

Discovering the Women's Center

By Jennifer Almquist
Women's Center Staff

Nestled in the trees on the east side of campus is a little blue house frequently overlooked. Confusion abounds as to what is inside and each term students wander into this little blue house looking for salsa lessons and swimming classes. What they find instead is what some may consider one of the many under-used resources on campus—The Women's Center.



Not to be confused with the Women's Building or the Women Studies Program, the Women's Center serves as a clearinghouse of information for both the campus and Corvallis communities. Since its inception in 1972, the Center's dedicated staff and supporters have worked to establish a variety of valuable resources. This may explain why those

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The 2003-04 Women's Center Staff: Melanie Love, Debi Stabler, Jennifer Robinson, Claudia Garcia, Jessica Bowron, Rachel Becker, Amanda Gzik, Connie Folse, Jessica Havstad, Beth Rietveld, Jane Clark. Not pictured: Jennifer Almquist.

Wymyn at Oregon State University: A History

By Jennifer Robinson
Women's Center Staff

Upon exploration of Oregon State University women's involvement in nation wide movements for women's liberation, it was made painfully clear that any efforts prior to the Second Wave of feminism were either non-existent or not documented.

Feminism's Second Wave deluged Oregon State. This flood was not so much in direct activism to specific political issues but in long-term changes and work that offered women solid ground in the patriarchal waters of higher education. The activism that was documented was tied back to just a few platforms during this period; the Women's Studies Center, and a group called Students for the Advancement of Women (SAW).

A central component in bringing the re-emerging feminist perspective to Oregon State University has been the Women's Center, originally called the Women's Studies Center. The creation of the WC itself was part of the national trend that started in the late 1960's when women students, staff

and faculty decided that traditional student support services were not meeting the needs of women on campus. The general purpose of the Center was to help retain women students by meeting their academic and social needs. On the other hand, the WC took on the onerous mission to lead the campus to ask questions about the status of women and to inform the community about women's contributions.

The specific objectives of the Center was to help women establish a supportive environment. This safe space would afford women opportunities to increase their confidence in their own abilities, and be shielded from the surrounding androcentrism of university life. The second objective was to support and promote research that would benefit and study women. In addition to the promotion of woman-based research, the Center sought to bring OSU "corrective scholarship." The entire Second Wave of feminism desired a well-rounded education for students in which they could learn

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What Do You Know About UCPS?



By Linda Anderson
Coordinator of Sexual Assault Support Services.

Greetings to all. My name is Linda Anderson, and I am the Coordinator of Sexual Assault Support Services here at OSU and a Psychologist Resident at University Counseling and Psychological Services (UCPS). I am writing to provide you with some information about sexual assault on campus and the resources that are available for survivors. Disturbingly, studies have found that 1 in 4 college women have been victims of rape or attempted rape. While there is a stereotype that sexual assault is often perpetrated late at night by a stranger hiding in a dark alley, the unfortunate reality is that 80-90% of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim. This person could be a friend, classmate, roommate, or even a romantic partner. Due to the violation of trust, shame, fear, helplessness, depression, and guilt that individuals may experience as a result of sexual assault, many do not seek help, or even tell anyone about the incident. In response to the widely recognized need for a sensitive and informed response to survivors and prevention of sexual assault in our community, Sexual Assault Support Services, a division of UCPS, was created.

Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS) offers a variety of services for female and male survivors of sexual assault, sexual abuse, stalking, relationship violence, and unwanted sexual contact. Services are also provided to those who are interested in offering support to survivors. Survivors may contact SASS (737-7604) for any or all of the following:

- ◇ Confidential telephone or in-person support, including information regarding resources on and off campus
- ◇ Confidential on-going counseling, both individual and group settings

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Women in Russia: Activists for Change

By Sarah L. Henderson
Assistant Professor, Dept. of
Political Science

Liliya Kravchenko is a retired chemist living in Akademgorodok, a town in Siberia that housed the nation's scientific elite during the days of the Soviet Union. When she was diagnosed with breast cancer, she knew relatively little about the disease, or about treatment or recovery options. She underwent a grueling treatment process, often struggling not only with the side effects of treatment, but also with the psychological strains of living with cancer. Upon her recovery, Kravchenko vowed that women should be more informed about breast cancer, and should have more options for diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. She decided to form the organization "Vera" to help other Russian women avoid her own experiences with cancer. A one woman army, Kravchenko has provided information, services, and support to literally thousands of women across Siberia. Relying on volunteer doctors, psychologists, and donations from local administrations, organizations, and citizens, Kravchenko has organized numerous breast cancer screenings, alternative therapy options, and support groups for thousands of women. She has single handedly introduced breast cancer as an issue that should be discussed in public, and by bringing it into the public, she has changed countless numbers of lives.

Liliya Kravchenko was just one of the women that I met on a three month long research trip to Russia in the fall and winter of 2002. I crossed seven time zones and traveled over 5000 miles as I moved from Central to Southern Russia, to the Urals, to Siberia, and finally to the Russian Far East. My research looks at the development of grassroots organizations and civic activism in post Communist Russia. I became interested in this issue as part of my ongoing fascination with Russia's tortuous process of political, eco-

nomic, and social reform as it struggles to build a market economy and robust democracy. I was interested in learning more about how citizens were organizing, what issues concerned them, and what they were doing about it. This was not my first trip to Russia to investigate such a question; I had lived in Moscow in 1998, interviewing women activists and their work within the emerging women's movement. On this trip, I met many amazing activists, most of them women. As Russia has struggled to remake its economy and political structure, women have born the brunt of the transition. Women are a higher percentage of the unemployed, and they have struggled to gain political representation once guaranteed to them under the communist regime. In addition, many still spend hours a day performing the majority of chores and tasks associated with running a household, often without the assistance of time saving Western consumer items, such as dish washers, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, and cars. Despite their busy lives, women also form the bulk of newly emerging non-governmental organizations (NGOs), many of which have sprung up in the wake of a retreating state.

What are women organizing about in Russia? While there are a few feminist organizations, the bulk of women activists are involved in issues that draw on their roles as mothers and caretakers. In other words, women are active in a variety of causes related to the care of other women, the disabled, the elderly, and children. For example, another activist, who lived in the city of Ekaterinburg, started an afterschool program for developmentally disabled children. Her own son was retarded, and in the absence of school programs to address this issue, she located other parents who also had children who had no access to alternative education or recreation op-

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Confessions of a Women's Studies Graduate



By Emily Wheeland
OSU Alumna

Surely I never expected to land my dream job right out of college. Maybe some of this has to do with the fact that I have no idea what my dream job actually is. I have spent hours upon hours daydreaming about making feminist slice-of-life documentaries or writing books or articles for a decidedly feminist magazine like *Bust* or *Bitch*. And then of course, there's that secret little fantasy I've always had about being a school bus driver- the cool one who lets the kids listen to the radio in the morning. I suppose when it all comes down to it, I like to do a lot of things, but am not fabulously talented at any one of them.

So where am I now that I have received my actual degree in Liberal Studies with a focus in Women's Studies and my hopes of a feminist magazine internship and an AmeriCorps job were slashed when I was rejected from both programs? I'll give you a hint: it's not writing smarty pants editorials for the local paper or being the most famous bus driver in Cow Town. But occasionally I do get to write a new menu item on the chalk board and pick up the trash out of the parking lot! That's right folks, I have found myself in none other than the food service industry, and I get to wear a visor to boot!

Enough with the sarcasm. I'm trying not to have a sense of entitlement simply because I've been privileged enough to receive a college education. But to be completely honest, when former professors come in for lunch I sometimes can't help but hang my head in embarrassment.

Some have said I'm doing the noble thing working in a job I despise to support myself, instead of

living with and sponging off one of my parents. I'm sure there are many other graduates out there who have found themselves in the very same shoes that I'm wearing at the moment.

I'll tell you, earning little over minimum wage for sometimes exhausting labor can certainly drain the feminist activism and enthusiasm out of a girl! While I did enjoy working at the Women's Center I didn't know how good I had it until I was forced to use my body instead of my brain to earn a living like so many of the world's work-

ers. These days I get home from work, collapse on the couch out of exhaustion, and often times don't move for

"I struggled a great deal with no longer being the activist or outspoken person that I was as a student."

the rest of the night.

Over the past few months, I struggled a great deal with no longer being the activist or outspoken person that I was as a student. Sometimes at OSU I felt the environment stifling and too conservative for my own taste and often complained about the lack of open-mindedness in the students around me. But after just a few months in the work force I have come to discover that my writing professor was correct when she said we may never have it as good again as we have it in college. Here we are taught the world is at our fingertips, that most anything we want we can achieve, and that fabulous careers are out there waiting for us. Oh yeah, and where many of us are lucky enough to work at places like the Women's Center and be in departments like Women's Studies where we can find like minded people.

So despite an achy back and feet and paychecks that barely cover the bills, I have decided to look at

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about humanity as a whole, and not from the “add women and stir” model as a solution. Fourth, the Women’s Center wanted to act as a liaison between students, community members, and related agencies in Corvallis. The final, crowning ambition of the OSU Women’s Center, as was the goal of nation wide sister centers, was to improve the status of women. The coordinators and volunteers at the WC used a variety of ways to bring the feminist climate to Oregon State. Programs ranged from “rap groups”, to forums, art shows, lectures and workshops. Nationally, these rap groups were the origin of various feminist theories, philosophies, and the slogan “the personal is political.” Other evidence of the Second Wave influence were events that celebrated the new feminist culture as well as skills already associated with women. Programs ranged from topics such as a calligraphy display and decorative arts show to a “Sappho Studies” seminar, and forums on the androcentrism of Western medicine. Starting in 1979 there was a radio show called “10 Steps Ahead” that offered listeners two hours of women’s issues. The purpose of all of this discussion was to spread the developing feminist perspective. While the programs and radio show did that on a casual level the Second Wave brought feminism to academia. Women’s Studies courses were sprouting up across the United States. In 1969 there were



only 17 Women’s Studies classes; by 1973 there were approximately 2700 classes. Activists and professors volunteered their time to teach until Women’s Studies gained institutional support. Oregon State kept up with the contemporary movement. Jeanne Dost spearheaded the effort to start a Women’s Studies program at OSU in 1973. In her interim report to the President’s Commission on the Status of Women, Dost explained what these courses would contribute to the campus and academics at OSU. Her vision of Women’s Studies reflected the structure of the program at other universities across the country. Dost emphasized that “we already spend millions of dollars on Men’s Studies under the guise of the traditional disciplines”, leaving a gaping hole where the other half of the world was concerned. Because this curriculum was interdisciplinary it operated like supplementary courses to fill out the gap. The establishment of Women’s Studies programs has been one of the most concrete legacies that the Second Wave left behind. In between school, work, heavy discussions about sexual politics, and activism feminists needed to have fun too. Groups like Students for the Advancement of Women, founded in 1976, tried to combine socializing with action and awareness. The statement of purpose for SAW says:

“we exist to examine women’s issues and the changing roles of both sexes; to recommend, initiate and sponsor educational programs and personal services pertaining to women’s issues and the changing roles of both sexes: to identify incidences of discrimination on campus and seek constructive solutions: and to provide a clearinghouse and forum for all students interested in the advancement of women”.

The majority of their meetings were social events that offered students the opportunity to be with likeminded people. The group held potlucks, brought women together to participate in sports recreation and encouraged women to get together to take full advantage of Dixon Recreation Center. This last point, spelled out so clearly in an early flyer, insinuates that women did not feel comfortable utilizing this student resource. A refusal to be intimidated to change the course of one’s day, or one’s life was a political act in itself within the Second Wave; SAW promoted the idea that women should exercise their right to go where they wanted to and to count on other women as a source of support. Students for the Advancement of Women expanded the Oregon State feminist community by allowing more students to participate. Not only did it open up more leadership roles for more women within the campus feminist community but also by 1978 there was a heavy emphasis on the inclusion of men. Interestingly, though this overt welcome especially for men correlated with a decline in mem-

bership. Perhaps the flair for feminism began to taper off in the Pacific Northwest, or just on the OSU campus. Maybe the excessive welcoming of men in particular into the group caused more radical feminists to withdraw. On the other hand it could have been an attempt to reassure would-be feminists against the lesbian baiting that is used to discourage young women from participating

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politically. Or, it could have been part of a genuine desire to welcome men into the pro-woman, active community that just

happened to be at the same time that membership was dropping. Despite the interpretation of the reduction in members of SAW and what it may have been related to, the tapering is right in line with the national trend. By the mid 1980s there was a full-fledged backlash in swing. The Second Wave changed the tone of campus life. It had a post-modern effect on OSU - what topics were explored, what was studied or even considered worthy of study, and opening the way for students to question what institutional support was offered and what it meant about their status. The perspective from which traditional knowledge came from was questioned. Women on Oregon State’s campus became ignited with the feminist movement in the 1970’s and changed this educational institution from its face to its roots.

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- ◇ Advocacy for survivors who choose to involve the police, student conduct and mediation, the criminal justice system, or other services
- ◇ Consultation with faculty, staff, friends, and family seeking information about how to support a survivor
- ◇ Educational presentations and training, to promote a climate of nonviolence and safety

We believe in providing a safe place for survivors to be heard, providing unconditional support and respect for each individual’s healing process, and providing information and options so that survivors may make their own choices for recovery. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to call 737-7604.

OSU Women’s Center

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The Women’s Center is open
Monday through Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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seeking information on emergency contraception, eating disorders, child care, or how to handle a crisis situation, just to name a few, often find themselves at the blue house kiddy corner to the Valley Library for answers.

Those who discover the Women's Center, which is also known as Benton Annex, are pleased with what they find and the most frequent comment after, "This space is amazing!" often is, "I wish I had known about this sooner." The appeal is in the comfortable couches, the large kitchen, and the overall welcoming space. The Center also maintains a resource library with over 1,300 books and houses a small computer lab with word processing and Internet capabilities.

Another center, the Queer Resource Center, has resided within the walls of the cozy little blue house for several years and is available for students to access. The mission statement of the

Queer Resource Center includes commitment to creating "a safe space for all people to explore aspects of sexual orientation and gender." Both Centers are dedicated to fostering an open and affirming atmosphere to engage in current issues, create net-

works, build community, and make a difference!

The resources housed within the Women's Center are open to all members of the OSU and Corvallis communities. Like the cultural centers, the Women's Center also offers a place for both new and established campus groups to meet.

For information or assistance, please call the Women's Center at 737-3186, visit our website at <http://womenscenter.oregonstate.edu> or stop by Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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portunities.

Throughout my trip, I was continuously amazed and inspired by the actions of hundreds of Russian women, scattered across Russia. Many of them were beyond busy, even exhausted; yet, they were determined to somehow provide a better life for those around them. I thought how overwhelming it would be for many of them to come to America and see the casual excess of many peoples' lives, when they were struggling on a daily basis to make the best of serious economic and social problems. Yet, some of these women, through a variety of exchange programs, had been able to come to the United States, had witnessed the much wider array of social services available to citizens, and returned home, inspired to somehow cajole local governments and citizens to join together to work to find a solution to many of Russia's ongoing problems. Although there is no magic solution to solve the variety of Russia's ills, women are working on a daily basis to make a difference at the local level.

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my current situation with optimism rather than pessimism (most of the time). It's probably healthy for a privileged girl like myself to have to live the life that so many millions of people not lucky enough to go to college live. It's good for me to earn everything I have for once in my life and be able to say that I am truly independent.

As your and my favorite 80s pop star George Michael used to say, "You gotta' have faith." In truth most of us really aren't destined to get everything we want in life no matter how much our little hearts hope we do. So while I may not have received the internship or job I hoped for after graduation and have not yet rid the world of patriarchy, I've taken old George's words to heart and have the faith that someday, with a little luck and years of hard work, my dream job may finally come a knockin'! Keep your eyes peeled and someday you may just see a documentary on OPB about school bus drivers by day, radical lesbian avengers by night!

Calendar of Events

November

11th - A Healthy Start 5:30-6:30 p.m.
Get great tips from OSU Nutrition Specialists Jordann Henkelman and Erin Hammond about healthy eating, self-esteem, and more! Enjoy a relaxed, conversational approach and take this opportunity to get your questions answered

12th - Graduate Women's Network Fall Reception 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Enjoy good conversation over hors d'oeuvres, wine, and punch while meeting other graduate women. Held at the home of President and Beth Ray.

14th - Magnificent Magnets! 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Swing by the table in the Memorial Union Student Lounge and make a magnet for yourself or a friend. It's fun and easy - give yourself a study break!

18th - Fight Like A Girl! 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.
This workshop is one part feminist studies and one part physical self defense. The first half of the program will be aimed at deconstructing the internalized sexism that socializes women to be the "perfect victims." The second half will be spent learning basic physical self defense skills

19th - Stress Management for Graduate Women 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Sponsored by the Graduate Women's Network. Tabatha Stewart, pre-doctoral intern at University of Counseling and Psychological Services, will discuss strategies for preventing and minimizing stress.

20th-Women Who Dared Brown Bag Series 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Nikki Olson, an OSU graduate student and Graduate Assistant in Intramural Sports, canoed the entire length of the Mississippi

River during summer 2003. Bring your lunch and enjoy as she recounts the adventure.

20th - Queer Ally Building 3:00-4:00 p.m.
Join Prudence Miles, Equal Opportunity Associate and Jackie Balzer, Interim Dean of Students, to learn methods to become a stronger ally to the queer community.

Learn the difference between tolerance and acceptance. Support friends and family in their struggle for acceptance.

25th - Women & Public Policy 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Sonia Kandathil, a PhD candidate in Public Health, will share information and anecdotes from her recent experience as a public policy intern in Washington D.C.

25th-Poetry Jam 7:00 p.m.

Join us for this event showcasing pieces selected for the Fall Women Writers' Se-

ries. This will be a time when creative energies can be brought together and celebrated! All welcome; refreshments provided.

January

12th - Women Who Dared Brown Bag Series 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Dawn Wright (a.k.a. Deepsea Dawn) has been a professor of Geography and Oceanography at OSU since 1995. Though you may have seen her above ground here on campus, much of her research and fieldwork have taken place under the ocean! Bring your lunch and learn about her many daring experiences at sea.

Visit <http://womenscenter.oregonstate.edu> for an updated list of events!

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