



WOMEN'S CENTER

208-885-6616

Corner of Idaho and Line Streets

Vol. 25, No. 5

March 1997

Secrets of the Sixties

by Susan Palmer

March is Women's History Month, and the Women's Center has lined up several programs to examine the history of women from the Elizabethan era to the contemporary. One of these programs, *Women's Choices in the '90s: Are We Headed Back to the '60s?*, zooms in on that tumultuous decade.

It escapes me just who coined the humorous phrase, "If you remember the sixties, you weren't there." However, regardless of how young or old, those of us who were there remember how unforgettable a period of history that decade was. Our everyday routines may have shared similarities to our lives today, but the backdrop was markedly different.

A vigorous civil rights movement opened the sixties, only to have a series of national leaders assassinated alongside the enactment of the Civil Rights Act. The escalation of a never-declared Vietnam War gave rise to an anti-war movement unmatched in this century. Both of these events launched a new western feminism that would be further cultivated in the '70s—a feminism committed to the philosophy that the personal is political, demanding correspondence between private lives and public personas. As Elvis's relative popularity waned, we lost several rising cultural icons, like Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Jim Morrison, to substance abuse from which our country has since been unable to shake loose. (Although their deaths occurred in 1970 and 1971, all within less than one year of one another, it should be noted that the "sixties" didn't officially end until the early 1970s.)

Yet, we did not view or interpret that decade from the same lens. The sixties arrived on the heels of the fifties, which deeply influenced the lens through which one interpreted the subsequent decade.

Following World War II, the postwar G.I. Bill hoisted countless veterans into the middle class in unprecedented numbers by offering government-subsidized federal support for higher education, coupled with loans for homes and businesses. This ticket to upward mobility

was the Roosevelt Administration's prudent solution to harness the potentially devastating reintegration of nearly 6 million veterans back into our domestic economy. The country could not withstand the potential massive unemployment that the end of the war might bring, nor the return of a depression similar to the 1930s.

The ensuing middle class had its own accouterments, including its social class-specific set of values and mores. Among the most pronounced of these values was an obsession with image. "What will the neighbors think?" echoed throughout middle class households across the country. The sixties generation was often perceived as threatening to preceding generations. The children of the '60s, a product of an altogether different historical moment, would cause enormous embarrassment and sometimes shame for their parents who clung tightly to their newly-found rising status.

Consequently, legions of middle class households wound up harboring secrets—skeletons in their respective closets—to maintain their (often false) image. Stephanie Coontz identifies this as "the way we never were" in her 1992 book of that title about American families. Family secrets included alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse, even religious, ethnic, or political heritage, and...among the most shameful of all...pregnancy out of wedlock.

Daughters of the sixties who became pregnant shook the foundation of their family's class status, whose community standing was at stake. For the middle class, this prospect was devastating.

Forced marriages too often unveiled the truth. Friends and neighbors were suspicious of hasty courtships and subsequent births labeled "premature." Although abortions were not legal, myriad daughters traveled to New York or Puerto Rico, risking their own lives to save face for their families.

Coontz writes, "The 1960s generation did not invent premarital and out-of-wedlock sex. Indeed, the straitlaced sexual morality of nineteenth-century Anglo-American societies, partly revived in the 1950s, seems to have been a historical and cultural aberration."

Commonly then, so-called self-respecting middle class families tucked their daughters away in unwed mother's homes or out-of-town apartments until birth took place and adoptions could be quietly and quickly arranged. These disappearances were often explained away with "white lies" about travel or illness. One joke of that period was, "Oh, she had mononucleosis? Was it a boy or a girl?" Ask almost anyone who was there ...they'll remember.

I asked Ronda Slater, a California actress and playwright, and she remembered. Ronda wrote a one-woman play called *...A Name You Never Got* about the true story of her reunion with the daughter she gave up for adoption in college in the sixties. She describes that time as an era when women in college operated in a vacuum with lots of shame, rarely talking with each other about being sexually active, let alone using birth control. She witnessed the double standard so characteristic then of girls, like herself, getting grounded if parents discovered a loss of virginity, while boys occasionally earned a case of beer from a congratulatory father.

In late 1965, Ronda had been thrown out of her house, so she stayed at school over the winter break. Feeling isolated, she claims to have "looked for love in all the wrong places." Although the concept, "acquaintance rape" would take nearly two more decades to emerge, following the consumption of alcohol, Ronda felt "emotionally coerced" and "hoodwinked" into having sex. "Honest to God, I didn't even think about birth control," she reflects. Over 5 months later her parents inadvertently found out she was pregnant.

Ronda describes the birth experience that occurred over three decades ago, and still gets a lump in her throat discussing it. She notes her mother's 180° attitudinal shift marked by sewing maternity clothes for Ronda. At the same time, however, Ronda wore a fake wedding ring while she stayed in an apartment in Santa Barbara, a safe distance from her parents' Los Angeles home, and managed to make friends with a very supportive woman upstairs.

Continued on page 3

No Rest for the Wicked

Dear Sisters,

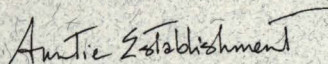
Though I am, as usual, inclined to begin this letter by complaining about the weather, I shall refrain. Suffice it to say that relocating to somewhere like South Carolina is beginning to look mighty appealing. Were it not for that carrot-haired testament to the efficacy of Geritol, Senator Strom Thurmond, I would be sitting on a verandah in Charleston right now, sipping a mint julep. (My dear friend Miss Julia, a Charleston native, tells me that I'm much too hard on the senator. Why honey, she says, Strom is the bridge to the 21st century—from the 19th!)

Still, ladies, your auntie has been in better moods. I am still reeling from the suggestion that Idaho state employees may find themselves paying not once but twice for flood damage—as our poor tax dollars are not equal to the task, we may also be expected to forego our paltry—if you'll excuse the indelicacy—two-percent raises. Sisters, what next? First, a one-percent holdback that became a one-percent reduction in the university's operating budget. We tightened our belt and got on with it. Then a two-and-a-half percent reduction that became a lag payroll. Once again, we tightened our belt, but we began to feel that the buckle was becoming an integral part of our spine. Now, we are faced with the prospect of no merit raises, no salary equity, and no cost-of-living increase. Our belt is lying on the floor around our ankles, and Kate Moss is beginning to strike us as a bit chunky.

My dears, watching this state cope with its balanced budget amendment is a lot like watching *The Other Side of the Mountain*. For those of you too young to remember either the 1970s or this movie, it's the story of a skier who falls off the side of a mountain and breaks her neck. Over and over, she struggles back against tremendous odds: her lover abandons her; she must learn to cope with disability long before the Americans with Disabilities Act; she must build a new life for herself. This she does with grace and aplomb, and the audience roots for her, wanting her to succeed. She even finds a new lover, one who's not only morally better but also better-looking than the faithless one who abandoned her. And what happens? Just as they're about to head off into the sunset, adversity overcome, Lover #2 crashes his airplane into the side of a mountain and winds up deader than a doornail. Sisters, I was removed from the theatre for throwing my popcorn in despair.

(I didn't bother to go see *The Other Side of the Mountain, Part II*—technically, the other side of the other side would be the one she skied off in the first place, wouldn't it? And why should I be expected to go through that again?)

With butter and salt,



Auntie Establishment

Savory Moments with Auntie Pasto

Greetings My Culinary Cousins,

Although March is recognized as Women's History Month, few are aware (save Auntie Pasto) that it is also National Noodles Month! Noodles are a descendent of the pasta family. Legend has it that Marco Polo brought a pasta recipe with him in 1295 from Asia. Pasta quickly became a staple food in Italy and spread throughout Europe. The addition of egg to pasta is what we know as pasta frecha, or the noodle.

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/>>.

MANDARIN CHICKEN WITH NOODLES

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Tbsp. cooking oil | 2 3-oz. packages oriental noodles w/ chicken flavor |
| 1 small zucchini, halved and cut lengthwise | 2 stalks celery, thinly cut |
| 2 cloves minced garlic | 2 Tbsp. coarsely chopped peanuts |
| 1/2 cup bottled sweet and sour sauce | 1 11-oz. can mandarin orange sections, drained |
| 1 cup water | |
| 1 lb. skinned, boneless chicken breast halves cut into bite-size strips OR two 5-oz. cans chunk-style chicken, drained | |

Preheat oil in skillet or wok. Stir fry chicken, half at a time, about 3 minutes and no longer pink. Remove. (Do not stir fry canned chicken.)

Break up noodles (set flavor packages aside). Add noodles, 1 cup of water, zucchini, celery, and garlic to wok or skillet. Bring to boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer 3-5 minutes or until noodles and vegetables are tender.

Stir in cooked or canned chicken, flavor packages, sweet and sour sauce, and peanuts.

Heat thoroughly. Serve and top each serving with mandarin oranges.

Continued from page 1

She had heard hair-raising horror stories from other unwed mothers giving their children up for adoption. Some women had towels thrown over their heads so they wouldn't see whether the baby was a boy or girl. Hospital maternity stays were often required for up to 5 days or more following births, and nobody, not a spouse or best friend, was allowed in the delivery room to hold one's hand or offer support.

Ronda was reading Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, when her water broke. No suitcase packed, she ran out into the parking lot in what she describes as an *I Love Lucy* scene that was both funny and not funny, since "we knew what was at the end of it." Following a relatively short labor, her daughter was born at 9:33 p.m. Despite asking, Ronda was not allowed to see the baby. She sneaked down the next day to view a baby marked "Baby Girl Slater" in the back of the nursery and received "holy hell" for it later from the physician. When wondering what to tell the landlady, her father merely declared, "Don't you ever say that baby died."

"Forget about it...get on with your life" was the message Ronda received from innumerable well-wishers. Instead, Ronda experienced low self esteem and "secondary infertility," the phenomenon experienced by nearly 50% of birth mothers who never bear another child. She observes, "They don't tell you when you go in for guidance that this may be the only child you'll ever have."

Ronda claims to have fought efforts to heal, but in 1983 she met her partner, Jim, who offered to help Ronda find her child. With Jim's encouragement, Ronda located her daughter. "We've been reunited for 13 years. I've got grandkids—a 3-year-old girl and 1-year-old boy!" Although she initially thought it would be "peaches and cream," it has been a bittersweet rocky road.

On the issue of adoptee rights, Ronda insists that "it's okay to wonder where you came from. When adoptees request medical and non-identification information, often they really want to be rocked in their mother's arms. I believe adoptees' rights supercede birth parents' rights."

Ronda shares her story across the country in her play and lectures. Her forums are foremost about decision making, although she also examines adoption reform. "Open adoption is not a panacea for the pain," claims Slater. Yet compared to the closed adoptions of the '60s, she prefers the open adoptions of the '90s. Ronda discusses reproductive ethics and sheds light on an area of reproductive rights often ignored by both

pro-life and pro-choice factions.

The '60s was a decade worth remembering, and Ronda Slater's lecture is one you'll never forget. Ronda will address the University of Idaho on *Tuesday evening, March 11*, in the *Student Union Building Ballroom* at 7:00 p.m. as part of Women's History Month.

Professional Environmental Campaign Positions

The Fund for Public Interest Research is accepting applications for career positions. If you are a graduating senior who would like to make a difference by working on campaigns dealing with environmental, consumer protection, and government reform issues, this job may be for you. First-year staff earn \$17,000-\$20,500, including health insurance, college loan assistance, and more. For more information, contact Cynthia Mika at Career Services, Brink G11, 885-6121, or e-mail Bryce Floch at floch@juno.com.

Prostitution in the Old West

The Moscow Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) will celebrate Women's History Month at their March meeting with a program sponsored by the Idaho Humanities Council. Dr. Priscilla Wegars, a speaker with the Idaho Speakers Bureau, will present a slide show entitled "Prostitution in the Old West" at Gritman Conference Center on Saturday, March 8 at 10:30 a.m.

Wegars received her Ph.D. in history from the University of Idaho and established the Asian American Comparative Collection of artifacts and bibliographical materials in the University's Laboratory of Anthropology and serves as a curator. She annually conducts tours of Polly Bemis country through Continuing Education. Wegars was the recipient of an American Fellowship for 1990-91 from AAUW's Education Foundation which is the largest funding source for graduate education for women in the country.

Wegars has worked on excavations in Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California, England, New Zealand, and Belize. Much of the information for the program resulted from excavations carried out in Moscow while investigating the history of Chinese peoples in Idaho, Wegars main area of interest.

This program is funded by the Idaho Humanities Council, a state-based program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The IHC is a non-profit, grants-making organization seeking to

increase public awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the humanities in Idaho. Gifts from First Security Bank and The Steele-Reese Foundation also support the IHC Speakers Bureau. The program will be free and open to the public. For additional information contact Troy Sprenke at 882-8014.

Mad Hatter's Ball

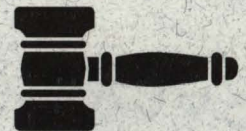
Sojourners' Alliance, formerly YWCA of the Palouse, presents the *First Annual Mad Hatter's Ball* as a major fundraising event on the evening of March 8 at the Moscow Social Club.

The ball begins at 7:00 p.m. with an auction preview, followed by the *Fashion Through the Looking Glass* fashion show at 8:00 p.m., featuring merchandise from Wise Buys Thrift Store. *Midnight Alice's Ball* begins at 10:00 p.m.

All proceeds support the Sojourner Truth House, Moscow's only transitional shelter for homeless women and children.

Tickets are available at the UI Women's Center, 885-6616, and other locations. Regular admission is \$10.00 and student admission is \$5.00, which offers the purchaser an opportunity to win door prizes, attend the auction, fashion show, and dance. Food will be served and there will be a no-host bar.

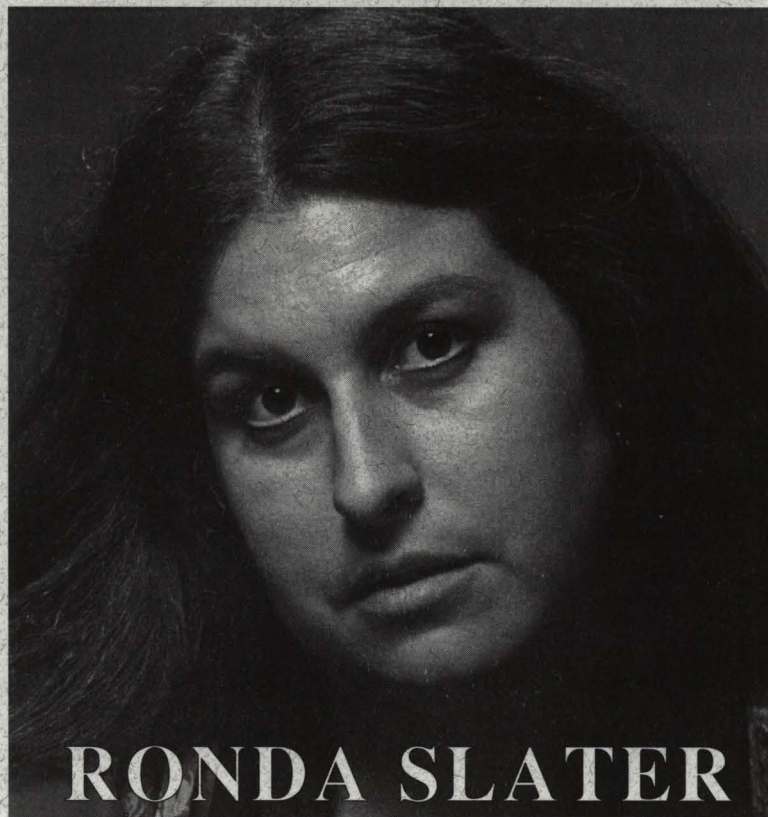
Have a ball supporting Sojourners' Alliance!



Race, Gender, and Justice

Race, Gender, and Justice, a conference sponsored by the UI College of Law's Idaho Women Lawyers and Minority Law Students Association, will be held from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Saturday, March 1, in the Law School Court Room. The conference is open to the public at no charge and will feature nine speakers on a variety of diversity and gender issues. Refreshments will be available and t-shirts will be for sale. For more information, contact Elisa Massoth, 882-5049.





RONDA SLATER

**WOMEN'S CHOICES
IN THE '90s:**

**ARE WE HEADED
BACK TO THE '60s?**

**California actress and playwright RONDA SLATER
tells the true story of her reunion with the daughter
she gave up for adoption in college in 1966.**

...BEYOND PRO-LIFE vs. PRO-CHOICE...

**Ronda's personal insights and experience with
adoption shed light on an area of reproductive rights
often ignored by conservative and liberal factions alike.**

NOMINATED BEST LECTURE — *CAMPUS ACTIVITIES TODAY* READER'S CHOICE AWARD

TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 1997 - 7:00 p.m.

SUB BALLROOM

UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO, MOSCOW

ADMISSION FREE ■ INFO: 208/885-6485 or 885-6616

Sponsored by: ASUI Productions and The Women's Center



BROWN-BAG LUNCH PROGRAMS WOMEN'S CENTER

Free! Public Welcome 12:30 p.m. Women's Center Lounge

March 1997

885-6616

MAR 4
Tuesday

POSTCARDS FROM POTATO@LAND MARIANNE LOVE, author of *Pocket Girdles and Other Confessions of a Northwest Farm Girl*, will read selections from her hot-off-the-press book, *Postcards from Potato@land*. Love grew up just a mile south of where humorist Patrick McManus was raised, and you'd think there was something in their water. McManus writes, "I have long been a fan of Marianne Love and of Marianne's writings, which catch the true and comic flavor of what it's like to grow up in rural Idaho." Her newest book has special potato recipes to accompany every chapter! Escape into laughter for your lunch hour with this talented UI alumnus and Sandpoint High School teacher.

MAR 5
Wednesday

COMMON VISIONS: THE FUTURE OF THE WOMEN'S CENTER AND THE UNIVERSITY'S COMMONS JOANNE REECE, Director of Capital Planning, will discuss the Commons. Active planning for this new facility project, the Commons, has been underway for over a year. The design phase is in progress now in anticipation of construction beginning in early 1988. In January, the UI Board of Regents approved the sale of bonds to finance the new Commons building in the center of the academic core. The bonds will be repaid over the long-term with student fees. The Women's Center is targeted for the new building. Join Joanne to learn more about the project, its features, and for answers to logistics questions.

MAR 11
Tuesday

THE HISTORY OF WOMEN IN SPORTS BONNIE HULTSTRAND, HPERD faculty member and Athena President, will tickle your funny bone as she illustrates the style changes from the Victorian era to today. She has collected and compiled literally scores of pictures! Bonnie will navigate our way through the social changes and changing mores that shaped the appearance of women in sports. You may want to go through your attic, cedar chest, and old photos to add your own seasoning of styles gone by. As part of Women's History Month, join us for this pictorial history.

MAR 11
Tuesday

WOMEN'S CHOICES IN THE '90s: ARE WE HEADED BACK TO THE '60s? RONDA SLATER, California actress and playwright, tells the true story of her reunion with the daughter she gave up for adoption in college. Slater is nationally praised for telling her story; a poignant, informative and often funny journey through the social and sexual rapids of the turbulent 1960s, during which time she was faced with an unplanned pregnancy. Slater's experience with contraception, the adoption system, and the consequences of life's choices provides a cautionary, yet hopeful, story for college students in the '90s. The lecture includes scenes from Slater's touching, funny, one-woman autobiographical play, ...A NAME YOU NEVER GOT, about her reunion with her daughter. Ronda has been nominated for the Harry Chapin Award for Contributions to Humanity and Reader's Choice Award for Best Lecture Program. *UI SUB Ballroom, 7:00 p.m. This program is sponsored by ASUI Productions and The Women's Center.*

MAR 25
Tuesday

A LOOK AT THE BLUES-JAZZ GENRE AND ITS FEMALE ARTISTS ROGER COLE, music professor in the Lionel Hampton School of Music, looks at blues and jazz as they are defined by history and the artists themselves. Jazz had its beginnings in the brothels of New Orleans, where women played an instrumental role in the development of the genre. Roger will explore these roots and use Bessie Smith's contributions as his point of departure into the origins and definitions of the blues and jazz. He will chart shifts in musical structure as the genre became increasingly sophisticated. And who would entertain this topic without Ella Fitzgerald!

MAR 26
Wednesday

FROM THE STREETS OF SHAKESPEARE TO THE COURT OF ELIZABETH TAMES ALAN, actress, historian, and fashion history teacher, first appears in an authentic lower-middle-class Elizabethan costume and talks about the life, times, fabrics, and dyes of the period. Later, she changes into an authentic, 62-piece Elizabethan court costume with full makeup. As she dresses, she describes each piece of clothing and its significance. Tames studied theater and history at Willamette University in Oregon, and theater at the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco and Dell Arte School in California. She has worked as an instructor in Elizabethan dialect and culture. Whether your interest is women's studies, history, Shakespearean theater, textiles, or art, you will want to participate in this hands-on cultural experience! *Women's Center Lounge, 5:00 p.m.*

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.

Women's Center Staff

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NBX003
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Women's Center
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address correction requested



March 1, 1933—Myrlie Evers Williams, civil rights leader, was born.

March 3, 1913—Harriet Tubman, Underground Railroad, died.

March 4, 1917—Jeannette Rankin became the first U.S. Congresswoman.

March 8—*International Women's Day*

March 9, 1928—Graciela Olivarez, Mexican-American legal advocate, was born.

March 12, 1912—Juliette Low founded Girl Scouts.

March 18, 1933—Unita Blackwell, first black woman mayor in Mississippi, was born.

March 24, 1912—Dorothy Height, president of National Council of Negro Women, was born.

March 31, 1988—Toni Morrison won the Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved*.

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