UPCOMING EVENTS

SPRING BREAK SPECTACULAR

Tuesday, March 8
National Feminist Coming Out Day
Friday, April 8
DRAG SHOW!
Tuesday, April 12
Healthy Communities and Relationships (HCR) Dinner
Friday, April 29
Annual Pride Banquet

And don’t forget about ongoing events at the GSC, like LGBT Tea time, and meetings student orgs like CIAO, CWI, GDG, the Sex Positivity Group, and SaGA.

Student Org Meetings:
Sex-Positivity Discussion Group: Wednesdays, Willis 204 7:00pm
Carleton In and Out (CIAO): Odd Tuesdays, Leighton 330 8:00pm
Sexuality and Gender Activism (SaGA): Wednesdays, GSC 8:00pm
Collective for Women’s Issues (CWI): Thursdays, WA (Berg House), 8:00pm
Gender Support Group: contact althausb for time and location

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

COVER ART BY QWILL DUVALL '14
What To Do Over Spring Break

Worried that you’ll get bored over spring break? Are you the kind of Carl that loves ongoing education? Although the GSC would be thrilled to bring some programming to wherever you may be during our two week hiatus, there are workshops and cool events hosted all over the country all the time. Here are a couple examples of things you might want to check out if you’re in the area—maybe even good excuses to take a road trip?

New York

Sexual Violence against Jewish Women during the Holocaust
Sunday, March 20, 2:00PM
Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Auditorium, 3rd Floor
The Brooklyn Museum
200 Eastern Parkway

Gloria Steinem will moderate a panel discussion featuring the co-editors of the groundbreaking book Sexual Violence against Jewish Women during the Holocaust, recently published by Brandeis University Press/University Press of New England. The program is one of several during March that mark the fourth anniversary of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art. Dr. Sonja M. Hedgepeth and Dr. Rochelle G. Saidel will speak about the book and its genesis. Nava Semel, whose novel And the Rat Laughed is the subject of a chapter of the anthology, will discuss her fictional exploration of the issue of sexual abuse of women during the Holocaust. A book signing will follow the discussion. Free with Museum admission.

Chicago

Gloria Feldt presents "No Excuses: 9 Ways Women Can Change How We Think About Power"
Wednesday, March 16, 7:30PM
Women & Children First Books
5233 N. Clark St.

For every man who receives a bachelor’s degree this year, three women will do the same. Yet there is still a 20% pay gap between men and women, and women represent only 4% of Fortune 500 CEO's. What's wrong with this picture? In her new book, former C.E.O and President of Planned Parenthood Gloria Feldt asserts that nobody is keeping women from parity—except themselves. Revealing how women limit themselves by adhering to outdated social structures and succumbing to pressure to conform, Feldt offers eye-opening and invaluable information to help women equalize power in politics, work, and love.

Standing on the Side of Love con't

After that, college students from both Carleton and St. Olaf chatted with members of PFLAG and the Northfield community, including many members of the UU congregation. This experience was extraordinarily valuable, as people gathered to discuss LGBTQ issues over food, across generational and educational lines.

While this term has been a success so far in terms of community outreach, I challenge every Carleton student who is interested in issues such as these to watch for more programs like these in the spring. I’ve met many interesting people in the past few weeks, and plus, who doesn’t like to get off campus to share a hot meal with new friends?

Match the GSCA to their Patronus/Daemon/Spirit Animal


Answers:

The past few weeks have provided many opportunities for Carleton students to get plugged into the Northfield community around LGBTQ issues and acceptance. Whether these events have been student-run—like the LGBTQQA Northfield Community Potluck, organized by SaGA—or planned by the community with invitation to students, we have set a collaborative precedent that I hope will be continued. During this time, I have attended the various events held by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northfield, and I have met many people in our community that are just as excited and knowledgeable about LGBTQ issues as many students on campus.

On Saturday, February 12, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northfield hosted their third annual Rainbow Dinner, which celebrated the presence and inclusion of LGBTQ members of the community and the world. Delfin Bautista (MSW, M. Div), the new LGBT ministries coordinator of the Unitarian Universalist Association spoke. She led an open discussion with the community members present about what everyone can do to address inequality and promote love, the key tenets of the UUA program “Standing on the Side of Love.”

Sunday morning, Rev. Bautista was again present to speak to the congregants’ responsibility. Reflecting on his own religious history, Bautista said, “Most of my people consider themselves to be Catholic. But I’ve always been the rebel. I’ve always enjoyed having interfaith, ecumenical conversations and looking to other faith traditions for guidance. There’s beauty in Judaism, in Buddhism, in Islam. As I’ve grown older, I’ve really taken that to heart and have tried to embrace alternative approaches to theology and devotion.” He implored all to use these ideas to promote love and acceptance, starting within the congregation, extending to Northfield, Minnesota, United States, and the world.

The following week was the LGBTQA Northfield Community Gathering and Potluck, which was a rousing success. Organized by SaGA, this event provided a forum for Northfield community members to share their stories. A mini-panel was presented in the first portion of the program.
As my fourth and final season working on the Vagina Monologues draws to a close, the inevitable reflective sentimentality has begun to set in. VDAY has been a formative experience during my time at Carleton. I am finding it hard to make some sense out of the reality that this is my final year.

This year, I was again awed by the extraordinary group of people who made VDAY happen. I was inspired by the courage and strength of the women onstage, the creativity of the publicity team, the dedication and quiet activism of the directors as well as the overwhelming presence of the Carleton community.

Every year we do something extraordinary together. We raise money, we build community and promote awareness of the prevalence of violence against women and girls. Yet, there is so much more work to be done. There are stories left out of the Vagina Monologues, and so we must find outlets to share those stories just as proudly. There are people who still try to silence the experiences of survivors and so we must speak louder. Politicians are still trying to deny women access to health care and so we must campaign harder.

Our biggest mistake is to think that a successful production of the Vagina Monologues is our goal. It cannot be a culmination, but a call to action. It must not be the end of the conversation, but a provocation for a lifetime of engagement.

3. There are some really awesome allies out there—we met high school Gay-Straight Alliance advisers who flew in from halfway across the country, priests trying to reform their congregations and hard-working high-school students from the middle of Nebraska. Good people exist, and they’re working hard for change.

4. Asking for gender pronouns doesn’t have to be awkward. At Creating Change, nearly every workshop sessions started with name/place/preferred pronoun. Sure it was “alternate reality”—but this part we’d like to take back with us.

5. Some gay men still really do wear cut-off short-shorts.

Marlene Edelstein ‘11

Claire Bosworth ‘11

Mikenna Everett ‘14

Reflections on Creating Change con’t
Reflections on Creating Change

Beth Budnick ‘11

Over midterm break, while some of you were sleeping, going to Mall of America or travelling back home, the seven of us also made a voyage. We travelled for three days to a fantastic place, full of rainbow banners, free food, gender-neutral bathrooms and dozens and dozens of women wearing ties (some of us particularly appreciated this). Where was this magical place? In fact, it was not far away at all—a mere 45 minutes. This was the land of Creating Change, population: 2,500 LGBTQIA activists. It was a sea of people, of workshops, of activism and of lanyards with our names on it. We saw LGBTQ celebs like Kate Clinton and Katie Miller (the lesbian cadet who left West Point before Don’t Ask Don’t Tell was repealed) and Miriam-From-Feministing.com. We also learned things. Lots of things. About 14 hour-and-a-half workshops worth of things. While we’ll be hosting workshops, events and programs to share this learning with all of you, we thought we’d distill five of our favorite findings from our most-queerest-of-weekends.

Five Things We Learned from Creating Change

1. There are SO MANY feminine queer women out there. I used to think I was the only queer lady who didn’t sport a uniform of cargo shorts. BOY WAS I WRONG. At Creating Change, a few of us attended a “Femme Caucus.” I thought maybe it would be just us and a few others, and perhaps some really intimidating women who looked like they were fresh off the L Word set. But instead, the room of the “Femme Caucus” was packed with over a hundred femme, femmey, or femmeish lesbians and bi women. These women blew my mind. First of all: there were so. many. femmes. But they also wowed me in their interpretations of “femme.” For some, “femme” meant stilettos (and there were some in the Femme Caucus room, to be sure). For others, “femme” meant—and I quote—“making butches sweat.” For others, “femme” meant simply “strength” or “an attitude.” The self-identified femmes were tall, short, skinny, less skinny, beautiful, athletic and confident. Not only did I bring a sense of solidarity with me from that room, I gained a better understanding of my own identity.

2. HOMONORMATIVITY EXISTS. In the alternate universe of Creating Change, everyone is queer or trans until proven otherwise. For real.

Guide to Getting It On: All Genders Welcome?

Kendall Bills ‘13

This winter break, I walked into my bedroom to find “Guide to Getting It On: Fifth Edition” lying on my bed. My mother, a very frank woman, had written a note saying that I should “give it a look.” And did I ever. It was great! It was like an actually instructive, significantly less offensive version of Cosmo: all the glorious detail, minus the ridiculous assumptions that women need more intimacy, men only want sex, etc, etc.

GTGIO includes a comprehensive array of information on issues such as how to perform sex acts, what sexual anatomy looks like, and how adolescence affects desire. The book itself is enormous: at 846 pages, including an impressive glossary of slang terms, and plenty of illustrations, this book surely approaches the oft-sought after title of ‘comprehensive.’ I first heard about this book from a sex educator in my hometown, who uses it as a particularly inclusive and ‘hip’ text, particularly around issues of gender and sexual orientation. However, while I loved this book for its detailed honesty, I found that it makes significant assumptions about the gender of its readers, and in particular, the cis-gender status of readers. It also makes a number of hetero-sexist assumptions about who is performing which sex acts.

For example, the section on handjobs is written almost exclusively for female-bodied people performing manual stimulation on male-bodied people. While those of us who do not possess penises may find a bit of extra information helpful or practical, it would be easy to provide this info without referring to ‘gals,’ ‘women,’ or ‘ladies,’ as though being in possession of a vulva makes one lady-like. The gendered language is unnecessary, and not only assumes cis-status, but also creates a sense of the book being less-than-gay-friendly.

Anyone who wants to give a fun handjob—man, woman, neither, in possession of a vulva or not, straight, gay, or totally uncertain— should be able to access fun and detailed information on how to enjoy their sexuality. While GTGIO provides this information in a readable and comprehensive way, here’s to hoping that the sixth edition quits with the unnecessary gender assumptions!
Has anybody seen my $hit? I lost it on Friday when I heard that the U.S. House of Representatives voted to pull funding from Planned Parenthood in a move that sent a clear message to women across the country that their health and safety wasn’t all that important. How not important are we actually talking about?

1 word: NASCAR. Let me say it again: NASCAR, people.

While the House of Representatives voted 240 to 185 to remove funding from one of our greatest providers of affordable health care to American women, they went ahead and voted to continue writing a check for $7 million worth of funding for a Pentagon NASCAR vehicle. Making sure that women are provided access to affordable birth control and contraception, exams, and potentially lifesaving procedures (yeah, including referral information about abortions) is less important than making sure there’s a car that drives around in a circle with some stickers on it to inspire individuals to join our nation’s armed forces. They’ve placed America’s #1 watched “sporting” event over our women, plain and simple.

Ok, focus on the good: This vote on Friday has hopefully provided many people with an opportunity to really reflect and discuss the importance not only of Planned Parenthood, but of organizations that offer like services. Maybe they will take time to remember the moments in their lives when they needed Planned Parenthood. They will have conversations we should have all the time. Additionally, if you haven’t seen Congress-woman Jackie Speier’s comments from the House floor regarding her own terminated pregnancy you need to hop on youtube right now. Highlight: “But for you to stand on this floor and to suggest, as you have, that somehow this is a procedure that is either welcomed or done cavalierly or done without any thought is preposterous.” REAL TALK.
“She is Robyn. The most killingest pop star on the planet. A pint-sized atom bomb dosed to the tits on electric and dispensing wisdom in three-minute modernist pop bulletins on the post-adolescent condition.” This blurb from her MySpace page very accurately describes the above named Swedish electro-pop sensation. I first discovered Robyn not three months ago, and ever since then I have been in awe of her passion, her energy, and her ability to make me want to dance. But what has fascinated me most about Robyn is the unique way she expresses her sexuality and femininity both in her song lyrics and in her music videos.

A lot of the songs on her album Robyn and in her newest project Body Talk focus on depicting the singer as a tough and confident woman who will put you in your place; who doesn’t take orders from anyone. She sings lyrics like “Don’t fucking tell me what to do”, “It’s a simple fact that you can’t seem to handle me”, “Even the Vatican knows not to fuck with me”, and my favorite: “I’m so very hot that when I rob your mansion, you ain’t call the cops you call the fire station”. Her “don’t-mess-with-me” attitude is one that is usually associated with masculinity. These are not phrases one would normally expect to hear coming from a 5’3” blond woman. She further defies gender expectations in her music videos by refusing to sexualize herself in the ways most female pop artists do. She does not wear revealing clothes and does not dance in an overtly sexual manner. Even in her highly sexual music video for “Indestructible”, she is the only one who does not engage in sexual activity. Instead she sings on a bed while wrapped in tubes with different colored liquid inside them. Also, in her music video for “Dancing on My Own” several sweaty couples make out on the dance floor but she is not among them. In fact, she rarely interacts with anyone in her music videos.

The theme of isolation in her music videos and in her lyrics represents a different sort of sexuality to me. Robyn is alluring not because she presents herself as being sexually needy or available, but because she presents herself as sexually confident and independent. Robyn is saying to us “You have to show me you’re worth it, because I don’t need you to validate my sexuality.” That is sexy in its own radical way, and a refreshing change from the way women pop stars have been portrayed in the past.

Who’s That Girl?
Hannah Button-Harrison ’12

I don’t get it. My heart aches when I think about this. As a woman and as a person who has gone to Planned Parenthood, I find it difficult to not take this personally. I’m a Planned Parenthood supporter through and through. How could you not be? Women who can’t afford birth control at their regular astronomical prices can walk into a neighborhood Planned Parenthood and get everything they need at a price they can afford. Young people who don’t feel comfortable going to their family doctor, if they even have one, can ask all the questions they’ve got, get all the education they need, and walk out the door ready to make an informed decision about their sexual selves. Women in crisis are helped, college students can afford to practice safe sex, and needless sexually transmitted infections are prevented. All of this is good. And while this seems to be a direct affront to women, Planned Parenthood also provides services for men, trans folk, and everyone in between. All people benefit from Planned Parenthood.

So what can I do? What can you do? Call your representatives and let them know how you feel. (I’m told it’s better to call than to email, and even better if you can manage to visit. Spring Break ’11 anyone?) Once the roll call is released and you have the opportunity to find out how your representatives voted, applaud or challenge them appropriately. Donate your time and some spare lunch money to Planned Parenthood. Volunteer and internship opportunities are also available. Get informed about the education and services Planned Parenthood provides and what removing funding would actually mean to both the organization and the people who use the organization. Educate others about why this is important. Oh yeah, and maybe we should get together and vote some better people into office next time? Just saying.

Fictional NASCAR driver Ricky Bobby once said “if you’re not first, you’re last.” I’m pretty sure that wasn’t a reference to how we value women’s health in our country… but it might as well have been.