

runway she said, “let’s keep talking, start a newsletter or something”—all tossed out as she rushed down the runway. Subsequently I sent out a call for interest and put the first newsletter together in the spring of 1986 with 79 names. I think it is worth mentioning that without Jane Chance’s enthusiasm, MFN might never have gotten off the ground—Jane listened to us talk and then urged Otto Gründler to give us a chance. Once our first sessions took place everyone saw the need for more sessions and it was smooth sailing, but it took Jane’s support and Otto’s openness to make it possible.

Beth Robertson
University of Colorado

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY FOR MIEVIAL FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP

As I have chatted with graduate students and younger scholars about MFN, I have come to realize what an important role this publication plays in providing both an exciting forum for the newest ideas and a supportive environment for thinking them through. Many of us depend on MFN to provide the intellectual lifeline often missing on our own campuses; its bibliographies launch our projects; its pedagogical discussions launch our new courses; its position papers stimulate our thinking: MFN stands at the center of an enabling community.

Yet the continuity of this community depends entirely on our participation. We are now a large organization, and it is easy to conclude that others will annotate the bibliographies, respond to the position papers, contribute to the fora. As our society makes the transition from a small, highly committed group and continues to grow, we don’t want to lose the heady excitement of those early days, with their sense of forward-looking change taking place with our students, our institutions, and ourselves, and that excitement was based on participation. The message of this message from your president is DON’T BE A LURKER! MFN needs your collaborative engagement.

Pamela Sheingorn
Baruch College, New York NY

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

The topic for this issue of MFN is **Gender and Medievalism**. We have personal reminiscences, essays on such figures as J.R.R. Tolkien and Joan of Arc, and thoughts on the future of feminism in medieval studies. In addition, two novelists have written essays for us: Katherine Kerr, who writes historical fantasies set in a world that shares many characteristics with the pre-Christian