



**-GSC-**

**GENDER AND SEXUALITY CENTER  
BASEMENT SCOVILLE**

# OUT OF THE BASEMENT

## FEATURES

*NOVEMBER 2008*

WHY V-DAY?

VAGINA WARRIORS SPEAK UP

THAT TIME WITH EVE

THE GREATEST SILENCE

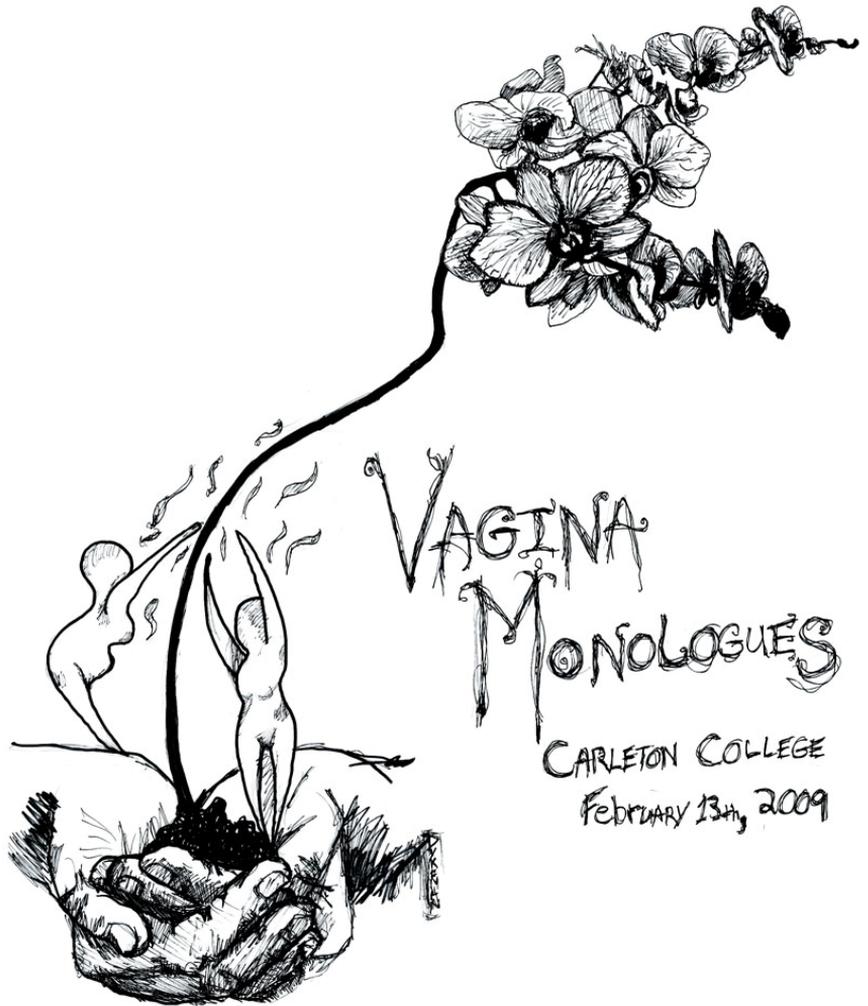
STARS AND (RAINBOW)  
STRIPES

FEM SEX IS BACK!

REVIEW OF GUYLAND

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VOLUME 8, ISSUE 3



Cover Art by Lawrence Dykeman 09'

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# Why V-Day?

By Juliet Dana '09

For me, it was peeing my pants from laughing so hard watching a Bowdoin College sophomore rage about tampons. I had never been in a room where the word “vagina” was thrown around with so much simultaneous nonchalance and reverence. I didn’t know about “floods” or “fish smells” or “Female Genital Mutilation.” There was a lot I didn’t know about vaginas. College girls who could almost be my peers (I was in eleventh grade) were surrounding me, telling me to be as liberated as I wanted. Brave, talented, compassionate strangers read monologue after monologue, convincing me that my sexuality was my own, that no one has the right to take that from me, and women all over the world deserve that message.

But everyone’s experience with “The Vagina Monologues” is meaningful (or not) for separate reasons. The show, written by Eve Ensler in 1996, became the anchorpiece for community movements about stopping violence against women and girls. Through the process of interviewing women for her play, Ensler came to understand the horrific breadth and depth of violence that affects women worldwide. VDAY, as a movement, serves as a catalyst for creative events that increase awareness, raise money, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. The activism also generates broader attention for the fight to stop violence against women and girls, including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM) and sexual slavery.

It has become clear to me that many of us don’t understand the extent to which sexual violence continues to affect people of all genders in our community, here at Carleton and on a larger scale. Several people have asked me if they should go to “The Vagina Monologues” this year, if it really matters. My answer is two-fold. First of all, yes, it matters. As an anchorpiece, the show is an incredible piece of activist theatre that brings a huge, vagina-loving audience together and can spark a much larger movement. For a lot of audience members, being in a survivor-friendly space is a rare and welcome experience. For others, the show provokes feelings of discomfort that are worth interrogating. Plenty of the women on stage and off are invested in the movement for very personal reasons; yelling “cunt” or sharing the graphic details of violence might be a lot harder than you know. We fail, in our communities, to take time aside from “The Vagina Monologues” to make safe spaces and supportive, exploratory, public community gatherings. For these reasons, and plenty more, I think “The Vagina Monologues” are tremendously important. I would urge you to come to the show in support of the whole movement and in celebration of the power we have both as a collective voice and as unique individuals.

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However, if the show's not your thing, then don't come. Please don't make it into a drinking game or a point of mockery, because while the production has certainly dealt with plenty of criticism – and I'm not saying it's perfect – it holds great significance to a huge number of women. There are ample opportunities for you to get involved aside from coming to the show. Give your time by sharing something at VNight at the Cave or by sitting with a survivor and making clear your patience and trust. Support the HOPE Center by buying raffle tickets or show tickets, or by making a donation, or by becoming an advocate. Educate yourself about the atrocities in the Congo or how to help someone navigate the sexual misconduct complaint filing process. Stop using the word “rape” casually. Use words like “vagina” and “cunt” with respect. Ask for what you want. Get consent. Hold your friends to these standards. Keep doing it. VDAY: Until the Violence Stops.



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# Carl Vagina Warriors

"I am a feminist, but a squeamish feminist, and I want to challenge myself." '09

"I want to use my spare time and creative juices towards the worthy cause of making the world a safer place for vaginas, for my niece's vagina (she just turned two)." '09

"I remember seeing it in 2007 and just feeling like I could conquer the world – feeling a strong sense of solidarity that is too often overcome by 'catfights' and competition. VM opens that dialogue. There are so many words for penis but only a few positive words for vagina. Female sexuality is hidden under a rug far too often and VM helps change that." '10

"I was exhilarated the first time I saw it and I think it would be a powerful experience to be a part of the production and to give other people amazing first times, too." '10

## That Time With Eve

By Marlene Edelstein '11

Over winter break I attended a Vagina Warriors workshop in NYC that brought together VDAY organizers from across the country and world. This diverse group of women (and a few men) who attended were all committed to the VDAY mission of ending violence against women. While working with this amazing group of activists, I got a sense of the scope of the movement. Those of us who are participating in this year's VDAY at Carleton are connected to thousands of others who are committing their time and energy to this important cause. What we are doing here is part of something much greater.

One of the many highlights of the event was getting to talk to Eve Ensler, the playwright of *The Vagina Monologues* and the founder of VDAY. She spoke of the desperation and hope of women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She spoke of VDAY as a movement that draws people for many different reasons and that any impetus should be honored. Eve reminded us that VDAY is a movement with a goal and that everything we do should work towards that end.

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# Speak Up!

“I see the show as a way to regain the positive sense of sexuality that has been taken forcefully from me, and to give words and a powerful voice to things I am not yet able to articulate. I want to get everyone thinking about and fighting against violence, not only those who do not have a choice in the matter.” ‘09

“I promised my friends from home I would try something ‘out there’ and new this term. (And I like the spirit of a female community).” ‘12

“I was a part of the VM last year and it was one of the most empowering experience I’ve ever had. I would love to experience it again. I think VM made me more confident.” ‘11

## The Greatest

By Nathan Yaffe ’11

After the formal end of the Second Congo War in 2003, civil conflict broke out in the eastern Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Government forces clashed with a rebel army under the charge of Laurent Nkunda, a suspected war criminal who had recently defected from the Congolese army. From the outset, the conflict has been characterized by particularly egregious human rights violations on both sides. Chief among these is the systematic sexual violence that has plagued Congolese women for the past five years. The pervasiveness of rape and sexual torture is unchecked by the boundaries of age: from young children to the very elderly, targeting women is used as a tool to humiliate and promote terror.

Following a visit to the region, Eve Ensler—author of *The Vagina Monologues* and portions of the V-Day Campaign—made sexual violence in the Congo the 2009 Spotlight issue. As a result, proceeds from annual *Vagina Monologues* performances around the country will be dedicated to V-Day’s humanitarian work in the region. Specifically, Ensler partnered with the Panzi Hospital in southeast Kivu to create a “City of Joy” for female survivors to receive treatment, find safe haven, and undertake training to become political leaders.

The Carleton College V-Day campaign is picking up with a series of events to raise awareness and money for the Spotlight Campaign. Building on the momentum of the nationwide movement, a group of students have mobilized. Their goal is not just to educate about what’s happening in the Congo, but also to create a sustained push to make a difference. By the end of their project, they hope to be able to make a substantial contribution to the City of Joy campaign, potentially exploring options to open up a second branch of the project.

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# Stars and (Rainbow) Stripes

By Christi Conkling, '09

There isn't much to do in Northfield during winter break so like most Carls I try to go to the cities as often as possible. One of these trips was to a monster truck rally, my first, called Monster Jam. But before the fireworks went off and the trucks revved their massive engines, approximately fifteen young people took their oath of service into the Air Force, right on the dirt track, in front of hundreds of impressionable eight year olds who were in love with "Afterburner", the Air Force's own monster truck. Now there are many questions we could ask here: How is this monster truck funded? Why are monster trucks so appealing to kids? What kind of preparation is involved in making a rally successful? But I was more concerned about the oath of service I saw people like me take, specifically the young woman with short black hair in skinny leg jeans who I identified with.

In high school I began applying for the Air Force Academy but never finished, mostly because I thought I would leave broken and cold hearted, stronger, yes, but perhaps very different than how I am now. Seeing these young Air Force recruits really hit home with me, both because I am queer and because I thought about joining the ranks, two traits that don't usually mesh together well. Considering Obama's interest in appealing the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) policy, I began to wonder exactly what the current situation for gay service members is.

Federal law Pub.L. 103-160 (10 U.S.C. § 654) says that "the presence in the armed forces of persons who demonstrate a propensity or

intent to engage in homosexual acts would create an unacceptable risk to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion that are the essence of military capability." According to this same law, having queer individuals in the circumstances of combat, namely being in close quarters at all times, jeopardizes the service of entire units. While there certainly are members of the military who identify as queer, they do not act in a way that would reveal a non-heterosexual orientation. This means that they both remain silent and do not act on any feelings. If a superior officer becomes aware that an individual may be queer they begin an investigation into the service member's personal life. Members of the armed forces who are found in violation of the DADT policy are discharged, usually at an extremely high cost. The United States Governmental Accountability Office "estimated that, over the 10-year period (1994-2003), it could have cost DOD (the Department of Defense) about \$95 million in constant fiscal year 2004 dollars to recruit replacements for service-members separated under the (DADT) policy. Also, the Navy, Air Force, and Army estimated that the cost to train replacements for separated service members by occupation was approximately \$48.8 million, \$16.6 million, and \$29.7 million, respectively." Additionally, the numbers of service members who have been discharged from skilled positions such as language experts fluent in Arabic make this issue even more pressing.

Obama's stance on repealing DADT is focused both on these economic advantages and

the issue of basic equality within the military. His website says that “the key test for military service should be patriotism, a sense of duty, and a willingness to serve. Discrimination should be prohibited.” And this isn’t a radical idea; many other countries allow openly gay individuals to serve in their militaries and have no problem, even “75 percent [of Americans]...favor service by homosexuals who do disclose their orientation.” One hundred and four top-ranking generals and admirals have issued this statement in support of repealing DADT (see shaded box).

While I may not currently want to serve in the military, I think I should be able to do so openly if I decided I wanted to at some point. And while this may not be a possibility at the moment because of DADT, I look forward to a day, probably in three or so years after Obama has dealt with other more pressing matters of national concern, when all of us, no matter our orientation and whether or not we are willing to hide it, have the equal opportunity to participate in the armed forces at a level we feel comfortable.

### Statement Against DADT

We – the undersigned -- respectfully call for the repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Those of us endorsing this letter have dedicated our lives to defending the rights of our citizens to believe whatever they wish. Scholarly data shows there are approximately one million gay and lesbian veterans in the United States today as well as 65,000 gays and lesbians currently serving in our armed forces. They have served our nation honorably. We support the recent comments of former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General John Shalikashvili, who has concluded that repealing the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. would not harm and would indeed help our armed forces. As is the case with Great Britain, Israel, and other nations that allow

For more info, see [palmcenter.org](http://palmcenter.org).



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# FemSex is Back!

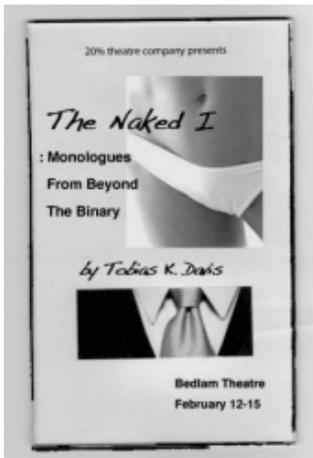
**By Sarah King**

This spring, Female Sexuality and Sexual Health – FemSex - is returning to Carleton for its second year. Originally from Berkeley, FemSex is a class designed for students by students to discuss everything and anything that has to do with female sexuality and sexual health. Last year, a group of students here at Carleton worked closely with a faculty adviser, and with Berkeley's syllabus, to develop a curriculum tailored to our school. Topics included, but weren't limited to, sexual anatomy, sexual violence prevention, survivor support, open communication, menstruation, reproductive choices, contraception and safe sex, masturbation, pleasure, pornography, erotica, sex work, body image, and the ways in which all of these are informed and constructed by power and privilege.

Last spring, fifteen women gathered twice a week to discuss some light readings on these topics in a student-facilitated and run class. Conversations were fun, educational, and challenging. For the class' final, students constructed a "Red Tent" in the Bald Spot, which displayed individual or paired projects on topics of her choice. The projects ranged from a pornography resource book to a picture book of vulvas to a lamp with information on violence against women of color.

In addition to creating a safe space for learning for a group of women, one of the goals of the course is to facilitate conversations about sexual health and sexual violence prevention within the larger Carleton community. Discussions inside the classroom will hopefully inspire more discussions outside of the classroom.

Interested in taking the course this 3 credit course in the spring? Contact conklinc, raoj, or kings.



Following in the footsteps of Eve Ensler's Vagina Monologues comes *The Naked I: Monologues from Beyond the Binary* by award-winning transgender female-to-male (FTM) playwright, Tobias K. Davis. Not willing to stop at discussing women's vaginas, *The Naked I* explores the bodies and experiences of transgender, gender-queer, and intersex individuals. The play, which includes monologues, duologues, and short sketches, boldly explores the land beyond 'male' and 'female'

The show will be presented by 20% Theatre Company at the Bedlam Theatre in Minneapolis from February 12-15. Tickets are only \$5-\$15! For more info, check out [www.bedlamtheatre.org](http://www.bedlamtheatre.org).

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# From the GSC Library: Guyland

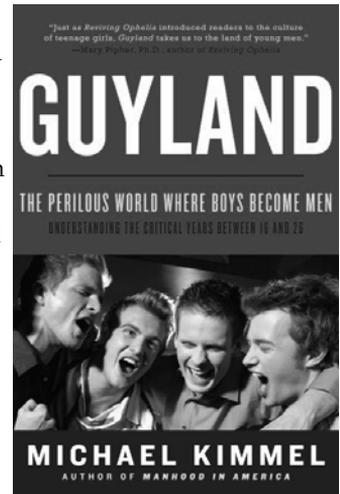
By Sam Ritter, '10

Michael Kimmel, in his newest book *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men—Understanding the Critical Years Between 16 and 26* sets out to examine “Guyland,” that “bill of goods” that tells guys that “a constellation of behaviors are the distilled essence of manhood” (23). It is an exploration of white, middle class young men who feel barraged by voices telling them that they are entitled to have good jobs and picture-perfect lives, yet, the dialogues of inclusion and equality have stripped them of power (or so they perceive). This gap creates a world in which boyhood becomes a “regression with a mission” (43). In the end, Kimmel writes, it is up to society to write a new code for men through which they can become “the kind of men who their families and their communities can truly be proud of and admire” (23).

This gap between “entitlement” and “power” is the linchpin of Kimmel’s understanding of “Guyland.” Guys, as Kimmel sees it, feel paralyzed because their upbringing has told them that they should be able to achieve anything that they want, yet, they find that the opportunities that were previously reserved for them are increasingly being filled by women and people of color. This paralysis manifests itself as a reversion to the tropes of boyhood and the stereotypes from *Animal House*. Furthermore, this reversion is fostered by a “culture of protection” among administrators, parents, coaches, and teachers that writes off immature, immoral, and illegal acts as “boys will be boys.”

While this analysis of white middle-class young men undeniably describes the actions and motivations of some “guys,” Kimmel’s analysis seems to only scratch the surface of young men’s worlds. Throughout the book, he constantly brings himself to the edge of making scathing condemnations of rape culture and homophobia in “Guyland,” yet, he is constrained by his desire to present the problem as something that can be easily fixed. The book, therefore, sometimes reads more like a self-discovery book for men than a critical commentary on masculinity.

Despite these shortcomings, however, *Guyland* is an impressive exploration of the ways that men are faced with conflicting (and often incompatible) models as they attempt to navigate their early adult years. And while perhaps these conflicts can’t be sorted out by changing the “culture of silence” to a “culture of honor,” as Kimmel thinks it can be (289), the book is nonetheless a great way to start thinking critically about how some of our male peers construct and navigate masculinity.



Arizona superbowl viewers were surprised when the Comcast coverage of the **game was interrupted by a pornographic film.** Tucson-



based KVOA-TV said it was "dismayed and disappointed" after some cable viewers had their match coverage disrupted towards the end of the game. The clip showed a woman unzipping a man's trousers, followed by a graphic act between the two. Oops! Source: BBC News.

# In The

Ryan Pacifico, a **vegetarian Wall Streeter has a real beef with his macho man ex-boss,** Robert Catalanello, who he says tormented him for being a "homo" who wouldn't eat steak with the boys. "You don't even eat steak, dude," Catalanello is accused of saying. "At what point in time did you realize you were gay?" Source: NY Daily News



**First openly gay world leader,** Johanna Sigurdardottir, is named in Iceland by the country's coalition political parties. In 1994, when she lost a contest for the leadership for leadership of the Social Democratic Alliance, she said, "My time will come!" She was right.

Source: NY Times & Wiki.

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# News!

The **House of Representatives** has adopted changes to its standing rules that include thirteen pages of amendments replacing terms like “he,” “him,” and “his” with **gender-neutral language**.

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**Obama signs in the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act**, which will cancel out a Supreme Court ruling last year that declared plaintiffs had to file wage claims within 180 days of a company's decision to pay a worker less than a counterpart doing the same work. Source: Jezebel and USA Today.



All star couple Lindsay Lohan and Sam Ronson remain girlfriends, but **they're on the rocks**. They were last seen fighting in a DJ booth and then making up in the ladies' room. Source: Jezebel.

# MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

## Get Ready for V-Day!

### FEBRUARY

**6th:** V-Night @ the Cave, 8-9:30 pm

**10th:** Congo Teach-In: What's Really Happening, 12 pm,  
LDC 104

**10th:** SEX TOY party w/ the Smitten Kitten, 7:30 pm,  
Nourse Main Lounge

**11th:** "How to Help a Sexual Assault Survivor: What Men  
Can Do," 7 pm, Nourse Main Lounge

**12th:** "Am I Feminist If...?" Brown Bag Lunch Discus-  
sion, 12 pm, Sayles 251

**13th:** The Vagina Monologues, 7:30 pm, Chapel, \$5

**14th:** V-Day Chat: What Does VM Mean to You?, 2 pm,  
GSC

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