OUT OF THE
BASEMENT

FEATURES
February 2008

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By Mal Hoffman
As part of the national V-Day Movement working to end violence against women, students at Carleton College will present a performance of Eve Ensler's Obie Award-winning episodic play "The Vagina Monologues" on Saturday, Feb. 9 at 7:30 p.m. in the Skinner Memorial Chapel on the Carleton campus. Advance tickets are available in the Sayles-Hill Campus Center for a suggested donation of $5-10; tickets will also be available at the door. All proceeds will go to HOPE Center in Faribault and to women in New Orleans, La.

Ensler founded V-Day in conjunction with the first benefit performance of "The Vagina Monologues" on Feb. 14, 1998. Now celebrating its tenth anniversary, the theme of this year's V-Day is "V to the Tenth." In the spirit of the anniversary, Carleton students are amplifying their annual production of play with a bigger venue, a larger cast, and increased effort to raise more awareness and funds to stop violence and empower women.

Since 1998, V-Day has raised over $50 million for local anti-violence groups with events taking place in over 120 countries to date and thousands more planned during the upcoming anniversary year. Carleton College has raised more than $7,000 for HOPE Center through past productions of "The Vagina Monologues" and other events.

"The Vagina Monologues" was originally written as a one-woman show based on interviews Ensley conducted with over 200 women. The show, a collection of monologues that range from the heartbreaking to the hilarious, presents the stories and experiences of women all over the world. Carleton's 2008 production involves a cast of 36 students, a crew of over 15, and countless other students involved with production, activism, and awareness.

Each year V-Day focuses on a specific group of women in the world who are resisting violence with courage and vision. In 2008, the spotlight is turned to the women of New Orleans and the South Gulf, who, through their ongoing daily work, have steadfastly kept New Orleans and surrounding region alive with little to no resources. Called the "Katrina Warriors," these women will be honored for their strength and resilience in the face of devastating loss. The goal is to bring global attention and funds so that women may be safe and empowered in a region whose pulse beats like no other. Ten percent of all proceeds from Carleton's production of "The Vagina Monologues" will go to the national V-Day benefit work in New Orleans.

HOPE Center delivers advocacy and crisis intervention services to victims of domestic abuse, child abuse, and sexual assault through healing outreach, prevention, and education. Formed in 1994 by merging the Rice County Sexual Assault Program, Battered Women's Program and the Northfield Helpline, HOPE Center is an advocacy organization that provides extensive services to victims of violence in Rice County. More information is available about HOPE Center at [http://www.hopecentermn.org/index.html](http://www.hopecentermn.org/index.html).
H.O.T. S.E.X. is back!

Our Healthy Open Talking about Sex and Everything eXtra workshop is back by popular demand as part of the SWAs Healthy Relationship Week. Learn how to get what you want out of your sex life. Don’t miss out on all the fun!

Wednesday, February 13 at 9pm in Hill Lounge (Sayles)
On my flight from Dallas to Buenos Aires over winter break, I casually read Larry Kramer’s famous novel *Faggots* for an independent study I’m taking this term. On the cover was a picture of a naked man and within the pages a harsh critique of the gay male sexual culture of the 1970s, complete with graphic descriptions of sex acts too controversial and explicit to be mentioned in most campus publications (including this one), and certainly nothing that I am accustomed to seeing. After all, Northfield doesn’t have bathhouses or parks frequented by gay men looking for sex (or, at least, I’ve never heard of them), and I read the novel with a certain distance from a culture that I viewed as a bit antiquated and foreign from the community that I’ve become a part of.

Upon my first outing to a gay club called Amerika in Argentina, however, I witnessed a similar parallel to what I had been reading about in Kramer’s survey of gay sexuality. Heavily advertised in all of the queer guides to Buenos Aires that I had read, Amerika boasted the city’s largest “dark room” in addition to its famous strippers and open bar. Of course, I wasn’t entirely sure of what a dark room, in fact, was – I naively assumed that men went there to hang out (and maybe make out) with other men that they had met, a relatively innocent hideaway from the flashing lights and booming techno.

A few hours into the night, having sufficiently explored the rest of the club, I decided to go check it out and found that I was very mistaken. After walking in, I realized that all of the men were actually having sex; when I say this, I don’t mean secretly fooling around in the corner, but instead explicitly, publicly, and loudly doing more or less...
everything you can imagine. I’d never considered myself a sexually reserved person before, and was accustomed to being open about sex and everything surrounding it, but I was pretty overwhelmed and shocked by what was going on. Not only were there over a hundred men having entirely anonymous sex, but they were completely unapologetic about soliciting others, groping everyone as they passed and forcing themselves onto men with no communication whatsoever beforehand.

It was all rather alarming for me, to say the least. After being unwillingly groped and pinned against the wall several times in my brief walk-through of the room, I decided that

I would not be returning, and spent the rest of my time dancing and making my way through the club. By the end of the night, I had learned that a huge portion of the men there were tourists, most spoke perfect English, and that no other gay clubs in the city had a room quite like this one. Indeed, this was quite an anomaly in Buenos Aires, not really hosting porteños or even paralleling other clubs in the city.

As I left to hail a taxi, I realized that someone, presumably in the darkroom, had stolen my wallet. After begging more than twenty taxis with very poor Spanish to give me a free ride home, one consented, and I crouched in the back, losing focus and thinking about how I may just not be cut out for the gay clubbing life after all. I finally got home at around 8 A.M., cancelled my credit card, slept, and picked up Faggots to try and figure out what exactly had happened the night before. I don’t think I’ve entirely figured it out yet.
Next term, a new independent study course on female sexual health and sexuality will be launched through the Physical Education Department. The independent study is conceived and adapted from University of California Berkeley’s course called Female Sexuality, or FemSex. FemSex was begun by a group of students at Berkeley in 1994 and since then Berkeley has offered at least one completely student-taught class in female sexuality every semester, with current demand for up to 6 sections each semester. Other schools such as Cornell, Harvard, and Brown have adopted the program in the last few years, and have enjoyed the same success Berkeley has experienced. FemSex at Carleton is being initiated by associates out of the Gender and Sexuality Center and several dedicated faculty who are working closely with Berkeley’s course reader and syllabus to tailor the course to fit Carleton.

Working closely with our faculty advisor, we plan to discuss and do readings on the following topics: sexual anatomy; sexual violence prevention; communication; health and menstruation; reproductive choices and motherhood; criticism of FemSex and similar environments; contraception and safe sex; masturbation, pleasure, and orgasm; pornography, erotica, and sex work; body image; women’s empowerment; and how all of these are informed by power and privilege. Clearly, these topics range from serious to fun, and all have the potential to be challenging and personal. We are hoping to foster an open-minded, respectful, comfortable, safe, and confidential space in which these discussions happen among a small group (the course caps at 12 participants!). We will present and discuss (and amend, if necessary) a contract on the first day of class to ensure success of this goal. This course is designed to be enjoyable, educational, and engaging. Light homework assignments - including readings, weekly journal entries, and a couple of awesome field trips – will be required.

One long-term goal of FemSex is to facilitate conversations about sexual health and sexual violence prevention within the larger Carleton community, and making our campus a comfortable environment for these conversations to occur. During the course, we will explore the above topics as they relate to Carleton to better understand the institutional, social, and academic issues that limit or encourage women on our campus. That being said, the success of this course relies on the dedication and engagement of the participants enrolled in the course. Confident discussions within the class will hopefully lead to more frequent, constructive discussions outside of class.

Date and time of the course has not yet been determined, but keep checking the PE section on the Hub when you register for classes to enroll! An information session on Carleton’s FemSex course will be held next Thursday, February 14 during common time. Email foremanj or kings for more information on the class or the information session.
Sexual Assault Support Group for Women

Mondays 4:30-6pm
Contact Jennifer at jgildner for more information and to sign up.

LGBTTea Time

Come to the GSC 4-5pm on Fridays to chat with friends, read the papers, eat snacks and unwind.
1969— My father was watching the evening news. The announcer said that Judy Garland had died. I fainted. I was nine.
—Andrew Freedman, marketing/film industry

When I was born, I remember looking back up at my mother and saying, “That’s the last time I’m going up one of those.”
—Stephen Fry, writer/actor/comedian

When I was six I loved my first grade teacher so much I knew I would have to grow up to be a boy so I could come back and ask her to marry me.
—Tammy Lynn Michaels, actress

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I knew in my twenties, when I kept waking up with women.
—Jenny Allard, head softball coach/freshman proctor, Harvard

I knew I was gay when the most exciting part of my Bar mitzvah was meeting with the party planner.
—Howard Bragman, public relations executive

I knew I was gay... when I outgrew my mother’s high heels.
—Max Mutchnick, co-creator/executive producer, *Will and Grace*
When I Knew

By Justin Smith

The GSC is organizing a publication for Pride as a take-off of the best-selling book "When I Knew" by Robert Trachtenberg. The book is a compilation of relatively well-known people writing about when and how they discovered their sexualities -- the stories are poignant, honest, and/or hilarious, and each one is accompanied with an illustration or a picture.

We're really excited about this because of what it can do here at Carleton -- not only will it be a lot of fun to put together and read all of the stories that Carleton students have, but it will also give us a concrete publication to distribute around campus, raise visibility, and share both serious and fun experiences with the community and campus-at-large.

You can submit a story, under your name or anonymously, with or without a picture or an illustration -- the most important thing is that we get a variety of stories and experiences to put in the publication. The stories are divided into four different categories in the book: When I Knew, When My Parents Knew, When Everyone Else Knew, and Coming-Out Stories; however, these can just be a way to think about how to structure what you have to say. The deadline for submissions is February 22nd.

We want to accept anything that you have to write -- gender, sexuality, queerness, straightness, questioning; essentially, we're not looking for your stories to fit into any categories, we're just looking for stories! If you want to be involved, email me at smithj. We're looking for a group of people to serve as an editorial board, putting the publication together, soliciting submissions, essentially figuring out how exactly we're going to do this. You can help put the book together, illustrate others stories, or write your own. Thanks for reading, and please contact me if you're interested -- seriously, it won't take much time, and it'll be great for everyone!

I was at college and sick with the flu. The apartment I was renting had no cable, but somehow we were stealing HBO. All day I lay on the couch and was forced to watch tennis—Wimbledon to be exact. I hated sports; I was a theater major!
Martina Navratilova started playing.
I ignored my book.
I told my boyfriend I was busy when he called.
—Suzanne Westenhoefer, comic
Carleton Monologues

By Jini Rao

Does your vagina have a story to share? The Collective for Women’s Issues is interested in collecting vagina narratives of members of the Carleton community. Here’s the plan:

First, we want to hear from you. There are three wide themes that your narrative could be based on:

- A story about something that directly involves your vagina. It could be a deeply painful experience, such as sexual assault, or a deeply pleasurable one, like your first (or best) orgasm or anything in between. Your first period, your favorite sex toy, anything.
- It could be a commentary on any significant event or experience in your life, as told by your vagina. For example, what would your vagina say about getting braces in the 7th grade? Or about your parents’ divorce? Or coming to college? Or deciding your major/career path? Or your relationship(s)?
- It could be an account of your relationship with your vagina: how did you find it? When did you first see/touch it? What do you think about it?
  And if The Vagina Monologues has played any role at all in your relationship with your vagina, what is your monologue on The Monologues?

These themes are, at best, starting points for you to think about your story and how you want to tell it. So really, anything goes, as long as it’s connected to YOUR VAGINA!

Second, we want to collect your stories. We recognize that the topic is deeply personal and that Carleton is a small community and if you wish to keep your monologue anonymous, we totally respect that. You could e-mail it to me at raoj@carleton.edu from a non-identifiable e-mail address, drop off a printout in my mailbox (#512) or burn it onto a CD and put that in my mailbox.

We are also planning writing workshops during the week following the Vagina Monologues performance. Please get in touch with me if you would like more details on that, or watch for announcements in the NNB, All-campus e-mail, etc.

Third, we want to present your stories. This will happen via a publication during spring term. We will also want answers to other cool questions like “What do you call your vagina?” “What would it wear?” etc. You could include answers with your monologue, or watch for flip charts around campus…

Please start thinking about your contribution right away and spread the word amongst all your friends. Questions? Comments? Ideas? E-mail raoj@carleton.edu
Keep the Sparks Flying

By Christi Conkling

With the Carleton workload and -30 degree temperatures it can be hard to keep long term relationships alive through the winter. If you’re still committed to your partner but you don’t feel the same magic you had after dating for a short time, don’t worry, you’re just like a number of other couples at Carleton and beyond the bubble. If you want to rekindle your relationship’s flame and keep the sparks flying, try some of these easy tips.

- Make a point of doing something nice and unexpected once a week. Your partner would love to be surprised by Friday flowers or a dorm-cooked meal. Draw your partner a picture and leave it under their pillow or leave them a message on their computer. Surprises can be really fun and remind you of why you love each other.

- Make sure you actually spend time together. Though you might sleep together, do work together and eat together, how much quality time together do you actually have? Decide with your partner on an amount and frequency of uninterrupted time you want to have together then have fun enjoying one another.

- Go on dates and call them dates. Send your partner an invitation to your date via email or campus mail. Then they’ll feel extra special and you’ll have a great time together.

- Spend time alone. Nothing makes you cherish your time with your loved one more than hanging out with people you don’t love. Make sure you have friends and activities independent of your partner.

- Try new things, both together and separately. Experiment sexually, with new kinds of food or music, anything. If you’ve never been to opera, try going to one. Keep the passion in your relationship alive by doing new things.
Mark Your Calendars!

**February Main Events**

**The Vagina Monologues**—February 9, 7:30pm in the Chapel (tickets are available for suggested donation of $5-$10 at the door)

**Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference**—February 22-24, University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign