Fem Fest? But I’m not a feminist….  
By Leahruth Jemilo ’08

Do you consider yourself to be a feminist? What does feminism mean to you? These questions and others like them were bounced around the table in Sayles two weeks ago. It was Fem Fest 2005 and the theme was breaking down the “Feminist Stereotype.”

One program of Fem Fest was a project to get lots of pictures of people with a sign that read, “This is What a Feminist Looks Like.” All the pictures were then made into a large display that was posted in Sayles. By the end of the week there were hundreds of photos of feminists. Men, women, Black, White, Asian, tall, short, blonde, brunette, professor, student, staff, president of the college (yay Oden!!!), and the list goes on. I have to say I wasn’t all that surprised at the vast array of people who came by in support of feminism for I assumed that because it was Carleton, we’re all feminists here. However, what I was not prepared for was the large number of people who came by and after being asked to take their picture with the sign they replied, “oh but I’m not a feminist…” And I was even more surprised by the number of WOMEN who turned down the title of feminist. Why is “feminism” such a taboo…something that people have to subjectively think about before saying, “yes, I am a feminist” or “oh no no no…that title’s not for me.”

Perhaps my naiveté toward the situation comes from the fact that I grew up with a mother who I swear has been a feminist since the womb. My mother was one of the first women in Chicago to organize shelters and programs for women who were then called “battered women” (now a gender neutral – domestic violence victims). I can see how this environ-

Sex Class
By Derek Zimmerman ’07

This term, I’ve been fortunate to take a class taught by visiting professor Caroline Burke. The class, entitled Psychology of Human Sexual Behavior, covered a wide range of issues and topics pertinent to our understanding of sexuality, covering everything from a basic survey of sexual anatomy to a complicated critical analysis of cultural constructions of gendered sexual desire.

Professor Burke is a member of the American Psychological Association and has worked as a sex therapist in the past, so she leavens the class lectures, which are based closely on the most up-to-date research in the field of sexual psychology, with anecdotes from her personal experience and advice from her professional practice. As far as I can tell, her goal in teaching the class is to push students towards healthy attitudes and a better understanding of a topic which, for most and as defined by our culture, is shrouded in mystery.

On the very first day of class, we took a moment to deconstruct the language surrounding masturbation. She solicited euphemisms from us, and wrote them up on the chalkboard. It was slightly jarring when, during the ungodly hour of class that is 1a, a professional academic wrote the words “spanking the monkey” in large letters; even more jarring was the fact that while the class came up with 10-12 euphemisms for male masturbation, we had only 2 or 3 for female masturbation.

As an employee of the GSC, it has been an eye-opening experience to see just how many topics there are to cover in the arena of sex. The class has flown at breakneck speed, leaving us only one class period to talk about attraction, one class period to talk about pregnancy, and two class periods to discuss non-heterosexualities.  

Continued on page 2
I talked to Professor Burke about her future class offerings, and she explained that she was only here teaching for a year while another Carleton professor was on sabbatical, and that the courses she would be offering in the winter and spring would not cheat on these topics. I was disappointed that the class wouldn’t be available to others, as it has broadened my understanding of the extensive amount of research yet to be done on human sexuality.

In a culture like ours, where talking about sex is culturally unsanctioned but a large chunk of our entertainment industry rides on Britney Spears’s bared midriff and schoolgirl outfits, people are constantly bombarded with extremely mixed messages. The experience of sex class has made me wonder whether there shouldn’t be an entire academic department focusing on the complicated knot of human sexuality at this and at every college. Hopefully the psychology department will consider adding the Psychology of Human Sexual Behavior class consistently, as I guarantee that no one, no matter how knowledgeable she or he may think they are, knows nearly enough about sex.

Derek Zimmerman is a Center Associate
ment might affect the way that I view the outside world. To me it seems second nature to be a feminist. As much as I am a woman, I am a feminist.

When I look outside my own sphere of influence I see women AND men who think feminism is an embarrassing label, something that refers to “man-haters” or “women who hate chivalry” or might even refer to women who disregard all the traditional roles that history has provided for them.

Halt. Feminism is not one thing; it means entirely different things to different people. We must get past the label before we can ever make progress, as a united group, towards equality.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary displays two definitions for the word “feminism.” The first is “the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes, and the second is “organized activity on behalf of women’s rights and interests.” If you choose to accept either definition it seems that feminism is, at its root, the equality of the sexes. How could you not want equality as a woman? How could you not want equality for women, as a man? I had many students come up to the table and explain that they believed in women’s rights and equality in the work place, thought it was great what we were doing for Fem Fest, but refused to take their picture with the sign because they were not “feminists.”

I, personally, do not consider someone to be part of the women’s rights movement unless they choose to accept the title of feminist. By a refusal of the title, there is an admittance that there is something wrong with the term itself.

Throw out your inhibitions; feminism is a term used to unite, unify, and define our mission. Feminism today is something very different than our mothers’ generation. Today we disregard the stereotypes of what a feminist must be, and we accept all people who believe in equality of the sexes.

We are proud and are calling women and men everywhere to push aside their former, perhaps negative, perceptions of feminism and rejoice in the honor of being a feminist!

Leahruth Jemilo is a Center Associate
**In The News**

**Methodist Court Removes Openly Lesbian Minister**
In the best-known of the cases decided yesterday, the Judicial Council removed from the ministry Irene Elizabeth Stroud, who told her Philadelphia congregation in 2003 that she was a lesbian in a long-term relationship with another woman. In a pair of decisions that bolstered conservatives, the highest court of the United Methodist Church defrocked an openly lesbian minister yesterday and reinstated a pastor who had been suspended for refusing to allow a gay man to become a member of his congregation. The series of decisions come at a time when disputes over the role of gay men and women in the clergy, and whether to bless same-sex unions, are roiling the mainline churches. The rulings served to reaffirm the Methodists' traditional stance against the ordination of "self-avowed, practicing homosexuals." (NYTimes.com)

**Representatives Propose Bill to Force FDA Action on Plan B**
Four members of the House of Representatives introduced legislation that would give the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) 30 days to take action on the emergency contraceptive Plan B, after which it would be automatically approved for over-the-counter sales. The bipartisan legislation, sponsored by Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Christopher Shays (R-CT), Jay Inslee (D-WA) and Joseph Crowley (D-NY), does not aim to overstep the FDA’s authority, but merely to force a decision after nearly two years of delays. “The bill ensures that the agency’s inaction will no longer prevent women from getting access to a drug that they have found to be safe and effective for over-the-counter use,” said Congresswoman Maloney. “This bill is necessary because it has become clear that FDA’s refusal to make the morning-after pill available OTC is a political decision.” (feminist.org)

**Swoopes's Announcement Shows Progress—Sort Of**
No one called for a boycott of the WNBA after Sheryl Swoopes announced she was gay. The league didn't ask for any of her MVP awards back. Her sponsors are still writing her checks. Any initial surprise has quickly turned to a shrug of indifference, and even if the WNBA is not the NBA in terms of public appeal, that reaction shows how far society has come. And how far we still have to go. While Swoopes is accepted whether she's a wife, a single mother, or a lesbian, gay men are buried deep in the pro sports closet. "I don't see that happening any time soon," Swoopes said Friday about the possibility that a high-profile male athlete might come out. "But you know what? I didn't really see this happening either. At least not now, and it did. I wish, as a society, as a world, that this wouldn't be an issue anymore. Unfortunately, it is.” Times have changed since 1981, when Billie Jean King lost millions in endorsements after admitting to a lesbian affair. Today, numerous athletes in women's golf, tennis, and basketball are open about their sexuality and aren't punished for it. Martina Navratilova, Rosie Jones, and now Swoopes even added endorsements from Olivia Cruises, a lesbian travel company. (Advocate.com)

**Alito Hearing, Vote Schedule Announced; Filibuster Still on the Table**
Senate Judiciary Chair Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Ranking Minority Member Patrick Leahy (D-CT) announced yesterday the schedule planned to consider the nomination of Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court. The committee hearings are scheduled to begin on January 9, 2006, with a committee vote planned for January 17 and an expected full Senate vote on January 20. However, Senator Leahy did not commit to a vote on January 20, leaving open the possibility of a filibuster. (feminist.org)

**Bishop: Anglicans Will Eventually Accept Gays**
The first openly gay Episcopal bishop said Friday he believed that the wider Anglican Church will eventually embrace gays, but perhaps not in his lifetime. "We learned that with people of color, we have learned that with women and now we are learning that about gay and lesbian people." said the Right Rev. Gene Robinson, whose promotion to bishop of New Hampshire caused a bitter rift among the world's Anglicans.

Robinson was visiting Britain to join celebrations of the 10th anniversary of Changing Attitude, a group which promotes the acceptance of gay clergy. Robinson is not permitted to preach or preside at any Church of England services during his visit. Anglicans disagree on other issues including abortion, stem-cell research and the war in Iraq, he said. "So the question is can we still live together and hold on to one another while we resolve this issue?" Robinson said. (AP)
Gay TV Kiss Makes Waves in Brazil
Brazilian TV is no stranger to scandal, but Friday night's final installment of the TV Globo telenovela *America*, which may air a scene involving a kiss between two men, has created more than the usual stir. Fans across the nation are eagerly waiting to see whether Junior, the son of a powerful ranch owner, will go so far as to kiss Zeca, one of the hired hands. If he does, it would mark the first time two men have exchanged a kiss on Brazilian television. While Portuguese-speaking Brazilians are generally more tolerant of homosexual conduct than their neighbors in Spanish-speaking Latin America, the country remains something of a paradox. Judges have granted foreign partners in gay relationships residency rights and have authorized civil unions that grant many of the benefits of marriage to gay couples, but there are many segments of society that remain openly hostile to gays and lesbians. A study conducted by the Candido Mendes University in Rio de Janeiro found that 60% of Rio's homosexual population had experienced some type of harassment because of their sexual orientation, and 17% said they had experienced physical violence. (AP)

Rosa Parks First Woman to Lie in Honor in Capital Rotunda
Beginning Sunday, the remains of Rosa Parks lay in honor in the Capital Rotunda for public viewing. By the close of viewing Sunday, more than 30,000 people had filed through the Rotunda to pay their respects, with another 20,000 expected Monday morning, according to the *Washington Post*. Parks is the first woman, and second African-American, to be honored in this way. (feminist.org)

Alito's Mother Says It All
Rose Alito, the mother of Supreme Court nominee Samuel Alito, told the Associated Press that "of course" her son is "against abortion." But you don't need to get this from his mother. Reading between the lines, Alito has done the most he could do as an appellate judge who had to follow Supreme Court ruling on Roe v. Wade to restrict abortion rights. As a judge on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, Samuel Alito, President Bush's nominee to the Supreme Court, was the lone dissenter in a 1991 case arguing that it is constitutional to force women to notify their husbands before obtaining an abortion. In a so-called partial-birth abortion ban case in New Jersey, he did not join the majority opinion overturning the law; rather, he wrote a concurring opinion simply stating he had to follow Supreme Court precedent. (feminist.org)

Afghan Editor of Women's Rights Magazine Sentenced
Ali Mohaqiq Nasab, the male editor of *Haqooq-i-zan*, which means Women's Rights, has been convicted of blasphemy and sentenced to two years in prison for publishing articles critical of punishments doled out because of interpretations of Sharia (Islamic) law. Nasab is the first journalist to be convicted for blasphemy since the fall of the Taliban regime four years ago. The case will automatically be appealed. Nasab was convicted by the Primary Court in Kabul for blasphemy resulting from two articles published in the magazine critical of these severe punishments, including 100 lashes for adultery and death by stoning for conversion to another religion. (feminist.org)

Alaska Court Orders Equality for Gay Couples
In a unanimous decision, the Alaska supreme court ruled on Friday that it is unconstitutional for the state to continue to deny equal benefits to the domestic partners of lesbian and gay state employees and retirees. The court wrote that the state's policy of denying lesbian and gay couples equal employee benefits violates the state constitution's equal protection guarantees. (Advocate.com)

PERSONALS

**WANTED:**

GSC Newsletter seeks dedicated reader to provide new name. Bored with functional but unexciting name, looking to spice things up with fabulous new title. Must be inclusive, creative, and generally awesome.

Think you might be the one? Send title ideas to vallensr@carleton.edu.
So now you’re out. You’ve adjusted to the world of a small liberal arts college in the middle of nowhere, and you’ve expanded your understanding of your identity. It’s difficult for anyone to go home after their first term away, but it’s especially difficult for those who have come to significant realizations or begun a questioning process. Whether you’ve come out as LGBT, questioning, allied, feminist, vegan, something else entirely, or you’re just thinking about starting that journey, you’re now facing the prospect of returning home for the six long weeks that make up a Carleton winter break.

Returning home can be a daunting undertaking after the whirlwind of your first Carleton term – so how does one survive? Here are some suggestions from students who have been there:

### Before going home:

- Talk to friends before you leave and find out who you can call or visit when things get tough.
- Decide what your goals are before you get there – do you want to come out to everyone, or would you rather just make it through the holidays without a major family fight?
- Look for allies in the family. There’s usually one, and they can really help your family understand.
- It’s not fair to you or them to drop an announcement without warning. Try to prepare them beforehand so they have time to react and adjust in their own ways. Consider writing a letter before you get home, or asking them not to respond immediately when you tell them.
- Coming out doesn’t happen all at once. Be prepared to have the conversation multiple times.
- Make individual decisions about coming out to each family member and friend. Just as no two people are alike, there are unique ways to approach the issues with each of them.
- Although it can be difficult to get away if things don’t go well, have a safe space arranged beforehand with a friend.
- Be prepared for potential negative reactions and have a plan for dealing with them – know what you’ll say or do.

Find out about local LGBT resources and support ahead of time (see some ideas below)

### While at home:

- “The most important thing was letting people know that I am still the same person I’ve always been and realizing my sexual orientation was not going to affect any relationships I already had; it was more about looking towards how my future would unfold.”
- Give the family a chance to adjust. They don’t know everything you’ve done and everything you’ve experienced. Don’t expect them to suddenly ‘get it’ when you walk in the door.
- While it’s important for others to understand and accept you, don’t be abrasive in communicating your identity to them.
- If you started coming out before you got to Carleton and your family is having a difficult time accepting your identity, don’t expect things to magically be perfect when you return home.
- People may surprise you with their reactions. Don’t assume too much ahead of time.
- It took you time to come to terms with your identity, remember that your family will need time as well.
- Remember, you are not defined by a single aspect of your identity.
- Encourage discussion and honest dialogue – welcome questions!
- Recognize that you can remove yourself from any situation where you don’t feel comfortable; it’s not your job to make everyone understand.
- Try connecting with someone who shares your identity – the Gender and Sexuality Center is open over winter break, as are many of the resources listed below. Give your parents a list of resources because it’s not up to you to educate them.

### When you get back:

- Keep in touch with those you came out to; let them know that they’re important to you, no matter their reaction.
- Not everyone can come out to everyone – there are circumstances that prevent it.
- If you didn’t come out over break, don’t be ashamed. Whether you planned to or not, many people need more than one try to make it happen. There’s no need to force it. Just because you didn’t come out doesn’t undermine your identity.
Going Home Cont’d.

Going home as an ally:

Whether you’ve come out as an ally, or you go home to discover a friend or family member has come out, here are some tips to help support them:

Before going home:

- Be aware of your comfort zone. If you feel confident discussing certain issues, then your family and friends will too.
- Don’t assume people’s reactions. Anticipate potential problems, but realize that people will often surprise you in positive ways. Be prepared for potential negative reactions and have a plan for dealing with them – know what you’ll say or do.

While at home:

- If you’re comfortable with it, confront any homophobia you hear (in the form of jokes, etc) and encourage others to do the same. People often don’t stop it because of what others might think.
- Encourage discussion and honest dialogue – welcome questions!
- Recognize that you can remove yourself from any situation where you don’t feel comfortable, it’s not your job to make everyone understand.
- Honesty and openness is the most important part. If you’re not sure what form of support your friends or family are looking for, ask them.
- If you’re not sure what language and words are appropriate, just ask. Different communities use different terms – just because a word is used commonly at Carleton doesn’t mean everyone will like it.
- When someone comes out to you, try not to focus on that aspect of their identity afterwards. Acknowledge the importance of their coming out process, but don’t dwell on the details. Treat them as you always have. Support yourself! The GSC is available for you, as are other organizations like PFLAG and the resources listed below. Try and find someone locally who understands what you’re doing.

When you get back:

Let them know that you’re thinking of them! Keep in touch as much as possible.

C.J. and Julie are Center Associates

Resources for everyone!

The Gender and Sexuality Center (507-646-5222): http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/gsc/
OutProud! http://www.outproud.org/brochure_coming_out.html
Human Rights Campaign: http://www.hrc.org
OutFront Minnesota: http://www.outfront.org
For Gay Parents: http://www.colage.org/resources/coming_out.htm
GLBT National Help Center:
http://www.glnh.org
Gay and Lesbian National Hotline: 1-888-THE-GLNH (843-4564)
GLBT National Youth Talkline: 1-800-246-7743

Resources for parents of gay children:
http://www.bidstrup.com/parents.htm
PFLAG (Parents, Friends, and Family of Lesbians and Gays): http://www.pflag.org

Vaginas are coming to the Concert Hall Feb 14th!
The Vagina Monologues and V-Day return . . .

Interested in being part of V-Day 2006? Come to the interest meeting first week of Winter term or
GSC Staff
Kaaren Williamsen, GSC Director
Kristen Askeland, Multicultural Affairs
Secretary
Ariela Canizal, GSC Advisor
Center Associates
Leah Entenmann, C.J. Griffiths, Em Harris, Leahruth Jemilo, Erika Lewis,
Cindy Lys, Julie Nicol, Katie Paul,
Dana Reinoos, Alisa Sánchez, James Sanna, Rachel Vallens, and Derek Zimmerman

CONTACT INFORMATION AND EDITORIAL POLICY
The Gender and Sexuality Center publishes this newsletter monthly for the campus community and friends. Information in the newsletter is based on the best available information at the time of publication. Items in the newsletter are provided for informational purposes only, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Gender and Sexuality Center or its employees, nor do they represent the views of the students, staff, faculty, or administration of Carleton College.

Please submit articles, calendar entries, letters and news to the Gender and Sexuality Center or via e-mail to: vallensr@carleton.edu. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and space.

Newsletter Team: C.J. Griffiths, Leahruth Jemilo, Julie Nicol, Katie Paul, Dana Reinoos, Rachel Vallens, Derek Zimmerman

Gender and Sexuality Center
Carleton College
One North College Street
Northfield, MN 55057

Calendar of Events

January

Vagina Monologues Interest Meeting
First week of classes.

RAINBOW RETREAT
Mark your calendars for the best weekend of the year! Join Carleton LGBTQA students at our annual community-building retreat.
Leave Jan 20, 6pm
Return to Campus Jan 22, 1pm

February

Vagina Monologues
Celebrate V-Day, the international movement to end violence against women by coming to see the Vagina Monologues on V-Day (also known as Valentine’s Day) itself!
Feb. 14, 7pm, Concert Hall