

Professor researches rural radicalism in-depth

KIMBERLY SWARTZ
Staff Reporter

William Pratt has researched rural radicalism for 25 years. He has searched through thousands of FBI records and newspaper articles, hoping to find answers about leftist political parties of the past.

The University of Nebraska at Omaha history professor presented "From Montana to Moscow: Researching Rural Radicalism on the Northern Plains" at the Great Plains Art Collection Wednesday in Love Library.

Pratt focused on the difficulty in researching his topic because documents were difficult to get and the topic could lead to exaggerated stories.

After the speech, he said he used the examples to show other people how to research and pursue a difficult topic. He said it was worth showing other people how to study as meticulously as he did.

"Through research you find things you never imagined you would," Pratt said. "It gives you a picture of how our society was shaped."

Pockets of rural radicalism existed on the northern plains into the 20th century, Pratt said. It was found in political parties such as the socialist and communist parties, the Nonpartisan League and the Farmers Holiday.

Pratt said he studies rural radicalism because it cuts across time and a number of different movements.

"These political groups promoted issues that wouldn't have been discussed earlier. Some ran the government, affected presidential elections, and pressured the government into helping farmers," Pratt said.

Pratt said he is planning a trip to Moscow to research newly opened Communist Party material from the Russian archives.

"I am completely hooked on my studies," Pratt said. "There is still so much out there to learn."

Pratt's presentation began with personal experiences and observations about field interviews and research techniques.

"He reminds us of our past heroes by giving them a voice," said Hilda Raz, an associate English

professor.

Pratt encourages personal interviews, but said they need to be evaluated because people tend to embellish stories.

"Many people misremember, without realizing they misremember," Pratt said.

He also said daily newspapers and organized party papers can be a useful source for detailed information. Pratt said fieldwork is important because historians learn and discover local knowledge of the topic.

"I don't care how often you read papers and articles; there are a lot of things you learn on a site that you can't learn anywhere else," he said.

Pratt has searched through boxes of FBI records trying to find more information, but many times he found whole documents deleted, little useful information, and at times had to wait four years for requested material.

"Unfortunately, the researchers don't decide what they can see and when they can see it — the FBI does."

Black women need change, speaker says

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-tainment tactics employed by the corporate sector to prevent black women from advancing.

The first strategy, exclusionary containment, occurs when organizations prevent minorities' access to the "inside" through segregation or discrimination in hiring.

The second strategy, inclusionary containment, describes how organizations increase opportunities available to black women by aggressively recruiting and hiring more of them, then prevent their advancement by placing them in subordinate roles.

She said businesses and colleges often aggressively recruit black women and give them visible roles to convince the public that the organization is committed to diversity.

But once new employees begin their jobs, further exclusionary tactics prevent them from playing a substantive role in the organization, Collins said. Qualified black women are routinely passed over for promotions, and any attempt to break this power structure is quickly quelled, she said.

Whether or not inclusionary containment is intentional, Collins said, it is based on popular views of diversity that promote such "cosmetic" fixes as integration and multiculturalism. Attempts to create genuine racial and gender equality are rare because of the conflicts they would create, she said.

In order to make further progress, Collins said feminists must recognize these "new politics of containment" and search for sophisticated means of combatting them.

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Student computer fees to be added to tuition

BY BRAD DAVIS
Staff Reporter

Technology was the focus of Wednesday's meeting of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska.

Twenty-one senators were in attendance to hear Kent Hendrickson, associate vice chancellor for information services, discuss the new plan to add a technology fee to tuition in the future.

The fee, which would start at \$2 per credit hour next year, would be phased in by adding \$2 more per credit hour in 1998, and finally \$1 more per credit hour to be implemented during the fall of 1999 for a total of \$5 per credit hour.

Students in the Law College and the College of Architecture would be exempt, as they would not benefit from the fee money.

Hendrickson said the fee would allow UNL to become equal with other Big 12 institutions. He said all Big 12 universities charge a



technology fee except for the University of Kansas in Lawrence, which is currently considering assessing its students similar fees.

ASUN President Eric Marintzer encouraged senators to support the new fee, which would be charged as an incremental increase because of ASUN lobbying as opposed to all \$5 in one year.

"It is important to point out that this would have happened whether we liked it or not," Marintzer said.

That scenario, which will be formed in part by student input, includes updating software and hardware in as many computer labs as possible the first year and continuing updates in following years. It also includes purchasing new hardware and software at new lab sites, increasing staff and help desk hours and making it possible for students to access more databases through the library system.