

Women's Center Newsletter

October 2007

Queer History Month

This year's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersexed, Queer and Questioning History Month has taken on a new name. Instead of listing each identity, we have decided to call it Queer History Month. We use queer as an umbrella term, encompassing all sexual and gender identities. It includes all people who identify in a certain way, and those who do not identify as anything at all. Queer is a term that includes everyone, which is the main goal of Queer Peer Services and the Women's Center. Please find a list of our events on pages 2 and 3. Our committee worked very hard in putting these events together. If you have the time, check them out. Each one of them is worth it. I especially invite you to attend Judy Shepard on Tuesday, October 23 in the Auxiliary Gym @ 7 pm. Her story is one of inspiration and hope in the face of devastation. It will be particularly moving. I hope to see you at one of our events!

-Christopher Jeune
Queer Peer Services Coordinator

A Note on Breast Cancer Awareness Month



In the month of October, people are wearing pink ribbons everywhere. I absolutely love it, but clearly I am biased, considering I have a pink ribbon permanently tattooed on my ankle. People often ask me why I chose that symbol to be drawn on my body forever. The answer used to be for my mom, Mary Jane, who is currently a 6 year breast cancer survivor. Then, as years have gone by, more people are getting added to the list of people I have the ribbon for: my mother's friend Maria, my god-mother Kathleen, Edie Falco from the

Sopranos, Ernie Green, best known for his career as a fullback with the NFL's Cleveland Browns. The list can go on and on to include the estimated 180,510 people who will be diagnosed in the United States this year, 2,030 of them men, 6,080 of them women in New Jersey. Or the estimated 40,910 people who will lose their battle with breast cancer this year. These numbers can be quite alarming, and sometimes when I look down at my ankle and think of all the significance behind that ribbon, I get very overwhelmed. That is why I have made a conscious decision to do more than just wear a ribbon and actually get involved in the fight against breast cancer. If you are interested in doing more than wearing a ribbon, stop by the Women's Center to find out how to make sure you are aware of the risks of breast cancer and the benefits of early detection. You can also learn how to keep yourself healthy and aware, as well as how to get involved in activism, such as Colleges Against Cancer and the Relay for Life. Wear your ribbon proud, knowing that you are doing something for all the people you wear it for.

-Sarah Costello
Women's Center Office Manager



How can the Women's Center help? The Men's Outreach Coordinator position

My name is Jean Semelfort and I am the Men's Outreach Coordinator (MOC). I am a junior student-athlete majoring in psychology. I am apart of the Track and Field team and the president of the Men of Strength Club. The MOC raises awareness of resources available to men on campus about issues such as sexual assault and violence prevention, the meaning of masculinity, healthy relationships, gender stereotypes, and media images through group and individual settings. I work in the Women's Center because it allows me to create change and work on issues, which I feel are important in today's society, through creative outreach programs.

Contact: x6209 and jsemelfo@ramapo.edu

Women's Center Events

October 2007

Female Friendly Funk

Tuesday, October 2

J. Lee's @ 7 pm

Enjoy music with a conscience and support pro-feminist, gay affirmative, anti-racist bands and musicians.



Poetry Monday with Rigoberto González

Monday, October 8

J. Lee's @ 1 pm

Rigoberto González is the author of two poetry books, *So Often the Pitcher Goes to Water Until It Breaks*, and *Other Fugitives and Other Strangers*; as well as two bilingual children's books. Facilitator: Prof. James Hoch, AIS

34 Million Friends with Jane Roberts

Monday, October 29

York Room @ 2 pm

In 2005 Jane published a book called *34 Million Friends of the Women of the World*. Since 2002, she has traveled to 22 states and spoken at 50 colleges and universities about *34 Million Friends* and the deeper issues of population and development and the human rights of women and girls. She has also had about 40 radio/TV interviews about her book and the issue.

Violence Awareness Week Events:

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes

Tuesday, October 9

Arch (rain site Alumni Lounges) @ 1 pm

Men will walk a mile in women's shoes to raise awareness and money to prevent violence against women.

<http://www.walkamileinhershoes.org/>



The Clothesline Project

Tuesday, October 9

Arch (rain site Friends Hall) - All Day

The Clothesline Project is a display of shirts with graphic messages and illustrations created by women and men who are survivors of violence.

<http://www.bergencountyrapecrisis.org>



V-Tech and Relationship Violence

Wednesday, October 10

York Room @ 1 pm

A facilitated discussion about the links between the Virginia Tech tragedy and relationship violence.



"No" The Rape Documentary Screening

Wednesday, October 10

J. Lee's @ 7 pm

Winner of both a juried award and an audience choice award at the 2006 San Diego Women Film Festival, this ground-breaking feature length documentary explores the international reality of rape and other forms of sexual assault through the first person testimonies, scholarship, spirituality, and activism of African-Americans.

<http://www.notherapedocumentary.org/>



Take Back the Night

Thursday, October 11

Alumni Lounges @ 7 pm

Take Back the Night is an empowering rally and march with the purpose of unifying women and men in an awareness of sexual and relationship violence.

Queer History Month Events:

Peterson Toscano - Queer 101: Now I know my gAy, B, C's...

Thursday, October 4

Friends Hall @ 7 pm

We're here; we're queer, but what the heck does it mean? The creator of "Doin' Time in the Homo No Mo Halfway House--How I Survived the Ex-Gay Movement!" presents a bold new theater piece -- Queer 101. Find out what happens to Chad after he graduates from the Homo No Mo Halfway House and has to cover the Queer 101 class. He takes his class on a colorful tour as he introduces individuals who shaped queer history and his own.

National Coming Out Day

Thursday, October 11

Friends Hall @ 1 pm

Members of the LGBTIQQ community will share their coming out stories with the campus community in an open speak-out.



Women's Center Events

October 2007

(continued)

LGBT Walking Tour of NYC

Saturday, October 13

Leaving The Circle @ 10 am

Join Professor Bob Sproul as he presents a walking tour of gay New York City.

Leviticus Who?

SC137 @ 1pm

Wednesday, October 10th

A discussion about the issue of sexual orientation as read in the bible. Professor Bob Sproul will facilitate a discussion about Leviticus and what this means for the GLBTIQQ community.

Closeted and Cloistered Voices: Queer Composing in the Baroque Era

Wednesday, October 17

York Room @ 1:00 pm

Facilitator: Professor Ursel Schlicht

Recent musicological research has uncovered much new insight into music making, composing, and queer life in the baroque era. This talk touches on the thrills and difficulties to uncover such subtle but fascinating information, of the cues in composer's lives and music regarding their gender. Be prepared for surprises - you may re-encounter familiar sounds and faces in a new light.

Judy Shepard

Tuesday, October 23

Auxiliary Gym @ 7 pm

In 1998, Judy Shepard lost her son, Matthew, to a murder motivated by anti-gay hate. Turning tragedy into a crusade for justice, and determined to prevent Matthew's fate from befalling others, she established The Matthew Shepard Foundation to help carry on his legacy. She has appeared in two Human Rights Campaign advertisements urging an end to anti-gay violence and promoting a greater understanding of gay issues.

Additionally, Shepard is actively involved with Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG).

Shepard states: "We get so complacent in our lives that we forget not everyone is safe..."

<http://www.keplerspeakers.com>



Race and Homosexuality with Andrew Jolivet

Tuesday, October 30

Alumni Lounges @ 1 pm

Andrew Jolivet Ph.D. is an accomplished educator, writer, speaker, and social/cultural critic. A current assistant professor at San Francisco State University, he will be speaking on issues of race, sexuality, and social justice - particularly as they related to homophobia, civil rights, marriage equality, HIV/AIDS disparities and the intersections of racism, class, and queer identity formation.



Special Meetings

Men Against Violence Meetings

Every other Monday (started on September 18)

SC217 @ 9pm

This discussion group creates a safe space for men to talk about masculinity and the prevention of violence against women. All men welcome!

Queer Peer Services Peer Support Group

Every Monday

Women's Center @ 9:30pm

This peer support group creates a safe space for members of the GLBTIQQ (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersexed Queer, Questioning) community to talk about issues students face on campus pertaining to sexuality, relationships, and dealing with homophobia and related issues. All GLBTIQQ people are welcome!

Ramapo Pride

Every Monday

Women's Center @ 1pm

Ramapo Pride provides a community for GLBTIQQ people and their allies.

Feminists United

Every Thursday

Women's Center @ 1pm

Feminists United is for students who support equality between the sexes and advocate to end the many problems that plague our society!





Hot Topic



Stalking

What is Stalking?

The legal definition of stalking is defined primarily by state statutes. While statutes vary, most define stalking as a course of conduct that places a person in fear for their safety.

However, the term "stalking" is more commonly used to describe specific kinds of behavior directed at a particular person, such as harassing or threatening another person. The variety of specific strategies employed and behaviors displayed by stalkers are limited only by the creativity and ingenuity of the stalkers themselves. Suffice it to say, virtually any unwanted contact between a stalker and their victim which directly or indirectly communicates a threat or places the victim in fear can generally be referred to as stalking.

How Common is Stalking?

Best estimates indicate that as many as 200,000 Americans are currently being stalked; moreover, 1 in 20 women will become targets of stalking behavior at least once during their lifetimes. With the passage of the 1994 Crime Bill by the U.S. Congress, which mandated the tracking and compilation of stalking crime statistics, experts will be able to determine the prevalence of this crime for the first time.

Who Are Stalkers?

Demographically

Stalking is a gender neutral crime, with both male and female perpetrators and victims. However, most stalkers are men. Best statistics indicate that 75-80% of all stalking cases involve men stalking women. Most stalkers tend to fall into the young to middle-aged categories and have above-average intelligence. Stalkers come from every walk of life and every socio-economic background. Virtually anyone can be a stalker, just as anyone can be a stalking victim.

Love Obsession Stalkers

This category is characterized by stalkers who develop a love obsession or fixation on another person with whom they have no personal relationship. The target may be only a casual acquaintance or even a complete stranger. This category represents about 20-25% of all stalking cases.

Simple Obsession Stalkers

This second category represents 70-80% of all stalking cases and is distinguished by the fact that some previous personal or romantic relationship existed between the stalker and the victim before the stalking behavior began.

While this kind of stalker may or may not have psychological disorders, all clearly have personality disorders. One forensic psychologist has attempted to identify some of the common personality traits and behavioral characteristics among this category of stalkers. Stalkers in this class are characterized as individuals who are:

- * Socially maladjusted and inept;
- * Emotionally immature;
- * Often subject to feelings of powerlessness;
- * Unable to succeed in relationships by socially-acceptable means;
- * Jealous, bordering on paranoid; and
- * Extremely insecure about themselves and suffering from low self-esteem.

The self-esteem of simple obsession stalkers is often closely tied to their relationship with their partner. In many cases, such stalkers bolster their own self-esteem by dominating and intimidating their mates. Exercising power over another gives them some sense of power in a world where they otherwise feel powerless.

- www.ncvc.org/scr



Hot Topic



Stalking in America

- * 1,006,970 women and 370,990 men are stalked annually in the U.S.
- * 1 in 12 women and 1 in 45 men will be stalked in their lifetime.
- * 77% of female victims and 64% of male victims know their stalker.
- * 87% of stalkers are men.
- * 59% of female victims and 30% of male victims are stalked by an intimate partner.
- * 73% of intimate partner stalkers verbally threatened victims with physical violence, and almost 46% of victims experienced one or more violent incidents by the stalker.
- * 28% of female victims and 10% of male victims obtained a protective order. 69% of female victims and 81% of male victims had the protection order violated.

http://www.actionohio.org/CampusStalking_Brochure_06.pdf

Protect Yourself From Cyberstalkers

Web and Email accounts: Don't give abusers access to your Web account. Use a password that can't be guessed (a combination of letters, numbers, and non-alphanumeric characters, example: "7#pz%4"). Print out and save harassing or abusive messages. They can be used as evidence against the abuser in a court of law.

You can defeat a computer-savvy abuser's attempts to track your Web accesses on your personal computer (such as a visit to this page), by removing the history on your hard drive,

as follows:

In Internet Explorer, Select 'Internet Options' from the Tools Menu. On the ensuing 'General Page' Click 'Delete Files' in the Temporary Files box and 'Clear History' in the History box. You can re-set the default history retention period to 0 days, as well.

In current versions of Netscape, select Preferences on the Edit menu. Select 'Clear History'; click 'Advanced' then 'Cache', and 'Clear Disk Cache.' In older versions, select Edit - Options - Cache - Clear Disk Cash. In older versions, Select 'Network Options' on the Options menu, then 'Clear Disk Cache.'

In AOL, Select Preferences on the Members menu. Click on the Web icon and select Advanced: 'Purge Cache'.

The surest way to prevent an abuser from knowing about your Web activities is to use a computer in a public library, or in a friend's house, or at work.

<http://www.co.bergen.nj.us/ADV/Cyberstalkers.htm>



T-shirt isn't funny to stalking victims

Ruth Sheehan
(Raleigh) News & Observer
RUTH SHEEHAN

Ruth Sheehan has been a metro columnist for The News & Observer in Raleigh for five years. Her columns appear each Monday and Thursday.

It's just a little T-shirt. Gray with white and fuchsia writing.

But its message was a slap in the face to

the woman who called me Thursday after seeing it in her local Wal-Mart.

"Some call it 'stalking,' I call it 'love'."

For the past two years, this woman has been stalked until she feels like a prisoner in her own life. She has been spied upon, bullied and threatened with her life.

She has been in frequent communication with local authorities. Yet, because North Carolina has one of the most vague stalking laws in the nation (a bill is wending its way through the legislature to address that), her recourse has been limited.

So when she saw the T-shirts, clearly aimed for the teen-younger adult set, she didn't see the humor.

"It's reprehensible," said the woman, whose story is well documented but who asked not to be identified for fear that her stalker might retaliate.

"People don't realize how serious stalking is," she said. "You constantly live in fear, look over your shoulder and suffer from psychological and physical symptoms due to the stress of the stalker."

(continued on next page)





Hot Topic



She wondered aloud: What's next?

"Some say it's rape, I call it hot sex"?
Or: "Some call it domestic violence,
I say I'm just teaching her a lesson"?

To me, the T-shirts fuel a notion that stalking is a natural, even comical element, of young love. Typical teenage mooning. I doubt that the college students once stalked by the Virginia Tech shooter would view it as quite so harmless.

When I called the N.C. Coalition Against Domestic Violence office in Durham about all this, I didn't even get the words out before executive director Rita Anita Linger said, "Oh yes, we've heard about the T-shirts, and oh yes, we're responding."

The coalition sent a letter to Wal-Mart calling on the company to "model corporate and community responsibility" by removing the T-shirts from stores immediately.

The question now is how the world's largest retailer will respond. Tara Stewart, a spokeswoman for the company, forwarded me information about Wal-Mart partnering with the attorney general's office in South Carolina on a public education campaign to combat domestic violence.

"We work hard on this issue and do a great deal to bring awareness and help families in need," she wrote in an e-mail message.

And the T-shirts fit into that public education campaign how?



Repeated calls and e-mail messages elicited promises of answers -- but no answer. No explanation.

What is a wonder is that a company as successful as Wal-Mart wouldn't see how the stalking T-shirt tends to undermine its public education campaign against domestic violence.

Sure, it's just one T-shirt with one ignorant message.

If only it didn't say so much about the world we live in, too.

<http://www.charlotte.com/news/story/293341.html>



On the Web



Visit the Women's Center website at:

<http://www.ramapo.edu/studentlife/womenscenter/> for even more information!

Newsletter created by Elyse Jankowski and Samantha Smith

If you want to write for the WC newsletter, e-mail women@ramapo.edu!

Activism Corner



What can you do if you are being stalked on campus?

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

If you think you are being stalked, report incidents to local law enforcement - Ramapo College Security: x6666, Mahwah Police: (201) 529-1005

If you have been physically assaulted by a stalker, call Ramapo's Assault Contact Team at x7222.

Talk about your experiences with others you trust. (family members, friends, roommates, school counselor/advisor, etc.) They may help you assess potential danger and seek help.

Deviate from your daily routine and avoid predictability.

Be careful about sharing your personal information.

You can be more credible and build a stronger case if you:

Keep a log listing all stalking incidents (dates, times, places, what happened, witnesses, etc.).

Save everything you receive from the stalker (e.g. letters, emails, gifts, etc.).

