

# Southwest Institute for Research On Women



## Regional Newsletter Fall 2011

Covering gender & women's studies & research institutes of Arizona, New Mexico, Northern Sonora, Colorado, Texas, Nevada, Utah



*"We got work to do."*

because of her tireless efforts to improve conditions for women in the state of Nevada. Her advocacy for women in the state also led to improvements for female prisoners, improved police-community relations and more thorough investigation of sex crimes.

Florence McClure is one of over 70 women profiled on the Women's Research Institute of Nevada's (WRIN) new website. One of the largest sections of the new site, *Our History: Profiles of Nevada Women*, embodies WRIN's two-part mission of research and education.

The site currently contains 75 biographies and is frequently updated. The biographies cover a wide range of women's experiences in Nevada ranges from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to contemporary women,

### Women's Research Institute of Nevada launches Multi-media Website Highlighting Notable Nevada Women

"We got work to do", and so she did. Florence McClure is known as "Hurricane Flo"

and includes women from all walks of life and occupations.

WRIN is currently enhancing the multi-media experience of the biographies by adding audio and video to many of the biographies. A number of the biographies originated in the Las Vegas Women Oral History Project and include recorded interviews. Videos are also in the process of being linked to the site. Currently video recordings featuring Ruby Duncan and Debra Nelson are available.

The site is an excellent resource for researchers, as it provides information about each woman's life and tells of her contribution to Nevada history. The biographies also include reference details and sources for additional material.

Browsing the interviews allows visitors to experience the breadth of women's experiences in Nevada. For more information and to visit the site go to <http://wrinunlv.org/research/our-history-profiles-of-nevada-women/>

### Texas Women's University Welcomes Two New Faculty Members

TWU is happy to introduce their two new faculty members, Dr. Agatha Beins and Dr. Danielle Phillips. Dr. Beins, who is a coeditor of the anthology *Women's Studies for the Future*, received her Ph.D. in Women's and Gender Studies from Rutgers in May. Her dissertation explores the production and consumption of U.S. feminist periodicals published in the 1970s. Dr. Phillips, who has worked as an intern at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, completed her Ph.D. in Women's and Gender Studies from Rutgers in October 2010. Her dissertation examines Irish and African American domestic workers in New York from 1880 to 1940. Welcome!

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The Southwest Institute for Research on Women (SIROW), established in 1979, is a regional and resource institute within the Gender and Women's Studies Department at the University of Arizona. The SIROW region includes Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, Wyoming, and Northwestern Mexico.

More information available online: <http://sirow.arizona.edu>

## SIROW Mission:

To develop, conduct, and disseminate collaborative research and education/outreach projects with regard to the diverse groups of women and children in the southwestern U.S. and northwestern Mexico.

## SIROW Goals:

**To develop collaborative feminist research focusing on southwestern problems or populations of interest to scholars in the SIROW region.**

To identify and disseminate research on women, children, and gender differences.

To provide advocacy for women and children by linking researchers with community organizations and policy makers.

To support equality for women in the workforce and conduct research on women and gender in the work environment.

To carry out participatory action research on a wide range of health, legal, and educational issues.

To support graduate, undergraduate, and K-12 education for women and children.

To examine women's contribution to literature, the arts, and southwest heritage.

NOTE: The opinions expressed within this publication do not necessarily reflect the positions of SIROW or individual personnel, however, as an research and academic institution, SIROW strongly support the right of students, researchers and faculty to express their positions through academic products and public expression.

## Southwest Institute for Research on Women

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# Feminist Formations

## Academic Journal Now Under University of Arizona Editorship!

AS of August 2011, *Feminist Formations* is under University of Arizona editorship. Established in 1988, Feminist Formation is one of the leading interdisciplinary, feminist academic journals, and the University of Arizona co-editors, Adela C. Li-cona and Sandra K. Soto are maintaining the journal's commitment to excellent scholarship while shaping the journal in bold new directions. In its new location, for instance, even the structure of Feminist Formations models interdisciplinary, feminist collaboration. The journal is situated between the editors' home departments of Gender & Women's Studies (GWS) and Rhetoric, Composition and the Teaching of English (RCTE). The other staff on the journal include GWS Ph.D. student Erin Durban-Albrecht (who formerly worked with SIROW) as the managing editor, and RCTE Ph.D. student Londie Martin as the editorial assistant.

Feminist Formations publishes cutting-edge scholarship in feminist, gender, and sexuality studies. The new website (<http://feministformations.arizona.edu>) has information about subscribing to the journal as well as submitting manuscripts about feminist theory, teaching, and activism. The Feminist Formations website and Facebook account will soon include information about the launch party for

### Researcher Profile:

#### Dr. Robert Buffington, UC- Boulder



Robert Buffington is an Associate Professor of Women and Gender Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He has done extensive work on the histories of crime and sexuality in Mexico and Latin America. His books include *Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico* (University of Nebraska Press, 2000), *Reconstructing Criminality in Modern Latin America* (co-edited with Carlos Aguirre), *True Stories of Crime in Modern Mexico* (co-edited with Pablo Piccato), *Mexico: An Encyclopedia*

*of Contemporary Culture and History* (co-written with Don Coerver and Suzanne Pasztor), and *Keen's Latin American Civilization*, 9th edition (co-edited with Lila Caimari). He is currently working on a book, *A Sentimental Education for the Working Man: Mexico City 1900-1910*, which will analyze the impact of modernity on working-class masculinities. He has also published several pieces in journals and edited books including a recent chapter on "Gender, Sexuality, and Mexican

## 2012 Heads and Directors Conference to be Held in San Antonio, Texas

The annual Southwest Regional Heads and Directors Meeting for Gender and Women's Studies Programs will be hosted by University of Arizona, SIROW and will take place in San Antonio Texas. This year we were fortunate to receive a grant to support the conference/meeting. This year's meeting will include a special focus on women's health and sexualities across the lifespan. And as always, it will be a time for programs to network and share strategies, develop collaborative project ideas and discuss the state of our departments and research insti-

## Staging Scholarly Subversion: Prescott College's Annual Drag Show

September 2011 marked the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Drag Show at Prescott College, staged by the *Sexuality & Sexual Out-laws* class as a final project. This course, one of a cadre of classes in our Gender & Sexuality Studies (GSS) program, interrogates the political, social, and cultural constructions of gender and sexual identity in the United States. The adage, "the personal is political," is never more apparent for me than when I teach this course, because many students are compelled to explore issues that have gone largely unexamined prior to their enrollment, yet which are directly connected to their own identities. For others who have experienced targeting because of their gender or sexual identity, they find safe space, acknowledgement, and affirmation in this class.

This course asks students to problematize structured oppression at both the micro/individual level *and* the macro/systemic level and to recognize that structures of constraint and subordination serve *none* of us. Spectrums & intersections of identity; gender & sexual fluidity; the pathologizing, medical diagnosing, & legislating of marginalization; diverse understandings of pornography & erotica; Feminist & Queer theories; the complex realities of sex work, trafficking, & slavery; exploration of language reclamation vs. perpetuation of linguistic oppression; and the profound policing of rigid binaries that privilege some and persistently marginalize others are just a few of the issues the students address through our readings, discussions, guest speakers, field trips, research, and presentations, while simultaneously seeking solution-oriented approaches to empowerment.

Our culminating Drag Show is a public demonstration of the academic, political, and social analyses the students have done during their intensive, one-month course (during which we meet every day for up to 10 hours at a time). I endeavor to have the students frame their production with scholar-activist ideals

drawn from Theatre of the Oppressed, guerilla theatre, culture jamming, and the rich legacy of Drag. My T.A. this year served as dramaturge and co-director in the context of his Independent Study entitled – *Queering the Stage: The Politics & Practice of Drag*, and his collaborative efforts with our cohort of students helped yield a production which was educationally rich & provocatively subversive, yet highly entertaining. Some of the acts included:

- A *Planet Earth*-esque satire examining the corollary of human patriarchy to the Ribbon Fish (who penis-fence for mating supremacy) and championing the hope that people might move toward behaviors more like the Bonobo monkeys' practice of affectionate genital-bumping.
- A Gender Box skit challenging the rigid expectations placed on "girls" and "boys" in our culture.
- A critique of Hollywood's string of "Bro-mance" movies, which regularly feature heterosexual males ribbing each other about their sexual identities. Our piece had two gay males ribbing each other with a series of "You know how I know you're hetero?" jibes.
- A powerful, original spoken word piece in which a survivor shared her intense history of sexual abuse and subsequent emergence into reclaiming her power.
- A transgender superhero known as Captain Fabulous, who liberated all.

One thousand dollars was raised from the event, which was donated to Prescott's Pride Center and to Dignity House in Phoenix, which provides programming and empowerment to individuals seeking to leave sex work.

*Jordana DeZeeuw Spencer, Ph.D.*  
*Prescott College, Prescott, AZ*

### Gender & Women's Research Online

*A few interesting sites*

Society for Women's Health Research  
<http://www.womenshealthresearch.org/>

The Feminist Sexual Ethic Project  
<http://www.brandeis.edu/projects/fse/>

The National Coalition for Immigrant Women's Rights  
<http://nciwr.wordpress.com/>

Sexualities: Academia.edu  
<http://www.academia.edu/Papers/in/Sexualities>

### Send an article or accomplishment to SIROW News!

If you would like to highlight the accomplishments, ongoing research efforts, new scholarship, or student projects in your program, department or institute, submit an article for the spring 2012 newsletter.

We aim for stories that are 350 words or less and showcase the depth and breath of Gender and Women's Studies projects and undertakings in the Southwest Region. Please submit stories in Microsoft Word by email by March, 2012. To submit stories or for more information contact Corey:  
[cknox@email.arizona.edu](mailto:cknox@email.arizona.edu)



Search for "Southwest Institute for Research on Women." From this page, click the "Like!" button in the top right-hand corner, and you will be able to follow SIROW updates.



### UTEP Women's Studies Program Uses Creativity to Raise Funds and Awareness

The University of Texas at El Paso Women's Studies Program has found a niche market for custom made buttons, bumper stickers, and jewelry to help raise funds and awareness. Many of the buttons and stickers proclaim gender equality, an end to homophobia, and other issues surrounding women and gender. Quickly becoming known around campus for their witty and sometimes outrageous slogans, donations from the buttons and stickers have made it possible for the program to fund small activities and events. The inexpensive creations are designed and assembled by the program's director, work study students and interns, allowing for a more personalized grass-roots approach to fundraising.

"They're really good conversation starters," says Sarah Bolanos, Women's Studies intern. Button and sticker topics range from the tongue-in-cheek, one in particular featuring the words *Eve Was Framed* around an apple, to more serious camouflage prints celebrating the repeal of *Don't Ask, Don't Tell*. "Some [of the buttons] focus on 'vaginas' or

'feminism', which is like an 'F' word around here" Bolanos adds.

These items are displayed around campus, in the Women's Studies office, and at special events. This October, the UTEP Women's Studies Program will participate in El Paso's 19th Annual *Band Together, Walk Together* AIDS Walk. The 5-mile trek raises money to benefit local non-profit organizations that provide assistance to people living with the disease. After the 2010 walk, local news station KTSM reported 1,670 confirmed cases of HIV/AIDS in the El Paso region alone. Partnering with special events such as this brings awareness of women and gender issues beyond the campus and into the community at large.

A gallery of Women's Studies buttons and a call for papers for the upcoming Women's History Month conference can be found at <https://academics.utep.edu/ws>.

Josh Espinoza, U Texas-El Paso, Head Women's Studies Intern

### Texas Tech University Presents Feminist Forums

The yearly forums are held by the TTU, Women's Studies Department. The forum is designed to continue discussions and to create new discussions around feminism past, present and future. These forums are intended to promote the equal and fair treatment for all individuals regardless of gender, race, class, sexuality, age, ability by engaging both the University and the wider Lubbock communities in an open discussion. Some of examples of Fall, 2011 Forums:

- **The Feminist Teacher** is a forum to discuss strategies to introduce critical thinking skills in a classroom setting from a feminist perspective. We will strive to answer questions such as; how does one define a feminist teacher, why is teaching from a feminist perspective vital to the classroom curriculum, and what are some best practices that are used to interpret feminist instruction?
- **Risk Perceptions and Innovation in Academia** investigates investigate diverse methods of teaching related to the topics of gender, gender roles and gender identity. The forum includes an examination of how ones definition of controversy can be used to translate and define another's tolerance and inclusion
- **Social Networks in Overdrive** is a forum designed to show how efficient technological tools, found within social networks, can strengthen feminist scholarship and activism. The intent is to demonstrate how quickly and powerfully current social, economic and political debates affect women and men, boys and girls to take action and make change.

For more information: [http://www.depts.ttu.edu/wstudies/events\\_feministforum.php](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/wstudies/events_feministforum.php)

## IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT AND THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM: Women in Immigration Detention Project, University of Arizona

The University of Arizona's Southwest Institute for Research on Women (SIROW) in partnership with the James E. Rogers College of Law's Immigration Law Clinic, provides social support, advocacy, and legal services to vulnerable women detained for months to years while the government determines whether to deport them or grant them legal immigration status to remain in the country.

The population of women we serve includes women who are recent survivors of intrafamilial violence, sexual assault, or gender-based violence; primary caregivers of minor children, many of whom are U.S. citizens; pregnant or breast-feeding women; and women with serious health conditions. While the majority of women are from Mexico or Central America, they are by no means exclusively from these regions.

In just the last month, we have served women from Ethiopia, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Ecuador, and Cameroon.

Unlike the protections afforded the accused in the criminal justice system, detained immigrants have no right to legal counsel or representation at government expense, although they are detained in settings that are indistinguishable from prisons or jails. Despite the dedicated efforts of the UA Law College's Immigration Clinic and the Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project to provide detainees with pro bono legal assistance, the majority of women will not have individual legal representation in their immigration cases. The majority of women or their families cannot afford to pay the thousands of dollars it costs for an immigration attorney to make sense of their complex legal claims.



We have to date worked with 120 women detainees to help them address their most pressing needs. For many, we have helped them find, stay in touch with, and at times even enjoy visits from their dependent children. For others we have written humanitarian parole requests that have allowed those women to pursue their immigration cases in the company of family, established ex-patriot communities, or women's shelters.

In the course of providing these direct support services, we gather the research necessary to contribute to policy analyses and advocacy efforts to address systematic concerns regarding immigration policy. Most recently, we released a report on the intersection of immigration enforcement and the child welfare system. We were observing cases arise with alarming frequency in which women were at risk of losing their parental rights to their children in large part due to their prolonged detention. We hope the report may begin a dialogue about how to avoid the tragic family separations we see play out on a daily basis in our work in immigration detention facilities.

Report: *Disappearing Parents: Immigration Enforcement and the Child Welfare System*, is available at <http://sirow.arizona.edu>.

By Patricia Manning, University of Arizona, SIROW([pmanning@email.arizona.edu](mailto:pmanning@email.arizona.edu))

## New Books

### First Laugh

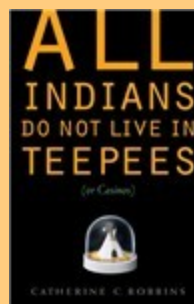
Margaret Randall



Margaret Randall is a feminist poet, writer, photographer, and social activist.

Her latest book,

"First Laugh" invites readers to ponder the role of race and racism in the 2008 presidential election; the nature of repressed memory in understanding oneself; the place of poetry in social change; the efforts of Pueblo Indians to earn historical recompense for Spanish colonialist atrocity and subsequent abuse; and the bonds of intimacy and shared political conviction that sustain family and friendship. Tempered by time and reflecting a life fully lived and richly examined, her thoughts on race, gender, poetry, landscape, cellular memory, and personal loss speak with eloquence and urgency. Published by *University of Nebraska Press*, 2011



### All Indians Do Not Live in Teepees (or Casinos)

Catherine C. Robbins

In *All Indians Do Not Live in Teepees (or Casinos)*, Catherine C.

Robbins traces this restorative effect in areas such as economic development, urbanization, the arts, science, and health care. Through dozens of interviews, Robbins draws out the voices of Indian people, some well-known and many at the grassroots level, working quietly to advance their communities. The result is a rich account of Native American life in contemporary America, revealing not a monolithic "Indian" experience of teepees or casinos, but rather a mosaic of diverse peoples existing on a continuum that marks both their distinctions and their shared realities. *University of Nebraska Press*, 2011



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