INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL UNION
COMMISSION ON GENDER AND GEOGRAPHY

NEWSLETTER 40 MAY, 2008

This is my last message to you as the Chair of the Gender and Geography Commission as in August, 2008 I finish the four-year term. I am happy to inform you that Robyn Longhurst from the University of Waikato, New Zealand has agreed to be nominated as the next candidate for Chair.for 2008-2012.

I enjoyed very much these four years which were very active and productive and I am glad we managed to keep our reputation as one of the most active Commissions in the IGU. From 2004 we had six meetings (Barcelona, Hamilton, Brisbane, Zurich, Taipei and Tunis) and their success and high academic quality is expressed in the fact that they have produced three special issues in Journals such as: ***Belgeo* (2007/3)** on: *"Feminist Geographies around the World"* (in English with abstracts in French, German, or Dutch) edited by Maria Dolors García Ramon and Janice Monk, ***Geographica Helvetica* (1, 2009**) on *"Public Spaces and Social Diversity* (in English) edited by Elisabeth Buehler and the planned issue of the Taiwanese journal, ***The Journal of Geographical Science*** on *"Transnational Lives"* to be edited by Nora Chiang (in English). This collection of publications in places other then the US and the UK expresses the importance of the Commission's activities in exposing the multiple forms of knowledge in feminist and gender geography to both the Anglo and non-Anglo audience and in widening the involvement of geographers from non-English speaking countries with the Commission's activities. Of course this could not happen without the strong support and dedication of the Commission members, especially the organizers of the meetings. (For those of you who are interested to read the detailed report about the Commission's activities in 2004-2008 you can find it on the Commission's website: www2.fmg.uva.nl/igugender/) .

In addition, I am also pleased to inform you that our Commission has one of the largest listserves with 350 people on it and a regular twice a year newsletter. Again, a very productive and constant way of communication thanks to **Jan Monk.**

I 'd like to use this opportunity to thank the Commission's Executive Committee who finished their term in August 2008 and to welcome the proposed new members. Thanks to **Janet Momsen** (US) – the Commission's Treasurer since its establishment. Welcome to **Holly Hapke** (US) the new Commission's Treasurer. Thanks to **Brenda Yeoh** from Singapore who finished two terms and welcome to **Shirlena Huang** from Singapore**.** Thanks to **Diana Lam** from Argentina who finished two terms and welcome to **Susanna Veleda da Silva** from Brazil. Thanks to **Audrey Kobayashi** from Canada who finished two terms and welcome to **Mireia Bayline** from Spain. I'd like to thank the continuing **members: Mariama Awumbila (Ghana), Elisabeth Buehler (Switzerland),** Shahnaz **Huq-Hussain** (Bangladesh), **Janet Townsend** (UK) and **Sorina Voiculescu** (Romania).

And lastly a big welcome to **Robyn Longhurst** as Chair and a successful and enjoyable period for all of us. I hope to meet all of you in our future meetings in Tunis (2008), Hungary-Romania (2009) and Tel Aviv (2010)

Tovi Fenster - Chair

IGU Commission on Gender and Geography Symposium 'Transnational Lives: Feminist Perspectives on Citizenship, Home and Belonging', Taipei, Taiwan, November 23-26, 2007

'*Transnational Lives: Feminist Perspectives on Citizenship, Home and Belonging'* was the title of the Commission's symposium organized by Nora Chiang and her students and staff of the Department of Geography, National Taiwan University in Taipei. About 75 participants from 16 different countries (Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Mainland China, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, UK and USA) met for the three-day symposium. The twenty-four papers were organized under four themes: 1) Citizenship, rights and identity formation; 2) Homemaking, everyday life and transnational families; 3) Mobility aspirations, decisions and adjustments; and 4) Cosmopolitanism, belonging and transnational subjectivity.

The program offered cohesion as well as diversity. Experiences of female migrants in a globalising world were a constant factor in all presentations. At the same time the presentations highlighted a variety of themes, female migrant groups, national or local contexts and methodologies: from national policies to food, from global cities to remote rural areas, from poor domestic workers to transnational academics and exchange students, from in-depth interviews to logistic regression analysis.

One of the traditions in the Commission on Gender and Geography is the inclusion of in-field meetings as part of the academic program, where academics and local feminist activists discuss and exchange experiences. In this case we visited two of the six landmarks of Women's Culture in Taipei: Fembooks, a feminist bookshop and publisher, and the Homemakers' Union and Foundation, founded as a Homemakers' Union, but

nowadays an active group of women with a wide array of schooling, cultural, neighbourhood and environmentalist activities. Other destinations of the field trip were the Zhon Shan Building, designed by the noted female architect Hsiu Tze-lan, the Yangmingshan and Beitou hot spring region, the Shann Garden, a former Japanese officers' club and Kamikaze reception site, and an old tea factory with a history going back to 1890 in Xiamen, China.

The organizers also initiated a 'Gender and Geography Week' in the Department of Geography which included the Symposium, special lectures, posters and a display of international publications. The complete department was buzzing with gender activity: in the elevators, stairs and corridors announcements, posters and other expressions of the 'Gender and Geography Week' could be found everywhere: a very warm welcome indeed! Nora Chiang and the Department of Geography did a great job: this meeting was scientifically inspiring, well organised and with a warm atmosphere

- Joos Droogleever Fortuijn, University of Amsterdam

Gender Commission Collaborates with IGU Commission on Dynamics of Economic Spaces

The Commission of Gender and Geography appreciates the cooperation of the IGU Commission on Dynamics of Economics Spaces in arranging to include two sessions focusing on gender themes in its forthcoming conference on "Worlds of New Work: Multi-scalar Dynamics of New Economic Spaces" to be held in Barcelona, August 5-8. Nine papers on gender themes are included in the program with participants from India, Japan, the Philippines, Spain, UK, USA. Topics range from international labor migration of single Japanese women to women's entrepreneurship in the UK, to gendered livelihoods in the global fish-food industry of India. We look forward to a report following the meeting and to further collaboration across Commissions.

Major Collection on Gender and Development Just Published

A four-volume, 1600 page edited collection ***Gender and Development: Critical Concepts in Development Studies*** will be released by Routledge (London) in June, 2008. Edited and with an introduction by **Janet Momsen**, the wide-ranging volumes include over 70 classical and new studies by scholars and practitioners from around the world. Volume I, "*Theory and Classics,"* provides an historical overview of foundational writing. Volume II, "*Policy and Practice,"* offers key documents such as major UN treaties and conventions drawing especially on the UN Conferences on Women. It also includes toolkits for field data collection. Volume III, " "Natural Resource Use, Microfinance, Labour, and Migration," focuses on gender divisions of labor across sections and their implications for women's well-being and changing roles. Volume IV, "Aspects of Culture

and Health." brings together scholarship on contemporary concerns such as HIV/AIDS, sexual trafficking, violence and warfare and concludes with contributions on women's networking.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

A workshop on gender and development geography focusing on questions related to "mainstreaming" of gender perspectives was held on April 25-26, 2008 at the Wannsee-Forum in Berlin (http://www.wanseeforum.de). The goals were to assess the importance of place/space of gender research in geographic development studies, ask whether gender research is serving or stimulating development practices; to examine the relationships between feminist geographic research and geographic development studies as well as with gender studies in other disciplines, and whether gender has to be researched as a cross-cutting task.

kkagencies (kkal1996@vsnl) is an Indian book distributor that features feminist works. Prices are listed in US dollars and ordering information can be obtained by contacting them.

Marit Aure is currently working The Northern Feminist University (www.kun.nl.no) as an advisor, doing mostly equality/ international projects. She reports that it's interesting and demanding project. Marit will shortly defend her dissertation and also plans to present a paper at the Women's Worlds conference in Madrid this summer.

Saraswati Raju (Jawaharlal Nehru University, India) will be in residence at the Australian National Universtiy for two months beginning in June, 2008.

Congratulations to **Fazeeha Azmi** (Sri Lanka) who has completed her doctoral dissertation "From Rice Barn to Remittances: A Study of Poverty and Livelihood Changes in System H of The Accelerated Mahaweli Development Project (AMDP), Sri Lanka." She will defend it at the Norwegian University of Technology in June. Fazeeha presented her research jointly with **Ragnhild Lund** at the IGU Gender Commission Symposium in Taiwan in November, 2007.

We are saddened to report the death of **Fay Gale**, the eminent Australian geographer, feminist, and academic administrator. Fay pioneered in introducing studies of indigenous Australians into the discipline. She served as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia, Chaired the Australian Vice-Chancellors, and was awarded the national honor of the Order of Australia. A number of feminist geographers have fond memories of the outstanding field trip she co-lead with the late Elspeth Young on

indigenous land rights and settlement in central Australia in conjunction with the 1988 International Geographical Congress.

Congratulations to **Doris Wastl-Walter** and colleagues at the University of Bern who have been awarded one of the very competitive interdisciplinary awards, Pro*Docs, of the Swiss National Fund, which means a financed graduate school and 10 Ph.D. research projects for 3 years. The Topic is "Gender: Scripts and Prescripts." Doris has also been re-elected as scientific director of the IZFG, Interdisciplinary Center for Gender Studies at the University of Bern and has been the acting director of the Department of Geography at the University of Bern. The group has also been approved and financed for another o got approved and financed another mentoring program for 19 months, this time beyond geography including women from the whole faculty of science.

Rupali Bhuyan (Cotton College, Guwahati, Assam, India) is now General Secretary of the Cotton College Women's Forum. The Forum aims to advance the status of women in Assam in particular and northeast India in general. It is carrying out research in the region which has rich ethnic and cultural diversity. Cotton College is now a 100 year-old institution.

Thanks to **Linda Peake** (York University, Canada) for her years of serving as Managing Editor of *Gender, Place and Culture*. Under her leadership the journal expanded to six issues per year and brought geographers from an array of countries to the editorial board. The editorial team now includes **Brenda Yeoh** (Singapore) as Managing Editor, with **Deborah Dixon** (Wales), **Robyn Longhurst** (New Zealand) and **Beverly Mullings** (Canada); **Patricia Noxolo** (UK) and **Rachel Silvey** (Canada) are book review editors.

Congratulations to **Sutama Ghosh** on being awarded the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's of the Housing Studies Achievement Award, which recognizes young Canadians whose work contributes to the understanding and advancement of quality, affordable housing in Canada. Sutama's completed her PhD at York; her dissertation which won her the award is: "We Are Not All the Same: The Differential Migration, Settlement Patterns and Housing Trajectories of Indian Bengalis and Bangladeshis in Toronto."

At the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers in April, the Geographic Perspectives on Women sponsored or co-sponsored over 30 sessions on a wide range of themes as well as an exceptionally successful reception honouring new books by feminist geographers. The topical index for the conference programs listed almost 90 sessions that had gender in their theme. The IGU Commission on Gender and Geography co-sponsored a session on "Anti-Hegemonic Thought and Praxis in Feminist Geography" which featured panelists from Canada, Spain, New Zealand, and the US and lively discussion from a diverse audience. Also at the meeting, three sessions were organized to honor **Susan Hanson's** (Clark University, US) 45 years as a feminist geographer and an authors meets critics session honoured **Pamela Moss** and **Karen**

Falconer Al-Hindi's *Feminisms in Geography,* an anthology also designed to be inclusive of diverse positions and traditions in the field. **Maria Dolors Garcia Ramon** (Autonomous University of Barcelona) received the Geographic Perspectives on Women Jan Monk Distinguished Service Award and **Jacquelyn Beyer** and **Janice Monk** were co-recipients of the AAG's Enhancing Diversity Award.

Congratulations to **Sinith Sittirak**, winner of the 2008 *Gender, Place and Culture* Award for New and Emerging Scholars. She is a PhD candidate in Human Geography at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. The award supports her presentation at the Women's Worlds Congress in Madrid in July, 2008 where she will report on a sustained struggle for women's land rights in Thailand. Upon completion of her doctorate, Sinith is committed to returning to Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand, where she hopes to contribute to strengthening feminist research at both the Geography Department as well as the Women's Studies Program.

A special session on feminist geographies is planned for the 24th New Zealand Geographical Society Conference to be held at Victoria University of Wellington, Aotearoa/New Zealand, 2-5 July, 2008. It is being convened by **Lynda Johnston** (lyndaj@waikato.ac.nz) and **Robyn Longhurst** (robynl@waikato.ac.nz). Feminist research and teaching has been in progress for several decades in Aotearoa/New Zealand, including attention to gender/sexuality and to intersections with race/ethnicity, culture, place, disability and other forms of difference, including the particular significance of bi-culturalism.

SPECIAL JOURNAL ISSUES

***Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica* 49**: 2007 is a special issue featuring research and review articles on gender covering research in Spain and several other countries. Individual articles are listed below.

A special "virtual" issue of ***Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*** has been launched to celebrate *International Women's Day* and is now available free online at www.blackwellpublishing.com/pdf/TIBG_Virtual_issue_Mar08.pdf
It includes a range of key feminist articles from the journal published originally between 1991 and 2008. Several include links to others published in *Transactions* that address themes including women and the history of geography; feminist methodology; gender and work; geographies of home; and family and relatedness.

Saraswati Raju is guest editor of ***Social Change: Journal of the Council for Social Development*** (37(4), December 2007). The issue includes eight articles, plus the editor's introduction on gender themes in contemporary India. It examines diverse contexts and issues, among them domestic violence, child care, educational attainment, and livelihoods

in several economic sectors including mining, forestry, and industrial enterprises. Individual articles are noted below.

International Feminist Journal of Politics 9(4) 2007 is a theme issue on the politics of water and the confluence of women's voices. Contributors from several disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives address a range of contexts (e.g., Peru, Israel, Bangladesh) and include geographer **Farhana Sultana** (see below).

Women's Studies International Forum 29 (6) 2006 is a theme issue on "Including Women: Gender in Commonwealth Higher Education." Ten articles take up questions related to the status of women faculty and students and efforts to foster change in the workplace and the curriculum. Of especial interest is the examination of micro-politics. Contributors include scholars from Nigeria, South Africa, Sri Lanka (including geographer, **Yoga Rasanayagam**), Tanzania and Uganda, together with British colleagues.

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