

Beacon Press

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March 23, 2009

To: UUA Board of Trustees
From: Helene Atwan, Director
Re: Beacon Press Board Report



In light of the downturn in the market, and a significant downturn in trade book sales, we have worked hard to revise our budgets, eliminating all but the most essential expenses and looking for creative solutions to managing to do good work with a reduced staff (through attrition). In spite of these challenges, we have managed to launch some important books and to acquire some promising new titles.

Since my last report, when the Republican smear campaign engulfing author **Rashid Khalidi** had prompted several prominent media outlets to respond in his defense, the *New York Times* has run a lead review of *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* recommending that President Obama read the book. Khalidi continues to be a vocal advocate of Palestinian rights, particularly in the wake of the war in Gaza, and has recently appeared on the Charlie Rose Show, BBC America, The Diane Rehm Show, C-Span/Book TV, CNN, CBS News, and BBC World.

Helen Benedict's new book *The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq*, the first to follow female veterans of the Iraq war, could not be more timely. Eve Ensler has praised the book as "a crucial accounting of the shameful war on women who gave their bodies, lives and souls for their country." Benedict, whom Katha Pollitt has lauded for her persistent courage to report "what others sweep under the rug," has recently been honored with the James Aronson Award for Social Justice Journalism and has appeared on NBC Nightly News as an expert on her subject. We are pleased that she has converted her book into a play, "The Lonely Soldier Monologues," that has been favorably reviewed by the *New York Times*.

In *Quiverfull: Inside the Christian Patriarchy Movement*, journalist **Kathryn Joyce** enters the households in which women live within stringently enforced doctrines of wifely submission and male headship. She shines the spotlight on a dangerous movement that remains a profound threat to gender equality and marriage equity. *Bitch Magazine* has applauded her investigative journalism as "illuminating and frightening," and *Public Eye*, the magazine for the political think tank Political Research Associates, has described it as "an excellent resource" with the insight to explain why "in the 21st century, a group that eschews modernity and individualism is gaining ground and adherents." *Christianity Today* ran a highly laudatory review calling on Christians to reexamine these issues, and Joyce has been invited to contribute pieces on the Quiverfull movement to Newsweek.com, *Salon*, and *Mother Jones*.

Until It Hurts: America's Obsession with Youth Sports and How It Harms Our Kids by journalist **Mark Hyman** takes a hair-raising look at the damaging effects of the ultra-competitive culture of youth sports. It has already been excerpted in *Sports Illustrated* and

was reviewed in the *Financial Times*. *New York Family Sports* interviewed Hyman for their Spring issue, and Buzz Bissinger, Stefan Fatsis, Robert Lipsyte, and Armen Keteyian have all praised the book. As Bissinger notes, "Every parent and every coach who has ever been involved in youth sports and cares about kids has an obligation to read it." We are looking forward to reading Mark's piece on the lessons he learned from his son's sports injury in the April 5th issue of the *New York Times*.



Comedian and lesbian icon **Kate Clinton**'s uproariously funny *I Told You So* has just come out in both book and abridged audio format (Beacon's third audio book), tackling sexual hypocrisy and gay marriage, 9/11 and its aftermath, US politics and so much more. Clinton has appeared on *The Rachel Maddow Show* on MSNBC and Air America to promote the book.

Early Spring: An Ecologist and Her Children Wake to a Warming World by Amy Seidl, Associate Director of the LivingFuture Foundation, brings the overwhelming problem of global warming to a personal level in a mix of memoir and science. *Library Journal* gave *Early Spring* a starred review, calling it "Informative and hopeful." We are pleased that *Organic Gardening*, a periodical that circulates to 500,000 readers, has excerpted the book in their April issue.

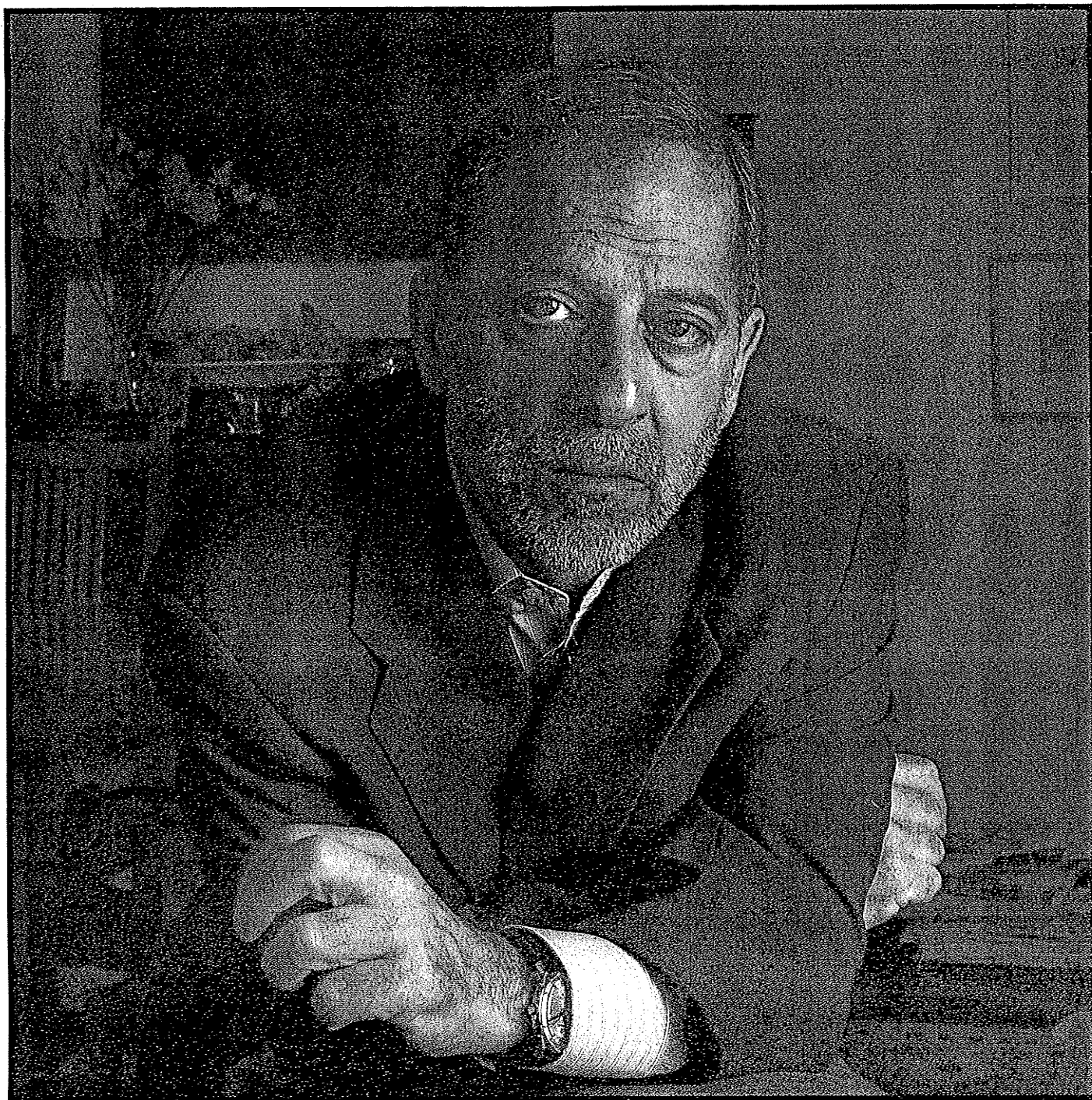
We have recently acquired two outstanding books, *Morning Haiku* by **Sonia Sanchez** and *Three Plays* by **Howard Zinn**. Sanchez is one of the most important writers of the Black Arts Movement, and has recently been honored with the Robert Frost Medal for distinguished lifetime service to American poetry and the Langston Hughes Poetry Award. Sonia will be keynote speaker for the UUMA Ministry Days at GA in 2009. *Morning Haiku*, a collection of poetry that celebrates the gifts of life and mourns the deaths of revered African American figures in the worlds of music, art, and activism, will be published in February 2010, her first new book since 1999.

Howard Zinn, as you know, is an activist and the renowned author of *A People's History of the United States*. We are pleased to be publishing all three of his plays, *Emma*, *Marx in Soho*, and *Daughter of Venus*, in one volume. Boston Playwrights' Theatre has recently performed all three pieces. From Karl Marx and Emma Goldman to the US "war on terrorism," Zinn's plays present a unique perspective on American history.

The Chronicle Review

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF IDEAS

The Chronicle of Higher Education • Section B • March 6, 2009



Rashid Khalidi's Balancing Act

By EVAN R. GOLDSTEIN

Does the World Care About American Culture? • How to Make \$100,000 as an Adjunct • Salvador Dalí's Inspired Madness

The following article is located at: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/februaryweb-only/107-53.0.html>

[Home](#) > [2009](#) > [February \(Web-only\)](#)

[Christianity Today, February \(Web-only\), 2009](#)

Deconstructing the Quiver

A review of *Quiverfull: Inside the Christian Patriarchy Movement*.
Review by **Elrena Evans** | posted 2/20/2009 12:07PM

Quiverfull: Inside the Christian Patriarchy Movement

by Kathryn Joyce

Beacon Press, March 2009

272 pp., \$25.95

It's a Monday night. Two back-to-back episodes of *Jon & Kate Plus 8* are on TLC. Tomorrow night the network will run *Kids by the Dozen* at 7 p.m., followed by four episodes of *17 Kids and Counting* during its 8-10 p.m. slot, followed in turn by another round of *17 Kids* from 11 to midnight. After that — if you're still awake — you can catch a few more rounds of *Jon & Kate*.

Looks like someone at TLC thinks big families might just equal big bucks in its current programming lineup.

Tie all that in with the media flurry about Nadya Suleman, the single mother in California who gave birth to octuplets conceived by in vitro fertilization in January, bringing her total number of children to 14, and suddenly we have — a trend? A fad? What's with all the large families? Or perhaps the real question is, what's with all of us who are watching them?

Why are we so interested in large families? Families like the Gosselins (*Jon & Kate*), the Duggers (*17 Kids*), and the Sulemans are sparking heated discussions among observers, including Christians. Outsider interest in how many children a woman has is nothing new, yet among considerations of failing Social Security and environmental concerns, this interest seems to be intensifying toward apprehension, even alarm. Women of childbearing age are used to fielding questions from family, friends, and complete strangers about their fertility: How many children do you have? How many children do you want? But these questions pale in light of the larger, more philosophical question at their base: How many children *should* you have?

That simple question implicates wide-ranging issues, including contraception, fertility treatments, human sexuality, gender roles, the purpose of marriage and procreation — issues that, in short, touch at the very core of our identities. Perhaps that's one of the reasons we are so fascinated by larger families: we're not just interested in what life is like for them, we're also questioning the implications for our own lives.

Kathryn Joyce addresses issues such as these in her new book, *Quiverfull: Inside the Christian Patriarchy Movement*. Joyce is specifically looking at the "Quiverfull" movement, whose origin is often credited to the 1985 publication of Mary Pride's *The Way Home: Beyond Feminism, Back to Reality*. Quiverfull adherents, along with other Christian families who eschew the name yet follow the principles, do not believe in using any form of birth control, including natural family planning, and for some, apparently, *lactational amenorrhea*, the suppression of ovulation that naturally results from breastfeeding. Simply put, as Joyce writes in her book, adherents believe in "babies, lots of them, for God." It's a movement that has drawn some attention as of late, including mention in a *New York Times* Fashion & Style [article](#) earlier this month.

In *Quiverfull*, Joyce turns a keen journalistic eye to the inner workings of the movement. She dedicates the first section of her book, entitled "Wives," to the concept of wifely submission, and makes the argument that it is the "antifeminist" practice of submission that paves the way for ideologies like Quiverfull to burgeon. From there, Joyce moves on to the heart of her book, "Mothers," and a discussion of the Quiverfull

movement. It isn't a large movement; she writes, "The number of families who have committed themselves wholly to the Quiverfull path doesn't represent any pollster's idea of a key demographic." But their aims are nonetheless big. Quoting David Bentley Hart, an Eastern Orthodox theologian, "It would not be difficult, surely, for the devout to accomplish — in no more than a generation or two — a demographic revolution."

The idea of a demographic revolution comes paired with an idea that surfaces repeatedly throughout Joyce's book: preparation for war. Joyce's interviewees differ on whether this coming war is spiritual, cultural, literal — or all three — but the message remains the same: Quiverfull adherents are planning to win this war by sheer numbers, giving birth to and raising "arrows," their term for children. Joyce references a letter from Cathi Warren, originally written as a response to columnist David Brooks's opinion in *The New York Times* that mothers of many are too busy with their children to win any sort of culture war: "Raising a large family ... was itself her 'battle station,'" observes Joyce about Warren, "as deliberately political an act as canvassing for conservative candidates, not to mention part of a long-term plan to win the culture war demographically."

Although several of the examples Joyce cites smack of the extreme (leaders who condone domestic violence, or blame repeated miscarriages on a woman's "witchcraft" left unrepented), many of the implied questions she raises in her book are insightful.

Writing about the growing trend of larger families on reality TV shows, she observes that the "theological underpinnings are glossed over to make room for the novel details of large family life." This observation seems a particularly important one for Christians: Are we interested in the theology of Quiverfull adherents, or do we just like watching the drama and entertainment that results? Can we look beyond the novelty factor — *How many loads of laundry do you do each day? Where do you store all the gallons of milk?* — and examine the questions of the soul hidden beneath the gloss of primetime television?

The criticisms against large families can be severe. Shmuley Boteach, father of nine, titled his recent *Jerusalem Post* article about his family size "The Criminal Act of Having Too Many Kids." But what do we make of Genesis 1:28 — be fruitful and multiply? It goes without saying that the Quiverfull interpretation of being fruitful isn't the only one; Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, [writing for CT](#) in 2001, states, "Fertility is not a command but a blessing that God gives to his creatures ... to suggest that birth control is evil or perverse because it undermines God's sovereignty is to underestimate God's sovereignty and reject our responsibility to serve him wisely."

So who has the final say? The couple? The medical profession? Friends, family, society, the culture at large? Fertility is a highly personal matter — but one with both public and political ramifications that shouldn't be ignored. Perhaps the real virtue of both Joyce's book and the current media focus on large families is a call to reexamine our own beliefs and the biblical basis for what we practice in the realm of family planning. If the question is bigger than, "How many children should we have?" maybe, to invoke Francis Schaeffer and Charles Colson, a better question would be, "How then, how now, shall we live?" The issues Joyce's book raises are fundamental to our identity as human beings, and as Christians. Perhaps they could stand some reexamination.

Elrena Evans is co-editor of [Mama, PhD: Women Write About Motherhood and Academic Life](#).

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Related Elsewhere:

More *Christianity Today* coverage of large families includes:

[The Case for Kids](#) | A defense of the large family by a 'six-time breeder.' By Leslie Leyland Fields (August 1, 2006)

Editorial: [Fill an Empty Cradle](#) | Falling birthrates demand new priorities for families. (November 1, 2004)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DARWIN!
Students, faculty prepare to celebrate the bicentennial of Charles Darwin.

SPLIT FOR SQUASH
WOMEN EARN VICTORY WHILE MEN COME UP SHORT IN SEASON FINALE AGAINST YALE. A9



FARMER GARNERS PRIZE
Medical School Professor Paul Farmer earns LIFE International Achievement Award.

The Harvard Crimson

THE UNIVERSITY DAILY SINCE 1873

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2009

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Retirement Offers To Start Next Week

By ESTHER L. YI
CRIMSON STAFF WRITER

Eligible University staff will receive retirement incentive packages as early as next Tuesday, kicking off a process that officials acknowledged could culminate in layoffs as Harvard seeks to cut costs.

Staff will have 45 days to accept or decline the offers, after which the University will reassess budgets before beginning discussions about layoffs with the Office of the General Counsel and human resources officials.

The information was relayed to department administrators in the sciences division of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences yesterday, according to individuals in attendance at the briefing. The individuals, who shared their own notes from the proceedings, requested anonymity in order to preserve their relationship with FAS administrators.

"I expect that there will be a very careful review of staffing levels... then we'll have to begin layoffs," FAS Associate Dean of Administrative Resources Geoffrey M. Peters told the assembled administrators, according to the individuals.

Peters repeatedly warned administrators to give no guidance on whether to accept the package, no matter how deeply they suspected that a staffer would be

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EARLY RETIREMENT

Dancing Harvard's incentive plans

ELIGIBILITY: Offers will be extended to staff over 55 years of age, who have worked at Harvard for over 10 years as of this June 30.

TIMELINE: Eligible staff at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Medical School, and the School of Dental Medicine could see offers as early as next Tuesday. Other Harvard schools will begin making offers next month.

PROCESS: Staff will have 45 days to accept or decline the packages, and most who accept will likely depart by the end of June.

MATERIAL GIRL



Jacqueline Olds discusses the book *"The Lonely American: Drifting Apart in the Twenty-first Century,"* about the effects of materialism on American culture at the First Parish Church.

Econ. Dept. May Cut Seminars

Shortage of economics faculty may bring end to junior seminars

By NOAH S. RAYMAN and ELYSSA A. SPITZER
CRIMSON STAFF WRITERS

Junior seminars in economics—the only small undergraduate courses taught by the department's faculty—may become yet another victim of the University-wide strain borne of the financial crisis.

With faculty departing and Harvard's hiring slowdown hindering their replacement, the already stretched department does not have enough faculty members to teach the seminars, according to some department members.

"We have a shrinking pool of faculty to teach the same pool of students," said Economics Professor Claudia Goldin, who taught a seminar this fall. "How can we teach as effectively when our faculty is down so many people?"

The decision to cancel junior seminars for the '09-'10 academic year—which Goldin said has already been discussed by the department as a very likely option—will not be finalized until at least mid-March, when the first draft of the department's list of offerings is due for the course catalogue, according to the department's Academic Coordinator Claire MacLean.

The economics department—which has one of the highest student-to-faculty ratios—introduced the 16-person courses three years ago as a result of a College-wide push to increase student interaction with faculty members.

"The student-teacher ratio is well out of whack," said Sendhil Mullainathan, an economics professor who also taught a seminar this fall.

Recent departures have worsened the situation. In the past few weeks, the department has lost several faculty members to the Obama administration.

Former University President Lawrence H. Summers, who was slated to co-teach a junior seminar this spring, left to head the President's National Economic Council.

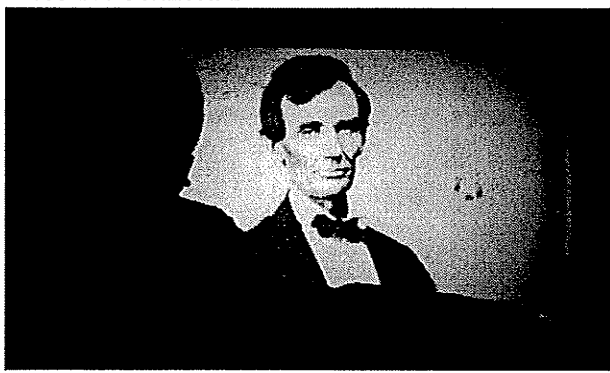
Professor David M. Cutler '87 departed to work with Obama on health care policy, and Professor Jeremy C. Stein joined Summers at the NEC. Visiting Professor Owen A. Lammont and Professor Raj Chetty have replaced Stein and Cutler, respectively, but department members said they are still anxious about the hiring slowdown.

"If economics is going to remain as popular as it has been for the last 20 years, we need to have more faculty resources in order to provide the educational experience that would be more comparable to what other departments are able to," said Economics Professor Benjamin M. Friedman.

Next year, the department plans to open courses that were formerly seminars to a higher number of students, thus eliminating their 16-student caps and losing their seminar designation.

See SEMINARS Page A6

LINCOLN'S OTHER SIDE



A viewer learns about President Abraham Lincoln's more racist side at the world premiere screening of the PBS documentary *"Looking for Lincoln"* yesterday at the JFK Jr. Forum at the Institute of Politics.

Experts Clash on Palestine Conflict

By NAVEEN N. SRIVATSA
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Two experts on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict laid out contrasting approaches to resolving the situation in a panel discussion at the Institute of Politics yesterday evening.

Shai Feldman, professor of politics and director of the Crown Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis University, argued that Israelis need to be convinced that the road to peace and the two-state solution will not jeopardize their security. Rashed Khalidi, professor of Arab studies and director of the Middle East Institute at Columbia University, said that the world powers should focus on building Palestinian

political unity rather than delegitimizing Hamas. The panel was moderated by Harvard Kennedy School Professor R. Nicholas Burns.

While introducing the speakers, Burns emphasized the effects of the 61-year struggle on the Israeli and Palestinian people.

"The Israeli people have not known a single day of peace, and the Palestinian people have not seen a single day of justice," he said.

Khalidi acknowledged the gravity of the situation, especially in light of the recent escalation in violence in Gaza, but said that he remained cautiously optimistic.

See PALESTINE Page A6

New House Masters Chosen

By BITA M. ASSAD & AHMED N. MABRUK
CRIMSON STAFF WRITERS

Law School Professor Ronald S. Sullivan Jr. and Law School Lecturer Stephanie Robinson have been chosen as the new masters of Winthrop House, and the first black House Masters in Harvard history, College Dean Evelyn M. Hammonds announced yesterday afternoon.

They will assume their new posts next fall, replacing Professor Stephen P. Rosen and Mandana Sassanfar, who called it quits after six years as the Winthrop House Masters, citing personal reasons

for the decision.

The pick comes as part of a recent push by Hammonds to foster greater diversity among House Masters, a group that contains few minority members.

In an interview last December, the Dean said that she hopes to usher minority faculty into recently opened House Master positions.

The selection fills one of two recent vacancies. In November, Florence House Masters Sue and James J. McCarthy announced their intention to step down after 13 years in the Quad.

Even though the McCartneys announced their retirement about two

months before Rosen and Sassanfar, their replacements have not yet been named. As is typical among House Masters, both Sullivan and Robinson have earned distinctions in a wide range of academic and professional pursuits.

Sullivan is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Morehouse College. He has worked in Kenya, documenting human rights violations, and served as the Director for the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia. Though he was a new faculty member at Yale Law School, Sullivan received the award for outstanding teaching

See WINTHROP Page A3



An IOP panel titled *"The Road to Peace After Gaza"* debates the future of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict last night.

HUDS Eliminates Peanuts from Menu Due to Salmonella Risk

By LIYUN JIN
CRIMSON STAFF WRITER

Students digging into the shrimp and peanut pad that served by the Harvard University Dining Services on Monday night may have noticed the lack of a central ingredient—diced peanuts. HUDS decided to eliminate peanut-based menu items due to the current peanut-borne salmonella outbreak that may have claimed nine lives and caused over 600

illnesses.

In consultation with the University's Environmental Health and Safety Department (EHS), which monitors food recall information, HUDS elected to remove certain foods in residential and retail operations as a precautionary measure.

EHS Public Health Manager Valerie Nelson said that in light of the quickly growing recall list, the elimination of nearly all peanut-containing products

is meant to protect students from foods that "may be thought to be safe one day, but which conceivably could be involved in the recall the next."

Although none of the ingredients have been formally implicated, HUDS spokeswoman Crista Martin said that HUDS is attempting to "stay ahead of the recall."

Dishes affected by the policy include peanut butter cookies—which are temporarily suspended—as well as the aforementioned pad thai.

But the peanut butter served in dining halls will not be affected by the new policy. According to Nelson, the safety of the various peanut butters HUDS serves—Teddie Peanut Butter, the bulk, residential dining peanut butter; Once Again Nut Butter, the organic peanut butter; and Snuckler's Peanut Butter personal packs, offered in retail locations and catering, was confirmed at the onset of the outbreak.

The policy will be in place until EHS—which receives information daily from the Massachusetts Health and Homeland Alert Network and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration—advises HUDS that it is safe to return the items to its menu.

Nelson said that decisions to reintroduce peanut-containing foods will be made on a case-by-case basis after the

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FM Inaugural Issue

FM gives you the inside scoop on the Harvard alumni who have been tapped to lead our nation.

SECTION 8

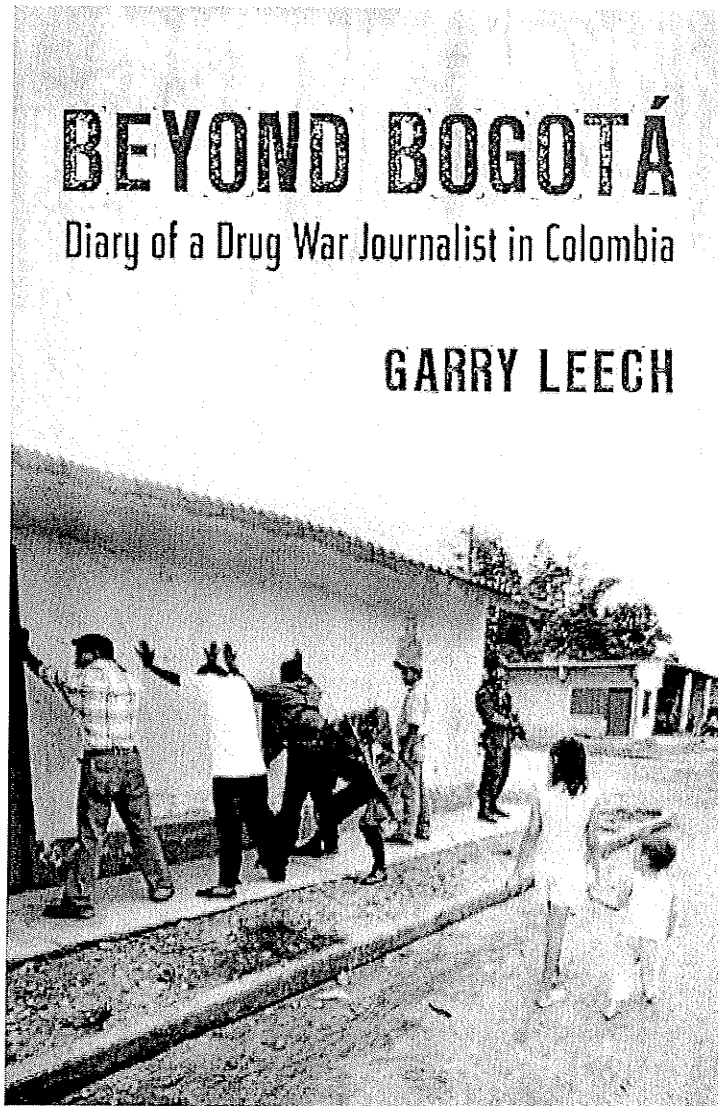


Book of the Month: "Beyond Bogota" by Garry Leech

By Matt Genner

London Progressive Journal - Issue 57 February 13, 2009

http://www.londonprogressivejournal.com/issue/show/57?article_id=371



For several decades Colombian civilians have been caught in the midst of a cocaine and oil-fuelled conflict. Government forces, paramilitary soldiers and various guerrilla groups have been fighting to control the country's oil-rich lands and cocaine fields. In 2000 the US launched Plan Colombia, a multibillion-dollar operation which switched the focus of the war on drugs away from drug traffickers to coca farmers. A key part of the strategy involved funding the Colombian government to carry out aerial fumigations of coca fields in the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) controlled regions, a policy which the US government claimed successfully destroyed all of the plants. There was, however, little firsthand, independent evidence to support these claims and, with this in mind, Garry Leech set-out to see the impacts of Plan Colombia for himself.

Leech is a rare breed of journalist; one who sacrifices his own safety and comfort to investigative topics often over-looked by mainstream corporate media. In his latest book, *Beyond Bogotá: Diary of a Drug War Journalist in Colombia*, Leech intertwines historical explanation of Colombia's drug war and his personal politicisation from naïve young traveller to investigative reporter, around the books . . .

March 10, 2009

THEATER REVIEW | 'THE LONELY SOLDIER MONOLOGUES (WOMEN AT WAR IN IRAQ)'

The Feminine, Touched: War as Women's Work

By NEIL GENZLINGER

If war-story fatigue prevents some theatergoers from checking out "The Lonely Soldier Monologues (Women at War in Iraq)," that will be unfortunate, because this energetically acted example of journalism as theater explores some issues that deserve more attention. Plays and films have parsed the war in Iraq from all sorts of angles — the justifications for American involvement, the treatment of wounded soldiers, the tactical mistakes — but comparatively little has been heard about the increased role of women in the military operations.

Helen Benedict, a journalism professor at Columbia, has interviewed an assortment of female veterans and constructed "The Lonely Soldier Monologues" from their words. If that sounds dry, it isn't: William Electric Black, her director, has injected the production with plenty of theatricality, using the whole space at Theater for the New City and livening things up with percussion, chanting, even a little audience involvement.

Ms. Benedict, who has also written a book based on her interviews, makes some choices that are less than illuminating. No one wants to hear soldiers whining about rough conditions. (Your tent's crowded? It's a war; what did you expect?) And some of what these women complain about has nothing to do with sexism or even the military. ("My team leader was controlling and arrogant," one grouses. Yeah? You just described 75 percent of the bosses in any hierarchy.)

But the bulk of the dialogue is revelatory and disturbing. Sexual harassment and assault by fellow soldiers is a constant theme. Lack of respect is another, and isolation yet another, women still being a small minority of the military population.

But commendably, the play doesn't merely ask for equal treatment; it also nods to the particular emotional pressures felt by women in the combat zone, many involving the Iraqi children who would approach soldiers or their convoys.

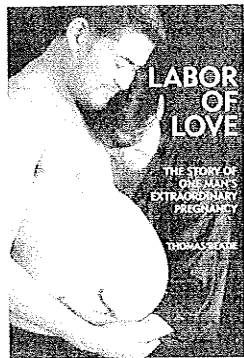
"You're supposed to run over them," one soldier laments. "I was a day-care teacher."

By the end of the play, you are keenly aware of the desensitizing that female soldiers had to go through to survive in such an environment. It feels like the opposite of progress.

The cast, asked to do a lot with basically a string of anecdotes, is sharp and forceful, especially Kim Weston-Moran and Verna Hampton as the two oldest soldiers, and Macah Coates as a young recruit from Wisconsin. Mr. Black gets carried away with his directorial embellishments at the end, just at the point when understatement would have been more powerful.

But this play is a well-conceived learning experience nonetheless. A panel after Saturday's performance is to include some of the actual soldiers depicted.

"The Lonely Soldier Monologues (Women at War in Iraq)" continues through March 22 at Theater for the New City, 155 First Avenue, at 10th Street, East Village; (212) 254-1109, theaterforthenewcity.net.



complicated. While he may be the first heterosexual, married, legally recognized man to carry a child, other transmen before him have given birth. (Beatie acknowledges this in passing three-quarters of the way through the book, and once again defensively in one of the final chapters, before dismissing it and moving on.) The difference is in the details, and in your own definition of a man. While Beatie's legal recognition is clearly a personal triumph, his insistence on being the first "man" to bear a child further marginalizes transpeople who do the same without turning in all the paperwork.

Beatie has the opportunity to set an example for acceptance in the LGBTQI community, which he feels has mostly shunned him. Instead, he is defensive about his choices and insistent about his masculinity and record-breaking achievement. His love for his daughter seems tainted by his pleas to be understood, though he refuses to acknowledge his own inconsistencies. Now pregnant with his second child—an event first announced on *The View*—Beatie will no doubt remain in the public eye, hoping to gain the acceptance he has so long desired. —BRITTANY SHOOT

Live Through This: A Mother's Memoir of Runaway Daughters and Reclaimed Love Debra Gwartney {HOUGHTON MIFFLIN}

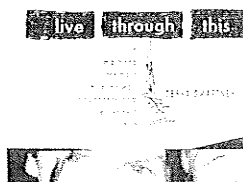
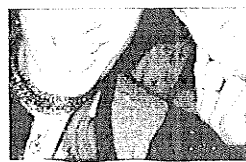
On the night her two teenage daughters will run away for the first of what will be many times, Debra Gwartney arrives home to find them cloistered in the bathroom dyeing their hair with Manic Panic, music blasting. "It was Bikini Kill: I recognized the voice and the badass lyrics of Stephanie's new favorite, [Kathleen] Hanna," she recalls in her predictably yet authentically heartbreaking memoir of those days, *Live Through This*. "This was a CD Amanda and Stephanie had bought for themselves, tuned in as they now were to grrl bands and only grrl bands, their old Madonna albums tossed aside with embarrassed disdain." Gwartney reminds herself that she was the one who bought them the Hole album from which her book takes its title—she had once been the kind of mom her daughters wanted to snuggle up to and confide in. How did they get so angry as to be unrecognizable?

After a bitter divorce, Gwartney moves from Tucson, Arizona to Eugene, Oregon with Amanda, Stephanie, and her two younger daughters, Mary and Mollic. All are traumatized in their own ways by the seeming downward spiral of their family, but the two older girls (ages 14 and 13, and the best of friends) are the ones to act on their feelings with the most force. Soon, the formerly excellent students are failing classes and skipping school, ridiculing their mother's

attempts at control. It's the late '90s—they wear black clothes, scrawl anarchy symbols on their bedroom walls, and swear allegiance to punk rock. The girls' rejection of rules and boundaries is a common enough—perhaps even necessary, and certainly not always dangerous—part of adolescence. But for Amanda and Stephanie, listening to Bikini Kill is a natural segue to sleeping on the streets.

These girls live the hard life on purpose, and as bad as things get, they are no one's victims. Gwartney is a single parent grasping at straws; she runs down the list of ways she might help her daughters, trying everything from wilderness therapy to foster parenting to rehab. After Stephanie has been gone for nearly a year without a word, her mother travels to San Francisco and wanders the streets looking for her. Gwartney is careful to present her own story here, and mostly avoids trying to reconstruct her daughters' thoughts or experiences. Living with Amanda and Stephanie, she confesses, had become so excruciating that she was partly relieved when they took off. But only partly—mostly, she's dogged by feelings of failure, loss, and betrayal.

It's difficult, and probably useless, to judge anyone's motives here, tangled up as they are with misunderstandings, rationalizations, and fantasies. It's impossible not to empathize with Gwartney's anguish, but also tempting to identify with Amanda and Stephanie's quest for independence at any cost. What can't be ignored, though, is that even when Amanda overdoses on heroin and Stephanie gets stabbed in the arm by a crackhead, their rebellion is something they've had the privilege to choose. This is made clear every time Gwartney picks up the phone and hears their dull, reluctant voices on the other end of the line, when their younger sisters catch them breaking into the house to stock up on supplies, and when Gwartney manages to persuade them to have dinner with their grandmother. As Gwartney's desperation ebbs and flows, one never gets the sense that these girls will stay gone forever (and not just because the book's subtitle makes a happy ending a foregone conclusion). When Gwartney finally describes their reconciliation—which begins tentatively, and grows into something deep and true—anyone who's ever been a teenage girl will likely find herself overcome. —ERYN LOEB



Quiverfull: Inside the Christian Patriarchy Movement ★

Kathryn Joyce {BEACON PRESS}

If you recall Sarah Palin's speech at the Republican National Convention, you no doubt remember her children, whom

she introduced for roughly 30 minutes before attacking the media for their curiosity about them. If the notion of having five kids in this day and age struck you as even slightly odd, Kathryn Joyce's *Quiverfull* may prove both illuminating and frightening. Joyce began researching the book to examine the "detail and complexity of the antifeminist lifestyle" that the media overlooked when reporting on pharmacists' refusal to fill birth-control prescriptions. Not a mere handful of religious renegades, they are a minute fraction of a much larger belief system that finds its ideal in the "Quiverfull" lifestyle, which views family planning as immoral, and women as little more than indentured baby machines.

Christian patriarchy enforces "complementarian" gender roles within a family, e.g., female submission and male "headship." At first glance the lifestyle can look, if not Amish, at least Amish-ish: Father off providing for his homeschooling, homesteading brood, and Mother at home in long skirt and apron doing the wash, tending to the cooking, and raising the children. But underlying this wholesome exterior is a long-range political vision that turns the meaning of "family planning" on its head. Quiverfull families (the movement takes its name from Psalms 127) are intentionally reproducing as quickly as possible to breed a new conservative Christian majority and hasten Christ's return to Earth.

Setting aside Jesus's ETA for the moment, this lifestyle is not easy on women. To some degree, submission means always having to say you're sorry. Quiverfull wives are expected to be sexually available to their husbands at all times, and constantly striving to please them. Masturbation, refusing sex, and even forming close friendships with women are equated with adultery, since none of them represents a path to motherhood.

Quiverfull balances analysis of the scripture behind these beliefs with stories that give a human face to the movement. When Quiverfull wife Cheryl Seelhoff's abusive husband leaves the family, she meets another man whom she eventually marries. Her church accuses her of adultery and says if she divorces it will be without grounds, giving her a lengthy list of punishments to work through. When she doesn't comply, the community works together to cut her off from her church and her sole source of income, a highly successful career writing, editing, and speaking in the Christian homeschooling world. (Seelhoff goes on to become a radical feminist blogger, so score one for our team.) Other women have been shunned for speaking up about domestic abuse, but not before they're held up to public scrutiny, blame, and humiliation.

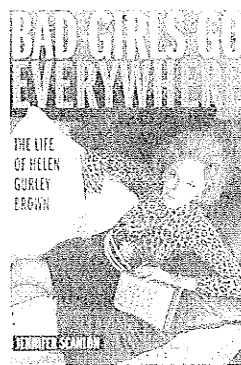
Joyce's facility with this difficult material is notable. In covering a movement that's virulently antifeminist, homophobic (they advocate the death penalty for homosexuality

in some sects), retrograde, and often just plain cruel, she portrays her interviewees as intelligent, patient, and kind. And though the discussion of Calvinism versus Reformation Protestantism in the early chapters gets a tad dense at times, the rest of the book moves along quickly, letting the facts speak for themselves. It would be easy to reduce the members of the Christian Patriarchy movement to a fringe group of hard-right kooks and poke fun at them; Joyce stays respectful, and closes with a look at a family who came to the movement later in life. The husband and wife play casually with the assigned gender roles, while in the background their children take to them with righteous fervor, opening the door for the next Quiverfull generation.

—HEATHER SEGGER

Bad Girls Go Everywhere: The Life of Helen Gurley Brown Jennifer Scanlon {OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS}

Jennifer Scanlon, a scholar of gender and consumer culture, might be the perfect person to pen the first biography of a woman as notorious as Helen Gurley Brown. In *Bad Girls Go Everywhere*, Scanlon approaches Gurley Brown's legacy in three loosely divided yet comprehensive sections: her life, her philosophy, and her impact. And though my own ideology conflicts with that of Gurley Brown, I came away from this book with immense respect for the way she carved her place in history. One could argue that it was Gurley Brown who made feminism go pop—without her, there would be no "Material Girl" Madonna, no "Bills, Bills, Bills" Beyoncé, and (even more directly) no *Sex and the City* franchise.



Raised in poverty and by her own admission not beautiful, Gurley Brown was from the start a believer in getting what you could with what you had. She slept with men she worked with (whether they were single or not) to advance her career, and schemed to get gifts from suitors in order to amass her own wealth. Simply put, Gurley Brown was a hustler: She recognized the ways women are disadvantaged by "the system," and instead of using her intellect to change it, she figured out how to manipulate it to her economic advantage. In *Sex and the Single Girl*, the how-to guide for the unmarried woman that made its author a household name in 1962, Gurley Brown used her own experiences and beliefs to counter the much-maligned stereotype of the single girl, making a case that a womanhood that didn't revolve around marriage and domesticity could be fun and fulfilling. Three years later, Gurley Brown took over the reins as the first female editor-in-chief of the foundering

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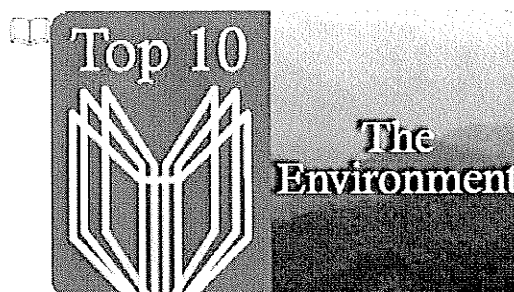
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Top 10 Books on the Environment: 2009.

Seaman, Donna (author).

FEATURE. First published February 15, 2009 (*Booklist*).

The first lesson in Ecology 101 is that everything is connected. This means that a book about bees relates strongly to books about ranching, a river in New York, a Wisconsin prairie, and Los Angeles' smog. The best "green" books reviewed in *Booklist* over the past year take distinctive perspectives on the same matrix of forces human and wild, explicating problems, offering solutions, and telling compelling stories of hubris and hope.

Albatross: Their World, Their Ways. By Tuie De Roy and others. 2008. Firefly, \$49.95 (9781554074150).

In this magnificent book about a magnificent bird—the revered, now endangered albatross—wildlife photographer De Roy and contributing scientists cover all aspects of albatross beauty, biology, and conservation.

American Earth: Environmental Writing since Thoreau. Ed. by Bill McKibben. 2008. Library of America, \$40 (9781598530209).

The environmental movement has been guided by writing of clarity and power, including books by McKibben, who has created a defining and essential anthology featuring 100 pioneering, eco-minded writers.

Fruitless Fall: The Collapse of the Honeybee and the Coming Agricultural Crisis. By Rowan Jacobsen. 2008. Bloomsbury, \$25 (9781596915374).

Jacobsen celebrates the marvels of the honeybee, reveals the many ways we've endangered this essential pollinator, and calls for action to prevent a "fruitless fall."

Greasy Rider: Two Dudes, One Fry-Oil-Powered Car, and a Cross-Country Search for a Greener Future. By Greg Melville. 2008. Algonquin, paper, \$15.95 (9781565125957).

Melville's larky tale of a coast-to-coast road trip in a car running on french-fry oil, including stops at a wind farm, a renewable energy lab, and a green home, is splendidly entertaining and educational.

Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution—and How It Can Renew America. By Thomas L. Friedman. 2008. Farrar, \$27.95 (9780374166854).

Friedman makes the all-important connection between business and environmentalism in this call for a green revolution.

The Hudson: America's River. By Frances F. Dunwell. 2008. Columbia Univ., \$74.50 (9780231136402); paper, \$29.95 (9780231136419).

The beautiful and historic Hudson River became "grossly polluted," a story with a happy and instructive ending brilliantly told by Dunwell, a key figure in the river's restoration.

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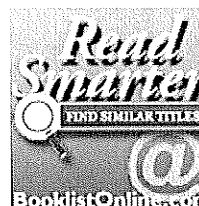
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FROM BOOK LINKS

Points of View

AWARDS

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- ☐ Great Graphic Novels for Teens
- ☐ Quick Picks
- ☐ Carnegie Medal
- ☐ National Book Award
- ☐ National Book Critics Circle Award
- ☐ Pulitzer Prize



Nature's Second Chance: Restoring the Ecology of Stone Prairie

Farm. By Steven I. Apfelbaum. 2009. Beacon, \$25.95 (9780807085820).

Ecologist Apfelbaum candidly chronicles the complex challenges he faced while restoring an 80-acre swath of woefully depleted and toxic southern Wisconsin farmland and turning it back into a thriving prairie.

Smogtown: The Lung-Burning History of Pollution in Los Angeles

By Chip Jacobs and William J. Kelly. 2008. Overlook, \$26.95 (9781585678600).

A fun book about smog? Jacobs and Kelly capture the aura of 1950s sci-fi movies in this lively history of Los Angeles' monstrous smog.

Trespass: Living at the Edge of the Promised Land

By Amy Irvine. 2008. Farrar/North Point, \$25 (0-86547-703-5).

Drawing on her Mormon family history, Irvine revels in Utah's breathtaking beauty and protests its destructive exploitation.

Why I Came West

By Rick Bass. 2008. Houghton, \$24 (9780618596751).

Bass tracks his ardor for the wild, especially his love for Montana's Yaak Valley, in this moving and instructive memoir of his life as a writer and wilderness activist.

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Works Discussed:

1. Trespass : Living at the Edge of the Promised Land
2. Hot, Flat, and Crowded : Why We Need a Green Revolution--and How It Can Renew America
3. Albatross : Their World, Their Ways
4. Greasy Rider : Two Dudes, One Fry-Oil-Powered Car, and a Cross-Country Search for a Greener Future
5. Why I Came West
6. The Hudson : America's River
7. Nature's Second Chance : Restoring the Ecology of Stone Prairie Farm
8. Fruitless Fall : The Collapse of the Honeybee and the Coming Agricultural Crisis
9. American Earth : Environmental Writing since Thoreau
10. Smogtown : The Lung-Burning History of Pollution in Los Angeles

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SIGNS *of* SPRING

A SCIENTIST OBSERVES AND EXPLAINS THE IMPACT

OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ON HER GARDEN AND YOURS. By Amy Seidl

Like many other gardeners, I'm eager to try novel varieties that could bring more cultivated diversity to my Vermont garden, not to mention new tastes that will be the envy of my neighbors. And so when 'Reliance' peaches appeared on the table of a friend's house last August, a whole basket of drippingly sweet and fleshy drupes, I immediately and greedily investigated growing peaches. It was pure covetousness—I too wanted these delicacies in my garden.



An extended growing season in North America has been touted as a benefit of climate change. Warming temperatures and greater precipitation are predicted to increase productivity in USDA Plant Hardiness Zones 3, 4, and 5, my own garden being in Zone 4. Gardeners and farmers in these cold, often northern places will be able to add new crops and see less winter stress, and the rate of photosynthesis may increase if there is enough available nitrogen to match the acceleration of carbon in the atmosphere. In fact, I already see these changes where I live.

"November is more like October, April more like May," I hear people say as they try to make sense of the extended season, the fact that children

are still swimming in the river after the beginning of school, or that sugaring season begins before rather than after Town Meeting Day, which for more than 200 years has been held on the first Tuesday in March. People are observing the differences as the growing season lengthens. People are asking: What is responsible for these changes, and how are they affecting the world around us?

Life in the garden is adapted to temperature as a primary cue to begin new growth, like a newborn baby who when placed on her mother's chest scoots upward toward the breast. Temperature is the orient-

ing cue for plant and animal life in the garden; it is the signal that stimulates growth, setting in motion the transition from dormancy to activity. This transition appears to us to take place at the whole plant or animal level, the glossy pink rhubarb nubs thrusting forth or the just-hatched fly lazily looking for edibles, but in actuality it is far smaller.

Within the cell, temperature controls the expression of enzymes, which catalyze specific reactions, turning on the proteins and hormones that manifest growth. Enzymes are closely adapted to their environment, and throughout time temperature has become a key feature of how they work. If temperatures are too high, enzymes tend to break apart and dissolve into the aqueous contents of the cell. If temperatures are too low, they become tightly bound and ineffective. Climate change is interrupting the lock-and-key relationship that temperature has with enzyme activity, the cues that have evolved over millennia.

It goes against a northerner's intuition, used to more cold than warmth during the calendar year, not to feel pleasure for a warm day. Yet it feels conflicting to benefit at all from climate change, to plant peaches in anticipation of the coming warm temperatures. Paradoxically, it also seems like a natural reaction. As environments change, we cultivators have always experimented with new crops, fitting them to the conditions at hand. On one hand, we may gain in pitted fruits; on the other, we might lose the cold-loving crucifers. Between the increasingly erratic weather and the whole host of new fungi, pathogens, and insect pests that will colonize our gardens and farms, the challenges will be enormous. It is hard to imagine that agriculture will truly benefit from the changes, especially given the predicted changes in rainfall patterns. Yet global warming will force us to respond creatively to the new dynamics and the disequilibrium in our landscapes. Frankly, we can do nothing else.

Adapted from *Early Spring: An Ecologist and Her Children Wake to a Warming World*, by Amy Seidl, who is an ecologist and research scholar at Middlebury College in Vermont. Copyright 2009. Reprinted with permission from Beacon Press.



From Good Offices

As we cruise into Ministry Days and General Assembly, I feel excited about the Good Offices training we will be hosting on Monday, June 22 in Salt Lake City. For those of you who are chapter officers, I hope you have made a note of the training and will remind your Good Offices Person about attending. It's my hope that GOPs who are new to the position or have a

least a year remaining on their term will make the effort to attend. What's going to be different about this training? Several things:

First, the training will be like a one day Ministry Day event with presentations, small group conversations, workshops and panels. For those who have wanted GOP "nuts and bolts," this training will be for you.

Second, the training is a response to those who have been confused, disillusioned, unhappy, or uncertain about the role of the chapter GOP. In September 2008, a group of colleagues gathered in Baltimore for an intensive one-day session that ad-

ressed the past, present and future of GOP. The agenda for this training emerged from that session. If you have ever wondered exactly what it was you were supposed to be doing as a GOP, this training will be for you.

Third, when there has been a failure in the GOP process, it's often (but not only) due to a lack of confidence: the GOP lacks the confidence/skill to fill the need; the colleague in need of a GOP doesn't have confidence in the GOP. It's my hope that this training will begin addressing this confidence issue. If this has been your concern, then this training will be for you.

A general outline of the training is included in the UUMA Ministry Day announcement you received and you can also look at it on

the UUMA website. Register through the UUMA office (not with me).

Have a great spring. Take care of yourself and stay in touch with your colleagues,

Fred Muir
goodoffices@uuma.org
 Continental Good Offices

*Monday, June 22, 2009:
 Good Offices Training
 SLC Marriott—Downtown
uuma.org/good_offices_training*



CENTER DAY 2009

Tuesday, June 23, 2009
 Salt Lake City

"Pushups for Peace"

★ **Professor Sonia Sanchez**

Sonia Sanchez, activist, poet, playwright, and professor, will explore with us the nexus of poetry, spirituality and social transformation. We are honored to present as our keynote this dynamic speaker, an internationally known lecturer on African American culture, literature, women's liberation, peace and racial justice. Details at www.uuma.org/center_day_presenter

In the afternoon, CENTER will offer 3-hour, intensive workshops on subjects of immediate concern led by the best of our esteemed colleagues. Workshop titles are list below — to see full details visit www.uuma.org/center_day_workshops_2009.

For more details about Ministry Days and to register visit www.uuma.org/ministry_days

2009 CENTER Day Workshops:

- Singing Our Tradition with Diversity and Joy!: An Intro. to a new UUA Spanish Language Hymn Supplement
- A House for Hope: The Promise of Progressive Religion
- Navigating Staff/Contract Issues
- The Power of Non-Anxious Presence
- Practical Theology for Professional Community: One Model
- Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership
- Understanding the Enneagram
- Be the Change: Sustaining Ministries of Peace and Justice
- Beyond The Usual: Worship as if It Matters Because It Does
- Ministry & Technology
- Upcoming Opportunities in Congregational Ministry
- GA Minns Lecture — Building a New Andalusia: UUism in Creative Engagement with Judaism and Islam

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BOOK REVIEW

The case against student loan lenders

By Rich Barlow | March 12, 2009

If a lender makes a loan and the borrower repays it with interest, the lender profits. If the borrower can't repay, the lender loses out. It's simple finance, or so you doubtless think. Silly you.

For the student loan industry, the reality is the opposite: Lenders hope their borrowers default, because they actually make more money that way. Not only can they charge usurious interest, but they also get to bury defaulted borrowers with punishing penalties and fees. Moreover, student loans are the only loans for which bankruptcy protection is prohibited. Pile on collection fees from agencies assigned to chase and harass borrowers for what they owe, and repayments can inflate to several times the original balance.

All of this comes from Alan Michael Collinge's necessary new exposé, and it calls to mind the Inquisition, minus the religion. That Collinge writes from personal experience makes "The Student Loan Scam" passionate and informed. When he graduated in 1988 with three engineering degrees from the University of California, he consolidated his \$50,000 in student loans with Sallie Mae, the government-sponsored company that later privatized and is now the leading student loan company. When he fell slightly behind on his repayments, Collinge says, the company assured him that if he continued his regular payments, he'd be assessed only a one-time late fee.

That fee mushroomed into a monthly charge, however. When he called Sallie Mae, the company refused to strike the fees. He tried to consolidate his loans with another lender offering better terms, only to learn that federal law bans that after the first consolidation. Collinge, whose political action committee, StudentLoanJustice.Org, catalogs such cases and advises the victims, is not the most extreme example. Some folks have fled the country or committed suicide to escape the stress and collection efforts of the loan industry. Even an earthquake won't shake these guys, who, Collinge reports, defaulted one borrower (without notifying him) after a California quake destroyed his apartment.

This mess, according to Collinge, is the work not only of greedy industry types but also their lackeys in political office. "Know that I hold you in my trusted hands, I have enough rabbits up my sleeve to be able to get where we need to," Ohio Representative John Boehner told a dinner hosted by a Sallie Mae executive. There are several such quotes here, and in some cases here the industry's actions have drawn legal penalties. (Some, former industry insiders included, compare student lenders to loan sharks.)

Collinge calls for laws granting student borrowers the same consumer protections enjoyed by other indebted people. The book would have felt more balanced, without losing its muckraker's sting, had he provided more of the industry's defense. What little he serves up is pretty flabby. Stripping bankruptcy protections for student loans, he writes, was based on "undocumented anecdotal examples of students who filed for bankruptcy immediately upon graduation. In fact, most of the anecdotal incidents involved credit-card debt, not student loan debt."

Adding to the book is not a suggestion made lightly. For a slender volume, it reads long in places. The chapter on the grassroots rebellion against the loan industry, in large part a memoir of Collinge's activism, could go.

He's performed a service nonetheless. He notes that Thomas Jefferson and Henry Ford declared bankruptcy at various times in their lives - an important reminder, in our materialist, money-is-merit culture, that hard times can befall even the talented, and that bankruptcy shouldn't always be stigmatizing.

Reach Rich Barlow at barlow81@gmail.com. ■



TAMARA DREWE
By Posy Simmonds
(Mariner)
Posy Simmonds (not-

ed for her graphic novel *Gemma Bovery*) began drawing *Tamara Drewe* in 2005 as a weekly series for *The Guardian*. Based on Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the installments eventually totaled 110 episodes and have now been refined and joined into one nuance-filled piece. Set in Bournemouth, England, *Tamara Drewe* explores the lives of Beth, the manager of a writer's retreat in the countryside; her cheating husband/acclaimed novelist, Nicholas Hardiman; Andy, the hunky groundskeeper; and Tamara Drewe, a cosmetically modified hot-piece-of-ass columnist who just inherited her mother's house down the street. A handful of peripheral characters add their individual blends of candor to the plot. As in any good soap opera, a bevy of secrets, affairs, and deception steams up the pages. Simmonds' drawings are intricate and expressive, and her characters' pointed personalities are in harmonious contrast to the elegance of their delicate, graphic build. She's careful to mind small details, such as animals grazing (or doing the "hibbity-dibbity"), "Celebrity Watch" page-layouts similar to those found in popular magazines, stylish outfits, and buildings adorned with realistic-looking graffiti. Her use of color is subtle, featuring mostly pale, subdued hues, accentuated sparingly by bright ones. Having read my fair share of graphic novels, I unexpectedly find Simmonds' cartoons to be the truest to human expression I've seen in a while. I dare say *Tamara Drewe* loosely reminds me of my beloved *Archie* comics, only more sincere, sexy, funny, bold, clever, unpredictable, and (thank God) R-rated. [WHITNEY DWIRE]



THE WELL-DRESSED APE: A Natural History of Myself
By Hannah Holmes
(Random House)
Hannah Holmes'

The Well-Dressed Ape is the type of book only one person in every household needs to read. Not because it isn't interesting but because it's so full of fascinating factoids that the reader will end up spouting them out. "Huh, apparently Joseph Stalin tried to breed a half-human, half-chimp army," you might say to whomever's listening. Not a book to read by yourself on the subway.

Holmes sets up her study of *Homo sapiens* to mirror what you'd see in a field-guide entry about a rabbit or lemming—there's a description of our own habitat, eating habits, physical form, and so on. Looking at ourselves from an outside perspective, we certainly do seem like strange creatures. But Holmes goes beyond this gambit to take a deeper look at herself and at us. She takes an endearingly honest look at her life—her childlessness, her love of 'shrooms—through the lens of an obsessive number of scientific studies, covering such varied topics as the human development of tools and language and what tickles our pleasure sensors. The results of these studies aren't indisputable, and Holmes is up-front about this. In fact, when it comes to questions of evolution, she lists a whole bunch of theories for many of our attributes and sometimes adds her own convincing hunch.

The idea that humans have a lot in common with animals isn't a shocking conclusion. More interesting, and what Holmes ends her book with, are the differences. The capacity for abstract thinking led humans to tools, and though a few other creatures use tools as well, Holmes shows how we have used ours to kill off our predators and produce enough food, allowing our species to grow to unsustainable numbers. But unique as well is the human capacity to analyze our actions and hopefully change our behavior. [KARIN MARLEY]

women of the cloth

FOUR BOOKS LOOK AT RELIGION FROM THE FEMALE PERSPECTIVE



DATING JESUS
A Story of Fundamentalism, Feminism, and the American Girl • By Susan Campbell
(Beacon Press)
Susan Campbell



I'M PERFECT, YOU'RE DOOMED
Tales from a Jehovah's Witness Upbringing • By Kyria Abrahams
(Touchstone)
Kyria Abrahams



QUIVERFULL
Inside the Christian Patriarchy Movement • By Kathryn Joyce
(Beacon Press)
Kathryn Joyce



TAKING BACK GOD
American Women Rising Up for Religious Equality • By Leora Tanenbaum
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux)
Leora Tanenbaum

DATING JESUS: A Story of Fundamentalism, Feminism, and the American Girl • By Susan Campbell • (Beacon Press) • As a young girl, author Susan Campbell was in love with Jesus. She would memorize quotes he'd said, sing songs giving him praise, and even go to his house multiple times a week to hear his greatest hits. She wanted to know everything about him, until she began to come into her own gender consciousness. *Dating Jesus* is both a coming-of-age story about the mixed messages Campbell received growing up as an evangelical Christian in America's Bible Belt and an investigation into her childhood suspicion that, as a female, giving your heart to Jesus meant taking a back seat in his Astrovan to Heaven. Campbell's wry wit and ability to break down Scripture crown her the Sarah Vowell of feminist theology. A must-read for anyone who's wrestled with coming to terms with women's social roles in her own faith. [TAYLOR GAVLIN ORG]

I'M PERFECT, YOU'RE DOOMED: Tales from a Jehovah's Witness Upbringing • By Kyria Abrahams • (Touchstone) • For most, Jehovah's Witnesses mean a knock on the door, an occasional interruption to one's day. For stand-up comic and poet Kyria Abrahams, the religion was a way of life for her first 23 years. *I'm Perfect, You're Doomed* is not only a memoir of her time in a faith often construed as a cult but also a tale of OCD, addiction, and broken families. Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate birthdays or Christmas and believe that those who do (known as "worldly" people) will perish in Armageddon. Abrahams recounts her strict upbringing, her marriage at the age of 18, and a dark spell of drinking and cutting herself when her husband won't let her work, until, eventually, she finds her salvation in worldly folk. Abrahams tackles her story with deft humor—her riff on how her public-school teachers dealt with her strict religious rules is especially witty—and her comedy is enhanced by just how humorless her life has been. If you're a believer in the equation that comedy equals tragedy plus time, *I'm Perfect* may serve as mathematical proof. [HEATHER MUSE]

QUIVERFULL: Inside the Christian Patriarchy Movement • By Kathryn Joyce • (Beacon Press) • In this engrossing look at the evangelical Protestant "Quiverfull" movement, we learn that the conservative patriarchal group takes its name from Psalm 127, which states: "Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them." (In other words, "Want to be in God's army? Start having babies—as many as God can give you.")

Stripped of equality, Quiverfull wives are servants of the home and of their husbands. Having an "unsubmissive" wife means a man can't control his home and is therefore unfit for church leadership. The patriarchy movement doesn't allow women to have friendships with other women, as the husband should be the only source of emotional support, and it even encourages young women to not merely save themselves for marriage but to save their first kiss for the marriage altar. Skillfully reported by journalist Kathryn Joyce, *Quiverfull* has echoes of *The Handmaid's Tale*. Unfortunately, it's not fiction. [REBECCA BRAVERMAN]

TAKING BACK GOD: American Women Rising Up for Religious Equality • By Leora Tanenbaum • (Farrar, Straus and Giroux) • This is a book about women who honor organized religion but struggle with their second-class status within it. From the story of two Muslims who organized a woman-led prayer service despite bomb threats, to the tale of a devoted Catholic advocating to be legitimately ordained as a priest, Tanenbaum covers women working both within their faith's social structure and against it, as well as those who thirst for change but feel powerless to speak up. With attention to Catholic, evangelical Christian, Muslim, and Jewish women—along with chapters on sexuality and language in worship, perspectives from primary texts and contemporary, forays into ancient history, and her interviews and attendance at services and conferences—Tanenbaum is thorough but never patronizing. Warm and informative, her own voice enriches the text as she talks about women rising up against the practice of their preachings. [CHRISTIE FEMIA]