



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

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Website: www.womensclearinghouse.org

APRIL 2006

WOMEN'S/GENDER STUDIES: HOW DOES THIS FIELD ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY?

Our speakers will discuss recent developments at the graduate and undergraduate levels, including the use of terms such as women's studies and gender studies, how students and faculty in these programs have maintained or shifted emphases over the past 20 years. How have these programs fared during the growth of the women's movement? We will hear about current challenges faced by women's studies students and faculty related to finding jobs, equal pay and backlash.

Allison Kimmich is the Executive Director, National Women's Studies Association (NWSA), headquartered in College Park, Md. She will provide a national perspective on women's studies, such as numbers and type of programs. She will also discuss trends and leadership interests of the NWSA.

Dan Moshenberg is the Director of the George Washington Women's Studies Program, which is the oldest graduate women's studies program in the nation. The curriculum at George Washington emphasizes public policy, national and global issues. He will discuss how their work in these areas has had a positive impact on gender equity, how local women's studies programs work with NGOs concerned with gender equity and whether there may be a role in this field for the Clearinghouse on Women's Issues.

**SPEAKERS: Allison Kimmich, Executive Director
National Women's Studies Association**

**Dan Moshenberg, Director
George Washington Women's Studies Program**

TOPIC: Women's Gender/Studies — Alive and Well in 2006

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, April 25, 2006 / 12 noon – 1:30 p.m.

**PLACE: American Council on Education
One Dupont Circle, 8th Floor, Kellogg Room**
Bring brown bag lunch; soft drinks available from a machine

IMPORTANT NOTICE

A photo ID must be shown at the security desk of One Dupont Circle.
Please come a little earlier than usual to go through the new sign-in system.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 23, 2006
at an alternate meeting place**

Program Summary – March 2006 Meeting

Women's Museums: A look at the role of women in shaping American Society

The speakers were Amy Conroy, Executive Director of the Sewall-Belmont House and Museum, and Susan B. Jollie, President and CEO of the National Women's History Museum.

Ms. Conroy began her talk by noting how crowded Women's History Month has been. Both speakers wished that celebrating the accomplishments of women would continue throughout the year.

Why are women's museums needed? Amy noted that women have learned only some of the facts about their history and not the whole story. Women's museums strive to tell the complete story of the struggle for women's equality.

The Sewall-Belmont House illustrates one aspect of this struggle: the fight over female suffrage. Ms. Conroy explained that the collection at Sewall-Belmont with its focus on suffrage, is one of the most significant collections in the U.S. and it is unlike any other museum. As the center of the National Woman's Party, it contains over 10,000 items that include photos, 1000 boxes of organizational archives, posters, over 200 banners and sashes (many homemade), and political cartoons. The cartoons were influential in modernizing the image of suffragettes by showing women that suffrage leaders looked "just like you."

The library at the Sewall-Belmont House contains material showing the tactics used by women to wage their political fights. A Congressional card catalog file detailed the friends and enemies of suffrage in Congress with information on how to persuade opponents. A scrap

book created by Mrs. Belmont collected news and magazine coverage of events and gave her interpretation of these events.

The items are fragile; many just kept in boxes. Only 30% have been catalogued. Because women's history can seldom be found in the formal documents of the period, data must be collected from organizational records, personal accounts and other informal sources of information. Fortunately, IBM has partnered with the museum staff to digitize some items so that they will be more accessible for the public.

One of the challenges faced by all museums that focus on women is that the museums are under-funded and unappreciated. They are not considered "mainstream." But Ms. Conroy noted that if educators want to tell the full story of women's achievements, they must have access to historical resources. Museums play an important role in making these resources accessible.

In addition to its importance as a museum, the Sewall-Belmont House is an historic home: the oldest house on Capitol Hill, built in 1789. Outreach is important at the Sewall-Belmont Museum. There are programs for Girl Scouts, school groups, and family days.

Susan Jollie stated that the National Women's History Museum has a wider focus than more specialized collections. She explained that at present the National Women's History Museum is a vision based on the concept that women's shared history is important for inspiration and for education. She explained that if we develop a full

Program Summary – March 2006 Meeting

Women's Museums: A look at the role of women in shaping American Society (cont.)

understanding of what women did to build this country, we would better appreciate their achievements. Unfortunately, much of what women did is out of the public record and a national museum would make this information available to a wider audience.

The goal is to have a building for the National Women's History Museum near the national mall. Ms. Jollie emphasized that the museum will not carry a message of victimhood, but rather will celebrate how women overcame barriers.

For example, it is important that the public learn how women improved the quality of life in the United States. They did so not by operating through the government which was closed them, but by finding innovative ways to deal with issues. Women created the idea of franchising because they were closed out of many enterprises. They were instrumental in obtaining child labor laws, sanitation and housing services, community-based craft services and local cooperatives. Women provided the impetus to create public holidays. They seldom received credit for their initiatives. In many cases men took credit for their work as did Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, praised by historians for progressive ideas that women developed.

Ms. Jollie stated that an important part of the museum will be collections of archives detailing women's service and professional organizations. But she made clear that in order to obtain a fair and comprehensive history, the scope of the museum has to go further than public policies. The museum will include family and community activities,

reflecting all the life choices that women have made. An example of this consensus approach developed by museum leaders is that all women elected officials from both parties in the House and Senate have agreed to serve on the museum's board.

However, even before the museum site is ready, the National Women's History Museum staff has been busy promoting women in history. Scenes honoring women during World War II have been included in the war memorial. The struggle to represent women's contributions is not easy. Ms. Jollie gave an example of how women who served in the USO were depicted in "Disney style" wearing frivolous costumes.

There has been a constant flow of women in the work force and in building this country, but the story has not been told. More than episodic examples are needed. The records will not be found in the legislatures, courts or academia, but in the oral histories and private accounts of women themselves.

Is there a site for the National Women's History Museum? In the discussion that followed, Ms. Jollie explained that a site has been chosen. The federal annex next to the Old Postal Building on Pennsylvania Avenue is ideal, one block from the American History Museum. The building has been vacant for 12 years. Although small, if administrative and research offices are located off the site there is enough room to display materials. She noted that the directors are not interested in a "signature building" to display architectural design, but are more concerned that the site be close to the national mall.

Program Summary – March 2006 Meeting

Women's Museums: A look at the role of women in shaping American Society (cont.)

Twice the U.S. Senate has unanimously passed legislation giving the building to the National Women's History Museum. Unfortunately in the House, members of the Transportation Committee refuse to agree to the transfer because they want to develop a commercial hotel on the site. Ms. Jollie urged everyone to contact their Representative urging them to support the Senate legislation.

Asked about contacts among the various women's museums in the nation, Susan said that informally there is a women's collaborative that works together. Women's museums, both speakers concluded, are essential to conserve, preserve, and utilize the "stuff" of women's history.

GETTING TO KNOW BOARD MEMBERS

Sue Klein serves as the Clearinghouse Vice President for Programs. Currently as Education Equity Director for the Feminist Majority Foundation, Sue focuses on saving and fully implementing Title IX. Previously she worked in the research offices at the U.S. Department of Education (and its predecessors) for 34 years.

Sue earned a Doctoral Degree in Educational Psychology from Temple University in 1970 and a Masters Degree from the University of Pennsylvania. Sue has earned a variety of awards including an Award for Outstanding Accomplishment in Gender Equity from The Marymount Institute for the Education of Women and Girls in April 2006. She is married with one grown daughter.

STATUS OF WOMEN'S HEALTH COVERAGE IN THE U.S.

The Kaiser Family Foundation has issued new data to help understand the status of women's health coverage in the U.S. Highlights show that nearly one in five midlife and younger women were uninsured; that women are less likely than men to be insured through their own job; and that low-income women are more likely to rely on Medicaid or be uninsured. For more information or updated fact sheets, contact Rob Graham at (650) 854-9400 ext 237 or rgraham@kff.org.

NEW WEB SITE LAUNCHED

Imagining Ourselves: A Global Generation of Women was launched on March 8th (International Women's Day) by the International Museum of Women. The site is very interesting, multi-media, and provides an interactive approach for younger women around the world. See it at <http://www.imow.org>.

NEW APPROACH TO GAIN PAY EQUITY

The National Committee on Pay Equity is launching an effort to create 100 new WAGE clubs around the country before Equal Pay Day on April 25. According to the 2005 Census, fulltime working women earn only 77 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts. This innovative project aims to help women close the wage gap. NCPE has developed a guide and other materials about forming a WAGE club. For information, call 410-212-1776 or visit www.wageproject.org.

SMITHSONIAN CRAFT SHOW APRIL 20-23

America's most prestigious juried exhibition of one hundred twenty talented artists and sale of fine crafts can be seen at the National Building Museum, 401 F Street NW (Judiciary Square Metro Red Line) on April 20 and 21 (Thu. & Fri.) from 10 am to 8 pm; April 22 (Sat.) from 10 am to 6 pm; and April 23 (Sun.) from 11 am to 5 pm.

The Smithsonian Craft Show is produced by The Smithsonian Women's Committee to benefit Smithsonian educational, outreach and research programs. Daily Admission Tickets \$15. Seniors, Students, Military & Smithsonian Associates \$12. Children 12 and under Free (no strollers). On Wednesday April 19, a Preview Night Gala will be held from 6:30 - 9:30 pm; \$150 (includes Preview & Cocktail Buffet, 3 Lane Valet Parking)

THE WOMAN'S NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CLUB HONORS BETTY FRIEDAN

Tuesday, June 6 Panel Discussion "*Betty Friedan's Legacy and Feminism Today*"

Panelists: Sheila Tobias, former assistant provost at Wesleyan University; Eleanor Smeal, President of the Feminist Majority Foundation, and Jacqui Ceballos, President of the Veterans Feminist of America. *Time: luncheon 12:30 p.m., Discussion and Q & A 1:00 p.m. Price: WNDC Members \$19, Nonmembers \$25.*

Wednesday, June 7 WNDC Woman of the Year Gala Dinner

Keynote speaker: Former Congresswoman Pat Schroeder
Time: Cocktails and Silent Auction 6:00 p.m., Dinner and tributes 7:30 p.m. Price: WNDC Members \$125, Nonmembers \$175. For information and reservations contact Patricia Fitzgerald at 202-232-7363 ext. 3003 or send email to pfitzgerald@democraticwoman.org

CWI NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE VIA E-MAIL

Members wishing to receive the CWI Newsletter via email instead of U.S. mail can send their requests by e-mail to cwinwsltr@aol.com. The newsletter will be sent in PDF format. The first issue after the request is received it will be sent both by e-mail and U.S. mail. The following month the newsletter will be sent by email only, unless cancelled. Requests to discontinue the email version and re-establish the regular mail version can be sent to the above email address. If you have questions concerning these procedures, please call newsletter editor Sheila Willet at 202 408-1777.

COMING EVENTS

- APRIL 19** **"Women's Voices in the Public Sphere"** 3pm-5pm, Woodrow Wilson Center, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave, NW. Visit <http://wiww.wilsoncenter.org> for additional information. Free, but RSVP required by email to usstudies@wilsoncenter.org.
- APRIL 20-23**
Smithsonian Craft Show at the National Building Museum (see p.3)
- APRIL 23** **Walk for Women's Lives 5K to fight ovarian and uterine cancer.** For information and to register, visit <http://www.iwalkforwomenslives.org>
- APRIL 25** **EQUAL PAY DAY**
- MAY 23** **CWI Meeting** Alliance For Justice, 11 Dupont Circle, 2nd Floor. (This is an alternate location for the May meeting only.)
- JUNE 6** **Luncheon/panel discussion: "Betty Friedan's Legacy and Feminism Today"** at the Woman's National Democratic Club. (See p.5)
- JUNE 7** **WNDC Woman of the Year Gala Dinner.** (See p.5)

<p>CWI Board of Directors, July 2005 – June 2006. OFFICERS: President, Ellen S. Overton; Vice President Program, Sue Klein; Vice President Membership, Jean Landweber; Treasurer, Linda Fihelly; Secretary, Harriett M. Stonehill. BOARD MEMBERS: Alvin Golub, Harriett Harper, Roslyn Kaiser, Ruth G. Nadel, Jacqueline Scherer, Clara G. Schiffer, Joy R. Simonson, ex officio. Sheila A. Willet, Newsletter Editor</p>
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