

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF SMFS

Greetings!

Now is an exciting time to be a medievalist. Suddenly “the Middle Ages” is everywhere: in Hollywood, on CNN, in op-ed pieces, on the *New York Times* bestseller list. As specialists in medieval literature, art, history, and other forms of cultural expression, we’re uniquely qualified to provides perspectives on current world events, as well as to analyze how today’s medievalisms reflect contemporary anxieties, desires, and values.

Now is also a great time to be a member of the Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship. Thanks to your support, the Society continues to grow and develop. This spring marks the fifteenth anniversary of the launching of *The Medieval Feminist Newsletter*—now the *Medieval Feminist Forum*. And this spring at the Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, SMFS will unveil its latest initiative: annual prizes for outstanding scholarship in medieval feminist studies. Stay tuned for more details!

As we shift into high gear for Kalamazoo, let’s review some of the events that the SMFS offers at the Congress. The annual SMFS banquet will take place on the Friday night (May 3) of the conference. We dined last year at the Blue Dolphin, which served excellent food, provided great service, and even allowed us to pay with separate checks! We’ll probably return to the Blue Dolphin again this year; if you’d like to reserve a space at the banquet send an RSVP to me (abartlet@condor.depaul.edu) and I’ll make sure it gets to this year’s banquet organizers. Or, if you’d like to help organize the banquet (a low-impact task, since we don’t need to collect money in advance), let me know. In coming months, we’ll publicize the banquet on medfem-l.

The Mentoring Exchange also returns in 2002. This program matches experienced scholars with graduate students and beginning scholars in similar fields of specialization. Last year, Francine McGregor (then SMFS graduate student representative) and I publicized the Exchange on medfem-l, organized the responses, and put together nineteen matches. Many of these pairs were able to meet and share resources at Kalamazoo. This year we hope to expand the program even further. If you’re interested in being a mentor or a mentee, please send your contact information and fields of interest to me, and I’ll pass them on to this year’s Mentoring Exchange team.

The Society’s business meeting and cash bar again takes place on Saturday afternoon (May 4). At the business meeting, we’ll suggest and approve the sponsored sessions to be submitted for next year’s Medieval Congress, announce recent SMFS developments, and discuss how the Society can better meet the needs of its members. Plan to attend with your ideas and suggestions!

The SMFS especially seeks your feedback on the reception for graduate students cash bar, traditionally held on the Thursday afternoon of the Medieval Congress. Because the wine hour is scheduled concurrently in Valley II, our reception has been located in Fetzer. This scheduling conflict forces SMFS members to choose between free wine (however awful!) at Valley II and a cash bar way over at Fetzer. We invite your input on the future of this event. The graduate student reception could offer a useful meeting place for students and faculty. (In recent years the event has been small but fun, and people often go out to dinner afterwards.) Is the graduate student reception a tradition you'd like to maintain? If so, how could it be made more accessible and attractive? If you have ideas or would like to help, respond to Patti Renda (prendal@uic.edu) or Alix Paschkowiak (alix@charter.net), SMFS graduate student representatives.

It's an honor to wish you a Happy New Year as incoming SMFS president. May 2002 bring us all peace, wisdom, and an extra helping of *solas*.

Anne Clark Bartlett

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of the *Medieval Feminist Forum* takes up the subject of women and the arts, especially the ways in which the arts have (or have not) been the focus of academic research. We present three very different essays from three quite different points of view. The first, "Women's Voices and Medieval Song: An Interview with Anne Azéma and Shira Kammen," presents a conversation with two contemporary performers of medieval music. It explores both the recovery of medieval music and the interactions between the modern and the medieval from a performance perspective. The second, "Skipping Like Camels: Or Why Medieval Studies Neglects the Dance," offers some explanations for the academic neglect of dance and suggests that the study of medieval dance may prove fruitful for feminist research. Finally, the third essay, "Pois dompna s'ave / d'amar: Na Castelloza's *Cansos* and Medieval Feminist Scholarship," examines *trobairitz* lyrics in the context within which they were performed and proposes a new emphasis on women's agency within Provençal feudal culture. Music, dance, and lyric: all three essays challenge us to think deeply about methods of studying the evanescent performances of the past. I hope that future issues of *MFF* will take up the challenge!

Mary Suydam