



**-GSC-**

GENDER AND SEXUALITY CENTER  
BASEMENT SCOVILLE

# OUT OF THE BASEMENT

FEATURES

*NOVEMBER 2009*

BOOK AND MOVIE  
REVIEWS

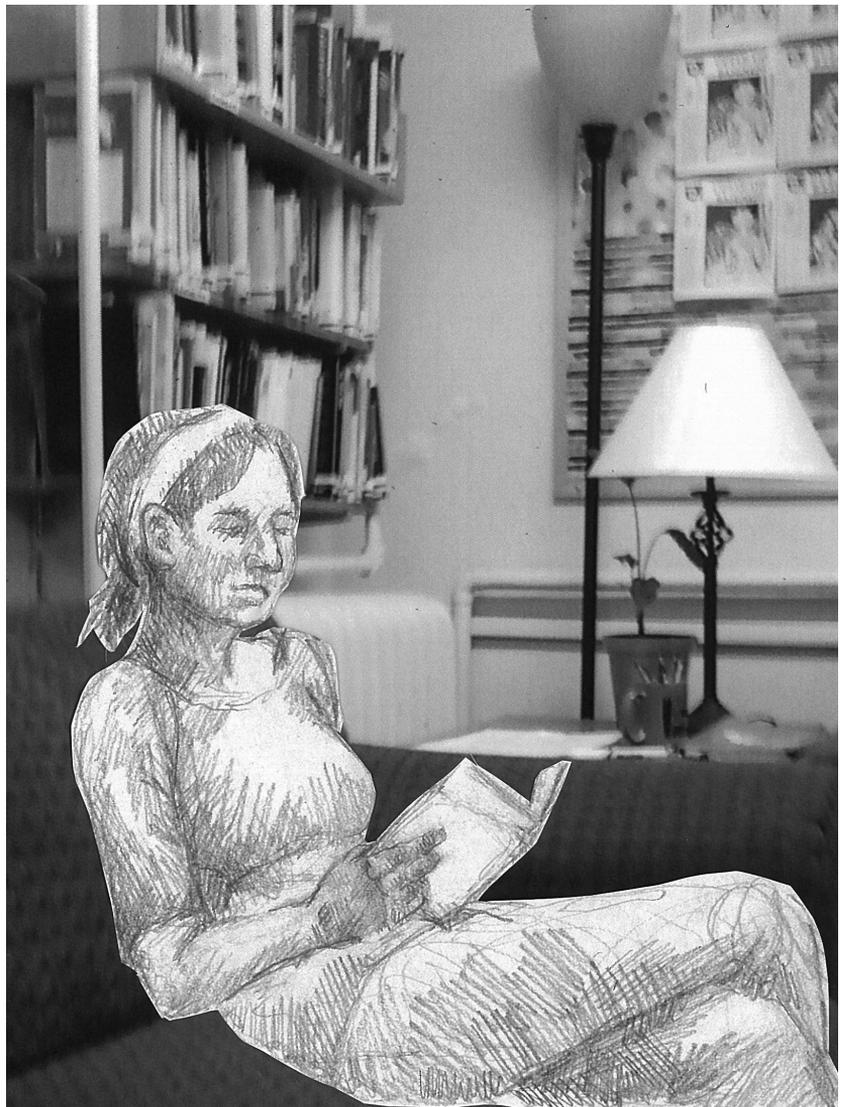
IN THE NEWS

ZINES

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RAINBOW RETREAT

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 2



Cover Art by Allie Schwartz '10

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# LOOKING TO CURL UP WITH A

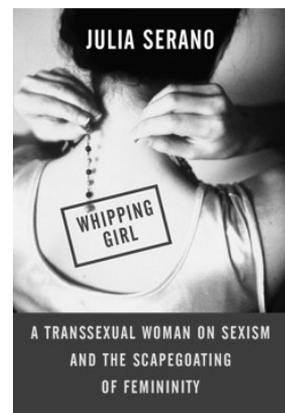
Whipping Girl by Julia Serano  
A review by Sarah Berlin

If you want to learn more about trans issues, feminism, or misogyny, you should absolutely read *Whipping Girl* by Julia Serano. This combination of personal experience, political manifesto, and trans, feminist, and queer theorizing is both informative and gripping. Serano, a transsexual woman, biologist, and spoken word performer, writes about the ways in which transsexual people (people who feel that the sex assigned to them does not match the sex that they feel they are), and particularly trans women, are misrepresented, marginalized, and discriminated against. She uses examples from popular movies like *Transamerica* and *Pricilla, Queen of the Desert*, to illustrate the ways that trans women are depicted as fake or pitiful, which implies that their expressions and identities are less valid than those of cissexual people (people who feel that their assigned sex aligns with the sex they feel they are).

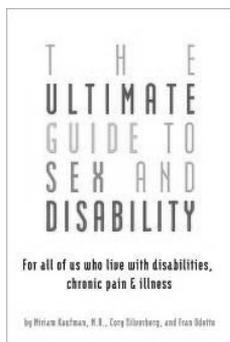
Serano believes that gender is neither entirely inherent in people nor entirely constructed by society, explaining that there are some aspects of gender that people are intrinsically inclined to express and others that society creates. She also challenges the popular idea that rejecting the gender binary is the only way to achieve the liberation of people of all genders and expressions. She talks about how this idea ends up privileging people outside of the binary, frequently at the expense of transsexual men or women. Instead she emphasizes, that we all need to stop privileging *any* identity- whether that is transsexual, cissexual, genderqueer or anything else- over other identities.

One of things that stuck with me long after reading this book is Serano's description of cissexual privilege and all the things that people who are not trans take for granted. For example, being referred to or assumed to be the gender you identify with or even the privilege of not having to think about or defend your gender identity constantly. This book also made me so much more aware of the injustices and exclusion occurring even with queer or feminist communities (see: the continuing exclusion of trans women from the Michigan Womyn's Festival). Finally, *Whipping Girl* provided me with a vocabulary for talking about these issues and presenting them in ways that make sense and can encourage other people to rethink their roles and actions.

*Note: Julia Serano will be speaking and performing at Carleton this spring!*



# GOOD BOOK OVER BREAK?



The Ultimate Guide to Sex and Disability by Miriam Kaufman, M.D.,  
Cory Silverberg, and Fran Odette  
A review by Allie Schwartz

A lot of things are tied up in sex. There are emotional considerations, the physical interaction, gender stereotypes, and personal pleasure (plus a whole lot more). There are also a lot of things tied up in disability. Physical and mental pain, fatigue, self-esteem, societal stereotypes, and day to day interactions with the world (again, plus a whole lot more).

Able-bodied sexual interactions can be plenty complicated. When you add disability or chronic illness (which are already a part of the daily lives of many people), things can get really stressful, even to the point where it can even feel like sex and living with a disability are incompatible. A really crucial part of any healthy sexual experience is to be able to communicate what you want and need. This is especially true when you have a disability, because your needs are often not met without additional effort. This book provides support and encouragement alongside expert advice, all aimed at helping people living with disabilities and chronic illness to create a healthy sex life that works for them.

Much of the advice is aimed at general areas that affect wide ranges of disabilities: pain, fatigue, mobility, self-esteem, and communication. But no one section of the book has just one potential solution to a problem, and there are often sections dedicated to particular disabilities. Instead there are suggestions based on different factors (like comfort, relationship, etc.) alongside specific information from experts and plenty of resources. One of the best parts of the book is the different sexual positions based on ability, and tons of tips about masturbation, toys, and getting to know your body and your body's schedule.

This book makes it clear that sex and pleasure are not lost causes for people with disabilities and are, in fact, very possible. The book is encouraging and supportive, and makes a point to address the unique concerns of self-esteem and communication often associated with disability. The book is tremendously helpful for anyone with a disability or chronic illness, or anyone engaging in sexual relationships with partners with disabilities or chronic illnesses. It's sex-positive, easy to read, and recognizes that all people deserve to have healthy sex lives, regardless of ability.

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Annie on My Mind by Nancy Garden  
Review by Juliet Dana '09

I graduated from college and went back to high school. And high school can be a scary place. But as a high school teacher, I am surprisingly impressed by the maturity and thoughtfulness of my students. In many ways these kids seem much more comfortable with the “concept” of queer people than we were when I was a teenager. On the other hand, a number of students transfer to the charter high school where I work, Avalon School in St. Paul, because of heartbreaking, homophobic abuse at their old schools. There are a lot of troubled high school students still out there.

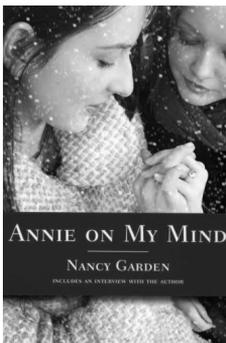
Given the culture here at Avalon, it was not surprising to see a lesbian coming-of-age novel on my student’s desk. I was surprised by the coincidence, because I had just finished the same book the night before, and by this book’s enduring appeal; though published almost 30 years ago, this one keeps showing up in both high school bookclubs and banned book lists.

The book is Nancy Garden’s *Annie On My Mind*, heralded as a breakthrough publication in the young adult queer fiction world as it was “the first to have a happy ending.” Alongside its optimistic resolution, *Annie* has maintained its popularity, and earned its beloved status, for its tenderness. Garden weaves a romance that would appeal to fans of *The Notebook* and *The Color Purple* alike. Like those films, *Annie* has both a target audience and a predictable fan base, and like those films, the love story absolutely delivers its expected emotional punch.

*Annie On My Mind* is a controversial book. On top of being banned over and over again, it’s been called bourgeoisie and outdated, wonderfully current, charming, contrived. It’s been (wrongly!) called dangerous and illicit; it may be tame or racy; it may be too-broadly painted for the nuances of the relationship, it may be too gentle. In the end, it’s a love story, and I liked it.

My student, who slowly outed herself as “bi, mostly” over the course of our conversation, thought Garden “treated that issue” sensitively and “without dwelling on it.” I devoured the novel in one sitting. I fell easily in love, like protagonists Annie and Liza, before I’d even realized. I appreciated Garden’s tenderness, the way she normalized a sweet but agonizing adolescence, how easily she invites (likeminded?) readers to remember falling in love.

Right or wrong, I think *Annie On My Mind* is exactly the book I wish I’d read in high school; like my student, I was looking more for normalization than for quality literature. In providing intrigue and also reassurance, the book succeeds tremendously.



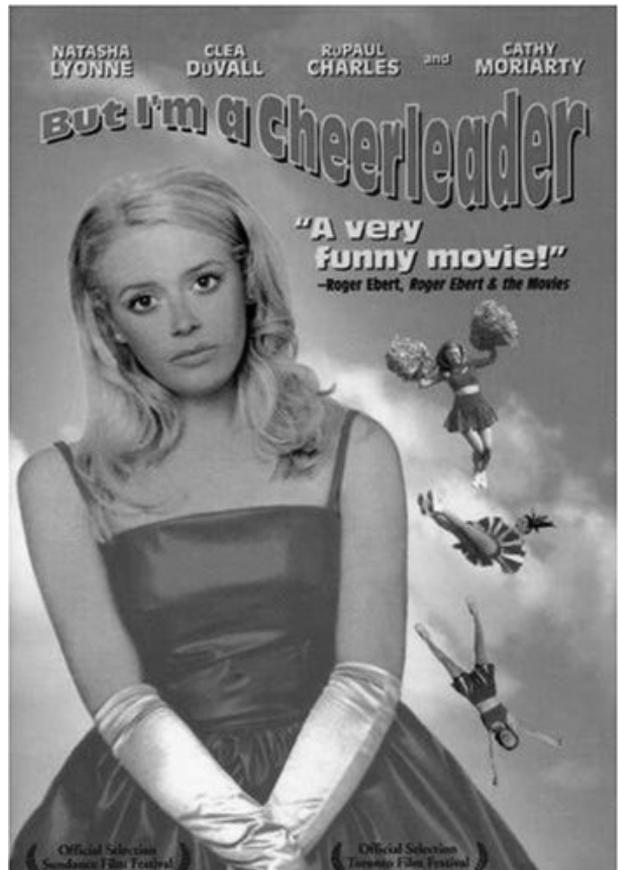
As far as high school reading goes, there seems to be a lack of well-known and well-written young adult literature. (My student has moved on to *Rage: A Love Story*, which appears to be an overly dramatic account of an abusive lesbian relationship. I found *Parrotfish*, a frustratingly naïve transgender coming-out story, at my public library.) While *Annie On My Mind* might not be the one-book solution to making high school less scary, I do see it as headed in the right direction. I’d like to be able to offer my students books that make them think, books that nod to reality but also are worth savoring. So even though I’m going to stay on the look out for something better, I’m ready to pass a copy of *Annie On My Mind* to any number of confused young girls – which was probably Nancy Garden’s intention in the first place.

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# OR A GOOD MOVIE?

But I'm a Cheerleader!  
Review by Daisuke Kawachi

It's another wonderful day in Suburbia, you're driving home with your boyfriend after cheerleading practice, and everything is simply marvelous! At home, something seems amiss though. Suddenly, you find that everybody thinks you are a lesbian and now you have to be fixed. This is how *But I'm A Cheerleader* begins. At True Directions, the protagonist is given a pink dress and taught how to be a "real", heterosexual woman, complete with lessons in how to vacuum properly and how to change a diaper. The boys there learn such useful skills as playing war and grabbing their crotches. At once a complex and well-directed film that both satirizes and redefines gender and sexuality modes, *But I'm A Cheerleader* defies the heteronormative standard. Of course, those who would probably benefit the most from seeing this film will not see it or will simply miss the point entirely. There are many critics who consider the portrayals to be stereotypes that do nothing to subvert the public's perception of the LGBTQIA population. However, there are others who say that the stereotyping is intentional and that it is satire. You will have to see this wonderful film in order to decide for yourself.



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# WHAT'S UP WITH THE GSC LIBRARY?

Big changes are what's up!

As you may have noticed, this newsletter's theme revolves around books and reading. We hope you've gotten some good ideas for reading material to give as gifts or to indulge in yourself this winter break. We're all really excited about reading gender and sexuality related books because we're undergoing a big library renovation project. By the end of winter term, we hope to have all the books in the GSC searchable in the Bridge, just like all the books you'd find in Carleton or St. Olaf's libraries.

A big hope of ours is that more students will come visit us in the GSC to pick up certain library books or browse the great collection we have here. If you have ideas for what you would like to see in the GSC library or want to give us input about the library renovation project, stop by the office, talk to any GSCA or email Allie (shwarta), Kate (richeyk), or Christina (gehring).

As the project progresses, we'll be moving books in and out of the library as we get them all catalogued. You may notice that some of the books in the GSC now have small salmon colored slips in them – these are really important so please don't remove them from any books you browse or borrow! Feel free to keep checking out books using the old system, but if you have any GSC books lying around that you're done reading, please bring them back in so we can get them up on the Bridge. Thanks so much for your help and we hope you're as excited about the new library renovations as we are!

Happy reading,  
The GSCAs.



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# *RAINBOW RETREAT*



While it may seem a ways away, winter term is approaching. And along with all that snow (and wind-chill... and ice...) that will surely await us when we return to campus in January, there's also a rainbow on the horizon-- the Rainbow Retreat, of course.

The Rainbow Retreat is a wintertime staple (or it should be!) for any letter of the Carleton LGBTQQA alphabet. After all, we're talking about a weekend set aside to meet new queer or queer-friendly ally faces and bond with those you know-- but at CAMP (Camp Pepin in WI, to be exact), by playing broomball, going sledding, drinking hot chocolate, and engaging in awesome discussions. Plus, the Rainbow Retreat offers the amazing opportunity to be in a space all about openness and acceptance, making it definitely a weekend you won't want to miss (or end).

In fact, the Rainbow Retreat is less of a "retreat" than a "kickstart" or a "springboard" for the rest of winter term. This year, we're lucky to have it first weekend, to start off the fun for winter term (and all of 2010) right away. Everyone is welcome: sign-ups are in the GSC or email Kaaren Williamsen (kwilliam) before you leave for winter break (and hurry before the spots fill up!).

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# IN THE NEWS

## HRC Protest

A group of protesters gathered outside of the Twin Cities Human Rights Campaign gala and Silent Auction to call attention to the ways they think the HRC excludes trans people and focuses too much on marriage issues. The protesters wore wedding attire and read vows promising to “to resist and to liberate ourselves from all systems of domination, for glitter and for cupcakes, for unicorns and for rainbows, in genderless bathrooms and in the streets, in love and in rage, from this dance party forward.” ([thecolu.mn](http://thecolu.mn))



## Obama Lifts HIV Travel Ban

President Obama recently lifted the 22-year ban on travel to the United States by people who are HIV positive, saying “If we want to be a global leader in combating H.I.V./AIDS, we need to act like it.” Before this, the United States was one of about a dozen countries that ban HIV positive people from entering the country. ([feministeminor.wordpress.com](http://feministeminor.wordpress.com))

## Election Results

On Tuesday November 3<sup>rd</sup>, voters in Maine overturned a law that would allow queer couples to marry, with about 53% of the vote. However, early returns from a largely mail-in election in Washington, favors a referendum that will allow domestic partnerships. ([elections.nytimes.com](http://elections.nytimes.com))





## Employment Non-Discrimination Act to Include Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The Senate has begun hearings for an LGBTQ inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). This piece of legislation makes it illegal for an employer to fire or refuse to hire or promote an employee because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The lead sponsor is Rep. Barney Frank from Massachusetts. ([www.advocate.com](http://www.advocate.com))

# ZINES!

BY CHRISTINA GEHRING

Looking for a short or alternative read on gender/sexuality issues? Check out the GSC's new zines! Zines (short for "fanzines") are self-published, non-professional publications, and most are easily read within one sitting. Here are the GSC's new additions (found on the wall next to the more glossy, traditional magazines):



Women's Psychology: Mental Illness as Social Disease by Susan Williams, M.D. Susan Williams discusses how the mental health industry causes women to think of their depression and anxiety as a result of individual experiences, rather than systemic sexism. Interesting food for thought.

Support by Cindy Crabb

Essays and art on consent and how to support someone who has been sexually abused. Everyone should pick this up and at least look at the list of questions on consent.

How I learned to Love Myself, and Occasionally Other Men by Dave

An "amateur punk rock coming-out zine." A short story about one man's struggle with internalized homophobia.



Every Body is a Modified Body by Aeryn

A zine on trans issues and bodies and cisgender/cissexual privilege. So great that we got two copies for the GSC. Everyone (you) should probably read this.

For more zines, check out online libraries ([zinelibrary.info](http://zinelibrary.info) or [qzap.org](http://qzap.org)) or order them through independent publishing companies ([microcosmpublishing.org](http://microcosmpublishing.org)).

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# INTERVIEW WITH AN IPA!

An Interview with Nimo Ali

## **What does IPA stand for?**

IPA stands for Intercultural Program Assistant.

## **What do you do as an IPA?**

I do programming for OIIL (the Office of Intercultural and International Life) but I do intercultural stuff. There are three others doing international stuff; they're all international students. I do chili nights, collaborate with ACT and other offices, for example we're doing a Point of View series Winter term. For chili nights, we pick topics relevant to us as individuals in the United States and the world. We always try to tie it back to Carleton, since in our mission there's the idea of global perspectives and being citizens. The first chili night was Beyond Barak Obama, where we talked about cosmetic versus fundamental change. At Carleton, we need to reconcile our rhetoric with actions, especially in response to the campus climate survey and CEDI. We say we care about these things. How can we hold ourselves accountable?

The second chili night was Is Anti-Zionism Anti-Semitic? It's a question of: if you think you already have the answer, shouldn't you still ask the question? And I guess the answer for some people is no, which is concerning given cosmetic versus fundamental change. People so quickly went to a place of, "oh if you're Jewish you already have credibility." But I thought the night went as well as it could have.

## **Do you have any ideas for chili nights for Winter term?**

Deconstructing Dave Chappelle is something I want to do. Maybe something about Tracy Morgan. He epitomizes being male and being black and he uses humor to bridge the gap between these things. Some people I'm friends with don't get it. I send e-mails, "haha, this is funny, think about the racial implications of this." Maybe something with Margaret Cho. It's like, these are actual human beings, when you laugh and don't recognize the substance behind them, you commodify them. So that's something I'd like to do. Deconstructing racially and sexually charged comedy.

## **Are there any things you might want to do with the GSC?**

I want to do the Faces of Feminism. So it's a really rough idea. It's called the Faces of Feminism; it's about how feminism manifests itself in other minority groups as opposed to it being your "only identity." It's not you only identity, but you know. For example when Kai Wright was talking about how the gay movement is still "the faces of the majority" but really when it began with this group of teens that came from diverse backgrounds but that's not really recognized. So I'm thinking of bell hooks and different ways to critique the question of feminism in multiple identities because when you talk in dichotomies all the time you leave so many people out. So I'm thinking about this even as the second chili night in the winter.

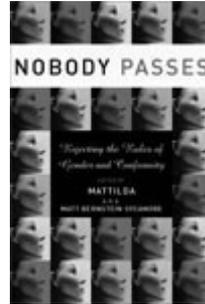
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# MORE RECOMMENDED MEDIA

Here's a list of things to read/watch over winter break!

## Movies

TransGeneration (2005)  
Ask Not (2008)  
Daddy and Papa (2002)  
Just Call Me Kade (2002)  
Fried Green Tomatoes (1991)  
The Birdcage (1996)  
Ma Vie en Rose (1997)



## Books

Nobody Passes by Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore (2006)  
Yes Means Yes by Jaclyn Friedman and Jessica Valenti  
Aftershock:: Confronting Trauma in a Violent World, a Guide for Activists and Their Allies by Patrice Jones  
Intersex (for lack of a better word) by Thea Hillman  
Word Warriors by Alix Olson and Eve Ensler  
The Color of Violence by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence  
The Revolution Will Not Be Funded by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence  
Woman on the Edge of Time by Marge Piercy  
Expletive Deleted: A Good Book on Bad Language by Ruth Wajnryb

## Blogs

Feminists with Disabilities: <http://disabledfeminists.com/>  
IllDoctrine Hip-hop media blog: <http://www.illdoctrine.com/>  
The Column: <http://thecolu.mn>  
Feministe: <http://www.feministe.us/blog/>

**HAVE A GREAT WINTER BREAK!**

## GENDER & SEXUALITY CENTER

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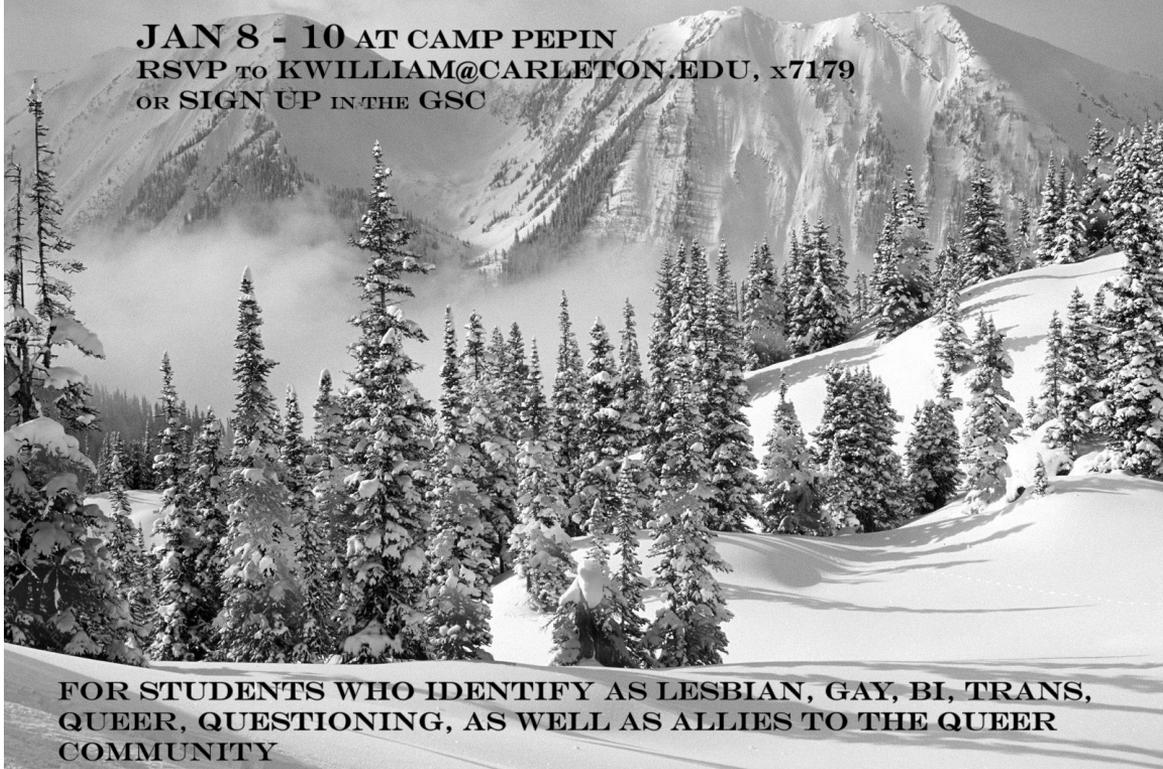
<http://webapps/carleton/campus/edu/gsc>

# RAINBOW RETREAT 2010

**JAN 8 - 10 AT CAMP PEPIN**

**RSVP TO [KWILLIAM@CARLETON.EDU](mailto:KWILLIAM@CARLETON.EDU), x7179**

**OR SIGN UP IN THE GSC**



**FOR STUDENTS WHO IDENTIFY AS LESBIAN, GAY, BI, TRANS,  
QUEER, QUESTIONING, AS WELL AS ALLIES TO THE QUEER  
COMMUNITY**

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Kristen Askeland, OIL Secretary

Danica Lance, GSC Advisor

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Please submit articles, calendar entries, letters and news to the Gender and Sexuality Center or via e-mail to: [gees](mailto:gees). We reserve the right to edit for clarity and space.