

womanifesto

Newsletter of the MSU-Bozeman Women's Center

February, 2008

SHANNON WEATHERLY LECTURE: SEX SIGNALS

Join the Women's Center, the MSU VOICE Center, and Student Activities for this year's Shannon Weatherly Lecture when we bring **SEX SIGNALS**, the "real life funny sort-of-improv show about dating and other stuff" to MSU. Held in the **Hager Auditorium in the Museum of the Rockies on Tuesday, February 26th at 7:00 p.m.**, this performance looks at the good, the bad and the ugly sides of dating in college.

SEX SIGNALS distinguishes itself by mixing improvisational comedy, education, and audience interaction to rise to the challenge of debunking rape myths and making college students question social pressures, gender role stereotypes, and unrealistic fantasies. Sexual violence is a controversial, highly charged subject, fraught with emotion and misunderstanding. Any discussion about sexual assault can make males feel implicated, simply because they are men, and women feel uncomfortable when they recognize their own potential for victimization.

SEX SIGNALS gives young adults a safe space to have a candid, positive conversation about the confusion and realities of dating, sex, and acquaintance rape.

SEX SIGNALS is produced by Catharsis Productions, an organization dedicated to creating and delivering cutting-edge educational programs that combine creative theatrical techniques to communicate important social messages. Feedback from universities, rape advocacy organizations and women's centers has been very positive. Most recommend it for university orientation programs and praise not just the content of the program, but also the quality of the performance. Feature articles

on **SEX SIGNALS** have appeared in *Campus Activities Magazine*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Chicago Sun Times*, *In These Times*, and the *Harvard Gazette*.

SEX SIGNALS is being brought to MSU as part of the Shannon Weatherly Memorial Lecture Series-- a very important part of our programming. The lecture series memorializes Shannon Weatherly, a young feminist who was tragically killed by a hunter who mistook her tent for a bear as she lay sleeping in Gardiner, Montana in 1982. Shannon's friends and family funded an endowment to be managed by the Montana State University Women's Center with the purpose of bringing in feminist scholars, activists and performers who, through their strong and purposeful lives, reflect the life of Shannon Weatherly and help inspire our students. These lectures, readings, and performances are free and open to the public. Shannon was on the Women's Center's founding Board of Advisors until her death and was a person of compassion and varied interests. She loved the simplicity of the outdoors as much as she loved the complexities of critical thought. She was an MSU alum and attended Iliff School of Theology at the University of Denver from 1979-1981. We are proud to have the opportunity to honor Shannon's memory through this lecture series.

We are very honored to join together with the MSU VOICE Center for this inspired presentation which promises to be both educational and entertaining. This event is free and open to the public. For further information, please contact the Women's Center @ 994.3836 or the VOICE Center @ 994-7069.

PORNOGRAPHY AND MISOGYNY: THE VERBAL ASSAULT

By Betsy Danforth

“One is used to thinking of pornography as part of a larger movement toward sexual liberation...For within our idea of freedom of speech we would include freedom of speech about the whole life of the body and even the darkest parts of the mind.” (Susan Griffin, *Pornography and Silence: Culture’s Revenge Against Nature*, prologue) Since the 1970s, many feminists have critiqued pornography. As a Women’s Studies major in the 1980s, I learned to always question its use and distribution. Like most others, however, when examining pornography critically, I focused on the depictions of women as the most offensive and degrading element. In reading current feminist critiques of pornography, I realized I hadn’t looked at one of these publications for decades and decided it was time to investigate. While looking through the June, 2005 issue of *Hustler* magazine, I was shocked to realize that the depictions of naked, available, ready-and-willing, young, and VERY young women were not, in fact, the most offensive element of the magazine-- it was the articles which truly shocked and disturbed me. We’ve all heard the excuse from those who purchase pornography: “I read it for the articles,” and my own response to this has always been “come on--who really reads the articles?” After my startling and very educational experience, I sincerely hope that the answer is nobody. The various headlines caught my attention immediately: “Paternity Laws: Know Your Rights!”, “Leykis 101: How To Get What You Really Want From Women” (any guesses?), and “Female Teachers Turned Sexual Predators.” These articles made one thing painfully clear: the editors of *Hustler* are doing their best to perpetuate the battle between the sexes.

The article entitled “Paternity Laws: Know Your Rights!” was written by Monique Raphael High, an accomplished romance novel author and contributor to *Cosmopolitan* magazine. She writes: “The bottom line is money; a woman has a child out of wedlock, and she wants some.” The article goes on to describe “a man’s worst nightmare, a woman you liked, not nearly enough to marry, tells you she’s pregnant.” She discusses the options which

simply put are: first, don’t believe her, second, hire a lawyer, and third, get a DNA test. Number four? If the DNA test comes back positive, get another one, the first one has probably been misread as labs make mistakes all the time. This recommendation, made by Los Angeles lawyer Ben Pesta, is accompanied by this sage advice: “You should have a baby tested even if you’re married and suspicious that your wife’s been having an affair. “ My goodness, this all sounds so complicated, how about making sure one or both of you is using birth control? How about men *assuming some responsibility* for their sexual activities?

Tom Leykis, a Los Angeles-based radio show host outlines “Everything You Need to Know About Outsmarting the Opposite Sex” in his article: “Leykis 101: How To Get What You Really Want From Women.” We are all engaged in the ultimate battle of the sexes according to Leykis; his hunting terminology sprinkled in with extremely questionable advice makes this painfully apparent. Phrases like “be ruthless,” “go in for the kill,” and “don’t let her mark her territory” are used throughout this piece. I’d like to think of this as comic relief (sorely needed after browsing through *Hustler*), but really, it’s the most depressing of these articles. Though Leykis claims he is not promoting rape, his advice constantly encourages playing that edge and engaging in behaviors that often lead to rape: get her drunk, don’t let her speak, if she does, don’t listen to her, and whatever the cost-- “score”! In a nutshell, here’s the story: men who are looking for a relationship are losers, real men are out to have unattached meaningless sex because “no guy really wants to hear some female discuss her political opinions.” Marriage only leads to divorce: “the later you get married, the fewer years you will be married when you ultimately get divorced. Consequently, there will be less alimony to pay.” I swear it’s in there! Women only get fatter, less attractive, and more mouthy as time goes on, so give it up now and get back into the swinging single life, says Leykis. Then come the rules (sixteen, to be exact, but I’ll just highlight a few): do not spend more than \$40 on a date; always act like you make huge amounts of money—ok, I have to stop here, because my favorite piece of advice is to stop at an ATM machine, look for a receipt with a large balance, steal it, and then make sure she sees it --

again, I swear it's in there! More rules: if you're not wealthy, lie about your job and where you live; get the woman home (to her place only, you don't want her "marking her territory" at your place) as quickly as possible, get her as drunk as possible; don't let her talk; certainly do not ask before making any sexual advances, "you make the move, never ask if you can kiss her"; if she doesn't give you her full attention, leave (if you are paying for dinner, you are *paying for 100%* of her attention"); never tell a woman that she looks good (she might realize she's better looking than you and ditch you); never be a woman's "friend" (she'll immediately assume you're gay); and finally, *never* believe a woman who says she doesn't have sex on the first date. Granted, this guy clearly needs all the help he can get: he's a sleazy, dishonest, soulless, unattractive, cheap, classless sod-- but I'd hate to think any one of these absurd tricks would work on any of the women I have ever known in my life!

Might these same Leykis disciples find themselves slapped with a paternity suit after following his advice and "scoring"?

I won't elaborate, but the article on female teacher predators interspersed with advertisements for 800 numbers (i.e. phone sex lines) over half of whose texts read "Barely Legal," "Horny Teen" or "I'm a Virgin" accompanying depictions of youthful women-as-girls, seems a contradiction of terms. The article insinuates that women are indeed the primary assailants of young students today and the system's legal treatment of these perpetrators is particularly lenient. I'd strongly encourage anyone to research actual statistics which estimate that 95-99% of childhood sexual abuse (against both boys and girls) is perpetuated by males.

Obviously, pornography is not the place to look when one is searching for favorable attitudes towards women, or to enhance warm and fuzzy feelings about relationships between men and women. But I must point out that the level of misogyny, and the lack of trust in women's opinions, word, or honor is incredibly disturbing. I'd like to think that men and women are moving closer together on intellectual and emotional levels; that we are in fact, making progress towards unity as humans. I realize the inevitability of backlash, and that some men will no doubt be threatened by the idea of women as equals, but that this level of

contempt is so carelessly expressed in a publication read by millions is astonishing and deeply offensive.

While searching on line to find out about *Hustler's* circulation (information I couldn't find), I came across a wonderful dialogue between Alan Minsky, KPFK Radio's Senior Producer, Bruce David, Editorial Director of *Hustler*, and Jamie Lee from the "Not In Our Name" project. The editor of *Hustler* maintains that the magazine presents a progressive and liberal viewpoint; they have supported anti-war causes and seek out liberals to interview. I suppose this is what baffles me most about the magazine spewing such misogynistic material. Minsky states: "I believe that in the 1990s and into this decade, there has been a great 'normalization' of pornography and the sex-industry, with Howard Stern and HBO both virtually promoting women strippers and lap-dancers as veritable role models for young women." He insists there is a correlation between the widespread acceptance of these industries and the de-emphasis on education as young women believe their only value is in their body's appeal to men. Is it a coincidence that university enrollment numbers are down?

Susan Griffin wrote *Pornography and Silence* in 1981. I honestly hate to think that not only have the images of women become more degrading (less realistic and more violent while not-so-subliminally encouraging sex with minors), but that the text of these publications is voicing misogynistic propaganda that only serves to enhance the "war" between the sexes. Americans have never had the opportunity to explore the concept of post-patriarchal sexuality, to see what erotica would look like in a society where the genders are truly equal. The editors of *Hustler* clearly consider themselves liberals, but what does this mean when their contempt for women is so readily vocalized throughout this magazine?

Racial, cultural, and socioeconomic slams and jokes are finally deemed unacceptable in our culture, and I'm sure not allowed on the pages of *Hustler*. Reading *Hustler* magazine only reminds me that views of women in this society are fraught with contempt. After twenty-seven years in women's studies and working as a professional for women's issues, I still cannot understand why. ~

PROSTITUTION: THE DEBATE OVER DECRIMINALIZATION

By Erin Deihl

Prostitution has existed for centuries and is commonly referred to as "the world's oldest profession." When thinking of prostitution, most people likely think of criminal behavior or immoral acts, not a legitimate professional choice -- certainly not a choice that falls within the realm of prescribed societal norms. Despite the cultural perception that the "oldest profession" is illegitimate as a career choice, the profession itself has persevered through centuries. Throughout history, prostitution has been associated with religious practices and cultural customs. In ancient Babylonia, most females were required to offer themselves sexually to strangers during religious ceremonies; in ancient Cyprus, prostitution was a prerequisite for marriage; and in ancient Greece, prostitutes were some of the most sought after mistresses because the Greeks viewed the practice of prostitution as proper and a legitimate economic practice (*The Prostitution of Women and Girls*, R.B. Flowers, 1998).

Perceptions of, and attitudes towards, prostitution and prostitutes have evolved through the centuries, alternately being viewed through various societies as a religious practice, a legitimate economic practice, and a cultural evil.

During the United States Victorian Era (1840-1900), views of prostitution shifted and it was seen as a major social problem. It was during this period that the debate for the decriminalization of prostitution began. Most attitudes towards prostitution in the beginning of this era were empathetic and focused on the betterment of prostitutes' plight, however, later in the era, feelings about prostitution shifted towards those of discomfort and disdain. It is important to mention that the strict moral code that emerged from this time encouraged people to look down upon individuals who strayed from the prescribed norms, fueling the debate around the decriminalization of prostitution.

This debate stems from changes in societal perceptions of sex work and previous attempts to provide solutions. At the turn of the 19th century, a religious movement claiming compassion for prostitutes incited believers to try to "save" them

through religion ("Women's History Then and Now: Prostitution", I.L. Hickenbottom, May, 2002). Followers, however, only offered assistance to prostitutes if they would repent and turn to religion (*Women and Prostitution: A Social History*, Bullough & Bullough, 1987). In order to find a solution for what was now viewed as a growing social problem, two opposing groups emerged: the abolitionists and the regulationists. The abolitionists were conservative Christians who wanted to eliminate prostitution, believing it to be an enormous social evil (*Crusade Sexual Morality and Social Control*, D.J. Pivar, 1973). The regulationists, on the other hand, offered a different approach, and proposed decriminalizing prostitution--they were not concerned with religion or maintaining the high moral fiber of society, but rather with health issues and crimes that endangered the prostitutes themselves. They wanted to regulate prostitution using police power rather than the pressure of societal norms and religious judgment.

The perceptions of prostitution in our society today remain somewhat constant with those of the Victorian Era-- we still view it as a crime against public morality. Women in the business are often referred to as "hookers," "whores," and "trash" and are possibly seen as people devoid of morals and therefore, legal rights. Many individuals hold these negative perceptions even though prostitution remains deeply embedded in our culture. Conflict continues to surround the issue, and the debate over the decriminalization of prostitution continues.

Activism promoting decriminalization is often lead by organized sex workers themselves, by groups such as COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics), and PONY (Prostitutes of New York). Their goal is to have society see prostitution as a legitimate profession that has the potential to be economically positive. Health care and social service workers could focus on helping prostitutes create a healthy work environment. They argue that a positive outlook about prostitution would lift social stigmas and moral judgments and thus improve the lives of prostitutes themselves. These advocates suggest that the primary harm of the illegalization of prostitution is a resounding negative social stigma which deems prostitutes socially invisible or easy targets of public contempt -- the internalization of this contempt by prostitutes

being the end result ("Bad for the Body, Bad for the Heart" in *Violence Against Women*, #10, M. Farley, 2004). By removing this legal and social stigma, advocates argue that prostitutes would be more likely to seek assistance from social service agencies and the police, which may empower them to leave the profession altogether.

The fight against decriminalization is still led largely by religious conservatives and moralists who believe that prostitution is an act of immorality that adds to the deterioration of the family unit. The fight for decriminalization is led by those who believe that prostitution is woven into the fabric of our society both culturally and economically, and rather than rejecting it, they believe prostitution should be legitimized and accepted as the norm. Opponents of the legalization of prostitution suggest that merely lifting stigmas would do nothing to help society perceive prostitution as a legitimate business and would not necessarily remove the shame prostitutes face (Farley, 2002). If decriminalized, prostitution might be regulated by zoning laws which would legalize transactions in particular neighborhoods- neighborhoods where no one would choose to live or work. By physically removing prostitution from more mainstream areas, prostitutes could find themselves both physically and socially removed from society. This would have the opposite affect than decriminalization advocates want-- by socially isolating prostitutes, they may no longer have access to social and health services or police protection.

Proponents for legalizing prostitution are lobbying for protection of prostitutes themselves, and submit that decriminalization with the appropriate social services could potentially improve the lives of prostitutes and the larger community (*Prostitution Policy: Revolutionizing Practice Through a Gendered Perspective*, L. Kuo, 2002). Without the potential for criminal prosecution, sex workers may stop soliciting in dangerous areas such as brothels and the streets, and move indoors where their safety may be increased. One study found that sexual assaults are experienced by most prostitutes on a very regular basis, and that individual prostitutes were sexually assaulted an average of **thirty-one times a year** (Flowers, 1998). Because of the possibility of being arrested themselves, only **four percent** of those

assaulted reported these attacks (Flowers, 1998). By decriminalizing and lifting the social stigma, proponents argue, prostitutes would be protected in ways that would increase the likelihood of their reporting sexual and other criminal assaults to the police.

Opponents of decriminalization argue that advocates for decriminalization assume prostitutes will actively seek health care, social services, and police assistance if they no longer face criminal sanctions. It is also assumed that if criminal sanctions are no longer a threat, victims of sexual assaults will automatically report crimes to the police with the expectation that their cases will be handled in the same manner as those crimes against non-prostitutes (Farley, 2002). Unfortunately, even if the criminal sanctions are removed, this may not effect the beliefs and actions of individuals within the criminal justice system. Police agencies and individual officers may still hold negative opinions about prostitution and the prostitutes themselves, believing that they cannot, by definition, be victims of rape.

In the U.S., individual states have the right to decide whether or not to decriminalize prostitution, but currently, no state has completely. With the exception of Nevada and Rhode Island, most states consider offering, agreeing to, or engaging in a sexual act for money or some type of compensation a crime. Depending on individual state laws and the specific criminal offense, prostitution and solicitation of a prostitute are misdemeanors with varying punishments for each offense. Due to the lasting effects of the Victorian Era which underlie our society's moral code and clearly influence our legal system, proponents of the decriminalization of prostitution may still have a long struggle ahead. While law makers, politicians, conservatives, and liberals continue battling with one another about decriminalization, those women and men working in the "world's oldest profession" remain at risk for sexual assault, poor health care, and the constant threat of criminal sanctions against them. Keeping prostitutes safe and healthy should be our main concern; for while some may take offense at the very existence of prostitution in our society, it is clear from our history that it is here to stay. ~

LUNAFEST™ BRINGS AWARD-WINNING FILMS TO BOZEMAN

Team LUNA Chix announces the Bozeman screening of LUNAFEST, the only national touring festival featuring films by, for, and about women. This third annual event will be held at the Emerson Theatre on Friday February 22 at 7:30 p.m. A reception with no-host beverages and appetizers takes place prior to the event in the Emerson lobby.

Tickets are \$10.00 for the general public and \$8.00 for students. Tickets are available in advance at Chalet Sports in Bozeman or at the door. The festival is sponsored by Chalet Sports and Bozeman Perio with all proceeds benefiting the Breast Cancer Fund and The Wellness Community Montana.

LUNAFEST, produced by LUNA®, the whole nutrition bar for women™, provides a national platform for emerging women filmmakers to share their stories. The films range from animated shorts to fictional drama, and cover topics such as women's health, body image, spirituality, relationships, and cultural diversity.

The program will include nine winning films selected from more than 200 national submissions, as well as a local film, *The Water Carriers*, by MSU student and filmmaker Jaime Jelenchick.

The year's LUNAFEST selections are:

- **MAKE A WISH: Director:** Cherien Dabis. Hollywood, CA
- **MY OTHER MOTHER: Director:** Diana Keam. Capetown, South Africa
- **DONA ANA / MRS. ANA: Directors:** Marlon Vasquez & David Sanchez. Medellin, Columbia **Animators:** Laura Acevedo & Carolina Escobar. Medellin, Columbia
- **HAPPINESS: Director:** Sophie Barthes. New York, NY
- **GODIR GESTIR / FAMILY REUNION: Director:** Isold Uggadottir. New York, NY
- **DAIKON ASHI: Director:** Ru Kuwahata. Brooklyn, NY
- **BREAKING BOUNDARIES: The Sondra Van Ert Story: Director:** Jennifer Grace. Bozeman, MT
- **THE GUARANTEE: Director:** Jesse Erica Epstein. New York, NY
- **POCKETS: Director:** Sophie Ohara. Glendale, CA

The Bozeman festival will also feature:

THE WATER CARRIERS, Director: Jaime Jelenchick. Bozeman, MT

For more information on the Bozeman LUNAFEST, call 570-5666. More information is also available at www.lunafest.org

Team LUNA Chix is group of ambassadors that promote cycling to women by facilitating group rides and clinics. This grassroots team also works to raise money and awareness for the Breast Cancer Fund. Visit www.lunachixmt.com or www.lunabar.com/lunachix

For information about this event, contact: Julie Kipfer, 570-5666, mtlunachix@hotmail.com

The Women's Center is Open for You

The MSU Women's Center is celebrating its 25th year as an office on campus. This is your Women's Center. We are here to serve all students, faculty, staff, and community members. In the Women's Center you will find a welcoming space with room to study and explore. We house a special treasure: the Geraldine Fenn Memorial Library. This cozy little lending library houses over 1900 books primarily by or about women and a wall of fantastic newsletters and magazines. Anyone can check out books for free. Donations of books and magazine subscriptions appropriate to our library are always welcome. Come and check it out.

When you find our office at 15 Hamilton Hall, our staff will greet you and gladly help you find answers to your questions, tell you about our programs and services, steer you to groups or other organizations that may be helpful, show you a big book full of scholarships for women, invite you to volunteer, or try to meet any other need you might present.

QSA: What's Happening

QSA is a campus based student organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, and transgender students, staff and community members, and allies in Bozeman. Weekly forum meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on Monday evenings, and a variety of bi-weekly social programs are also held throughout the academic year. Forum meetings provide an opportunity to discuss topical issues pertaining to the perception of sexual identity in the Gallatin Valley, meet others, and become the catalyst for social change in Bozeman. Social programs like coffee and bowling nights offer those interested the opportunity to meet with others that are similarly minded, and help to form a strong LGBTQ-allied community in Bozeman. For more information, and to subscribe to our email newsletters please visit www.qsamsu.com

Local Women's Resources:

The Network Against Sexual and Domestic Abuse (24-hour Shelter & Crisis Line), 586-4111
Bridger Clinic, Inc. (Reproductive Health Care), 587-0681
Career Transitions, Inc. 388-6701, careertransitions.com
Child Care Connections, 587-7786
HELP Center (24-hour crisis line), 586-3333
MSU Police (24-hour emergency), 994-2121
MSU Counseling and Psychological Services, 994-4531
MSU Student Health Services, 994-2311
MSU VOICE Center (Victim Options In the Campus Environment), 994-7069 (24-hour crisis line)
MSU Women's Center, www.montana.edu/~wwwwomen, 994-3836
Montana Women Vote! Project, (406)543-3550 (Missoula), montanawomenvote.org
Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG), 723-7251 (Butte), 252-5440 (Billings)
PRIDE, www.gaymontana.com/pride, 1-800-610-9322
QSA (Formerly Q-MSU): Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Allies Student Organization, 994-4551, or qsa-msu@googlegroups.com
Women's Voices for the Earth, 585-5549

GET THAT GRANT: GRANTWRITING FROM CONCEPTION TO COMPLETION

A COMMUNITY SYSTEMS WORKSHOP

Monday through Thursday

April 21-24, 2008

This internationally acclaimed training program is designed for those who want to develop effective grant proposals, find new funders, and successfully manage the grantseeking process. Workshop participants receive extensive individual assistance and follow-up critiques of their grant proposals.

**For more information about this workshop,
call the Women's Center @ 406.994.3836**



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