

MANY VOICES



FALL
2011

A newsletter of the University of St. Thomas Luann Dummer Center for Women, the University Advocate for Women and Equity, and the Women's Studies Program

Helen Benedict to speak on women in the military

The Luann Dummer Center for Women, in co-sponsorship with Students for Justice and Peace, is pleased to announce that we are hosting Prof. Helen Benedict to speak about women in the U.S. military on September 21, which is the International Day of Peace. The lecture will be at 7 PM in OEC Auditorium. It is free and open to the public. It will be followed by a reception and book-signing.

Helen Benedict is author of *The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq* (2009). This book, based on countless interviews with soldiers and vets, chronicles the harsh reality for women who join the U.S. military, including

isolation, misogyny and a shockingly high rate of sexual assault.

The subject of Helen Benedict's talk will be "Women on the Front Line: War, Trauma and Remorse." In this lecture, Professor Benedict will be speaking about why and how war stories are different when they are told by women soldiers. She will discuss the experiences of women at war, and what they have to say about war, violence, and peace. And she will illustrate how women tell war stories with examples. To prepare for this lecture, the Women's Center will offer free copies of *The Lonely Soldier* for the first 12 persons who sign up for a discussion of the book on September 20 over the noon hour.

Helen Benedict is professor of journalism at Columbia University. In addition to *The Lonely Soldier*, she is the author of many works of non-fiction, including her latest, *Sand Queen*, the first Iraq War novel to be told from the viewpoints of a woman soldier and an Iraqi woman. Copies of *Sand Queen* and *The Lonely Soldier* will be available for purchase the night of the lecture. To learn more about Prof. Benedict, visit her website at: www.helenbenedict.com. ●



Notes from the director



As many of you know, this Fall begins my last year as director of the Luann Dummer Center for Women, a deadline that has us all preparing for a smooth transition to a new director. While I am not directly involved in the selection process for a new director (that is the job of the Advisory Board), I have been thinking a lot lately about why someone would want to do this. I want to take this opportunity to talk about why I love directing the Center.

The first reason that I love this job is that I have the rare opportunity to work with professionals from all parts of our University. Often faculty members have little chance to work side-by-side with student affairs personnel, staff in Purchasing and Accounts Payable, administrators in various offices, etc. Let's face it, outside of work on University committees, faculty rarely work with people outside of their own department. But for me my number one joy in this position has been this collaborative work. We have amazing, dedicated workers at St. Thomas, and it has been such a gift to understand their contribution to our institution. Although I would

not claim to know most of the employees at UST, I have developed relationships and friendships that wouldn't have been possible before.

Some of this cross-campus interaction has come through co-sponsored programs, such as working with MSS on Challenge Day a few years ago, helping Student Affairs with the "Can I Kiss You" event, or working with Theology and Environmental Studies to bring in the founders of the Agape Community. This coming year, we have two major co-sponsored events on our calendar. The first takes place on Sept. 21, which is International Day of Peace, when we join Students for Justice and Peace to bring in Helen Benedict. A professor at Columbia University, she will talk about her research on women serving in the U.S. military during the Iraqi War. This research has been instrumental in getting the U.S. government to respond to the shockingly high rate of sexual assault these women experience. Then on March 26, we partner with Theology to bring in Miri Rubin, a Jewish medieval historian, whose latest book traces the development of the doctrine of Mary.

The second reason that I love this job is that I have met the most interesting people! Yes, folks, I have been hugged, and sometimes kissed on the cheek by the likes of

Stephanie Coontz, Minniejean Brown Trickey, Susan Faludi, Gail Collins, and Patricia Hill Collins (President Mary Robinson was not much of a hugger, but I did get a very warm handshake.) In all seriousness, I have had the amazing opportunity, not only to meet these women, but to engage the depth of their work. Conversations with these remarkable pioneers have given me insight into the passion that fuels each of them.

This year I look forward to meeting Sheryl WuDunn, co-author of the Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*. This book deserves its Pulitzer. It is engaging, eye-opening, disturbing, and hopeful all at once. It covers important aspects of women's lives worldwide, and what Americans can do to improve the lives of these women and therefore of their families and societies. This book should be read by students as well as faculty and staff. With what I have learned from each March speaker I have felt so much better prepared to teach my courses. This year will be no exception.

While I am on the topic of what I have learned as director of the Center, the third reason that I love this job is because I learn something new almost every day.

The book club has me reading books I never would have read on my own, the grant proposals teach me about cutting edge research being conducted in various areas of our university. Even Yarn Tamers has taught me how to knit. (It also taught me that I am not good at it: I needlepoint instead.) We have a great slate of books to read again this year. In keeping with the topic of our March speaker, we are focusing on the voices of women globally.

Anyone can learn more by coming to the Women's Center. Join our book club, listen to our Feminist Friday speakers, attend the annual

poster session of our grant recipients. Feminist Fridays provide a continuing avenue for on-going education and enrichment. This Fall, the series will present the collaborative feminist research of two of our professors, the artwork of one of our textile artists, and research on class issues from one of our Advisory Board members.

Lastly, I have realized that each director molds the job to fit their interests and talents. While Debra Petersen, for example, did brilliant work with our art collection and

supporting local artists, I have focused on social justice for women world-wide. I know the next director will take us into whole new areas; this is the wisdom of how the job is structured. I look forward to handing over the keys, not because I am "done" with the job, but because new growth, for both the Center and for myself, is a wonderful thing. In my next column I will tell you more about what I look forward to after I finish as Director. But for now, I plan to thoroughly enjoy my last year as Director. I hope that many of you will join me. ●



Feminist Fridays set for the Fall

We will have three Feminist Fridays this fall. Feminist Fridays, a long-standing program of the Center, take place over the noon hour. This series provides the UST community an opportunity to hear from local women about their research or activities related to women. You can bring your lunch; we provide treats and drinks.

On October 7th, Dr. Meg Wilkes Karracker (Sociology) and Dr. Paola Ehrmantraut (Modern and Classical Languages) will present “Collaboration and Feminist Research.” In the summer of 2009 Angela High-Pippert (Director of Women’s Studies) put Paola Ehrmantraut (about to begin her first year in Modern Languages at UST) in touch with Meg Wilkes Karracker (about to begin her 20th year in Sociology at UST). One year later the result was a Faculty Partnership funded by UST Faculty Development, a team-taught Aquinas Scholars Course “Women in the Zone of Conflict: Literature, Gender,

and Politics,” and an effective ongoing professional relationship. Ehrmantraut and Karracker will discuss the process through which their collaboration developed, as watin America.

Beth Barron is a regional artist, who often uses bandages in her textile pieces. She has primarily used the stitch as her main mark of expression. Her path took a definitive turn in 1995, when she turned 40. The University of St. Thomas has supported her artistic growth and exploration and owns 6 of her pieces, one of which belongs to the Women’s Center. Her talk on November 4 is titled, “Allowing the Path to Unfold, One Stitch at a Time.”

Beth writes, *I’d like my work to be a monument to the resiliency of the human spirit and a wish for wholeness. Within each piece is emptiness, chaos, paths chosen or passed by, despair and repair.*

Needle in needle out, the work is a meditation. I work with intention and devotion. I listen for and feel the rhythm of the piece. I strive to attend to the mark. Sometimes taking a stitch as if we were the first and the last.

I will forever be compelled by the “stitch” and the metaphor of it as a “mark” to catalog time, events and emotion. The line of the stitch fascinates me, knowing as I follow those marks my own story will unfold.

Our final Feminist Friday for the Fall, on December 2, will feature the research of Advisory Board member, Tori Svoboda. Svoboda is the associate dean of students at the University of St. Thomas, where she also teaches in the Leadership in Student Affairs graduate program and is completing her doctorate in leadership. Her research agenda focuses on intersections of identities (class, race and gender) at interpersonal and structural levels. Her research was supported by the Bush Foundation and she received a professional develop-

ment grant from the Women’s Center to attend the Center for Working Class Studies conference in June 2010.

Her talk is titled, “Constructing Class: The experiences of white women student affairs professionals from working class backgrounds.” This qualitative study, informed by critical and feminist theories and utilizing a grounded theory method, explores the experiences of white women who were raised in working class families and now work as student affairs professionals in Midwestern colleges or universities. Ample literature exists regarding the experiences of working class students and faculty in higher education, but there are no known studies about socio-economic class as experienced by staff. This study docu-

ments the complexity of class, how it is shaped by one’s race and gender, as well as reproduced through social institutions such as schools, families, and professional organizations. Please join us for these stimulating topics. ●



◀ Mandala: Implosion #3 by Beth Barron 52 inches diameter found band aids, hand stitched



Luann Dummer Book Club

THE LUANN DUMMER CENTER FOR WOMEN

VISIT THE CENTER'S WEBSITE
<http://www.stthomas.edu/ldcw/>

The Luann Dummer Book Club, which generally meets the last Wednesday of each month over the noon hour, provides faculty, staff, students and community members an opportunity to discuss a book written by a woman. We have a lively core group of attendants, but we have plenty of room for more people to join us.

This year, in honor of the topic of our March Speaker, our theme will be global women. We have included books by African, South Asian, Asian-American and Native American women on our list. In addition, to books dedicated to this theme, we continue to include at least one classic (*Jane Eyre*), one juvenile fiction (*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*), one non-fiction (*Half the Sky*) and at least one mystery.

Bring your lunch and join us for these discussions. Remember, you don't need to have finished the book (or even started it) to come!



► **September 28: J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows***

The final installment of the Harry Potter series brilliantly brings closure to this epic series. The female characters are richly drawn and rarely discussed. But they come to their own in this classic tale of good and evil.

► **October 26: Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (2008)**

With sensuous prose, a dreamlike style infused with breathtakingly beautiful images and keen insight into human nature, Roy's debut novel charts fresh territory in the genre of magical, prismatic literature. Set in Kerala, India, during the late 1960s when Communism rattled the age-old caste system, the story begins with the funeral of young Sophie Mol, the cousin of the novel's protagonists, Rahel and her fraternal twin brother, Estha. In a circuitous and suspenseful narrative, Roy reveals the family tensions that led to the twins' behavior on the fateful night that Sophie drowned. Beneath the drama of a family tragedy lies a background of local politics, social taboos and the tide of history. All of which come together in a slip of fate, after which a family is irreparably shattered. Roy captures the children's candid observations but clouded understanding of adults' complex emotional lives. Rahel notices that "at times like these, only the Small Things are ever said. The Big Things lurk unsaid inside."

► **November 30: Fatima Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood* (1995)**

This rich, magical and absorbing growing-up tale set in a little-known culture reflects many universals about women. The setting is a "domestic harem" in the 1940s city of Fez, where an extended family arrangement keeps the women mostly apart from society, as opposed to the more stereotypical "imperial harem," which historically provided sex for sultans and other powerful court officials. Moroccan sociologist Mernissi (*Islam and Democracy*) charts the changing social and political frontiers and limns the personalities and quirks of her world. Here she tells of a grandmother who warns that the world is unfair to women, learns of the confusing WW II via radio news in Arabic and French, watches family members debate what children should hear, wonders why American soldiers' skin doesn't reflect Moroccan-style racial mixing and decides that sensuality must be a part of women's liberation. With much folk wisdom—"was when there was a balance between what you gave and what you took"—this book not only tells a winning personal story but also helps to feminize a much-stereotyped religion.

► **January 25: Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre***
Need I say more?

► **February 29: Sheryl WuDunn and Nicolas Kristof, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide***

New York Times columnist Kristof and his wife, WuDunn, a former Times reporter, make a brilliantly argued case for investing in the health and autonomy of women worldwide. More girls have been killed in the last fifty years, precisely because they were girls, than men were killed in all the wars of the twentieth century, they write, detailing the rampant gendercide in the developing world, particularly in India and Pakistan. Far from merely making moral appeals, the authors posit that it is impossible for countries to climb out of poverty if only a fraction of women (9% in Pakistan, for example) participate in the labor force. China's meteoric rise was due to women's economic empowerment: 80% of the factory workers in the Guangdong province are female; six of the 10 richest self-made women in the world are Chinese. The authors reveal local women to be the most effective change agents.

► **March 28: Karen Tei Yamashita, *Tropic of Orange* (1997)**

This fiercely satirical, semifantastical novel ... features an Asian-American television news executive, Emi, and a Latino newspaper reporter, Gabriel, who are so focused on chasing stories they almost don't notice that the world is falling apart all around them. Karen Tei Yamashita's staccato prose works well to evoke the frenetic breeziness and monumental self-absorption that are central to their lives.

► **April 25: Buchi Emecheta, *Joy's of Motherhood* (1980)**

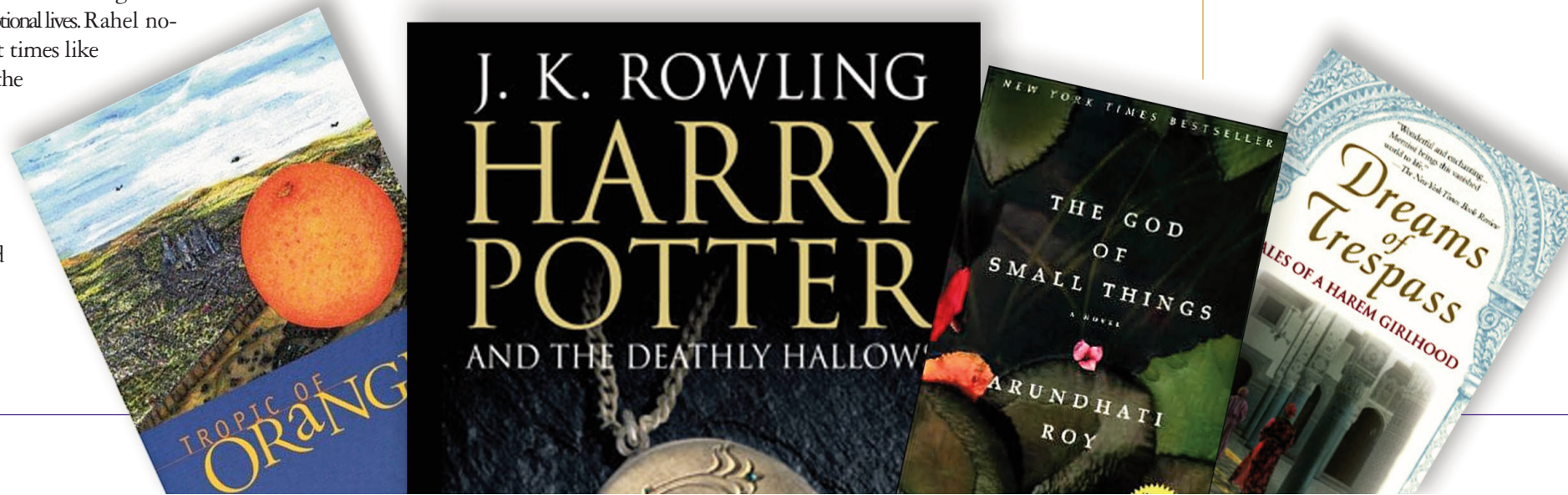
After a childless first marriage Nnu Ego, the daughter of a Nigerian chief, is sent from her village to Lagos to marry Nnaife Owulum who works as a laundry man for an English couple. Nnaife is a weak man and the adjustment to urban living is a painful one for Nnu Ego. Her life becomes an unceasing struggle to maintain her family. Through periods of extreme hardship and deprivation, amid more intense by Nnaife's absence during WWII, Nnu Ego is sustained by the bright future she anticipates for her children when they will be able to support her. However, the traditions she has fought to uphold and the family ties she has always honored are but an anachronism for her children: Nnu

going strong!

Ego is forced to live out her days alone. *The Joy's of Motherhood* is more than just a story of Nnu Ego and her family, however. We see Nigeria as it tries to catch up with the twentieth century; a Nigeria rocked by colonialism, WWII, and the general encroachment of the modern western world on a traditional African one.

► **May 30: Louise Erdrich, *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse***

Erdrich seems to be inhabiting her characters, so intense and viscerally rendered are her portrayals. Her prose shimmers: a piano being carried across the plains is "an ebony locust." This novel will be remembered for a cornucopia of set pieces, all bizarre and stunning: wounded and taken hostage by a bank robber and pinned to the running board of his Overland automobile, Agnes, "her leg a flare of blood," briefly touches hands with her astonished lover as the car crosses his path; old man Nanapush, impaled on fish hooks that pin him to a boat that's hitched to the antlers of a wounded moose, careens through the woods in delirious exhaustion. Writing with subtle compassion and magical imagination, Erdrich has done justice to the complexities of existence in general and Native American life. ●



Women's Studies Update

This will be another great year for the Women's Studies program. At UST, we are offering excellent cross-listed courses in a variety of disciplines, including Art History, Biology, Communication and Journalism, English, Political Science, Sociology, and Theology. We'll be offering WMST 205: Foundations in Women's Studies in the spring of 2012.

I taught WMST 205 for the first time last spring, and found it to be among the most rewarding experiences of my professional career. An experience that amazing should not be kept a secret, so I want to open that opportunity up to more Women's Studies faculty members. It is my goal to create a pool of faculty who are interested in teaching WMST 205, so that our program can more effectively plan and coordinate teaching schedules. This will not only make it easier on the next director, but will also allow our program to continue to develop and expand.

If you are interested in teaching WMST 205, let me know! If you want to know more about what's involved with teaching WMST 205, join our Women's Studies brown-bag discussions this fall. We'll meet from 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. in the Luann Dummer Center for Women on the following Wednesdays: October 12, November 16, and December 7. There will be a brief

reading or two from Shaw and Lee's Women's Voices, Feminist Visions for each date, which will give you a sense of the material covered in a Foundations in Women's Studies course. Come for an informal discussion of both the readings and possible approaches to teaching such material. These pedagogical discussions should be useful for any and all of us, and will also be a great opportunity for new faculty to meet other Women's Studies faculty members, and for the rest of us to reconnect with each other. All faculty who are interested in learning more about Women's Studies are welcome to attend, so spread the word. Feel free to join one or all of the discussions. Send me an email with your preferred dates, and I'll send you the readings.

At the ACTC level, the Women's Studies directors will continue to work together to implement exciting revisions to the ACTC Women's Studies major. These curricular changes will allow for increased flexibility while maintaining the strengths of the ACTC major. I will be serving as director of the ACTC Women's Studies Coordinating Committee this fall, and will continue as director of the coordinating committee in 2012-2013.

As always, if you have questions or concerns about the Women's Studies Program, feel free to contact

me. And stop by my office for a "Changing Lives—Changing the World—Women's Studies" button! ●

Angela High-Pippert
Director of Women's Studies
405 JRC 651-962-5725 ahigh-
pippe@stthomas.edu



New Discussion Circles for Female Faculty

This year, the Luann Dummer Center for Women is partnering with Faculty Development to host a series of "talking circles" for female faculty on a variety of topics. Discussions will include "Is Service a Trap for Female Faculty?" "Know Your Faculty Handbook," and "Preparing to Submit or Evaluate Third Year Reviews."

Discussions will alternate between a noon hour discussion with lunch or a late afternoon event with wine and cheese.

Participants will be asked to register for each one in advance so that we can order the right amount of food. We will

usually provide a short reading ahead of time to prepare for the discussion. Each discussion is self-contained, so there is no need to attend the whole series. Faculty can simply register for the topics and times that work best for their schedule. While these topics are designed for female faculty, male faculty can also attend.

In the Fall, we will have two discussions, one at the noon hour on October 13, and one at 3:00 on November 11. The dates for the Spring are: 2/9 at 3:00; 3/15 at noon, 4/19 at noon, and 5/11 at 3. Topics for each date will be

announced in the Bulletin and on our Facebook and Twitter pages.

If you have suggestions for topics, or if you are interested in leading a discussion, please feel free to forward those to either Corrine Carvalho (ccarvalho) or Ann Johnson (ajjohnson). You can register for any or all of these by emailing Pat Alexander (pmalexander). Please indicate if you have any dietary restrictions. Registration will be limited. ●

Fall 2011 Calendar of Events

We welcome you to any or all of our programs and co-sponsored events. See the LDCW website for information on additional events and activities. (All events are held at the Luann Dummer Center for Women, OEC 103, unless otherwise noted.)

- Sept. 16 ▶ Chocolate Reception, 3:00 – 4:30 pm
- Sept. 21 ▶ Helen Benedict presentation, 7:00 pm, OEC Auditorium, *Women on the Front Line: War, Trauma, and Remorse*.
- Sept. 28 ▶ LDCW book club, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Noon – 1:00 pm
- Sept. 29 ▶ UAWE Fall meeting and reception for women who have been hired at UST since spring reception, 3:30 – 5:00 pm, McNeely Hall 100.
- Oct. 7 ▶ Feminist Friday, Dr. Meg Karraker and Dr. Paola Ehrmantraut, *Collaboration and Feminist Research*. Noon – 1:00 pm
- Oct. 12 ▶ Brown bag discussion, Noon – 1:00 pm, Readings from Foundations in Women's Studies course
- Oct. 13 ▶ Talking Circles for female faculty, Noon – 1:00 pm.
- Oct. 26 ▶ LDCW book club, *The God of Small Things*, Noon–1:00 pm
- Nov. 4 ▶ Feminist Friday, Beth Barron, *Allowing the Path to Unfold, One Stitch at a Time*
- Nov. 11 ▶ Talking Circles for female faculty, 3:00 – 4:00 pm
- Nov. 16 ▶ Brown bag discussion, Noon – 1:00 pm, Readings from Foundations in Women's Studies course
- Nov. 30 ▶ LDCW book club, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*, Noon – 1:00 pm
- Dec. 2 ▶ Feminist Friday, Victoria Svoboda, *Constructing Class: The experiences of white women student affairs professionals from working class backgrounds*. Noon – 1:00 pm.
- Dec. 7 ▶ Brown bag discussion, Noon – 1:00 pm, Readings from Foundations in Women's Studies course

Save the date ▶ March 7, 2012 Sheryl WuDunn, March Women's History Month speaker

Yarn Tamers



Yarn Tamers is an opportunity for faculty, staff, students and outside community members to spend a relaxing hour working on yarn projects, meeting new friends and colleagues and socializing. Newcomers are encouraged to stop by and join in the fun.

Yarn Tamers meets on Mondays from noon-1:00 pm in Room 103, OEC in the Luann Dummer Center for Women.

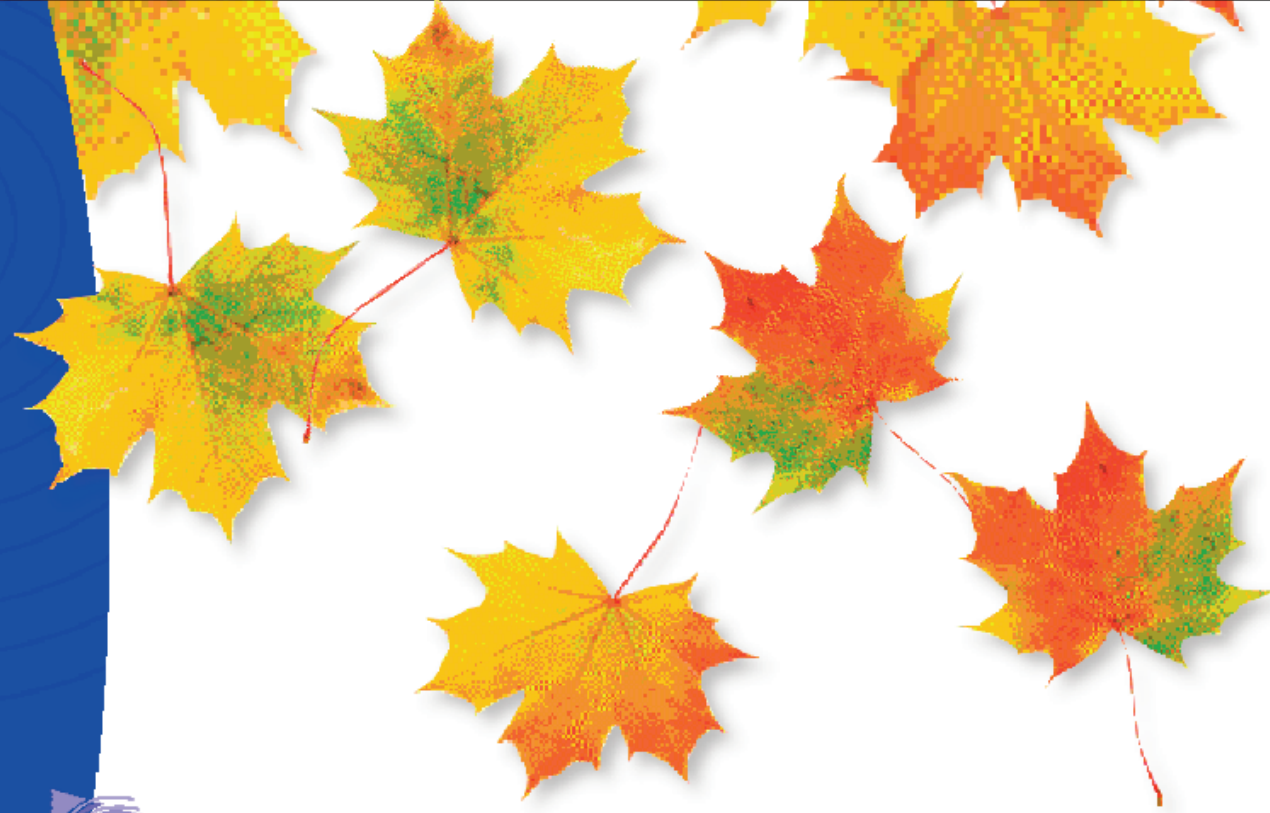
Each fall semester the group creates knitted and crocheted items to donate to local women's shelters.

If you knit, crochet, quilt, or participate in any other type of yarn or needle craft, you are welcome to join this group. Registration is not necessary, just show up on Mondays during the noon hour. Contact: pmalexander@stthomas.edu.

▶ **The University Advocates for Women and Equity** will hold its annual fall meeting on Thursday, **September 29, from 3:30-5:00 pm in McNeely Hall 100** on the St. Paul Campus. **Elections will be held** to determine representatives on the executive committee. Also, for the first time, we will be combining the fall meeting with a reception to **welcome women who have been hired at UST** since our spring reception. **Refreshments will be served**. Please come to discuss goals for the academic year and to welcome our new women employees. Throughout the year, be sure to watch for discussions of various topics of interest that are **sponsored by UAWE**.

MANY VOICES

FALL
2011



Luann Dummer Center for Women

Hours: Monday - Thursday 9 a.m. - 9 p.m., Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.



2115 Summit Avenue · Mail 4075
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105 · USA

► **Contact:**

Telephone: (651) 962-6119
From this number you can
access hours and leave
a message.

► **Staff:**

Corrine L. Carvalho,
Director

Pat Alexander,
Administrative Assistant

► **Student Assistants:**

Robbie Gooding
Melissa Seymour
G. Lee Xiong