

Spring 1978

Women's Studies Newsletter April 1978

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women's studies newsletter

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Professor Helen Vendler of Boston University, poetry critic for the New York Times and important analyst of American poetry, has been delivering the John Crowe Ranson Memorial Lectures at Kenyon College this week. Denison faculty are familiar with Ms. Vendler through the series of lectures she gave at Denison in February of 1974. The topics of her four Kenyon lectures are four Keats odes, the "Ode to Psyche," "Ode to a Nightingale," "Ode on a Grecian Urn," and "To Autumn."

Lectures 3 and 4 will be held Wednesday and Friday nights, April 19 and 21, at 8:00. See Tony Stoneburner for more information or for possible transportation.

Susan Harris, '73, returns to preach at Chapel Service this Wednesday at 7:00. Her title, "This Story Ends With Me Still Rowing," is taken from Anne Sexton's volume of poems "The Awful Rowing Towards God." Susan is a graduate of Union Theological Seminary and is currently in the process of being ordained an Episcopal minister. She is employed with the Religion and Life Program at Columbia University.

Laurine Towler, Assistant Professor of Theatre, will direct Arthur Miller's The Crucible at Ace Morgan Theatre on April 28-30 and May 3-6.

Sheila Parks Little, '71, will be on campus for Black Alumni Career Week on April 16. Ms. Little is a medical researcher just completing a Ph.D. in molecular biology at Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Jean E. Rubin of Purdue University was a visiting lecturer in the Mathematics Department April 11-12. Dr. Rubin is a member of the Mathematical Association of America.

The women's lacrosse and tennis teams opened their respective seasons on April 8, both against Kenyon at Denison. Further schedule information may be obtained from the Physical Education office, or from lacrosse coach Joanne Rosenberger or the tennis coach, Penny Van Horn.

Donna Wolff, senior, presented her graduating recital on viola on Wednesday, April 12, at 8:15 in Burke Recital Hall. She was accompanied by sophomore Joseph Uffner on piano.

Ms. Sue Sprecht, '75, was on campus April 10-14 as the Geology/Geography Alumni Scholar. Ms. Sprecht is currently completing a master's degree in Glacial Geology and Environmental Geology at the University of Illinois.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (continued)

The English Department welcomed back two Denison graduates to help in celebrating the Denison Festival. Cynthia Grant Tucker, '63, currently an Associate Professor at Memphis State University, was the department's Alumni Scholar. Lauren Shakely, '70, returned for the week as a Beck poet. Lauren works as an editor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and recently published her first volume of poems, Guilty Bystander.

Denison is happy to announce receiving a \$132,000 grant for Women's Studies from the Andrew Mellon Foundation. The grant proposal, written by Ann Fitzgerald, Lou Brakeman, and Nancy Nowik, earmarks money for four key programs:

1. Providing summer grants for faculty doing research in various Women's Studies areas such as women in the work force or future careers for Denison students;
2. Financing visiting scholars, women professionals who would remain on campus for two weeks at a time to work with our students in their fields and to provide both motivation and career counselling;
3. Adding several new components to our June Orientation program, components such as an advising awareness workshop for faculty, a program of videotapes sensitizing advisers to racist and sexist problems and issues on campus, and a program to relieve math anxiety;
4. Training faculty career advisers, one or two from each department, who would be specialists in helping our women to choose rewarding careers.

The goal of the three-year program is to graduate competent and self-confident women students ready to move into responsible positions in all fields. By enhancing faculty advising skills and providing additional opportunities for our women students, we hope to increase their aspirations, their potential, and their success in a full range of careers after Denison.

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WOMEN AND HONORS PROJECTS

Twenty three senior women are currently engaged in completing honors projects in several departments.

One of these women, Loranna Franz, is working toward honors in the English Department. Although her subject is author Virginia Woolf, Loranna says, "My work is really a combination of both Woolf and me. I'm using essays that I've written on her works and my own short stories. She's always been my mentor."

A writing and literature major, Loranna had written only poetry before this year. "I saw the honors program as the vehicle for a variety of possibilities. First, I wanted to try writing short fiction, and an honors project provided the impetus to start trying. Secondly, I try to view my future, and this project is the first of three stepping stones--I need this year of research to help me develop enough self-discipline to earn my master's degree, with a Ph.D. as my ultimate goal. Most important--I did not attempt this just so that I could graduate with honors."

Loranna feels good that she followed her ambition to this final point, but she is not unaware of some inherent problems. "The most difficult part is sustaining the creative energy needed month after month after month. Christmas break makes it rough to get back into the swing of things--once again, it's all self-discipline. It's a good feeling to know that I'm able to talk about Woolf with some authority. I'm no expert, but I'm more familiar with her than with any other author. I'm very glad that I did it."

The other Denison senior women working on honors projects are: Pamela French, Kay Van Vactor, Nancy Hans, Pamela Butler, Cynthia G. Baum, Sally Schade, Jane Lowry, Deneise Deter, Amy Aldred, Kathleen Stork, Betsy Bergen, Janet Rieger, Lisa Woolard, Annika Jagander, Ann McConnel, Julianne McNeer, Nancy David, Melanie Sherwood, Candy Cone, Anne Hornickel, Judy Barmeir, and Susan Rather.

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WIFE ABUSE

Two women sociology majors, junior Barbara Landy and sophomore Karen Westerfeld, completed a paper for Dr. Thomas J. Rice's Sociology 207 class last fall on wife abuse. The paper was later presented at the Sociology Department's Fall Symposium. Recently Karen discussed in an interview some of the research that went into the writing of the paper and conclusions drawn from that research.

"We found that information is extremely hard to get. Our only truly reliable and consistent source on the subject was current literature. We talked to the director of Phoenix House (a refuge for battered women in Columbus) and we couldn't get clearance there either to talk to any of the residents or even to observe. They wouldn't give us any written or statistical information--all we could get was a lot of phone conversations. The Granville, Newark, and Columbus police departments weren't much help. We did get some leads to some Denison faculty and Granville residents who had been battered in the past, and they were of great assistance. Also the national headquarters of NOW provided some written material and the names of a few people that we could get in touch with."

The paper, entitled "Wife Beating: A Public Issue, Not a Private Trouble," was intended to explore the idea, in Karen's words, that "abuse just doesn't happen to anybody for any reason--there are structural variables such as class, religious background and education which contribute to someone's chances of being a wife-beater. Unfortunately, not enough studies have been done to draw anything conclusive about the weight and relationship of these variables."

The paper explored several common problems faced by abused women. It warns that wives should not try to, nor allow the husband to explain away his behavior as "a bad day." They should not kid themselves that the problem will get better; they should realize that extreme male aggression is not the norm, no matter what they have been taught. And they should not fall into a pattern of self-blame, because wife-beaters are definitely upset people and need help of some kind. Any form of physical, verbal, mental, or emotional abuse that develops into a pattern can turn into battering, so women must either stop the abusive behavior of men immediately (when possible) or discontinue the relationship.

Unfortunately, there is little or no help for battered women at this writing. Refuges are few and overfilled. Women receive only sparse help from the police, and if they have children, there is frequently a serious problem in deciding whether to leave them with the abusive husband, or take them and risk not being able to support them. It is even difficult to get medical help for sustained injuries without intrusions in privacy.

Steps must be taken to insure that wife beaters will receive the therapy that they need, and that judicial roadblocks to the safety of women must be eradicated.

NOTE: Although not as frequent as wife abuse, husband abuse, Karen and Barb discovered in their research, is a grave problem which must be treated in the same fashion as wife abuse.

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THIRD ANNUAL GLCA WOMEN'S STUDIES CONFERENCE

Fifteen Denison faculty members and students attended the third annual GLCA Women's Studies Conference in Rochester, Indiana on the weekend of April 6-7. Approximately 150 women and men participated. A variety of workshops were led by faculty and administrators of the GLCA as well as by outside consultants sharing their perspectives on the present status of women in today's society. The conference theme was Women's Life/Work this year, and Sheila Tobias, known for her work with math anxiety, was the conference resource person. Workshops ranged from Women and Professionalism and the Politics of Feminism (which featured senior Betsy Bergen) to the Problems Men Face with regard to Women's Changing Roles. Pat Somers, Ann Fitzgerald, Robin Bartlett, Marti Rawlings, and Nancy Nowik were speakers in other relevant workshops.

The three workshops that particularly spoke to the problems Denison faces were The Black Experience, Women's Sexuality and Health Care, and Lesbianism. Our experiences in these workshops made us realize the extent to which the Denison community is insensitive to these issues.

The need for greater sensitivity was further emphasized in a workshop composed of student representatives from the twelve GLCA colleges. We shared the differences and commonalities of our community resources. Out of this student caucus came a commitment to publish a GLCA student newsletter and to support and educate each other in our efforts to improve our own campuses. The response by the faculty to the student caucus report made us realize the value of hearing both faculty and student views in our efforts to move ahead.

Speaking for ourselves and the other Denison students, we found this experience enlightening, intellectually stimulating, personally and emotionally fulfilling, and a hell of a lot of fun.

Wendy Phoenix and Laura de Vault

The Denison contingent was made up of Cindy Steele, Laura de Vault, Wendy Phoenix, John Marshall, Betsy Bergen, Robin Bartlett, Liz Goldenberg, Marti Rawlings, Mary Beth Hepner, Jim McConnon, Ann Fitzgerald, Pat Somers, Melissa Mitchell, Julie Mulroy, Loranna Franz, and Nancy Nowik.

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PORTRAIT

(Every month, the Denison University Women's Newsletter interviews a female faculty member, student, administrator, or supportive staff member. This month's interview is with Nancy Good, wife of President Robert Good.)

"When Bob and I first came here last year, we were particularly excited about the attitudes of the faculty and the student body. They seemed very interested in working together to make Denison a good school."

Seated in her living room, Nancy Good discussed her feelings about Denison-- both its progress since her husband took office as President in the 1976-77 school year, and many of the current issues and problems now facing the campus.

Raised in a small town in Wisconsin, Mrs. Good attended public high school, and after becoming interested in Ivy League schools, attended Smith College for four years. "I received my B.A. in Economics, even though my overriding interest was journalism, because I figured I would probably never have the opportunity to study economics anywhere else." After graduating from Smith, she spent a year doing graduate work at Haverford on a special program for people who were interested in doing relief work after the war. It was here that she met Robert Good, who was then a senior at Haverford. They were married in Europe, where she was working at a Displaced Person's Camp in Germany for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association (UNRRA) and he was doing relief work in Italy. After the wedding in Switzerland they lived apart for six months, finishing up their job obligations in Germany and Italy. Today the Goods have one son and two daughters, and four grandchildren, aged two through nine years.

Mrs. Good views the isolation of Granville as both a disadvantage and an advantage. "True, we've very isolated here, and Columbus is a lot farther away than most people seem to realize. Nonetheless, this is a lovely town, and this very isolation forces us, or it should, to focus on the many very interesting people right here, both among the faculty and the local residents."

Among the faculty, Nancy sees "a very brilliant group. I think that Denison's faculty is one of the best in the country. Obviously, as the population of the college diminishes in the coming years, some of these people are going to have to be cut. One has to be realistic, I suppose, but I hate to see it happen."

As the wife of the president, Nancy sees certain functions as almost official, but "We try to keep our home open for as much entertaining as possible anyway. Our home (which was built for past president Joel P. Smith) is badly located, situated at the end of Chapin Place, and too small roomwise to be conducive to anything more than small groups. We have a lot of faculty and students in in minimal numbers, ten to twelve, to make things more comfortable." She is interested in renovating the now condemned Monomoy Place on Broadway and Mulberry, but worries that people will "think that is too much space for the President's family."

Nancy is very concerned with Denison's academic reputation, or lack of it. "Denison used to be known as a school where students worked hard and played hard. Things like the rating in Playboy indicate that only the latter is true anymore. I think that our academic standards are picking up again, due both to a tightened admissions policy, and more stringent practices among the faculty. At the very least, I think that the type of 'partyng' here could use a little diversification."

About various relationship problems, Nancy had several ideas. "The coed dorm idea should go a long way toward making for less strained, more normal contact between men and women. I feel that the students who put forth this idea were very serious about its implementation, and I hope that it is regarded equally as seriously. Among other problems here, I see respect as a great solution. I don't look with any favor on the Wingless Angels group as it exists today, but I think that a group that can poke fun at issues and people that have become too overbearing is needed. The black/white issue is obviously the burning one on campus at this moment. The blacks argue, rightly, that they lack a 'critical mass' on this campus. We need more black students here, to establish a non-artificial situation of personal contact that would establish mutual knowledge, respect and admiration for each other's cultures. Denison needs to get moving on this in ways that it hasn't before."

Considering herself a "partly liberated wife," Nancy has some praise and some quarrel with the feminist movement. "I would disagree with some of the opinions I've heard put forth concerning men. I think that feminism has raised the consciousness of women whether they are feminists or not, and has begun to liberate men as well as women from traditionally assigned roles and personality traits. It has been responsible for more honesty and openness between men and women."

"To me, the liberation of both men and women foreshadows life styles that are more supportive of a combination of career and child nurturing for both. But I feel that until there has been a re-ordering of priorities so that career and child rearing can be shared or alternated by a man and woman (and in some careers this may be possible) it is almost impossible for a man and woman to both have a career that is the kind of 18 hour-a-day challenging, creative career. Something has to be secondary--either one career or the children and/or the personal relationship. Perhaps men or women could be paid for child nurturing, as it is almost the most important challenging job that there is and I worry about having most all of this done by another person. Part of the salary could be used for freeing the person to do other things than child rearing and for exposing the children to essential experiences outside of the home."

Nancy is appreciative of the amount of involvement that the students at Denison have permitted her. "I've been gratified to be asked to serve on several committees, including the gynecological aspects of the Health and Safety Committee, and the Human Relations and Homestead Committees. I hope to be able to help this campus through work like this." Nancy Good brings intelligence, energy, and warmth to her job at Denison. Her ease in meeting with, entertaining, and working with people is perhaps her best and her most endearing quality. She seems wonderfully suited to her job and her life.

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April

- 2 Theodosia (Theodora) (d. at Caesarea, Palestine, Easter 307), eighteen-year-old martyr
- 3 Burgundofara (Fare) (d. c. 660), daughter of Burgundian nobleman; sister to two bishops, Faro (whom she persuaded to leave office of Chancellor to King Dagobert & receive holy orders in middle life) & Cagnoald; nun (against familial opposition)
- 4 Dorothea Dix (b. 4 April 1802)
- 5 Juliana of Cornillon (b. at Liège, 1192; d. at Fosses, 1258), nun who initiated establishment of the feast of Corpus Christi
Eve (d. c. 1265) recluse of Liège, friend & confidante of Juliana
Catherine Tomas (b. at Valdemizza, Majorca; d. at Palma, 1574) canoness regular of St. Augustine
- 7 Laura & Petrarch meet (1374)
Billie Holliday (b. 7 April 1915), jazz singer
- 8 Julie Billiart (b. at Cuvilly, 1715; d. in Belgium, 1816); paralytic from twenty-second to forty-fourth year, when she experienced a cure; foundress of Institute of the Sisters of Notre Dame
Ursula Curtiss (b. 8 April 1923), writer of detective fiction
- 9 Waudru (Waldetrudis) (d. at Châteaulieu, c. 688), daughter of Walbert & Bertilia; sister to Aldegund of Maubeuge; wife to Madelgaire (when he became a monk, she gave herself to caring for the poor & sick & established a convent); mother to Laudric, Dentelin, Aldetrude, Madelbert; patroness of Mons, Belgium
- 10 Maddelena of Canossa (b. at Verna, 1774; d. 1833), as a girl she attracted notice of Napoleon (he thought her appearance that of an angel); entered Carmel; foundress of congregation of the Daughters of Charity (for instruction of peasants & care of the sick)
- 11 Gemma Galgani (b. at Camigliano, 1878; d. at Lucca, 1903), daughter of poor parents, orphan at nineteen, domestic servant, sufferer of spinal tuberculosis (which prevented her becoming a Passionist nun & which she believed intercessions by Gabriel Possenti cured); sufferer/enjoyer of stigmata for eighteen months; ecstatic; visionary
Anna Katharine Green (d. 1935), writer of detective fiction
- 12 Mechtilde (d. at Lappion, c. 1200), Scottish (?) woman who lived & died in a hut
- 13 Ida (b. 1040; d. 1113), daughter of duke of Lorraine; at seventeen, wife to Eustace II, count of Boulogne; mother of children (a daughter was wife to Henry IV, emperor of Germany; a son was Godfrey, king of Jerusalem, 1099; another was Baldwin, successor to Godfrey)
Eudora Welty (b. 13 April 1909), fictionist & photographer
- 15 Jane Ellen Harrison (d. 15 April 1928), anthropologist
- 16 Bernadette (Marie Bernarde Soubirous) (b. at Lourdes, 1844; d. at Nevers, 1879), daughter of miller, visionary, member of the Sisters of Charity at Nevers
- 17 Mariana of Jesus (b. 1565; d. 1624), foundress in Spain of the decalced nuns of Our Lady of Mercy
Isak Dinesen (b. 17 April 1885), fictionist
- 18 Agia (d. 707), wife of Hidulf, count of Ardennes (he entered religion at Lobbes in Belgium; she at abbey of Mons ruled by Wandru, her aunt)
- 19 Emma (d. c. 1050), wife of count Ludger; widow (consecrated to good works for forty years)
- 20 Agnes of Montepulciano (b. in Tuscany, c. 1268; d. at Montepulciano, 1317), child in care of nuns; young superioress of a convent; foundress of Dominican nunnery at Montepulciano; visionary
- 21 Charlotte Brontë (b. 21 April 1816), writer
- 22 Pherbutha (fourth century), Persian girl; sister to bishop Simeon Barsabba'e; dedicated virgin; martyr (by sawing asunder)
Mme. de Stael (b. 22 April 1766), writer
Ellen Glasgow (b. 22 April 1873), fictionist
- 23 Ngaio Marsh (b. 23 April 1899), writer of detective fiction (creatix of Roderick Alleyn)

- 24 Euphrasia Pelletier (b. on island of Noirmoutier, 1796; d. at Angers, 1868), daughter of refugee parents; at eighteen, members of Institute of our Lady of Charity & Refuge at Tours; in 1825, superioress of that house; in 1835, foundress of the Good Shepherd of Angers
- 26 Dorothy Salisbury Davis (b. 26 April 1916), writer of detective fiction
- 27 Zita (b. nr. Lucca, c. 1218; d. there, 1278), from twelve, domestic servant in household of a well-to-do weaver
- 30 Katherine Benincasa (b. at Siena, ?1347; d. at Rome, 1380), youngest child of a dyer; goodlooking & lively girl who resisted parental efforts to get her to consent to marriage; Dominican tertiary; visionary; gatherer of a 'family'; participant in public affairs & social action; author (by dictation) of letters & DIALOGUE (an Italian classic)

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