>th</sup>. Professor Bolles’s lecture, co-sponsored by Ethnic Studies and Human Rights and Human Diversity, highlighted the economic, health, and domestic violence Caribbean women have faced in the past which has only worsened in the aftermath of Sept. 11. “When America sneezes, the Caribbean gets a cold.” Bolles spoke of the AIDS epidemic, including various reasons why the lack of support from the US, as well as the US’s completely separate agenda from that of the UN, has made it very difficult to develop successful health care campaigns. She also spoke of tourism as a major piece of the Caribbean’s economy that has suffered a huge blow since the September attacks, and therefore, so have Caribbean economies. The new restrictions on tourist visas to the U.S. have made it harder for Caribbean workers who come to the U.S. to get low-paying seasonal jobs, often caring for the elderly. Professor Bolles’s unique perspective opened many eyes to a broader definition of terrorism where women’s lives are concerned -- one that includes the labor market, environment, health care, and domestic violence in many countries that are economically, militarily, and politically affected by the U.S.

*Melissa is a Women’s Studies Major.*

**WS Program Newsletter**  
**Gwen Bedient,**  
**editor and designer**  
**(gbedient1@unl.edu)**



## No Limits Conference 2003

February 28-March 1,  
2003

University of Nebraska - Omaha

W.H. Thompson Alumni Center

\* The conference is free and open to all interested

For More Information contact :

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**No Limits** is an annual conference dedicated to exploring a wide range of women’s issues. We invite proposals from undergraduate students, graduate students and recent graduates on any topic from any discipline related to women’s lives, history, cultures, feminism, and women’s studies. Creative writing, visual arts, film, music, performance and academic papers are welcome. Please submit a 250 to 500-word abstract outlining your proposed project by January 24, 2003 to Karen Falconer Al-Hindi, Director of Women’s Studies, ASH 307A, 6001 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68182-0304 PH: 402-554-3834 FX: 402-554-4907. Keynote and featured speakers include: **Dr. Jenny Gruber:** Rhodes scholar and NASA engineer, will share her experiences. **Nobuko Oyabu:** “Portraits of Survival” A survivor of sexual assault herself, Nobuko photographs survivors of assault and abuse in empowering ways. **Judy Gorman:** a musician and feminist songwriter combines music with discussion on the “Multicultural History of Women and Music.” **“Remapping the Apron:”** will feature works from artists in all media, to explore the visual meanings and cross-cultural implications of the apron, through gender and class roles, and imaginative possibility. To submit work for consideration to this juried exhibit, contact Nancy Kelly at 402/554-2796.



## **Alix Olson: A Review by Amy Young**

ATTENTION SHOPPERS!!!

attention 9 to 5 folk, cell-phone masses,  
the up and coming classes,  
attention sports-utility,  
plastic-surgery suburbanites,  
viagra-popping, gucci-shopping urbanites  
attention george-clooney loonies,  
promise-keeper sheep,  
stockbroker sleep-walkers,  
big investment talkers,  
ricki lake-watchers,  
attention walmart congregation,  
shop til you drop generation,  
ATTENTION NATION!  
AMERICA'S ON SALE!

(from "America's On Sale!" [www.alixolson.com](http://www.alixolson.com))

Alix Olson, a lesbian and feminist slam poet from New York, performed on Tuesday, October 1, 2002 at Creighton University's Blackbox. The crowd of about 50 people



cheered as she began her performance. Her work is poetry, but her appearances are much more performance than recitation. Olson, a member of the 1998 Nuyorican National Championship Slam Team, has performed at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival for the last two years, and has been touring the country for much of this year. Many of her perfor-

mances are booked through Speak Out!, a not-for-profit organization that promotes progressive speakers and artists.

In addition to "America's On Sale," Olson performed other pieces from her CD "built like that." She began her performance with "warriors," a piece written after an article about her appeared in a conservative Christian newspaper, and included others such as "eve's mouth", which retold the stories of figures such as Little Red Riding Hood and Helen of Troy, and "cute for a girl," a portrayal

of one woman's first experience with lesbian sexuality. She deals with many topics in her work, including her thoughts on war, corporate America, aging, armpit hair, and the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York and Washington D.C. Her razor-sharp wit and willingness to deal with tough subjects lie at the heart of what she does, and what she does best is make her listeners think about those topics themselves.

*Amy Young is a Women's Studies Graduate Assistant for 2002-2003 and a Ph.D. Candidate in Modern Languages specializing in German Literature.*

*Congratulations to the following  
Women's Studies Major and Minors  
who will be graduating:*

**Major: Rebecca Kaiser  
Minor: Julie Dierberger**

*Congratulations to August 2002  
Women's Studies Graduates  
Sara Zabawa  
Alison Downs*

*Graduation Reception &  
Welcome for new faculty*

**Janice Driesbach  
Mary Anne Holmes  
Marie-Chantal Kalisa  
Victoria A.O. Smith**

*Friday December 6, 2002  
5-7 pm  
3004 Stratford Avenue  
(Joy Ritchie's Home)*

*Everyone Invited to Attend!*

## **“Women, Gender, and Equality: Where Do We Stand Now?”**

### **A Review by Becca Kaiser**

Students and faculty from UNL, UNO, and UNK came to the Women’s Studies Colloquium on October 3, 2002. Three internationally recognized feminist scholars gave short papers on their response to the question, with a follow-up from the audience.

Melissa Williams, Professor of Political Theory from the University of Toronto, explained the expanded vision of “women” in the current political dialogue to include multiple backgrounds and cultures. The difficulties of providing representation and voice to these groups are now the foremost concern. But that makes engaging with women’s lived experience crucial.

Susan Moller Okin, Martha Weeks Professor of Ethics in Society at Stanford University, took a slightly different approach. She responded that women today have gained in politics, yet still have much to gain. One concern is the misunderstanding of feminists’ concerns with the home and family. She explained the tendency of media and political groups to misrepresent the women’s movement as unconcerned with the family, putting women’s occupations above their children. However, this has never been the

case. A critical issue facing women today is fighting for change in the valuing of childcare and housework. Society places value within the capitalistic job market, and pays those who care for our children the least. This has to change, Okin says.

Gurpreet Mahajan, Professor of Political Science at Jawaharal Nehru University, outlined the status of women in India over the last 50 years. Relatively speaking, the lives of women have improved in India. The key word here is “relative.” She spoke of such practices as wife beating and dowry exchange as becoming less prevalent. By western standards these abuses are extremes, but her main point fit well within the colloquium theme. Though women have come a long way in India, they still (as in America) have a long way to go.

Students and faculty continued the lively discussion with these three international theorists at a potluck supper at sociology professor, Helen Moore’s, home.

*Becca is a Senior Women’s Studies & Political Science Major.*

**Check out our  
web site at:  
<[www.unl.edu/womenssp/wshome.html](http://www.unl.edu/womenssp/wshome.html)>**

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