Women's Studies Newsletter October 1977

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Six women have joined Denison's staff this year in full-time administrative or faculty positions.

Nancy Cable: Assistant Dean of Students. B.A., Marietta College; M.Ed., University of Vermont.

Rita Y. Cohen: Assistant Professor of Psychology. B.A., Rutgers University; M.S., Ph.D., Florida State University.

Laurie McKirahan: Assistant Professor of Dance. B.F.A., United States International University's School of Performing Arts; M.F.A., New York University.


Jeanne Ramos: Visiting Instructor in Spanish. A.B., Webster College; M.A., University of Missouri; Ph.D. Candidate, University of Missouri.

Laurine Towler: Assistant Professor of Theatre and Cinema. B.A., Stanford University; M.F.A., University of California at San Diego.

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Dr. Joan Straumanis, Associate Professor of Philosophy, is currently on year-long leave of absence from Denison in order to work for the National Science Foundation in Washington, D.C.

The Foundation (NSF) administers grants for programs enabling new scientific research to be incorporated into college curricula. Dr. Straumanis' job includes management of the review process for the grants, and setting up evaluation procedures for educational grants.

Beginning in November, she will be traveling throughout the nation in order to oversee the grant review process. Her leave of absence, funded by a personal mobility grant from NSF to Denison, is an attempt to allow "academic people to rotate through the organization."

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Currently on sabbatical from Denison, Dr. Esther Thorsen, Associate Professor of Psychology, is doing research in reading and mathematical models for Dr. William Estes of Rockefeller University in New York. Dr. Thorsen's work is being funded by Denison University and a research grant through Dr. Estes.

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Dr. Ilse Winter, Associate Professor in German, participated in a summer seminar entitled "German Literary Existentialism" at the University of Minnesota from mid-June through early August. The course, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) was one of several offered nation-wide for college teachers from schools without doctoral programs.

The group spent eight weeks relating a variety of German literature to various existentialist concepts. As each member of the group was expected to work on an individual project as well, Dr. Winter chose to compare Sartre's "Being and Nothingness" to modern German literature. All the participants will submit a report to the NEH before the close of the year.

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The Denison Women's Action Group will meet every Monday at 9:30 p.m. in Slayter 405. The group's steering committee is composed of Gina Chiarucci, Melissa Mitchell, Tona Dickerson and Deb Baer. Several issues were discussed at the first two meetings, including needs assessment, a permanent location for the group, and speakers. The group will be holding discussion dinners on Monday evenings in Curtis West Dining Hall (curtained section behind Vegy) at 5:00 and on Thursday in Huffman Hall (Little Siberia) at 5:00. Everyone is welcome to meetings and discussion tables.

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Curtis West Dormitory has organized an Academic Committee composed of approximately ten women who organize, plan and facilitate biweekly cultural events including speakers, readings, and musical events. The dorm's head residents are Deneise Deter and Melissa Mitchell.

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Denison's fall dance concerts, November 10-12 and December 9-10 will be directed by Anne Andersen, Dance Department Chairperson, and will include women's choreography. Ms. Andersen also performed with a dance company this summer in San Francisco.
Denison played host to the October meeting of the Mid-Ohio Women's Studies Consortium on October 12. After a business meeting chaired by Barbara Scholz of the Columbus Technical Institute, the group previewed a movie ("That's Our Baby") and discussed the future of the women's studies major as it becomes a possibility for our students at our various institutions. The next meeting will be held at Capital University on November 9. The 4:00 program will feature women employees from Merrill Publishing Company discussing sexism in textbooks. Persons interested in attending should contact Nancy Nowik, extension 326.

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Chris Cannon, Assistant Dean of Students, is currently sponsoring a Male/Female Relationships Workshop on the DU campus. The co-ed group will meet weekly to explore their attitudes about sexuality, their personal awareness of sex-role stereotyping, and the effects of sex roles on the Denison Community. If you are interested in joining, and if you are willing to commit yourselves to weekly meetings for a period of six weeks, contact Chris to see if spaces are still available.

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In Mid-September, several posters appeared in the academic buildings on campus announcing a Saturday afternoon game of the Denison Rugby Club. These posters featured a large-breasted (nude) woman who was accused of "stealing two balls from the Rugby Club." The poster described the woman as of moderate height, with brown eyes, brown hair and "two outstanding features."

Offended by the degradation of women implicit in these posters, the Women's Action Group and individual men removed the posters and submitted letters of protest to the Denisonian. "Posters such as these can only serve to perpetuate a one-dimensional view of a woman"—as one of them stated—"as a sexual object."

Rugby team captain Al Bellanca refused to give any printable reaction to the charges of sexism.

PRESENTATIONS


Presenting a paper on "The Reception of Hermann Hesse in the German Democratic Republic," Dr. Ilse Winter, Modern Languages Department, will address the Herman Hesse Symposium at Antioch College on October 20.

Associate Dean Susan Bowling will address the Ohio National Organization of Women's (NOW) State Convention on December 5. Her speech will include an overview of Denison's Assertiveness Training Program.
Laurine Towler, Theatre Department, will direct Edward Albee's *The American Dream* at Ace Morgan Theatre on October 28, 29, and 30. The playwright will speak at convocation on Thursday, October 27.

"Courtly Love as an Attempt at Individual Freedom" was the topic of a paper presented by Dr. Anne Shaver to a Faculty Forum on September 19. More on her speech can be found in this month's *Portrait*.

In a contributing paper session, Juliana Mulroy, Biological Sciences, presented "Gas Exchange in Saxifraga eespitosa: Adaptation to its Environment" to the American Association of Biological Sciences with the Ecological Society of America. The Association met in East Lansing, Michigan on August 24.

Judy Kahrl, national board member of the La Leche League will be speaking on childbirth and breast-feeding on October 18 in Knapp 306 from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

One of the original founders of Ohio Planned Parenthood, Babette Sirak, will be speaking on Planned Parenthood and her personal friendship with Margaret Sanger on October 27 in Knapp 306 from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Ann K. Fitzgerald, English Department, presented "The Staging of the York Cycle: Medieval York and Modern Toronto" for the Denison Medieval Studies Group. The presentation was a comparison/contrast between a production she viewed in Toronto in early October with original medieval staging, and a production in York, England in 1976.

Speaking on "Personalities in the History of the Women's Movement," Ann Fitzgerald addressed the first seminar of the OSU-Newark series on "The Emerging Role of Women: Historical and Humanistic Perspectives" on October 11. The series is sponsored by the Ohio Program in the Humanities and will meet every Tuesday evening during the fall semester (7:30, Founders Hall, Newark campus).

Deneise Deter, Head Resident/Curtis West, addressed freshmen, parents, faculty and selected upperclassmen at June Orientation and again at the September Freshman Dinner. Her paper focused on her growth at Denison and her changing perceptions of her role as student and woman. More recently, Deneise has learned that the 1977 Annual International Poets and Patrons Contest sponsored by the Poet's Club of Chicago has awarded her this year's first prize for her narrative poem about the death of her grandfather.

On Sunday, October 16, Ms. Rita Jackson held a Sexuality workshop for interested students. Her approach to human sexuality has been shaped in part by the work she did last summer at the St. Louis-based Masters and Johnson Clinic.
(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 Anne Shaver, Assistant Professor of English.)

"On a practical level, a student with an English major usually graduates into a teaching career or into further training. There are the lucky few who can find publishing jobs, or who can make it as free-lance writers, but many of our students go either to law school or graduate school in English. Recently, however, English majors are finding more and more jobs in government and industry, in positions where their writing skills and analytical abilities are in demand. Renewed emphasis on good writing is apparent everywhere, not just on college campuses." I hate to dwell on the practical side, though, because the most important aspect of English is this: the reading and understanding of literature is a lifetime skill and a lifetime comfort."

Seated in her office on the fourth floor of Fellows Hall, Dr. Anne Shaver discussed in great detail what led her to where she is now, and what she's done since her arrival at Denison.

Born and raised in Kentucky, Anne is the oldest child of three—"academics are usually oldest children; I don't know why" and entered the University of Kentucky as an Art Major. "I dropped out of art when the professor told us to 'express' an apple—that was when I knew I was in trouble as an artist." She received her B.A. from Kentucky, her M.A. from Northwestern University and her Ph.D. from Ohio University. After teaching at Murray State College of Kentucky, and at the University of Kentucky in the honors program, Anne joined Denison's faculty five years ago and currently shares a contract with Dr. Nancy Nowik, Assistant Professor of English.

"I am a poor example of a woman who knew her own goals from the beginning. I was brought up to be a Junior Leaguer and a wife, and I tried. After two failed marriages, however, it became apparent that I was lousy at what I'd been brought up to do, and I took a very hard look at what I was going to make of my life. After a struggle, I found myself where I am today, and I'm very happy. I've put my profession above everything, but I've seen that for me that's the way things have to be."

Anne's burning interest in English centers in the narrative poems of the Renaissance, especially Spenser's Faerie Queene, although she admits that she has strayed happily into medieval romance—"I call it going backwards to see where the beginnings are." Accordingly, she took a leave of absence last year as a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow at Northwestern. There she took part in a weekly seminar entitled "Aspects of Love and Literature from Milton to the Brontés." "Even though the course was really out of the period I usually deal with, the professor, Jean Hagstrom, thought that my knowledge of courtly love would make good background for the seminar."

Anne also translated La Tavola Rotonda (The Round Table) from Italian to English, and began to explore elements of courtly love in Spenser's poems. She utilized some of this research in a paper delivered to a Denison Faculty Forum on September 19, entitled "Courtly Love as an Attempt at Individual Freedom."
As a teacher, Anne has become aware of the growing lack of basic English skills among students. "I think there are probably a couple of reasons for this lack--first, high schools are still practicing the laissez-faire method of teaching, which is nothing more than a relic from the late 1960's. They're ignoring the basics in favor of student interest, which is great on a moment-to-moment basis but doesn't give a student much preparation. Secondly, I feel that our society is a lot more oral than it used to be... there is more T.V. and radio, and subsequently, less need to read. Where there's less need to read, there's going to be less reading, and less writing." She feels that students speak as well as or better than they ever did, but that "the discrepancy between oral expression and written expression is becoming greater and greater."

On life in Granville as a single woman, Anne spoke freely. "Young, single women used to be refused jobs here because everyone felt they'd go crazy without any cultural outlet, or real peer society, but I disagree with that--Denison is culturally a very rich community. In addition, with Columbus only 30 minutes away, we have a delightful place to live and interact."

Anne summed up her feelings on Denison with thoughts on her place here. "Nancy and I become eligible for tenure consideration next year, and for the first time, I'm seeing Denison in a light of permanence--I might actually be spending a large part of the rest of my life here. I do love this place in a sort of way, and I'm becoming interested in its faults and virtues for the first time as an active participant. It's interesting, and promises to become even more so."

The Denison Women's Studies Newsletter is published once monthly.

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