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Wheeler studies how ACLU shaped 20th-century sexual policy, culture

An eye-opening answer to an informal survey question was the genesis of a book project that has earned a BGSU historian two research fellowships, one of them from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

Pursuing her Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota in 1997, Dr. Leigh Ann Wheeler opened an honors seminar she was teaching, "Rethinking Pornography and Hate Speech," by asking students how they would feel if their partner or spouse used pornography or brought it into their home.

Each female student replied that, while pornography made her personally uncomfortable, she would never request that her boyfriend or husband remove it from her home for fear of violating his "right to free speech."

The response left Wheeler wondering why the students equated criticizing pornography with advocating censorship, even in their own homes. But after reading a book by the president of the American Civil Liberties Union, she had a possible answer—they were living in a civic and sexual culture "profoundly" shaped by the ACLU.

That hypothesis is at the core of Wheeler's project, "Liberating Sex: How the American Civil Liberties Union Shaped Policy and Culture in the Twentieth-Century United States." Her research will be aided next fall by a fellowship from BGSU's Institute for the Study of Culture and Society and in 2007 by the NEH fellowship, which was among 155 granted nationwide recently.

Wheeler wrote a 2004 book that outlined how female reformers in the early 20th century worked to repress sexual content in new "amusements" such as burlesque and films, even as they developed explicit sex education materials for their curious children.

Eventually, she notes, those reformers butted heads with the ACLU. Founded to defend conscientious objectors in World War I, the organization moved on to supporters of organized labor and other "radicals"—communists and socialists, for instance—as well as causes related to sexuality, she says.

That wasn't surprising, given that its founders included a "robust and eclectic group" of Bohemian leftists who practiced variations on nudism and "free love," explains Wheeler, whose research has already taken her to the American Nudist Research Library in Kissimmee, Fla.

In addition to nudists, they defended birth control activists and playwrights among their own members, including Eugene O'Neill and H.L. Mencken, she says. And as proponents of sexual freedom who themselves explored unconventional sexual relationships, they opposed laws that criminalized consensual sexual activity and expression, she adds.

Over time, ACLU activists began to treat sexual expression and practice as civil liberties, promoting privacy rights and freedom of expression as the constitutional bases for them, according to Wheeler. The organization was central in getting courts to accept the consumption of pornography—and later, the sale of birth control and the right to abortion—on the basis of privacy, she maintains.

Where the legal concept of privacy originated, however, and how it became a court-sanctioned category for protecting sexual expression are among the questions she hopes to answer as her project progresses.

"I think the ACLU has played a huge role in shaping how we think about sexuality today,"

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which is essentially an “anything goes” attitude, she says. “The notion of what constitutes censorship is so broad” in part because of the organization’s efforts.

But the ACLU’s approach to sexuality has also created contradictory consequences, internally and otherwise, Wheeler suggests.

Issues of sexuality separate activists on the left when, for example, “feminists argue over whether to oppose pornography as oppressively sexist or defend it as a liberating form of free speech,” she points out, calling that debate still a “very divisive” one among feminists.

And generally, “even as the ACLU advanced sexual privacy through individuals’ right to engage in a variety of practices—including homosexual sex and non-reproductive heterosexual sex—it also eroded sexual privacy, in the minds of many,” she notes. “By using the First Amendment to unfetter sexual expression, the ACLU helped make way for a public realm saturated with sexual imagery.”

Her research, and eventual book, aims to resolve the resulting contradiction: “Has American liberalism erected a wall around sexual practice in the private sphere, insulating it from all government intrusion?” Wheeler asks. “Or has it instead erased borders between public and private with regard to sexual expression?”

Forensics team wins state title

BGSU has captured the Ohio Forensics Association State Championship for the first time in 35 years.

On Feb. 17 and 18, seven BGSU students competed in the Varsity State Tournament hosted at Kent State University against students from Cedarville University, Ohio State, Ohio University, Muskingum College and the University of Cincinnati. They took the championship for the first time since 1971, placed fourth in debate and earned 21 individual awards.

The state title is determined by combining the scores of the Novice State Tournament held recently at Ohio State and those of the Varsity State Tournament. Unlimited entrants are allowed at the Novice Tournament, where BGSU took second place. A university may send only its best two competitors in each of the 11 individual events to the Varsity Tournament.

BGSU placed fourth in debate and earned 21 individual awards at the Varsity Tournament, including three individual state championships.

Individual champions included Michelle Baker, a junior from Loudonville, who took first place in communication analysis, and Kenny Rogers, a sophomore from Peoria, Ill., who won first place in both after-dinner speaking and dramatic interpretation.

This was the first state title for BGSU forensics director Paul Wesley Alday in his 18-year coaching career. He and volunteer alumni coach Tony Wise traveled with the team.

Bowling Green’s forensics program is a co-curricular, competitive team offered through the Department of Theatre and Film to any undergraduate student in good academic standing. The forensics team and Pi Kappa Delta forensics honor society are among the oldest organizations on campus. For more information, visit www.bgsu.edu/departments/theatre/performances/forensics/index.htm.

Douglas Neckers elected to Jackson Center board

Dr. Douglas C. Neckers, McMaster Distinguished Research Professor, has been elected to the Robert H. Jackson Center board of directors.

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The center, located in Jamestown, N.Y., is dedicated to preserving the memory and advancing the ideas of Robert H. Jackson, a former U.S. Supreme Court justice and chief American prosecutor at the Nuremberg war trials.

Neckers and his wife are natives of Chautauqua County, N.Y., Jackson's home county. Neckers played a key role in creating the partnership that enables BGSU faculty and students to study and conduct research on original materials in the Jackson archives at the center.

At BGSU, he serves as the full-time director of the Center for Photochemical Sciences. He is also director of Spectra Group Limited, Inc., a photochemical sciences business located in Millbury.

The author or co-author of 10 books and more than 340 scientific papers, Neckers holds 46 patents. He is a graduate of Hope College, holds a Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of Kansas and had a postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard University.

Internationally known for his expertise in photopolymerization, he has served as a consultant to the National Science Foundation, the American Chemical Society and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation as well as dozens of corporations, including Mead, 3D Systems, Ciba Geigy, PPG, General Electric, 3M and E.I. DuPont de Nemours.

Among his many scientific awards are an Alfred P. Sloan Fellowship, the Paul R. Block Jr. Award from the American Chemical Society's Toledo Section, the President's Award from Mead Imaging, the Morley Medal from the Cleveland Section of the American Chemical Society, the National Science Foundation Creativity Award and the Inter-American Photochemical Society Award. He was the first winner of the Olscamp Research Award at BGSU and its first distinguished research professor.

Neckers is a Fellow in the American Association for the Advancement of Science and is listed in Who's Who in American Education, American Men in Science and Who's Who in America.

Webb, Foldenauer to spearhead increased student programming

Jodi Webb and Janet Foldenauer of Orientation and First Year Programs have each received a new title and some new responsibilities, Dr. Wanda Overland, associate vice president for student affairs and dean of students, has announced.

Webb, director of Orientation and First Year Programs, has been named associate dean of students and Student Affairs associate to the BGeXperience.

She will be the liaison between Student Affairs and BGeXperience, overseeing all Student Affairs connections with the program, such as the new-student convocation and Fall Welcome, and providing leadership in developing new initiatives and partnerships. She will also work on expanding programming between Student Affairs and BGeX throughout the academic year.

Foldenauer, coordinator of orientation, has been appointed assistant dean of students. She will have responsibility for all aspects of orientation and registration and the First-Year Success Series, which has grown considerably since its inception. She will also oversee plans to create additional programming for transfer and commuter students.

Webb and Foldenauer will still have offices in 301 Bowen-Thompson Student Union.

Campus throws big Presidents' Day welcome for prospective students

The campus opened its doors to about 2,100 prospective students and their families at the

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Feb. 20 Presidents' Day open house.

Hosting the 6,000 or so visitors was a coordinated effort on the part of faculty and staff. Volunteers drove shuttle buses, guided tours, provided maps and information and directed people around campus. Faculty, staff and student groups presented displays in both the Bowen-Thompson Student Union, Olscamp Hall and in their departments.

President Ribeau addressed students and their families at one of the main morning presentations in Olscamp, where visitors heard about BGSU from Admissions, Student Financial Aid and others.

University Dining Services served many additional meals to visitors eager to sample the food here, including special "meal deals" created for Presidents' Day. In two of the dining centers alone, business was up about \$4,000 each for the day, said Dining Services Director Gail Finan.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to making the day such a success!

IN BRIEF**Technology dean candidate to hold open forum**

The final candidate for dean of the College of Technology will visit campus Monday and Tuesday (Feb. 27 and 28).

Dr. C. Wayne Unsell, dean of the School of Engineering Technology and Management at Southern Polytechnic State University in Marietta, Ga., will conduct an open forum from 3:30-4:30 p.m. in 314 Bowen-Thompson Student Union.

He will speak on "Opportunities for Development and Applied Research for a College of Technology," and then answer questions from the audience.

Business college to host five dean candidates

Five candidates for the dean of the College of Business Administration have been invited to campus for two-day interviews, the Dean Search Committee has announced.

All candidates will give their response to the question: "What future opportunities and challenges do you foresee for the College of Business Administration, and how will you, as dean, pursue these opportunities and prepare for these challenges?" Each talk will be followed by a question-and-answer session and a reception. All are welcome to attend.

Tuesday (Feb. 28)

Dr. Nancy Merritt, interim dean, BGSU College of Business Administration, 3-4 p.m., 314 Bowen-Thompson Student Union.

March 13

Dr. James McFillen, associate dean for graduate and executive studies in business, BGSU College of Business Administration, 3-4 p.m., 314 Union.

March 14

Dr. Mark Vonderembse, director, Intermodal Transportation Institute, School of Business Administration, University of Toledo, 3-4 p.m., 315 Union.

March 20

Dr. Rodney Rogers, associate dean and director of academic programs, School of Business Administration, Portland (Ore.) State University, 3-4 p.m., 314 Union.

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Date Pending For:

Dr. Paul Prabhaker, associate dean, Stuart Graduate School of Business, Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago.

Campuswide campaign supports University 'family'

The 2006 Family Campaign officially kicked off Feb. 23. Supported by faculty and staff, the campaign is aiming this year for 57 percent participation and \$1 million in pledges and donations.

Any employee contribution made to the University by June 30 will count toward the campaign, and donors have the option of directing their gifts to any area or scholarship at BGSU.

Area representatives will be contacting you soon with more information.

CALENDAR

Monday, Feb. 27

Technology Dean Candidate Open

Forum, Dr. C. Wayne Unsell, dean, School of Engineering Technology and Management, Southern Polytechnic State University, Marietta, Ga., 3:30-4:30 p.m., 314 Bowen-Thompson Student Union. Reception to follow.

Communication for Learners Workshop,

"Delivering Effective Presentations," by Dr. Gene Poor, visual communication technology; Dr. Michael Ellison, theatre and film; Dr. Brett Holden, Chapman Community at Kohl, and Colleen Boff, University Libraries, 5:30-7 p.m., 113 Olscamp Hall. Hosted by the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology.

Provost's Lecture Series, "Reading for the People," by Dr. Francine Masiello, Sidney and Margaret Ancker Distinguished Professor in the Humanities, University of California-Berkeley, 6:30 p.m., Union Theater. Hosted by the Institute for the Study of Culture and Society.

Reception for Dr. Mary McKinney Edmonds, former BGSU vice president for student affairs, 7-8:30 p.m., McFall Center Gallery. Presented by Project Search, the Graduate College and the College of Health and Human Services.

Music at the Forefront, duo runedako, with pianists Daniel Koppelman and Ruth Neville, 8 p.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center.

Tuesday, Feb. 28

Business Dean Candidate Open Forum, Dr. Nancy Merritt, interim dean, BGSU Col-

lege of Business Administration, 3-4 p.m., 314 Union.

BGSU Firelands Diversity Celebration

Event, "Paul Laurence Dunbar: The Eyes of the Poet," a first-person interpretation of Dunbar by Dr. Herbert Woodward Martin, poet-in-residence and professor of English language and literature, University of Dayton, 7 p.m., Cedar Point Center, Firelands.

Film Director Series, "Happy Together (Cheun gwong tsa sit, Chun guang zha xie)," directed by Wong Kar-wai (Wang Jiawei), 1997, Hong Kong, 7:30 p.m., Gish Film Theater, Hanna Hall.

Concert, Student Jazz Combos, coordinated by Jeff Halsey, jazz studies, 8 p.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center.

Black History Month Event, "Old Skool' Motown Sound Explosion!" featuring the performance group TOUCH, 8:30 p.m., doors open at 8 p.m., Lenhart Grand Ballroom, Union.

Wednesday, March 1

Open House, celebrating the University Honors Program's move to Harshman Quadrangle, 2-4 p.m., 209E Harshman. Reservations requested, but not required. Respond by calling 2-8504 or email honors@bgsu.edu.

Guest Lecture, "Cultural Competence," by Dr. Mary McKinney Edmonds, former BGSU vice president for student affairs, 3:30-5:30 p.m., 201 Union. Presented by Project Search and the Graduate College.

Concert, Symphonic Band, directed by Dr. Bruce Moss, 8 p.m., Kobacker Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center.

Men's Basketball vs. Miami of Ohio, 7 p.m., Anderson Arena.

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Thursday, March 2

Brown Bag Luncheon, "Arab Women Journalists: A History," by Fatma Azzouz, Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence, communication studies, noon-1 p.m., Women's Center, 107 Hanna Hall.

Administrative Staff Council, 1:30-3:30 p.m., 207 Union.

Dissertation Defense, "In Defense of an Animal's Right to Life," by Aaron Simmons, philosophy, 2-4 p.m., 317 Shatzel Hall.

Communication for Learners Workshop, "Extending the Classroom Experience," 5:30-7 p.m., 201 University Hall. Hosted by the CTLT.

International Film Series, "Der Geteilte Himmel (Divided Heaven)," directed by Konrad Wolf, 1964, Germany, 7:30 p.m., Gish Film Theater, Hanna Hall.

Reading, by fiction writer Daniel Falkner, a graduate student in the Creative Writing Program, and alumnus Dan Rziczneck, 7:30 p.m., Prout Chapel.

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FACULTY

Theatre and Film. Instructor. Call the department, 2-2222. Deadline: March 20.

Applied Statistics and Operations Research. Instructor. Call B.M. Rao, 2-8011. Deadline: March 24.

Contact the Office of Human Resources at 419-372-8421 for information regarding classified and administrative positions. Position vacancy announcements may be viewed by visiting the HR Web site at www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr.

Employees wishing to apply for these positions must sign a "Request for Transfer" form and attach an updated resume or data sheet. This information must be turned in to Human Resources by the job deadline.

CLASSIFIED

On-campus classified:
http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/BGSU_only/page11151.html

Off-campus classified:
http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/cl_staff/page11145.html

ADMINISTRATIVE

http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/adm_staff/page11137.html

OBITUARY

There were no obituaries this week.