



WOMEN'S CENTER

208-885-6616

Corner of Idaho and Line Streets

Vol. 26, No. 3

November-December 1997

When I Grow Up

by Susan Palmer

When I grow up I want to be a...nontraditional student. Imagine that. At least two national surveys indicate that over 40 percent of college students nationwide are "nontraditional." Although there is no definitive definition of what constitutes nontraditional, it is commonly defined as over the age of twenty-four. In addition to being older. they "are more likely to attend part-time; more likely to have families and to work: and more likely to reside off rather than campus." The majority of nontraditional students enrolled in campuses across the United States are female, approximately 60 percent, according to one College Board survey.

Thriving colleges and universities are the ones who pay special attention to nontraditional students whose rate of growth is significantly greater than the growth rate of younger students. In many regions, traditional student populations are declining while the number of older students is increasing.

According to Dennis Lincks of the University of Idaho Registrar's Office, 40 percent of our overall student population are age 25 years or older. Nearly 60 percent of those are registered part-time. Among UI undergraduates, only 19 percent are nontraditional, compared to 88 percent of graduate students. Unlike the national profile, females comprise only 40 and 43 percent of the University of Idaho nontraditional undergraduate and graduate students, respectively, compared to 60 percent elsewhere.

Nontraditional students, almost by definition, are typically in transition. The nature of their transition varies widely. Some students are recently divorced, while others have experienced stagnant wages or job loss. Relocation or the completion of military service invites older students to explore opportunities in higher education. Some are merely entering a new life passage. Many have children. Some parents wait to return to school when their children have grown. Many parents, however, have young ones and face the challenge of locating flexible and affordable child care.

Almost all nontraditional students share one common thread-they are making personal sacrifices to be in school. Despite the fact that their growing numbers are partly responsible for keeping the doors open at many colleges and universities, nontraditional students have a significantly higher attrition rate—are less likely to complete their degree-than their younger counterparts. In Change, Arthur Levine writes, "Higher education is not the center feature of their lives, but just one of a multiplicity of activities in which they are engaged every day. For many, college is not even the most important of these activities. Work and family often overshadow it."

Financial hardships and conflicting role demands (obligations to family, workplace, community, and school) are often to blame for higher dropout rates. One psychological study reports that nontraditional students must "deal with the difficulties of being committed to the student role while simultaneously being committed to other important life roles."

Frequently, however, older students report a lack of institutional support and commitment. In Adult Learning, Mary Ann Christensen writes, "As they travel through the educational environment, the most significant need met by this process is 'mattering'; whereby individuals who feel valued by their institutions are more likely to persist and complete." She continues, "Does this take a significant investment of time, human resources, and budget? Yes. Is it worth it? Undoubtedly."

Psychologist Judy Chartrand reports "nontraditional students, that particularly female students, are more prone to underestimate their abilities and to lack confidence in their ability to succeed in college. Low self-confidence in academic settings may psychological distress and place nontraditional students at risk for prematurely dropping out of school." She cites previous research "that found that working full-time, having children, and for women, being married when entering college were all related to dropping out of school."

Although the Women's Center draws

students who are demographically varied. on a daily basis I am fortunate to have the opportunity to converse with the myriad nontraditional students, predominantly female, who migrate to the Women's Center. Some seek to improve their career opportunities or enhance their skills, while others are thirsty for intellectual growth and personal fulfillment. Many of them are seeking undergraduate degrees in education, general studies, forestry, mathematics, journalism, family and consumer science, English, and landscape architecture. A few are working towards graduate degrees in counseling and human services, metallurgical engineering, music, theater, and English as a second language. Although a menagerie, they are a rich collection of committed students.

As a rule, the nontraditional students who congregate in the Women's Center complete their degrees, despite the fact that each of them is likely to experience some form of personal distress along the way. Chartrand notes that "commitment to the student role contributes to personal distress...For students with heavy demands in other roles, a high degree of commitment to the student role may be associated with increased distress."

Perhaps one reason Women's Center nontraditional students appear to be successful is that they find support and common experiences among one another. When needed, these women take advantage of our crisis intervention services, and are willing to accept referrals for financial aid assistance, legal aid, child care services, academic assistance, short-term and long-term counseling and so forth. That is, they use support services that the university provides, although many wish we could provide even more.

To augment the institutional support, a considerable amount of support and commitment to nontraditional students needs to come at the individual department and classroom level. Students at the Women's Center report very uneven experiences across campus at that level. As a sociology instructor, I consistently enjoy the contributions that older students offer in the classroom. Likewise, many instructors and

continued on next to last page

No Rest for the Wicked

Dear Sisters,

I have seen the future, and it was in Spokane of all places.

Last Friday, I was fortunate enough to get tickets to a WNBA tour game, the Seattle Reign versus the San Jose Lasers. The sportsminded among you will have no doubt seen *A League of Their Own*. Ladies, this was the real thing. These women drive hard to the basket, defend aggressively, take three-point shots, and slam-dunk for all they're worth. The best part, however, is that the audience was packed with young women, all screaming through megaphones and stamping fit to bring the bleachers down. If the future has a name, it's Jennifer Azzi. Or perhaps Kate Starbird, or Rebecca Lobo, or Cheryl Swoopes. The latter, by the way, is the first woman ever to get her own signature line of Nike sneakers, and as soon as they appear at either Tri-State or the Footlocker, they are mine.

Twenty-five years ago, when the Women's Center was founded, your Auntie was a mere chit of a girl. Baseball was my sport then, not basketball, and I dreamed of playing professionally. Imagine being paid to spit, swear, and scratch yourself in unmentionable places. It's a tomboy's dream! Unfortunately, the only self-proclaimed feminist I knew in 1972 was my cousin, Becky Jo, the scourge of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Becky Jo had marched for women's rights and against the Vietnam war. She had given up a full scholarship to tune in, drop out, and live in an unplumbed tobacco barn with a man named Snake. This being the South and my family being Baptist, Becky Jo and Snake had actually gotten married, but in many ways, this only added insult to injury. Becky Jo kept her maiden name, and the wedding took place outdoors. To quote my grandmother, "They had a Unitarian instead of a preacher, the bride's legs were hairy, and they served those funny brownies."

When I announced my plan to spend the rest of my life playing shortstop, my grandmother said, "You mark my words, that's Becky Jo all over again. One of these days, she'll be telling people she's a feminist, and she won't even own a razor."

Sisters, don't let anyone tell you that old women can't predict the future.

A happy spinster but otherwise dancing down the Becky Jo trail,

Amtie Zatabishment

Auntie Establishment

BROWN-BAG LUNCH PROGRAMS

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

Oct 31 Friday Gender and National Pay Equity NORMA SADLER, nationally recognized poet and award-winning teacher, recently won a pay equity suit against Boise State University. Sadler will discuss her case and national pay equity issues at this special brown-bag lunch program. The jury deliberated for one day and found that BSU had violated the federal Equal Pay Act. Three specific charges were identified as having merit: 1) Sadler had been paid a lower salary than her male colleagues in doing equal work; 2) BSU retaliated against her for raising pay equity issues; and 3) BSU's retaliation was willful. However, the jury found no evidence that BSU had intentionally discriminated against her. Although Sadler was awarded \$74,000 in back wages and damages, BSU is appealing the decision. This program is supported by the Idaho Federation of Teachers.

Nov 4
Tuesday

Southern Hemisphere I: Women in Kenya ALICE NKATHA and KOI TIRIMA, University of Idaho graduate students from Kenya, will discuss cultural and social practices regarding the role of women in Kenya. Nkatha, a Meru tribe member, earned her Bachelor of Divinity as a graduate of St. Paul's United Theological College in Kenya. After serving two years as a Methodist Church parish minister, she is now working on a graduate degree in Counseling and Human Services. Tirima, a Kikuyu tribe member, is working on her master's degree in English as a Second Language (ESL). Noting tribal differences, Nkatha and Tirima will explore such controversial issues as wife inheritance, female circumcision, and wife beating, in addition to examining rural and urban cultural, social, and political climates.

Nov 7 Friday

Why Are Women So Good at Murder: The Golden Age of the Mystery Novel JAN WIDMAYER, Professor of English at Boise State University, will delight murder mystery enthusiasts at this program. When Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, and Margery Allingham began writing mysteries in the 1920s, they transformed the genre. Why was the mystery story so congenial to them—and why were they so good at it? Widmayer explores their contributions to the Golden Age of the Mystery and traces their influence on later novelists. Widmayer received her B.A. in English and Art History from Oberlin College, and earned her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. This program is supported in part by the Idaho Humanities Council, a state-based program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Gifts from First Security Bank and The Steele-Reese Foundation also support the IHC Speakers Bureau.





BROWN-BAG LUNCH PROGRAMS WOMEN'S CENTER

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

Nov 11 Tuesday The Intrepid Victorian Traveler Tames Alan, actress, historian, and fashion history teacher, looks into the clothing and life-style of a Victorian woman during the mid 1850s through the early 1860s in this five-costume show. She first appears in a wrapper to tell how a Victorian woman started her day. As Tames dresses for travel to the seaside, she discusses what someone could expect to encounter along the way. In addition, she shows a complete set of Victorian undergarments and discusses their various functions. Later, she changes into appropriate dress for a watering place, and finally prepares for a formal dinner and dance. Those who saw her Elizabethan presentation last year know Alan provides a lively discussion of each article of clothing, its function, how it was made, as well as sharing her wide knowledge of the era. Tames Alan 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. Whether your interest is in women's studies, history, theater, or textiles, you will want to participate in this hands-on cultural experience! This program takes place in the UI Student Union Building Vandal Lounge at 5:30 p.m.

Nov 13 Thursday

WomensWorks A HOLIDAY ART FAIR OF QUALITY GIFTS MADE BY WOMEN. The third annual UI Women's Center Holiday Art Fair will be bigger and better. This event offers a festive atmosphere that includes catered refreshments and background entertainment. WomensWorks will feature the work of several area artists where you will find beautiful pottery, natural skin care products, stained glass, candle holders, hand-painted and batik-dyed clothing and silk scarves, journals, jewelry and more. WomensWorks takes place in the UI Student Union Building Vandal Lounge from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. So even if you have to work until 5:00, there will be time to stop by to browse at the talented work of these local artists.

Nov 18 Tuesday Southern Hemisphere II: South Africa Recreation supervisor for Moscow Parks and Recreation, GINA RICHARDSON participated in the nonprofit People to People program traveling to South Africa this past summer. Richardson's trip was part of a sports and physical education exchange where she was among over 30 people from the United States to visit. As Murf Raquet reported in his Moscow-Pullman Daily News article (August 30-31, 1997, page 1C), "Lacking a firm set of expectations proved valuable to Richardson. With Moscow and the Palouse miles away, she was surrounded by the stark reality of a poor nation coming to terms with new-found freedoms, but at the same time unable to shake the fetters of segregation. 'By our presence, the children seemed to benefit...It was good for them to see a multiracial, predominantly female group working in harmony," Richardson observed. She has assembled a slide presentation which will be presented at this brown-bag lunch program. Join us for this unique glimpse of South African life.

Nov 19 Wednesday Women's Center Traditional Thanksgiving Potluck For nineteen years running, we have hosted this traditional Thanksgiving potluck. As always, we provide the turkey and you provide your favorite Thanksgiving dish. Join the Women's Center staff, students, and supporters again this year to celebrate the season and companionship. Come by about noon. There is usually still food on the table well into the afternoon. Don't miss this mouth-watering event!

Nov 20 Thursday When Love Hurts: Violence and Relationships Donna Ferrato, an award-winning photojournalist and author of Living with the Enemy, has devoted her life to documenting, exposing, and preventing the abuse of women and children by the ones they love. Ferrato rode with police on their "4-10" calls, was granted unprecedented access to hospitals, women's shelters, support and therapy groups, women in prison for killing their husbands and lovers in self-defense, and the homes of victims. In this presentation, Ferrato focuses on youth, incorporating contemporary music and images that bring into the light a hidden terror for young people from all walks of life. Her lecture and slide program offers a clear understanding of how violent relationships affect all of our lives. Ferrato's photographs have been widely published in LIFE, People, Ms., and twice on the cover of TIME. This program, supported by ASUI Productions and co-sponsored by the Women's Center, will be in the Student Union Building Ballroom and begins at 7:30 p.m.

Dec 2
Tuesday

Southern Hemisphere III: Peru Holly Wissler lived in Peru and Nepal for many years, leading treks in the Andes and Himalayas. She is currently working on two masters degrees at the University of Idaho, in flute performance and music history. Her music history thesis topic is an ethnomusicological look at a sacred pilgrimage festival in the Andes of Peru. Wissler continues to guide treks through Peru each summer and conducts on-site ethnomusicological fieldwork at the festival. The festival, *Qoyllur-rit'i*, is featured in Holly's slide presentation at the Women's Center. *Qoyllur-rit'i* is a high altitude, centuries-old festival in which thousands of Andean pilgrims hike to the base of the sacred glaciers of Colquepunku Mountain in southeastern Peru for ritual worship. An estimated 300 dance groups dance and play music for three days...non-stop. The colorfully costumed dance groups represent Andean characters who act out their myth through dance. For the first time in the history of this festival, a non-Peruvian—Holly Wissler—has been invited to play a major role in next year's festival with one dance group in particular. *This program begins at 7:00 p.m. in the Women's Center Lounge*.

Thank You Supporters of the UI Women's Center 25th Anniversary!

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Savory Moments with Auntie Pasto

Greetings My Culinary Cousins,

We continue our 25th anniversary festivities at the Women's Center. It was wonderful to see so many of you at our anniversary banquet! The food was savory, indeed. Thanks to all of you who contributed your recipe for Auntie Pasto's 25th Anniversary Favorite Recipes of the Women's Center Cookbook. Remaining copies of the cookbook are available at the Women's Center. Here are two easy-as-pie recipes for autumn.

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/.

PUMPKIN CREAM PIE

2 cups milk

1 cup canned pumpkin

1 cup whipped topping (such as Cool Whip)

2 packages vanilla instant pudding

1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice

1 baked 9" pie shell, cooled

Combine milk, pie filling mix, pumpkin, spice, and topping in a deep, narrow bottom bowl. Beat at the lowest speed for 1 minute. Pour into pie shell. Chill until set, at least 3 hours. Garnish with additional whipped topping and pecans if desired.

GUM DROPS

1 package (1% oz.) of powdered fruit pectin ½ teaspoon baking soda
1 cup light corn syrup

34 cup water 1 cup sugar

2 teaspoons of extract (strawberry, orange, lemon,

peppermint...your choice)

Combine pectin, water, and baking soda in a saucepan. Combine sugar and corn syrup in a large saucepan. Heat each on high until foam disappears from pectin mix, and sugar mixture boils rapidly (about 5 minutes). Pour pectin mixture into boiling sugar in a thin stream. Boil mixture stirring constantly for 1 minute longer. Remove from heat. Stir in extract and a few drops of food coloring (a color which corresponds with the extract). Immediately pour into a 8" x 8" x 2" pan. Allow to stand at room temperature for 3 hours or until it is set. Cut into pieces and roll in sugar.

When I Grow Up

continued from front page

departments welcome nontraditional students.

A study published in Adult Learning found that "instructors rate nontraditional students more positively than traditional students in the following areas: ability to concentrate, common sense, reasoning ability, time management, listening skills, paying attention, class preparation, completion of assignments, behavior in class, coursework (more careful), initiative (inclined to start a task immediately rather than procrastinate), eagerness to learn, good organizational skills, being responsible, career goals—committed to their vocation and valuing training, and concern for others."

Faculty attitudes and behavior contribute to the success and failure of older and younger students alike. Levine reports that nontraditional students rank course quality as the highest priority, above cost and services. At the Women's Center, over the years there have been more than a handful of students who find a hostile learning environment for nontraditional students. Although these are generally isolated cases, they are worthy of changing even if they require adjustments in curricula and teaching methods.

Higher education for adult women can be especially important. Dana Hawkins and John Sides reported in *U.S. News and World Report* that while nearly 60 percent of adult students are female, "for them the investment in higher education pays especially large dividends. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the percentage difference in annual median earnings between all men ages 25-34 with a college degree and those with a high school diploma is 54 percent. But for women in the same categories, that figure jumps to 88 percent."

Students are the bread and butter of colleges and universities, and older students are a sizable component. As we plan for the future of the institution, nontraditional students should be among those at the forefront. As Chartrand concludes, "Efforts to promote institutional commitment and to minimize psychological distress may be more important than interventions designed to promote the academic adjustment of nontraditional students."

Idaho HIV/AIDS Conference

The 9th annual Idaho HIV/AIDS Conference takes place at Boise State University, November 5th through 7th. Keynote speakers include Wayne Pawlowski, director of training, Planned Parenthood Federation of America; Merle Sande, professor and chair, Internal Medicine Department, University of Utah; and Laurie Jensen-Wunder, director of AIDS Prevention Education, South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs. For registration information, call 208-422-1305, or inquire at the Women's Center.

Native American Month Pow-wow

The kickoff event in November for Native American Month will be the third annual pow-wow, sponsored by the Native American Student Association (NASA), on Saturday, November 1 in the Student Union Ballroom beginning at 1:00 p.m. The early part of the pow-wow features a competitive session of dancing in sixteen different categories. Following a complimentary dinner, there will be a evening dancing session.

This is an excellent opportunity for non-Indians to learn about the meaning of the dances and the significance of the dancers' dress, as well as observing the level of skill and talent of various dancers. Last year's pow-wow drew nearly 300 people. The general public is welcome to attend. For more information, contact Farren Penney at 885-4555.

A Note from UI Women's Center First Student Coordinator

Dear All:

My mother recently sent me one of your newsletters commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Women's Center. I wish I could attend the anniversary banquet. It would also be fun to see how the Center has changed over the last 25 years. I was the very first Women's Center [Student] Coordinator back in 1973. The Assistant Dean of Women approached me the summer before my senior year at UI to help set up the Center in the old Administration Building. It was a busy summer of finding some comfortable old furniture. setting up bulletin boards with clippings related to the women's movement, and preparing to greet the women coming to the campus in the fall. I continued to work part-time through the rest of the year as the Center's Coordinator. Word of the Center quickly spread and by spring there were always at least half a dozen women in the Center. Sometimes we just sat around trading stories of the biases we faced and providing support for each other. We also got a speaker in for a brown-bag lunch about once a month. (It's too many years for me to remember who the speakers were!)

The women's movement was just beginning to catch on at UI that year, although it had been getting national publicity for several years before that. We were very fortunate to be at a school like Idaho, where there were fewer barriers than many other places. I had ended up at Idaho because of those barriers elsewhere. While in high school, my family was living in Richmond, Virginia. I wanted to go into pre-med, but the only state university that offered that curriculum did not admit women. I would have been faced with going to North Carolina and paying out-of-state tuition. So my folks moved to Moscow, where I finished high school and had no problem getting into the pre-med program at UI.

Now, 25 years later, with two daughters of my own, I strongly believe that the single best gift I can give them is a good education. And the thought that they might be limited in the field they can choose has never entered their heads! My oldest, a junior in high school, has her sights set on medicine, while the younger daughter, a seventh grader, wants to go into some kind of science, although she hasn't settled on a particular branch.

We've come so far and yet we have a ways to go. When I graduated in chemistry and began doing research work, I was one of three women among 30 or more chemists. I frequently found at conferences and meetings that I was the only woman. Now there are many more women at those same conferences, yet they are still far outnumbered by the men. Six years ago, I left a large environmental consulting firm because, although I was among the most senior women, I could see that I had hit the glass ceiling. The solution for me was to start my own company, run it my way, and have the joy of seeing it thrive when the larger firms for which I had worked previously were downsizing! There are now 10 of us in the company, including one man! Before he joined us a year ago, we got frequent questions about why we had no men on the staff. Our quick response was "When we find one that's qualified, we'll hire him!"

I am thrilled to see that the Women's Center has done so well over the years and has moved to even nicer quarters than in that first year. I wish you the very best over the next 25 years. I am enclosing \$25 to help in your anniversary year.

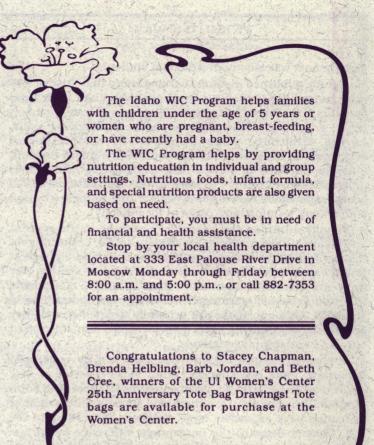
Sincerely,

A. Louise Dressen

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 JILL ANDERSON Office Coordinator

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