

MARY & WILLIAM

The Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program Newsletter

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WHAT'S INSIDE?

FROM THE DIRECTOR

GSWS EVENTS

CAROL WOODY AWARD RECIPIENTS

MEET BETTINA JUDD

SEXUAL ASSAULT AND STUDENT ACTIVISM AT WILLIAM & MARY

GSWS Majors in Action

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

Alumni Update

BLUE COLLAR CONFIDENTIAL

An Interview with Anne Balay

COURSE SPOTLIGHT

Introduction to LGBTIQ Studies

GIVE TO GSWS





A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Working on this newsletter has been a constant reminder of how wonderful the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program is and how lucky I am to have been appointed Director.

But I'll be honest, I was a bit hesitant about taking on the job. I have young children, I'm in the midst of two hefty writing projects, and, frankly, I just wasn't sure I was administrative material. But then students started congratulating me when they saw me around campus. At first I would explain that I wasn't exactly elected, that it was just sort of my turn, and then I thanked them and moved on. After a while it occurred to me that even if I hadn't actually won an election, I did have what was turning out to be a pretty awesome job—a job that allows me to do meaningful work with fabulous people. So by all means, congratulate me when you see me! Congratulate me on my good fortune in having been given the honor of filling the Director's chair for a few years.

I'll say more here about the work we've done so far this semester, but first I want to acknowledge some of my colleagues, without whom none of the work of the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program would be possible. Professors Leisa Meyer, Suzanne Raitt, Christy Burns, and Gul Ozyegin were all directors of the program before me and all four have had a lasting impact on how the program is run and what we do. While I've resisted bothering her in the early days of her much-deserved

retirement, Nancy Gray's presence in the program is greatly missed; I can see her influence everywhere—on our curriculum, our programming, our personnel policies, and not least, our students, who still ask when they can take that "Rhymes With Witch" course they have heard so much about. I am particularly grateful to Gul, whose directorship took "Women's Studies" at William & Mary in a new and exciting direction and whose amazing organizational skills left the directorship in such great shape that I think anyone could have stepped in and done a good job. She continues to advise me, all the while gleefully reminding me that she no longer has to make the decisions! Victoria Castillo, our Visiting Assistant Professor in GSWS, is also an invaluable resource at all times; it is great to see her more often now that my office is in Morton rather than all the way across campus in Tucker. (Her "Introduction to LGBTIQ Studies" is the focus of our Course Spotlight in this issue!) We are also fortunate to welcome a new faculty member this year, Bettina Judd, about whom you will find a profile in this issue of the newsletter.

I'm also thrilled to welcome Kristen Sperling to the Program as our new Administrative and Financial Coordinator. I was terrified when I found out that Jenny Holly, our former Coordinator, was leaving us for the Parks Service, but Kristen and I have quickly become a team. She is creative and competent, not to mention incredibly enthusiastic and kind. If you haven't met her already, you really should stop by the office and do so!

I've spent the semester meeting with our students, especially our GSWS majors and minors, some of whom I knew

already and some of whom I hadn't had the opportunity to meet before. We have amazingly smart and thoughtful GSWS majors and minors, many of whom will be featured in our newsletter. In this issue, for example, Noah Brooksher ('16) and Zoe Mitchell ('15) interview Jordan Taffet ('16) and Maggie Perreault ('15) about what I tend to think of as our post-Sigma Chi-email campus; essentially, Jordan and Maggie, student activists whose work has focused largely on issues of sexual violence, were asked, "Has it gotten better?" (Responses to this piece can be emailed to me at jlputz@wm.edu. If we get enough, we'll feature them on our website.) Of course political activism and civic engagement are kind of a tradition around here at GSWS, as you'll see from reading our "Where are they now?" feature, which highlights the lives and careers of former GSWS majors. For this issue, I focused on three students with whom I worked very closely during their time at William & Mary and have continued to remain in touch. I'm proud to share their stories and hope our current students will feel free to contact Danielle, Meghan, and Virginia if they have questions about the career paths they have chosen. Students will also be interested to read about the recipients of our Carol Woody Internship Awards; from Washington D.C. to Kenya, award recipients are doing important work around issues of gender and race that we are proud to support, with the invaluable assistance of William & Mary graduate, Carol Woody ('71).

In addition to receptions (both our Welcome Back Reception, held in early September, and the Homecoming Reception in mid-October) and brownbag lunches, this semester we co-hosted and organized a lecture by Anne Balay, author of *Steel Closets: Voices of Lesbian, Gay, and Transgender Steelworkers* (University of North Carolina Press, 2014). Anne generously shared her time while on our campus, discussing her work with faculty and undergraduate and graduate students in a brownbag lunch and giving a talk titled "Blue Collar Confidential: Why gay steelworkers remain closeted and how that's changing." We're excited to offer you a brief interview with Anne Balay, conducted by our own Christy Burns, in this issue of the newsletter. I do hope those of you who haven't had a chance to read her book will do so! It is a great read and an important intervention in the field of LGBTQ studies.

I do hope you enjoy the first newsletter of my tenure, ably co-edited by Noah Brooksher, work study student, researcher, and GSWS major extraordinaire. If you have any ideas about features for our next newsletter or responses to this one, please don't hesitate to contact either one of us.

Best wishes,

Jennifer Putzi, Associate Professor of English and Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

GSWS EVENTS

Welcome Back Reception: Wednesday, September 10, 2014

Homecoming Reception: Saturday, October 18, 2014

GSWS FALL BROWNBAG PRESENTATIONS

"Queer Geeks: Creating an LGBT+ Inclusive Climate in the Physical Sciences"

WOUTER DECONINCK, Assistant Professor of Physics

"Indigenous L.A.: Queer Intimacy and the Politics of Disappearance"

KARATHOMPSON, Assistant Professor of English and American Studies

"The Inauguration of Experiments': Methodology, Creative Process, and Telling the Stories of Enslaved Women in *Patient*."

BETTINA JUDD, Visiting Assistant Professor of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

SAVE THE DATE

Tuesday, February 24, 2015

The 19th Annual Minnie G. Braithwaite Lecture in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

NICOLE J. GEORGES, author of *Calling Dr. Laura: A Graphic Memoir*, and

A. K. SUMMERS, author of *Pregnant Butch: Nine Long Months Spent in Drag*

CAROL WOODY INTERNSHIPS: REAL WORLD EXPERIENCE

Eva Zelson ('14), Charlotte Mabon ('15), and Amanda Whitehurst ('15) were the recipients of the 2014 Carol Woody Internship Awards. Funded by a generous donation from William & Mary alum Carol Woody ('71), Carol Woody Internship Awards are available for academically distinguished students participating in GSWS, with a preference for women students. The award is intended to offer a "real world" experience as preparation for professional career and/or post-graduate opportunities. The awards are available for students interested in doing an internship during the summer.

EVA ZELSON

This past summer, I interned in the Employment Unit of Community Legal Services in Philadelphia. During my time there, I was able to assist in the representation of low-income clients in a variety of cases, including employment discrimination and wage and hour claims. I saw firsthand the devaluation of so-called "women's work"; many employers in caretaking and similar industries simply refused to pay their employees for the work they performed.

One thing that stuck out to me was how our clients seemed more excited that we could help them than that they might get their money. This made me believe that our clients were so used to being taken advantage of, that it was a huge relief for someone to simply listen to and agree to fight for them; the end result meant less than the fact that we cared.

Carol Woody continued on page 5



Above photos: Faculty, staff, students, and friends gather together for some great conversation and food at the GSWS Welcome Back Reception.



Kristen Sperling, GSWS Administrative and Fiscal Coordinator



MEET BETTINA JUDD

by Suzanne Raitt, Professor of English

The Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies Program is honored to welcome to its faculty Bettina Judd,

who joined us this fall from Mount Holyoke College, where she was a Visiting Assistant Professor of Gender Studies and Africana Studies. Bettina is a poet, a writer, an artist and performer, and somewhere in there, she also manages to find time to be a teacher. Or perhaps I should say that she is always doing all five things. Bettina doesn't believe in separating experience from learning, or learning from communicating with others. She sees "experience as knowledge," and all her many activities are in constant dialog with one another. To create poetry is to perform; to perform is to teach; and to teach is to make poetry.

Bettina is one of very few young poets today to be eagerly awaiting the publication of her first collection of poems, *Patient*, coming out from Black Lawrence Press any day now (watch out for an announcement of a launch party and book signing!). *Patient* won the Hudson Prize for poetry in 2013, and Bettina notes that part of her prize—in addition to the publication of her book—was "a little purse."

Like everything Bettina does, *Patient* is part of a broader meditation that includes watercolors, historical research, and even her own surgery. As Bettina puts it, visual "art informed another art form—poetry."

She found herself asking questions as she healed, wondering about other Black women and their experiences of their bodies, especially Anarcha Wescott, a slave whose body was used for repeated experiments by leading gynecologist J. Marion Sims in the mid-nineteenth-century, and Wescott's fellow-slaves Betsey Harris and Lucy Zimmerman, who also suffered at Dr. Sims' hands.

Bettina's reflections on her own story grew out of her realization that "the most compelling material was not in what I would find if I researched these women, but what compelled me to research—what was happening with my body under the care of certain doctors."

"The Researcher Discovers Anarcha, Betsey, Lucy," published in *Meridians* in 2011 and included in *Patient*, interweaves lines from Bettina's own experience ("Nurses ask me, |'How much does it hurt on a scale from one to ten?") with allusions to Dr. Sims' tainted legacy:

In these three, Sims shapes his speculum, invents his silver sutures, perfects protocol for proper handling of the female pelvis.

we wake at Johns Hopkins,

Anarcha, Betsey, Lucy and other Black women such as Joice Heth, a slave who was exhibited by P. T. Barnum and autopsied in public in 1836, all speak to the "researcher" in *Patient*, as if, Bettina says, they are "ghosts coming back to haunt her." "Run on Sentence" quotes one of Dr. Sims's textbooks and on Bettina's marvelous website (www.bettina.judd.com), her voice reading Sims's words fades into her voice speaking from Joice Heth's perspective. One of Bettina's "Joice Heth" poems, "Joice Heth Catalogues the Skin," was nominated for a prestigious Pushcart Prize.

While writing the poems in *Patient*, Bettina also completed a PhD dissertation in the Women's Studies department at the University of Maryland. Bettina sees the two undertakings as interrelated projects. Her dissertation explores the ways in which Black women artists create art that has implications for feminist thought, or, in Bettina's words, "how art engages experience." There is a lot of joy in Bettina's work, especially in the chapter on poet and writer Lucille Clifton, who Bettina says "articulates a theology of joy" in her poetry. Visits to Lucille Clifton's archive revealed that some of her poetry was produced through automatic writing—a process, Bettina says, in which "body and spirit write together."

Like many of us, Bettina's journey through academia was not without its hesitations and



doubts—but unlike most of us, there were always other lives, other identities, that Bettina could consider taking up. She started writing poetry at the age of ten, but she did not really take herself seriously as a poet—she describes herself as writing lots of “angsty teenage poetry”—until she was in her second year of graduate school. As she recovered from her surgery, painting and writing the poems that would later form the core of *Patient*, Bettina started wondering if graduate school was really the right place for her.

Perhaps she should try an MFA program in the visual arts. Around that time, she was encouraged by a fellow at Cave Canem, an organization that honors and supports African American poetry and poets, to apply for a Cave Canem fellowship. Bettina decided to “gamble with the universe!” If Cave Canem accepted her, she would know that she “was supposed to be a poet.” The Cave Canem community—who embraced her as a fellow not once but three times—made it possible for Bettina to stay in graduate school. “I was an artist who was in graduate school,” she explains. “I was trying to figure out what knowledge was, and I had this other identity, in a community of

poets, that allowed me to continue with my PhD.”

Bettina’s vision of a world of many voices shapes her classrooms as well as her art. This semester she is teaching “Black Gender,” “Feminist Activism,” and “Hip Hop and Sexuality” – a typically inclusive list. Bettina thinks that sometimes her focus on “experiential knowledge” throws off some of her students, until they get used to the idea that they are part of a community of learners with responsibility not only to themselves, but to one another. Sometimes, Bettina says, “really difficult things” have happened in her classes, but it’s been a “fun” kind of difficulty. “Conflict is part of the creative process,” she notes, “and it’s always part of the intra-racial conversation about what it means to be Black. It makes a huge difference who the students in the class happen to be.” In “Black Gender,” students choose their own group assignment, and this semester’s class is creating a zine exploring ideas about black gender in community. Bettina is excited about their project, hoping that it will be exactly the kind of knowledge-experience that she

Bettina’s vision of a world of many voices shapes her classrooms as well as her art.

seeks to promote in all her creative work—including her teaching. Next semester Bettina is teaching “Introduction to Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies” and “Feminist Research Methods,” and is looking forward to meeting more GSWS majors and other students from around campus.

Bettina still misses the beautiful flat she used to have in NE Washington DC, before she moved to Massachusetts to take up a Five College Dissertation Fellowship at Mount Holyoke College in 2012. But she has found a place that she likes in Richmond, and she’s enjoying being able to walk out of the door and find coffee-shops, bookshops, and restaurants right on the threshold. She’s worried about her cooking, though. “I can order in so many different kinds of delicious food that I am not sure I will ever cook again,” she says.

Please join the Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies Program in giving Bettina a very warm welcome to our campus. We are proud and delighted that she chose to move so far to be with us. Her wondrous spirit, her poetic and visual artistry, and her unifying and inclusive vision are a wonderful addition to our community.

Carol Woody continued from page 3

My summer experience was immensely rewarding, and I am very grateful to Carol Woody for helping to make it possible. Spending a summer in a large urban center with a high rate of poverty showed me just how much work is still necessary to help those in need and to combat the gender discrimination that perpetuates these inequalities. I hope that I am to be able to continue this type of work in the future, so that more women (and men) are able to assert their rights and feel that they are heard.

CHARLOTTE MABON

I am excited to share my experiences at Generation Hope as a Carol Woody Internship Award recipient, for I neither had any idea what to expect (this being my first time living in a city and working as an intern), nor did I know what I would come away with. I felt truly fortunate to be working for a cause about which I was so deeply passionate.

Generation Hope is a small 501(c)3 non-profit in the DC Metro area that supports teen parents in their pursuit of higher education. In the current day and age, a college degree is required in order to have the chance to obtain upward social mobility and improve one’s quality of life. For teen parents, college is neither discussed, nor even seen as a possibility most of the time. Teen parents are particularly vulnerable; they are commonly overlooked, stigmatized, and shamed. Generation Hope battles the stigmas and statistics (less than 1% of women that have a child before the age of 19 graduates from college) by giving their scholars both financial and mentoring assistance – two essential ingredients for any successful college career.

As time has passed, I have come to believe that the firsthand experience I received was one of the best things that I got out of my internship experience. You can read about white privilege, social gradients of health, stigmas associated with teen sexual promiscuity in the US, the current state of welfare or the foster-care system (to name a few subjects), but it’s a completely different matter to either experience such things and deal with them on a daily basis. After meeting and interviewing the Scholars currently in the program, I was humbled to be in the presence of such strong individuals who were all able to balance receiving good grades at college while also raising a young child. Every Scholar in the Generation Hope program has defied the odds.

I am fortunate to be at an institution like William & Mary and only wish to give back to those with voices that

Carol Woody continued on page 8

Bettina Judd, Visiting Assistant Professor of Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies.





Sexual Assault and Student Activism at William & Mary:

An interview by Noah Brooksher and Zoë Mitchell

GSWS majors Jordan Taffet and Maggie Perreault have been active in the effort to prevent sexual assault on the William & Mary campus and to promote sexual assault awareness among students, staff, and faculty.

Zoë Mitchell: How have you been involved in combating sexual violence on campus? Are you a part of any organizations? What sort of events or campaigns have you been a part of?

Jordan Taffet: On campus, I am the Vice-President of the Healthy Relationships/Sexual Aggression branch of HOPE, the Undersecretary of Sexual Health in Student Assembly, and I played a small role in the formation of The Haven, William & Mary's new safe space. I also work as an online hotline volunteer for RAINN (The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network) in my free time.

During my time at William & Mary, I helped to organize HOPE's Sexual Assault Awareness Week, culminating in one of the biggest "Take Back the Night" events in William & Mary history, with 100-150 people in attendance. That same semester, I was selected as one of two students to attend a meeting with the former Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius and Chief of Staff to the First Lady, Tina Tchen, and speak as part of the White House's Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. This year, I helped to organize the Red Flag Campaign, which confronts the issue of dating violence, and the sexual assault discussion as part of orientation for new students.

Maggie Perreault: Last semester I became involved with the conversation around sexual violence on campus after the Sigma Chi email. I took part in one of the initial small group conversations between students, staff, and administrators and helped facilitate the small group por-

This year I've been working with a group of students and administrators to create The Haven, the new safe space on campus that deals with sexual and relational abuse.

ZM: It's really interesting that you both approach activism from different angles—Maggie doing more independent work and Jordan spearheading clubs and organizations. Maggie, do you find it easy to join organized campaigns on campus? How easy would it be for other students not a part of HOPE or the Student Assembly (SA) to get involved?

MP: I think it is difficult for students to know what conversations are going on, who to get in touch with, and where to express interest if they are not part of a student organization that already connects them to these things. The main reason I was able to get involved is because I took "Feminist Activism" (GSWS 390) my sophomore year and was introduced to fellow student activists who were connected to larger organizations. I feel my ability to participate in activism has relied on my connections with those students and the relationships I've built with administrators and staff as a result. Still, there are times I feel an extra pressure to prove to myself and those I work with why I belong in the conversations. I think everyone is welcome to join and take part in organized campaigns on campus; the challenge is finding the right connections that allow you to be the person starting those campaigns and that is difficult without membership in certain groups.

JT: I think that everyone is capable of becoming involved. Part of what is required to prevent sexual violence is simply a heightened awareness of its existence. By looking, listening, and speaking about the issues that sexual violence presents whenever possible, people are doing their part in making sure that this issue is heard and addressed.

That said, if someone is looking to add "walk" to their "talk," it is not quite so easy to be involved to that extent.

The Center is a welcoming, safe, and inclusive gathering space of support.

tion of the Town Hall. I'm not part of any organizations on campus that deal specifically with sexual violence, but I have done some personal activism work with members of HOPE and The Center for Student Diversity (CSD). Mostly, my work has focused on creating, improving, and promoting gender and sexuality resources and safe spaces on campus, and sexual violence is a part of that sphere.

Becoming involved in an issue so complex and wide ranging as sexual violence requires an extensive knowledge base, an ability to speak at a moment's notice to any and all related issues and ideas, creativity, intuition, and drive. Luckily, most William & Mary students already possess these qualities and are more than equipped to take action.

GSWS Majors in Action

Some tangible steps students can take include volunteering on hotlines or at The Haven, organizing and attending events, and creating their own organizations.

ZM: *It's been almost eight months since the "Sigma Chi email incident." Do you feel the college's response to sexual assault has been adequate? Have you seen the changes that you would like to see in the way William & Mary's administration handles issues of sexual violence?*

JT: To answer your question of whether William & Mary's response to sexual violence on campus is adequate, I say yes and no.

I say yes because the administration has taken substantial steps towards creating a survivor-friendly campus. It has greatly broadened its definitions of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and sexual misconduct so as to account for a wider array of threatening behaviors; disseminated resources and information all across campus in a variety of ways; improved training, investigation, and remediation policies; and established The Haven, a new "safe space" on campus.

I will admit that I am often quick to look at the administration as a faceless and bodiless monolith—an arbiter of policy, a generator of good press, a collector of alumni donations—and not much else. Yet, I think it is important to note that this is not the case. The administration is composed of countless individuals who care and have been working incredibly hard for many years to make our campus safer, healthier, and happier.

All that said, I also say no.

I say no because the administration's response to this issue reflects a larger cultural tradition of inaction, insincerity, and disconnect that has allowed sexual violence to persist.

Unfortunately, the TWAMP (Typical William & Mary Person) mentality is persistent among students and the administration. The issue of sexual violence and the broader issues of health and wellness have long ranked below academic, career, and financial concerns

Perhaps the most perceptible example of the TWAMP mentality at work is the fact that nothing was done on an administrative level to curb sexual assault until the Title IX investigations were announced. Since those were announcements were made, the administration has assembled a task force devoted to assessing the campus climate and revising policy according to where there are gaps.

It concerns me, however, that these administrative efforts are reactionary and not proactive. It was not until the

government became involved that William & Mary took concrete steps to confront sexual violence.

Ultimately, this stems from a deeply rooted disconnect between students and administrators. Even though there are two students seated on the Task Force, it seems to most students that campus-wide decisions are largely made without their voices.

That said, communication is a two-way street. I will be the first to say that there is so much more that students can do in order to get actively involved in this issue.

I have spoken to several administrators who struggle because they cannot figure out how to reach students. The Task Force has been great about being transparent and reaching out towards students via email—yet only a select few students reciprocate—which is shameful. We cannot be apathetic.

MP: I would also like to echo Jordan's sentiment about how significant the daily small actions and conversations are to creating change. Becoming a socially aware student means more than simply going to a concert or an event that's held once a year. We can't simply "like" a status on Facebook or go to a conversation about healthy relationships and then think we've done our part in creating lasting cultural change. Social media activism and attending events on campus are important, but the dialogue must be sustained in order for it to truly do anything.

I think the College's response to sexual assault has been fine. The College is giving itself a lot of credit for the task force and The Haven—two endeavors that are certainly representative of progress and hold lots of promise for W&M. The College is not giving credit where it is deserved though. The brunt of the work done to create The Haven was done by students and recent grads—namely Mallory Tucker and Hannah Boes. Administrators played an essential part in its development, but this space could not exist without the heavy-lifting from students.

The care that administrators have for students has not translated into sufficient student support services. The College is doing things now that should have been done years ago. The measures the College has taken this semester have come because we've been forced into action. Why do we stubbornly wait until we are forced to create a better, safer environment for our students? The students that are the heartbeat of the institution.

It's difficult because I am consistently disappointed and frustrated in the administration's responses to problems on campus, but at the same time recognize the good intentions and individual efforts of the administrators. How

can we translate the administrators' genuine concern into policy, safe spaces, and other endeavors that improve the quality and quantity of student support services? We need to create stronger links of communication between administrators, faculty, staff, and students. We must turn these conversations into actions, policies, and new spaces all with the intention of creating long-term cultural change.

Noah Brooksher: *Both of you place emphasis on The Haven. Do you think that you could tell us a little more about this safe space? What do you want the community to know about the center and what are your expectations for it?*

MP: I think Jordan and I both emphasized The Haven because it is an endeavor we both have put time and great care into. The center is a welcoming, safe, and inclusive gathering space of support. It provides confidential education, advocacy, and acceptance for anyone seeking guidance on relational abuse, understanding that a diverse array of students, faculty, and staff may walk through our doors. We serve survivors, those who stand beside them, and those ready to learn more.

So essentially, The Haven is a space for students to come to speak with a student volunteer, find out where to go or what resources are available to them, or come take a minute in their day to breathe. We have journals, stress balls, and other small activities for people to use. Visitors can speak with a student volunteer, or people can come for silent reflection. Anyone can come to the center. We are open to survivors, friends, or people who just want to learn more—we are an open door on campus. The Haven is also intentionally inclusive of all gender identities and sexualities.

NB: *I think it's safe to say that you are both dissatisfied with the administration's efforts in dealing with sexual assault. What tangible changes would you like to see in the way that the administration handles sexual assault?*

JT: Perhaps more so than anything, I would like to see a massive shift in our culture.

William & Mary is composed of driven students. We do not settle for less. We do it right, or not at all, so we must get rid of the checklist approach. Just as we strive to be the school with the most academically inclined students, we should strive to be the first school without sexual violence, suicide, hazing, and addiction. We should be thinking outside the box that Title IX requires us to fill with a check mark. Of course, I'd like to see us finally meet all of the Title IX requirements by establishing a set of policies that are so solid in their foundation that



there will never be any doubt that we are meeting those basic standards again. Yet, I'd also like to see policy and infrastructural changes that extend beyond the bounds of Title IX.

This means that we need to regain our focus on students. We often receive money from alumni to put towards facilities that are nice, yet secondary to the true concerns of current students. There is a lack of communication between current students and past students that makes it difficult to place money where it is needed. We do an excellent job of connecting current students to alumni when it comes time to write a thesis or find a job, so why can't we make student concerns more visible when it comes time for alumni to donate? If alumni truly want to benefit the College, then they would do well to listen to the students who are supposed to benefit from alumni money.

MP: I think how I feel about it could be summarized in one word: proactive. I would love to see the College self-reflect before these tipping point moments when disgusting emails go viral or when a student is harmed on campus. We pride ourselves on our high rankings for academic excellence and continue to strive towards intellectual greatness, but that cannot come at the cost of student health both mental and physical. We should take the same care, dedication, and initiative we have for academia and focus it on student health and wellness.

I would like to see William & Mary focus on the whole person rather than on the person simply as student. Developing resources like The Haven and providing

support for the Center for Student Diversity and the Counseling Center are great places to begin. The College must also come up with new creative, engaging ways to interact with students and fill our community's need. Conversations, proposals, and ideas must leave email chains and offices and enter into practice. It's not going to be easy. It's going to take time and it will require collaboration between all members of our community. Despite the time, effort, and difficulty of creating change in student support services, I have faith in our ability to be innovative and see that happen.

Carol Woody continued from page 5

need to be heard, whose concerns need to be addressed, and whose dreams need to be supported. What a gift it was to be a part of the Generation Hope family: an organization that empowers at the individual level, and recognizes the beautiful consequences of investing in those who are commonly cast off. Generation Hope just seems to get it.

Amanda Whitehurst

This past summer, I interned with an organization called Rafiki Africa in Alendu, Kenya. As an intern, my primary job was to help launch a feminine sanitation project aimed at keeping girls in school, augmenting health, creating jobs in the community, and bettering the environment through the introduction of a reusable feminine hygiene product. I was only able to do this project because of a scholarship I received through the Carol Woody Internship Award in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program. Seeing the positive impact of my work in Kenya has given me an indescribable feeling of accomplishment and excitement.

Some of our wonderful GSWS majors L to R: Jordan Taffet '16, Zoë Mitchell '15, Maggie Perreault '15, Noah Brooksher '16

This experience made a profound impact on me. As a student who has studied the theories behind the oppression of women around the world, it was an eye-opening experience to see these concepts play out in real life. The classroom and the textbook became a tangible world that truly exists, a world that I could touch and influence. This trip has inspired me to start my own nonprofit. The need for feminine hygiene products that are affordable and reusable is not isolated to the community of Alendu, Kenya; rather, this sort of a project could alleviate social ills in many other parts of the world as well. My hope is to launch a small business aimed at training female tailors in rural areas of developing countries to make reusable feminine hygiene products that can change their communities and empower their women. It's still in the early stages, but I'm thrilled by the possibility.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? GSWS/WMST ALUMNI UPDATES



DANIELLE GARRETT, '08:

Women's Studies and Government Double Major

After graduating from William & Mary, I got my Masters in Public Affairs from the University of Texas and then started working at the National Women's Law Center on their health and reproductive rights team. At NWLC, I focused on increasing women's access to affordable, quality health care and ensuring that the Affordable Care Act was implemented in a way that met women's health needs. In August, I left NWLC after four years to take a job at the Association for State and Territorial Health Officials. At ASTHO I work primarily on primary care access. Although this job doesn't have "women" in the title, I spend a lot of time thinking about issues that draw on my GSWS education, including health equity, access to maternal health services, and culturally competent care.

Last November, I married my partner Mari in a ceremony in Nags Head, NC. We bought a house in Maryland and I spend my non-work time playing with our two chihuahuas, plotting a move to Key West, and reading books that don't have anything to do with public health. I'm more than happy to talk with current GSWS students about careers in public policy or public health. My e-mail is laurendgarrett@gmail.com.



MEGHAN MCCARTHY, '07:

Women's Studies and Government Double Major

So, where am I now?!

After graduating from William & Mary in 2007, I spent five years as a reporter on Capitol Hill covering health policy for publications like Congressional Quarterly and National Journal. During that time, I got to see the passage of the Affordable Care Act and all the political battles that followed (and still live on) during the implementation of the law. Since the start of 2014, I have been running the newsroom for a DC media startup call Morning Consult. We cover health, energy, tech and finance policy in Washington and what it will mean for industries on the ground.

Personally, I met a fellow New Jerseyan in the newsroom five years ago and we got married in May of 2013. A few months later, we took the plunge and decided to leave the District of Columbia for a house in Virginia (where I now meet lots more William & Mary alums!). Some day (soon), I hope to actually get a dog and officially solidify my position as a semi-suburbanite.

I'd love to talk to any and all GSWS alums or current students about the media market, particularly in Washington DC. You can reach me at: meghankmccarthy@gmail.com.



VIRGINIA WALTERS, '07:

Women's Studies and Religious Studies Double Major

After I graduated from William & Mary in 2007, I spent the next several years working in non-profits before deciding to pursue a career in healthcare. In 2013 I completed a pre-medical post-baccalaureate program at Columbia University, and I am now three months into the foundational science years of the College of Medicine at SUNY Downstate in Brooklyn, New York. I expect to complete the program and earn my M.D. in the spring of 2018, at which point I plan to complete my training in providing women's reproductive healthcare.

Much of the time I spent on William & Mary's campus somehow revolved around women's reproductive health—I studied the socioeconomic and political determinants of women's health in my Women's Studies seminars, and my extra-curricular time was spent organizing for Planned Parenthood through their campus affiliate, Vox. But it wasn't until two years after I graduated, that I gained experience in directly providing reproductive healthcare to women. While in Richmond, I started working for the Virginia League for Planned Parenthood as a project manager, and I also started volunteering in the clinic at the same time. Eventually I graduated to assisting and monitoring vital signs during surgical procedures. The experience was transformative, for myself and my career. I could finally put faces and stories to the providers and patients for whom I was advocating, and I felt at home in the clinic. Because I had taken no core science courses in undergrad, completing my pre-requisites for medical school took several more years—time I spent managing projects in the population health office of New York City's public hospital system. If current GSWS majors would like to contact me, I'm at virginia.walters@gmail.com.



BLUE COLLAR CONFIDENTIAL: AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNE BALAY

On Wednesday, November 5th, Anne Balay, author of *Steel Closets: Voices of Lesbian, Gay, and Transgender Steelworkers* (University of North Carolina Press, 2014), visited campus to talk about her work. Christy Burns, associate professor of English, spoke with her prior to her visit.

CB: *Steel Closets* is a great project and a wonderfully written book. You describe your own background and interest in what Judith/Jack Halberstam has identified as a vulnerable and loyal queer community in rural areas—a surprise to many who think of the LGBTIQ community flocking to cities, and often being modeled by its upper-class members. Could you say something about why you chose to write about steelworkers? and how you initially reached your amazing narrators?

AB: I think what got me was the automatic assumption that if you're queer, and getting shat on where you are, the obvious thing to do is move to the city. That's just considered the logical response. But what if you don't want to? If you LIKE where you are, or your job is there, or your family, or your lifestyle? It bugs me that people on the coasts think everyone who lives in the middle of the US spends all our time leaning against the garage holding a gun and hating on the gays. There's some of that everywhere, but I wanted to tell a complete, detailed story about what it meant, both the good and the bad, to be a gay steelworker. Just for one example. I hope that the picture of what it means to be gay continues to expand. Now, too often, when we picture a gay person, it's a white man who lives in Boystown and works as an architect. That's cool -- I love those guys -- but when we picture a gay person, I want it to also be blue collar, rural, raggedy, funny, black, female, trying to work it out. I want each of us to have lots of competing images in our heads of ALL the things that being gay is and can be -- just to open that up.

The steelworkers were hiding—meeting them was hard for that reason—originally I met most of them at the local bars.

CB: *Some of the stories are painful to hear. The narrators often reference the alienation, isolation, and threat of violence against them. And yet there is also that strong sense of belonging to the work and place, and to fitting in, by bent of working hard and being loyal or stubborn. How did you manage what must have been an emotionally difficult interview at times? For example with Elise's story, of how she was hazed and raped when her co-workers saw her as a woman, after she initially presented as male.*

AB: That was hard. My therapist gave me a book called *Trauma Stewardship*. I read it often. It talked me through listening to other people's trauma without living it. Strategies I used included taking breaks when I couldn't hear any more. And taking what my narrators said to heart—because they (even Elise) weren't complaining—they were describing. They didn't expect life to be easy, and some bumps on the road didn't shake their inner strength. The folks I interviewed, in terms of how they handle the stress? That's the ultimate class lesson I learned here. My mother was a working class woman. She understood hardship as part of life—not something to be prevented, but something to expect. And my narrators had that same approach. When they got harassed, raped, fired, beaten, they knew this was awful and unfair, but that didn't sour them—they handled it and kept focused on making a life they could be comfortable with. I tried to channel that spirit in writing about them, and in experiencing my own setbacks.

CB: *This book changes awareness quite powerfully. You manage your facts and give a strong sense of people, working in their narratives. Did the book have an effect on your*



Anne Balay, author of Steel Closets: Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender, Steelworkers. Photo by Riva Lehrer.

activism, your life? Did it change some of the folks you interviewed, in terms of how they handle the stress?

AB: Oh my yes. After some of the interviews, I just pulled over to the side of the road and cried. Sadness at the pain of the stories, but mostly tears of joy and relief that people could find meaning and nobility in the struggle. Just intense gladness that people like this exist, and that they had shared their life with me. You don't ever forget being touched by these folks.

When you write oral history, your narrators are people with lives and continuing stories. You feel compelled not to let them down, and THEY feel changed and challenged by being in a book. One form that took for us was that some narrators took the book to their union, and with my help, got the union contract changed so that future gay steelworkers would maybe have it easier. I never would have anticipated that change. And that in turn made me rethink what scholarship can be and do. Words are powerful—thinking can make a difference. So now, scholarship that doesn't aim for that feels kind of pointless to me.

The people I interviewed tell me that just knowing there are other—that they are not as alone out there as they thought they were—helps. AND knowing that people out there in the world (like you) care enough to read the book—to teach it and to build future research on it—makes them feel visible and valued.

CB: *What will you do next? Another book? A film based on Steel Closets?*

AB: Film is a no, since the people still work there and are hiding. I would like to write a book about truckers and trucking. But I currently don't have a job (being a queer activist academic can be challenging), so I'm working on that as well.

COURSE SPOTLIGHT: INTRODUCTION TO LGBTIQ STUDIES

An interview with Victoria Castillo by Elizabeth Harbron, Associate Professor of Chemistry

I was excited to meet up with Professor Victoria Castillo to learn more about the “Introduction to LGBTIQ Studies” course she has been teaching for GSWS the last several years.

Over coffee we covered everything from how an undergraduate biology major becomes a feminist historian to our (surprise!) shared background in what was then known as Gender and Women's Studies at Grinnell College. Although we probably consumed many cups of coffee sitting across the dining hall from each other as undergrads, it was great to sit at the same table for the first time and hear about Victoria's teaching methods in this important course.

EH: How do you select which topics you're going to cover in “Intro to LGBTIQ Studies” with only a semester to survey the entire field?

VC: Because I'm an historian, I believe in the importance of examining how societal understandings of gender and sexuality have changed over time. There have been incredible changes over the past few decades. But I like to start the semester a little further back. Specifically, I begin in the nineteenth and early twentieth century to examine when and why certain terms emerged, such as homosexuality, heterosexuality, and queer, and how their meanings have transformed over time. I also like to provide histories of how individuals lived and experienced their sexualities and genders in times when there was little understanding or acceptance of LGBTIQ people. After the historical background, I then focus on specific themes, such as legal issues, marriage equality, representations of LGBTIQ people in film and literature, HIV/AIDS, transgender issues, sexual fluidity, and international perspectives. I also try to select readings from a wide range of disciplines, though they tend to be chosen from the humanities and social sciences.

EH: Marriage equality and trans issues have been major topics in the news and popular culture recently. How do current events inform and affect your teaching in this course?

VC: The fact that LGBTIQ issues have been in the news quite regularly makes this course fun to teach. I encourage students to pay attention to LGBTIQ issues in the news, and I try to set aside time at the beginning of class for students to discuss any recent events that they've heard about in the media. Of course, decisions about marriage equality have been some of the big changes in the past few years. Every year I have to update which states have marriage equality,

and this semester I had to update it a second time because of the recent Supreme Court decision. But the timing of the Supreme Court's decision coincided perfectly with my syllabus. We started our discussion of marriage equality on a Thursday, but by the following Tuesday more states had to be added to the map, including Virginia. I think it was exciting for the students. We were able to see history being made and then discuss the events in class.

EH: The final project in the course has an open format where students can write a paper or choose to create an art project, write a story, or pursue a different format. Can you tell us about how having the choice of format has affected the students? Do you feel that it frees them to pursue different topics or to approach topics they might otherwise have written about from a new perspective?

VC: Yes, definitely. I've actually had a fair amount of students who are in the sciences or social sciences tell me

they could use the final project to advance some of those goals. For example, I've had students who were interested in teaching at the K-12 level research and write proposals about how to make a school curriculum and environment friendlier to LGBT students. Selfishly, I enjoy not having to read about the same topic for every paper that I grade. I also like to see what topics students are interested in and potentially incorporate those topics into my syllabus in future semesters.

EH: Students in your course write book and film reviews. Can you recommend any recent books or films for our readers that you've learned about through the student reviews?

VC: Sure. The students seem to enjoy campy films such as *But I'm a Cheerleader* and *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, or films based on real people, such as *Milk* (Harvey Milk), *Boys Don't Cry* (Brandon Teena), and *De-Lovely* (Cole Porter). They also like films that focus

on specific issues relevant to LGBTIQ people, such as religion (*Latter Days*), HIV/AIDS (*And the Band Played On*, *Philadelphia*), international examples of LGBTIQ lives (*Beautiful Boxer*, *Fire*, *The Iron Ladies*), and even the experi-

ences of elderly LGBTIQ individuals, such as *Cloudburst*, a film about an older lesbian couple on a road trip through Canada. With regards to books, many take the opportunity to read historic LGBTIQ novels, such as Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, Gore Vidal's *The City and the Pillar*, or E.M. Forester's *Maurice*. Others prefer more contemporary novels, such as *Tipping the Velvet* by Sarah Waters, *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides, or *Stone Butch Blues* by Leslie Feinberg. In the past few years, students have also chosen to read YA (young adult) literature that focus on LGBTIQ issues such as *Hero* by Perry Moore, *Luna* by Julie Anne Peters, or *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* by Emily Danforth.

EH: Do you see this course playing a role in the College's new curriculum?

VC: I hope so. As an interdisciplinary course, it already fulfills one of the main goals for the COLL 200 courses. Also, if it does become part of the new curriculum, it may draw students who might not have initially considered taking a GSWS course. I think it is also an important course for the GSWS major, particularly with our recent name change from Women's Studies to Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies. The course gives students an opportunity to explore how humans have lived their genders and sexualities in diverse and often non-normative ways.

The fact that LGBTIQ issues have been in the news quite regularly makes this course fun to teach.

that they chose to write a short story or do an art piece because they rarely have the opportunity to do creative assignments in their other classes. On the other hand, I've also had students who like to write the traditional research paper because that is what they know how to do. My overall goal for the final project is that I want it to be meaningful to the students. So if there is a topic that a student is passionate or curious about that we were unable to cover sufficiently in class, the paper gives the student the opportunity to pursue research on that topic. Or, if students have particular careers in mind for their future,





MARY & WILLIAM NEWSLETTER

Editor

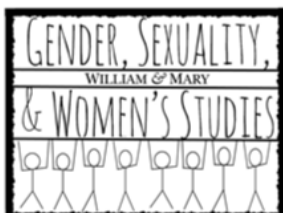
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WILLIAM & MARY
GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND WOMEN'S STUDIES

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