

NORTH SHORE VISIONS

VOLUME 21, ISSUE 1 MARCH 2008

FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

It is my great pleasure to invite faculty, students, and staff and community members to stop by the Department of Women's Studies for coffee or chai, and find out more about our work. As engaged pedagogues, be it in our classrooms, at conferences, in research and in the trenches, we are in the process of formalizing our research and activism relationships with feminist organizations in the community that we live and work in. We most recently enjoyed collaborating with the YWCA to bring Nicole LaVoie from the UM Tucker Center to Duluth to speak at UMD and the YWCA about women and girls in sport. We look forward to continuing to be engaged with women and women's organizations throughout the Twin Ports in academics and in the struggles and celebrations living life while working to transform the world.

The Department is in high gear with Women's History Month. We've had a great start to the month and hope to see you at the events that remain. If you stop in our office, we have women's history quizzes available all month and you'll be able to test your women's history knowledge. Come by and share stories with us about any woman who has influenced

your life. I would like to share with you stories and pictures of women who changed and continue to change the world including the intrepid women of Dahomey. The great women of Dahomey are renowned warriors. They were a gallant military force that defended their kingdom for generations. Currently, their great granddaughters have continued in making important economic contributions in their society. Some have individually made great deal of wealth from the market place and are popularly referred to as Mama Benz. These indomitable market women live in the African country known as Benin. Mama Benz are so wealthy that the only car they drive is a Mercedes Benz. They also make sure that their daughters study only in the best of higher education institutions and pursue degrees in business and economics (please see the documentary: Mama Benz). Come and also learn about the department and the invaluable work that we do.

In February we celebrated Black History Month, while in March we celebrate Women's History month. As we observe these two months, the department of Women's Studies takes note of the contributions people of color and women have made. We celebrate

and honor our foremothers and fathers who worked to make a difference. Let us uphold Susan Gage, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Margaret Sanger, Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, Mary Church Terrell, Harriet Tubman, and the many faceless and nameless women working to transform the world. I also valorize Women's Studies majors and minors who work tirelessly to ensure that these foremothers' dreams and aspirations for an equitable and just society are kept alive in the work they do both in the classrooms and in their respective communities.

To bridge Black History Month's Celebration and Women's History Month, the College of Liberal Arts graciously scheduled me to present on February 28th, at the "CLA Research Thursdays", a paper on development projects and the re-fashioning of gender, based on my larger ongoing research on water diversion in Kenya. More than 40 people joined us to learn about these issues. In this issue, we revive a tradition of giving you small tastes of the research topics that our feminist faculty in Women's Studies and throughout UMD are pursuing. Please see the "Research News" section of newsletter for more on research.

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ALUMNAE NEWS

Dawn Mikkelson, WS alumna is producing a new film.

The Red Tail is a feature-length documentary film that looks beyond the headlines of the historic struggle between Northwest Airlines and the workers whose loyalty and dedication built the company. From a two-plane company in 1926, Northwest Airlines has become the fourth largest airline in world. Through a combination of personal stories of mechanics, flight attendants, pilots, ground workers, and union organizers, *The Red Tail* will explore this battle over money, power, and pride.



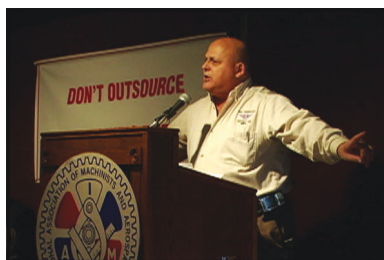
Mikkelson's work in film and video has received international acclaim across broad delivery platforms. Mikkelson has completed two award-winning documentary films, *Treading Water: a documentary* and *THIS Obedience*. *THIS Obedience* won numerous festival awards and is currently being distributed for national PBS broadcast by American Public Television. Mikkelson recently completed her third documentary, *Green Green Water*, which premiered at the imagineNATIVE Film Festival in Toronto in late 2006. Mikkelson is in production on her fourth, *The Red Tail*.

A former television news reporter, Mikkelson formed her first company with business partner, Jamie A. Lee, at the age of 25. Aquaries Media, a full-service multimedia production company, served clients including Wilsons Leather, Target Corporation, Marshall Fields, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, American Public Television, and the Domestic Abuse Project. In 2006, Mikkelson started Emergence Pictures, to focus exclusively on video and film production.



You can learn about it at <http://www.redtailmovie.com>.

From the Emergence Pictures Website: Named to *AV Multimedia Producer's* 2004 National "Top Producers Showcase", Mikkelson is both an award-winning media producer and documentary filmmaker. From National PBS broadcasts to being selected as a Featured Video Podcast by iTunes, Mik-



STAFF SPEAK OUT

BY LAURA STOLLE SCHMIDT

In a surprising announcement about lump sum payments to non-bargaining unit (non-union employees), the University administration revealed last week that funds for salaries in excess of 1.5 million dollars are available now, despite their statements that there were no salary increase funds available during the September clerical/technical/health care strike in September. The 1.5 million dollars that the administration is now paying to civil service workers would have funded the one percent difference in cost of living wage increases that led to the September clerical/technical/health care strike.

Many AFSCME workers were also surprised that this announced lump sum payment was made to thank Civil Service employees for their service amid "special challenges" in the Fall of 2007. One issue of contention during the AFSCME (bargaining unit) strike included outrage over the fact that the University administration granted a 3.25% wage increase to Civil Service employees but not to AFSCME workers despite the fact that both groups perform very similar duties. The University administration granted this COLA in addition to their step increases (merit/service increases), while insisting there was not enough money available to give the same to AFSCME workers even when the state legislature had appropriated funds for the University to do so. Ironically, Civil Service wages rose dramatically when the AFSCME union negotiated the first wage increases, and Civil Service employees have historically received increases very similar to union-negotiated increases until now.

Also surprising was the administration's language stating that "special challenges" existed in September, when at the time the University administration, including Judith Karon, UMD Human Resource Director repeatedly insisted publicly that there were no negative effects on the University or UMD from the strike.

Many of you know that in September 2007, the Clerical, Technical and Health Care workers of the University of Minnesota went on strike for fair cost of living wage increases. What you may not know is that more than 95% of AFSCME represented workers at the University of Minnesota are women.

Many people in the communities of the Twin Ports, the University-wide system, and the AFSCME workers are asking if there may be an issue of gender related pay-inequity at hand. AFSCME workers are the only group at the University primarily made up of women. Could there be a

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KENYA: VIOLENCE ROOTED IN COLONIAL PAST

By Njoki Kamau



Did I say Kenya? I am sure you some of you are confounded by the specter of violence that blared on our TV sets lamenting loss of lives in Kenya. The violence that broke out on December 30th, 2007 was triggered by the claims that the presidency has been stolen from the opposition party. As I wrote this piece, over 1000 lives were lost and over 300,000 people internally displaced. For the past thirty years, Kenya's espoused national philosophy -- at least by the political leadership -- has been, Love, Peace and Unity! The ongoing murderous fury by machete-wielding unemployed youths is a testament that there can be no lasting peace without justice.

The simmering political casserole can indeed explode -- as we are witnessing as events unfold in Kenya. The causes of the crisis are many and complex and the touted rigging of the presidential election awoke a sleeping giant. The majority of Kenyans live under the poverty line, escalation of credentials is at its highest, and compliance with austere Structural Adjustment Programs complicated an already complex situation. The incumbent looking for economic solutions looked to China and Asia for trade. This was not well taken by those who had to compete with China in the tenders, namely Western interests used to post-colonial privileges.

Historical injustices, dating back to the 1884-1885 Berlin conference for exam-

ple, set in motion ethnic chauvinism and land alienation. For instance, in 1905 large tracts of land were expropriated and marked "Crown Land"-- white highlands by the then British imperial power. Manipulation of ethnic differences helped in the conquest process. Former owners of the land were pushed into marginal lands or were turned into squatters. Huge coffee, tea, sisal, and pyrethrum plantations were established. Some are still owned by absent overseer landlords. To ensure a regular and predictable labor force in the plantations, poll tax was imposed -- that is every adult male was expected to pay taxes and the tax was to be paid in cash. Hut tax was also introduced whereby the male head of the household paid tax according to the number of huts (meaning wives) he had in his domain. The only way to attain cash was to work in plantations.

Kenya was thus unequally integrated into the global capitalistic economic system—those who had previously accessed the richness of the land were left with only their labor to sell to colonial powers. On the eve of "independence", a class of systematically trained elites took the reigns of power. Their class interests were well aligned with those of the departing colonial rulers. There were no structural changes, only a change of face. In fact, the post colonial (for lack of a better words) leaders were at pains to prove that they were as good as the departing colonizers and

could govern just like they did -- hence the "black mzungu" syndrome. If the departing colonizer lived in an exclusive neighborhood in a huge mansion replete with servant quarters, cooks, gardeners, drivers, watchmen, etc. that is what they wanted for themselves, and hence social stratification was accelerated instead of being minimized. The modern elites also joined hands with international elites. Some African political elites continued and still continue to seek political protection from international elites, and the international elites get their business interests secured in return! The poor, and especially women and children, continue to pay with their lives every election season. While elite actors inside and outside of Kenya safely look on while the poor act out ethnic and class conflict, the international community brings in external solutions without drawing on the wisdom of those who live and work in Kenya, again imposing agreements that benefit the elite. Meanwhile, conditions for women and children deteriorate as traditional beliefs that would have honored and valued them continue to be eroded by colonial thinking that allows the use of women and children's work to make up the gap in what has been extracted from the resources of the people of Kenya.

Njoki Kamau was born and raised in Kenya. She became a member of the Women's Studies faculty in 1997.

LIBRARY NEWS

New Books:

Women at War: Gender Issues of Americans in Combat
Sucking Salt: Caribbean Women Writers, Migration, and Survival
Woman with a Camera
Before They Could Vote: American Women's Autobiographical Writing, 1819-1919
Fight Like a Girl: How to be a Fearless Feminist
Women and Authorship in Revolutionary America
In the Beginning, Woman was Sun: The Autobiography of a Japanese Feminist
Their Right to Speak: Women's Activism in the Indian and Slave Debates
Nation of Women: an Early Feminist Speaks Out
When Sex Becomes Gender
From Oppression to Grace: Women of Color and their Dilemmas in the Academy
Her Best Shot: Women and Guns in America
Blessed Motherhood, Bitter Fruit: Nelly Roussel and the Politics of Female Pain in Third Republic France
In the Days of our Grandmothers: A Reader in Aboriginal Women's History in Canada
Feminists who Changed America, 1963-1975
State of the World's Children 2007--Women and Children-Double Dividend of Gender equality
Agenda Setting, the UN and NGOS- Gender Violence and Reproductive Rights
Short Life and Long Times of Mrs. Beeton
Feminist Thinkers and the Demands of Femininity
Pin-up Grrrls: Feminism, Sexuality, Popular Culture
Just Advocacy?: Women's Human Rights, Transnational Feminisms, and the Politics of Representation
Amazon Grace: Re-calling the Courage to Sin Big
Sisterhood Interrupted: From Radical Women to Grrls Gone Wild
New DVDs: *Beloved Community* and *I Was a Teenage Feminist*

FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

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In our ongoing efforts to diversify our curriculum to represent the experiences of diverse Global peoples and especially women, we have conceived and constructed two great new courses: WS 3750: Voices of African Women, and WS 3595 Special Topics: Asian American Women. These courses are underway this Spring semester for the first time. We are also offering another brand new course in the May inter-session focusing on globalization and food. The course will examine the politics of promoting genetically modified foods to feed a hungry planet, processes through which food grown in Third

World countries reaches our dinner tables looking fresh while women in both the developed and developing world are implicated in this process as growers, packers, and cashiers at grocery stores. This course will also examine urban agriculture and other forms of resistances to corporate take-over of small farms. We will look at the overall control of the food that we consume and the subsequent control of our physical environment and our overall health status. Get in touch with the department for more info about this class at ws@d.umn.edu or 218-726-7953. Please tell your friends about it. Food is the stuff of life and the future of healthy foods is at stake.

I wish you all a happy semester and please join us for the Women's History Month celebrations. Look for our posters around UMD and Duluth for great collaborative efforts and co-sponsorships on amazing events throughout the Twin Ports.

Sincerely,
Njoki Kamau



WOMENS HISTORY MONTH CALENDAR 2008

“WOMEN’S ART WOMEN’S VISION”

Events listed are at UMD, UWS, St. Scholastica and other locations, please note times and locations.

Saturday, March 15, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., U of M Coffman Union “Women Leading for Global Justice” Robin Morgan, Keynote Speaker 13 th Annual International Women’s Day Celebration Presented by Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights and the Human Rights Program at the University of Minnesota.

Saturday, March 15 & Sunday, March 16, 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Location TBA Doula Training Lead by Marla Lukes, CD (DONA), Birth Doula Trainer Birthing Ways Doula Connection

Tuesday, March 25, 11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m., UWS Multicultural Center (232 Old Main) “Living the Questions” Rachel Nelson , one-woman cabaret of original music, storytelling, dramatic performance, and spoken word. A reception will be provided. Sponsored by UWS Women’s and Gender Studies Program and Office of Women and Gender Issues.

Tuesday, March 25, 7:00 p.m., UMD Montague 70 Presentation by Melanie McPherson “Courage to Resist: An Army Reservist Talks about Her Decision to Refuse Deployment to Iraq” Sponsored by UMD Women’s Resource and Action Center and Women’s Studies Department

Wednesday, March 26, 12 Noon, UMD KSC 333 “A Dialogue with the Post-Tsunami Gendered Victims of Tamil Nadu” Brown Bag Presentation by Dr. Sutapa Chattopadhyay Sponsored by the UMD Women’s Resource and Action Center and Women’s Studies Department

Wednesday, March 26, 6:00 p.m., UMD Montague 70 Film: “The Salt of the Earth” There will be a film showing followed by a discussion and reception. Sponsored by the AFSCME Education Committee Women and Labor Film Series and the Commission on Women.

Thursday, March 27, 12 Noon, UMD Fourth Floor Library Rotunda “Listen to Girls: The International Girls Summit” Presented by Zora Radosevich and Rachel Johnson UMD Fourth Floor Library Rotunda Sponsored by UMD Royal D. Alworth Institute for International Studies

Thursday, March 27, 4:00 p.m., UWS Multicultural Center, 232 Old Main “Cost of War: Who Profits and Who Pays” Presented by Photographer and Gulf War Veteran Chante Wolf A reception will follow Ms. Wolf’s presentation. Sponsored by UWS Office of Women and Gender Studies Program and Women's Studies Program.

Thursday and Friday, March 27-28, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Holiday Inn Hotel, 200 West First Street, Duluth Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault: Training Symposium & Conference “Moving Beyond He-Said She-Said: Effectively Investigating and Prosecuting Consent-Defense Cases” For more information please call (218) 726-1442 or go to www.pavsa.org Sponsored by Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault (PAVSA)

Friday, March 28, 7:00 p.m., UMD Bohannon 90 “The Vagina Monologues” Performed by V-Day UMD Ticket prices are \$5 per students and \$8.00 for general Public Sponsored by UMD Women’s Resource and Action Center, Women’s Studies Department and Commission on Women

Saturday, March 29, 3:00 p.m., UMD Bohannon 90, \$5 per students and \$8.00 for general Public “The Vagina Monologues” Performed by V-Day UMD Ticket prices are \$5 per students and \$8.00 for general Public Sponsored by UMD Women’s Resource and Action Center, Women’s Studies Department and Commission on Women

Monday, March 31, 7:00 p.m., College of St. Scholastica Mitchell Auditorium Shea Lecturer, Poet Mary Oliver Sponsored by the College of St. Scholastica Women’s Studies Department

MULTICULTURAL CENTER CALENDAR

Thursday, March 13 - 12 Noon, Workshop: "Past Present and future of Latinos in Minnesota" presented by Susana Pelayo-Woodward, Director of the Hispanic/Latino/Chicana Learning Resource Center

March 24-29 Tabling outside the bookstore African Week Celebration Sponsored by Black Student Association

Monday, March 25 -Thursday, March 28, 6:30 p.m., MonH 70, Human Rights Festival

-Monday "Outlawed: Extraordinary Rendition, Torture and Disappearances in the 'War on Terror'"

-Tuesday "Discovering Dominga"

-Wednesday "Witnessing Darfur"

-Thursday "Cargo: Innocence Lost"

Tuesday, Wednesday March 25 - 26, 11:30-2:00, Kirby Commons Egg Roll Sale Sponsored by Access For All

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Friday, March 28 & Saturday, March 29, 7 p.m. Friday and 3 p.m. Saturday, UMD Bohannon 90, The Vagina Monologues Performed by V-Day UMD Sponsored by UMD Women's Resource and Action Center, Women's Studies Department and Commission on Women

Saturday, March 29, 7-10 p.m., Kirby Ballroom QASU's Spring Drag Show Get tickets tabling in Kirby this week, or at the door. Show starts at 7pm. Get there early, this event will sell out! For information, call QASU at 218-726-7041.

Sunday, March 30, 2:00 p.m., MPAC Dudley Theatre "Bus Stop." Performance interpreted in American Sign Language.

The Vagina Monologues

Performed by V-Day UMD

Friday and Saturday March 27 and 28

7:00 pm Friday, 3:00 pm Saturday

UMD Bohannon Hall 90

RESEARCH NEWS FROM BETH BARTLETT

Several of the faculty in Women's Studies – Susana Pelayo Woodward, Tineke Ritmeester, Joan Varney, Cindy Christian, and Beth Bartlett -- have been engaged in a joint research project gathering the histories of various feminist and women's advocacy organizations in Duluth. The history of our community is so rich, unique, and significant, and needs to be recorded, told, and passed on to future generations. Many of the organizations have been leaders in feminist activism and women's advocacy, serving as models of feminist practice, and gaining national and international stature. For example, the "Duluth Model," based on work by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, serves as a model for domestic abuse intervention throughout the U.S. and the world. Mending the Sacred Hoop was the first technical assistance program for Native women, and continues to be a leader in this work among First Nations. Sexual assault policies and protocols developed by Program to Aid Victims of Sexual Assault widely serve as models for other such programs. *New Moon Magazine* has achieved national and international recognition for its work on behalf of girls. The North Country Women's Coffeehouse is the longest continuously running feminist coffeehouse in the country.

We are particularly focusing on those grass-roots organizations that developed ten to twenty-five years ago, that are continuing today to address feminist concerns and serve the needs of women in the community. Currently, we are in the process of conducting oral histories and collecting and sifting through archival materials. All of our conversations and research so far have been immensely enlightening, informative, and personally enriching and we are grateful to the many who have taken the time to share their stories with us. We look forward to passing on these histories to future generations of activists and organizers.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Housing: Chester Creek House, a housing cooperative in Duluth for more than 25 years, has several openings for lesbian or lesbian-supportive housemates. Private room or rooms are accompanied by large, gracious shared living spaces. Housemates share chores and meet and eat together on a regular basis. The household hosts a community brunch every second Sunday of each month. Monthly cost is very reasonable. Call us at 218-728-5468 for more information.

Middle-Aged Women's Sock Hop! Amazing Grace Bakery, DeWitt Seitz Building 394 Lake Ave S., Second Wednesdays of the month, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. This is a no talking, no gawking, just dancing event. Bring along two of your favorite dance tunes on a CD to share. Suggested donation \$1 or more as you are inclined. Proceeds go to Seeds of Hope Youth Ranch.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING UMD'S DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S STUDIES

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STAFF SPEAK OUT CONTINUED

BY LAURA STOLLE SCHMIDT

correlation between the University administration's treatment of AFSCME workers and their gender? Is it easier for the administration to de-value the traditionally female professional roles of secretaries, health care assistants, librarians, bookstore workers, student assistants and sign language interpreters? The answer will take some time and research, but the consistent devaluing and unfair wage policy towards AFSCME workers, coupled with clear inconsistencies in statements about the availability

of funds is disturbing.

In September, I joined more than 100 other workers at UMD joined the system wide strike which lasted three weeks. At the heart of the strike was a union request for a *cost of living increase consistent with inflation and the increases given to other job groups at the U*. The strike was settled unsatisfactorily for the workers who were forced to give in due to economic pressures and fears about losing health benefits.

While many workers at UMD are happy to see their peers receive extra pay, there is also a feeling of

shock that the University would grant this class of workers a \$300 lump sum payment in addition to their COLA increases when the administration's past argument was that they did not have the money to fund the same 3.25% increases for AFSCME workers. In September, the University administration insisted there were no funds available for such an increase. The difference of 1% represented the amount necessary to keep the increase consistent with inflation rather than below inflation and *avert the strike*. I'll say it again—a fair

1% increase would have averted the strike. This new announcement about lump sum payments by the University administration seems inexplicably inconsistent to many people who tried to believe that the University administration spoke the truth in September when they said they did not have funds to pay the 3.25% increase AFSCME requested. To those who challenged their statement that the funds were not available, this has been no surprise. According to state legislators Yvonne Prettner, Mary Murphy and Tom Rukavina of the State Appropriations Committee, ample funds for fair COLA increases were appropriated to the University prior to the strike.

In recent years, salaries for administrators and faculty have grown between 8% (deans), 16-21% (faculty) and 79.43% (president) when adjusted for inflation. AFSCME-represented positions have seen salaries fall 4.84% when adjusted for inflation over the same period. When factors such as rising health insurance premiums are considered, AFSCME workers receive even less take home pay in relation to others at the U. In real dollars in the market, AFSCME workers have taken pay cuts each year for the past twelve years while receiving some of the lowest salaries on campus. In 2003, the University asked AFSCME workers to "share the pain" of statewide budget cuts. However, in 2007, the University received an appropriation from the legislature won by AFSCME workers and lobbyists to fund fair cost of living increases. Despite this, the University refused to pass on the state's funding to AFSCME workers. Instead, University administrators insisted that AFSCME workers include step increases (merit/service increases)

in the computation of cost of living increases—a move never before made at the U. In contradiction to this, Civil Service employees who do very similar work to AFSCME employees, were granted step increases PLUS cost of living increases, and have now been paid an additional lump sum.

To workers, this feels like a clear message that the University is asking AFSCME workers not to "share the pain" but really "bear the pain" of administrative budget decisions, even while they are in direct conflict with the intent of the Minnesota State Legislature's Appropriations Committee. To me, this looks awfully similar to the world-wide social and cultural practice of asking women and children to bear the pain of decisions that benefit people who are already privileged. For example, on an already low salary of \$19,000 per year, a 3.25% increase over two years (1.625% per year) is a \$617 gross pay increase. This is not the unreasonable and outrageous request the University administration made it seem to be through their statements and media relations, and at the bargaining table. If other job classes received a 3.25% increase rather than the 8-80% increases they have received, there would be enough funds to give AFSCME workers their increases many times over.

To compare the difference in economic affect on a worker receiving a lower salary versus a higher salary, here's some math. This is a bit obvious—higher salaried employees receive larger raises because their bases are significantly higher. This compounds the gap between "classes" of workers. For example, let's pretend that a

**THE UNIVERSITY
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PAIN"**

**...
WHAT DOES
THIS MEAN
WHEN 95% OF
AFSCME
WORKERS ARE
WOMEN?**

STAFF SPEAK OUT CONTINUED

BY LAURA STOLLE SCHMIDT

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faculty member making 52,000/yr – 80,000/yr got an increase of 1.625% per year for 2 years, this would equal \$1,690 to \$2,600 per 2 years (vs. \$9,620-\$14,800 actual); Deans at \$102,000/yr



would receive \$3,315/2 yrs (vs. \$12,240 actual); the Chancellor would take home \$7,312/2 yrs (vs. \$30,375 actual). Clearly, there are noticeable differences in how a COLA affects a low-wage earner at the University versus a higher wage earner. A seven-thousand dollar increase goes a lot further towards groceries and heat than six hundred dollars. But when you look at the fact that it's really more than a \$30,000 increase compared to a \$600 increase, that's an amazing difference! In fact, someone earning this kind of wage may have completely forgotten what it's like to worry about groceries and heat while showing up every day to do a great job at work.

As a union, we never argued that high wage earners should

take lower percentages. Our argument was and continues to be that the administration should at least do the right thing and give AFSCME workers the increase the legislature funded. This increase is just fair. AFSCME-represented jobs keep the University going and moving forward. Many of us are very sad and frustrated that the administration was unwilling to give a COLA consistent with inflation while sending home huge increases to many others who work at the U.

Effectively, the University launched an extensive and powerful public relations campaign insisting that AFSCME workers were adding up the math incorrectly and should (for the first time in contract history) consider their merit/longevity step increases to be part of their COLA increase. In spite of MN Legislators' requests to the University Regents and President to give AFSCME workers the pay increases the legislature had appropriated, the University administration refused. This was especially disappointing because AFSCME workers had already agreed that the pay cuts against inflation of the past years could be overlooked if a fair increase could be given in the current contract.

We don't give up easily. Local 3801 at UMD is moving forward to create positive change in the future. We are now just a year away from ne-

gotiating our next contract. We continue to organize ourselves, communicate with legislators, build relationships, and host educational events that may help others understand what unions are all about. We hope that everyone will be willing and able to understand what's at stake: the ongoing devaluation of work in which many women traditionally excel, and unfair and inadequate compensation for that work. The union brought this country many benefits including the weekend and cost of living adjustments. We are hopeful that by organizing, lobbying the legislature, and educating each other we might achieve our goal at the U of a fair cost of living increase in the academic years 09/10 contract.

For more information on Local 3801 see our website at <http://www.afscme3801.org/> I also want to mention that the WS Department was a great support to striking workers and those who could not strike as well. We offer them our sincere thanks.

All the Best,
Laura Stolle Schmidt, WS
Department Executive Office
and Administrative Specialist
Member Local 3801

Women and Labor Film Series**The Salt of the Earth**

Wednesday, March 26, Reception at 5:00 pm, Film at 6:00 pm
Introduction and discussion afterward led by Dr. Tineke Ritmeester
UMD Montague 70

Free and open to the public

Sponsored by UMD Women and Labor Education Committee, The Commission on Women, and the WS Department

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STUDENT LETTER:

I am finance major. Initially, I took Intro to Women's Studies just for the liberal education requirement. By the end, I was taking it for myself. When I got further into the semester, I really started to enjoy every aspect of Intro. I would draw connections from what I learned to what my own mother and grandmother had to go through. It opened my eyes to the complete lack of basic rights and equality that the women of the 1900's suffered; what women had to go through, and have to go through, to try to become

socially equal.

This class left me yearning to know more about all of the struggles that still lie ahead. Because of the enjoyment and knowledge that I took from Intro to Women's Studies, it has led me to take many more Women's Studies and Cultural Studies classes. I can not fathom how much I would have been at a loss if I had not had the opportunity to be in that classroom.

David Donndelinger

March is Women's History Month

Events Throughout the Twin Ports— Listed Inside!

