



# WOMEN'S CENTER

208-885-6616

Corner of Idaho and Line Streets

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## Kitchen Towels and Cabinet Secretaries

by Susan Palmer

In tidy block letters, hand printed on newsprint-quality paper with extra-wide lines, my first-grader niece wrote, "When I grow up I want to go to kolij and I want to get mareed and I want to have a baby and I want to be a sekretary." Nearly a decade has passed and the one sure thing that she still wants is to go to college (now flawlessly spelled). If she marries, she wants to be free to marry whomever she loves. If she chooses to have a baby, it will be planned and well nurtured. If her eyes remain on becoming a secretary, I am confident it will be a cabinet secretary.

I uncovered my niece's creative writing assignment just about the time President Clinton nominated Alexis Herman, a well-qualified and experienced African-American woman, to join his cabinet as secretary of labor. Simultaneously thinking about both my niece and Alexis Herman, I chuckled at the humorous dual meanings in the words "secretary, labor, and cabinet."

"Secretary" conjures up an image of women's work. As we approach a new millennium, approximately 99% of all secretaries in the United States are female. It's part of our system of occupational sex segregation. Although women are entering occupations in record numbers that traditionally have been predominantly male, men are not reciprocally entering predominantly female occupations at anywhere near the same rate.

Despite limited opportunities for advancement in predominantly female occupations, it is advantageous for men to accept traditional female employment, since men disproportionately rise to the top in supervisory capacities. This is true for librarians, bank tellers, nurses, occupational therapists, and elementary school teachers—all predominantly female occupations. On the other hand, women who enter predominantly male occupations (e.g., lawyers, physicians, engineers, and even college faculty) do not fare as well in assuming positions

of higher rank as their pioneering male counterparts engaged in women's work.

Of course, the wages in predominantly female occupations are, in general, markedly lower than wages in predominantly male occupations (with the notable exception of custodians, of whom nearly 75% are male). One need not speculate about why men fail to migrate en masse to engage in "women's work" and lose earning power and status.

My sister is a childbirth educator, and the humor I see in the term "labor" is its common association with childbirth...more women's work. "Cabinet" brings to mind the kitchen where, unlike my own household, it is estimated that 77% of cooking is performed by women, and approximately 83% of the clean up is done by women. This is all unpaid labor, sometimes called unproductive, or in Marx's more palatable terms, useful labor.

Several years ago a longtime friend, with whom I attended graduate school, presented me with an unusual kitchen towel that has survived countless trips through the laundry and continues to adorn my kitchen. The towel is filled with text entitled "Women Count — Count Women's Work." It was an appropriate gift, since at the time the subject of my never-completed dissertation was "The Effects of Nonmetropolitan Underemployment on Household Sex-based Divisions of Labor." (Although the title alone puts one to sleep, I was gripped by the topic. As one professor advised me, "You had better LOVE your dissertation, because nobody else will.")

On my kitchen towel there is a reference to the 1980 United Nations Decade for Women Draft Program of Action that calls on all governments to count "the contribution of the unpaid work that women do in the farms, at home and in other fields." The kitchen towel also cites the 1985 World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women in Nairobi.

The towel reiterates the multi-governmental agreement that "The remunerated and, in particular, the unremunerated contributions of women to all aspects and sectors of development should be recognized, and appropriate efforts should be made to measure and reflect these contributions in national accounts and

economic statistics and in the gross national product. Concrete steps should be taken to quantify the unremunerated contribution of women to agriculture, food production, reproduction and household activities" (Paragraph 120 of "Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women" ratified by the UN General Assembly on November 6, 1985).

Although this reads like jargony governmentese, I relish the irony that following a spell of unpaid domestic labor (housework), I dry my hands as well as pots and pans on this lofty message about recognizing the contributions of women's work. I trust the creators of my kitchen towel were clever-minded enough to reproduce this on diapers too.

The Gross National Product (GNP) is supposed to reflect the total value of goods and services produced by a nation, but actually only includes goods and services *exchanged for money*. Women's unwaged work (and men's, for that matter), estimated to produce as much as 50% of the GNP, is not counted.

While speaking to a standing-room-only crowd at Rutgers University, Heidi Hartmann, executive director of the Institute for Women's Policy Research, relayed a GNP story to illustrate the point. She told of a maid hired to clean the home of an academic economist. Each year, the product of the maid's work, just like the work of the economist, was calculated into the GNP. After many years, the economist, himself a widower, successfully persuaded the maid to marry him. Although she continued to perform the housecleaning as she had previously, as his wife her work no longer counted in the GNP. And so it goes.

Clinton's nominee for labor secretary, Alexis Herman, previously served as director of the Women's Bureau in the Labor Department. She is an experienced advocate for labor. This is welcome news for employees of Texaco and Mitsubishi, two corporate cultures riddled with charges of racial discrimination and sexual harassment, respectively. Herman has a firm grasp on how to handle these issues. When she returns to the Labor Department as its secretary, I trust no one will need to remind her to count women's work.

## No Rest for the Wicked

Dear Sisters,

When you read this, it will be 1997, and we will have drawn another year closer to the millenium. Tell me, have I been watching too many television shows about serial killers, or is the term millenium just inherently frightening? *Millenium*, *The Profiler*, the *X-Files*, and countless A&E documentaries bombard us with images both violent and weird. I feel a schizophrenic urge to run screaming backwards to the dull comfort of *Mary Tyler Moore*. At the same time, I want to party like it's 1999. (I think seriously of changing my name to #@%&\*!, but you may refer to me as the "columnist formerly known as Auntie Establishment.")

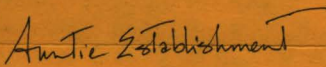
Perhaps I'm just suffering from *fin de siècle* angst, which has taken the form of competing desires both to move ahead and to stand pat. If so, I'm clearly not the only one. In Hollywood, the popularity of serial killers has been matched only by that unlikeliest of growth industries, Jane Austen. On the large screen, we have had *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma*; on television, A&E (the serial killer network) has given us *Pride and Prejudice*, *Persuasion*, and yet another *Emma*. Kenneth Branagh and, inexplicably, Leonardo DiCaprio (Macaulay Culkin with a pinch of Marlon Brando) are picking mercilessly at Shakespeare's bones, and Jane Campion is attempting to grind Henry James into a grist suitable for Nicole Kidmann. In the meantime, where do we find a more modern masterpiece like *Bastard Out of Carolina*? Relegated to Showtime, with all of its lesbian content sucked out through a fat hole in the screenplay.

And so, my dears, I find myself Janus-faced this New Year's Eve (a change from how I'm usually faced at this time of year). I find hope in the fact that public figures as diverse as Bruce Springsteen and Moscow's own Grace Wicks have spoken in support of married same-sex couples; that even though the Defense of Marriage Act passed, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act captured 49% of the Senate; that although voter turnout nationwide was shamefully low, Latah County turnout was high. I am proud to be associated with a strong, vital, and very necessary university Women's Center. I worry that Rush Limbaugh and G. Gordon Liddy are still on the air; that statutes are still on the books which allow Idaho judges to punish unwed teenage mothers for "fornication"; and that many still find it remarkable and perhaps even sinister that women voters should have given a U.S. president his electoral majority.

Sisters, I raise a glass of bubbly to you all as I watch the ball drop in Times Square. Sure, it's only nine o'clock in Idaho, but it's midnight in the Big Apple. My dears, if you'll forgive the vulgarity, your auntie has a lion in her pocket, and baby, she's ready to roar.

Yours in qualified anticipation,

#@%&\*!



(aka Auntie Establishment)

## Savory Moments with Auntie Pasto

Happy New Year My Culinary Cousins,

Over the winter break, I shoveled snow and watched the waters rise. Although we had quite a variety of weather this season, as my dear old Grandma Pasto used to say, "Things could always be worse, dear." I was reminded of Grandma's words when I heard that the editor, Auntie Nuke, traveled to Florida during the break. What could be worse? Answer: Auntie Pasto did not go. When you think of gators and dolphins, what comes to mind? No...not football teams...Key Lime Pie!

Key limes are very sensitive to the cold and, in the United States, have never been grown above the very southern tip of Florida. According to my sources, there is only one remaining private grove on one of the Key Islands. I am told you cannot buy Key Lime Juice in the U.S. any longer. However, there is something called Key West Lime Juice sold in pint bottles that seems to work fine.

Join me in indulging in the winter fantasy recipe straight from Key West which Auntie Nuke selfishly devoured at Mangrove Mama's. Enjoy a slice of Key Lime Pie and think warm thoughts.

To share your family recipes with Auntie Pasto, write to: Auntie Pasto, c/o Women's Center, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho 83844-1064. You can find Auntie Pasto's recipe box on the web. Surf to the UI Women's Center Home Page <<http://www.uidaho.edu/~wcenter/>>.

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### KEY LIME PIE

3 eggs	1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk
1/4 cup key lime juice or persian lime juice	1/2 teaspoon sugar
1 9-inch graham cracker crust	

Separate eggs and beat together egg yolks and condensed milk.

Add the lime juice and beat until smooth. (The acidity of the juice thickens the milk and eggs into custard.)

Pour into pie crust and chill before serving.

For a variation: Garnish by beating the egg whites with a pinch of sugar until stiff. Spoon onto custard and chill. Or, if you prefer, bake in a preheated oven at 250° until topping is slightly brown.

Auntie Nuke prefers a dollop of sweetened whipped cream on top instead.



# BROWN-BAG LUNCH PROGRAMS WOMEN'S CENTER

Free! Public Welcome 12:30 p.m. Women's Center Lounge January-February 1997 885-6616

**JAN 21**  
Tuesday

**MILKING THE FINANCIAL AID COW** JAMA SEBALD, Financial Aid Office, will help you mooooooove through the financial aid process by examining the "dos and don'ts" of completing the FAFSA (free application for federal student aid) form. She will review common mistakes to avoid to ensure the smooth processing of your form. No udder office can make financial aid udderly understandable and help you like her office can. Financial aid staff will remain at the Women's Center for one hour after the program for students with unique situations. No student should miss this!

**JAN 29**  
Wednesday

**A PERSONAL VIEW OF COSTA RICA** DEBBIE MCLAUGHLIN and her family spent 11 months living in Costa Rica. Accompanied by breathtaking slides, Debbie will guide us through many of Costa Rica's natural areas with its unique flora and fauna, and introduce us to her Costa Rican neighbors and neighborhood. She will share her own perceptions about the people she came to know and her experiences viewing an incredible rain forest. Debbie will contrast Costa Rica with the United States with a variety of curious statistics.

**FEB 4**  
Tuesday

**THREADS OF THE PAST: CHANGING THE FABRIC OF LIFE** SARAH SWETT is a tapestry weaver and knitter who nurtures her products from start to finish by spinning her own yarn, designing, knitting, or weaving her creation. In this special lunchtime program, Swett will demonstrate the art of spinning and knitting. Recently featured as one of the artists in *Knitting in America* by Melanie Falick, Swett claims that "This is my quiet way of changing the world." In an interview with Andrea Vogt (*Lewiston Morning Tribune*), Swett notes that, "You can knit and nurse your baby at the same time. You can be interrupted. You can take it with you. It's mobile, which life as a woman tends to be." If you are interested in textiles, fiber arts, or experiencing the link to women throughout history, join Sarah for this narrated demonstration.

**FEB 11**  
Tuesday

**LIFE AS A MUSLIM IN THE UNITED STATES** DONNA ABUNAYYAN offers a unique perspective on cross-cultural comparisons. Currently living in Moscow working toward a graduate degree in early childhood special education, Donna, an American, married a Saudi Arabian man and practices the Muslim religion. She will share her perceptions of living as a Muslim in the west in contrast to being identified as a westerner in Saudi Arabia, and will distinguish between the religious versus cultural aspects of her life.

**FEB 12**  
Wednesday

**HOME SCHOOLING** SUE STEELE finds home schooling "a great way to be a family." Although acquaintances may believe she has home schooled her two daughters (9 and 12 years old) forever, she is actually in her third year. Teaching certificate in hand, Sue previously taught in a private school while her daughters were enrolled in the public school system. Sue will explore the benefits and drawbacks of home schooling, in addition to explaining how to get started and develop an appropriate curriculum. This program will be of special interest to those in the field of education, as well as those entertaining or providing home schooling.

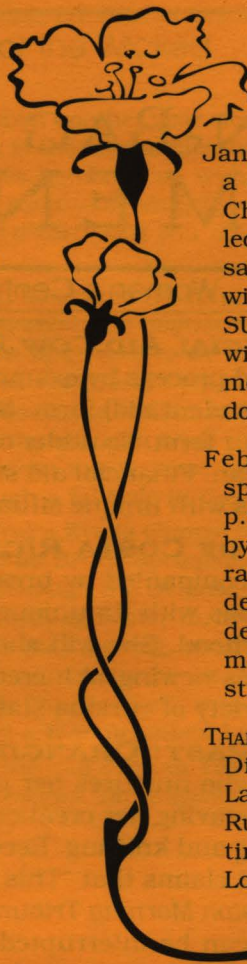
**FEB 18**  
Tuesday

**HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION: EXPLORING ALASKA WITH A TEENAGER** DONNA HANSON, UI Science Librarian, has sorted through her recent slide collection to escort us on a venture through Alaska. A few of the tantalizing highlights of her trip include the teen favorite, Raptor Rehabilitation Center in Sitka, Denali National Park, and an archeological dig in Gakona with Donna's niece, an archeologist. If you have been to Alaska yourself or would like to make plans to visit, you will find this narrated slide presentation a treat!

**FEB 26**  
Wednesday

**AMERICAN GIRL AFTERNOON** [3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m. at the McConnell Mansion, 110 S. Adams at the corner of Second St.] ADDY, FELICITY, KIRSTEN, MOLLY, and SAMANTHA will be joined by MARY REED, Latah County Historical Society, and SUSAN PALMER, UI Women's Center, to explore the world of the American Girls Collection of dolls. From a personal historical angle, Mary will discuss the generational history of dolls and exhibit some of the historical society's collection. Susan will review origins of the Pleasant Company and the emergence and success of the American Girls Collection. Children are invited to bring their American Girl Doll with them, and parents are invited to bring their favorite childhood doll to show and exchange stories. *The McConnell Mansion is open Tuesday through Saturday 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m., and its gift shop has selected American Girl products available for purchase.*

The Women's Center Newsletter is published six times during the academic year. It includes announcements and information about the many services and programs offered by the center to the university and regional communities. There are also items of general interest about women's and men's issues. If you have announcements or information to include in subsequent issues, please let us know. Suggestions for changes, improvements, or additional items are always welcome. Disability access is on the north end of the building through the TAAC. A taped copy of the newsletter is available on request for the visually impaired.



January 27—"Moving the Mountain," a cinematic account of the 1989 Chinese democracy movement that led to the Tiananmen Square massacre, featuring Li Lu (see below) will be shown at 8:00 p.m. in the SUB Borah Theater. The film is the winner of the International Documentary Association's prize for best documentary.

February 4—Borah Symposium sponsors a public lecture at 7:00 p.m. in the UI Admin. Auditorium, by Li Lu, a Chinese student democracy leader and now graduate student at Columbia University. Student dissident, Li Lu, guided the movement through several demonstrations and a hunger strike.

THANK YOU to Women's Center donors: Diane Baumgart, John Burlison, LaRae Donnellan, Tisha Egashira, Ruth Jackson, Isabel Miller, Christine Moffitt, Evelyn Palmer, and Louise Regelin.

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