



# USC Center for Feminist Research

University of Southern California, Mark Taper Hall of Humanities, Suite 422,  
Los Angeles, CA 90089-4352

## Director's Message *by Mike Messner*

This issue of the CFR Newsletter includes the usual updates on new faculty publications and honors. It also continues our newish tradition of highlighting the accomplishments of two amazing alums of our graduate program, in addition to focusing on the local scholar-activism of our current and recent undergraduate majors in gender studies. But here I'd like to focus a bit below the radar of these glossy accomplishments to honor the work that makes the CFR and the gender studies program go.

This past year, serving as interim director of the gender studies program and the CFR has



Jeanne Weiss hard at work, keeping the Gender Studies boat afloat

brought home to me again something I've told my students over the years: University faculty could disappear for a stretch of time (in fact, many of us do, during summer breaks or sabbaticals), and departments and programs chug along just fine without us. But if our office staff members were suddenly to disappear, we'd very quickly be up the proverbial creek without a paddle. Jeanne Weiss, our gender studies office manager for the past eleven years, is the person who keeps our boat afloat and on course: as program directors come and go, Jeanne Weiss stays on top of the daily and seasonal demands of the office—class staffing, student advising, budget oversight. She also contributes intangibles, including invaluable institutional memory and a consistent optimistic cheer that buoys both students and faculty.

I ask my students to notice the ways in which occupations—right under our noses at the university—are gendered. University office staff positions are held almost entirely by women, and disproportionately by women of color. This is the stuff we study in gender studies, but at times our critical scholarly scrutiny sweeps outside the walls of our own workplace, and we fail to see what is right in front of us: that we sometimes participate in helping to render invisible the women's labor that keeps our own privileged boats afloat.

So here's to Jeanne Weiss, and the work she does for gender studies. And here's a pitch to those of us who benefit from Jeanne's labors of love: let's do what we can to make USC a place where this most important labor is both appreciated and fairly compensated. Love, yes, but justice too. Bread and roses: that's feminism at work.

### *Inside this issue*

- 2 - Valerie Jenness New Directions seminar lecture
- 3 - ONE's new exhibit, Visions & Voices events
- 4 - Faculty updates
- 6 - Featured Alums
- 7 - We're online!
- Save the Date!
- 8 - Students in the Community
- 10 - Undergrad project gets grant
- Conferences, conferences!
- 11 - Book Review

## Congratulations!

The Center for Feminist Research and the USC Gender Studies Program would like to congratulate **Karen Tongson** for her recent attainment of tenure. She is now an Associate Professor of English & Gender Studies at USC. We also would like to congratulate **Joseph Hawkins** on his recent appointment to the position of Director of the ONE Archives collection in the USC Libraries. Hawkins will assume this position in June, 2011.

## Valerie Jenness: New Directions in Research on Prison Violence

Transgender inmates are especially vulnerable to sexual assault in California men's prisons. In a riveting January lecture sponsored by the CFR New Directions in Feminist Research Seminar, U.C. Riverside sociologist/criminologist Valerie Jenness described how her research with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation illuminated the vulnerabilities and survival strategies of this under-studied population.

Jenness had been collecting quantitative and qualitative data on inmate-on-inmate sexual assaults in prisons, when she discovered what at first seemed an interesting blip in the data: Transgender inmates were reporting far higher rates of sexual assault than were other inmate sub-populations. 59% of transgender inmates in California men's prisons reported having been sexually assaulted, compared with only 4% of a representative sample of the general inmate population. These stark numbers led Jenness to launch a parallel study, based on interviews with 315 transgender inmates in 28 California prisons. The research yielded the first systematic profile of a prison population that is unique by virtue of being both transgender and incarcerated. Situated at the nexus of intersecting marginalities, transgender inmates fare far worse on standard demographic and health measures than their non-transgender counterparts in the U.S. population, the California population, the U.S. and California prison populations.

Jenness' fascinating research reveals the complex workings of gender and power, illuminating especially how sexism, homophobia and violence are played out in prisons. A Mexican American transgender inmate told Jenness about "trying to get by" in a maximum security prison:

*Prison is an alpha-male community. It's run by alpha males. So,*



Jenness reveals the depth of her work with a slide showing the state of her office during her research



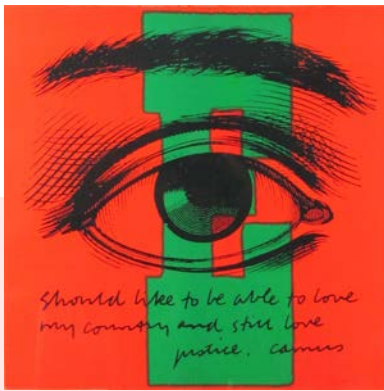
### Valerie Jenness discusses her findings

*we're perceived as punks—just women. No one is going to come up to me and give me the respect they give my old man. They see me as his property. And I guess I am. We're seen as weak—a lower species. In a sense we are. But, people should not be taken in by the illusion. Don't forget: we're men. We're just trying to get by in an alpha male community. You women—YOU are a woman—you have it easy. I don't have it easy.*

This statement led researcher Jenness to wonder, "what does it mean to be 'just women?'" Moreover, her interviews pressed her to engage in self-reflexivity that expanded her insights not just about prisons, but also about the workings of gender in her own life. She received unexpected beauty tips from some of her interviewees, and one transgender inmate's comment was especially intriguing for Jenness in reflecting on the question, what is a "real woman?"

*Val, you're a biologic, right? I figured. We have the utmost respect for biologics. You are perfection. I am Memorex. You are what I can never attain. But, like all good Memorex, I try to get close. Always a copy. Never the real deal. But a damn good copy.*

Valerie Jenness' lecture was a fitting capstone for the 2010-11 New Directions in Feminist Research seminar's focus on gender-based violence. Next year's seminar, led by professor Macarena Gomez-Barris, will focus on "Race, Sexuality and Resistant Bodies." Stay tuned for announcements of the seminar's public events for 2011-12.



Sister Corita Kent  
*E eye love, 1968*  
Serigraph, 30 ½ x 30 ½ inches  
ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives  
Courtesy of the Corita Art Center, Immaculate Heart Community, Los Angeles

## ONE's New Exhibit Cruises Archives, L.A. Queer History

ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives will be one of 60-plus cultural institutions in the Los Angeles area to collaborate with the Getty Foundation for its *Pacific Standard Time* initiative, meant to highlight art communities in postwar Los Angeles. ONE Archives, which has recently become a part of USC Libraries, will be curating *Cruising the Archive: Queer Art and Culture in Los Angeles, 1945-1980* an ambitious exhibit of three parts that will explore the relationship between artistic practices and LGBT histories through objects and documents. According to ONE Archives' President Joseph Hawkins, "This exhibition will, for the first time, reveal much about the development of queer communities of art in Los Angeles from the early postwar period to the pre AIDS era. It is exciting that the Getty Museum has invited ONE to participate. Especially since controversy surrounded the Hide and Seek Exhibition at the National Gallery last year. Many of the works in the exhibition are anonymous, because their creators worked from underground and in the shadows."

In addition to its featured artwork, *Cruising the Archive* will contain archival material selected to provide cultural and historical contexts for each piece. Though Los Angeles has been an important site for the historical formation of LGBT movements and communities, these histories are often overlooked in national narratives of queer history. Additionally, queer artists and activists have contributed to the aesthetic and political field of cultural production in general. This exhibit is meant to engage viewers in thought and discussion about LGBT history, visual strategies in queer activism, gay and lesbian social movements, queer aesthetics, and performativity, particularly in L.A., as well as archival methods in contemporary art practice. The exhibit, so far the most extensive of its kind to come out of ONE Archives' collections, will help connect USC with a larger art world.

Coinciding with *Cruising the Archive* will be "Queer Aesthetics and Archival Practices," a series of six events held throughout the 2011-12 academic year as part of Visions and Voices, USC's Arts and Humanities Initiative. These events will provide opportunities to engage in dialog about the exhibit and related topics with academics, artists, and curators connected to the project. There will be a workshop and lecture, panel discussions, a film screening, performance art, and a discussion with artist Don Bachardy and writer Susan Morgan.

Finally, ONE Archives will publish a fully illustrated catalogue featuring essays by Ann Cvetkovich, Vaginal Davis, Jennifer Doyle, Dean Spade and others. The catalogue will also contain additional information on artists and archival materials, as well as an introduction by the exhibit's curators.

ONE Archives' exhibition dates & locations:

ONE Archives' West Adams location: Oct. 1, 2011 – Apr. 1, 2012  
ONE Archives Gallery & Museum, West Hollywood: Oct. 1, 2011 – Mar. 31, 2012  
USC Doheny Library's Treasure Room: Jan. 26, 2012 – May 31, 2012

More information on Cruising the Archives will be posted at a later date on <http://www.onearchives.org/>

For more on "Queer Aesthetics and Archival Practices," or Visions and Voices in general, please visit <http://www.usc.edu/dept/pubrel/visionsandvoices/>

Please note that Visions and Voices' 2011-12 schedule will not be up until later this year.



Anthony Friedkin  
*Lesbian Couple, Hollywood, 1972*  
Photograph, Gelatin-silver print, 11 x 14 inches  
Morris Kight Collection  
ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives  
Courtesy of the artist and Stephen Cohen Gallery, Los Angeles



## Gender Studies Faculty Updates

### Lois Banner: History, Gender Studies

Lois Banner's *MM:Personal* has just been published by Harry Abrams. It is the story of Marilyn Monroe's life told through the contents of her file cabinets, which were in private hands for the last fifty years. The book tells how Banner found the file cabinets, details the history of who owned them, and relates Banner's search to document the provenance of the cabinets' contents. 300 photographs, taken by Hollywood photographer Mark Anderson, are included, as well as a new interpretation of Marilyn's life, which Banner constructed. Reviews have appeared in the New York Review of Books and a variety of other mainstream places.

Banner has been on leave to finish her scholarly biography of Marilyn, completing 350 pages of it in the last seven months, with 250 pages to go. The book, *An Uncommon Woman: Marilyn Monroe as an American Icon of Passion and Power*, is due to Bloomsbury Press in September.

Banner plans to be back teaching in September, hopefully with the new book done. "It should be a definitive biography of Monroe," Banner says. "She is the most complex biographical subject on whom I've worked. What a life! It's fascinating and infuriating to write, because of all the individuals who passed themselves off as being her friends when they didn't know her. There's even a man who claimed to be married to her! And the media believed him until he died."

### Diana Blaine: Writing Program, Gender Studies

Spring semester has been busy for Diana Blaine. In February, she presented her paper "Dead Like Me?: Constructions of Subjectivity at the Mummies of the World exhibit" at the University of London for a conference entitled *The Carnival of Death: Perceptions of Death in Europe and the Americas*. In mid-March, Blaine gave a presentation on representations of women leaders in the media at the Center For Women and Men's 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's Retreat. March 31 found her chairing a panel for the College Commons on Near Death Experiences; the panel featured an author who believes in the scientific veracity of such experiences. This was part of a larger project Blaine has been working on to analyze representations of death in mainstream culture. Blaine notes the gendered aspects of these representations: they tend to conflate "male" with omnipotence, transcendence, and the subject position while conflating "female," the object of the male gaze, with passivity, nature, and, well, death!

### Joseph Boone: English, Gender Studies

Joseph A. Boone is busy putting final touches on his manuscript, *The Homoerotics of Orientalism* (forthcoming

Columbia UP), a great portion of which he finished while in residence as the M. H. Abrams and NEH Fellow at National Humanities Center Residency Fellowship during the 2009-10 school year. His essay, "Modernist Re-Orientations: Imagining Homoerotic Desire in the Nearly Middle East," appears in *Modernism/Modernity* 17.3 (September 2010): 561-605 with 36 images. Versions of this essay were delivered as the Rushton Lecture at the University of Virginia (Mar. 2010) and at Duke University (May 2010). He spoke on "European Travelogues and Ottoman Sexuality: Sodomitical Crossings Abroad, 1600-1850," at UNC-Greensboro (Feb. 2010) and Wake Forest University (Apr. 2010). At UNC-Chapel Hill (Oct. 2009) and Bowdoin College (Nov. 2009)

his lecture topic was "Beautiful Boys, Sodomy, Hammams, and Other Tropes: A Visual History of Middle Eastern Homoeroticism."

**WORK IT!**  
a conference on gender, race,  
and sexuality in pop  
music professions



Alice Echols, Judith "Jack" Halberstam, & Karen Tongson all participated in the Work It! conference at USC this March.

### Alice Echols

Professor Alice Echols gave a talk entitled, "Tear the Roof Off: Funk Music and Commerce" at this year's Experience Music Conference at UCLA. She also kicked off a one-day conference, "Work It: Gender, Race, and Sexuality in Pop Music Professions," which preceded the main EMP conference. "Work It" was co-sponsored by USC Gender Studies Program, Center for Feminist Research, Department of Music, USC Arts and Letters, and *The Journal of Popular Music Studies* and attracted a large and animated audience. Echols also presented a paper at a forum on popular music and social movements at Northeastern University in Boston.

### Chris Freeman: English, Gender Studies

Chris Freeman (Gender Studies/English) co-chaired a panel at January's MLA Convention in Downtown LA on "Isherwood in Los Angeles." He delivered a talk on "Teaching Isherwood in Los Angeles." He also wrote a long review of the newly-published Isherwood diaries, *The Sixties*, which came out in the *Gay and Lesbian Review* (March-April 2011). He and co-editor Jim Berg are working on a sequel to their book *The Isherwood Century*, an anthology of essays on the Anglo-American writer and his work, for the University of Minnesota Press (2012).

### Joseph Hawkins: Anthropology, Gender Studies

Beginning June 1, 2011 Joseph R. Hawkins, PhD will move from his position as adjunct in the Anthropology Department and Gender Studies Program at the University of Southern California to a new position in USC Libraries. For the past seven years professor Hawkins has been the President of the Board of Directors at ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives and has, with the help of the Board of Directors, raised in excess of a million dollars in funding for ONE, including a \$272,086 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 2010. His

new position will be that of Director of the ONE Archives collection, which last year in August became part of the USC Libraries. Dr. Hawkins continues to teach as a faculty member and will work closely with the Gender studies program to strengthen research on LGBTQ history and art.

#### **Mike Messner: Sociology, Gender Studies**

Michael Messner's Pacific Sociological Association presidential address, "The privilege of teaching about privilege," was published in the Winter 2011 issue of *Sociological Perspectives*. His article "No hype for women's hoops: An 'unnatural silence' may keep women's basketball from having a larger fan base," appeared in the January 2011 issue of *Ms. Magazine*. In June 2011, Messner's article "Gender ideologies, youth sports, and the production of soft essentialism," will appear in the *Sociology of Sport Journal*.

#### **Gloria Orenstein: Comparative Literature, Gender Studies**

Gloria F. Orenstein's article "Down The Rabbit Hole: Shamanic Initiations and Mythic Rebirth From The Womb of The Great Mother" will be published in the book catalogue to the exhibition IN WONDERLAND co-curated by LACMA and THE MUSEO DE ARTE MODERNO IN MEXICO. The catalogue/book will be published by Pretzel, a German art publisher, and will come in three different language editions, English, French, and Spanish. It will be for the exhibition IN WONDERLAND that will feature works by Women of Surrealism who lived and worked in New York City and Mexico City after WW II. It's first opening will be held on Jan. 29, 2012 at LACMA, and will be there through May 6. Then it will go to Quebec City and will open on June 7 at the Musee National des Beaux-Arts de Quebec (MNBAQ) and stay until Sept. 3. Finally, it will have its last opening on Sept. 27, 2012 at the Museo de Arte Moderno, INBA MAM0 in Mexico City, and will stay until Jan. 13, 2013. Orenstein is particularly excited about all this since she was the first one to write about The Women of Surrealism for THE FEMINIST ART JOURNAL in New York back in the early seventies.

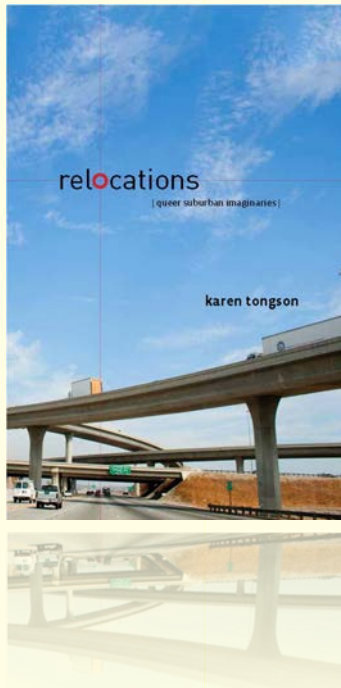
#### **Amy Parish: Anthropology, Gender Studies**

Amy Parish was invited to the Centre for Gender Research at Uppsala University in Sweden where she gave a talk in March 2011 on the sociosexual behavior of bonobos. She also gave a talk in the Literature Dept. on her ARLT course "Love,

Marriage, and the Experience of Being a Wife" and led a discussion on research methodology for the Centre's "Humanimal" group. In the Fall semester, Amy created and taught a new course in the USC MPH program titled "Women's Health and Reproductive Rights as Social Justice Issues". This term she is teaching an "Ethical Issues in International Health Research, Promotion, and Intervention" course for the MPH program. She has upcoming talks at UCLA for the "Darwin Evolving" series and for the Los Angeles Institute for the Humanities.

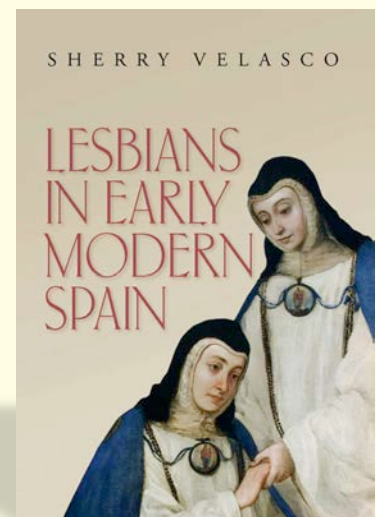
#### **Karen Tongson: English, Gender Studies**

In fall 2011, Karen Tongson assumed the editorship of the *Journal of Popular Music Studies* (with Gus Stadler), and launched a new interdisciplinary book series at NYU Press, titled *Postmillennial Pop* (with Henry Jenkins, USC Annenberg). This academic year, Tongson delivered talks at the annual conventions of the American Studies Association and Modern Language Association as well as the EMP Popular Music Conference. She was also invited to speak at the "Queering the Middle" symposium at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and, in the spring, delivered invited lectures at UC Berkeley, Dartmouth and Indiana University. In February 2011, Tongson co-organized the "Work It: Gender, Race and Sexuality in Pop Music Professions" (hosted by the Gender Studies Program and co-sponsored by CFR, the Music Department, Arts and Letters and the *Journal of Popular Music Studies*). In March 2011, Tongson was promoted to Associate Professor of English and Gender Studies. Her first book, *Relocations: Queer Suburban Imaginaries*, will be released by NYU Press in August 2011.



#### **Sherry Velasco: Spanish, Gender Studies**

Sherry Velasco has been on leave and travelling thanks to a Faculty Fellowship from the USC-Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute and another grant from the Advancing Scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences Initiatives. Additionally, Vanderbilt University Press has just published her latest book, *Lesbians in Early Modern Spain*, and last semester she was awarded a General Education Teaching Award.



#### **Quotable Quotes**

There can be no daily democracy without daily citizenship.

RALPH NADER

## The Gender Studies Graduate Program: Two Stellar Alums

For over two decades, the Gender Studies Program has benefitted from the work of scores of graduate teaching assistants who are foundational to the success of our general education courses. Moreover, the Graduate Certificate in Gender Studies has helped USC grad students of gender and sexuality stretch their research across interdisciplinary boundaries. Since 1989, 134 students have completed the Graduate Certificate in Gender Studies, and many have found the Certificate to be a valuable resource in helping to launch academic careers. Today, 48 current graduate students are enrolled in the Certificate Program, spanning at least thirteen USC departments.

With this issue of the CFR Newsletter, we continue a series that spotlights the accomplishments of two alums of the Gender Studies graduate program.

### Gloria González-López, 2000 Ph.D. (Sociology)



After she migrated from Monterrey, Mexico to Texas in 1986, Gloria González-López worked as a teacher and counselor at community based agencies serving Mexican immigrant families in Houston. She then migrated to Los Angeles where she worked with Latin American immigrant women and their families as part of her clinical training as a couple and family therapist at USC in the 1990s. She simultaneously completed her Ph.D. in sociology at USC while becoming fascinated by the sex lives of the selfless and

generous Mexican immigrant women who gave life to her doctoral dissertation. These women's narratives of sexuality established endless dialogues with the Mexican immigrant men she later interviewed as a UC President's Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of California, Berkeley. The sexual stories of these women and men resulted in *Erotic Journeys: Mexican Immigrants and Their Sex Lives* (University of California Press in 2005), which received the 2006 Distinguished Book Award of the Sexualities Section of the American Sociological Association. *Erotic Journeys* was translated and published in Spanish in Mexico under the title, *Travesías eróticas: La vida sexual de mujeres y hombres migrantes de México* (Grupo Editorial Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 2009).

Gloria González-López is now an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Texas at Austin where she conducts sexuality research with Mexican populations, and teaches graduate and undergraduate courses on sexuality, gender and society, and qualitative methods. She is Faculty Associate at the Center for Mexican American Studies, and affiliated with the Center for Women's and Gender Studies and the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies where she serves as Faculty Coordinator of the Gender Violence initiative. González-López has a special concern about engaging in multidisciplinary conversations on the ethical and methodological issues and

dilemmas researchers encounter while conducting research on sensitive issues. She is exploring ways in which feminist-informed epistemologies and methodologies in the social sciences have the potential to facilitate individual and collective healing and social justice through dialogue with emerging critical theories of feminism and engaged research across disciplines, especially while working with activists and other agents of social justice and change. For instance, González-López became the co-editor of *Bridging: How Gloria Anzaldúa's Life and Work Transformed Our Own* (University of Texas Press, 2011) in her attempt to explore ways in which Anzaldúan thought can cultivate innovative methodologies and creative ways for feminists to produce knowledge in the social sciences.

Gloria González-López is currently conducting in-depth individual interviews with 60 Mexican adult women and men in Ciudad Juárez, Guadalajara, Mexico City and Monterrey who have histories of incestuous relationships. This project also includes interviews with activists, women's groups, community organizers, and other professionals advocating for human rights, policy making, and laws aimed at protecting children and women. The incest project emerged from her engagement with organizations serving women in Mexico, especially in Ciudad Juárez where she has become a long distance volunteer since 2001, periodically visiting the city to give workshops and seminars on gender and sexuality related themes at an organization serving working class women. She also serves as a professional consultant to an organization based in Ciudad Juárez, which works with men promoting gender equality and exploring avenues to eliminate violence against women.

Thinking in retrospect about her training at USC, Gloria González-López says that, "the USC Gender Studies Certificate provided me with the foundational academic training and skills I needed to explore my persistent curiosity about gender, sexuality, and culture. The USC Gender Studies Certificate exposed me to exemplary role models who stimulated me intellectually and nurtured my professional dream of becoming a teacher and a researcher concerned about understanding the complex ways in which gender inequality is articulated across and within cultures. Ultimately, the USC Gender Studies Certificate inspired me to become a feminist without borders."

### Elizabeth A. Say, 1988 Ph.D. (Religion/Social Ethics)

Elizabeth A. Say didn't plan to be a professor. She was the first in her family to go to college and the only one (to date) to receive an advanced degree. One of her professors suggested that she go to graduate school and, in part because she wasn't sure what she wanted to do after graduation, she followed his advice. It was a decision that would change her life. While earning her doctorate in Religion/Social Ethics, Say served as a Teaching Assistant in the SWMS program, working and studying with faculty such as Lois Banner, Gloria Orenstein, Barbara Myerhoff, and Sheila Briggs. Those years provided a broad understanding of gender and women's studies as both an academic discipline and a foundation for social transformation. While working in the SWMS program, she gained an appreciation for interdisciplinary scholarship and experienced firsthand the value of working collaboratively with



diverse constituencies. She came to understand the truly transformative power of education and found her passion and her mission: to open the door of higher education and its life-changing opportunities to those who, like her, didn't know what possibilities might await. Since leaving USC, Dr. Say has built upon her experiences as she moved through the ladder ranks of faculty life and academic administration.

Say joined the faculty of the Department of Religious Studies at California State University, Northridge as an Assistant Professor and spent her first nine years in this department, developing curriculum about Women and Religion and working to promote gender equity on campus. She was the Chair of the CSUN Commission on the Status of Women, Faculty Advisor for the CSUN Women's Center, and a member of the Women's Studies Advisory Board. During this time, her first book was published, *Evidence on Her Own Behalf: Women's Narrative as Theological Voice* as were several of her articles addressing feminist and gender issues. Say was active in the American Academy of Religion where she was the Co-Convener of the Women's Caucus and Co-Chair of the Lesbian Feminist Issues in Religion Group, among other offices held. She was equally involved with the National Women's Studies Association.

Given her commitment to promoting Women's Studies, it is not surprising that Say enthusiastically accepted the invitation to become the first permanent Chair of the newly-formed

Department of Women's Studies at CSUN in 1998, the same year her co-authored (with USC alum Mark R. Kowalewski) book, *Gays, Lesbians and Family Values*, was published. Over the next several years she and her colleagues recruited six additional tenure-track faculty, designed and implemented a B. A. degree in Women's Studies, and instituted the *Phenomenal Woman Awards*, the major fundraising event for the department. The B.A. degree emphasizes interdisciplinary, cross-cultural and transnational studies with a focus on the intersectionality of gender, race, class, and sexuality and is grounded in a social justice framework. WS graduates have gone on to be lawyers, university professors, social workers, non-profit managers and community organizers.

In 2001, Say was appointed Associate Dean of the College of Humanities, becoming Dean of the College in 2004. The College of Humanities is the largest college at the university, housing seven departments and six interdisciplinary programs. In addition to departments one would expect to find (e.g. English, Philosophy, and Religious Studies), the College also houses most of the university's diversity programs including one of the oldest and largest Chicana/o Studies department in the country, the only Central American Studies degree program in the nation, Asian American Studies, American Indian Studies and Gender and Women's Studies. Most recently the College has added the Queer Studies Interdisciplinary Program, one of the accomplishments of which Elizabeth Say is most proud. Say continues to be actively engaged on the CSUN campus and currently serves as the co-Chair of the University's WASC Reaccreditation Steering Committee. She also maintains professional activities, serving on the Board of Directors for the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences. "My experience in SWMS let me understand the theoretical grounding and applied significance of a feminist perspective. I continue to build on this foundation as I work to support educational opportunity in this diverse, ever-changing region."

## SAVE THE DATE:

*Seth Koven lecture, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 4:30pm  
Taper Hall, Room 420  
University Park Campus, USC*

On Thursday April 28th at 4:30 in the Ide Room, Gender Studies is bringing Rutgers University Professor Seth Koven to USC to give a talk about his current project: the friendship and love that developed between a cockney match girl from the London slums and the daughter of a great shipbuilder who abandoned her wealth to live according to principles of radical Christian social justice. Professor Koven is best known for his much-acclaimed 2004 book, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London*. His talk is co-sponsored with the Departments of English and History, and the Center for Religion & Civic Culture's Interdisciplinary Research Group.



## Catch us online!

The Center for Feminist Research has a new website and is now on Facebook. Our website can be found at



<http://dornsife.usc.edu/cfr>

Look here for the latest news on our New Directions in Feminist Research seminar, application information for our various research opportunities, current and past newsletters, calls for papers from across the U.S. and beyond, and more!

Our Facebook page is



**USC Center for Feminist Research**

We post gender-related news, event info, and, through our favorite pages list, provide a growing collection of gender-related resources on Facebook. Come "like" us today!



USC Gender Studies also has a new website:

<http://dornsife.usc.edu/genderstudies>

## Gender Studies Students in the Community

Gender Studies students tend to carry their passion for the field beyond the classroom walls and study time. Most find that what they learn in class is directly applicable to daily life, be it planning events through student groups on campus, attending conferences and engaging in activism, or on the job after graduation. In fact, the passion of those in the Gender Studies field can even be contagious! Case in point: one of our student workers in the Gender Studies Office, who is majoring not in Gender Studies, but Sociology, decided to utilize the lens of gender in her own research project with the McNair Program this past summer. Be careful when associating with Gender Studies undergrads – you just might catch that burning desire for gender justice!

### Creating Community Connections: Queer & Ally Student Assembly at USC

*By Emily-Hella Tsconas*

As March comes to a close, the student leaders of the Queer & Ally Student Assembly (QuASA) are celebrating the end of yet another successful Pridefest. A queer USC tradition dating all the way back to the (gasp!) 90's, Pridefest started out as a heavily programmed week of queer events organized each March and in recent years has expanded to include the whole month. This year's theme- Trojan Pride- aimed to foster unity between the greater USC campus community and the queer student communities within it. Aside from the social highlights- a BBQ, a dance party, and a trip to Long Beach Hamburger Mary's for the ever-popular lesbian Dollhouse night- this month featured programming focused on intersection of identities. QuASA

worked with the Latin@ Student Assembly & El Centro Chicano to put on this year's Latino Queer Story, which featured a panel of USC students and alumni who identify as both queer and Latin@, moderated by American Studies professor Maria-Elena Martinez, followed by a performance by the Latina lesbian comic Sandra Valls. QuASA also hosted a screening of "Pick Up the Mic," a documentary about queer hip hop artists in San Francisco's underground

music scene, as well as the event "My Princess Boy," a discussion with Cheryl Kilodavis, who is the mother of a 5 year old self-proclaimed 'princess boy' and the author of a picture book by the same name.

My personal contribution to this year's Pridefest was organizing a USC performance of the queer literary tour Sister Spit: The Next Generation, funded by QuASA with co-sponsorship support from both the Gender Studies Program and the Center for Feminist Research. I'm the coordinator of University Rap at USC, which is a weekly confidential discussion group that seeks to address the needs and interests of queer students- and as such, I am also a default member of the QuASA executive board, so I can do cool stuff like organize events for my community. Last semester I organized a solo performance by Lynnee Breedlove, best known as the lead singer of the former queer punk band Tribe 8 and author of the novel *Godspeed*. That performance included nudity and some other things considered "shocking" by the wholesome folks over at Ground Zero, and caused some complaints. I feel a little guilty that the QuASA director, Emily April Allen, had to write a formal letter of apology to Ground Zero, but being the good Gender Studies major that I am, I feel it's part of my obligation here at USC to ruffle a couple feathers.



USC students browse the merch table after Sister Spit

No one got naked at the Sister Spit show, but it was still a great success. Acclaimed queer writer Michelle Tea first organized Sister Spit in the 90's in order to create a space for feminist and queer writers, and since she had so enjoyed the experience of touring with a band she wanted to try it out with poets and writers. This year is

the first that the tour is no longer women-only; in addition to the brilliant and hilarious writers Myriam Gurba, Ali Liebegott, MariNaomi, and Michelle Tea- the performance also featured queer authors Kirk Read and Blake Nelson (much to the disappointment of the audience, creator and producer of the trans-culture magazine *Original Plumbing*, Amos Mac had the stomach flu, and missed out on the USC show). I had a great time at the event- impressive, since the stress of being an organizer often gets in the way of such fun. I was in tears from laughing so hard at the poems and stories shared, and grateful for the opportunity to discover more fantastic queer writers.

### A Feminist Spring Break

*By Mary Walsh*

I attended the National Young Feminist Leadership Conference held at George Washington University on Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, as well as the optional Congressional Day on Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup>. NYFLC was put on by the Feminist Majority Foundation to bring together young feminists from around the country for a weekend of activist and leadership training. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet some really dedicated women (and men) from different places working to effect change on their college campuses and abroad.

In addition to General Assembly meetings, when there were many great speakers, including Eleanor Smeal, the President of FMF, Terry O'Neill, the President of the National Organization for Women, and various women involved in politics, there were also break out sessions that were really informative and catered to specific interests. I attended meetings about a variety of topics, including ones that relate to reproductive justice, making campuses safer by reforming their policies relating to rape, and one that encouraged the attendees to advocate for the US ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

In addition to receiving a multitude of information, I was able to make connections with dedicated women across the country. We had regional caucuses on the second day of the conference, where



we were able to discuss the happenings in our part of the US. It was awesome to see how many people from the West Coast actually made it all the way to DC for the conference. On the first night of the conference, there was an optional mixer, in which the documentary "The Coat Hanger Project" was screened, and the director talked to us about why she made the film and how all of us in attendance could make a film if we were so inspired.

The conference left me feeling really refreshed and glad that I took the time out of my spring break to do something worthwhile.

I learned new ways to be an activist, and learned more about topics that need to be paid more attention to. The biggest thing that I took away from this was that all of us at the conference were going to work to defeat the GOP's current Congressional "War on Women," as I heard it called over and over again all weekend. I cannot wait to begin a job in social justice, and I know I will always remain dedicated to feminism. It also inspired me to sign up to attend Feminist Summer Camp in New York City this summer. I can't wait!

## Gender, Race, and the Juvenile Justice System

By Bernadette Gholami

Last year I had the honor of being selected as a member of the 2010 McNair Cohort. The McNairs Scholar Program is created to encourage underrepresented college students to engage in research under the advisement of a faculty member. As a sociology major my interest has always focused on deviant behavior and delinquency. It was natural that I was geared towards this research area for my McNair research project. Similarly being a student worker in the Gender Studies department I was inclined to look at an issue related to gender, mainly because I am not a Gender Studies major, and I hoped to learn more. I also was looking to tie in my interest in Social Work. For this reason, I wanted to focus on young Latina



Mary

women in Los Angeles who had been in detention. Research on female delinquency and experiences while in detention or camp is extremely limited and I hoped to add something to the discussion on these topics. After completing a graduate level research course through McNair I was ready to go.

My paper titled "The Effects of the Juvenile Justice System on the Lives of Latinas in Los Angeles" examines Latina female youth and their experience in the juvenile justice system. It looks critically at their experiences and analyzes how their time spent in the system affected their lives after being released. Many studies

discuss female detention centers and camps as lacking resources and having inadequate programs. It took a case study approach to examining the lives of Latinas who have been in a juvenile hall or detention camp about their experiences in the system, and how this affected their lives after release. My research did not go entirely as planned, and I hit many bumps along the way. One of the biggest problems I ran into was finding young Latinas to interview. Although I had scheduled multiple interviews, all except one of the young women followed through with the interview. I felt that this had to do with the Latina cultural norm of "not airing out your laundry in public". I felt cultural norms may have hindered them from wanting to participate in my study.

What the case study of the interview I was able to complete revealed was that there was a sense of "more of the same" in my interviewee's life and this continued while she was in detention. The indifference in which she saw life while in detention and while outside caused an apathetic view of the system. In order to help young Latinas such as her it is necessary for the juvenile justice system to change its approach to female delinquents. They must



Bernadette

offer more diverse programs, specifically gender-specific programs and strength-based programs to help these young women change their lives and be able to re-enter society as productive citizens and manage the stigma associated with their past.

## Gender Studies Daily: Life After Graduation

By Genevieve Flores

USC Class of 2010

BA Psychology, Minor: Gender Studies

As a High School substitute teacher I find myself interacting with a larger number of students on a day-to-day basis than the average teacher. My classroom make up and students change from class period to class period, but one thing remains the same: classroom gender politics. This is where my minor in Gender Studies comes into play.

High School is the battleground where students initially start carving out niches for each other in both style, friends and the way they exude gender. I've come to find the full spectrum of gender performance at the high school I work at from hyper-masculine, hyper-feminine and everything therein and out. Because I am not a permanent teacher I find it easier to talk to the students "on their level." Usually the students make comments to each other like "don't be such a girl!" or "I have eyebrows like a man", to which Ms. Flores poses the question "what does that even mean?" or "Why is that a bad thing?" The students are usually quiet; however, on occasion I've had one or two smart-alec comments like, "He is saying that Juan is

actually a girl!". Other times we have engaged in dialogues about what they think the terms boy and girl mean. By no means are these conversations deep or imbued with theory, but I'd like to think it's a way to get the students to think about how their gender impacts their lives- if only for those 54 min that the students are in my class.

## Gender Studies Class Assignment Turns into Funded Non-profit to Oppose Sexual Slavery

Amy Parish is proud to announce that former student Lauren Dawson has won a \$25,000 Pepsi Refresh grant for a project that she first conceived and launched in SWMS 225 (Sex Similarities and Differences) in Spring 2010! Amy assigns activist-based projects to students in all of her classes. She asks students to identify social problems that need to be addressed at the local, national or international level and then asks that students design a project to help with the problem. Lauren launched a non-profit organization titled She Shall Go Free. The organization is dedicated to fighting against sexual slavery, human trafficking, and other forms of exploitation or violence against women and girls. Efforts include awareness raising campaigns, promotion of fair trade and ethical consumerism, fund-raising for anti-trafficking programs, and other initiatives to make a visible impact in the fight against injustice.

She Shall Go Free aims:

1. To RAISE AWARENESS, increase advocacy, and contribute to the fight against sexual slavery, human trafficking, and the exploitation of women and girls worldwide.

2. To PROVIDE a forum for students to learn about, discuss, and take action on issues of gender based violence at home and abroad.

3. To WORK WITH local and international agencies committed to ending sexual violence and human trafficking in order to provide the most effective and comprehensive services in the areas that most need our assistance.

4. To DEMAND JUSTICE and legal protection for victims and survivors of gender-based violence and exploitation.

5. To EDUCATE the community on the reality of sexual enslavement and trafficking in persons.

Blogspot: <http://sheshallgofree.blogspot.com/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/sheshallgofree>

Pepsi: <http://www.refresheverything.com/ssgf>

## Conferences, conferences! *By Rebecca Das*

As a Program Specialist with the Gender Studies Program and the Center for Feminist Research, I get to attend a local academic conference now and then. This spring, I was fortunate to attend two informative and inspiring conferences at the University of California Los Angeles. Obligatory sports rivalries aside, UCLA's Center for the Study of Women and USC's Center for Feminist Research agree on many issues of much more lasting concern than the score of the last game. Our jobs, for one, come to mind, and not just for the role they play in our daily survival, but for the important roles they play in shaping the future of both the academic world and the culture beyond - locally, nationally and globally.

February 11<sup>th</sup> saw the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Thinking Gender conference, a graduate research bonanza. Topics ran the gamut from discourse on "faking it" in pornography to the impact of gender transitioning on kinship relationships. March 4<sup>th</sup> found the UCLA Center for the Study of Women hosting New Majorities, Shifting Priorities: Difference and Demographics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Academy, described on the program as "A conference to address challenges now facing women's, gender, sexuality, LGBT, ethnic, race, and postcolonial studies in the academy." Faculty from across the country, including department chairs and program directors, discussed the design and redesign of curriculum, research, academic departments and research centers in the aforementioned fields. People shared what worked and what did not, possible approaches and goals for the future, and critiques of current trends in higher education.

While these two conferences were quite distinct from each other, they had very important things in common. Knowledge production and meaning making were taking place, as at any

conference. The graduate conference was directly participating in the production of discourses concerning "women" and "LGBTQ" populations. The faculty-oriented conference produced discourse on the structure of educational institutions and their embedded sites addressing subaltern positions in the world at large. Both processes ultimately have some effect on the lives of those subaltern populations; both are part of the culture shaping that goes on in the academy.

The power of higher education institutions to shape the cultures they are embedded in is significant, precious, and not to be forgotten. Our institutions help shape the world's future leaders in every field imaginable: government, non-profit, for profit organizations; arts, sciences, entertainment, news media, etc. And voters. When we create the discourse of today, we shape the lived experiences of fellow humans tomorrow. This is why we are committed to doing justice for those whom we study. When budget hassles, technology glitches, logistics problems, and annual reviews give us endless headaches, it is for those who will live in the world we help shape that we keep going. Our work is way more than just a paycheck!

With this in mind, I will soon be heading off to yet another conference, this time to present my own contribution to the ever-evolving discourse around gender, identity, and how we think about them. This April 30<sup>th</sup> Stanford is hosting Queer Horizons, the first undergraduate queer studies conference. As we engage in discussing the past, present, and future of "queer," we will be shaping each other's perceptions, affecting our future scholarship, and perhaps some ripples of change we begin will someday reach out into the world to make it a better place to live for all.

## America's Ur-Blonde

*A book review by Alice Echols, Professor of English and Gender Studies*

Gender Studies students lucky enough to have heard one of Professor Banner's lectures on the screen star Marilyn Monroe know of her broken family, her left-wing political leanings, and her impatience with American prudishness. Now, with the publication of *MM-Personal: From the Private Archive of Marilyn Monroe*, we get a sense of where Banner is headed in her forthcoming biography of the actress.

A fruitful collaboration between Banner, Professor of History and Gender Studies, and veteran photographer Mark Anderson, *MM-Personal* upends the usual depictions of this icon of mid-century American femininity. Described by Banner as the "ur-blonde who has haunted the American imagination," Monroe has inspired countless biographies, most of them "pathographies" that pathologize her as a deeply dysfunctional woman at the mercy of the powerful men she attracted. Banner does not deny Monroe's considerable troubles, including a dependence on prescription drugs so strong that a friend described her as a "walking pharmacy." However, she maintains that the actress was considerably more complicated and exerted greater control over her career than other biographers have suggested. Indeed, in studying Monroe, Banner admits that she came to understand the inadequacy of her own earlier feminist dismissal of the actress as "an exemplar of the sexual objectification of women."

*MM-Personal* is based upon the contents of two four-drawer file cabinets that the actress purchased in New York in 1958. After her death in 1962 and until now this material--the Monroe Collection--has been in private hands, hidden away from public view. It was long assumed that this archive had been lost, and Banner's narrative of its contested ownership is fascinating. What Banner and Anderson found filed away inside the cabinets were studio contracts, photographs, telegrams, legal and personal correspondence, psychiatrist bills, bank statements, jewelry, and a multitude of receipts--from department stores, drug stores, and

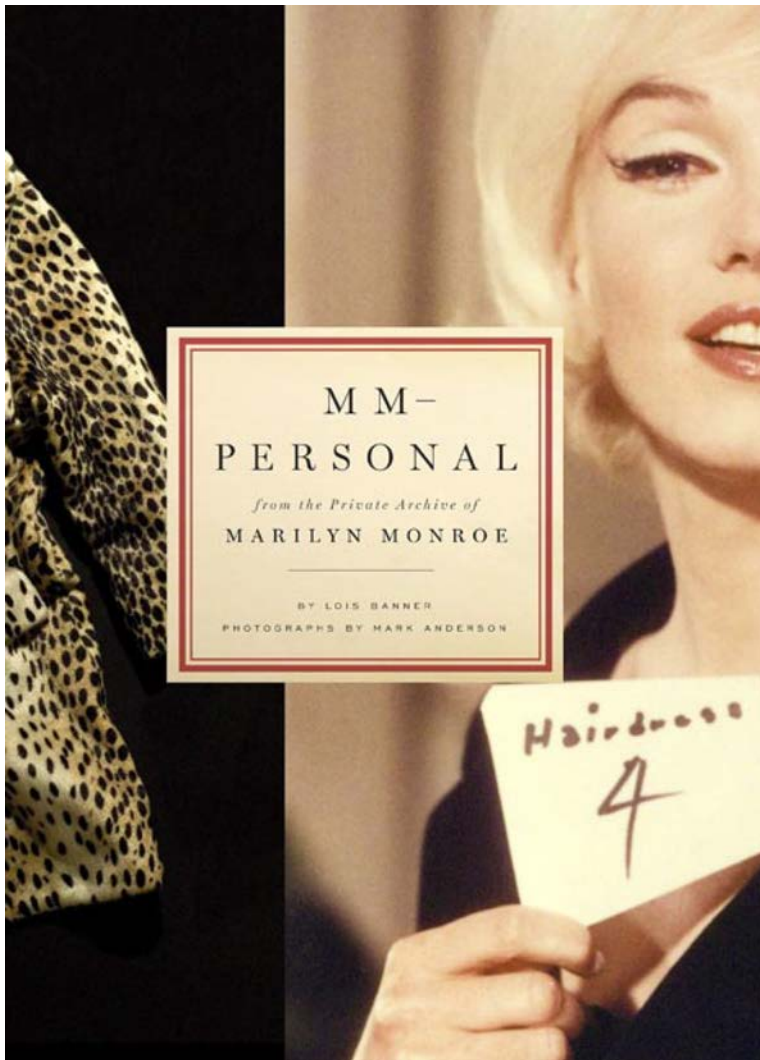
bookstores. (Banner reveals that book-lover Monroe's first charge account was with a bookstore, not a department store.)

Lovingly photographed and arrestingly arranged by Mark Anderson, the bits of Monroe's personal archive selected for inclusion in *MM-Personal* will give readers who have never dug around in an archive some sense of how gripping archival research can be. A sweet letter from Somerset Maugham to Monroe, who had sent the writer a birthday greeting, and Monroe's letter to a *New York Times* editor and friend defending Fidel Castro, are among the book's many surprising finds. As beautifully presented as *MM-Personal* is, it is much more than a sleek coffee-book. Banner's capsule commentaries about the archive and the complicated woman who kept it are incisive. She makes a persuasive case that Monroe was not the isolated, friendless celebrity whose life revolved around her latest love, as others have suggested. Indeed, Monroe's personal correspondence demonstrates that she led an independent life and enjoyed many sustaining friendships, especially with older women. The archive reveals Monroe to have been a good businesswoman, not what many would expect of the woman they took for the "dumb blonde" she often played. And speaking of that dumb blonde image, it was, Banner argues, just one of the many Marilyns the actress constructed.

In her very last interview, Monroe lamented the absence of any museums in Hollywood. "Nobody left anything behind," she said. Well, Monroe did, and thanks to *MM-Personal* we have a new angle of vision on the actress and a deeper understanding of the intersection of celebrity, gender, and popular culture in 20<sup>th</sup>-century America.

### ***Feminist Flashback***

In 1986, Gloria Steinem's *Marilyn: Norma Jean* was first published. Enjoying several printings, this book examines Monroe's life from a feminist perspective





## USC Center for Feminist Research

University of Southern California, Mark Taper Hall of Humanities, Suite 422, Los Angeles, CA 90089-4352

### Friends of the Center for Feminist Research

We strongly encourage you to support our activities by becoming a Member in any of the categories listed below. Your contribution will place you on our mailing list. You will receive our Newsletter and be invited to special events. You will also know that your generosity is furthering the development of feminist scholarship and outreach in Los Angeles.

#### Membership support categories

- Member \$25
- Student (with copy of I.D.) \$15
- Associate Member \$125
- Sponsor \$250
- Underwriter \$1,000
- Benefactor \$2,500

I would also like to include and additional donation to help support the work of CFR.

- \$50
- \$75
- \$100
- Other
- \$250
- \$500
- \$1000

Please make checks payable to the Center for Feminist Research. Mailing address: Center for Feminist Research, University of Southern California, Taper Hall of Humanities, Suite 422, Los Angeles, CA 90089-4352.

Donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

### CFR Steering Committee 2010-2011

Sarah Banet-Weiser  
*Communications*

Ange-Marie Hancock  
*Political Science & Gender Studies*

Aniko Imre  
*Cinema*

Mike Messner  
*Sociology & Gender Studies, Chair of Gender Studies*

