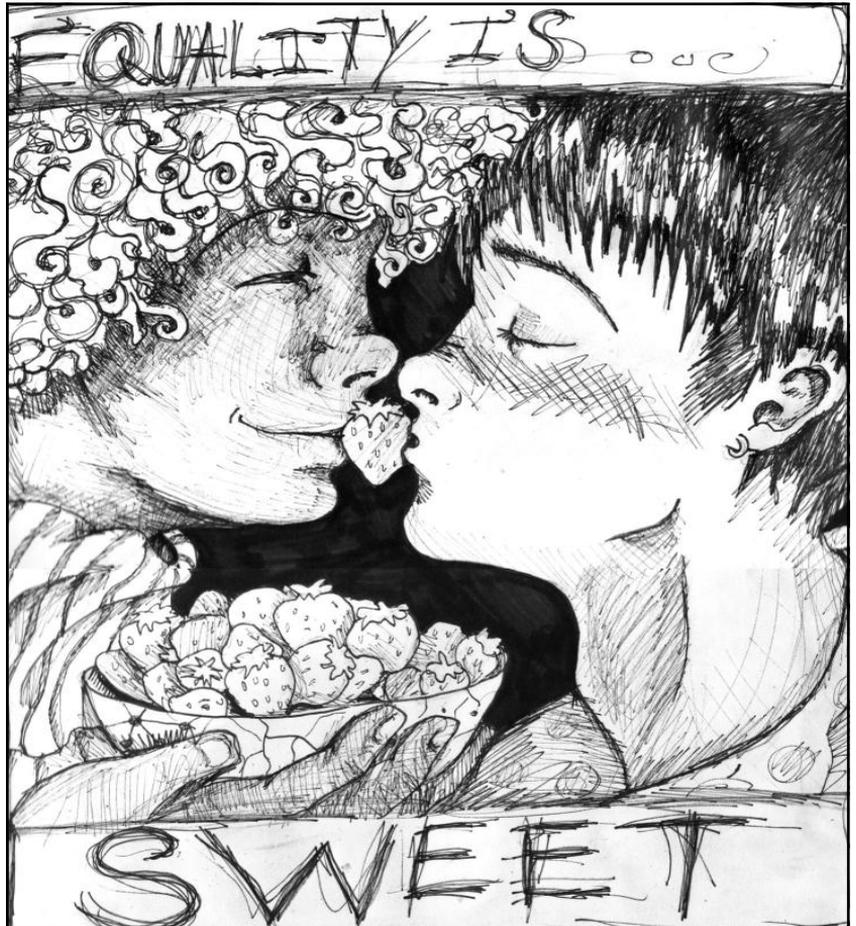




**GSC**

Gender and Sexuality Center  
Basement Scoville

# OUT OF THE BASEMENT



## Features

*Under the Cover*

*February 2007*

**MEERA  
SEHGAL**

2

**THE  
CARLETON  
HOOK UP**

3

**LET'S TALK  
ABOUT SEX**

6

**MEN OF THE  
PINK PARTY**

7

by Lawrence Dykeman '09

---

# How Professor Meera Sehgal is merging feminism, activism, and academia at Carleton

By Dominic Vendell '09

## How did you get your start in sociological work?

I did ethnographic work with women in the Hindu right movement in India, which would be similar to doing ethnographic work with white women in the Ku Klux Klan movement. It's a fundamentalist, nationalist version of Hinduism centered around Hindu civilization and its past domination by Muslims and the British. Most research was about men, and the impression that you got was that women weren't really involved. I asked questions like what are they doing the private sphere? I was politically interested in generating knowledge in the Indian women's movement.



## What has your experience been like with Carleton students?

It seems to me that there are two groups of Carleton students—those who have extraordinary writing ability and those who do not. There isn't a strong support system for writing skills at Carleton. As far as class discussions, there are students who are radicalized, and then there are students who are coming from different majors. They're definitely all startled that I have a feminist framework to teach South Asia!

## How do you integrate your different course listings?

I'm straddling three different fields. Women's and gender studies is the main framework through which I teach my courses, but I refuse to ghettoize it. They [the students] have to deal with feminist perspectives, race, class, gender, etc. I'm a hybrid in many different ways, in my positionality, in who I am.

## What has your experience been like with activism at Carleton?

I express my activism through my teaching. It comes out in my approach, the kinds of readings that I choose, the kinds of assignments that I give. But there seems to be very little space for activism at Carleton because of the extreme academic pressure and workload that the faculty have. There isn't time to stay human. We must not let our scholarship be reduced to a disembodied brain.

## How do you feel about men's commitment to feminism?

If you give up on men or people in power, then you can never change the world. If fifty percent are not with you, then you're never going to change the world. You need men as allies. We need to hold onto the hope that people who haven't faced the same level of discrimination can be able to empathize. You cannot see privilege or oppression in dichotomous terms. You have to be in that constant position of humility. So I don't make judgments about heterosexual white men.

---

# *What exactly is the Carleton hook-up?*

By Jedda Foreman '08

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, the GSC hosted a brown-bag lunch discussion about 'The Carleton Hook-Up'. Carleton students of all sexual orientations joined into a conversation about the culture of hooking up at Carleton. Although the facilitators had planned out a few basic structural questions, the conversation really stemmed from an universal feeling among those present that hooking-up at Carleton isn't nearly as good as it should be. We talked about the awkwardness, the 'incestual' friend groups, the 'always drunk' factor, the 'I didn't really want to keep going, but I was there and felt obligated to' feeling, and the 'it was great till s/he didn't even say hello the next time we saw each other' fiasco. And we talked about the good stuff too—the fun, the non-commitment, the jokes that come later, and the juicy details shared the next morning. But ultimately, we decided that good Carleton hook-ups appear all too infrequently, and so we accumulated this list of things that might help.

**Choose well.** This sounds easy, but with the influence of various drugs, sometimes your perception and decision-making get a little impaired. If you go into a hook-up knowing before hand you never want to see this person again, it's probably not going to be very good—and it will definitely be awkward later when you do run into them. At least make sure that whoever he or she is, they are likable. There are some qualities you think are nice, hot, attractive—whatever turns you on. The best hook-ups (at least in our experience) have some forces of attraction working alongside.

**Try a sober hook-up.** Seriously. This doesn't mean that drunk hook-ups are bad, because there is certainly something to say for loosening up a little with a beer or two, but sometimes it's good to know your limits and comforts when your mind is a little clearer. Remembering the night shouldn't be a bad thing, and being sober will certainly help you understand your body in a new light.

**Before you start anything, make sure its ok.** Just saying, "Is this ok with you?" can be a great way to get consent from your partner, and also let them know that you respect their bodies and don't want to make any assumptions about how they're feeling. And when it really comes down to it, sex (and any other sexual interaction) is soooo much better when both people are really into it, so why would you want to have it any other way?

**Make sure your partner knows where you're at to begin with.** If you're not feeling like doing much, tell your partner. The earlier, the better. It takes a lot of pressure off and gives your partner some limits without making them find out on their own by risking rejection.

**Remember to have confidence in what you're feeling.** Whether your experience is good or bad, it's your experience and you should be able to translate that into reality. If you are feeling turned on, let them know. We've all experienced society's stigma against expressing strong desire and lust, but the truth is that in the privacy of your own hook-up, telling someone else you find them attractive is usually pretty hot. And giving them a few suggestions about how to make you really happy only serves to make their job easier, and your life better.

**Also, make sure they are feeling good throughout.** Asking "Does this feel good to you?" will give them a window to say how they're feeling and ask you to do something differently if they need it. And similarly, if something doesn't feel right to you, say so. You don't owe your partner anything, and you didn't agree to have sex with them just because you wanted to go 'watch a movie'. *Continued on page 5*

## Chastised by Choice

At the Rainbow Retreat, facilitator Jamie Washington asked, as part of an exercise about the “social barometer” of opinions held by people in our community, whether sexual orientation was a “choice”. The way this exercise works – he makes a statement, and you stand either near the side of the room designated as “agreement” with the statement, or “disagreement” on the opposite end of the room. When he said “Sexual orientation is a choice”, I was dismayed to find that 95% of the people in our community disagreed.

I can see why they would hold that opinion. In the gestation stage of my coming-out process, I was miserable. Growing up in a conservative place where anyone bad at sports was a horrible “fag” and everything negative and worthless in the human condition could be dismissively termed “gay” made me hate the idea that I was doomed to be one of those worthless fags. In addition, I was starved for any sexual experience, and where I grew up, I was the only (well, maybe one of two) gay man. Forays into the internet for

dating were terrifying and disappointing; in chat rooms I inevitably only attracted that sketchy 50-year-old who wanted to take a drive with me that night in the countryside. I wanted to date someone normally! And the bitterest flavor in these experiences came from the things that female friends would tell me as I kvetched constantly: “If you were straight, I would totally date you” etc. Straight people seem to hold all the advantages. Why wouldn’t you choose to be straight, if you could?

My answer is: you could, very well indeed, choose to act and live your entire life in a “straight” manner. I jokingly told my parents over winter break if this were the 1950s and society was more intolerant of my actual desires, I would probably be married to my roommate Jenny. But we, as a group of people, have the strength and insight to acknowledge our non-hetero desires, and most importantly, to *act* on them. Every day we make the difficult choices of when, where, and to whom we are out in our pursuit of these desires.

Consider the phenomenon of married, family men and women who have to exit their homes and relationships and sever partnerships and in some cases parenting relationships

because they finally have made the choice to acknowledge same-sex desires. It is socially acceptable for them to employ the rhetoric that their orientation was forced upon them, that they had no choice, and that the pains they suffer and are inflicting on those closest to them are “not their fault”. I find this standpoint morally reprehensible, as in most cases, these people have made choices to hide, and lie, to their own and others’ ruination, for many years. Clearly, these deceptions are motivated by terrible fear and weakness in the face of societal pressure.

But the position we are in, as self-identified lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, shows our bravery, strength, and wisdom. We are a part of the continuing revolution against a limiting and morally reprehensible gender system based on two genders and one acceptable desire, that of procreation. We cannot waste our good fortune in being able to express our sexualities. It is our responsibility to show people who haven’t ever given a single thought to the way gender inflicts its repression on their lives that it is *fine* to love who they want to love; and that this love will go to waste if the choice is not made to share it. Stop being harassed and punished by your sexuality, and start enjoying it.

# GSC Book Review

Come check out the GSC library to find this book and others.  
Lots of others.

By Em Harris '08

The Kid opens with a Bjork soundtrack, prompting a customary, well-rehearsed, and passive-aggressive fight.



This banter takes place between Dan Savage and Terry, his boyfriend of two years, on their way to Portland to “get pregnant.” In the following pages of this novel, the author of sex-advice column Savage Love does not disappoint. This book exemplifies what Dan Savage

does best: makes you laugh out loud with frank, unapologetic humor, and teaches you something at the same time. Their journey to adoption was not simple in the least. From an indecisive lesbian couple and the straight girl next door to homelessness and fetal alcohol syndrome, the twists and turns are educational and hilarious.

*Continued from pg. 3*

When its all over, let them know you felt good about it, or, if you didn't feel good about it, at least say “Hi” to them at Sunday brunch. Whoever ‘they’ are, they're still a person, so acknowledge their humanity. You don't have to plan a meeting, and a walk through the Arb, and a coffee date to Blue Monday's to talk about what the date meant and how exactly how each part of your relationship is going to work for each possible instance of running into each other again, but you should make an effort to be polite. Mostly, because its Carleton, and most likely you'll see them 5 different times the day after your hook-up, you might as well as be nice—also, it's just more humane.

## Women's Moments in History

**January 11, 1928:** Amelia Earhart started her record-breaking flight today from Honolulu to San Francisco



**January 14th, 1697:** Massachusetts colony officially regretted the Salem witch hunt with a day of fasting.

“Women, if the soul of the nation is to be saved, I believe that you must become its soul.”

— *Coretta Scott King*

---

# Let's Talk About SEX...

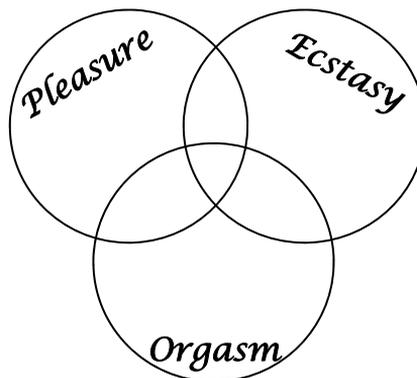
*This advice column is produced by an alliance of SWAs and GSCAs in order to bring you the most up-to-date and comprehensive information about anything and everything you ever wanted to know about sex. Have sex questions of your own? Thought you'd never be able to have them anonymously—and thoroughly—answered? Well, place your questions in **mailbox 1422 or 1143**, and we'll try to have them answered in the next newsletter.*

## What are the different ways that women can orgasm?

As we alluded to in our first female orgasm article, all women experience an orgasm differently, and can experience each of their orgasms differently. However, there are a few main paths toward orgasm, though every woman (and her partner) must find the particulars that work for her. As you may know, clitoral stimulation is probably the most well-known method for orgasm and can include anything from hand to tongue to sex toy play. Another common method for orgasm is through penetration. Penetration means either vaginal or anal, and can (but doesn't have to) include exciting the g-spot. Many women orgasm from pain or other intense sensations from S/M. More surprising, though, is that some women can orgasm purely from breast stimulation, and some (like tantra practitioners) can reach orgasm solely through mental stimulation and fantasy. For a number of women it takes some combination of any number of these practices in order to orgasm. Additionally, no orgasm is the same, so don't worry if what you're experiencing isn't how your friend described it. As Our Bodies, Ourselves, (available in the GSC library) explains, "orgasm can be mild like a hiccup, a sneeze, a ripple, or a peaceful sigh" (238).

However, sexual pleasure isn't just about the orgasm. Gina Ogden, author of Women Who Love Sex, describes a model of women's sexual response that opens up the door for a broad scope of sexual feelings that doesn't have to include orgasming.

Ogden describes her model (see below) as representing "three dancing spheres of energy" in which women experience orgasm, pleasure, and ecstasy, and depending on the mood, situation, and the woman, these three can occur alone, consecutively, or all together.



So, have fun, experiment, take our suggestions if you want, but mostly figure out what works for you—it's more fun that way. And make sure you come to a talk by Marshall Miller and Dorian Solot during spring term entitled, "The Female Orgasm". It should be fun, engaging, and interesting. Watch out for GSC updates, posters around campus, and pride month calendars.

Newman, Felice. *The Whole Lesbian Sex Book*. San Francisco: Cleis Press, Inc, 1999.

Our Bodies, Ourselves. The Boston Women's Health Book Collective, eds. New York: Touchstone, 1998.

## From the men of the Pink Party...

“Centers like the HOPE Center are an important part of increasing protection for women, and I support/am participating because of its generous donation to the HOPE Center. Also, through this event women on campus can be aware that there is a large group of men who do not condone sexual violence.” -**Peter Olds**

“I want to eradicate this problem completely.”  
-**Mac McDonald**

“In the first place, violence against women is wrong. In the case of sexual violence it is a particularly demeaning and disgusting act. The worst thing about sexual violence, however, is that it is so tacitly tolerated. For my part, an event that befell a very close friend of mine impacted me deeply, and since then I cannot ignore the problem. Whatever I can do, I feel I must, in the interest of stopping sexual violence here and elsewhere.” -**Sam Lemonick**

“It all comes down to respect, really.”  
-**Robert Matera**

“This is an issue that needs to be addressed not only at Carleton but on campuses everywhere. Sexual misconduct and violence is something that no woman or man should ever have to go through. It takes both men and women to stop the violence. After dealing with friends who have been violated sexually by men I feel that this is the least I can do.”  
-**David Nonberg**

## Why are you part of the Pink Party?

Thirty-five male Carleton students stood in Stimson house last week, many meeting each other for the first time. Each of them had one thing in common; they were all participating in this year’s “Not On Our Campus! Pink Party!” This event, co-sponsored by the Men of Color and the Gender and Sexuality Center, addresses the issue of violence against women.

For too long violence against women has been seen as solely a “women’s issue.” Since the majority of the time acts of sexual violence and assault involve a male perpetrator and a female victim, we thought that we should gather together guys on campus and have them take a public stand against this kind of behavior.

This year we have chosen 35 Carleton students who think that the occurrence of sexual violence at Carleton is a problem; 35 Carleton students who would never participate in such acts and would interrupt a dangerous situation if they saw one; 35 Carleton students who say, “This should not be happening on our campus!” Here are some things that those 35 students have to say about why this event is important to them...



Gender and Sexuality Center  
1 North College Street  
Northfield MN 55057  
<http://webapps/carleton/campus/edu/gsc>

---

#### GSC Staff

Kaaren Williamsen-Garvey,  
GSC Director  
Kristen Askeland, OIL Secretary  
Erin Updike, GSC Advisor

#### Center Associates

Lawrence Dykeman, Ben Egerman,  
Jedda Foreman, Em Harris, Leahruth  
Jemilo, Michael Lane, Cindy Lys, Eliza-  
beth Nguyen, Julie Nicol, Katie Paul,  
Sarojini Rao, James Sanna, Justin  
Smith, Liz Snider-Lotz, Dominic Vendell,  
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:  
[vendellid@carleton.edu](mailto:vendellid@carleton.edu). We reserve the right to edit for clarity and space.

*Newsletter Team: Dominic Vendell, Leahruth Jemilo, Katie Paul, Jedda Foreman, Derek Zimmerman*

## Come Check out the GSC's New Books:

*(Thanks to Mark Lofstrom for many of the new books!)*

- **Breaking the Silence: Preventing Violence against Asian American Women** produced by Health Partnerships for Asian women and families (*in Violence and Violence Prevention*)
- **Justice for All: The Courts and Equal Rights** by Chris Edelson and Lara Schwartz (*in Queer Issues: General*)
- **The Trouble with Diversity: How we learned to love identity and ignore equality** by Walter Benn Michaels (*in Multicultural/Multiple Identities*)
- **Anything but Straight:: Unmasking the Scandals and Lies behind the ex-gay myth** by Wayne R. Besen (*in Queer Issues: General*)
- **The End of Gay (and the death of heterosexuality)** by Bert Archer (*in Queer Issues: General*)
- **Men Who Loved Me** by Felice Picano (*in Biography*)
- **The Salt Point** by Paul Russel (*in Fiction*)
- **I Give You Oscar Wilde** by Desmond Hall (*in Biography*)
- **Gay Marriage: Why it is good for gays, good for straights, and good for America** by Jonathan Rauch (*in Queer Issues: General*)