Congratulations to our new Doctors!


Pairin Jotisakulratana presented her dissertation research, “Mothers of All Peoples: Goddesses of Thailand from Prehistory Until the Present” on Thursday, September 20th, 2012. WSE will host a going away party for Pairin before she returns to Thailand.


Greetings from the Program Chair

As new curricular chair of Women’s Spirituality, I want to say what an honor it is to work among so many amazing scholars, healers, leaders, and visionaries. Our students, alums, staff and adjuncts offer myriad gifts to both our community and the world at large; I am continually inspired by hearing of your community engagements, intellectual and artistic endeavors, and spiritual healing work. You will read about some of these incredible projects in this newsletter; others will be highlighted throughout the year at WSE gatherings and via online announcements.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Community,

It is wonderful to have joined you all in the role of Program Assistant this semester. My name is Manvi Singh and I have recently started the Expressive Arts Therapy program at CIIS. I have greatly enjoyed meeting those of you whom I have met and have felt very welcomed and supported within this community already.

Warmly,
Manvi
There are moments in life when you miss someone so much that you just want to dream and hug them. It is about appreciating the importance of all the people who have touched our lives.

Wally opened his heart and home to all of us in the Women’s Spirituality program, celebrating our graduations, rituals, accomplishments, goals and love for each other. He, with as much passion as Lucia, traveled with us on her trips throughout Europe and Africa, taking endless photographs while sharing his wisdom and their mutual belief in caring, sharing, healing and vision.

Wally went to City College of New York when he was 15, graduated at 18, having switched his major in his junior year from Statistics to Physics, because swept away by the possibilities of peaceful applications of nuclear energy. Later, as a founder and President of Physics International, he explored peaceful applications of nuclear energy. At the same time he joined Lucia in radical political activities for equality and justice, notably as fundraising chair of the Peace & Freedom Party. While in graduate school, Lucia and Wally brought up three sons; they have ten grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Someone has described their relationship as “mysterious and magical.” Lucia says that Wally’s “unflagging support” made all her work possible. “Our marriage/partnership of sixty-five years may have endured because our differences (he’s a scientist, I’m a seeker) preclude boredom. And, probably, because underneath different external identities, we share similar deep beliefs.

I believe their life together was much like the creative process, in order to solve a problem, both the right and the left hemispheres of the brain must activate. This connection quickly locks in, the brain pulls together different thoughts and binds them into a new single idea that enters consciousness. This is the “aha” moment of insight, which Lucia and Wally experienced throughout their relationship.

Fortunately, I had the opportunity to have many inspiring conversations and fascinating times with Wally and Lucia. It is those special, sacred memories that we remember most. Wally would quietly come to Lucia’s rescue, be it a breakdown of her computer, microwave, or to support her in the challenges of trying to be a scholar and international feminist while being a mother, responsible citizen, wife, teacher, friend.

Lucia speaks of the space “in between” and “underneath” that creates a deep bond between people.

For me, Wally, lived his life with Lucia, like in a Hindu marriage ceremony, when a man and woman become husband and wife. As the ends of their garments are tied together, the groom takes the hand of the bride with the words, I seize your hand that I may gain fortune, I am the spirit, you are the rest; I am the words, you are the melody; I am the seed, you are the field; I am the sky, you are the earth.

As for so many of us, we are grateful for the gift of knowing Wally Birnbaum. We will miss him but his presence and values for justice with compassion, equality, and transformation will always be part of Women’s Spirituality.

By Tricia Grame

October New Moon forum: Alana Roman, an MA student in the Women’s Spirituality program, organized a screening of the film “The Things We Don’t Talk About: Woman’s Stories from the Red Tent” by Isadora Gabrielle Leidenfrost, PhD. As stated on the movie’s website, redtentmovie.com, The Red Tent is a “spontaneous and organic...textile space where women gather to rest, renew, and often share deep and powerful stories about their lives. The Red Tent movement is changing the way that women interact and support each other by providing a place that honors and celebrates women, and by enabling open conversations about the things that women don’t want to talk about in other venues.”
Program Updates

Fall Retreat: On August 17th, twenty women from across the United States and the world, came together to share devotional song, ritual, and healing practices as a way of celebrating the beginning of a new academic year together. We officially welcomed Alka Arora as curricular chair for the academic year of 2012-2013. Dr. Mara Keller gifted Dr. Arora with a statue of Saraswati to mark this transition in the program’s history and wish Alka many blessings in her new position.

This fall we welcomed 9 new students. This year to date there are currently 72 total students, 30 (42% of enrolled students) of whom identify as women of color. The department is also making efforts toward collaboration this year, both with other departments at CIIS and with community organizations and other Women’s and Gender Studies departments at other schools.

To further strengthen the work of our community, the department is focusing this year on collaboration and alliance building. We’re developing closer relationships with other academic units at CIIS; other Women’s/Gender Studies programs in the Northern California region; and national organizations focused on women in religion and spirituality. Stay tuned to hear more about lecture series, symposia, and other projects through which we will come together to honor the divine feminine and contribute to global healing and transformation.

We now have a Facebook page as another way of staying in community. You can find it at www.facebook.com/ciiswomensspirituality and “like” to join and receive messages and updates, along with viewing photos of our events.

Upcoming Conference

National Women’s Studies Association (NWSA) annual conference

The National Women’s Studies Association (NWSA) annual conference **Feminism Unbound: Imagining a Feminist Future**, will take place in Oakland, CA, from November 8-11, 2012. Registration will be available on-site at the Oakland Marriott City Center. We encourage Bay Area students to attend this conference which is dedicated to showcasing the latest development in feminist studies and regularly draws more than 1,500 attendees. This year’s keynote address will be presented by Patricia Hill Collins, social theorist and author of several books exploring Black feminist thought and issues of race, gender, class, and sexuality.

Members of the WSE community will be presenting a panel entitled **The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House: Decolonizing Feminist Epistemologies via Spiritual Frameworks**, on Friday, November 9, at 10:50 am. Moderated by former WSE Chair and faculty member Arisika Razak, the presenters are WSE Chair Alka Arora, doctoral candidate Sara Salazar, and adjunct faculty member May Elawar. This panel challenges academic materialist paradigms that oppose spirituality, rationality, and liberation. By placing women’s of color’s spiritual and liberatory practices at the center of inquiry, the presenters seek to reclaim and honor sacred ways of knowing and acting; develop creative, embodied, and practical tools for resisting racism and colonialism; provide guidelines for engaging in appropriate and ethical collaborative research and practice; and enrich feminist epistemologies.

In addition, doctoral candidate Karen Nelson Villaneuva will be moderating two panels: **Defining, Writing, Remaking, and Reimaging Bodies** and **Gender, Race, and the Law**. MA Student Alana Roman will be moderating two panels as well: **Girlhood, Feminism, and New Technologies** and **Odd Bodies/Bodies at Odds: Rhetorics and Materiality of New Subjectivities**.
Past Conferences

The Matriarchal Studies Conference and The Conference of the National Association for the Study of Women and Mythology

This past May 2012 many of our WS students, faculty, and alumnae attended the joint sessions of the Matriarchal Studies conference and the conference of the National Association for the Study of Women and Mythology, focusing on Goddess Studies, in San Francisco. Participants on panels included:

Laura Amazzone, Alka Arora, Blythe Collier, Dianne Jenett, Anne Key, Mara Keller, Joan Marler, Judy Grahn, Mary Mackey, Arisika Razak, Elisabeth Sikie, Charlene Spretnak, Mary Louise Stone, Luisah Teish, Karen Villanueva, Anna Yang, Marguerite Rigoglioso, Frances Santiago, Rashidah Tutashinda, Cheryl Dawson, Patti Davis, Patti O'Luanaigh, Kimberly Gibbons, Sridevi Ramanathan, Jennifer Berezan, and more; along with many other excellent scholars and artists from across the country.

It was so wonderful to see the strong presence of our Bay Area Women's Spirituality community. Special thanks to Anne Key and Joan Cichon for their special roles in serving on the organizing committees for these conferences!

In addition, our Women's Spirituality program held a special reception for Matriarchal Studies foremother Heide Goettner-Abendroth. We have arranged for Heide to teach a course for us on Matriarchal Studies for Fall 2013.

Pacific Northwest Regional American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting (May 2012)

The Women's Spirituality department was well represented at the recent annual Pacific Northwest regional American Academy of Religion conference, held May 11-13, 2012, at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon. Five members of the CIIS Women's Spirituality community presented papers in the "Arts and Religion" program unit, co-chaired by Drs. Susan G. Carter and Louise M. Pare.

- Dr. Susan G. Carter (alumna and adjunct professor in the Women's Spirituality program) presented "The Divine Female Sun as Depicted in Japanese Religion and the Arts: From Ancient Artifacts to Contemporary Anime."
- Dr. Louise M. Pare (alumna) presented "Outrageous Acts: A Ritual Journey Exhibition of Paintings and Poetry on Behalf of Women."
- Dr. Viviane Dzyak (formerly Hahn) (alumna) presented "Inspiring the Body: Totem and Tattoo in the Ancient Pazyryk Culture of the Eurasian Steppes."
- Rashida Tutashinda (Ph.D. student) presented "Art, Spirit and Female power of the Mothers within the Gelede of Yoruba."

Staci Boden, WSE ’98 graduate, has just published her book, *Turning Dead Ends into Doorways: How to Grow Through Whatever Life Throws Your Way*, in which she draws upon both her earth-based and women’s spirituality training, plus 15 years as an energy worker and healing practitioner. In the book, she invites people to let go of the illusion of control and learn how to navigate the unknown in daily life through cultivating a relationship with eight universal teachers: fear, awareness, choice, body, intuition, energy, intention and surrender.

People can learn more by visiting www.dancing-tree.com/book or through reading her blog: www.dancing-tree.com/blog.

The anthology *She Is Everywhere! Volume 3*, a compilation of essays, poems, and artwork from an international community of women and men who honor the Sacred Female, co-edited by Mary Beth Moser (Ph.D. Candidate) and Mary Saracino, memoirist, novelist and poet, was published in March, 2012. Dr. Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum, CIIS Professor Emerita, initiated the She Is Everywhere series, whose first volume was produced and edited by WSE alumna Josephine MacMillan, M.A. and the staff of Belladonna Sanctuary. The second volume was co-edited by WSE Doctoral Candidates Annette Williams and Karen Villanueva, along with Lucia Birnbaum.

Several of the fifty contributors in the third volume of the anthology are students, graduates, and/or teachers in the CIIS Women’s Spirituality Program: Laura Amazzone, M.A., “The Fijian Kava Ceremony: An Ancient Menstrual Ritual?”; Michele Arista, Ph.D. student, “A Midrash of Rosary Prayers”; Dr. Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum “Story, gifts, standpoint, and methodologies of feminist cultural history”; Dr. Randy
Recent and Upcoming Publishings


Anne Key (WSE PhD 2005), Managing Editor of Goddess Ink, a press devoted to publishing works in Women’s Spirituality, is pleased to announce the release of our latest audio book. *Heart of the Sun: An Anthology in Exaltation of Sekhmet* has over 20 contributors and features writings from Normandi Ellis, Margaret Atwood, Nicki Scully, Barbara Hand Clow, Hank Wesselman, Chandra Alexandre, and Genevieve Vaughan, among others. In addition to the print version, the audio version is now available for download or as a 4 volume CD set. The audio version features the voices of many of the writers as well as professional readers. Goddess Ink also has an audio version of my book, *Desert Priestess: a memoir*, recalling the three years I spent as priestess to the Temple of Goddess Spirituality Dedicated to Sekhmet. We are planning to release a new anthology, *Brigit: Sun of Womanhood*, at Imbolc 2013. This anthology, edited by Patricia Monaghan and Michael McDermott, will feature writings about Brigit from both sides of the Atlantic. Goddess Ink is always looking for new manuscripts and ideas for books. See our manuscript submission process and contact information at www.goddess-ink.com.

WS faculty Mara Lynn Keller has been able to devote more of her time to writing recently. This past year she has placed for publication the following articles: “Rejoicing in the Goddess Traditions of Ancient Greece” forthcoming in Goddess Thealogy: An International Journal for the Study of the Divine Feminine; “Marion Rosen at 97: Finding a New Life Later in Life,” forthcoming in Poetics of Aging Journal; and “Goddess Spirituality” forthcoming in Psychology and Religion Encyclopedia (Springer Science+Business Media). In addition, her papers and presentations for the national conference of the Association for the Study of Women and Mythology in San Francisco in May 2012, will be published in the forthcoming book of conference proceedings: “Demeter-Persephone-Hekate: Philosophical and Psycho-spiritual Reflections on Honoring Women at All Stages of Life; “Sorceress: Mythic Archetype Of The Wise Woman Healer During The European Middle Ages; “Goddesses around the World: Praise Song and Litany; “California Foremothers of the Women’s Spirituality Movement;” and “Archaeomythology as Academic Field and Methodology: Bridging Science and Mysticism” (also forthcoming in the Journal of Archaeomythology).
From Nancy Ivey: I presented my original thesis research for my MA in Women’s Spirituality as a workshop titled “YoGaia: An Ecofeminist Appreciation of Hatha Yoga’s Matristic Roots,” to Women’s Spirituality students during the summer intensive at CIIS. The research examines how hatha yoga contributes to developing an ecofeminist ethic in practitioners and also how an ecofeminist lens unveils the matristic roots of hatha yoga. Inaugurating the newly finished large classroom in the old library at the main campus, students experienced a strong therapeutic yoga practice on the first day of the weekend workshop balanced by lively debate the next as they perused copies of the thesis where selected chapters described the principles framing the conversation. Student observations included the shamanic perspective on yoga’s metamorphic postures and the rediscovery of the mother centered origins in the metaphysical roots of hatha yoga.

California State University Bakersfield, where I teach yoga classes for the Physical Education and Kinesiology department added an advanced class to my usual load of two beginning yoga classes. They also shortened my classes. Beginning students bask in the joy of restorative yoga while the advanced class trains under a firmer hand to get ship shape for tough poses like headstand and wheel.

Tibetan Lama Anam Thubten, founder of the Dharmata foundation in Point Richmond, held a meditation retreat in Bakersfield last February. I attended with my mom and a few students. I have studied Tibetan meditation with other American born teachers like B. Alan Wallace and Pema Chodron. But Rinpoche Thubten grew up in Eastern Tibet and studied in a monastery for 12 years before escaping to Nepal. His understanding is different from my other teachers. I took bhodisattva vows with his organization and attended his summer retreat last month in Boulder Creek. The week long retreat was silent and we enjoyed (sometimes endured) sitting meditation for 6-8 hours daily. At the end of the week, I felt a bhodisattva’s bliss.

Blessings,
Nancy
shaktideva@mchsi.com

Margaret Lynn Mitchell was appointed Interim Academic Dean at the Won Institute of Graduate Studies in Glenside, Pennsylvania in May 2012. She now oversees and provides the academic leadership for three Master’s Degree programs: Won Buddhist Studies, Applied Meditation Studies, and Acupuncture Studies, for which she was the former Department Chair. Her advancement to Ph.D. Candidacy in the Women’s Spirituality Doctoral Program in September 2011 was a major factor in her promotion.

Karen Nelson Villanueva - a Doctoral Candidate completing her dissertation entitled, "Invoking the Blessings of the Tibetan Buddhist Goddess Tara through Chanting Her Mantra, a participatory research study," currently works as an academic tutoring fellow with the Center for Writing and Scholarship at CIIS. This spring, she presented papers at the regional American Academy of Religion (AAR) conference at Santa Clara University and the Association for the Study of Women and Mythology conference in San Francisco, and published a book review in the Journal for the Motherhood Initiative for Research & Community Involvement. This summer, she traveled to Lebanon, participated in the Mother Goddess Tour of Turkey with Lydia Ruyle, and took a ten-day retreat on the Goddess Tara in the Santa Cruz mountains. This fall, she will present on two panels at the National AAR conference in Chicago and moderate two panels at the National Women’s Studies Association conference in Oakland.

Cristy-Rose Smith, PhD student, continues to work in sustainable, local, and organic living with her community of sisters in Southern California. In between, she takes opportunities to travel, most recently, in Alaska this past summer. Focusing on her mestiza heritage, she hopes to be in Central America this fall and in the Philippines this coming winter. In October, Cristy-Rose will be attending "Dalamhati, Paraang Banal Tungong Paghilom: Grief, A Sacred Path," a weekend retreat faciliated by Filipina scholars.
Leny Strobel and Venus Herbito. In November, she will be presenting her paper on “Sacred Ecowoman: Naming and Reclaiming” at the national American Academy of Religion Conference in Chicago under the Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism unit.

*From Staci Boden:* I co-facilitate an ongoing monthly women’s circle called Sacred Dance. If anyone is interested in exploring body movement as a form of healing, our next 5 month series began September 20 in San Francisco. You can learn more by visiting http://www.dancing-tree.com/sacred-dance.

Join Staci for an online class based on her book: http://www.entheos.com/academy/courses/Turning-Dead-Ends-into-Doorways

Experience Women’s Sacred Dance: https://www.facebook.com/events/214968958632219/

Meet on facebook: https://www.facebook.com/StaciBodenDancingTreeConsulting

**Susan G. Carter, Ph.D. (2001)**

*Current Academic Activities:*

Susan currently serves as interim Chair of the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) program at Marylhurst University, Portland, Oregon. She was the recipient of the Marylhurst Excellence in Service and Teaching Award for 2012.

She also continues to teach at the California Institute of Integral Studies, primarily in the Women’s Spirituality, Transformative Leadership, and Transformative Studies programs. Susan currently both chairs and serves as second member on dissertation committees in the CIIS Transformative Studies program, and serves as committee member in the Women’s Spirituality department. She is also thesis advisor in Marylhurst University’s Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies program.

Susan is a consultant to The Center for Partnership Studies (www.partnershipway.org), and a member of the center’s speaking bureau. She also co-designs and develops curriculum for the center’s “Caring Economic Leaders” Program and other partnership-oriented international webinars and learning circles.

**Recent Presentations at Conferences:**


Co-chair of "Arts and Religion" program unit.


**Sandra Hareld** co-produced a Storytelling Jamboree the weekend of Sept. 14-16 in Jemez Springs, NM. The weekend featured several professional storytellers from New Mexico, as well as an open mic, food booths, local arts and crafts, children’s stories, and community information on being responsible hikers, fishers, and campers in our local forests.

**From Marion Dumont**

Dear WSE Community,

I am currently living in Shelton, Washington near the capitol city of Olympia. Even though I am enjoying being back with family and living in the beautiful maritime Northwest I often think of my time at CIIS and living in Berkeley. As my daughters agree, it was a very special opportunity.~

My eldest daughter Catie is married and lives in Seattle where she is creating a niche in the street fashion world, specifically in design and photography. She has been featured on several online fashion sites as well as in publications, including Marie Claire and Glamour magazines. You can visit her blog at http://www.fleur-d-elise.net/

I live in a multi-generational, all female household with my daughters Madeleine and Bethany and my grand-daughter, Mathilde. We are fortunate to have established our home on acreage and have started a small farm with poultry, rabbits, and Boer
goats. Madeleine and Bethany are both students at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, an interdisciplinary institute with brilliant professors and a dynamic student body. Maddie is a mathematics major and Bethany is leaning toward environmental with an emphasis in art. Mathilde and I work together at home—caring for the animals and writing my dissertation. Even though this latter endeavor is going more slowly than anticipated, with the love and support of my family it is getting written. We have taken several trips to Montana over the past 3 years in order for me to complete my research. It was on one of these trips in 2011 that we purchased our first Boer goats from a breeder in Pleasant Valley, Marion, MT. In June we made a trip to Marion and acquired a young buck, named Sunny. He completes our herd and we expect our first kidding in the spring.

I miss the WSE community and with each missed event, fond memories are stirred and I give thanks. I hope this letter finds all well and blessed with the goodness that comes from the Earth.

Love,
Marion & family


She is also part of an academic writing support group with Marion Dumont (PhD Candidate) and Maryka Paquette (graduate student in the Indigenous Mind Program at Wisdom University, http://www.wisn.org/our-work/indigenous-mind-masters-and-ph-d-programs/).

She is also serving as Vice President of the Seattle Trentino Club, a newly-formed “circolo” (in Trentino, clubs are known as “circles”) dedicated to cultural sharing among Trentino Americans. Hosting our third annual Polenta Picnic on Sunday, September 16th, 2012. (Yes, food is spiritual! Especially to Italians!)

From Louise Lieb (Baumgartner), MA WSE 1998, I am now a practicing herbalist. Last year, I completed my studies and received certification from California School of Herbal Studies. Since then, I have been working as an herbalist at Forestville Wellness Center, located in Forestville, California. The Forestville Wellness Center opened in August 2011. It is affiliated with West County Community Health Clinics, which provides medical services to the underserved population of West Sonoma County. It is gratifying to be following my heart—helping others find healing through plant allies. In addition, it is exciting to be part of this new model of alternative health care. It is among the first of its kind in the United States.

Jodi MacMillan (WS 2006) is celebrating Belladonna Sanctuary’s 8th anniversary as a government-recognized feminist church ordaining priestesses in women’s shamanic traditions! The Belladonna Priestess program continues to provide legal licensure and professional training in ritual ceremony, seership, trancemediumship, spiritual counseling and healing. Belladonna also offers fiscal sponsorship for a variety of women spirituality projects. Please email hibelladonna@mac.com for more information.

Adjunct Professor and leader in Women’s Spirituality Carol P. Christ will be offering transformative and educational Goddess Pilgrimages to Crete on May 25-June 8, 2013 and September 28-October 12, 2013. This is an opportunity to walk in the paths of an ancient matrifocal culture that honored women and the Goddess as the Source of Life and that was not male dominant or warlike. 1-3 units of credit are available. 3 Women’s Spirituality students will be on the fall 2012 tour. Consider including the Goddess Pilgrimage to Crete in your academic planning.

From Anna Joyce: Well, after a relentless few months, I think I am finally catching my breath and wanted to...
write and thank the department for the beautiful amber necklace that was sent to me. Synchronistically, I found myself opening it while sitting in my car with Doris and Felipa, two curanderas from Cuernavaca who came to Northern California as part of our Curanderismo Series at Sol Collective Arts and Cultural Center in Sacramento. My involvement with Sol Collective and with the curandera community of Sacramento grew out of my dissertation on curanderismo as a way of life and has resulted in ongoing participation in organizing and implementing programs in which traditional healers present elements of their work on a monthly basis. Our most basic intention is to help empower people to take responsibility for their own health and wellness. We have developed a well-attended program and often after our Sunday workshops, I drive the two hours home to fine people have already posted comments on facebook about how curanderismo Sunday is their favorite day of the month and saying they went home feeling so filled with the loving vibe of community.

I also had the honor of giving a forty-five minute presentation of my dissertation research at the Traditional Medicine Without Borders class at University of New Mexico in July. I was really nervous ahead of time, but thoroughly enjoyed myself when I got up on stage. So many people asked for the link to my dissertation and told me they had loved the presentation. The talk combined the story of my journey into this arena with a look at the previous scholarship on it and then ended up with a recounting of the projects and lifelong friendships that have grown out of my fieldwork. Complete with power point slides. Folks liked the combination of personal and academic, but of all the compliments I got, the most heart-warming was when one woman said, “Your love of the people really shone through.” That one made me cry!

As fall arrives, I find that I am ready to settle into a more rhythmic and reflective time. So much more has happened on the curandera path since finishing my dissertation, maybe I’ll find time to write the rest of the story. And if not, then certainly, to live it more fully. I found myself drawn back to my own Irish heritage more strongly while in New Mexico this year, and now ready to settle into a path that is drawn from the changing seasons on my little piece of land and my relationship with this earth that I care for and which cares for me here at home.

Blessings,
Anna Joyce

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**About the Newsletter**

The newsletter is published online once per academic semester and welcomes from CIIS Women’s Spirituality students, alumnae, staff and faculty. For more information about contributing to the Spring 2013 issue, please contact Manvi at isingh@ciis.edu.