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WKU Women's Studies & Support Program

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Feminist Activist Network

Feminist Activist Network, FAN for short, is the exciting new organization on Western's campus. We are affiliated with the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF), through them, we are connected to many other feminist campus organizations all over the nation. FMF also supplies us with information and resources to help us make a difference here on Western's campus and in the Bowling Green community.

Over the semester FAN meetings were held at 8:30 on Monday nights at the Women's Studies Center. The meetings focused on getting the organization off the ground, getting to know one another, and brainstorming for events and fund-raising ideas (one of which was the yard sale that we held the last week of the semester). On Monday September 15th FAN elected the executive committee members by secret ballot. Elected were:

President- Nicole Dorris
 Vice President- Angie Fetty
 Finance Chair- Jenna Vondran
 Publicity Chair- Mackenzie Erd
 Events and Retention Chair- Katie Cielinski
 Recruitment Chair- Christy Kayrouz
 Press Chair- Rachael Paquette
 Communications Chair- Shelly Glorioso
 Equality Chair- Christina Antoine
 Community Outreach Chairs- Robyn Trivette and Shawna Quire
 Web Manager- Lindsey Looft



Members of FAN

Photo by Trish Lindsey Jagers

October 15th was Love Your Body Day (LYBD) this is "a national day of action to speak out against ads and images of women that are offensive, harmful, dangerous and disrespectful" (NOW). To celebrate LYBD, FAN setup a table in DUC, and handed out information on a variety of women's health issues. There was a petition for people to sign, telling the magazine companies that we don't like the way women are depicted in their magazines and we refuse to starve ourselves to fit into the fashions they are advertising.

FAN also got a chance to volunteer our time at Girls Inc., a great and empowering after-school program for girls. This was a very rewarding experience for us, and we plan on doing more with Girls Inc. next semester.

FAN has a lot of exciting ideas for next semester including a trip to Washington, DC to march for Freedom of Choice. To learn more about the Feminist Activism Network, join us in the Women's Studies Center (the stone house next door to the International Center) on the first Monday of next semester (January 12, 2004) at 8:30 pm. Hope to see you there.

Jenna Vondran, *WS minor*

INTRODUCING

FRIENDS OF WOMEN'S STUDIES

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NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Trish Lindsey Jagers, Chair,
 Editor, *WS Office Associate*
 Jenna Vondran, *WS Minor*
 Angela Fetty, *WS Minor*

From the

DIRECTOR'S DESK

This semester has been terrific. We had two wonderful speakers for our Catherine Coogan Ward Visiting Professorship and the Gail Martin Lecture Series. Winona LaDuke had people sitting in the aisles in the Mass Media & Technology Building, and Jean Kilbourne filled the lower level of Van Meter. More gratifying than the near- or over-capacity audiences, however, is the fact that LaDuke's and Kilbourne's presentations were excellent. I don't always feel that way, even after some of our "big name" guests.

I'm also proud of the steering committee and the former fundraising council, which have worked together for over a year to re-envision what we've decided to call Friends of Women's Studies. Our "coming out of planning and into reality" was on November 19, when Julie and Gary Ransdell hosted our recognition reception at their home. The highlight was when Alicia McDaniel offered a snippet of the "magic show" she and a number of her colleagues in Chemistry do every year as part of our Girls to Women in Science project.

Another first: our Halloween Open House gave us the opportunity to strut our alter egos. We had a wonderful costume contest, judged by Barbara Burch, who came up with her own categories (and kept wanting "just one more" category 'til we ran out of prizes to award!). With over twenty contestants (and a whole lot of "absent-minded professors" who looked suspiciously normal) it was a colorful crowd.

As I head off on my spring semester sabbatical, I find myself grateful for a chance to focus on some other work—yet also a little rueful that I'll be missing all the action next semester! The program will be in good hands: Kathryn Abbott will be acting director.

—Jane Olmsted

WOMEN'S STUDIES ANNOUNCES A NEW ACTING DIRECTOR

Women's Studies is pleased to introduce and welcome Dr. Kathryn Abbott (Department of History) as acting Director for the spring 2004 semester. (Jane Olmsted, director, is on sabbatical until May 2004.)

"I am excited to take on new responsibilities as the Interim Director of Women's Studies for the Spring 2004 semester. Jane Olmsted has left some large shoes to fill—I just hope I don't trip over my own feet! Seriously, though, the Women's Studies office is an exciting and dynamic place, and the program has provided me with wonderful opportunities for professional and personal development. I am so happy to be able to give something back."



Kathryn Abbott, Department of History

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." —Margaret Mead

Et cetera

Perspectives is published twice yearly—spring and fall terms—by the Women's Studies Program at Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky.

The Women's Studies Center is located at 1532 State Street. Our mailing address:

Women's Studies Program

1 Big Red Way
Bowling Green, KY 42101

Call us:

Phone: (270) 745-6477

Fax: (270) 745-6861

Email: Trish.Jaggers@wku.edu

or Jane.Olmsted@wku.edu

Visit our website at:

www.wku.edu/womensstudies/

We are . . .

Jane Olmsted, Director

Trish Lindsey Jaggers, Office Associate

Farah Ferriell, WS Instructor

Barry Brunson, Faculty Fellow

Shelly Glorioso, Student Office Assistant

Preethi Sircivella, Graduate Assistant

GIRLS IN SCIENCE

October 2003: Women's Studies sponsored another Science Magic Show, with Butler County middle-schoolers as the attendees. Girls and boys created silly putty and tie-dyed goggles, all while learning a bit of chemistry. Afterward, they were treated to a "magic show" where the mystery of chemistry was revealed in a fun and magical way.

Photos by Trish Lindsey Jagers



(Above and below) Alicia McDaniel (Chemistry) is the chemical magician of the magic show.



The women who help make the magic.



JEAN KILBOURNE

DEADLY PERSUASION: ADVERTISING & ADDICTION

On Wednesday, November 12th Jean Kilbourne delivered an eye opening lecture, "Deadly Persuasion: Advertising and Addiction," on Western's campus in Van Meter Auditorium. She began her lecture by saying that everyone is affected by advertising even if they think they are not.



Jean Kilbourne

Dr. Kilbourne is internationally recognized for her pioneering work on alcohol and tobacco advertising and the image of women in advertising. Her films, slide lectures, and television appearances have been seen by millions of people throughout the world. She was named by *The New York Times Magazine* as one of the three most popular speakers on college campuses.

Kilbourne's lecture and explicit slide show focused on alcohol and tobacco advertising. Cigarette companies gear their ads to kids to make up for the adult customers that they have

lost to death or quitting. The cigarettes that are advertised towards women are often associated with being thin like Virginia Slims. Those advertised towards men like Marlboro and Winston are focused on being tough and masculine.

Both alcohol and tobacco ads equate their products with rebellion, but Kilbourne points out that it isn't rebellious to smoke or drink; people are being manipulated and controlled by big corporations.

Her lecture gave the audience a glimpse of her wonderful and shocking research, much of which appears on her web site, <http://www.jeankilbourne.com>, and also in her new book, *Can't Buy My Love*.

Jean Kilbourne's appearance, which nearly filled Van Meter Auditorium, was brought to Western Kentucky University thanks to the Catherine Coogan Ward Visiting Professorship and Campus Activities Board, with assistance from Rodes Helm Lecture Series and Potter College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences.

Jenna Vondran, Women's Studies minor

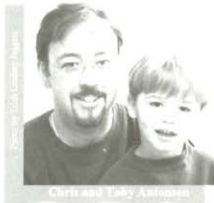
Photos by Trish Lindsey Jagers

FILM REVIEWS: *WRESTLING WITH MANHOOD***

**Wrestling with Manhood: Boys, Bullying, & Battering*, by The Media Education Foundation, is part of Women's Studies' Video Library

WRESTLING RINGS**

**Chris introduced this film for the Gender Images Film Series.



Chris and Taly Antonson

Christopher Antonson,
Polk Studios

This fall I had the pleasure of introducing the WSC's showing of *Wrestling with Manhood: Boys, Bullying, and Battering*, by Sam Jhalil and Jackson Katz. It is a genuine, attention-grabbing, provocative documentary dealing with gender, violence, culture, media literacy, social criticism, film is about masculine gender

and learning. But to boil it down, the film is about masculine gender role construction in a new breed of professional wrestling "entertainment" and its social implications from the late 1990s to the present. Because I have never been a wrestling fan, I had assumed wrestling's excesses were limited to the demand that viewers suspend their disbelief to accept exaggerated competitive violence on stage as genuine and spontaneous. I was shocked to learn just how breathtakingly blatant the homophobia, misogyny, and traditional masculine gender enforcement are in new wrestling as produced by WWE (Worldwide Wrestling Entertainment, Inc.). Jhalil and Katz are very skilled in the craft of identifying and clarifying subtle, complex issues concerning enculturated values, and deep-matrix cultural assumptions about power and dominance. *Wrestling with Manhood* carries on this tradition very well.

I have seen firsthand how the film thoughtfully encourages new reflection about the WWE's version of "manhood" (especially among younger, college-age viewers who may know WWE fans or are fans themselves). Nevertheless, after viewing it and moderating group discussions about it several times, I have grown still more concerned that there is an unmarked category of influence that is too often overlooked. What is it doing to young girls and women?

Take the following example: During a segment called "Normalizing

Gender Violence," we watch sequences consisting of male wrestlers violently attacking their wives and girlfriends (some really are married and others are related only as characters) within and outside of the ring for a variety of perceived injustices ranging from mildness to vague suspicions of failing to respect their male counterparts. These "scenes of domestic violence," as Jhalil and Katz refer to them, are juxtaposed depressingly with close-up interviews of young men from the audience venting their thrill at the spectacle and expressing convictions that the women "had it coming" and "they deserved it." Jhalil and Katz refer to them and effectively demand that we examine the link between WWE themes and the production of *young men* in the audience who come from, and then

integrate into, a larger American social context in which such violence can be seen as entertainment at all, and in which violence against women remains a chronic horror. Yet the film does not call attention to the fact that young girls and women in the audiences are influenced by the same information and express the same thrill and righteousness about the violence toward female characters. That, in itself, is another film.

Over and over again, the filmmakers urge us to consider how boys and young men learn to see the world through the WWE's glamorized and untenable version of manhood which they are consuming in record numbers. With this I agree, but the very legitimate questions and concerns expressed here are almost exclusively phrased in terms of males as the audience. *What does it teach boys about what it means to be a man?*

These mass-marketed ideals of violent masculinity raise major concerns about how a generation of men will learn to understand their responsibilities and entitlements in the home and in society at large. I have to ask, over and over again: How chilling is it, then, that there are young girls and women who are learning to interpret gender roles the same way and will reinforce these views in the

WRESTLING WITH PACKAGES

by Dale Righy

"One of the most cringe-inducing TV moments in recent memory was Matthews and G. Gordon Liddy sprouting rhetorical wrodsides over the spectacle of Bush on the carrier deck in his flight suit, his parachute harness showcasing the presidential bulge—or, to use Liddy's inimitable phrase, his manly characteristic." One guy to another, Liddy put Matthews wise: "You know, all these women who say size doesn't count, they're all liars. Check that out."

—James Wolcott, *Vanity Fair* (Oct 2003)

Dale Righy, English

Did you read the scene of our commander-in-chief landing on the USS Abraham Lincoln



as a heroic gesture or a sock job? Mission or infomission accomplished? Was the act worthy of American President George Bush or Professional Wrestling's Gorgeous George? Who is right? Well, we all are.

We come to both the mosh pit of a professional wrestling promotion and the cockpit of a presidential photo op in what scholars deem different "reading formations." No matter how overdetermined these scripts might attempt to be—no matter how ostensibly misogynistic, homophobic, phallicentric, or just

(continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

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The **bad news** is that too often academics forget they hold no patent here. The meaning is not just in the text for the pedagogue elect to doomy.

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 “No matter how over-determined these scripts might attempt to be...]the **good news** is that we flickle consumer-critizens remain resistant readers.”

and
 even surprises—
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 by real readers, as Justice Rad-
 way discovered twenty years ago in her
 seminal ethnography *Reading the Woman: Heron, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*.

The **best news** is that at this fall’s exceptionally well-attended showing of *Firewalking With Ashwood: Box, Bullying, and Rioting*, students in our Women’s Studies community achieved impressively savvy readers of popular culture. As to be expected, they lunged at the camp, frenzied at the gear, cheered at the soap opera denouement, and peered at the most egregiously misogynistic clips. They listened politely to the always qualified, but essentially cause-and-effect thesis of the film, which was that profes-

sional wrestling narratives are let’s-say-sunctor-violence-into-women narratives in the same way scholars prior to Radway had read romance novels as please-erotic-narratives. But then in a probing question-and-answer period, students asked questions and offered comments which took the master narrative of the documentary with a grain of wholesome salt.

- ☞ “These clips are completely out of the storyline’s context.”
- ☞ “Aren’t all male professional sports homophobic in some of the same ways?”
- ☞ “The very next show, it’s Mr. McMahon who gets a toilet seat—by a woman!”
- ☞ “Soap operas are way, way too easy a mark.”
- ☞ “Why didn’t they talk more about social class and politics rather than just lump all males together?”

There is no space here for more than just that small flavor of the conversation begun at what was yet another provocative forum hosted by the Women’s Studies Program. It so happens that a Western student, Sam Ford, is right now undertaking an ethnography for an undergraduate honors thesis that asks similar questions to “real” readers of professional wrestling. Stay tuned.

GAIL MARTIN LECTURE SERIES PRESENTS: WINONA LADUKE: “LAST STANDING WOMAN”

Who is the **woman** who ran for the Vice Presidency in 1996 and 2000? Winona Laduke came to Western Kentucky University on September 17, 2003 and was greeted by a standing-room-only crowd in the Mass Media and Technology Hall’s auditorium.

Laduke, the Vice Presidential running mate for Green Party candidate Ralph Nader in the years 1996 and 2000, became politically active at the age of eighteen.

“Sometimes a private citizen must become a public citizen,” she said, echoing the campaign slogan of Nader. She said, “Being a parent politicized me.”

Laduke said she would run the government like she runs her household, using the same basic principles she wishes to instill in her children—a clear sense of right and wrong, sharing, shopping for bargains, playing fair, telling the truth, and taking responsibility for one’s actions.

Laduke, a graduate of Harvard, is also a Native American activist



Winona Laduke

“Being a person politicized me.”

and advocate for environmental, women and children’s rights. Her lecture, “Last Standing Woman: A Sweeping Indictment of Racism and Oppression,” addressed the issues that surround her home, the White Earth Reservation in northern Minnesota. The U.S. government, by allowing strip mining, nuclear power plants, and the dumping of nuclear waste, continues to deny the people access to land that is rightfully theirs and contaminating the land around it—all for the sake of “powering” the United States. She informed the audience that ninety-percent of land is owned by people who are *not* Native American. “You cannot control your destiny if you cannot control your land,” she said.

Laduke is also the founder of the White Earth Land Recovery Project, which seeks to reclaim/restore the land and introduce an alternative to the invasive, polluting, and limited food sources: wind power. Wind turbines provide clean, efficient power using wind—a fuel source available in abundance in the area. “Change is possible because someone does it,” Laduke said.

The message was well received by the enthusiastic audience as she challenged all with a final call to action: “Change comes in the hands of individuals.”

Thanks to the Gail Martin Lecture Series, along with assistance from Campus Activities Board, Reda-Hein Lecture Series, and Potter College of Arts, Humanities, & Social Sciences for bringing such a powerful and thought-provoking speaker to Western’s campus.

generations

PHOTOGRAPHY: TERRY LINDSEY JAGGERS



Wayne Tarrant, Sherrie Serros,
& Barry Brunson



Molly Kerby & Lisa Lindley



Soup, bread, & conversation



Students enjoy the atmosphere



Audience enjoys lunch of warm
bread and delicious soups



Friends of Women's Studies



PHOTOGRAPHY: TERRY LINDSEY JAGGERS



INTRODUCING FRIENDS OF WOMEN'S STUDIES

With pride and pleasure we wish to introduce the brand new Friends of Women's Studies, which serves as a bridge between the Women's Studies Program at WKU and the broader communities of Bowling Green and Kentucky. Its goals are

1. Carry the Women's Studies mission into the broader community
2. Increase awareness about women's issues
3. Serve as a catalyst for change
4. Fund scholarships, events, and other activities that support women

The Friends of Women's Studies inaugural ceremony took place at the home of Julie & Gary Ransdell on November 19, 2003. Attendees were treated to a glimpse of the Girls to Women in Science magic show (a community outreach project). FOWS was the brainchild of the WS Steering Committee and WS Fundraising Council. All funds contributed to FOWS directly benefits students.

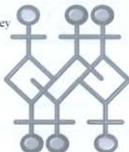
Persons wishing to be a member of FOWS can do so at various membership levels. Contributions and membership fees support FOWS initiatives: Graduate scholarships, travel scholarships for students (assistance to attend conferences, research, and internships), and community projects such as the *Girls to Women in Science* project.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Regular	\$25
Student	\$10
Contributor	\$50
Supporter	\$100
Life Member	\$500
Life Patron	\$1000

OUR FIRST "FRIENDS"

June Hendrick
 Barry Brunson & Judy Hallisey
 Aaron Hughey
 Trish Lindsey Jagers
 Pat Kafoglis
 Joan Krenzlin
 Jane Olmsted
 Elizabeth & James Oppitz
 Judy Owen
 Karen Schneider
 Patsy Sloan



LIFE MEMBERS

(GIFTS OF \$500 OR MORE)

Dawn Bolton
 Jane Bramham & Cam Collins
 Valeric Brown
 Donna & Charles Bussey
 Wilda Collins
 Elmer Gray
 Pat & Nick Kafoglis
 Dixie & Pete Mahurin
 Gail & Cornelius Martin
 Mary Ellen Miller
 Patricia & Mike Minter
 Judy & Ernie Owen
 Regina Parsley-Byrd
 Jimmie Price
 Valerie Scott
 C. G. Shahmir
 Cora Jane & Colonel Robert Spiller
 Dr. Robert Spiller, Jr.
 Katie & Bob Ward



Regina Parsley-Byrd, President

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

FOWS always welcomes people eager to serve on the executive board. Current officers:

President
 Regina Parsley-Byrd
 Past President
 Romanza Johnson
 Vice President, Membership
 Cora Jane Spiller
 Treasurer
 Trish Lindsey Jagers
 Women's Studies Director
 Jane Olmsted
 Faculty Representative
 Aaron Hughey
 Events Co-chairs
 Patsy Sloan & Gail Martin
 Outreach Co-chairs
 Katie Ward & Kathryn Abbott
 Honorary Board Member
 Julie Ransdell

2003-2004 WOMEN'S STUDIES MEMBERSHIP/CONTRIBUTION FORM*

*All donations are tax-deductible

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Women's Studies Program, WKU

1 Big Red Way

Bowling Green, KY 42101

270-745-6477

womenstudies@wku.edu



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FALL 2003 WOMEN'S STUDIES GRADUATING MINORS

Congratulations to **Melissa Smith**, who completed her undergraduate degree in women's studies December 2003.

WOMEN'S STUDIES ALUMNI UPDATE

Jonathan Edwards (WS minor) was asked by Virginia Fryd to speak at the National Association of Men's Studies Conference at Vanderbilt University.
Farrish Ferrell (WS Graduate Certificate, MA Folks Studies) was selected as WKU WS full-time instructor. She began teaching fall 2003.

FACULTY & STAFF NEWS

Kathryn Abbott (History) is the interim director of the Women's Studies Program for the spring 2004 semester and has also taken over duties as advisor to undergraduate history and social studies majors.

Dawn Bolton (Extended Learning & Outreach) received both Bowling Green Community College and the Western Kentucky University-wide Faculty awards for Excellence in Teaching in 2003. She also earned the 2003 KYVU On-line Excellence Award for Teaching (the highest on-line award at the state level) for her on-line course.

Jeanie Brown (retired, English) won first place for "Tent Children and the White Princess," her prose submission to the Women Who Write Seventh Annual Writing Competition (University of Louisville). The award included a cash prize and publication in their new anthology, *Collage*.

Barry Brunson (Mathematics) is the new Faculty Fellow of Women's Studies.

Deborah Logan (English) presented a paper at the Harriet Martineau International Conference at the University of Worcester, Italy (July). She also hosted the Victorian Institute annual conference at WKU (October). She will be on sabbatical during the spring 2004 semester.

Patricia Miner (History) spent July and August teaching English Legal History on the CCSA London Summer Program and presented a

paper at the British Legal History Conference's annual meeting in Dublin, Ireland.

Jane Onusied (Women's Studies & English) and **Elizabeth Oakes** (English), for their collaborative work on the Kentucky Feminist Writers Series, were selected by the Kentucky Foundation for Women as recipients of the 2003 Sallie Bingham Award. The honor includes a cash award.

Excellent job and congratulations to all of our hardworking instructors.

News and announcements can be sent to the Women's Studies Center or emailed to Trish.Jagers@wku.edu.

"A pedestal is as much a prison as any other small space." Gloria Steinem