



A Culture of Giving

Mary Ann Villarreal, Co-President, CCWH

Originally, I had intended this column to focus on exploring a plan that CCWH might consider in creating a sustainable culture of philanthropy. As a volunteer organization that relies on membership fees, as so many of our peer organizations do, the question about how we enter our 50th year with new pathways to financial sustainability has taken up a great deal of my thinking as we prepare for the AHA in Denver. But plans and ideas change quicker than we can ever imagine. As I prepared to board a plane in Houston, I learned that we had lost Rachel Fuchs unexpectedly. Rachel's death stunned me; it deepened the hole of recent losses of significant women in my professional and personal life. The news arrived just as I had

said goodbye to my family, who boarded a flight home to Colorado, while I followed my usual Sunday return to California. I left them after three days centered on my children and grandmother, allowing them their last moments surrounded by my sister's belongings. Three long months ago, we said goodbye to my sister following her fiercely fought battle against pancreatic cancer.

Four months ago, as Rachel stayed active in retirement engaged with CCWH's co-authored report on part-time and adjunct faculty, cared for her husband following his surgery, and worked on manuscript edits for *Gender and Citizenship in Historical and Transnational Perspective: Agency, Space, Borders* (forthcoming Palgrave, 2016), she still made time to check on me weekly as my sister

entered end of life. Two weeks before my sister's death, I shared with her my struggle of powerlessness over cancer. She replied: "Dear Mary Ann, I think that the anger and grief comes before peace...Peace is something I wish for you. As they say in French, "je f'embrasse tres forte." Her note after my sister's death affirmed the deep grief that I felt: "Dear Mary Ann, Your pain must be unbearable at times. You have lost one of the most important people in your life..." She connected in honesty and with an ability to see right through all the toughness I thought I needed to perform.

At her last CCWH meeting, Rachel was clear, she was retiring and would eventually roll off all projects. But in true Rachel Fuchs spirit, she stayed with projects that she had start-

ed and promised to see them through. I had told her, “I am not letting you go that easy!” Of course, she would commit to a final report, but then she had retirement to enjoy. As she saw the decline of tenure-track positions, and the consequent increased reliance on part-time faculty with few benefits and outrageous teaching loads, Rachel was dedicated to raising attention to the issues surrounding part-time faculty, but also ready to let others take up the fight.

Over two years ago, Rachel contacted me after I was invited to be considered as Co-President of the CCWH. Years had passed since we had previously talked, but the memories of my very green time as a graduate student instructor were very much imprinted in her mind. As a graduate student, I occupied the office across from hers and often wandered into her office as I prepared to teach my first classes at Arizona State University. We would discuss at length the materials I was using, pedagogical techniques to give the discussion life, and how to approach grading both in terms of use of time and ensuring students received useful feedback. The fact that I was not studying French history nor that she had no obligation to my studies, did not interfere with my weekly office visits and all that she was willing to share with and teach me. Rachel saw an opportunity to ensure that I would find success in the classroom and made it her concern. She walked me through my frustra-

tions and helped me find ways to redirect when it felt like I had lost control of my class. In that call she expressed excitement to work with me as a colleague, to reconnect and strengthen the role of the CCWH.

Rachel had many friendships across her professional networks, but there were two that we shared from my time at ASU, Noel Stowe and Jann Warren Findley. Both public historians and long-term department colleagues, Noel and Jann made a deep impact in public history. Rachel spoke of their illnesses and ultimate deaths with such love and respect for the way they chose to die. She impressed upon me that the work they had accomplished at ASU and within the National Council on Public History may be absent from the present day department, but it was not forgotten. In her retelling of their last days, with such grace and compassion, Rachel gave me the priceless gift of reminding me of the honor of being the recipient of such rich mentorship.

The CCWH report on part-time and adjunct faculty was not a bandwagon idea. Rachel was astounded when she discovered that an instructor at her institution was hired to teach double the load of tenure faculty at half the pay. I asked her, “Did you really not know that salaries and teaching loads for non-tenure track faculty did not mirror that of tenure-track faculty?” She had not stopped to think about the disparity, until she heard the story from a recently hired lecturer. The idea embarrassed her for her department and angered her sense of



Mary Ann Villarreal

fairness. Her outrage about the injustice and “the administrators” who encouraged such practices was at the top of the agenda during one of our first conversations. She came to me, both as her Co-President and as faculty turned administrator. She wasted little time in pushing that we survey our membership, and in that moment, Rachel turned to me as her colleague and partner to represent our membership in this necessary and vital discussion. I hope we will stay focused on this commitment and work with our affiliate peers in turning our recommendations into implementation.

Like a true mentor, Rachel made me feel like I occupied a special place, closing her emails in French in response to my “abrazos fuerte.” She modeled a culture of giving time, talent, and resources through her mentorship, scholarship, and service. She gave the CCWH a new purpose. Like the many brilliant women historians who led the CCWH, Rachel led with her heart, her mind, her intellect, and her passion. Her legacies, should we follow them, will lead us to a stronger and more humane organization.

Notes from the Executive Director

Sandra Trudgen Dawson,
Executive Director, CCWH

Dear CCWH Members,

By now you should have received a reminder about membership renewal for 2017. Please renew as soon as you can, as this will allow the officers and Executive Board to plan and budget for next year. Many of you have taken advantage of the three-year memberships that we introduced this year. This is a great way to stay updated for three years without having to remember to renew again until late 2019 for 2020!

We have heard from all the CCWH award committees about the 2016 winners. There were so many great applications this year and so we also have several honorable mentions. The richness and diversity of topics suggests CCWH members will be leaders in their fields! I would like to congratulate all of our 2016 winners:

The Catherine Prelinger Award goes to Frances Reanae McNeal for her dissertation, "African Native American Women's Rhetorics of Survivance: Decolonization and Social Transformation." Honorable mentions go to three members, Courtney Campbell, Lara Freidenfelds, and Lily Anne Welty Tamai.

The Nupur Chaudhuri Award First Article Award goes to

Kate Imy for her article titled, "Queering the Martial Races: Masculinity, Sex and Circumcision in the Twentieth-Century British Indian Army."

The first Carol Gold Award for Best Article goes to Cara Delay for her article, "Women, Childbirth Customs, and Authority in Ireland, 1850-1930."

The CCWH/Berks Graduate Student Fellowship goes this year to Mary Klann for her dissertation, "Citizens with Reservations: Race, Colonialism, and Native American Citizenship in the Mid-Twentieth Century American West." An honorable mention for the award goes to Kathryn Lawton for her dissertation, "Deinstitutionalization and Disability Rights: Policy and Activism in New York State."

The Idea B. Wells Graduate Student Fellowship goes this year to Alisha J. Hines for her dissertation, "Geographies of Freedom: Black Women's Mobility in the Western River World, 1814-1865." An honorable mention was awarded to Jessica Blake for "A Taste for Africa: Imperial Fantasy and Clothing Commerce in Revolutionary-Era New Orleans."

I would like to thank all the members of each selection committee for their service to the organization and their dedicated approach to each application. Thank you all so much!

Most of the awardees will be attending the CCWH Annual Award Luncheon at the AHA in Denver on January 7, 2017. The cost of the tickets for the luncheon is \$40. If you plan to attend the AHA, please come to



Sandra Trudgen Dawson

The luncheon and celebrate with our award winners. At the luncheon, our keynote speaker is Rebecca Plant, President of the Western Association of Women Historians and winner of the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians best article award. The title of Rebecca's talk is, "Race, Motherhood, and the Commemoration of America's World War I Dead."

The CCWH is sponsoring and co-sponsoring a number of other panels at the AHA including "A Question of Intent: Alcoholic Insanity, Violence and the Law in 19th Century America," "New Directions in Gender and Women's History: China, Japan, and the U.S.," Job Workshop for Historians, "Strategies for Teaching the History of Fashion and Dress," and "Consumption, Rationing, Boycotting, and National Identity: Britain at War, 1939-45."

Once again, the CCWH the Berks, and the Committee on LGBTQ History will unite to host a reception on Friday, January 6th at the Hyatt Regency. This is always a good time to meet others from different organizations. I do hope you will join us there.

Please contact me with any questions, concerns, or ideas – execdir@theccwh.org.

Membership Programs & Opportunities

Ilaria Scaglia

Membership Coordinator

On behalf of the Membership Outreach Committee, it is with great joy that I present to you the first map with all of the locations covered by our new CCWH HOST program. In each of the places marked on the map below, we have at least one CCWH member willing to host another CCWH member who may be attending a conference or conducting a short archival trip.

This is a substantial step towards fulfilling CCWH's mission to support women in history. Indeed, this program has the potential of being transformational for many of us. First, it can provide substantial financial help to those without access to institutional

funding for conference and research travel. For some, the host program may mean the difference between remaining active in the profession or not. Second, and equally important, this program represents a meaningful step towards supporting a model of academia centered not on competition, but on collegiality. Indeed, the host program signals inclusion and is a welcome sign to colleagues regardless of rank or affiliation. It is also a model other associations might consider following.

Our thanks go to all those who volunteered to open their homes, and especially to Dr. Jennifer Hudson Allen who agreed to serve as Coordinator for this important program and created the first version of this map, and to Erin Bush who refined it and made it available on our website.

If you have plans to travel to any of these cities for a conference and/or for a short re-

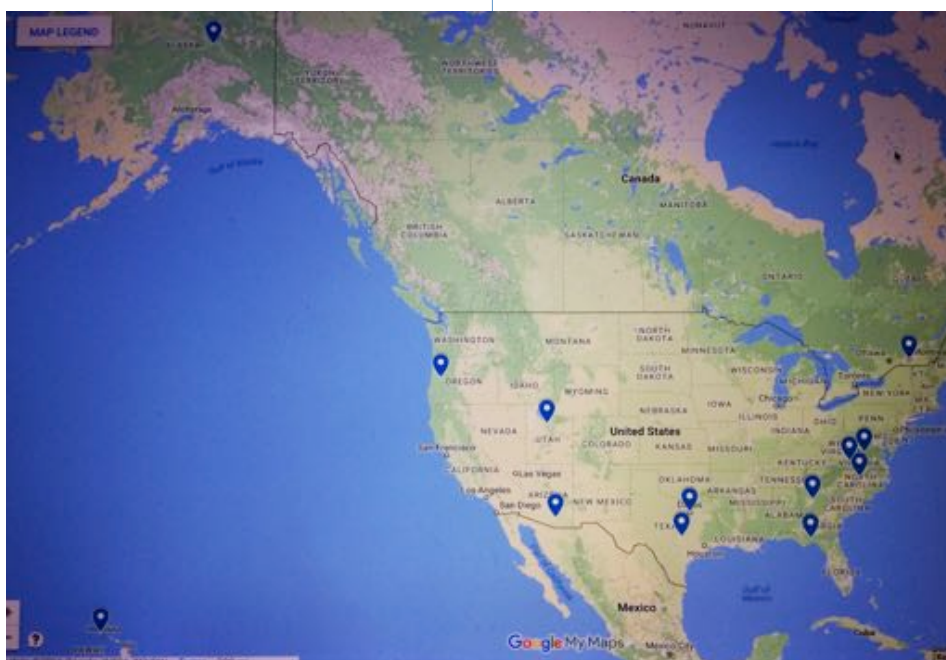


Ilaria Scaglia

search trip and wish to stay with a host, please contact our HOST Program Coordinator, Dr. Jennifer Allen, at host@theccwh.org. Don't hesitate! This is a great opportunity not only to defray costs, but also to meet fellow CCWH members!

If you wish to sign up as a host, please fill out the form on the same webpage. The Host Program Coordinator will give your name to any member who contacts her looking for a place to stay. Members would communicate directly with each other and make final arrangements on lodging. The CCWH Host Program Coordinator would only connect Hosts and Guests; individuals would ultimately be responsible for any specific agreements made.

Don't hesitate! You do not need to offer luxurious lodgings to become a host. A welcoming smile can do wonders, and any additional peg on this map makes the future just a little bit brighter for all of us. And remember to view the link to the map at <http://theccwh.org-resources/host-program/>.



CCWH HOST Program Map

Public History Forum

Sarah Case

Public History Coordinator

The National Museum of African American History and Culture

In September, the Smithsonian Institution officially opened its newest museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC). The museum, first proposed in 1915 by black union veterans, overcame years of indifference and opposition within Congress and the Smithsonian itself until finally receiving support of key members of Congress, including Representative John Lewis of Georgia, a new director of the Smithsonian, and of President George W. Bush in 2003. Part of the controversy was the lo-

cation of the new museum. Supporters of placing the new museum on the National Mall, including President Bush, prevailed, and the museum is situated on part of the grounds of the Washington Monument. The choice of the site near the popular National Museum of Natural History and National Museum of American History meant both convenience and symbolic resonance, but also put restrictions on the architects, who were required to create a building that did not intrude upon the view from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial.

The architect, the Ghanaian Britain, David Adjaye, made this constraint a virtue. Although lower than other museums on the Mall (many of its exhibit floors are underground), the building makes a strong statement. The building is a step pyramid, covered with intricate metal work (aluminum covered with bronze), meant to invoke the handiwork of slave



Sarah Case

artisans. NMAAHC director, Lonnie Bunch, intentionally hoped to create a “darker building” that pointed to how Americans “undervalue, neglect, overlook” black history and black Americans, but one that also speaks to “resiliency and uplift.” Although low and somewhat set back from the Mall, the building is visually stunning.

The museum began with a mission – interpret African American history and a central part of American history – but no objects. Much of the collec-



The NMAAHC Building. Alan Karchmer/NMAAHC.

Public History Forum (cont.)

tion consists of objects associated with major figures in black history and culture – Ella Fitzgerald’s dress, Chuck Berry’s Cadillac, Nat Turner’s bible. But much of it is from local communities and tells a quieter, but no less compelling story. The new museum used “history harvesting” or community collecting to encourage potential donors to give part of their family history to the museum, to view their personal treasures as part of American history. As such, it displays objects that interpret individual experience as part of the national story.

The museum is immense. Although I spent a good part of two days visiting it, I still did not see everything. The lower floors of the museum interpret history, and the upper floors culture. To access the history floor, visitors descend by elevator. Once there, they confront the early modern world and the emergence of transatlantic slavery. One side of the room displays African objects, the other European. To the side is a small, dark room holding parts of the *São José Paquete Africa*, a Portuguese slave ship. Director Bunch made finding and displaying a slave ship one of his primary goals, and the NMAAHC worked with several U.S. and African museums to locate and authenticate the ship. Nearby hand and neck cuffs, some sized to fit children, are displayed.



Red Cadillac Eldorado owned by Chuck Berry, 1973. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History Culture, Gift of Charles E. Berry.

The exhibit follows chronologically, next covering the expansion of slavery in colonies and the new United States. It is careful to demonstrate black agency, and not only black victimization, highlighting stories such as that of Anthony Johnson (an enslaved African who purchased his freedom and became a land-owner in Maryland) and Revolutionary War participants, on both sides of the conflict. The paradox of the thoughts and actions of Thomas Jefferson as well as the promises and contradictions of the language of the Revolution, are given special attention. Indeed, paradox, rather than linear progress, acts as the major theme of the history galleries. The interpretation of the Civil War presented the idea of self-emancipation, but also displayed

the startlingly small tents that up to twenty freedmen and women used as shelter in contraband camps. A slave cabin used well after the end of the war further underscores the lack of full autonomy and financial stability endured by freedmen and women.

Postwar themes of the tenuousness of freedom are demonstrated with a prison tower from Angola State Prison in Louisiana that looms over text that explains the convict labor system. Segregation, lynching, and racist popular culture receive attention, as do the growth of education, women’s club activism, and black-owned businesses. Journalist and reformer Ida B. Wells receives particular attention. Here, too, the exhibit creates a complicated story highlighting progress

Public History Forum (cont.)

as well as ongoing struggle and discrimination.

Rising upward, physically and symbolically, visitors encounter the Civil Rights Movement. Video and aural recordings enliven this section, perhaps the most uplifting of the history exhibit. At an interactive exhibit, visitors sit at a long counter, invoking a lunch counter and displayed next to stools from the Greensboro, North Carolina sit-ins, and are encouraged to think of themselves as participants in the ongoing struggle. Among the most memorable objects is a striking display of small pieces of stained glass from the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. These are quiet objects that speak to the horror of the bombing.

The final section interprets a “changing America” since 1968, including Black Power, the candidacy of Shirley Chisholm, hip-hop as a musical and social movement, and the presidency of Barack Obama. Themes of ongoing struggles over education and housing are included, as well as the Black Lives Matter Movement.

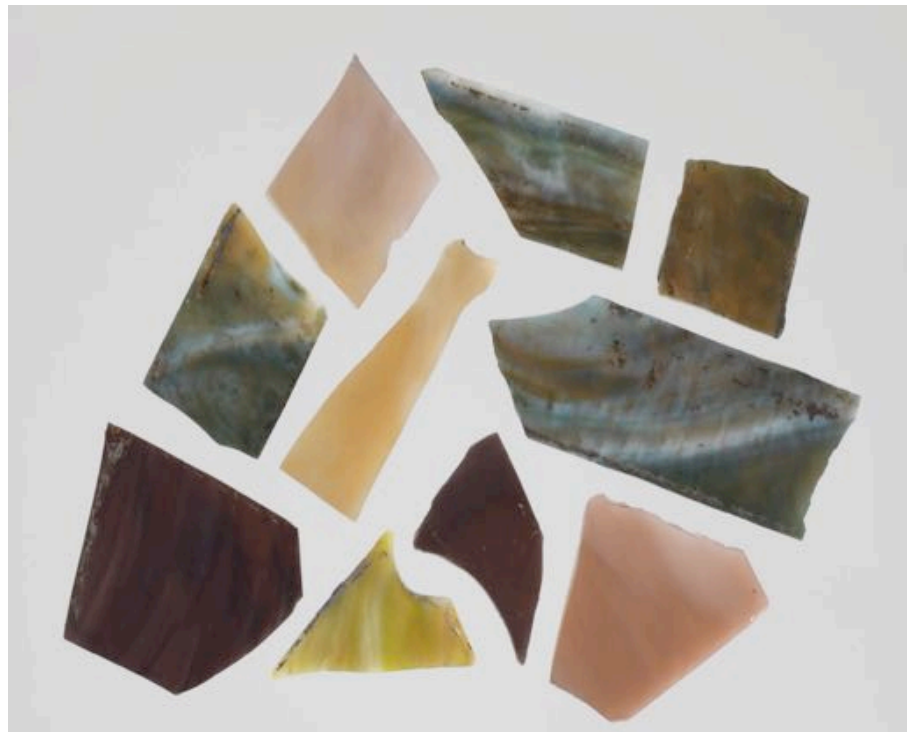
Throughout the exhibit, incorporation of current scholarship in black history is evident. Notably, many visitors photograph not only objects, but also text panels, and discuss them with their companions. This is something curators hope for, but do not always achieve. Indeed, many

visitors come in family groups, and seemed to be engaged in wide-ranging conversations inspired by the exhibit.

Upstairs, the fourth floor focuses on culture and presents rooms on music, dance, theater, television, movies, and fine arts, as well as displays on foodways, gesture, language, beauty products, colorism, and other topics. The music room gives attention to everything from blues, jazz, R&B, and hip-hop, to country and hard-core. Genres of music indebted to black artists, but not always associated with them. These areas use video extensively and visitors clearly enjoyed finding particular artists, television shows, and other popular culture favorites. The floor below includes an interpretation of local place, as well as exhibits

on the military, sports, and activism. Especially compelling was a room focused on famed educator and civil rights activist Mary McLeod Bethune which was styled like a club room, complete with a table upon which were cards inviting visitors to share their social concerns.

If this sounds a bit overwhelming, it can be. It is worth planning to spend extensive time at the museum, or visit more than once. Although, the current advance ticket reservation, now sold out through March as of this newsletter’s publication, makes this difficult. This speaks to the thoroughness, and accomplishment, of the museum and its curators, which in turn speaks to the complexity of the African American experience.



Shards of glass from the 16th Street Baptist Church. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Trumpauer-Mulholland Collection.

Graduate News

Erin McCullugh

Graduate Representative

“Don’t Take It Personally” and Other Suggestions From An Academic Job Market Survivor

We have all heard the general advice: You can expect the competition to be fierce. You will need new clothing. Be sure not to wear bright colors or distracting accessories. Expect the application process to be enormously disruptive to your personal and scholarly life. Be prepared to receive little or no notice about the status of your application or whether or not you have been removed from consideration. Be prepared to try again.

The decline in federal and state funding for public universities coupled with the rise in hiring adjunct professors has led some to compare landing a tenure track job to unicorn hunting, and an entire industry has sprung up around preparing graduate students for the market. There are many different approaches and opinions on how to “succeed” on the job market.

Unfortunately, there is no fail-proof strategy to getting hired. With this in mind, I recently sat down with Professor Tessa Murphy, a recent PhD graduate from the University of Chicago and newly minted Assistant Professor of History at Syracuse University to talk about her recent experience navigating the academic job market.

EM: To begin with, how many job cycles did you participate in?

TM: Two – once when I was conceivably close to finishing by the end of the academic year, and once when I had defended my completed dissertation, but had not yet been awarded the Ph.D.

EM: Did you look for jobs outside of academia?

TM: I did not. I applied to a variety of academic jobs and postdocs, and figured if nothing worked out I would then begin applying for non-academic jobs. But don’t be like me! Definitely start thinking – early and often – about other ways in which you could apply the skills acquired during graduate school to other careers.

EM: Organization and tracking – whether for research or applications – always seems to be tricky. How did you manage your different types of applications for, example, post-docs, research universities, or teaching colleges? Did you find any specific type of software helpful?

TM: I’m a big fan of Evernote. It’s free, and it allows you to clip entire webpages to specific folders on your computer or phone or tablet, making it easier to verify all relevant details in one place. I organized different applications into subfolders according to type (job, postdoc, etc.). Within each application folder, I organized individual job ads chronologically by dead



Erin McCullugh

line, and had the satisfaction of checking them off the list when applications were submitted!

EM: During your first cycle, you were still working on finishing your dissertation. Were you also teaching while applying for jobs?

TM: Both years were crazy. My first year on the market I was fortunate to have a completion fellowship, so I wasn’t teaching, but juggling different types of applications and finishing the dissertation (while also being abroad) took up much more time than I anticipated. In my second year, I had a research fellowship in the fall, while writing applications, and was teaching two courses in winter, while going on campus visits. Luckily, by the time the dissertation was finished; otherwise, I think I would have slept even less than I did already! There’s no way around it: it’s a stressful time, and, with any luck, probably one of your busiest in grad school. I was able to cluster my teaching so that campus visits didn’t interfere with my ability to be there for my students, and was fortunate that a campus visit during my first year on the market provided a job talk template for

Graduate News (cont.)

those I gave in year two.

EM: What was your timeline like for looking? For example, how early did you start looking? When does the market actually start? And were there any places you found jobs that our readers might not readily look?

TM: I would recommend getting your general materials (teaching and research statement, general cover letter) in order over the summer, so that when job ads start to appear in August and September you're ready to tailor your application to specific positions. Application due dates seemed to cluster in mid-September and mid- to late October, with a few trickling in around November. You can generally breathe, or work furiously on the dissertation, in December. Then, in January, after the AHA, things start up again, either with campus visits or with applications for postdocs and VAPs advertised later.

EM: The campus visit and job talk. It's what everyone hopes for, but also one of the most stressful aspects of the process. Do you have any suggestions for preparing for the campus visit?

TM: Practice, practice, practice! Take as many opportunities as you can to actually deliver your job talk before a real-

life audience. Gather feedback from specialists as well as people outside your field. If at all possible, try out the talk with non-historians (your family, your friends, colleagues in other departments) at least once. They can be a great gauge of whether you're providing an engaging, easy to follow argument. And get some sleep.

EM: What was the most surprising aspect of the campus visit? Or an interview question that caught you off guard?

TM: Probably just how different each visit can be. Some places are primarily interested in your research, others want to know how you would teach their particular student body, and still others are very invested in how you would fit into or complement the existing academic community. There's no one-size-fits-all model, and preparation is your best friend.

EM: What was the best piece of advice you received before going on the market?

TM: Don't take it personally. I think for a lot of people apply for jobs is a very trying time psychologically. In addition to stress and lack of sleep, what you've been working on for years is now open to scrutiny. Every rejection, or, more often, total lack of response, can feel like a judgment on the value of your work, and it's hard not to get down about it. But there are so many reasons why one doesn't get a particular job, or, in this market, any job, and you

should remember that just because you may not have been the right person for a specific position, doesn't mean you're not a great person and scholar in general.

EM: What would be your one piece of advice for someone who is on the market for the first time?

TM: See above. Also, don't get too attached to a specific position, especially before you've even interviewed for it! It's certainly worth seriously considering whether you would want to live in a specific place or be part of a given community before you apply to a tenure-track job there, but try not to get ahead of yourself. I've known people who start browsing real estate ads right after clicking "submit" and that strikes me as a recipe for disappointment.

EM: Now that you have transitioned from graduate student to assistant professor, what has been the most challenging or surprising part of your first year?

TM: Things continue to be incredibly busy. I had the naïve idea that once I got a job, things would calm down a little. How wrong I was! But, I'm loving all the things that accompany the transition from grad student to assistant professor – advising students, planning new courses, seeing the inner workings of the department. And having my own office is pretty great too!

Guest Column

Ilaria Scaglia

Membership Coordinator

Of “Meat Markets” and Similar Metaphors: One Woman’s View

I was talking to a colleague about presenting a paper at the AHA this year, and she remarked on how much she avoids this conference as it reminds her of the job market days – the “meat market,” she called it, a moment in her career she gladly left behind. At a different venue, during a talk, another young female scholar quipped about her own dislike of “prostitution” while referring to the process of applying for funding to finish her project. I heard similar language from mentees, graduate students, and even young colleagues, as they justified *not* applying for something. I cannot help wondering about the gendered aspects of these metaphors, about the fact that most often – if only anecdotally – I hear them from women, and about the effect of this mindset on their professional experience.

I am not foreign to the uneasy feelings that might arise while in the process of putting forth one’s candidacy. I come from Italy, a cultural environment where self-promotion is frequently scorned as *superbia* and *arroganza*, and I struggled

to adjust to the aspects of our profession that require me to make a case for myself. I am also in favor of a more inclusive – rather than a cutthroat, competitive, and exclusionary – approach to success in academia. Yet, I recognize the need, and even the merit, of putting forth one’s case.

A precious piece of advice once came from an older colleague, indeed, a woman, who pointed out that I was not “promoting” or “selling” myself, but only my work and my ideas. I was preparing my first annual review at the time, and I confessed to her I felt uncomfortable “bragging” about what I had done. She suggested thinking of it as “justifying my expense of taxpayers’ money,” and that did the trick. I surely felt confident in making the strongest possible case for supporting public education in Georgia. After that conversation I actually enjoyed the rest of the review process and I felt comfortable in my own skin while standing behind my work.

Recently, a prominent scholar, also a woman, commented on the “prostitution” metaphor by pointing out that the alternative to marketing oneself is “being sold” arbitrarily by somebody else. If only to stand against the “Pygmalion” model of academia, “self-marketing” surely represents a more empowering alternative.

Embracing such process does not have to devolve into a neoliberal, corporate approach. For as much as I am grateful for the

advice I read in blogs such as *The Professor Is In*, I do take exception to the unforgiving world they portray, one in which a bad haircut or a casual conversation dragged too long at a conference (both offenses I am certainly prone to commit) represent an irreversible *faux pas* that jeopardizes one’s chances to succeed. I know for sure that academia offers many opportunities for frank conversations and sincere friendships, many of which I am privileged to enjoy, and most people will not be as unforgiving as they are often made out to be. Also, associations such as the CCWH stand witness to the fact that many scholars are willing to volunteer time, energy, and money to help others succeed. Such service, it seems to me, represents the best alternative to corporate models many of us dislike. The “meat market” talk, however, has to go, first because it effectively discourages women from putting themselves forth and, second, because it might just turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy.



Member Spotlight

Editor's Note: In each issue, we spotlight members of the CCWH to highlight our members' varied backgrounds, fields of study, experience, and geographic locations. Spot-lighting members from across the CCWH spectrum reflects the diversity of our membership.



Annessa Ann Babic

Annessa Ann Babic is an adjunct professor and freelance writer, and she was the coordinator for Interdisciplinary Studies at a small, private college. She holds a PhD in American History from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Her research interests and specialization centers on women's studies, cultural history, and transnational studies with a particular emphasis on the Modern Middle East and U.S. – Turk relations.

She is the author of numerous books – the most recent being *Comics as History, Comics as Literature* – and book chapters,

reference entries, book reviews, and journal articles. Her active publication career deals extensively on nationalism, women's rights, women's liberation, Turkish-U.S. relations, transnational feminism, and travel literature. Most recently, she completed two smaller pieces "Failing New Women: Anne Shirley's Legacy, The New Woman, and World War I" and "Importing the Ethnic: Voyeurism on Your Dinner Plate" (concerning the permeation of American Chinese food). Both are due out in the ensuing year.

She also maintains an active publishing career outside of academia and serves as co-chair of the European Association of American Studies Women's Steering Committee. This past summer she crafted travel writing while spelunking in the Iowa's Women's Archives and the Oregon State University Archives, as she and her co-writer, Tanfer Emmin Tunc, have been crafting a discursive examination of food safety, activism, and grassroots women's voices. This project – "Safety for Our Souls" – has received funding from several libraries. Independently, Annessa is nearing completion of her next academic and popular venture that explores cultural diversity, travel narratives, and the economic structure of tourism on women in the Aegean Sea region.



Debashree Mukherjee

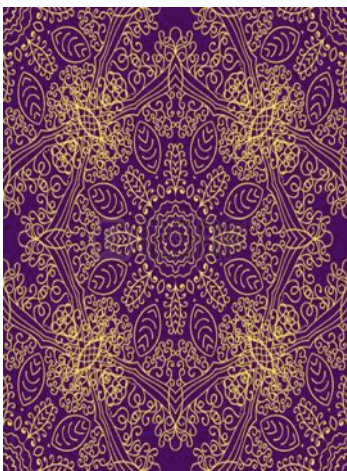
Debashree Mukherjee is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies at Columbia University. Her research and teaching centers on the history of modern South Asian visual cultures and industries, with a focus on late colonial Bombay cinema. Debashree draws her methodological inspirations from feminist film historiography, archival ethnography, media archaeology, and technology studies. Her current book project, *Cinema and the Practice of Modernity*, presents a cultural history of early Bombay cinema (1920s-1940s) that privileges material practice, circuits of work, and technologies of production.

Debashree received her Ph.D in Cinema Studies from New York University (2015), and holds an M.Phil degree in Cinema Studies from the School of Arts & Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University (2009), and an M.A. in Mass Communication from Jamia Millia Islamia University (2004). Select publications include "Creating Cinema's Reading Publics: The Emergence of Film Journalism

Member Spotlight (cont.)

in Bombay,” in *No Limits: Media Studies from India* (2013), “Scandalous Evidence: Looking for the Bombay Film Actress in an Absent Archive,” in *Doing Women’s Film History: Reframing Cinema’s Past and Future* (2015), and “Tracking Utopias: Technology, Labor, and Secularism in Bombay Cinema,” in *Media/ Utopia* (2016).

Trained as a filmmaker, Debashree previously worked in Bombay’s film and television industries as an assistant director, cameraperson, and writer. In 2013, she curated an exhibition of Indian film ephemera titled *Maya Mahal*, and is actively involved in digital humanities initiatives such as the *indiacine.ma* online annotation platform. She is currently an editor with the peer reviewed journal *Bio-Scope: South Asian Screen Studies*.



The CCWH at the AHA Denver – January 5-8, 2017

The CCWH co-sponsors a reception and a number of sessions at the AHA, as well as conducting its Annual Business Meeting and hosting its Annual Awards Luncheon. Join us at these events.

Thursday, January 5th

1:30 - 3:00 p.m. – Colorado Convention Center, Room 302. Session 1, Joint with the Alcohol and Drugs History Society. A Question of Intention: Alcoholic Insanity, Violence, and the Law in 19th Century America

3:30 - 5:00 p.m. – Hyatt Regency Denver, Limestone Room. CCWH Annual Business Meeting

5:30 - 7:00 p.m. – Hyatt Regency Denver, Mineral Hall C. Session 2, Joint with the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians. Women’s History Organizations: Regional and National Collaboration

Friday, January 6th

8:30 - 10:00 a.m. – Colorado Convention Center, Mile High Ballroom 4C. Session 3, Joint with the AHA Committee and the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians. New Directions in Gender and Women’s History: China, Japan, and the U.S.

10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Hyatt Regency Denver, Centennial Ballroom D. Session 4, Joint with the AHA. Job Workshop for Historians

10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Colorado Convention Center, Room 401. Session 5, Joint with the AHA. Strategies for Teaching the History of Fashion and Dress

7:30 - 8:30 p.m. – Hyatt Regency Denver, Capitol Ballroom 1. LGBTQ Historians’ Reception, Joint with the AHA Committee on LGBTQ Status in the Profession; the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians; and the Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History

Saturday, January 7th

10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Colorado Convention Center, Room 402. Session 6, Joint with the AHA and the North American Conference on British Studies. Consumption, Rationing, Boycotting, and National Identity: Britain at War, 1939-45

12:00 - 1:30 p.m. – Hyatt Regency Denver, Mineral Hall A. CCWH Annual Awards Luncheon

In Memoriam

Rachel Ginnis Fuchs 1939-2016

The Coordinating Council for Women in History recognizes the life and work of its past Co-President, Rachel G. Fuchs (1939-2016).

Formally retired from Arizona State University in 2015, Rachel continued her scholarship unabated. Late 2016 will see the publication of another co-edited book by Rachel, *Gender and Citizenship in Historical and Transnational Perspectives*. She also had two other books in the works.

Rachel's career track represented the "non-traditional" path recognized by the CCWH Catherine Prelinger Award, but at a time when the term did not exist. While raising her children, Mindy and Daniel, she completed her Ph.D. from Indiana University in 1980, always partnered with her husband, Norman, since high school days.

Her award-winning 2009 monograph, *Contested Paternity: Constructing Families in Modern France* (Johns Hopkins), followed *Poor and Pregnant in Paris: Strategies for Survival in the 19th Century* and *Abandoned Children: Foundlings and Child Welfare in 19th Century France*. Her numerous works brought women's lives to the forefront of her analysis.

As her personal feminism intertwined inseparably with her scholarship, her family has requested any donations to be made to Planned Parenthood

Arizona, on whose board she had served.

Colleagues and friends from throughout the history community have offered their condolences and remembrances. Pamela Stewart noted, "We will miss her laughter, intellectual rigor, service, and mentoring, but commit to all four."

Sandra Trudgen Dawson remembers Rachel as "a warm and generous person who gave her love and talents joyfully. Rachel had the ability to make a deep impression on the lives of her colleagues and friends. Rachel was a professional with a big heart. When she was co-president of the CCWH, she taught me and mentored me with care and kindness. Rachel often edited my letter drafts and helped my professional development profoundly. Rachel was caring, helpful, and a really excellent editor. I will miss her immensely."

Sara L. Kimble responded to the news of Rachel's passing with these thoughts: "Rachel Fuchs was one of the most important influences on my intellectual development as a scholar of French history with an emphasis in socio-legal history. In graduate school, I read Rachel's book, *Poor and Pregnant in Paris* and it changed the way I thought about historical evidence. In this book, Rachel examined the discrete acts that constituted "strategies for survival" among vulnerable women in the broader landscapes of the 19th century French society. Rachel's analysis of such acts as leaving infants secretly at foundling homes helped us gain insight into the options open to

women at the time – as agents in their own lives, operating against the constraining limits of their society. Her insights in other books, notably *Contested Paternity: Constructing Families in Modern France*, demonstrated the ways in which power and knowledge operated in surprising and complex ways. She had a way of reading and interpreting against the grain, disrupting assumptions, and arriving at innovative conclusions. I admired the ways in which Rachel found the human stories within the historical context in nuanced and insightful ways that bridged the distance between us in the present moment and those who lived in the past. As a colleague, Rachel was extraordinarily generous of her time, she freely shared her enthusiasm and good humor, and she gave sincere and concrete support to younger scholars. She was a warm, delightful, witty person. I am grateful for all our conversations, exchanges about my works in progress, meals shared, and the bonds of friendship. I am thankful for my shared time with Rachel on this planet. I will miss her profoundly."

And, finally, Cassia Roth adds, "Rachel Fuchs was a dedicated and brilliant scholar and a compassionate mentor. When I experienced tragedy and loss in my personal life, Rachel supported me and urged me to continue in my academic endeavors. I will miss her."

Author's Corner

*Editor's Note: As part of a new feature for Insights, we are interviewing authors of fiction and non-fiction books of interest to our membership. If you are an author, or would like to nominate an author to be interviewed, contact newsletter@theccwh.org. With this issue, Whitney Leeson and M'Elise Salomon interview Nathalia Holt about her latest work, *Rise of the Rocket Girls*.*



Nathalia Holt

Today, we are interviewing Nathalia Holt, author of *Rise of the Rocket Girls: The Women Who Propelled Us, from Missiles to the Moon to Mars*.

Hi Nat. Thank you for fitting this interview into your busy travel schedule.

Can you please tell our CCWH members a little about yourself and your background?

I'm a science writer and the author of two books: *Rise of the Rocket Girls: The Women Who Propelled Us, from Missiles to the Moon to Mars* (Little, Brown, 2016) and *Cured: The People who Defeated HIV* (Penguin Random House, 2014). My work has appeared in numerous publications including *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Atlantic*, *Slate*, *Popular Science*, and *Time*. I have a Ph.D in microbiology and have trained at the Ragon Institute of MGH, MIT, Harvard University, the

University of Southern California, and Tulane University.

How did you become interested in writing a book on the women who worked as “computers” at the Jet Propulsion Lab (JPL)?

I came across their stories by chance in 2010. My husband and I were expecting our first baby and having a difficult time coming up with baby names. When my husband suggested the name Eleanor Frances, I decided to Google the name and was intrigued to find a woman named Eleanor Frances Helin pop up in my search. A photograph taken of her in the 1960s revealed she worked at NASA as a scientist at a place called the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. I realized I had never heard of women who worked at NASA during this period in history. After contacting the NASA archives, I learned that there were many women who worked at the lab during that period and soon became obsessed with finding them.

How did you find the women who worked at JPL? And how did you decide which women to interview?

It wasn't easy to find them. NASA had lost most of their names and had no contact information for them. It took countless phone calls all over the country to track them down. I interviewed as many as possible, but, unfortunately, due to space constraints, I wasn't able to include all their stories in the book. However, all their memories helped inform the narrative.

Tell us about the process of interviewing the various Rocket Girls. How many female “computers” did you interview? How long were your interviews on average? What types of questions did you ask? And, where are the oral histories you collected currently stored?

I interviewed more than 30 women over many hours. A few of the women I focused on for the book I spent years of weekly phone calls in order to get their stories completely documented. After all, these are careers that span five decades! All of the oral histories, both recordings and transcripts,

Author's Corner (cont.)

are still in my possession, but I hope to make them publically available at some point.

During your interviews, were the Rocket Girls more eager to talk about their work at JPL or their personal lives and relationships with each other? Were some areas of questioning off-limits because of the nature of their work?

The women were eager to discuss all aspects of their work and their personal lives. I was careful to make sure they felt comfortable with the personal details that were included in the final book.

What are one or two favorite stories you heard from the Rocket Girls?

Too many to count! One of my favorites is how the Voyager mission was saved from budget cuts in a single weekend by hard work and a daring trajectory that included gravity assist.

Have you received much feedback about the book from the women you interviewed? What do they think?

I'm still in contact with many of the women today and consider them my friends. It's been very rewarding to see how pleased they are with the publication of the book. I've been fortunate enough to do several interviews and events with them since publication and it is very rewarding to see the response to the book and their incredible careers.

What was the biggest challenge you faced in writing *Rise of the Rocket Girls*?

Having a baby halfway through writing the manuscript!

As a professional microbiologist, did you enjoy writing a popular history and how did the experience differ from your other book-length projects? What sources did you find most valuable in historically contextualizing the time period?



The JPL computers at work in 1955. Courtesy NASA/JPL-Caltech

It's a wonderful experience to write about science and technology for a book such as this one and I really appreciated being able to explore these classic missions of space exploration that are such a vital piece of our American history from a completely different perspective.

Do you think the close institutional connections existing between JPL and Caltech made the Rocket Girls work experience exceptional especially when compared to that of other private contracting firms?

JPL, even today, is very different than other NASA centers. It's always had a more casual, academic vibe, and I'm convinced that this, combined with other factors, are the reason the women were given so much responsibility and made the lab's earliest computer programmers.

If you had the opportunity to interview one individual you were unable to do so for the book, who would you choose and why?

The answer is easy: Eleanor Frances Helin, whose story inspired my journey, but who sadly passed away one year before I came across her name.

Author's Corner (cont.)

Both you and Margot Lee Shetterly published books about women in the field of mathematics and aeronautics within months of each other. Why do you think you were both attracted to a similar topic at roughly the same time.

This is a funny coincidence, particularly as it seems we both started our research the same year, 2010. I love Shetterly's book and feel so fortunate that we have both been able to document the histories of these incredible women.

What advice would you give educators and employers trying to encourage women to pursue a career in the STEM fields?

We are fortunate enough to have many great female role models in the sciences for young women today. By recognizing the women in history who have accomplished so much, not just at NASA, but throughout the STEM fields, we can inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers.

What advice would you give to historians thinking about writing a popular history?

Do it! Bringing history to new readers is incredibly rewarding.

How can readers discover more about *Rise of the Rocket Girls* as well as more about the next book project you have on the horizon?

My website is a great source of information: www.nathaliaholt.com. I am working on another book project, but am not quite ready to reveal the topic.

Whitney and M'Elise have also penned book reviews of both Nathalia Holt's book and Margot Lee Shetterly's book beginning on page 18 of this issue.



**Difficult Conversations:
Thinking and Talking About Women, Genders,
and Sexualities Inside and Outside the Academy**

June 1-4, 2017
Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY

Registration opens October 2016.
Visit hofstra.edu/BC2017 for complete conference details.
Questions: Please contact us at bc2017@hofstra.edu for more information.



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Berkshire Conference

The 2017 Berkshire Conference program committee has reopened submissions for the Poster Session at the 2017 Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Genders and Sexualities, Long Island, New York, June 1-4, 2017. Proposals are due by December 5, 2016.

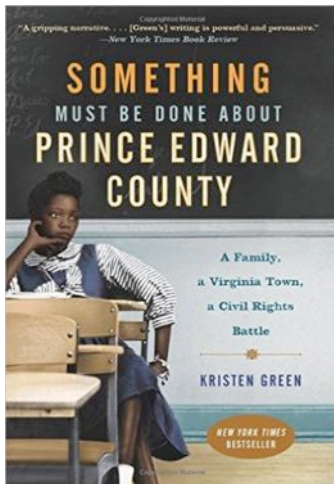
Submissions are welcome on any topic related to the theme of the conference "Difficult Conversations: Thinking and Talking about Women, Genders, and Sexualities Inside and Outside the Academy."

The poster session aims to provide scholars with a space to share and discuss current research and to present work in formats that cannot easily be accommodated in a regular panel session. Undergraduate students, graduate students, non-affiliated scholars, activists, and those not already on the conference program are strongly encouraged to apply.

Presenters of conventional posters will be required to format and print their own poster, which should not exceed the limit of 36" x 48." Further guidelines and information will be provided upon selection.

Please email a 250-word abstract and a one page c.v. that includes your name, affiliation, and contact information to BC2017@hofstra.edu with the subject heading "poster session proposal." For further information about poster guidelines see www.berksconference.org.

Book Reviews



Kristen Green. *Something Must Be Done About Prince Edward County: A Family, a Virginia Town, a Civil Rights Battle*. New York: Harper Collins, 2015. 320 pp. ISBN 978-0-06-226867-9. \$15.99.

Rachel Gunter
Texas A & M University

Journalist Kristen Green calls this work “a hybrid of history and memoir” (ix). It is both the history of the author’s family in Prince Edward County and the county’s “massive resistance” to *Brown vs. Board of Education* by closing its public schools for five years. The book follows Green as she grapples with racism, past and present, and her family’s role in the closings. Green also does an admirable job of connecting the events in Prince Edward County to the larger Civil Rights Movement.

The book is organized into three sections. “Separate But Not Equal” recalls the decrepit state of black public schools in

the early 1950s. The all-white school board refused to address complaints about classroom conditions and overcrowding until student Barbara Johns led a walk-out in protest. After the school superintendent insisted the schools were equal, Johns met with NAACP lawyers who took the case on the condition that they sue for integration instead of equal facilities. The students returned to class after two weeks and the NAACP filed suit. In 1952, the Supreme Court took five cases including *Davis et al. v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, combining them into *Brown v. Board*, in which the Supreme Court declared segregation unconstitutional.

Green regularly interjects the colonial, antebellum, and Civil War history of the county to explain the events of the 1950s and the present, even tying white fears of uprising in the 1950s to Nat Turner’s rebellion in 1831 about a hundred miles away. This county history leads Green to the founding of the Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties, a group organized to maintain segregation. County history and Green family history blend further when the author discovers her grandfather’s name amongst the list of Defenders.

On May 31, 1955, the Supreme Court handed down *Brown II* ordering public schools to integrate “with all deliberate speed.” In response, white leaders founded the Prince Edward School Foundation, which would found the whites-only Prince Edward Academy.

Prince Edward County maintained segregated schools for four years after *Brown*, but in May 1959, an appellate court ordered the county to integrate schools by September. Instead, the County Board of Supervisors closed all public schools.

Green’s section entitled, “The Lost Generation,” begins with Green detailing her years of schooling at the Prince Edward Academy, which finally admitted black students when she was in eighth grade. She struggles with the realization that the “well-mannered Southern gentlemen” she knew had so callously closed the schools. When interviewing the retired academy headmaster, Robert T. Redd, he assures her “you would have voted for it, too.” Contemplating her own privilege, the author reflects, “I can’t help but wonder if what he says is true” (99).

Green again jumps to her present struggle with where to enroll her own mixed race children in Richmond, Virginia. The public school district is failing, but racially diverse. The private school is mostly white, middle or upper class, and draining resources from public schools. Green goes a little too far by comparing her choice between a failing public school and a private school to her grandfather’s choice to shutter public schools. She recalls Redd’s words: “You’d do the same thing” and concludes, “He’s probably right” (131).

After the public schools closed, money poured in from segregationists and the foundation rented space in down-

Book Reviews (cont.)

town buildings, abandoned warehouses, and churches. The preparations were slapdash at best. It is striking what whites were willing to suffer in order to maintain segregation. Green argues that the conditions that first semester were not substantially different from those of the former black public schools, but “white parents were willing for their children to endure these second-rate facilities for the sake of an all-white education.” (127).

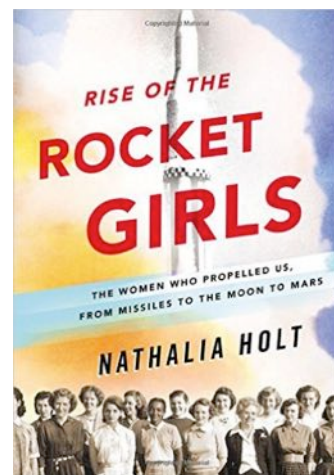
The majority of this section explores the lives of students profoundly affected by the school closings. Some older students were able to attend a college that offered high school courses. Others, like the daughter of the Green’s black housekeeper, were sent away to live with relatives. Still many others were simply unable to acquire an education. They remained illiterate and severely disadvantaged. Most of these students were black, but poor whites lost years of education as well. Green traces the illiteracy and anger that persists within this generation.

In 1961, black parents filed *Griffin v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, while students and young adults engaged in direct action to integrate Prince Edward County. In 1963, black and white residents and

activists banded together and opened the Free Schools one day after the Sixteenth Street Church Bombing in Birmingham, making parents all the more nervous. Finally, on May 24, 1965, the Supreme Court ruled school closings unconstitutional. The court ordered public, integrated schools opened; ruled that district courts could require county supervisors to levy taxes for a county school system; and outlawed Virginia’s tuition grants for private education. That night, Prince Edward County issued tuition grants to families of Academy students before the courts could block them. The public schools opened that fall with eight white students attending.

Green’s final section, “Integration,” covers the further integration of the public schools and the forced integration of the Academy as well as the current state of both. In 1978, Prince Edward Academy lost its tax-exempt status for failure to desegregate. Facing financial ruin, in 1984, the school integrated. Without segregationists’ donations, it still struggles financially. The Academy also struggles to recruit non-white students, but their successful efforts at recruiting black athletes from the public schools has not made them any more trustworthy within the black community. Green concludes that the existence of the Academy still negatively affects the public schools, siphoning off resources and talent. Green also reflects on how the county remembers the school closings, and in particular how many

white residents do not want to remember. The battle to shape the memory of the closings is apparent on anniversaries and at the local civil rights museum. Both scholarly and undergraduate audiences will appreciate Green’s fascinating contribution to local and national histories of the Civil Rights Movement.



Nathalia Holt. *Rise of the Rocket Girls: The Women Who Propelled Us, From Missiles to the Moon to Mars*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2016. 338 pp. ISBN 978-0-316-33892-9. \$27.00.

Whitney Leeson and
M’Elise Salomon
Roanoke College

In *Rise of the Rocket Girls*, Nathalia Holt chronicles the story of a group of ambitious young women who began working as “human computers” in the early 1940s at the Jet Propulsion Lab (JPL) in Pasadena, California. These mathematically-minded women used mechanical pencils, slide rules,

Book Reviews (cont.)

and logarithmic tables to calculate the extraordinarily long and complicated equations essential to launching rockets, satellites, and eventually men into outer space. Digital computers, as we know them today, did not yet exist and so engineers depended upon human computers to get the numbers right for rocketing heavy bombers, determining the orbits of satellites, and landing rovers on Mars. The contribution of these women to knowledge of our solar system is inestimable and Holt deserves praise for bringing their story to the attention of the American public.

Nathalia Holt's research for *Rise of the Rocket Girls* is based on extensive research in the archives of NASA and JPL-Caltech as well as multiple oral interviews with surviving rocket girls, including Barbara Paulson whose amazing stories and keen memory rewarded Holt with much rich material. Structurally, Holt approaches her collective biography chronologically, subdividing sections by decade – 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s to the present. Every decade features several key female figures whose long-term employment at JPL fundamentally shaped the work experience and work product of the company's human computers. Through-

out *Rise of the Rocket Girls*, Holt keeps her narrative person-centered by providing the reader with a brief description of each woman's family history, educational background, and career path once hired by JPL. In micro-historical fashion, these individual accounts allow the reader to reflect upon the larger social issues of reproductive control, equity in employment and marital relations, and changing gender roles in an era when most women did not work professionally. Taken together, the rocket girls' experiences demonstrate how modern women struggled to care for children and maintain a home life while working long, irregular hours in a demanding, but rewarding, career. Their story is largely an uplifting one, but social circumstances forced many rocket girls to leave JPL. Long commutes, lack of maternity leave, the expectations that the demands of a spouse's job trumped theirs, divorce, and a limited family and friends support network were just some of the hurdles women had to overcome.

The story of the rocket girls begins with the establishment of JPL itself. After one mishap too many, Caltech's administrators asked an all-male group of rocket builders, known by the moniker as "the suicide squad," to relocate their base of operations off campus. They selected a remote canyon in the scrubland north of Pasadena as their new headquarters and invited Barby Canright, along with her husband, Richard, to join the team. Barby worked computing thrust-to-weight ra-

tios for the group's jet-assisted takeoff (JATO) trials. Soon after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Barby's husband was promoted to engineer and JPL hired additional women to keep up with the demands of calculating the potential of various rocket propellants. While it took only seconds for a rocket engine to fire, analyzing a rocket's thrust, rate of combustion, and velocity took a week or more for several human computers to accomplish by hand. During World War II, JPL's group of human computers became "distinctly female" (35). After JPL's only male human computer left to join the war effort, Macie Roberts, head of the computing department, enacted a policy of female-only hiring. Throughout the 1950s and 60s, she assiduously avoided the disruptive potential of men who viewed human computing as an alternate route to entering the more lucrative and prestigious field of aeronautical engineering. Firmly believing that men saw themselves "as bosses and women as employees – not the other way around" (64), Macie hired only brilliant, dedicated, and hard-working women like Barbara Lewis, Helen Ling, and Susan Finley. Together, they became a collaborative, close-knit group of coworkers who "called themselves the sisterhood" (164). Macie Roberts also made the bold decision to hire Janez Lawson, a young woman with a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from UCLA, who, in 1952, became the first African American hired for a professional po-

Book Reviews (cont.)

sition at JPL. Janez entered an integrated workspace making calculations for the inertial missile guidance system alongside JPL's other human computers in Building 122. Janez, indeed, was a good hire. Her proficiency in mathematics so impressed Macie that she selected Janez as one of only two women sent to IBM for training on the company's first commercial scientific computer, the behemoth 701.



As the 1950s gave way to the 1960s, the Space Race heated up and JPL's ongoing involvement with rocket-launched satellites cemented their interdependent relationship with the NASA. The human computers proved essential personnel in America's early spaceflight forays including the success of Explorer 1, America's first satellite and our answer to Sputnik. The rocket girls worked hand in hand with male engineers to launch a series of probes exploring the Moon (the Ranger series) as well as Venus and Mars (the Mariner

missions) while also calculating trajectories for the Apollo missions. The data they produced transformed the design of our nation's future satellites, space shuttles, and planetary probes. Digital computers were still in their infancy in the 1960s and most engineers regarded them with suspicion, preferring to rely upon the number-crunching abilities of the female computers whose skill they recognized and appreciated when it came to big-data reduction. The women at JPL worked tirelessly finding trends in the calculations they produced for engineers who needed to know things like the maximum possible weight of a spacecraft given a certain trajectory. Helen Ling, who succeeded Macie Roberts as head of JPL's computing division in the early 60s, succinctly summed up the relationship between engineers and computers when she said "[e]ngineers make up the problems and we solve them" (166). In the one-and-done world of space launches, there was no room for error. Everyone had to get it right the first time and no computer proved faster or more reliable than Helen and her "girls."

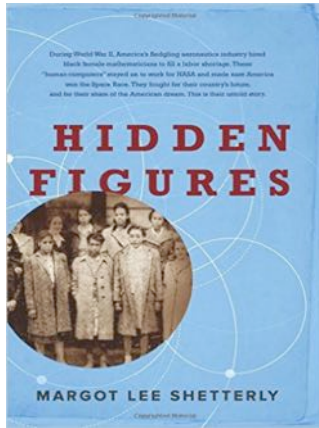
The increasing efficiency of IBM computers in the 1970s, however, soon required human computers to develop new skill sets in order to avoid the layoffs arising from an obsolescence that had all but eliminated JPL's cadre of switchboard operators. With Helen's encouragement, women in the computing division enrolled in computer science courses at Caltech,

learned to write code, fix programs, build computers, and become masters of digital image processing. Human computers like Sue Finley, NASA's longest serving woman (sixty-one years at JPL and still counting), reinvented themselves becoming some of our nation's first and most talented computer programmers. Along the way, they rewrote the rules for women working in aeronautics and engineering by taking lead roles in the design and management of various NASA projects ranging from comet research to deep space exploration. In an era when the number of women earning bachelor's degrees in computer science has declined sharply from 37 percent in 1984 to 18 percent in 2016, Nathalia Holt's *Rise of the Rocket Girls* not only fills an obvious gap in the history of women in science, but also serves as a timely reminder that women once dominated a research field now largely considered unappealing to them.

(For further insight into Rise of the Rocket Girls, see the interview of author Nathalia Holt on page 14 of this issue.)



Book Reviews (cont.)



Margot Lee Shetterly. *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race*. New York: Harper Collins, 2016. 346 pp. ISBN 978-0-06-236359-6. \$27.99.

Whitney Leeson and
M’Elise Salomon
Roanoke College

Margot Lee Shetterly seeks to revise America’s historical narrative by telling the stories of Dorothy Vaughan, Katherine Johnson, and Mary Jackson – three of the African American women who worked in the West Computing Unit of the Langley Memorial Research Center. Not only were these three women instrumental in winning the Space Race, but they also defied gender and racial boundaries. Shetterly grew up in Hampton, Virginia, surrounded by African American engineers, mathematicians,

and computers. Her close relationship to black NASA employees granted her unprecedented insight into an otherwise hidden story. In the introduction of *Hidden Figures*, Shetterly proclaims that she wants “to prove their existence and their talent in a way that meant they would never again be lost to history” (xvii).

Shetterly organizes *Hidden Figures* into two major sections. First, she describes how Dorothy Vaughan, Katherine Johnson, and Mary Jackson made their way to Langley. In 1943, the United States government appealed to people for help in the war effort. That same year, President Roosevelt had desegregated the defense industry, which allowed African American women to apply for jobs at Langley and other labs across the country (6). Vaughan, Johnson, and Jackson had all grown up in rural Southern towns, graduated from historically black colleges, excelled in math and science, and taught in segregated schools. Heeding America’s call for help, Vaughan, Johnson, Jackson, as well as many other women, made their way to Hampton to participate in the “Double V.” They were waging two wars: one against the Axis Powers and the other against racism at home (32).

Langley desperately needed computers – people who could crunch the numbers and check engineers’ calculations. Once female mathematicians arrived at Langley, they were promptly sorted into one of two computing groups: the East

Computing Unit, which was reserved for white women, and the West Computing Unit, for black women. Vaughan quickly climbed the ranks of the West Computing Unit, earning a promotion to head of the West computers. After the war, many computers received pink slips that relieved them of their war jobs, but the women of the West Computing Unit found a way to stay. They proved that “female research mathematicians were not just a wartime measure but a powerful force that was about to help propel American aeronautics beyond its previous limits” (76).

One of Shetterly’s major arguments is that Langley provided black women with a sense of equality in a highly segregated and unequal world. Once they left the West Computing Unit, however, it proved much more difficult for black women to traverse the fine line between the equality of their computing unit, the perceived progressivism of Langley, and the overtly segregated world around them. Each woman dealt with these hardships in her own way. When Mary Jackson was working on a project in the East Computing Unit and had to use the restroom, white women laughed at the absurdity that they would ever need to know where *her* bathroom was. In a split second, Jackson had gone from a computer of equal standing to “a black girl whose piss was not good enough for the white pot” (108-9). Even though Katherine Johnson was acutely aware of the segregation

Book Reviews (cont.)

at Langley, once she arrived at work, she viewed herself as an equal and refused to feel the weight of injustice thrust upon her own shoulders (135).

While the first portion of *Hidden Figures* focuses on how Vaughan, Jackson, and Johnson made their way to Langley, the last half of the book demonstrates how the three women used their poise, intelligence, and progressive thinking to pave the way for future women in science. Shetterly argues “unlike the women who started in West Computing after years of teaching, the new generation was coming to research early in their careers – early enough that they’d have time to stretch out and see where their talent might take them.” (231). When NASA emerged in May of 1958 and united several aeronautics labs under one federal domain, the West Area Computing Unit dissolved, which effectively ended segregation at Langley. The computers then found more specialized work within specific engineering groups. Shetterly asserts that African American women demanded at seat at the table – they climbed the ranks, earned promotions, became engineers, and acted as beacons of equality at Langley and within their own communities.

Margot Lee Shetterly’s work addresses an important

point: why have we forgotten about the Rocket Girls of the West Area Computing Unit? She claims that computing had transformed from an all-female occupation to a top-tier division with expensive technology and large operating budgets. Computing was no longer considered a suitable career for women; rather, it became viewed as a launching pad of sorts for men looking to become engineers. Furthermore, NASA’s public face was unabashedly white, so the African American engineers, scientists, and mathematicians at Langley “lived in its shadows, even within the black community” (242).

In *Hidden Figures*, Shetterly aims to educate America’s wider reading public. She not only wants to recover a lost narrative, but she also seeks to prove that Vaughan, Johnson, Jackson, and the women of the West Computing Unit were instrumental to U.S. success in the Space Race and are, therefore, an invaluable addition to our nation’s story. For proof of these assertions, Shetterly draws from an incredibly diverse pool of primary and secondary sources. She conducted more than thirty interviews with surviving Rocket Girls, their friends, and families, which she contextualizes with archival materials gathered from Langley, NAACP records from towns across Virginia and West Virginia, articles from *Air Scoop*, secondary literature on women in science, and even weather reports from 1943. The combination of abundant secondary

sources and rich, oral interviews could have easily created an overwhelming and jumbled storyline. Yet, Shetterly has produced a popular history that is both educational and engaging.

Hidden Figures offers readers a personalized take on the history of women in science. Shetterly masterfully weaves together a narrative that describes the backgrounds of Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson; articulates their struggle to navigate overt acts of segregation, racism, and sexism; and, validates their individual and collective triumphs.



Shetterly’s book has been made into a film due to be released in December 2016. Image courtesy of Fox 2000 Pictures.

Member News



Sara Kimble

Congratulations to Sara Kimble on the publication of her co-edited book with Marion Rowekamp entitled *New Perspectives on European Women's Legal History* (Routledge, 2017). This book integrates women's history and legal studies within the broader context of modern European history in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Sixteen contributions from fourteen countries explore the ways in which the law contributes to the social construction of gender. They analyze questions of family law and international law and highlight the politics of gender in the legal professions in a variety of historical, social, and national settings. Focusing on different legal cultures, they show us the similarities and differences in the ways the law has shaped the contours of women and men's lives in powerful ways. They also show how women have used legal



knowledge to struggle for their equal rights on the national and transnational level. The chapters address the interconnectedness of the history of feminism, legislative reforms, and women's citizenship, and build a foundation for a comparative vision of women's legal history in modern Europe.



Cara Delay

The CCWH is pleased to announce that the first recipient of the Gold Award goes to Dr. Cara Delay of the College of

Charleston. Her article is titled "Women, Childbirth Customs, and Authority in Ireland, 1850-1930." Delay's article explores childbirth in modern Irish history, with a focus on popular belief (folklore and oral traditions, attitudes, and understandings of birth) and religious rituals. Through an analysis of oral histories, diaries, memoirs, autobiographies, and folklore narratives, it illuminates women's experiences, with a particular focus on poor rural and working-class urban women. Local customs such as fairy belief and centralized Church rituals including the churching of women highlight the ways in which ordinary women faced layers of regulation by both their local communities and the Catholic Church. Tensions between local communities' supervision of reproduction, the Catholic Church's views of childbirth and its surrounding rituals, and the ways in which women themselves viewed pregnancy and birth provide a window into changing authority structures in modern Irish history as well as women's abilities to negotiate these changes. The examination reveals that some women challenged the dominance of patriarchal and Church authorities, hoping to secure a comfortable place for themselves and retain autonomy in modern Ireland.

The newly established Gold Award is named for longtime member, activist, and scholar, Carol Gold whose life and work exemplify the mission of the CCWH – to promote women's history and to support women in the historical profession.

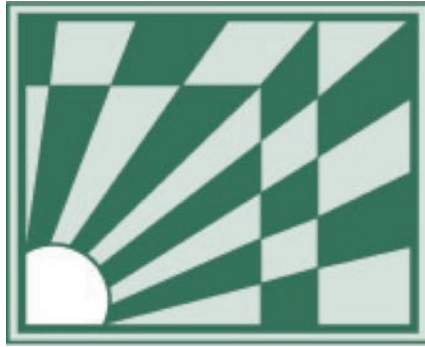
Announcements

“Transnationalisms, Transgressions, Translations”

A reminder that the 12th Conference of the International Federation for Research on Women's History/ Federation Internationale Pour la Recherche en Histoire des Femmes (IFRWH/FIRHF) will be held August 12-15, 2018 at the University of California, Santa Barbara, the home of the current president, Eileen Boris. This will be the first time that this international gathering of historians of women and gender will assemble in the United States.

The theme, “Transnationalisms, Transgressions, Translations: Conversations and Controversies,” probes the meanings of boundaries and frameworks, narratives and epistemologies, analytic terms and foundational categories, global, national, and local understandings, interactions and power relations across time and space. We are open to proposals for complete panels (chair, commentator, three papers), as well as individual papers, roundtables, conversations, workshops, and non-traditional forms of presentation.

The submission link is now live. Proposals will be accepted until March 15, 2017. For more information please visit: <http://www.femst.ucsb.edu/ifrwh/call>. For inquiries email: ifrwh18@gmail.com.



The CCWH Membership Renewal

Please renew your membership for 2017 and consider donating to the CCWH awards. We are especially asking for donations to keep the Catherine Prelinger Award active in the coming years.

The year is drawing to a close, and our Membership Coordinator, Ilaria Scaglia, has posed a challenge to all current CCWH members: ***bring in a new member by December 31st!***

Talk to students and colleagues and tell them about the benefits of being part of our organization. We are aiming to go over 500 members in 2017. If 1/3 of you were to bring in somebody new, we would be well over that target!

If you make a successful recruit, email us. Just put "successful recruit" in the subject line of your email and include both your name and the new member's in the body of the email. We will post them in our next newsletter. We will also honor the CCWH member who recruited the most people. It is essential for us to grow and for as many women in history to receive support.

Let's make it happen!

Predocctoral Fellowships in Women's History at the New-York Historical Society

Applications are now open for the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Predocctoral Fellowships in Women's History.

The two recipients of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Predocctoral Fellowship in Women's History should have a strong interest in the fields of women's history and public history. They must be currently enrolled students in good standing in a relevant PhD program in the humanities. The Predocctoral Fellows will be in residence part time at the New-York Historical Society's new Center for Women's History, opening in March of 2017. The positions run for one academic year, between September 1, 2017 and June 29, 2018, with a stipend of \$15,000 per year. This position is not full time and will not receive full benefits.

The application deadline is January 6, 2017.

For further information contact: Joanna Scutts, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in Women's History, Center for Women's History, New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West, New York, NY 10024. The contact email is: fellowships@nyhistory.org.

For further information see: <http://www.nyhistory.org/library/fellowships>.

Announcements

Rachel Fuchs Memorial Award

The Coordinating Council for Women in History have decided to honor the memory of our recently departed Rachel Fuchs with an award that recognizes and applauds service to the profession, including mentoring. The Rachel Ginnis Fuchs Memorial Award of \$500 will be given annually to celebrate an individual whose service is most representative of Rachel's own.

The breadth of Rachel's service to her chosen profession is truly awe-inspiring. Rachel's abundant scholarship is widely read and she was and is acknowledged as a leader in her field of French History. Yet, Rachel was so much more to her students, her peers, and her colleagues at many different institutions and in numerous organizations. Rachel was deeply committed to women's rights, women's history, and to supporting women in the historical profession. Rachel worked diligently to serve the historical profession as a mentor, a role model, an activist, and as a friend. Rachel served as President of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association, as President of the French Historical Society, and most recently, as Co-President of the Coordinating Council for Women in History, 2013-2016.



Rachel Fuchs

The CCWH is asking you and/or your organization to donate any amount to help endow this memorial award that honors our friend and colleague, Rachel Fuchs. Contributions from \$100 to \$10,000 would be most appreciated. Donations may be made on our secure online Awards Donation Form or by check made payable to the CCWH and sent to: Pam Stewart, College of Integrative Sciences and Arts, Arizona State University, 455 N. 3rd St., Suite 380, Phoenix, AZ 85004-1601.

The Coordinating Council for Women in History is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All donations to the Rachel Fuchs Memorial Award are tax-deductible.



Call for Submissions

2017 Dean's Fellowship Cornell University

Cornell University is accepting applications for the 2017 Dean's Fellowship in the History of Home Economics. We invite faculty members, research scholars, and advanced graduate students (must be eligible to work in the United States) with demonstrated background and experience in historical studies to apply for this post-graduate opportunity. The fellowship recipient will receive an award of \$6,500 for a summer or sabbatical residency of approximately six weeks to use the unique resources available from the College of Human Ecology and the Cornell University Library System in pursuit of scholarly research in the history of Home Economics and its impact on American society. Relevant historical subject areas may include, but are not limited to: the role of women in the family and society, the history of women in higher education, the history of food, nutrition, housing, consumer economics, the family, child development, design, clothing and textiles among other key topics in American social history. The deadline for receipt of all application materials is Friday, March 3 2017. For additional information, see: <http://www.human.cornell.edu/fellowship/>.

CCWH Elections

Election season is upon us. The current CCWH Executive Director's term ends in January 2017. The Executive Director serves for a term of three (3) years pursuant to Article IV, Section 5 of the CCWH's Bylaws. The current Executive Director, Sandra Trudgen Dawson, has again offered herself as a candidate for the position. The position is described as follows: "The Executive Director shall issue notices of all board and members' meetings and shall attend and keep the minutes of the same; shall have oversight of the organization's finances and membership activities; shall keep or archive the records and papers of the organization; shall have the authority to sign written contracts on behalf of the organization; shall be responsible for communication among board members; and, shall perform all such other duties as are incident to the office (Article IV, Section 4).

Any current member of the CCWH may vote for Executive Director. Balloting **via email** will begin on **December 1, 2016 and will run through December 15, 2016**. Emails should contain the words "CCWH Executive Director Election" in the subject line. In the body of the email you may type the name of the current candidate, Sandra Trudgen Dawson, or any write-in candidate who is a current member of the CCWH. Ballots are to be emailed to: Mary Ann Villarreal, CCWH Co-President, mvillarreal@exchange.fullerton.edu. Any questions should be address to Mary Ann Villarreal.

CCWH Board Members

Mary Ann Villarreal
Co-President

Barbara Molony
Co-President

Sandra Trudgen Dawson
Executive Director
execdir@theccwh.org

Pamela Stewart
Treasurer
knutter@smith.edu

Ilaria Scaglia
Membership Coordinator
membership@theccwh.org

Sunu Kodumthara
Outreach Coordinator
outreach@theccwh.org

Sarah Case
Public History Coordinator

Kim Todt
Newsletter Editor
newsletter@theccwh.org

Marshanda Smith
Website Coordinator
web@theccwh.org

Erin N. Bush
Website Coordinator
web@theccwh.org

Whitney Leeson
Book Review and Media Editor

Andrea Milne
Graduate Representative

Erin McCullugh
Graduate Representative

Nupur Chaudhuri
Fundraising Coordinator

Stephanie Moore
Prelinger Award Chair
PrelingerAward@theccwh.org

Patricia Schechter
Ida B. Wells Award Chair
WellsAward@theccwh.org

Nicole Pacino
CCWH/Berks Award Chair
CCWHBerksAward
@theccwh.org

Brandi Brimmer
Napur Chaudhuri First Article Award Chair
chaudhuri@theccwh.org

Whitney Leeson
Carol Gold Article Award
GoldAward@theccwh.org

COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR WOMEN IN HISTORY MEMBERSHIP FORM

1) ___ new membership 2) ___ membership renewal 3) ___ gift membership

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

This is a (circle one) HOME or WORK address

Telephone: _____ Email address: _____

Do you wish to receive emails from the CCWH membership email list? (circle one) YES or NO

Do you wish to receive the CCWH newsletter as a PDF file sent to your email? (circle one) YES or NO

Current position and institutional affiliation, or independent scholar _____

Research and professional fields (up to three): _____

___ I am willing to serve on CCWH committees or the CCWH Board.

Membership in the CCWH runs from 1 January to 31 December each calendar year

Dues	Membership Level	Donation Amount	Donation Designation
\$ ____	\$20 income under \$25,000	\$ ____	CCWH Catherine Prelinger Award
\$ ____	\$30 income \$25-50,000	\$ ____	CCWH Carol Gold Associate Professor Best Article Award
\$ ____	\$50 income \$50-75,000	\$ ____	CCWH Nupur Chaudhuri First Article Prize
\$ ____	\$75 income \$75-100,000	\$ ____	CCWH Ida B. Wells Graduate Student Fellowship
\$ ____	\$90 income over \$100,000	\$ ____	CCWH/Berkshire Conference of Women Historians Graduate Student Fellowship
\$ ____	\$80 institutional membership	\$ ____	Joan Kelly Memorial Prize in Women's History (CCWH Sponsored, AHA administered)
Please make check or money order (in U.S. funds) payable to CCWH. Print and mail to:		\$ ____	Peggy Pascoe Memorial Fund (at the University of Oregon)
Dr. Pamela Stewart Arizona State University 455 N. 3rd St. #380 Phoenix, AZ 85004-1601		\$ ____	Donation where needed
		\$ ____	50 th Anniversary Fund
		\$ ____ TOTAL PAYMENT	

Insights: Notes from the CCWH is published four times a year. Our publication dates are Spring (March 1st), Summer (June 1st), Fall (September 1st), and Winter (December 1st).

We invite members of the CCWH to share your professional news with colleagues. Submit announcements about recent awards, appointments, achievements, publications, and other news. If you wish to submit material for inclusion in the newsletter, please send material to the Newsletter Editor no later than two weeks prior to publication (e.g., for the Spring issue, no later than February 15th). Material should be sent to newsletter@theccwh.org. If you have any questions about whether material would be appropriate for the newsletter please email the editor.



“We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.”

— Winston Churchill

Insights: Notes from the CCWH

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