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Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

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Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program
Illinois State University

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Should Pre-Teen Girls Get the HPV Vaccine?

By Alison Bailey

Last June the National Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended that eleven- and twelve-year-old girls be routinely vaccinated with Gardasil, Merck & Co.'s new drug that protects women against the human papilloma virus (HPV), which causes cervical, vulvar, and vaginal cancers and genital warts. In tests, the vaccine has been found highly effective against almost all strains of HPV. Very few side effects have been observed, at least at this point. Illinois House Bill 115 and Illinois Senate Bill 10 would require girls to be vaccinated before they enter sixth grade beginning in 2008-09 unless their parents formally opt out.

It is common for public dialogue on women's reproductive health to be framed in terms of sexual morality. People say, "The HPV vaccination will cause teen girls to want to have sex." This is a familiar argument. If we teach sex education in high school, then students will become sexually active. If we allow teens access to contraception, they will want to have sex.

Preconceptions about "appropriate" female sexual conduct distort thinking on women's sexual health. You never hear people arguing against tetanus shots because it will cause people to take more risks around rusty metal objects, but for some reasons taking precautions around sex leads to sexual behavior.

These arguments fall prey to what philosophers call the "false cause fallacy." In order to prove a causal connection between two events, say Gardasil and the onset of sexual activity, you must establish three

conditions: There is (1) a correspondence in presence, i.e. in cases where teens do get the vaccine they become sexually active; (2) a correspondence in absence, i.e. in cases where teens do not get the vaccine they do not become sexually active; and (3) no third cause, such as a sexual charged culture, puberty, or peer pressure that might cause teens to become sexually active. There is no evidence that the moral argument in this case meets these conditions. The link between Gardasil and being sexually active commits the false cause fallacy.

Now please don't misunderstand me: I am not suggesting that there is nothing problematic about young teens being sexual active. What continues to astound me is how quickly people are ready to punish young girls for any real or imagined sign of sexual behavior. I recently spoke with a woman who said something like, "and they're giving this shot to promiscuous girls who are too young to be having sex anyway." Proponents are not implying anything about girls' sexuality. Their goal is to stem an epidemic. The American Cancer Society estimates that 11,150 case of cervical cancer will be diagnosed this year, and that 3670 women will die from it. The vaccine needs to be given before a girl or woman is exposed to the virus; ideally, therefore, before a girl becomes sexually active.

This is a women's health issue, not a question of sexual morality. Just as contraception-causes-sex arguments historically have impeded women and girl's access to reproductive health services, so these anti-vaccination arguments distract us from the real issue here—cancer. If there is a shot that can prevent women from getting cervical cancer, shouldn't we make it available to girls and women? We regularly mandate that children entering nursery school be vaccinated for diphtheria, polio, measles, etc., so why not HPV?

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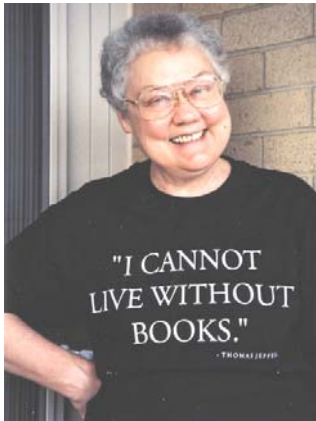
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And why are we targeting just young girls? Okay, only women get cervical cancer, but both men and women carry and transmit HPV, so if you want to prevent the virus from spreading you need to vaccinate regardless of sex. But Merck does not yet have the data proving that the vaccine is effective in males. Once again the burdens of women's sexual and reproductive health fall to women themselves. ☀

Sources: Philadelphia citypaper.net, <http://www.citypaper.net/articles/042299/feat.20q.shtml>.

GLBT History Month, <http://www.glbthistorymonth.com/glbthistorymonth/bio.cfm?LeaderID=14>. ☀

Barbara Gittings **July 31, 1932-February 18, 2007**



Barbara Gittings

Barbara Gittings, a gay rights activist since the late 1950s, died on February 18. She was 75. Gittings died after a lengthy fight with breast cancer.

In the 1950s, when gay activism was in its infancy, Gittings helped organize the Daughters of Bilitis, an early lesbian rights and cultural

organization. Describing those years Barbara said,

“There were scarcely 200 of us in the whole United States. It was like a club—we all knew each other.” While working with the D.O.B. she met her life partner, Kay Lahausen. Gittings edited the group's pioneering journal, *The Ladder*, from 1963 to 1966.

In 1965 she helped organize gay-rights demonstrations at the White House and in Philadelphia at Independence Hall. Gittings was also active in the campaign that led to the American Psychiatric Association's 1973 decision to drop homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. For 15 years she served as head of the American Library Association's Gay Task Force.

In an interview last fall Gittings said, “As a teenager, I had to struggle alone to learn about myself and what it meant to be gay. Now for 48 years I've had the satisfaction of working with other gay people all across the country to get the bigots off our backs, to oil the closet door hinges, to change prejudiced hearts and minds, and to show that gay love is good for us and for the rest of the world too. It's hard work—but it's vital, and it's gratifying, and it's often fun!”

Barbara Gittings is survived by Lauhausen and her sister, Eleanor Gittings Taylor of San Diego.

Marilyn Boyd, International House Coordinator

Marilyn Boyd, program coordinator for the ISU International House for almost 25 years, died on January 23. As coordinator, Marilyn organized and participated in the Global Review, the various cultural nights, and all other International House programs. She became synonymous with International House. In 2001, She received the Strand Diversity Award in 2001

In his eulogy for Boyd, Dr. Taye Woldesmiat, ISU professor and former ISU graduate student from Ethiopia, reflected, “She made the International House just like her home. The students became part of her family and life, and she became part of their family. She lived with them, and their lives became intertwined. She was the mother to Benjie and Lisa [her children] and to all the international students.”

When Woldesmiat was imprisoned in Ethiopia for his political activities, Boyd organized the “Free Taye” movement, which contributed to his eventual release. Marilyn contributed her time and energy to fight for human rights and justice in Ethiopia. She was committed to education for all children, regardless of gender, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. As Woldesmiat, noted, “Marilyn wanted the world to be peaceful and democratic. She was always attuned to humans around the world. She railed against poverty and hunger. She was a real fighter. She fought injustices, and she fought cancer, with passion and dignity.”

Boyd is survived by her children, Benjamin Boyd and Lisa Boyd, both of Minneapolis, MN; a brother, David Miller, of Towaco, NJ; and the many international students she served and loved. ☀

Student News

Welcome, New Minors!

Magan Belcher, Politics and Government
Erin Davidshofer, Anthropology
Katie Doyle, English Education
Kathryn Schumpert, Mass Communications

Welcome, New Certificate Student!

Lindsay Rosenquist, Politics and Government



Annaliisa Ahlman, 2007 recipient of the Women's Studies Achievement Award, and her mother at the College of Arts and Sciences Awards ceremony.

FLAME is Burnin'

by Erin Brophy

ISU's chapter of FLAME (Feminist Led Activist Movement to Empower) has had a kick-off year full of successes. The organization works for equality between genders, GLBT rights, and ending sexual assault and domestic violence. February events included a thought-provoking roundtable discussion about women and spirituality, featuring WGS faculty members Karen Pfost and Paula Ressler.

Be on the lookout for FLAME's upcoming "It Affects Me" Campaign, set for April 9-12. Events will include a YWCA Stepping Stones program, "Walking the Walk—A Sexual Violence Awareness Exercise"; and a discussion on childhood sexual assault and scenes from *The Illustrated Woman*, presented by the Women's Project. FLAME also will be out on the quad during the campaign, showcasing the Clothesline Project and a new campaign called "These Hands Are Not for Hurting."

FLAME holds meetings every other Monday and encourages new members, men and women, to attend. Contact jmwear@ilstu.edu to learn more or to subscribe to the e-mail list. The next meeting will be on March 19. ☼

V-Day Events Expanded This Year

By Annaliisa Ahlman

Nearly 750 vagina-friendly folks packed the Large Prairie Room at the Bone Student Center on February 23-25 for the 7th annual Illinois State University production of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*. The play was co-directed by Laura Weaver and Joanna Vaickus, and included a cast of nineteen students (shown in photo). The play and other V-Day events were produced by Annaliisa Ahlman. This year's proceeds from the benefit performances will be donated to YWCA Stepping Stones, CDV Neville House and Planned Parenthood of East Central Illinois.



With performances held around the world annually, *The Vagina Monologues* highlights the V-Day campaign, a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. The weekend began on February 22 in Capen Auditorium, with a screening of the V-Day documentary *Until the Violence Stops*. The film recognizes the work women do in the aftermath of war, natural disasters, and other traumatic experiences to rebuild their communities as well as their own lives.

Culminating this year's V-Day journey, the cast and crew will visit the Lincoln Correctional Center, a medium-security women's facility, on March 9 to perform for and speak with the inmates.

The Vaginas urge you to work to reclaim peace in your life and your community. ISU's campus theme this year challenges you to "Use your iVAGination. Create, inspire, affect change." Black or fuchsia "use your iVAGination" T-shirts are still available in most unisex sizes. If you would like to purchase one, please contact Annaliisa at amahlma@ilstu.edu. ☼

Faculty Accomplishments

Pat Badani received an Interdisciplinary/Computer Arts award for 2007 from the Illinois Arts Council.

Kristin Dykstra, Paula Ressler, and Maura Toro-Morn presented a discussion of Achy Obejas' novel *Days of Awe* on February 22 at ISU. Dr. Toro-Morn's topic was "Migration, Gender, and the Cuban Revolution. Dr. Dykstra's was "U.S. Latino Literature." Dr. Ressler was the moderator. Justin Simon, an undergraduate, also presented a paper.

Kass Fleisher received a 2006-2007 University Research Initiative Award at the College of Arts and Sciences award ceremony on February 28.

Deb Gentry published "Family Life Education: Implications of Cultural Diversity" in *Cultural Diversity and Families*, edited by B. Sherif-Trask by R. R. Hamon, Sage Publications (2007).

Cynthia Kukla was a visiting professor during the fall 2006 semester at Aristotle Thessaloniki University in Thessaloniki, Greece.

Maria Schmeckle published "Gender Dynamics in Stepfamilies: Adult Stepchildren's Views" in *Journal of Marriage and Family* 69, 174-189.

Michelle Vought performed three concerts in Provincetown, Massachusetts during Women's Week in October 2006, in which she premiered her one-woman show entitled "Madame/Monsieur."

Ressler Receives Strand Award



Paula Ressler, associate professor of English Education and Women's and Gender Studies faculty member, is the 2007 recipient of the ISU David Strand Diversity Achievement Award. She is the fourteenth recipient of

the award, which was established and endowed by President Emeritus David Strand to honor a current faculty or staff member who is instrumental in extraordinary curricular or program activities that assist the University in its commitment to diversity.

Ressler, who came to Illinois State in 2000, focuses her research and teaching on social justice issues. Her book, *Dramatic Changes: Talking about Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity with High School Students through Drama*, describes the innovative drama work she has done in various educational settings to address LGBT issues. The book won the American Alliance for Theatre and Education Distinguished Book Award in 2003. Paula is the co-founder and co-coordinator of the Safe Schools Program, and currently is working on a state-wide initiative, the Pre-Professional Project, to integrate LGBT issues into teacher preparation curricula. In collaboration with the Triangle Association and the Women's and Gender Studies Program, she also is developing a queer studies certificate program proposed for the Women's and Gender Studies minor.

Several WGS faculty members are past recipients of the Strand Award: Alison Bailey, Philosophy and Director of Women's and Gender Studies; Nancy Tolson, English; Christopher Horvath, Philosophy and Biological Sciences; Maura Toro-Morn, Sociology and Anthropology and Director of Latin American and Latino Studies; and Louis Perez, History. ☼

Ciani Wins Stan and Sandy Rives Award

Dr. Kyle E. Ciani, Department of History and Women's and Gender Studies Program faculty member, has been named this year's recipient of the Stan and Sandy Rives Award for Excellence in Undergraduate



Education. This award recognizes outstanding teaching or any significant contribution to the undergraduate experience. Says Dr. Roger Biles, Chair of the Department of History, "Kyle Ciani is a terrific teacher whose dedication to her students is legendary in the History Department."

Dr. Ciani specializes in the histories of women and gender and is currently working on a book about childcare choices in the 20th-century United States. She received a University Teaching Initiative Award for 2004-2005.

The Stan and Sandy Rives Excellence in Undergraduate Education Award was established in honor of Dr. Stan Rives' longtime commitment to an undergraduate program of the highest quality and for his contributions to Illinois State University as Dean of Undergraduate Instruction. ☼

Calendar

Feb. 22-mid-Apr.: “Civilization vs. Nature.” Art works by Lisa Piaskowy. Artist talk, WGS program office, Mar. 22, Noon.

Mar. 7: Faranak MirafTAB, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, UIUC. “**Cities, Women, and Neoliberalism: Reflections from the Global South.**” Free Pizza. STV 401, Noon.

Mar. 28: Margarita Saona, Department of Spanish, French, Italian, and Portuguese, UIC. “**Wounded Men in the Dysfunctional Nation.**” Free Pizza. STV 401, Noon.

Mar. 28-31: *Vinegar Tom*, by Caryl Churchill, directed by Debbie Alley. A feminist revision of witchcraft trials in 17th century England. Westhoff Theatre, 7:30 p.m. Also at 2 p.m. on March 31 and April 1. Call (309) 438-2535 or visit <http://www.cfa.ilstu.edu/cpa/> for tickets.

Apr. 11: *The Illustrated Woman*. A Stepping Stones discussion on childhood sexual assault with scenes from Nancy Keifer’s play. BSC Circus Room, 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Apr. 12: Body and Soul: Celebrating Sound Nutrition and Healthy Body Images. Cooking demonstrations, food samples, door prizes. ISU Wellness Program. Contact Nikki Brauer 438-8845 for more information. BSC Circus Room, 11-2 p.m.

Apr. 26-27: Dolores Huerta: *La Lucha Continua/ The Struggle Continues*. See box on this page for complete schedule.

Apr. 26-27: Women’s and Gender Studies Symposium. University Art Galleries. April 26, 1-5 p.m. April 27, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.



Glass artist Lisa Piaskowy and some pieces from her show “Civilization vs. Nature” at the WGS program office.



Dolores Huerta *La Lucha Continua/ The Struggle Continues* April 26-27, 2007

Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farm Workers, social activist, and labor leader, will give lectures at the following on-campus events:

April 26 12:35-1:45 p.m. “Communicating Social Change: The United Farm Workers and the Pursuit for Social Justice.” STV 401.

2:00-3:30 p.m. “The Power of Women as Activists.” SCH 112.

7:30-9:00 p.m. University Lecture: “Civil Rights and Social Activism: Sharing a Lifetime of Experience.” SCH 138. Open to the public.

April 27 8:00-9:30 a.m. Breakfast with Latino Community and Hispanic Families Working Group. For info contact Maura Toro-Morn at mitmorn@ilstu.edu

1:00-2:00 p.m. Women’s and Gender Studies Symposium Keynote Lecture: “Feminism and Social Activism: Saving the Future with Gender Balance.”

Gender Matters
Illinois State University
Women's and Gender Studies Program
Rachel Cooper 2nd Floor
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Summer 2007 Required and Elective Courses

WGS 120	Women, Gender, and Society	MTWR 1:25-4:15pm May 21-June 14
ENG 128	Gender in the Humanities	MTWR 8:55-11:45am Internet- begins July 16
ENG 261	Women's Literature in a Global Context	MTWR 1:30-3:20pm July 2- August 9
HIS 264	Women in North America	MTWR 8:55-11:45am May 21-June 14
POL 337	Lesbian and Gay Politics	MTWR 10:25am-1:15pm July 16- August 9
PSY 305	Psychology of Women	MTWR 10:25am-1:15pm May 21-June 14
CJS 339	Women in Criminal Justice	MTWR 8:55am-11:45am May 21-June 14
PHI 202	Sex, Values, and Human Nature	MTWRF 3pm-5:50pm May 21-June 8
SOC 264	Minority Relations	MTWR 10:25am-1:15pm June 18-July 13
SOC 265	Personal Relationships	MTWR 9am-11:50am May 21-June 14

Fall 2007 Required Courses

WGS 120	Women, Gender, and Society	TR 9:35-10:50am TR 11-12:15pm
HIS 262	U.S. Women to 1865	TR 2:00-3:15pm
ENG 160	Women in Literature	TR 9:35-10:50am
PHI 246	Feminist Political Philosophy	MW 3:00-4:15pm

Fall 2007 Elective Courses

CJS 339	Women in Criminal Justice	TR 12:35-1:50pm (1) TR 2:00-3:15pm (2)
COM/ FOR/ ENG 128	Gender in the Humanities	MWF 10-10:50am (1) TR 12:35-1:50pm (2) MWF 2:-2:50pm (3) MW 3:00-4:15pm (4)
ENG 261	Global Women's Lit	TR 2:00-3:15pm
FCS/HIS/ SOC 112	American Family	MWF 8:00-8:50am (1) MWF 9:00-9:50am (2) TR 9:35-10:50am (3) MWF 10-10:50am (4) TR 11:00-12:15pm (5) TR 12:35-1:20pm (6) TR 3:35-4:50pm (7) MW 4:00-5:15pm (8) W 5:30-8:20pm (9)
FCS 222	Cultural Diversity in Dress	W 5:00-7:50pm
FCS 233	Family Economic Resources	MW 10:00-11:00am
FCS 327	Clothing and Behavior	MW 2:00-3:15pm
HIS 261	Women in the U.S. to 1865	MWF 10:00-10:50am
PSY 123	Human Sexuality	MWF 2:00-2:50pm
SOA 265	Personal Relationships	TR 9:35-10:50am
SOA 341	Sociology of Gender	TR 2:00-3:15pm (1) TR 3:35-4:50pm (2)

Illinois State University Women's and Gender Studies Program

Faculty - Please encourage your students to submit abstracts or complete papers that they prepared for your classes to the Women's and Gender Studies Programming Committee for consideration for the spring symposium.

Twelfth Annual Women's and Gender Studies Symposium

Thursday, April 26
1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Friday, April 27
9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

University Art
Galleries

Illinois State
University

For more information, contact
Women's and Gender Studies at:
(309) 438-2947
e-mail Rozel White at wstudies@ilstu.edu
or visit our website at:
<http://www.womensandgenderstudies.ilstu.edu>

Call for Papers

Panels on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning
Lunch at noon on Friday
Keynote Address (1:00 pm)

Dolores Huerta

"Feminism and Social Activism - Saving
the Future with Gender Balance"

Call for Papers

Undergraduate and graduate students are invited to submit proposals for presentation of papers at the Symposium. Proposals/papers are welcome on any topic related to the study of women and gender. Outstanding papers on women and gender issues prepared for courses will be especially welcome!

Proposal

Please send a one-page proposal with the following information to the address below, by **March 23, 2007**:

Proposed paper title

Your name

The course for which and the professor for whom you wrote/are writing the paper

Your address, telephone number, and e-mail

Please briefly describe your proposed presentation. Where relevant, include a summary of the main argument or findings, your research methodology (if applicable), and sources of information/data.

Send to:

Women's and Gender Studies Programming Committee

Illinois State University

Campus Box 4260

Normal, IL 61790-4260

or bring your proposal to the Women's and Gender Studies offices,
231 Rachel Cooper, or e-mail wstudies@ilstu.edu.