

## DATELINE 2002

**Dr. Mina Bissell** gave the Women's Studies Program's first lecture series of the semester on February 27. She spoke on "Breast Cancer Research in the New Millennium: The Role of the Matrix in the Macroevironment." This program was co-sponsored by Women's Studies Program and The Program in Research on Women's Health, Medical School.



Friends of the Women's Studies Program gather after a talk by Dr. Mina Bissell.

**Proessor Shahla Haeri**, the director of the Women's Studies Program, showed a short documentary on March 13, "Mrs. President: Women and Political Leadership in Iran." Shot in Tehran, Iran, this film includes interviews with six Iranian women who registered for Iranian Presidential election of 2001.

**The Women's Studies Program** hosted its second party of the year for Women's Studies Program minors on March 21. Adding to the festive mood were delicious munchies from Al-Hassoun.

**A forum on Afghanistan:** "Afghan Women's Vision for Social Participation and Reconstruction" was presented by the Women's Studies Program on April 24. Participants included Ambassador Robin Raphel, Fatima Gailani, Fahima Vorgetts, Amita Kulkirni, and Fawzia Karzai.

## Letter from the Director

We begin the new academic year at Women's Studies Program poised to celebrate the first anniversary of its formal existence on Boston University campus. Thrilled to have a space of its own, the Women's Studies Program is presently located at 704 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 101. The age of its ephemeral existence and of wandering from department to department is over. With two full-time faculty, several adjunct professors, and a "permanent" place, the WSP intends to provide stability and continuity for the students who minor in Women's Studies and to become the hub of their intellectual and academic activity. This change would not have been possible if it were not for the University's recognition that Women's Studies matters. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to Provost Dennis Berkey who made it all possible and to Dean Susan Jackson for her sustained support for the Women's Studies Program.

My colleagues and I take this opportunity equally enthusiastically and seriously, and look forward to making the Women's Studies Program a vibrant, intellectually rigorous and academically challenging part of the University curriculum. We intend to take an inclusive and multidisciplinary approach and to shed the long-held "ghettoized" image of Women's Studies by moving it instead into the center stage of academic interests.

Toward that goal, we have upgraded the Women's Studies courses and updated cross-listed courses related to women's studies from other departments in order to enable our students to choose from an array of courses from all over the University. We have reached out to other Boston University departments and invited some of the distinguished professors to be on our Advisory Board, and we have initiated several extra-curricular programs for our minors, potential minors, and other enthusiasts in order to broaden the breadth and depth of our students' knowledge. My assistant, Michael Williams, a graduate student in the History Department, has been busy creating our Web site, which is all but completed. For more information and to find out about the WSP's upcoming programs, as well as last year's forums on Afghanistan, individual speakers, and other activities, please visit our website <http://www.bu.edu/womenstudies>.

As we look forward to expanding and implementing our program in the coming years, I am pleased to announce the Sarah Joanne Davis scholarship, which was bequeathed to the Women's Studies Program during the current academic year. As part of fulfilling the objective of the gift, the WSP has instituted an Annual Writing prize to be given to female students focusing on Women's Studies.

I invite Boston University students to come to the Women's Studies Program's office to meet the WSP's faculty and staff, to let us get to know them, and to take a tour of our small but cozy facilities. I encourage students to share with us their visions, ideas and hopes for making the Women's Studies Program a more inclusive and vibrant center for the student body at Boston University.

*Dr. Shahla Haeri,  
Director of the WSP*

# Meet the Faculty



**Shahla Haeri, Director**  
Photo taken in Pakistan by  
Rahat Ali Dar.

**S**hahla Haeri is the director of the Women's Studies Program and an Assistant Professor of cultural Anthropology at Boston University. She has conducted research in Iran, Pakistan, and India, and has written extensively on religion, law and gender dynamics in the Muslim world. She is the author of *Law of Desire: Temporary Marriage, Mut'a, in Iran* (1989, 1993), which has been translated into Arabic (seven printings) and Urdu. She is also the author of a forthcoming book, *No Shame for the Sun: Lives of Professional Pakistani women* (2002).

She has been awarded several postdoctoral research grants and fellowships, from: the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University (1985-86); the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women, Brown University (1986-87); the Social Science Research Council (1987-88); St. Antony's College, Oxford University (1996), and, most recently, Dr Haeri received a Fulbright Fellowship (1999 - 2000).

She was involved in the University of Chicago's multi-year program on global fundamentalism, Fundamentalism Project, which was funded by a John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur grant, and contributed an article to the second volume: "Obedience versus Autonomy: Women & Fundamentalism in Iran & Pakistan" (1993).

Dr. Haeri made a short documentary on several Iranian women who registered for the Presidential election of 2001, titled "Mrs. President: Women & Political Leadership in Iran." The documentary is distributed in the United States and Canada by Films for the Humanities & Sciences, ([www.films.com](http://www.films.com)).

**D**iane Balser, has been teaching Women's Studies courses at Boston University for the past six years and is the director of undergraduate studies for Women Studies minors. She teaches WS 113, Women in Society and Culture, and she also teaches advanced seminars on Women and Politics.



**Diane Balser**

Professor Balser holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from Brandeis University. Her doctoral dissertation, *Sisterhood and Solidarity: Feminism and Labor in Modern Times* was published by South End Press (1987). From 1983-1994, Dr. Balser founded and built the Women's State-Wide Legislative Network of Massachusetts. It was the largest network of individuals and organizations in Massachusetts representing women in regard to public policy issues. The Network trained thousands of women in effective participation in the legislative process and in public policy decision making. It provided access to legislators, congressional delegations, and gubernatorial administrations, as well as consultation for public policy makers on issues concerning women and children.

For more than twenty-five years Diane Balser has been an International Trainer on Women's Issues and leadership development through the Re-Evaluation Counseling Communities. She has led workshops for women (and men) in the context of this peer empowerment support network throughout the world, in diverse places including North and South America, Western and Eastern Europe, Japan, Africa, and Australia. She has given talks to conferences/seminars in South Africa, Netherlands, Israel and other countries.

Dr. Balser has led delegations of women to the Third and Fourth NGO International Conferences for Women. At the Fourth World Women's Conference, in China, she led training workshops on global issues pertaining to women's lives.

**B**arbara Gottfried has been teaching in the Women's Studies Program at Boston University since 1994. Prior to that she was an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Hawaii and then at Bentley College. She attended Boston University as an undergraduate and received her master's and Ph.D. degrees from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her dissertation, *Sexual and Textual Politics in Bleak House: Expanding the Parameters of Feminist Readings*, was a feminist reading of Dickens's *Bleak House*. She has published feminist critiques of Dickens and of Philip Roth and she has also published on gender in advertising and popular culture.



Barbara Gottfried

Dr. Gottfried teaches WS114; Women and Film; Women, Gender and Race in the Media; and Women in Popular Fiction [summer session I]. She is particularly interested in feminist literary/film criticism and theory, gender and feminist theory, classic and contemporary fiction and film, and popular culture.

**D**iane M. Hotten-Somers is currently a lecturer in both the Women's Studies Program at Boston University and in the English Department at Boston College. She received her B.A. in English Literature from UC Santa Barbara, her M.A. in English Literature and Irish Studies from Boston College, and is working on completing her Ph.D. in American Studies at Boston University.

Her interest in women's studies grew out of her undergraduate thesis work on the role of women in medieval chivalric narratives and evolved throughout her graduate studies into an investigation of how ethnicity and class shape women's experiences.

More specifically, Ms. Hotten-Somers has both lectured and published on the experience of Irish women in both their native homeland and in their adopted country, America.

**J**amie Ann Sabino, a graduate of Wellesley College and Northeastern University School of Law, has been teaching at Boston University since 1988. Ms. Sabino sits on the boards of the Women's Bar's Association and Women's Bar Foundation of Massachusetts and has been an active member of their *pro bono* committee, assisting in organizing panels providing legal assistance to battered women, elderly women and men, survivors of sexual assault, homeless women, incarcerated women and teenagers seeking judicial authorization for abortion. Ms. Sabino is President of the CPPAX Education Fund.

Ms. Sabino is the co-author of "A Minor's Right to Abortion: The Unconstitutionality of Parental Participation in Bypass Hearings," *New England Law Review*, 25:4, April/May 1991; and "Tell it to the Judge: PPLM v. Harshbarger," *Women's Bar Association Law Journal*, Volume 1.

Since 1978, Ms. Sabino has practiced family and appellate law with her husband in the Cambridge firm of Klibaner and Sabino. She is currently on leave of absence from the firm, having taken a position with the Trial Court of Massachusetts to conduct a needs assessment of the trial courts in the area of delivery of services to victims of domestic violence. Ms. Sabino is the mother of two active boys, Sam and Jacob.

**D**eborah Swedberg has been teaching at Boston University since 1975, first in the English Department, and, since 1984, in the Women's Studies Program. Over the years, she has taught most of the courses offered in the Women's Studies Program at BU.



Deborah Swedberg

She holds degrees in English from CCNY (undergraduate) and Boston University (graduate) and an MA in Developmental Psychology from NYU. She has published in the *National Women's Studies Association Journal*

**C**arney Maley graduated from Connecticut College in 1997 with a major in American History and a minor in African Studies. For three years, she taught World History at a Catholic High School in Astoria, Queens, and last year she taught English and History to sixth graders at the Advent School in Beacon Hill. She spent two summers attending National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminars. The first, held at Chestnut Hill College, was on American autobiographies and the second, held at Dartmouth College, focussed on the evolution of the feminist movement during the first half of the twentieth century.

Carney Maley spent the past summer working as a mentor teacher for the Citybridge Program in Concord, MA, helping to train undergraduates interested in the teaching profession. She is currently a PhD student in the American Studies Department at BU and she teaches WS 114, the humanities component of the Introduction to Women's Studies sequence.

## **Administrative Staff**

Since the departure over the summer of the WSP's initial Program Coordinator, Cheryl Lyons, the administrative aspect of the department's functioning have been taken over, on a part-time basis, by Michael Williams. Michael Williams is a graduate student in the department of History at BU, working on a PhD in medieval history. He recieved his Bachelor's (1997) and Master's (2000) degrees in history from Purdue University. His work focusses on the Western Mediterranean in the High to Late Medieval period, particularly on those areas that belonged at one time or another to the Crown of Aragon confederation (consisting principally of what is today south-eastern Spain and southern Italy). Thematically, he is interested principally in social and cultural history of the Mediterranean cities.

## **Contact List**

Diane Balser	(dbalser@bu.edu)	617-358-2372
Barbara Gottfried	(gottfried@bu.edu)	617-358-2373
Shahla Haeri	(shaeri@bu.edu)	617-358-2371
Diane Hotten-Somer	(dhotten@bu.edu)	
Carney Maley	(carneymaley@yahoo.com)	617-353-4186
Jamie Sabino	(klibaner@sprintmail.com)	
Deborah Swedberg	(debswed@bu.edu)	617-353-2505
Michael Williams	(wsp@bu.edu)	617-358-2370

## **Coming Events**

Our First speaker for the 2002 to 2003 academic year will be Dr. Quratul Ain Bakhteari, who will present a talk entitled, "Women, Education, and Development: the Case of Pakistan." Dr. Bakhteari is the founder and the president of the Institute for Development Studies and Practices in Pakistan, an organization that works to promote community-based education in Pakistan. Dr. Bakhteari has spent more than 20 years working in community development and other fields of social work; she has been especially active in promoting education for women and young girls in Pakistan. The talk will be held Thursday, October 10, from 4:00 to 6:00 pm., in the the African Studies Seminar Room, 270 Bay State Road, room 416.

## **Fall 2001 Retrospective**

In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks of last year, the Women's Studies Program felt it appropriate to address the issues raised by these events. The result was a special forum called "Women's Voices for Peace," held on October 4, 2001. Speakers for the event included Ayesha Jalal, a MacArthur Fellow and professor of South Asian History at Tufts University; the WSP's own Diane Balser, who gave a talk titled "Alternatives to Retribution;" and Eleanor Lecain, former Assistant Secretary of State, MA, who gave a talk titled "Terror or Transformation: Women Organizing for Peace." Also speaking at the forum were Susan Carlisle and Tahera Shairzay; the WSP's director, Shahla Haeri, moderated the forum. The event was very well attended and provided a meaningful and sometimes moving exploration of very important issues facing us in our post 9/11 world.