Winter 2002

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WKU Women's Studies & Support Program

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Transitions, "Friends"

On Sunday, November 16, 2002, the Women's Studies Steering Committee and Fundraising Council gathered at the "Transitions" retreat for a day of brainstorming, evaluating, and planning. The group met at Cora Jane Spiller's lovely log cabin in Oakland, Kentucky. The retreat marked the beginning of a transition from Fundraising Council to a new format, tentatively called Friends of Women’s Studies.

We began the retreat with a delicious luncheon followed by Cora Jane's hot apple cider. Then after an ice-breaker activity, we got down to business. With Dawn Bolton's help, we created a "position map" to help us visualize where women's studies fits among other groups and programs, both at Western and in the community—in terms of education and social networking. We also looked at models from the University of Cincinnati and West Virginia University, where two women's studies fundraising programs have been successful.

Dawn Bolton then led us in a brainstorming activity as a way of generating and sharing each person's vision of what women's studies should be and what it could become. We categorized and then ranked our five favorite ideas. Every idea ended up with a ranking. Some of the most valued ideas were:

- Do public service announcements on television and radio
- Create an executive board to oversee the Friends group
- Hold at least one event a year in the community
- Implement a program where WS minors speak in the community
- Invite "friends" who donate a certain amount to dine with distinguished guests

Our task this spring is to set up an effective framework and strategies for initiating the new group in the summer.

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Newsletter Committee:

Trish Lindsey Jaggers, Chair, WS Office Associate
Mindy Farmer, WS Graduate Student
Melanie Roides, WS Minor
Jennifer Whipple, WS Minor

Contributing Writer:

Farrah Ferrell, Graduate Assistant
We are...
PHOTOGRAPHS ON HELL HOUSE FROM TWO SURVIVORS: ON OUR WAY TO HELL—AND BACK
BRIT IN THE BLUEGRASS

A Brit in the Bluegrass: by Melanie Roides, English Literature Major, Women's Studies Minor, and a native of England (yes, it's me again, the same pesky "tney" who "buttonholed" several professors for their response regarding the "controversial topics question"). However, this is a piece of my own making: a short editorial regarding some reflections upon being: a Brit in the Bluegrass.

Thanksgiving is upon us (in fact, by the time you receive this it may be behind us). Anyway, an American friend of mine asked me how we celebrate Christmas in England. She looked at me askance when I said, "Well, actually we don't, there weren't too many Indian tribes hanging around England circa 1620. And, the pilgrims were hot-footing it out of the place."

Anyway, my friend can be excused her faux pas because Brits, being a rather eccentric people, do celebrate some occasions that seem incompatible with their culture. For example, on 5 November, we celebrate Guy Fawkes Day (Guy who? I hear some of you asking). In the Book of Who's Who, he should be relegated to who's he? Because on November 5, 1605, Guy Fawkes attempted to blow up both King James I, and the Houses of Parliament (the seat of the British government). Luckily he was unsuccessful. But, unusual folk that we are, every year we celebrate this unsuccessful coup. Brits have fireworks parties, and children prep up stuffed effigies of Guy Fawkes on streets all over England, and ask for "A penny for the guy," in order to get money for fireworks (allowing for inflation, it's probably five pounds for the guy these days).

Anyway, I digress... where was I? Oh yes, celebrations and the Brits. We do not celebrate Independence Day (considering who the Americans got their independence from, and what Britain lost, I suppose I'm stating the obvious). However, we do celebrate Christmas Day, and on the same day as many Americans, i.e., 25 December (just thought I should clarify that there are many things that Brits and Americans call the same thing but do differently—this speaks to George Bernard Shaw's observation that we are two countries divided by a common language).

Brits also celebrate the day after Christmas. On 26 December we have Boxing Day. This does not refer to having a "punch up," or coming to blows (although this has been known to happen when too much "booz" has been consumed, not by anybody I know of course). Rather, Boxing Day, according to that which I have read, is named from a custom that arose in the days of upstairs/downstairs. In olden days, in the big "posh" houses, where servants doted on their rich employers almost ceaselessly (and for a pittance), Boxing Day was set aside as the one day of the year when employees were recognized, and given small boxed gifts (hence the name Boxing Day) by their so-called social superiors. Are my working-class roots showing yet?

Anyway, as my man Porky says, "That's all for now, folks."

—Melanie Roides, English major, Women's Studies minor

FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENT NEWS


Charles Bussey (History) is retiring June 30, 2003. Also, the Fulbright office in Washington, D.C. nominated him for a ten-month gig in Norway beginning August 2003—the Fulbright office in Oslo will make the final decision by January.

"The following two students were awarded the Russell M. and Mary Z. Yeager Scholarship ($500), which is a research scholarship funded by the Kentucky Museum and Library to those who are conducting research projects and theses based on information found in the Kentucky Building."

Mindy Farmer (History GA & WS Graduate Student) was awarded the Yeager Scholarship for her masters thesis titled (tentatively) "Peech 'Pistol Packing' Pace: Kentucky's First Woman Sheriff and Eisenhower Appointee to the War Claims Commission."

Farrah Ferrell (WS GA, Folk Studies GS) was awarded the Yeager Scholarship for her scholarly work on "'Go Big Red!': An Individual, a Creation, and Identity," for her Folk Art semester project.


Molly Kerby's hand, Lost River, announces their new CD Onward to Avalon, a body of musical work about the journey to the spiritual side of life. All members of Lost River are employees of Western Kentucky University.

Deborah Logan (English) had many publications since fall 2001, among them:


Dr. Valerie Sanders, Fall 2002.

Articles: "Not fine ladies, but true-hearted Englishwomen: Harriet Martineau's Feminism," A Harriet Martineau Miscellany, June 2002; "Slavery in America": HM and the South Carolinian. A Harriet Martineau Miscellany, June 2002; additionally, she presented papers at eight professional conferences, colloquia, and special events.

Jane Olmsted (Women's Studies & English) was elected chair of the membership committee of the National Women's Studies Association. Also, her short story, "Letters from the Karst," was selected by George Ellis Lyon to be included in a collection of writings by Kentuckians about Christmas, forthcoming in 2003 by University Press of Kentucky.

Karen Schneider (English) will be going to Louisville in February to give a paper at the Twentieth Century Literature Conference: "Unexpected Resistance in Postmodern Cinema: The Parodic Satire of Mars Attacks!"

News and announcements can be sent to the Women's Studies Center or emailed to Trish.Jaggers@wkub.edu.
Pix from the Fall 2002 genderations Colloquia Series . . .

The poets read from Writing Who We Are, edited by Elizabeth Oakes and Jane Olmsted.

Attendees enjoy each other's company & a delicious lunch.

What is your best/most radical example of activism?

Perspectives, beginning with this issue, has undergone a makeover: new stories, new style, new focus, new objectives. Some of the topics to be covered are "Controversy in the Classroom: What is the most controversial topic you've encountered in the classroom, and how did you approach it?" Activism: What's your "activism story"? (a letter-writing campaign, a boycott, picketing, candlelight vigils, chaining yourself to the handrail at the local courthouse, a night spent in jail????? Tell us about it and your story may earn a spot in the newsletter. Also, new in this edition, stories "from the field": issues, observances, and instances of activism from our minors and graduate students. We welcome your comments, suggestions and, most of all, your articles.
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Email: Elizabeth.Oakes@wku.edu or Jane.Olmsted@wku.edu

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I would like to support one of the following Women’s Studies initiatives (please circle):

[ ] Catherine Coogan Ward Visiting Professorship

[ ] Scholarships

[ ] The Gail Martin Lecture and Faculty Development Series

[ ] Women’s Studies book and video library
FALL 2002 WOMEN’S STUDIES
GRADUATING MINORS

Congratulations to those who complete their undergraduate degrees in women’s studies December 2002:
Cynthia Darst
Anna Dattilo
Melanie Roides
Michelle Slaughter

Correction to Spring 2002 newsletter:
Rachel Lindsey graduated in Spring 2002.

NEW WOMEN’S STUDIES
ELECTIVES FOR SPRING 2003

We’re pleased to announce the following first-time offerings:
Women and Journalism (WOMN321)
Women in Sport (WOMN 370)
Gay and Lesbian Literature (ENG 399)
England Since 1714 (HIST 324)

Visit our website for more information and class listings.

“The ceiling isn’t glass; it’s a very dense layer of men.”
Anne Jardim