

November 22, 2004

Fall Term Issue

Oregon State University Women's Center

Women's Center, Benton Annex,
Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331-2503
541.737.3186

<http://oregonstate.edu/womenscenter>



A Day in the Life ... by Beth Rietveld

A typical day in the life of a Women's Center Coordinator usually starts with a cup of tea and a friendly face. Angi Baxter who has volunteered at the Women's Center for the past 2 years brings a huge smile into the office each day as we check in and share something that might have happened to one of our respective daughters...and we drink tea.

Then a student comes into the Women's Center frantically trying to find a place to print a paper that is due at 9am. She immediately relaxes when she finds out that we have the computers on, the printer ready, and we offer *her* a cup of tea while she puts her disk in. We talk briefly about how she can connect with other Latina students and with single student parents. She is noticeably more relaxed when she leaves 30 minutes later for class (and we have a new friend for life).

I move into my office to continue work on a conference that we will co-sponsor with Corvallis NOW for Young Feminists. We will collaborate in finding speakers, arranging facilities and organizing the content for this January conference.

I delete e-mails about penis enlargement, cheap mortgages, laser printer toner, software sales, Viagra, Cialis, the guy in Nigeria that wants to deposit huge amounts into my bank account, and from Citibank asking for personal information.

Then I receive a phone call about the Childcare Advisory Board Meeting and work with both Kindercare and Growing Oaks to find students to serve on this very important committee. Our charge this year is to plan for the future needs of our student parents and to determine how we can best provide quality, low-cost childcare...and determine other needs that student parents might have, that OSU can provide.

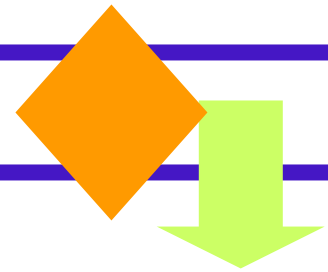
A visitor stops by accompanied by a certain Dean who works nearby. Some of our best public relations is done by people outside the Women's Center who know the work that we do and immediately connect interested visitors to our programs and services. We have hosted community college presidents, visiting faculty from many other countries, potential graduate students, and parents of current students who are escorted to the Women's Center by many of our friends around campus.

As I begin to arrange travel to a meeting in North Carolina, my work stops for a student in crisis. This student shares her personal story about being in fear of her abusive partner. I listen to her story and offer her options for her immediate safety through the Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence (CARDV) and through various campus resources. She accepts my offer to walk her over to University Counseling & Psychological Services.

Later, a student e-mails with a question about custody in Oregon. I refer her to the ASOSU attorneys who work on behalf of students. I also let her know about the resource books and files about divorce that we have in the Women's Center library.

I finally get around to taking down the decorations from my birthday celebration last week. Each balloon seems to pop very loudly as I stab it with a pair of scissors. As much as I have enjoyed my celebration, I remember that with each additional candle on my cake, there is another year that I am removed from the age of my students. The other day I was talking with 2 much younger colleagues about TV shows like "Donna Reed" and "Father Knows Best"....and songs like "I Want to be Johnnie's Girl" that shaped my generation and moved us toward the Women's Movement.

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“Spirit of life and hope, be present with us this hour. Join us today as we gather in community. In this place, may we greet one another with open hearts and open minds; may we cultivate together wisdom and compassion; may we inspire each other to labor with purpose and right intention; let all who enter this place see a welcome face, hear a kind word, and find friendliness in this community. And may all that is done and said here today be in service to love and justice.”

Nancy O’Mara, 2004

Who is the Women’s Center Staff?

One of the most frequently overlooked buildings on campus, the Women’s Center in Benton Annex, is not only a comfortable space in itself, but also home to a welcoming staff. The 2004-2005 staff consists of women from a diverse range of backgrounds and interest areas and bring with them new experiences and ideas.



Cat McGraw is a master’s student in College Student Services Administration. She comes to Corvallis after recently finishing a degree in Journalism from the University of Oregon in Eugene. She is this year’s activism coordinator. She has prior experience working in Student Orientation Programs and for the LGBTQ Alliance at the U of O. In addition to working at the Women’s Center, Cat has an assistantship in the College of Science Advising Office.



Cynthia Briggs is this year’s Graduate Assistant for the Women’s Center. Cynthia is a second year doctoral student in Counseling Education. She came to Oregon last year from Guilford College in North Carolina, where she was Director for Gender Issues and Retention. While she was there, she developed a sexual assault protocol and procedure for the campus. She first discovered the Women’s Center last year by doing an internship that involved evaluation sexual assault programming here on campus. This year as the Graduate Assistant, Cynthia brings a great deal of experience in teaching, counseling, assessment, research and supervision.



Molly Gray is this year’s Outreach and External Events Coordinator for undergraduate students. Molly is a student in Liberal Studies with an emphasis on Women’s Studies. She is very active in organizations on campus that focus on women’s issues such as SPEDA (Students Promoting Eating Disorder Awareness) and the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance.



Chelsea Ruediger is the marketing coordinator at the center this year. Chelsea is a transfer student majoring in Interior Design. Chelsea is originally from Ashland, but spent the last couple of years studying in Arizona. Chelsea has prior experience working at Women’s Resource Centers, having worked at them both on the Southern Oregon campus and at Northern Arizona University. She thought that working at the OSU Women’s Center would be a great way to become involved on our campus.



Mehra Shirazi is the Outreach and External Events Coordinator for graduate students. She is currently a doctoral student in Public Health, just finishing up her dissertation that researches breast cancer screening in the Iranian immigrant woman population. To gather information for her project, she traveled to various places to meet with Iranian women and have conversations with them. Mehra has also in the past taught a class on Feminism in Muslim Societies in the Women Studies program.



STAFF: Who is the Women's Center Staff?



Jane Clark is returning for a second year to the Women's Center staff. She is continuing her role as Publications Coordinator, this year focusing on the writing and editing. Jane is majoring in Political Science and minoring in Spanish. In addition to working at the Women's Center, she is involved with the ASOSU Judicial Board and is part of the University Honors College.



Tarah Howard is working on publications this year, on the layout and design, both for the newsletter and the Women's Center website. Tarah is a first year masters student in the College Student Services Administration program. Tarah comes to OSU from Tucson, Arizona where she was working as a personal program guide at a health and fitness resort. In addition to working at the Women's Center, Tarah is the new director of graduate student affairs for ASOSU.



Melanie Love is the Women's Center's General Office and Special Projects Coordinator. She is returning to the center after doing an internship last fall. Melanie is a second year master's student in the Women's Studies program, last year being new to Oregon from North Carolina. Melanie teaches a class on violence against women in the Women's Studies program. In addition, she has been involved with other groups on campus that focus on women's issues, such as the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance and the Women's Center Advisory Board.



Angi Baxter is an active volunteer at the center, continuing with her hard work and support from last year when she first started volunteering at the OSU Women's Center. She is originally from South Dakota and has come to OSU to finish her degree in Sociology with a minor in Women's Studies. With her she brings her eleven-year-old daughter Isa and seven year old daughter Oriana. Angi has also been very active in what is now called the Pride Center and is part of the LGBT Advocacy team. Eventually she hopes to have a career in human rights work.



New to the Women's Center this year is AmeriCorps community educator, Jenny Mei, who will be working on developing a Sexual Assault and Violence Education (SAVE) program. Jenny is from Chicago and received her degree in Psychology and Women's Studies from Loyola University. She spent last year working as an advocate at CARDV through the AmeriCorps program, and this fall she moved to the Women's Center to continue her work by developing the SAVE program. The program will be a way to respond to incidents and fear around sexual assault. Jenny Mei is creating educational presentations for student living groups, classrooms, and staff and faculty groups. The hope is that through the SAVE program many of the myths surrounding sexual assault will be broken down and people will gain knowledge about the resources available on campus and in the community.

MUST READ BOOKS:

1. Do They Hear You When You Cry?
Fauziya Kassindja
2. Pinstripes & Pearls: Women of Harvard Law School who Forged an Old-Girl Network
Judith Richards Hope
3. Lucky
Alice Sebold
4. For Women Only!: Your Guide to Health Empowerment
Gary Null & Barbara Seaman

***All books available in the Women's Center library.**

Women's Center Events:

November 30th
World AIDS Day Program
World Premiere Movie:
"Women are...Leading Change"
What else : Discussion with
Donna Champeau
When: 7-9:00pm
Where: MU 213
(*Co-sponsored by Peer Health
Advocates & Benton County
Health Department)

February 16th-March 26th
Creating Reality One "Artist" at
a Time
Where: Memorial Union
Concourse Gallery

Would you like
to see an event
take place?
Contact us!!!

DAY: The Women's Center makes a difference

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

There was a blank look on their faces as I realized they weren't even born in the 60's and didn't have a clue what I was talking about (maybe they had a clue about the Women's Movement, but not the TV shows or songs).

At the end of the day, we receive a visit from a reporter from KVAL-TV about the Clothesline Project, sponsored by the Women's Center that will be up on the MU Quad. The reporter insists on talking with "survivors." I feel she is pushy and lacking in compassion...and then I meet her and realize that she worked with me at Dixon Recreation Center back in the 80's. She interviews one of our student employees and leaves, very satisfied with her story and with additional information about specific

resources in Eugene that can help her or other survivors of relationship violence (and she's somewhat surprised that we have resources for anyone in the state of Oregon that someone might seek assistance).

Some of my days are full of meetings that often seem meaningless, and some days I feel like I've truly made an impact on students. It is for those small positive impacts on student lives that I come to work each day with an open heart. It is for the amazing women students with whom I am honored to work that I love my job. And it is for the small differences that we make each day at OSU for the improvement of the status of women and a better climate for all students that I will continue to do this work. And if just one student, staff or faculty member joins our quest for social justice and equality...the Women's Center will have exceeded beyond measure.

About Us ...

More than thirty years after its initial creation, the Women's Center continues to offer numerous resources to the campus community as well as a comfortable and safe space. As the center constantly adds to its resources, it becomes more and more comprehensive in the information and supports it provides to both women and men at Oregon State University.

The S.A.V.E. Program

The new Sexual Assault and Violence Education (SAVE) program has been developed this year as a way to more effectively respond to the incidents and fear of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and relationship violence on campus. AmeriCorps Community Educator, Jenny Mei, is creating original trainings and discussion-oriented educational presentations that will be taken into classrooms, living groups, the Greek community, clubs and organizations, and faculty and staff meetings.

The SAVE office is located in the Women's Center and will be an excellent place to glean helpful information and discover resources designed to assist survivors or friends of survivors (and anyone else who may be affected or interested).

SAVE strives to end the tolerance and silence around sexual violence through education and awareness efforts. We acknowledge that men and women alike can be survivors of sexual violence and that relationship violence takes place in heterosexual and same-sex partnerships. It is the hope of this program that through education, people on campus will be more informed on the myths and facts about sexual assault, understand consent, and know how to access campus and community resources.

To contact SAVE or to find out how you can help, please contact Jenny Mei at:
SAVE.program@oregonstate.edu

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My Trip to Russia ... by Jane Clark

This last summer, I had the opportunity to travel to Siberian Russia with Habitat for Humanity. I have always had an interest in Russia, starting with the glamorized stories about the Tsarist era when I was young, later with the appearance of gender equality that existed in the Soviet Union, and finally the effect of the fall of communism on Russian women today. During the Communist Era, Russian women were a huge portion of the workforce and predominated in medicine and the social sector. They were also fairly well represented in legislative positions. Despite the subtle discrimination that still existed, Russian women were at least statistically better represented in all spheres than even most Western nations. Since the collapse, women's governmental representation has plummeted, their job security is almost non-existent, and government sponsored "back to the home" campaigns have started that encourage women to return to their role as mother and homemaker. I was excited to have a chance to talk to women about their perceptions of themselves and their place in society. I was certain that I would find a community of women who had either been forced out of the workforce or were fleeing their jobs to return home to their families.

Once we got to Russia I immediately began observing the people around me. The city in which we were working, Ulan Ude, was in a region of Russia called Buryatia. The native people, called "Buryats", are cousins of the Mongols and thus are very Mongolian looking in appearance. Intermixed are a number of ethnic Russians. Both ethnic groups seemed to be in a similar social and economic situation.

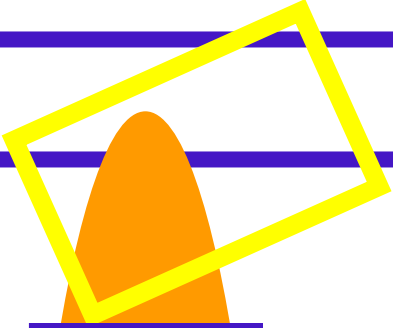
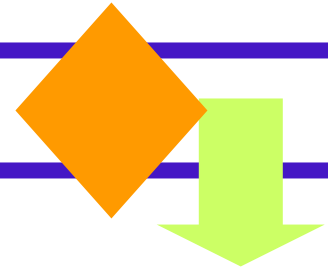
Right away, I observed a clear gender divide. While men filled all of the labor and construction positions, the women were in charge of the clerical work, such as working in the offices and acting as tour guides. Tanya, the woman who was receiving the house, was on the worksite every day but spent most of her time preparing tea and doing minor clean up tasks while caring for her new son Ilya. We asked her at one point if she had a job, and she told us that she used to be a lawyer but

now felt lucky that she could spend time being a mother. Her husband's job was enough to support them. I saw her as very stereotypically representing what I had read about Russian women. Further, we had a number of guides and translators in both Siberia and Moscow, all of whom were women. The Habitat board of directors was comprised of women. All of these are considered soft jobs—women's work instead of men's work, and hence are not well paid. Also evident was an absence of elderly men. While we had a number of old women observing us at the jobsite, there were never any old men. Russian men have a very low life expectancy, usually due to alcoholism brought on by their "vodka tradition" and as a way to escape from poverty and hardship. I assumed that this was true in Buryatia, just like in other parts of Russia.

The more time I spent getting to know individual women during the trip, however, the more I realized that while my stereotypes might hold true for many, there are also many women who *don't* fit the stereotype. Three women in particular made a significant impact on me.

We met Tamara during our weekend at Lake Baikal. Tamara was an ethnic Russian who worked at Lake Baikal in the summers and taught at an elementary school the rest of the year. She and my mother forged a special bond as teachers. At one point she told my mother she was glad that we had had a chance to see that Russians were nice people. "Please don't hate us," she said. "We're not all bad." Tamara loved being a school teacher, and despite hardships, lacking resources, and minimal pay, she continued working hard since she cared about the children's education. I learned from Tamara that there are Russians working not just out of necessity, but because of desire to do so.

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“We must be true to each other. We must stand by the woman whose work of hand or brain moves her from the customary sphere.”
 - Lucy Stone, Woman’s Rights Convention, 1852, History of Woman Suffrage, I, 1881

RUSSIA: My experience ...

• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Elena was the coordinator for Habitat for Humanity in Ulan Ude. She was responsible for the entire coordination of the project and spent nearly every waking hour making sure everything ran smoothly. Her husband seemed to be very supportive and also hard working. At one point she sat down next to me while I was reading a copy of *Manifesta*. She asked to look at it, and said, “Ahhh...feminism. I used to not know much about this so I thought it was just for radical women, but when I realized that it can mean that my husband helps me out around the house, I like this idea!” I learned from Elena that there are women with supportive husbands in Russia, who are beginning to explore feminism in their own lives.

Sasha was a young Buryat woman who translated for us daily on the jobsite. Not only was she constantly translating for both us and the local workers, but also she worked with us, nailing up fence pieces, hauling dirt, and painting boards. She said that her friends and mother didn’t understand why she wanted to do hard work in the sun every day. She was fascinated that we wanted to volunteer in another country, because a similar spirit of volunteerism doesn’t exist in Russia.

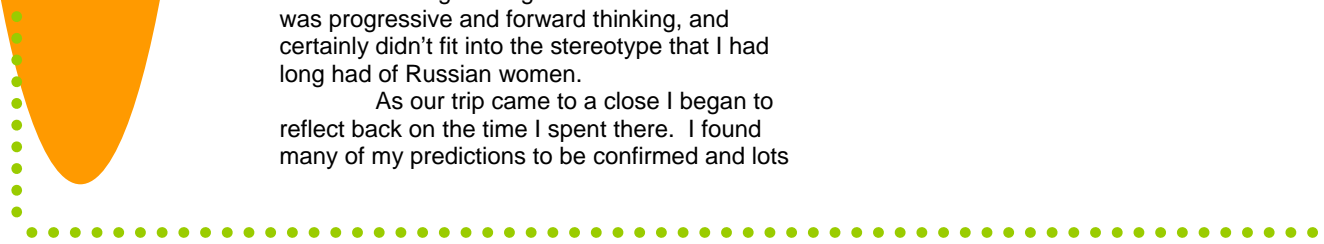
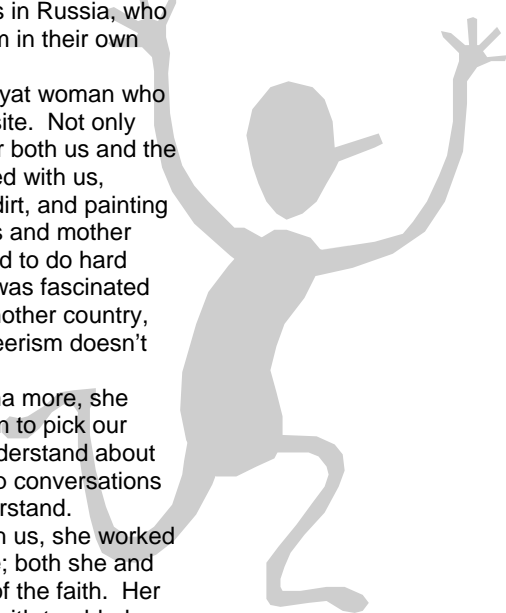
As we got to know Sasha more, she shared more of herself and began to pick our brains about things she didn’t understand about our country, often provoking deep conversations about issues we don’t even understand.

When Sasha wasn’t with us, she worked for the Baha’i Center in Ulan Ude; both she and her sister were active members of the faith. Her sister worked practically for free with troubled youth in the city, trying to keep them off the streets. Her sister was exhausted by the work, but couldn’t leave the position, because she knew if she didn’t do it no one would.

Through Sasha I learned that there are Russians who are committed to overcoming the problems existing in their country and are willing to sacrifice more profitable employment in order to work for the greater good of Russia. Sasha was progressive and forward thinking, and certainly didn’t fit into the stereotype that I had long had of Russian women.

As our trip came to a close I began to reflect back on the time I spent there. I found many of my predictions to be confirmed and lots

of the prior information that I had heard to be true. I also found that just like in any other situation, it is ignorant and unfair to stereotype an entire group of people. While we did find in some cases that women were choosing to abandon their jobs or do menial work, we also met a number of inspiring women who cared a great deal about the well-being of their community and country, and who wanted to have an active role in helping bring about change in the lives of those around them. Russia may have its struggles, but it is a country that has a treasure trove of people who are often overlooked, but are still working, caring and fighting.



Help Fight Breast Cancer by Going to the Movies!

By Linda Lovett / Benton County Breast & Cervical Cancer Coalition

On January 22, 2005, the Benton County Breast and Cervical Cancer Coalition (BCBCCC) will kick off "LUNAFEST™ Corvallis" at the LaSells Stewart Center. Made possible by Clif Bar Inc.—the makers of Luna nutrition bars—LUNAFEST™ is a national festival of films made "by, for, or about women." It features a diverse lineup of short films, including three 2004 Sundance Film Festival selections, and has a total running time of just under two hours. The event also will include a screening of "Oasis of Hope," a documentary about breast cancer survivors by local filmmaker Lynn Walker.

For a nominal fee, LUNA makes the films available to women's organizations and donates its proceeds to The Breast Cancer Fund, a national non-profit dedicated to investigating environmental causes of breast cancer. The rest of the proceeds from LUNAFEST™ Corvallis will go to the BCBCCC.

Last year in Oregon, 2,600 women were diagnosed with breast cancer and 500 women died of the disease. Every woman has a 1 in 8 lifetime risk of breast cancer. Routine mammograms can decrease deaths from breast cancer by up to 30%, but the cost can be prohibitive for women without medical insurance. They often delay or do not seek preventive mammography services, resulting in a later diagnosis and a lower chance of survival. By funding mammogram vouchers and through outreach and education programs, the BCBCCC aims to improve access and increase awareness for all women in Benton and Linn Counties.

I take personal satisfaction in bringing LUNAFEST™ to an OSU venue. It was at the Philosophy Department's 2002 lecture series commemorating the 40th anniversary of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* that I learned that the BCBCCC was soliciting contributions for its second book of stories from breast cancer survivors in Benton and Linn Counties. By contributing to that book, *Transitions*, I became a member of the Coalition board and am now heading up the LUNAFEST™ fundraiser.

I am also pleased to support an organization—The Breast Cancer Fund—that is looking into environmental causes of the disease. Although none of this year's LUNAFEST™ films are about breast cancer or the environment, the event offers an opportunity to raise awareness on both issues and the connection between human and environmental health. As Kathleen Dean Moore writes in *The Pine Island Paradox*, "this is the saddest, most self-destructive mistake of all our sad and self-destructive mistakes, to think that humans can degrade their habitats and not degrade themselves." In addition to breast cancer organizations, we have invited local environmental organizations (Oregon Toxics Coalition, Oregon Natural Step, Corvallis Environmental Center, OSU Sustainability Network) to participate with educational materials.

Finally, I am thrilled to have the enthusiastic support of volunteers from the OSU Women's Center. They will be selling tickets at the Women's Center and the OSU Holiday Market 12/3-4 for \$8 students/\$10 general admission. You may also purchase tickets online (with a small surcharge) at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/667>.

You can learn more about LUNAFEST™ at www.lunabar.com; The Breast Cancer Fund at <http://www.breastcancerfund.org>; and the Benton County Breast and Cervical Cancer Coalition at <http://www.co.benton.or.us/health/CH/HEd/Pr evention%20Programs/BCC.htm>. For more information about "LUNAFEST™ Corvallis," you may call me at 738-6875.

"If a woman is swept off a ship into the water, the cry is 'Man overboard!' If she is killed by a hit-and-run driver, the charge is 'manslaughter.' If she is injured on the job, the coverage is 'workmen's compensation.' But if she arrives at a threshold marked 'men only,' she knows the admonition is not intended to bar animals or plants or inanimate objects. It is meant for her."
- Alma Graham



The End

Congratulations Goes to ... Bridget Burns

Congratulations to Bridget Burns, former student body president at Oregon State University, and current member of the State Board of Higher Education. Bridget has been chosen as one half of the US National Debate Team for an all expense paid tour of the United Kingdom, Portugal and Holland. Burns is the first OSU student to receive this selective honor in the 80 years of the program.

Bridget Burns, an OSU graduate student in Political Science from Livingston Montana, beat out all other debaters from across the country to land one of two coveted spots on the U.S. National Debate Team and subsequent international tour which will take place in January and February, 2005.



Sixth Annual Conference on Gender and Culture

April 20 - 22, 2005

Call for Proposals

Each year, this conference provides an enriching forum for campus and community members to discuss the far-reaching influence of gender and culture. This three-day event will feature a variety of presentations and panels and a feminist film festival.

You are invited to submit proposals that address historical or contemporary issues of race, gender, sexuality, and class. We invite proposals from all academic disciplines, student services areas and community groups. Please note that sessions may be limited to 60 minutes.

To be considered, proposals must include:

- Title
- 250-word abstract
- Length of presentation
- Contact information for all presenters (name, phone number, and email address)

Address proposals to:

Cynthia Briggs
Oregon State University Women's Center, Benton Annex
Corvallis, OR 97331-2503.
Email proposals may be addressed to cynthia.briggs@oregonstate.edu.

Deadline for Submission: March 5th, 2005

Art, Art, Art!

Please consider submitting a piece of art for the Winter Term art exhibit in the Memorial Union Concourse Gallery. Women faculty, staff and students are encouraged to submit art in any media: photography, sculpture, fiber arts, quilts, paintings, sketches, etc. We are calling it: Creating Reality One "Artist" at a Time. The vision is to show a creative, and diverse view of feminism.

