

# The Seneca Falls Dialogues Journal

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Volume 1 *Ecofeminism: Cultivating Place and Identity*

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## Editorial Introduction to The Seneca Falls Dialogues Journal, v. 1

Barbara LeSavoy

*The College at Brockport, State University of New York*, blesavoy@brockport.edu

Deborah Uman

*St. John Fisher College*, duman@sjfc.edu

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Editorial Introduction to The Seneca Falls Dialogues Journal, v. 1

## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

We are thrilled to introduce the inaugural edition of The Seneca Falls Dialogues Journal. This multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed, online journal grows out of the Biennial Seneca Falls Dialogues (SFD), a biennial conference launched in October 2008 to celebrate the 160th anniversary of the first women's rights convention held in Seneca Falls, New York and the 60th anniversary of Eleanor Roosevelt's Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Seneca Falls Dialogues Journal volume I draws from the 2014 SFD conference theme, *Ecofeminism: Cultivating Place and Identity*, which was highlighted in the keynote address by BLK ProjeK founder and Eco-Warrior, Tanya Fields. Tanya lives and works in New York City's south Bronx where she deploys urban farming as a strategic tool to tackle social, racial, and economic justice goals. Inspired by Tanya's BLK ProjeK work, the 2014 SFD conference organizers conceptualized the ecofeminist theme broadly, seeking to consider the social ecologies of person and place as a backdrop to feminist intersections with environmental variables along social and political lines. Conference subthemes included: Gender and the Environment; Politics of Space; Activism; Sustainability, Food, and Nourishment; and Identities and Bodies. Twenty-one authors contribute to this inaugural SFD Journal. These essays, many of them collaboratively written by university students, faculty, and staff, are versions of their SFD conference presentations enhanced by the dialogues in which we engaged throughout the weekend.

The volume opens with "Confronting Student Resistance to Ecofeminism: Three Perspectives," a provocative essay that explores ways diverse faculty bring ecofeminist strategies into their classrooms. "The Potential of Ecofeminism to Develop 'Deep' Sustainability Competencies for Education for Sustainable Development" imagines how to foster social change based on ecofeminist principles. Moving from

ecologies of place to ecologies of culture, “Nature, Technology, and Ruined Women: Ecofeminism and Princess Mononoke” interrogates some of the problematic gender tropes woven into anime films about ecological issues. “Unusual Subjects: Finding Model Communities Among Marginalized Populations” centers the volume, turning the environmental focus to the topic of sustainable communities and examining an urban squat, African-American beauty culture, and polyamorous families as paradigms for social transformation. Similarly, “Sisterhood & Feminism: Engaging Gender and Women’s Studies Students in the Community” explores a best practices teaching model that bridges feminist theory and community activism with Gender and Women’s Studies pedagogies. This pedagogical thread links to “Changing an Institutional Environment through Appreciative Inquiry” where authors introduce readers to feminist engagement strategies for organizational change in higher education. Bringing readers back to explicit ecological concerns, “The Disproportionate Impact of Toxins in Consumer Products” addresses the insidious use of toxins in women’s beauty products, positioning women’s collective action as means to reduce environmental contamination. Bookending the volume is *The 1848 Declarations of Sentiments: Usurpations and Incantations*, a powerful multimedia piece that reimagine the 1848 Declaration of Sentiments by presenting it in contemporary oration. This closing contribution adds visual dimension that carries readers to the Biennial Seneca Falls Dialogues as the foundation for the journal and to the power of place that is Seneca Falls, New York.

In her social justice work, Tanya Fields pioneers urban farming as a device to empower marginalized populations, primarily urban women of color and their families. Her efforts share and expand the vision of women’s rights and responsibilities articulated in the Declaration of Sentiments, first signed in 1848 by 100 attendees of the first women’s rights conventions. Written into the goals of *The Seneca Falls Dialogues Journal* is the importance of creatively engaging diverse tools for

feminist activism, particularly those that support dialogues across difference. As so inspired by eco-warrior Tanya Fields, and drawing on the journal theme, EcoFeminism: Cultivating Place and Identity, The Seneca Falls Dialogues Journal honors the work of those who came before us as we build an accessible and inclusive publication in our continued pursuit of enlightenment and equality.

CO-EDITORS:

**BARB LESAVOY**, PHD, THE COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT

**DEBORAH UMAN**, PHD, ST. JOHN FISHER COLLEGE