

36th *Historia Medica*

presented by **The Bernard Becker Medical Library**

in collaboration with the **Center for History Of Medicine**



“Cultural Meanings of the Dwarf Body”

by Sara van den Berg, Ph.D.

Sara van den Berg, Ph.D.
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Portraits by Van Dyck and Velasquez. Carnival acts and museum displays. Fiction by Sir Walter Scott, Poe, and Dickens. *The Wizard of Oz*, *Freaks*, and *The Station Agent*. *The Tin Drum* and *Stones from the River*. *Geek Love* and *Mendel’s Dwarf*. Tom Thumb and reality television.

Dwarfs have been popular objects in art, literature, and society since the Renaissance, but their bodies have had different symbolic meanings over the centuries. This lecture will explore those meanings, and how they affected the social role and personal experiences of dwarfs. Older meanings endure even as the medicalization of dwarfism has developed from measurement to surgery, hormone treatment, and genetics.

Sara van den Berg’s research and teaching focus on three areas: Seventeenth-Century English Literature, especially the works of Ben Jonson and John Milton; Disability Studies, with special emphasis on the cultural meanings of disability; and Medical Humanities, with special emphasis on the problem of pain.

Professor van den Berg received her B.A. *summa cum laude* from the University of Minnesota, and her M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. from Yale University. She presently teaches in Saint Louis University’s Department of English.

Thursday, February 27, 2014, 4:30 pm*

Bernard Becker Medical Library, 7th floor, King Center