

WOMANifesto

NEWSLETTER OF THE MSU WOMEN'S CENTER

January/February, 2011

The Golden Rule and Bullying **By Annah Arrasmith and Krystal Fischer**

Prejudice is ignorance. The cure for ignorance is a new perspective which ideally stems from education, empathy, and life experiences. Students who attend a credited university to reach enlightenment about particular subjects shouldn't limit themselves to an understanding of, and education in, only these subjects. College is also about new life experiences, taking on new responsibilities, and opening ones' mind to new ideas while forming adult opinions. As students, we are ideally here not only to prepare for a career, but to receive an education. If we are broadening our minds, why are there still so many cases of anti-gay harassment occurring on university campuses?

Ignorance is usually fueled by fear, anger, and cowardice. Outlets such as Facebook and MySpace can facilitate harassment-- when cowards feel safe voicing anti-gay sentiments, unleashing personal attacks on individuals, and posting dangerous personal images while shielded behind their computer screens, they likely will not face any consequences. There have recently been many cases of teen suicides resulting from ruthless bullying and the targeting of gay students. Since July of last year, at least four teenagers have killed themselves because of anti-gay bullying. College student Tyler Clementi was one such victim-- he jumped off the George Washington Bridge after his roommate secretly recorded him with another male student and posted the video online. Billy Lucas hung himself and his mother found his lifeless body in Greensburg, Indiana. Billy was harassed endlessly for being gay and was

repeatedly told that he didn't deserve to live. Asher Brown, who lived in Cypress, TX, shot himself with his step father's gun; his parent's claim that he was literally "bullied to death" because he was small, a non-Christian, and thought to be gay. The list of victims goes on to include Justin Aaber, Seth Walsh, and Raymond Chase.

What can we, as allies, do to stop this trend and support fellow LGBTQ students? Clearly it is time to focus on solutions. There are many projects being developed in support of LGBTQ students—one such project is called "The Trevor Project," --a California non-profit. The project was started by writer James Lecesne, director/producer Peggy Rajski, and producer Randy Stone, co-creators of a 1994 Academy Award-winning short film, *Trevor*, a comedy/drama about a gay 13-year-old boy who, when rejected by friends because of his sexuality, attempts to take his life. When *Trevor* was about to air on HBO, the film makers realized that LGBTQ teens experiencing the same feelings would likely need someone to talk to and additional resources to access after seeing the film. The Trevor Project offers an around-the-clock crisis and suicide helpline for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth.

The "It Gets Better Project" is another step toward a better life for LGBTQ teens. The project was created by Dan Savage, the author of the internationally syndicated relationship and sex column, *Savage Love*, and the weekly podcast *Savage Lovecast*. He is editorial director of the *Seattle Weekly* column, *The Stranger*. Savage heard about the suicides of Justin Aaber and Billy Lucas and had the

reaction many did: "I wish I could've talked to that kid for five minutes before he killed himself," he stated, "I'd tell him that however bad it was in high school or middle school... it gets better." The It Gets Better Project was born. The web site has millions of videos of celebrities and other people who know what it feels like to be bullied as a teen. These high profile personalities have created videos sharing their own stories and providing a place of love and support. The message to gay youth is: "it may feel hopeless now, but please have patience, things will get better."

These are incredible support systems nationally, but what about possible local solutions? MSU needs to be doing more to make this campus completely free of anti-gay harassment and bullying. Again, hopefully, education is the resolve of ignorance. Setting up educational discussion groups may create an understanding of the harm bullies inflict on their targets.

Understanding the innate damage being done, as well as empathizing with GLBTQ students and others typically targeted by bullies, are the only ways to find a solution to the problem. On an individual level, if you see someone being harassed, stand up for them. Let the potential bully know that what they are doing is wrong

and show them that the victim has an ally. Be aware of what you and your friends are saying in daily conversations--If you hear a friend using derogatory terms such as "that's so gay", or "he's such a faggot," point out the prejudice and potential damage. Let your friends know you'd prefer that they not use derogatory language in front of you. There is no need for a confrontation; just let them know why it's offensive and why it bothers you. Be a good role model, and be mindful of what you are saying as well.

A bully is the guy next to you calling someone a "fag" over the phone, or saying their friend is "retarded" because they did something careless. These accusations hurt and it's time to serve as an ally and side with those speaking out against bullying. Teenagers are the population most likely to experience bullying, and the recent suicides are an alarming red flag to alert us to the fact that this problem is getting way out of hand.

Everyone can make a difference, even if it's a small difference; every supportive word, gesture or action can make an enormous difference for an individual who feels targeted and hopeless. Let's work together to stomp out bullying and prejudice!

Family Care Room Grand Opening: October 26, 2010

Hamilton Hall 123

**Supporting the Family Needs of MSU
Students, Staff, Faculty, and Visitors**

Dedicated 45 min Parking Available

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The VOICE Center

●●●●

Montana State University

... hits the ground running!



Vagina Monologues!

They're Back! This February 17th and 18th, in the Procrastinator Theater, the VOICE Center is sponsoring the 2011 production of the Vagina Monologues. Come see smart, sassy women perform monologues on everything from social injustice to ... vaginas! And all proceeds go to benefit the VOICE Center, which provides support and advocacy services to victims and survivors of rape, relationship violence, and stalking.

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Educator and Advocate Training

The VOICE Center is always looking for more peer advocates and peer educators to volunteer with us! Interested students should email, call, or drop by the VOICE Center for more information and to pick up an application. Training starts February 26th!

**what's
your
green
dot?**

Latex and Lace

The VOICE Center wants everyone to know that fun sex is safe, consensual sex. In that vein, we are participating in Latex and Lace on February 11th in the SUB Ballrooms. Also known as the Condom Fashion Show, Latex & Lace features student models working the catwalk in sexy and fun fashion made entirely out of condoms. L&L is free and open to everyone!



Respect is Sexy

Violence Prevention Institute

Saturday, January 29th, the VOICE Center and the Leadership Institute are offering the Violence Prevention Institute, aimed at freshmen and campus leaders. VPI is a day-long event consisting of large group discussions and break-out sessions addressing the issue of violence in our campus community, and what we as student leaders can do about it.

Attendance is \$5 and includes an awesome lunch!

the **VOICE CENTER**

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24 Hour Support Hotline

406-994-7069

Daytime Office Number

406-994-7662

Anonymous Support Email

msuvoice@gmail.com

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FRIDAY FEB. 11TH
8:00 p.m.
SUB BALLROOMS
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CONTACT HEALTH PROMOTION
AT 994-5497 OR AT
DOUGLAS.FULP@MONTANA.EDU



& LACE

CONDOM FASHION SHOW



BRIDGER



CLINIC Inc.



Planned Parenthood
of Montana

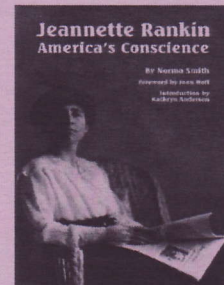
V.O.I.C.E.



New Books in the Gerladine Fenn Memorial Library:

Jeannette Rankin By Norma Smith Foreword by Joan Hoff

Suffragist, Social Worker, first woman elected to the United States Congress, a lifelong peace activist, and a tireless advocate for political reform, Jeannette Rankin is often remembered as the woman who voted "No." Elected to congress from Montana on the eve of the United States' entry into World War I, Rankin cast her first vote-the first vote cast in the House of Representative by an woman-against the declaration of war against Germany. Reelected in Congress in 1940, she repeated her vote, becoming the only member of Congress to vote against the United States' involvement in World War II.



RITA MAE BROWN



Six of One by Rita Mae Brown

Love, Marriage, Murder, Madness... It's all happening in Runnymede. Welcome to Runnymede, a small town, U.S.A., right smack on the Mason-Dixon line. Home of Juts and Wheesie Hunsenmire, two spirited Southern sisters who cheerfully raise hell-and a matriarchy-together. Home of Fairy Thatcher, political activist; Fannie Jum Crighton who runs a speakeasy in her mansion; elegant Celeste Chalfonte who kills a man and married a woman... and a host of other formidable characters. When Celeste's lover goes mad for Celeste's brother, no one bats an eye. In wild, fun-loving, hell-raising Runnymede, everything makes perfect sense...

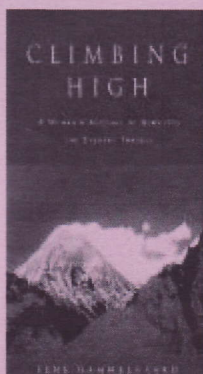
Disorderly Conduct by Carroll Smith-Rosenberg

This first collection of essays by Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, one of the leading women's historians, is a landmark in women's studies and in cultural history in general. Focusing on the "disorderly conduct" women and some men used to break loose of the Victorian Era's rigid class and sex roles, it examines the dramatic changes in male-female relations, family structure, sex, social custom, and ritual that occurred as America was transformed by rapid industrialization. Throughout *Disorderly Conduct*, Smith-Rosenberg startles and convinces, making us re-evaluate a society we thought we understood, and society whose outward behavior and inner emotional life now take on a new meaning.

DISORDERLY CONDUCT

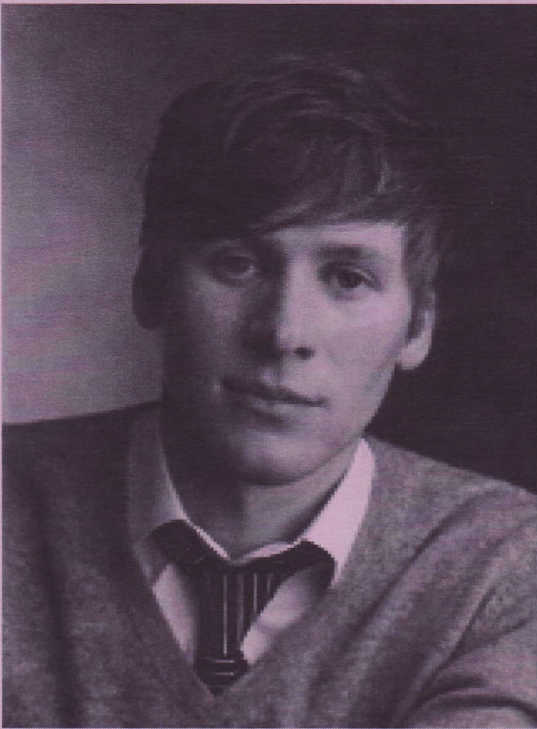


CARROLL SMITH-ROSENBERG



Climbing High by Lene Gammelgaard

On the afternoon of May 10, 1996, Lene Gammelgaard, a member of Scott Fischer's Mountain Madness Expedition, became the first Scandinavian woman to summit Mount Everest. By nightfall, however, a raging storm and human error conspired to turn triumph into catastrophe. Eight climbers, including Fischer himself, ultimately perished in the storm, a tragedy by which made headlines worldwide and continues to resonate today. In this riveting account, Gammelgaard take the read step-by-step from her weeks of determined training and her exhilarating arrival in Nepal to her arduous climb to the summit of the world's highest and deadliest peak. As the bitter storm sweeps over the mountain, forcing the climbers to descend in harrowing conditions, Gammelgaard and seven others are forced to huddle throughout the night, hoping to stay alive.



Academy Award Winner Dustin Lance Black to Speak at MSU

Academy Award winning screenwriter and activist Dustin Lance Black will speak at MSU on Wednesday, February 9th at 7:30pm. Black has won two Writer's Guild of America Awards for the HBO's series "Big Love" and an Academy Award and Oscar for his screenplay of "MILK".

Tickets are \$5 and are available at Tickets West locations and at ticketswest.com. For more information contact the MSU Leadership Institute at 406-994-7275 or visit www.montana.edu/leadership.

Photo: Dustin Lance Black, courtesy of CAA



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Women's Center

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