

February, 2007

# The Net

A Newsletter of the Women's Network of the Upper Valley

## President's Letter

### Mission:

"A forum for women in all their roles, both personal and professional, to share their viewpoints and interests."

### Please Take Note:

- Evening event on Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>

### Upcoming Networking Questions:

#### Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>:

This will be a "generic" networking. Please introduce yourself and share what is on your mind.

### Inside:

President's Letter	1
Events	2
Membership	3
Program 2006-7	4

*The Net*

P.O. Box 183  
Hanover, NH 03755-0183

Dear Friends,

On January 9<sup>th</sup>, Jennifer Loros, Professor of Biochemistry and Genetics, gave a wonderful talk on "Mapping the Human Genome" -- the largest biological project ever undertaken.

From the micro perspective, Jennifer described for us the human cell, DNA, RNA, proteins, genes, and chromosomes. All the DNA in an organism is called its genome. Each cell in our body contains 4½ feet of DNA, huge regions of which are considered "junk". Human DNA contains 20,000 genes, approximately the same number needed to make a small worm!

From the macro perspective, Jennifer shared some delicious politics. An evangelical Christian and devout family man, Francis Collins Directed the public Human Genome Project at the National Institutes of Health which began in 1987. In contrast, a competitive entrepreneur with a penchant for expensive yachts and known as the "bad boy", Craig Venter established Celera, a private company, with the intention of sequencing the human genome in 1998. Thus began a healthy and productive competition between the public and private sectors from which we all now benefit.

We are particularly grateful to Jennifer for her talk on "Mapping the Human Genome" because, as it turns out, her area of interest is quite different -- circadian rhythms. That promises to be a very interesting topic for another time!

Do NOT think of Afghani women as "burqa clad victims," said Jennifer Fluri at our winter luncheon on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. "They are some of the brightest women I have ever met." As it turns out, they are some of the most courageous and empowered, too.

Jennifer talked about the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) which, according to its website ([www.rawa.org](http://www.rawa.org)), "is the oldest political/social organization of Afghan women struggling for peace, freedom, democracy and women's rights in fundamentalism-blighted Afghanistan". It was founded at Kabul University in 1977 by Meena a woman later martyred for her work.

RAWA limits its membership to women who live in Afghanistan. To maintain anonymity, they use pseudonyms, are never photographed, and do not take credit publicly for their work. With no legitimate space to meet, they connect through public baths, secret societies, literacy courses, and the many orphanages they support. Pragmatic, they gladly wear the burqa in order to transport information secretly, partner with men willing to do what women cannot due to prohibitions in their culture, and use the internet to solicit funds from the USA. No one person knows its entire membership.

According to Jennifer, gender equality in Afghanistan results far more from the culture of men wanting to perpetuate their own power than from any Islamic teachings. Afghans themselves value leadership that emerges naturally from within and from those who have the wisdom of age. According to Jennifer, the best way to bring about change for women in Afghanistan is to work with the older women and educate men based upon the Koran.

Afghanistan is an incredibly difficult place to live. Right now it is very cold. There is very little electricity, running water, or access to food. Toxins from munitions pollute the air and water. The life expectancy of an Afghani woman is around 45. It is even more dangerous for women trying to implement political and social change. "For them, the burqa actually keeps them alive," explained Jennifer.

This month we were indulged by two wonderful women pursuing very different passions. Please join us on February 13<sup>th</sup> when another, Betsy Morse, shares with us her work at the Windsor Women's Prison.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Judi Colla

### “Mapping the Human Genome” with Jennifer Loros



*Left:* Jennifer Loros  
*Below foreground from Left to Right:* Judy Music, Esther Colby,  
Bernice Cohen, Sharon Fromm, Chica Maynard



### “Female Leadership in Afghanistan” with Jennifer Fluri



*Left:* Jennifer Fluri  
*Below:* Christina Stoltz  
*Right:* Mariann Spaulding



# Membership

## The International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers

<http://www.grandmotherscouncil.com/>

Inge Brown brings this organization to our attention. Their website includes the following statement:

*WE, THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF THIRTEEN INDIGENOUS GRANDMOTHERS, represent a global alliance of prayer, education and healing for our Mother Earth, all Her inhabitants, all the children, and for the next seven generations to come. We are deeply concerned with the unprecedented destruction of our Mother Earth and the destruction of indigenous ways of life. We believe the teachings of our ancestors will light our way through an uncertain future. We look to further our vision through the realization of projects that protect our diverse cultures: lands, medicines, language and ceremonial ways of prayer and through projects that educate and nurture our children.*

### This Day in the Life of Working Women

Joni Cole, who spoke at the WNUV three years ago and created the book series *This Day in the Life: Diaries from Women across America* recently e-mailed to ask for our help. Currently, Joni is working on the third book in the series, *This Day in the Life of Working Women*, and is looking for "powerful contributors". If you yourself are interested in contributing to this book or know of others who might be appropriate and interested, please check out [www.thisdayinthelife.com/participate.htm](http://www.thisdayinthelife.com/participate.htm) for further information.

### The Women's Health Resource Center

I have just discovered the WHRC and its Director, Elaine Shamos, in Lebanon on the mall. Check out [www.dhmc.org/dept/whrc](http://www.dhmc.org/dept/whrc)



*"The way the night knows itself with the moon, be that with me." Rumi, Sufi mystic and poet (1207-1273), translated by Coleman Barks. (The above drawing (her own) and quotation was submitted by Karen Coombs in honor of Valentine's Day.)*

#### President

Judi Colla  
[jcolla@collaassociates.com](mailto:jcolla@collaassociates.com)  
603.643.9274

#### Vice-President/Program

Judy Music  
[judymusic@verizon.net](mailto:judymusic@verizon.net)  
802.649.2535

#### Secretary/Publicity

Sheila Buckley  
[sbuckleyr@yahoo.com](mailto:sbuckleyr@yahoo.com)  
603.643.5359

#### Treasure/Photographer

Inge Brown  
[inge.brown@dartmouth.edu](mailto:inge.brown@dartmouth.edu)  
802.296.5777

### Core Committee 2006-7

#### Hospitality

Esther Colby  
[Escolby@verizon.net](mailto:Escolby@verizon.net)  
603.643.2483

#### Hospitality

Kathy Sherrieb  
[kathleen.sherrieb@dartmouth.edu](mailto:kathleen.sherrieb@dartmouth.edu)  
603.795.2831

#### Hospitality

Alyssa Smith  
[alyssas@gmail.com](mailto:alyssas@gmail.com)  
603.448.1759

#### Special Events

Debbie Aliber  
[debaliber@yahoo.com](mailto:debaliber@yahoo.com)  
603.643.0107

#### Biographer

Estelle Diamond  
[estelle.diamond@valley.net](mailto:estelle.diamond@valley.net)  
603.643.2710

#### Raffle

Judy Rocchio  
[judith.rocchio@valley.net](mailto:judith.rocchio@valley.net)  
603.643.6902

#### Membership

Mary Ann O'Connor  
[Mary.Ann.OConnor@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Mary.Ann.OConnor@dartmouth.edu)  
603.643.8280

#### Nominations

Carol Weingeist  
[cpereraw@verizon.net](mailto:cpereraw@verizon.net)  
603.643.6850

#### Website

Diana Greywolf  
[myrrhia@sover.net](mailto:myrrhia@sover.net)  
802.333.9793

#### Past President

Mary Kukowski  
[mary.kukowski@valley.net](mailto:mary.kukowski@valley.net)  
603.643.8994

# Program 2006 - 7

## Evening Program

*Unless otherwise noted, Howe Library in Hanover  
Second Tuesday of the Month, 6:15 to 8:30 pm*

**October 17**

Fall Reception

**November 16**

“A Journey of Transformation:  
From Physics to Energy Healing”  
Margarita Crocker

**December 12**

“Gems: Mystique and Mistakes”  
Antoinette Matlins

**Tuesday, January 9**

“Mapping the Human Genome”  
Jennifer Loros  
Professor of Biochemistry and Genetics

**February 13**

“Windsor Women’s Prison”  
Betsy Morse

**March 13**

“Women's Spirituality and Meditation Disciplines”  
Carla Bailey, Senior Pastor, United Church of Christ

**April 10**

“Northern Stage”  
Brooke Ciardelli and Catherine Doherty

**May (TBD)**

Spring Dinner

**June 13**

Potluck/Brainstorming for Next Year’s Program

## Luncheons - “Remarkable Women”

*(In collaboration with the Program on Gender and Women  
Studies at Dartmouth)*

*Tip Top Café in White River Junction*

*Selected Mondays, 12:00 to 2:00 pm*

*Advanced Reservations Required*

**October 30**

“Salon Movement in 17<sup>th</sup> c. France:  
Madeleine de Scudery and Marie-Madeleine Pioche de la  
Vergne, comtesse de Lafayette”  
Faith Beasley, Assoc. Professor of French/Italian

**Monday, January 22**

“Female Leadership in Afghanistan”  
Jennifer Fluri, Assistant Professor of Geography

**April (TBD)**

“Eva Peron: A Remarkable Woman”  
Maryssa Navarro, Professor of History

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