



You may like to know that...

- WGS invites in-kind donations to update our resource center as a welcoming space for students (see page 3).
- WGS is planning a women and spirituality series for next academic year! Watch for details in the fall newsletter.
- You can keep up with WGS news online. "Like" us on Facebook at "Women's and Gender Studies at UAH."

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WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES NEWS

Spring, 2016

Volume 26, Number 2

Huntsville Feminist Chorus "Homecoming" Concert *Reflections on 20 Years Singing at UAH*



The Huntsville Feminist Chorus (HFC) will offer its annual spring concert at UAH on **Saturday, April 16, at 7:30 p.m.**, in Chan Auditorium of the Business Administration Building. The concert's theme, "Homecoming," brings together favorite pieces from the chorus' more than two-decade history of singing inspiring songs from diverse spiritual, folk, and social justice traditions.

A pre-concert slideshow featuring photographs of the chorus over its history will cycle for 30 minutes as audience members arrive. A reception will follow the program.

HFC Director, Pam Siegler, said this concert is "about coming home to whatever Home is: the home you grew up in, the home you find comfort in...both within yourself and around you, and the home that is your country. For a lot of women, Chorus was home for a while, and this is a chance for them to sing a song with us and be back in that home for a bit."

The concert welcomes back former HFC members, some of whom will join in singing a favorite song. Current members are looking forward to singing with old friends. Nancy Pendegraph said, "It will be a joy to sing with them again who have been connected

with us." Betty Clemens said, "Once I'm connected to people in chorus, they are always a part of me. I always feel a special energy."

HFC members also expressed excitement to sing again at UAH through the Women's and Gender Studies Program. This will be their 20th Anniversary (and 21st concert) performing at UAH in honor of women's history. According to past WGS Director Rose Norman, the chorus' first year singing at UAH was also the first year WGS became an academic program. Two WGS faculty members sang in that concert, Rose Norman and Nancy Finley, who also co-founded the WGS Program.

LaWanda Siniard, a current chorus member, said she likes the opportunity the concert gives to "show we support the Women's and Gender Studies Program at UAH." Carol Dayton said the concert offers a chance to
(cont. page 4)



WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES NEWS



Dr. Molly Johnson,
Women's and Gender
Studies Director

Message from the Director

Greetings from the Women's and Gender Studies Program at UAH!

In this newsletter, you can read about our coming events, including a full-feature on the Huntsville Feminist Chorus in honor of its 20th Anniversary "Homecoming" concert at UAH on Saturday,

April 16, and "Responding to Domestic Violence in the African-American Community: Creating Pathways for Change and

Recovery," a campus conference WGS will co-sponsor on Monday, April 18.

You can also see photos from our spring semester UAH Week of Welcome event, "Cookies and Cocoa with the Women's and Gender Studies Program." The event invited students to meet faculty, staff, and students and learn about campus and community resources that support diversity and gender equality.

Thanks to all those who visited us at the "Soaring For Social Justice" community kite festival, co-sponsored by AshaKiran and the City of Huntsville, on Saturday, March 5. This was our fourth year as exhibitors at this wonderful community event, and we appreciate your showing of support!

Many sincere thanks to those who completed our student and alumni survey this year. Your efforts helped us complete the WGS Program's self-study. It was particularly gratifying to see how many of you are using the knowledge

you gained while completing the WGS minor in your current employment and in your volunteer and community activities.

A final thanks to those of you who made contributions to the WGS Program and to the Rose Norman Women's Studies Award for Scholarship in Action this past year. Your contributions help us support diverse and creative events that bring greater understanding of women's and gender issues to our community.

Please remember to check out our website at www.uah.edu/wgs and to "like" "Women's and Gender Studies at UAH" on Facebook to keep up to date with WGS news and events. You can also sign up for our online newsletter at www.uah.edu/ahs/departments/womens-and-gender-studies/news/ subscribe.

Molly Wilkinson Johnson

Associate Professor of History

Director of Women's and Gender Studies



Left: WGS hosted the UAH Week of Welcome event, "Cookies and Cocoa with the Women's and Gender Studies Program." Right: Our able student assistant, Roxie Brookshire (Sociology major, WGS minor), hosted the program's table at the kite festival and also took time to fly a kite.

WGS to Co-Sponsor Conference on Domestic Violence in the African-American Community

On **Monday, April 18**, WGS will co-sponsor "Responding to Domestic Violence in the African-American Community: Creating Pathways for Change and Recovery." This one-day conference will be held from **8 a.m. to 4 p.m.** in the Conference Training Center (formerly University Center) at UAH, with check-in beginning at 7:30 a.m.

The conference is AshaKiran's Annual Cultural Competency in Crisis Intervention Workshop. Other sponsors are the UAH

Office of Diversity, Crisis Services of North Alabama, and Wellstone Behavioral Health Center.

The keynote speaker is Karma Cottman, Executive Director of the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence, which provides leadership to all sectors of the Washington, DC, community to respond effectively to the needs of domestic violence survivors and their children. Social workers, nurses, and counselors can earn six CEUs, if they attend all sessions of the conference.

The general registration fee is \$5, and professional registration (for those pursuing CEUs) is \$10. UAH students are admitted free with a student ID and must register in advance. Lunch will be "on your own" with several affordable campus options. The deadline for registration is Monday, April 4.

For information and a registration form, please visit www.ashakiranonline.org or contact 256.698.4446 or zakia@ashakiranonline.org.



Karma Cottman, Executive Director of the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence

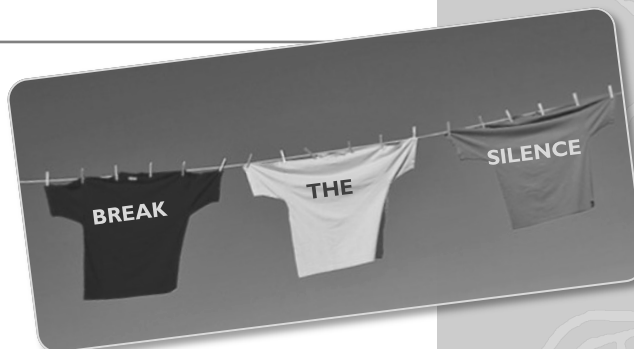
Fifth Annual Clothesline Project at UAH

The Clothesline Project, an annual collaboration between Crisis Services of North Alabama and UAH, will be held **April 5 and 6, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**, in the UAH Charger Union Lobby.

The Clothesline Project is a visual display that calls attention to sexual and physical violence. The project displays shirts designed by survivors of violence and those

who support and care for them.

The shirts hang side-by-side to "break the silence" in an effort to bring awareness to these terrible acts. The community is invited to add their anti-violence messages to this living tribute. Shirts and fabric markers will be available during the day.



The event is free and open to the public. For more information, email morgana@uah.edu or call 256.824.6701.

WGS Resource Center Needs YOUR Help!

The WGS Program is adapting our resource center to function as a more effective space for student congregating, club meetings, group work, and socializing.

The program would welcome in-kind donations from the community of WGS supporters! Specifically, the space would benefit from

a Keurig coffee brewer or a water cooker, some fun coffee and tea mugs, and a few bean bag chairs or collapsible folding chairs, or even a gently owned love seat or small sofa.

We would also welcome a document scanner to assist our student worker in archiving paper files.



To donate, contact Erin Reid in the WGS office at 256.824.6190 or erin.reid@uah.edu.

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WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES NEWS



Deanna Nicholas, WGS alumna

WGS Alumni Profile: Deanna Nicholas

Many extraordinary students pass through the WGS Program, and we are delighted to celebrate one of our alumni, Deanna Nicholas.

Nicholas graduated cum laude from UAH in 2014 with a major in Psychology and minors in Communication Arts and Women's and Gender Studies. She also earned an Honors Certificate from the Honors Program, doing an honors thesis with Dr. Sandra Carpenter on the link between poverty and domestic violence.

While at UAH, she was the recipient of the Kathryn L. Harris Women's and Gender Studies Scholarship for two years, and she also received the Women's and Gender Studies Outstanding Student Award. She juggled her de-

manding curriculum with over thirty hours of work per week at Red Lobster, all the while raising her son Mikey as a single mother.

Nicholas said that joining the WGS Program at UAH "was a powerful turning point in my life." In addition to the academic perspectives she acquired, WGS helped her, a non-traditional student, "feel included in the school environment in a way that no other program did." Through the program, she became involved in AAUW-Huntsville, the Non-Traditional Women's Network, and POWER, the WGS student club.

Nicholas has been highly motivated in both her academic studies and professional work by her two

children, Mikey and Heather (deceased). Heather died as a result of domestic violence and addiction (which Deanna also overcame when she was younger), and her commitment to honoring her daughter's memory and serving as a model for her young son motivated her return to UAH to pursue her education.

She now works as a Case Manager for the Madison County 310 Board, a non-profit Case Management Agency established by Madison County in 1980. She works specifically with developmentally disabled adults.

Deanna said, "I love that every day as I drive to my awesome job I go right by UAH, the place that made it all possible!"

Huntsville Feminist Chorus "Homecoming" Concert

(cont.) highlight "the feminist aspect of who we are."

The chorus appreciates the diverse array of students and general public who attend the event. Martha Steele said she hopes the concert will give her daughter, a UAH student, the chance to meet other students with similar interests and perspectives. Liza Q. Wirtz said she values how this event shows UAH's breadth of cultural and community offerings beyond engineering and research.

Carol Crosslin, a past HFC Director, said, "I enjoy the energy of the reception after. There is a cookie-fueled, buzzed, high. I get to see people I haven't seen in a while." Benita Hayes appreciates the positive affirmations from the

audience, which inspire the chorus to keep going into the next season. Cindi Stewart said, "I feel like we are loved."

The chorus has played a very personal role in the lives of its members. Sherri Birdsong described the impact of the group on her life: "I have received much positive encouragement! My life has greatly benefited from this support group. They were instrumental in helping me to believe in myself, and I was able to get my GED."

Judy Guerry said, "For me, singing in the chorus has meant a 'going home' to my childhood through my young adult years when I regularly sang in choirs, from small church and school choirs to large graduate school *a capella* choirs.

Since the chorus' beginnings, I have loved singing songs with women that honor humankind in *all* of our different ways of being in this beautiful and terrible world—our genders, our cultures, and our spiritual understandings."

She continued, "I love that the chorus' mission of 'Opening Hearts and Minds through Song' contributes a unique texture, hue, and *tone* to the tapestry that is our community. It is a gift that is vital—for me, and, I believe, for our community."

The concert is sponsored by the UAH Women's and Gender Studies Program, with support from community sponsors, and is free and open to the public. For more information, call 256.824.6190.



Women's and Gender Studies Featured Faculty: Dr. Susan Friedman

Susan Friedman, Ph.D., is a Lecturer in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at UAH. Friedman teaches Literature and Culture (EH 207 and EH 208), Freshman Composition II (EH 102), and Honors Writing Seminar (EH 105). This summer she will be teaching Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies (WGS 200).

Friedman is a student-centered teacher, whose pedagogical approach focuses on empowering the student by featuring their voices and subjectivities in the classroom. Taking her inspiration from bell hooks' feminist pedagogy, Friedman works to create a classroom environment that values student expression, while also providing students with the knowledge and course material necessary for students to educate themselves both within the university and outside in the community at large. She seeks to make the classroom a space that is open to interrogation and draw attention to invisible power structures that can make the classroom seem restrictive rather than liberatory.

As such, Friedman's current research centers on creating composition classrooms that recognize

and respect multiple subjectivities. Applying Andrew Solomon's groundbreaking exploration of "horizontal identities" to her work, she recently presented her pedagogical approach at the NCTE conference in Minneapolis.

Friedman is currently investigating ways in which college teachers can create safe spaces for students' multiple identities, including those who identify as LGBTQ. Her previous studies on first person narratives and their relationship to Trauma and Recovery were the basis of her courses entitled Women's Crisis Memoirs and Expository Writing through Life Writing previously offered at the University of South Florida. In these classes, students explored the power of scriptotherapy, or writing as a form of healing. She is delighted to return to teaching WGS classes.

Friedman is extremely proud of the two student organizations on campus that she sponsors: The Writer's Block and the Green Club. Last year, the Writer's Block published its first glossy literary magazine and has just released its newest issue this spring. Each Thursday evening,

students in the organization meet in the Charger Union to read and workshop their original work. All UAH students are invited to club meetings and are urged to submit their original literary pieces for publication in the magazine.

The Green Club, in conjunction with Chargers for Sustainability, has many on-campus recycling projects and on-campus clean-ups—in addition to its work with UAH's community garden. All members of the UAH community are invited to visit the garden or take the yoga classes Friedman teaches in the garden, which are always free to the public. The Green Club posts upcoming yoga classes on its website and on flyers around campus.

In addition to teaching yoga around the Huntsville community, Friedman is a longstanding member of the Huntsville Feminist Chorus, which regularly performs in the spring in honor of women's history. She also dabbles in local community theatre, most recently performing with the Huntsville Purim Players at Temple B'nai Shalom.



Dr. Susan Friedman, Lecturer in English, will teach WGS 200 Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies in the Summer 2016 term.



Pictured left to right: HFC founding director, Sherry Mercieca; past directors, Angela Lucas, Carol Crosslin; current director, Pam Siegler.



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Become a Friend of Women's and Gender Studies!

Friends of Women's and Gender Studies (FWGS) is an organization of people who support the UAH Women's and Gender Studies Program. The goals of FWGS include:

- Supporting community involvement in Women's and Gender Studies events
- Sponsoring cultural activities and events that honor and empower women
- Supporting women scholars, artists, and performers
- Fostering discussion of issues affecting women's lives

Annual Contribution (October 1 – September 30)

- | | | | |
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- ☐ I would like to contribute to the "Rose Norman Women's Studies Award for Scholarship in Action." \$
- ☐ I would like to contribute to scholarships and travel for Women's and Gender Studies students. \$

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