Women's Center

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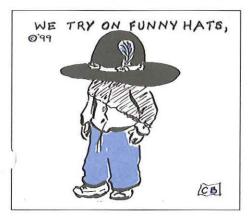
CONFLICTING 'FAMILY VALUES'

DAY CARE: personal need or public duty?

by ELIZABETH ROSE

Americans today live with contradictory ideas about day care and motherhood. On the one hand, many believe that day care is inherently bad for children, who should be raised at home by a full-time mother. On the other, many believe that mothers as well as fathers should provide for their children; single mothers especially are praised when they leave their children in someone else's care in order to go out to earn money to support them. Others promote lay care as an educational experience that is beneficial to children.

Certain occasions make these contradictions particularly visible. In 1994, a young college student named Jennifer Ireland lost custody of her two-year-old daughter Maranda on the grounds that she put the child in day care. The judge wrote that although Maranda had a deep bond with her mother, and her day care arrangements were good, staying in her mother's custody meant that she would be "in essence raised and supervised a great part of the time by strangers." With her father, on the other hand, she would be reared by her grandmother, a



full-time homemaker who would "devote her entire time to raising the child when the father was not available." ("Judge Threw Out Advice on Custody," *Detroit Free Press*, 7/29/94.) The judge's ruling, which effectively defined Ireland as a neglectful mother because of her use of day care, elicited widespread protest and was eventually overturned. Taken together, the judge's ruling and the protest it sparked reveal how our society still holds conflicting ideas about day care.



More recently, these contradictions have surfaced in public policy debates as well. Shortly after enacting welfare reform that compels poor mothers to work, some legislators proposed instituting tax credits to encourage middleincome parents to stay home with their children. In his latest budget, President Clinton tried to please both groups, proposing tax savings for both working and stay-at-home parents. Working parents would get an increase in the child and dependent tax care credit, while parents who stay home with infants (under one year old) could claim an "assumed" child care expense of \$500.

Even these modest proposals would cost the federal government an estimated \$6.3 billion over five years.

So who is day care for? Does using day care make women good mothers (because they are responsibly supporting their children) or bad mothers (because they are neglecting them)? Should mothers work outside the home, or should we try to return to the days when fathers were able to support their families on their own? Does day care nurture children's development, or harm them?

Our debate about these questions could be much richer and more productive if it were informed by a knowledge of history. Although most people think of "working mothers" and day care as purely contemporary issues, in fact both have a long history in this country. The problem of balancing the needs of children with a woman's other work is not a recent one. Throughout American history, most mothers, whether they lived in urban working-class neighborhoods, slave quarters on southern plantations, or midwestern farms, spent most of

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Conflicting views of day care continued from page 1

their energy performing tasks other than child care, and relied on other women and older children to look after the youngest. The idea of a mother devoting her time almost exclusively to the nurture of children's bodies, emotions, and souls was the specific creation of the urban middle class in the early 19th century. In time, this idea became so pervasive that today we have trouble recognizing other ways of defining "a mother's job."

To meet the needs of poor and working-class mothers who went out to work to help support their children, elite women in late 19th-century cities founded day nurseries. By 1912 there were at least five hundred such nurseries across the country. This form of day care was offered as a charity to the deserving poor, not with any intention of encouraging mothers to work for wages. In fact, the founders of day nurseries were so uneasy about the idea of wage-earning mothers that they never really championed day care as a positive contribution to society. Instead, they focused on making sure that only mothers who clearly "needed" to work were able to use the nurseries. The stigma of charity that the day nurseries created

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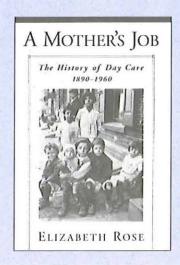
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Elizabeth Rose is assistant professor of history at Vanderbilt. She examines how our fragmented system of day care developed in her book, A

Mother's Job: The History of Day Care, 1890-1960, published in January by Oxford University Press. The book uses the city of Philadelphia as a case study, and expands on her 1994 dissertation, which won the Allan Nevins Prize from the Society of American Historians.



ELIZABETH ROSE

would continue to shape attitudes toward day care for decades, and dissuaded many mothers from turning to the nurseries for help.

In the 1920s, a new definition of day care emerged with the rise of the nursery school. Nursery schools, which focused on affluent children's education rather than on poor mothers' employment, avoided the stigma of charity that tainted the day nurseries. Arguing that group care could be educational and beneficial for children, the nursery schools challenged the assumption that a mother's care was always best. The good mother was now not necessarily the one who spent 24 hours a day with her child, but the one who sought out advice from experts in psychology and nursery school teachers trained in child development.

A growing need

The national crises of the Great
Depression, World War II, and the Cold
War would further challenge the definition of day care offered by the charitable
day nurseries. As the needs of the
nation as well as the needs of their families called more women into the workforce, day care became more of a public
issue. The federal government haltingly
provided some funds for day care, suggesting that day care, like education,
might become a community responsibility. Day care gradually became more
legitimate, as a wider spectrum of fami-

lies came to need it and as it was redefined as an experience that would benefit children as well as mothers.

Although day care has become increasingly accepted, it has never been embraced as social policy (except for women on welfare) or given the resources it needs to fulfill its mission. Most families have been left to find their own private solutions — solutions which have public as well as private costs. Whatever their child care arrangements, employed mothers today struggle to combine breadwinning with the work of nurturing children, fearing that their deviation from the ideal of full-time motherhood makes them "bad mothers." Failure to redefine fatherhood at the same time as motherhood has brought mothers of young children into the paid workforce without altering the gendered division of labor within many American families. Perhaps the most damaging result of our failure to support day care is that many children spend their days in poor-quality care. A recent major study of day care centers concluded that although high-quality day care has a positive impact on all children's development, language ability, self-esteem, and ability to have warm and open relationships with others, most day care centers do not provide the level of care that can produce these results. Day care workers are notoriously underpaid, especially given their

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Other voices in the day care debate

A new study released earlier this spring measured the effects of day care on children, prompting yet another round of commentary on the issue. The study found that children of women who work outside the home suffer no permanent harm because of their mother's absence.

Published in the March issue of the journal Developmental Psychology, the study came to a different conclusion than some earlier studies of the same group of children. The new work examined the children at a later age, 12 years old, suggesting that problems seen in children of working mothers at age 3 and 4 may have gone away by the time the children were 12. Predictably, reactions to the study varied:

Repeat: Working women not dooming their kids

Oh, not again, not another Page 1 story on work, mothers and children. Haven't we been there, done this? This week's news bulletin was the latest in a series of studies showing that "mothers who work outside the home are not harming their children."

For at least two decades, every brief truce in the mommy wars has come when both sides agree, with or without clenched teeth, that mothers should be able to "choose." What about a little focus on what makes those choices easier?

Quality day care? A smoother segue back to work after time out? Anyone for decent part-time work? Mothers at the office, mothers at home — once again the psychologists have found that our child's whole future doesn't rest on this one choice.

Now we just have to believe it.

- Ellen Goodman, The Tennessean, March 5, 1999

Sorry, ladies, but you cannot have it all

When tobacco companies claim that studies about a connection between smoking and lung cancer are inconclusive, the public is mostly skeptical, even disbelieving. Similar skepticism

should be directed at a study that concludes mothers who are employed full-time outside the home are not harming their children. Several previous studies reached different conclusions, suggesting a connection between absentee mothers and troubled children.

Robert Rector, a senior policy analyst for family issues at the Heritage Foundation, says many mothers want more time with their children but feel pressured to work to pay bills, a huge percentage of which are taxes. "Forty percent of the working woman's income" in a dual-earner household, says Rector, "goes for taxes, not to sustain her family."

We don't need more federal money for day care, as President Clinton has proposed. We need a tax cut so women who want to stay home with their children have that choice.

-Cal Thomas, The Tennessean, March 5, 1999

The Other Working Parent

For a lesson in what keeps us from doing a better job of meeting the needs of working mothers, take a look at the media coverage of the latest "don't feel guilty" study.

While the articles and broadcast[s] about the study were accurate, a number of them were incomplete in a telling way. It was not a study of working mothers but of working *parents*.

In fact, "Short-Term and Long-Term Effects of Early Parental Employment on Children" is one of the first national studies to examine the effect of men's employment on their children's development. As with mothers, it found no significant effects.

Why don't we consider the effects of a father's employment as important as those of a mother's employment? Focusing only on the maternal role reinforces a way of thinking that perpetuates women's sense of burden: it also constrains their careers.

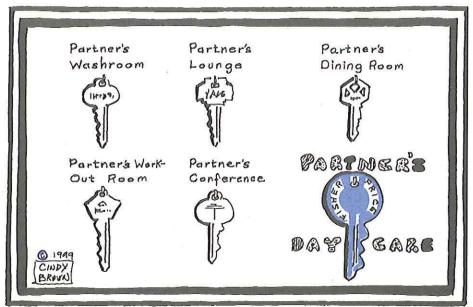
-James A. Levine, The New York Times, March 4, 1999

Day care continued from page 2

level of education. Yet most parents cannot afford the full cost of the high-quality care that their children need.

Over the past 100 years, day care has become increasingly legitimate, and today it is recognized as a widespread social need. But support for day care lags far behind. We can continue to piece together individual solutions, and some of us will be more fortunate in doing so than others. But in order to "win permanent day care for our children," as one Philadelphia mother proposed in 1945, we must make a case for transforming day care once again: it must gain recognition, not just as a universal need of normal families, but as a public responsibility that reflects our society's commitment to its children.

Getting our priorities straight . . .



Scales still tipped as women balance work and family

by LYNN GREEN

After years of studying attitudes toward women and work, sociologist Joan Spade offers this succinct summary: We've come a long way, *maybe*.

"Recognizing all the marvelous changes in family life in recent decades, there is still a holdover in the way we look at women's work," says Spade, who has authored several studies of the way women's work is perceived by women and men.

Spade's research has documented "a disjunction between the way men and women think about women's work." In general, "women tend to take their work more seriously" than men perceive it. Many husbands are reluctant to identify their wives as "co-providers," preferring instead the traditional roles of the past when wives worked for "pin money" to buy household extras.

Women also face a continuing battle to achieve a more equitable sharing of family responsibilites. Spade has found that while many college women today envision marriages with equally shared parental duties, many college-age men do not share these expectations.

Spade, an associate professor of sociology at Lehigh University, has been at Vanderbilt during the spring semester as a visiting scholar in Women's Studies and the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center. While at the Women's Center, she has shared her warm and engaging personal style, along with her expertise on women and work and topics related to the sociology of education. Her current project is a study of the changing role of trustees in the governance of higher education from 1960 to the present.

Spade says she was drawn to the study of sociology because of her personal interest in the broader issues of women and work. "Because I'm a woman, and because I wanted a career myself, these issues have always been important to me." She completed her bachelor's degree when her son was four years old and her daughter two, and then went on to graduate school.

Today, she sees her adult daughter

struggling with the same issues of balancing work and family that confronted Joan in the early days of her career.

In prior generations, Spade says, women were often denied equal access to education and career advancement. Although these hurdles have been largely overcome, most women still face the question of how they will accommodate both work and family needs.



JOAN SPADE
Visiting Scholar studies women's work

"We still don't expect men to balance work and family," Spade notes. Even if a husband and wife are both committed to sharing equal roles in caring for the family and home, they will find it difficult to achieve this goal. "The reality is that you can't totally share it equally, because employers don't," she says.

"Men do *career* planning, while women do *contingency* planning."

As a result, "men do *career* planning, while women do *contingency* planning. Women plan for work around what they think their family needs will be," says Spade, who has found that young women in college today remain far more likely than men to consider family

needs in planning a career.

In a study published in the journal *Sex Roles* (1991), Spade and co-author Carole A. Reese examined opinions of undergraduates at an independent school. The study, "We've Come a Long Way, Maybe: College Students' Plans for Work and Family," found that men and women differed in the way they envisioned their future family roles.

"Men are significantly more likely [than women] to express traditional orientations toward combining work and family roles, whereas women are more likely to . . . envision symmetrical role relationships in work and family," the study noted.

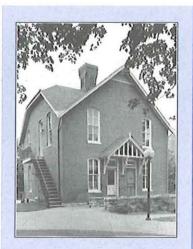
The college women in the study are likely to face huge obstacles in achieving their dreams of shared household and work responsibilities. "Even in Sweden where policies respond to demands of the family, few men take paid leaves to care for children and those who do are likely to be ridiculed by their coworkers," the authors reported.

Spade has also found that men in dual-career families often interpret their wives' careers in very different ways than the women do. "Wives' and Husbands' Perceptions of Why Wives Work" (Gender and Society, June 1994) surveyed suburban dual-worker couples. The husbands and wives were asked whether the women were working to help pay bills, to buy extras for the house or family, to use their training, or to keep busy. Spade found that the higher a husband's income, the more likely he was to downplay the significance of his wife's career. These higherearning men were more likely to report

that their wives were working "to keep busy."

"Because he can earn more, the more contingent the wife's career becomes on the family," Spade points out. This creates a

catch-22 situation for women, who often earn less than men due to the gender gap in wages. Spade foresees future conflict as young women who are highly educated, trained and motivated find it more difficult to see their working life take a back seat to family needs.



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Calendar of Events

PLEASE SAVE AND POST

For more information on the events listed, call 322-4843.

May 1999

Tuesday, May 4

Creative Life Planning Group. Joan Spade, associate professor of sociology at Lehigh University, leads a discussion of women and work. *Noon to 1:00 p.m.* Cuninggim Center.

Monday, May 10

Book Group meets to discuss *White Rabbit* by Kate Phillips. Facilitated by Judy Helfer. 5:15 to 6:00 p.m. Cuninggim Center.

Tuesday, May 11

Creative Life Planning Group. Linda Manning, director of the Women's Center, will talk about Wiccan spirituality. *Noon to 1:00 p.m.* Cuninggim Center. *Also meets May 18 and 25.*

Wednesday, May 12

Brown Bag Lunch for Lesbian and Bisexual Women. Group of faculty, staff, and graduate students who identity as lesbian or bisexual meets to make plans for the summer. Any questions, contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or https://doi.org/ni.edu/hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu. 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Cuninggim Center.

Thursday, May 20

Reading Sisters, a book group focusing on the works of black women authors, meets to discuss *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker. *Noon to 1:00 p.m.* Cuninggim Center.

Saturday, May 22

Movie Group for Lesbian and Bisexual Women. Videos on lesbian life, including "Films from Down Under" featuring Lucy Lawless (Xena). 5:00 p.m. Cuninggim Center.

Wednesday, May 26

Body Image and Self Esteem. Karen Silien and Dotty Tucker of the Psychological and Counseling Center present a brown bag lunch for women of all ages to discuss personal and cultural influences on body image. *Noon to 1:00 p.m.* Cuninggim Center.

Thursday, May 27

Socially Responsible Investing. Winnie Forrester, of Wheat First Union, will talk about making socially responsible investment decisions with your savings. Forrester will focus on how today's investment choices can impact future generations. Everyone is welcome. Register with Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu. *Noon to 1:00 p.m.* Cuninggim Center.

A private space for nursing mothers

Do you need a private room on campus to nurse a baby or pump breast milk? If so, the staff at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center would like to talk to you. The center has been attempting to gauge interest in the concept of a campus nursing room.

The room could be located at the Women's Center or another campus location. Other universities and businesses have successfully launched such centers and found them to be a convenient and peaceful refuge for working mothers.

If you are interested in using a nursing room or would like to find out more, please contact Hilary Forbes, assistant director for programs, at 322-6518 or send e-mail to hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu.

How to find us . . .



The Cuninggim Center is located in the Franklin Building at 316 West Side Row.

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and Lullabies

WOMEN IN WAR

FROM PREHISTORY

TO THE PRESENT

BARBARA CLARKE Women's Center librarian



Women at war: untold stories of women in military history

Battle Cries and Lullabies: Women in War from Prehistory to the Present (University of Oklahoma Press, 1998) is an enlightening volume by Linda Grant De Pauw, a professor of history at

George Washington University and the founder and president of the MIN-ERVA Center. She has been studying women and war for over 20 years; as the title suggests, this is a comprehensive and scholarly work covering all eras and many geographic areas.

Though women have always been

involved in wars, they have largely been omitted from military histories; this book partly fills the void. The author declares that "women have always been part of war. To ignore this fact grossly distorts our understanding of human history." In most cultures only males can be warriors. Most women in war have not participated in combat roles and De Pauw divides women's military activities into four broad categories: classic women's roles, camp followers, virago (traditionally male) roles and androgynous warriors.

The writer examines a vast array of archaeological and historical sources in her study of the wide variety of roles played by women in wars through the ages: female warriors; spies; nurses; wives and families of fighters who followed armies; prostitutes; Army laundresses; home guard units; and political leaders, such as Queen Elizabeth I and Margaret Thatcher, who sent armies into

battle. In her analysis she includes the ancient Amazons and Greeks, Cleopatra, the Crusades, Joan of Arc, the French Revolution, the Civil War, the Boer War, female African warriors, World Wars I

and II, the Cold War, ancient and modern China, the New World, and women's participation in the various civil wars of the present day.

Frank Moore's Women of the War: Their Heroism and Self-Sacrifice: True Stories of Brave Women in the Civil War

(Blue/Gray Books, 1997), which is cited in the volume by De Pauw, is a very different type of history. It was originally published in 1866, shortly

after the end of the Civil War. Though the writer naturally shared many of the prejudices and attitudes about females that were typical of his era, he nonetheless realized that women had made immense contributions to the Civil War

battles and that it would not be just to let their efforts go unrecognized. "The story of the war will never be fully or fairly written if the achievements of women in it are untold," Moore wrote.

Though the stories of some women who participated in the war had not yet come to light when this work was written, Moore described many roles played by courageous women of all ages and backgrounds. Some sections describe the contributions of one woman while others are dedicated to topics like female soldiers, loyal southern women and women's sacrifices.

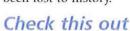
Moore, who wrote a number of other

works on American history, discussed adventurous women who dressed as men and who fought alongside them, women who went to the battlefield to be with their husbands, and family members who followed the soldiers from camp to camp and who usually cooked and did laundry for the men. Many readers might be surprised to learn that some women received regular military discharges at the end of their service. There were also female spies; women who rode into battle to retrieve the dead or wounded; those who raised money at

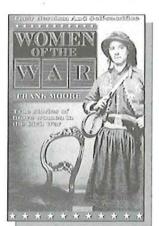
home for the war effort; and many women who nursed the wounded on both sides, often in appalling surroundings.

Since war is usually considered the province of men, had this volume not been written so soon after the Civil War, the accomplishments of many of these

brave women undoubtedly would have been lost to history.



Other new acquisitions include: The Girls Report: What We Know & Need to Know About Growing Up Female by Lynn Phillips and commissioned by the National Council for Research on Women; Minding Women: Reshaping the Educational Realm edited by Christine A. Woyshner and Holly S. Gelfond; and Betty Friedan and the Making of The Feminine Mystique: The American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism by Daniel Horowitz.



- mentoring award winners

Two faculty members honored for service to students

Peggy Thoits, professor of sociology, and Nancy Walker, professor of English, have earned praise and gratitude from students for their willingness to provide advice and encouragement on the path to academic success.

But Thoits and Walker agree they have also gained many rewards from working with students. Mentoring is a two-way street, they say, with benefits for those on both sides of the process.

The two faculty women have been named the winners of the 1999 Mentoring Award, given annually by the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center for outstanding contributions to the professional and intellectual development of Vanderbilt women. Thoits and Walker were honored recently at a reception at the Women's Center.

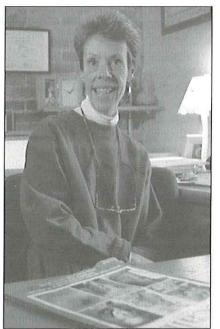
"Of all the prizes given at this university, this is the one that thrills me more than anything else, because it's from students," says Walker, who served as director of the women's studies program for seven years before moving to the English Department full-time. In a typical semester, she works with four or five students in a direct way, serving on their dissertation committees, and mentors other students more informally.

Students describe Walker as an inspiring teacher, an invaluable resource on academic issues and departmental poli-

tics, and a willing listener.

"Whenever I talk with her, I leave feeling inspired and challenged, and I have yet to encounter a graduate student who doesn't say the same thing," says Amanda Kinard, a graduate student in English.

"Nancy makes herself available to her students, and the support she offered — especially at the lowest points in [my] dissertation-writing process — was so crucial to me," commented Rory Dicker, a lecturer in English and women's studies who first



NANCY A. WALKER "I get to see them grow"

worked with Walker as a graduate student.

In return for mentoring these and other students, Walker says, "I get to see them grow; I get to see them succeed. Nothing is as rewarding as that."



PEGGY A. THOITS, (left) works with Kimberly Secrist on a project.

Peggy Thoits, who came to Vanderbilt in 1990, says her goal in mentoring is to "try to do for my graduate students what I wish had been done for me," when she was a graduate student at the University of Colorado and Stanford University. At CU, there was only one female faculty member in sociology, and at Stanford, only three, Thoits recalls. "They were struggling in their own careers and overwhelmed by the daily demands on them," so they didn't have time for a "special ear or extra word of encouragement" that graduate students need.

Thoits' students at Vanderbilt says she is unselfish in making time for them and incisive in her analysis of their work. "Peggy has greatly influenced my own personal growth and development by pushing me when I need it, giving me time when I need it, and encouraging me when I was discouraged," said Cynthia Ganote, a doctoral student in sociology.

Thoits says her greatest responsibilities as a mentor are to "give advice and guidance on professional issues" and to "break down the daunting challenges of the research process into steps that are more manageable to handle. Work in graduate school seems overwhelming, but if you break it down into steps," it's easier to tackle.

Thoits is currently working with 11 graduate students, on dissertation committees, independent research projects and research apprenticeships. She strongly supports the notion that mentoring is a two-way street. "I get something out of it, too," she says. "When students have research interests related to my own, it pushes my own thinking forward. I'm training people, but in turn, they force me to re-evaluate my own work.

Being a mentor doesn't stop when the students graduate, Thoits notes. "Former graduate students stay in touch. They circle back for advice, perspective and consultation."

Announcements

- Karen Essex, an award-winning author who has led several
 workshops at the Women's Center, is organizing an intensive weekend session for writers next month. The
 group will meet Saturday, June 26 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00
 p.m. and Sunday, June 27 from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. The workshop will focus on the specifics of craft, style and form.
 Cost is \$175. To register, contact Essex at 269-8675.
- The 15th annual National Conference for College
 Women Student Leaders will be held June 10-12 at
 Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. The conference
 is designed for college women who hold or aspire to leadership roles on campus or in their communities. Sessions
 focus on career and leadership issues, political topics, and
 diversity/inclusion concerns. The event is sponsored by
 NAWE: Advancing Women in Higher Education. For information, see the NAWE web site at www.nawe.org.
- The Nashville Chapter of Webgrrls International meets the third Thursday of each month at Nortel in MetroCenter. Webgrrls provides a forum for women who are interested in or who work in new media and technology to network,

- exchange job leads, form strategic alliances, mentor and learn new skills. The local meetings are held at noon, and those attending can bring a sack lunch. For more information, send e-mail to Vanderbilt web designer Gill Murrey at gillian.g.murrey@vanderbilt.edu or check the group's web site at www.webgrrls.com/nashville/.
- Since Vanderbilt no longer has paper recycling bins on campus, you may be wondering where to recycle paper. National Paper Recycling Inc., 4006 Elkins Avenue, at the corner of Elkins and 40th Avenue, will recycle white, colored, and computer paper. Drop off paper between 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the loading dock in the back of the center. The company does NOT accept newspaper or magazines. For more information, call National Paper Recycling at 269-3228.
- Members of the Middle Tennessee Women's Studies
 Association are debating the future of the organization.

 For an interesting look at the discussion, or to add your viewpoint, check the postings at this web site:
 www.tntech.edu/www/life/orgs/mtwsa/future.html.



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