

## Award winners



Karen Pfost (right) presents the Luellen Laurenti Award to Caitlin Keturi



LEFT Julia Drauden received the 2010 Women's and Gender Studies Student Achievement Award



Breanna Mull, Anne M. Semlak Award recipient, with Jay Groves, who presented the award

## Art, art, and more art in the WGS program office

For three years now WGS has given wall space to student artists. A few of our exhibits this year have included Hailey Fisk's whimsical photography exhibit "Public Interaction;" Kayla Hueneberg's "Dirty Linen," a collection of paintings depicting women's sexuality; and Renee Constanzo's photography of the good-deed doing "Triad Moped Gang."



ABOVE Hailey Fisk with photograph from "Public Interaction"



ABOVE Kayla Hueneberg's "Dirty Linen"



BELOW Renee Constanzo's "Triad Moped Gang"



ILLINOIS STATE  
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# WGS ALUMNI MATTER

SUMMER 2010

## From the director

Dear Alumni,

Greetings once again from the Women's and Gender Studies program! This is our fourth annual newsletter and I can't wait to tell you about all we've been up to since our last mailing. The big news here is that the WGS faculty and staff have just completed our Five-Year Plan! It's hard to believe that more than five years ago we began what I lovingly refer to as our "radical make-over." We have a new name, new faculty, new courses, the *Gender Matters* quarterly newsletter, and more visibility on campus and in the community. And, of course...the *WGS Alumni Matter* newsletter!

This year the WGS program was given Diversity Advocacy's Outstanding Established Program Award for the 15th Annual Women's and Gender Studies Symposium. The 15th annual symposium had creative writing panels and scholarly presentations on gender passing, gendering Black sexual bodies, and on women's history. Some students drove down from Chicago to attend. Rickie Solinger drew a large crowd with her keynote address, "Who gets to be a Real Mother in the U.S.: Race, Class and the Fallacy of 'Choice.'" Her "Beggars and Choosers" photography exhibit challenged more than 800 visitors to think critically about mothering and poverty in the United States. WGS also continued to contribute to the International Studies Seminar Series. This year we had speakers address HIV/AIDS charities in Africa, gender in medieval Italian literature, and the Iranian Feminist Movement. Jonathan Stacks was invited to campus for two talks on sexual health education.

On the curricular front we introduced WGS 392: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender/Queer Studies and Theory. Exciting new electives such as Sociology of the Body, Gay Men's English, and Ancient Greek and Roman Women were also offered.

FLAME—our student feminist organization—continues to light up the campus. Once again they performed Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* and raised enough funds to help women locally and in the Congo fight sexual violence. They also volunteered at the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes March against Sexual Violence cosponsored by Student Counseling Services and Male Allies Against Sexual Violence (MARS). As always, Take Back the Night and the Clothesline Project were popular events.

So many alums have stopped by to visit this year. We just love seeing you and hearing what you've been up to, and what you've been doing with your WGS minors and certificates. Thanks to all of you for staying in touch!

With gratitude for the differences you are making in our world,

*Alison Bailey*

## Alumni news

**Rachel Spangler '05** views her son Jackson as being her primary job. However, she has signed a contract for her third novel, *The Long Road Home*, and is a few chapters into writing her fourth. She got a huge boost during the summer when both of her previous novels won Golden Crown Literary Awards. She will also be teaching a romance writing class at SUNY-Fredonia. Learn more about her work at [www.rachelspangler.com](http://www.rachelspangler.com).



Anisty Lilith Mirasol

**Anisty Lilith Mirasol [Tiffany Starnes] '05** is finishing her master's degree at The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work. She is also working as an Outreach Specialist for The Girls Empowerment Network of Austin (GENAustin). This year she began a new chapter in her life and legally changed her name.



Diana Onken with her daughter

**Diana Onken '97** has moved back to central Illinois. She and her family have relocated to Mahomet. She still works (from home) for NARAL, and flies to Washington, D.C. once a month for meetings.



Brandy Peak

**Jenna Goldsmith '10** has been accepted into the Department of English graduate program at the University of Kentucky.

**Brandy Peak '09** is at DePaul University studying for her master's in nonprofit management. She completed her Development Internship with Rape Victims Advocates, and is the Outreach Coordinator for Illinois Choice Action Team. She wants to work for NARAL.

**Annaliisa Ahlman '08** is currently the technical director and Theatre Department assistant at Niles North High School. The Kennedy Center Alliance of Arts Education and National School Board Association have recognized her school district as the best for arts education in the country. Her greatest accomplishment this year was codesigning and building the set for the musical *Rent*. See the video at [flash.niles-hs.k12.il.us/InternetTV/ViewVideo.aspx?VideoID=5268](http://flash.niles-hs.k12.il.us/InternetTV/ViewVideo.aspx?VideoID=5268)



Annaliisa Ahlman

## WGS Symposium speaker asks: "Who gets to be a mother in America?"

Independent historian Rickie Solinger's visit left a huge impression on the Illinois State campus and community. Her curated photo exhibit "Beggars and Choosers: Is Motherhood a Class Privilege in America?" drew hundreds of visitors to the University Galleries. The show offered a visual counter-narrative to stereotypes of women who mother on the margins. The primary audience for all her work is the academic community. She seeks to interrupt the curriculum, calling attention to reproductive justice issues that most curricula ignore. Her university lectures at Milner Library and the WGS symposium exposed the historical roots of present injustices. The U.S. came late to providing social welfare services. Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) was instituted in the 1930s in response to the systemic causes of poverty during the Great Depression. However, legislators who crafted the



Rickie Solinger and University Galleries director Barry Blinderman at the exhibit

ADC policy still valued only some mothers: those previously married, widowed, or divorced (single mothers need not apply). Additionally, domestic and agricultural workers—the poorest of the workers, mostly African-American or Mexican-American—were excluded. Rather than championing a rhetoric of reproductive choice, Solinger urges activists to focus their efforts on reproductive justice, which, according to Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice (ACRJ), is achieved when women and girls have the economic, social, and political power and resources to make healthy decisions about their bodies, sexuality, and reproduction for themselves, their families, and their communities in all areas of their lives.



Barnes at the Seminar Series

## Questioning Project Red's approach to the African AIDS epidemic

As part of the International Studies Seminar Series, Teresa Barnes critiqued the way Project Red addresses the African AIDS epidemic. This philanthropic organization licenses its brand to other companies that donate part of their Project Red profits to buy medicine to treat AIDS. Barnes, an associate professor of history and gender and women's studies at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, argues that while the program delivers medicine to people who need it, this model ensures that more money goes to promoting products "for the cure" and to pharmaceutical companies than it does to healthcare organizations.

Further, Barnes pointed out that the program does nothing to address the structural problems underlying the spread of AIDS, particularly gender inequality. As long as young people don't respect themselves, their sex partners, and their bodies, Barnes points out, medicine alone will not stop the spread of AIDS.

## FLAME carries on activist traditions

In its 19th year at Illinois State University, Take Back the Night (TBTN) took place on a cold, rainy, October night. FLAME (Feminist Led Activist Movement to Empower) put on the event, which gathered community members, Bloomington-Normal organizations, and Illinois State students and faculty to shed light on issues of domestic and sexual violence in our community. TBTN includes an empowerment rally, a march through the campus community, and safe-space discussions. This spring FLAME members also volunteered at the "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" March against Sexual Violence cosponsored by Student Counseling Services and Male Allies Against Sexual Violence (MARS).



Alumni Anisty Marisol and sister Tonya Starnes get ready to march.



WGS staff Breanna Mull and Kelly Donnellan tabling

## Going medieval on gender

Regina Psaki visited the University to deliver two lectures on gender in medieval literature. On February 3 she presented "Traffic in Talk about Women: Praise and Blame in Medieval French and Italian" to the International Studies Seminar Series. The next day she lectured on "*Le Roman de Silence: The Maiden-Knight Comes of Age*" to students and faculty of the Departments of English and of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures.



Psaki explains the tale of the Maiden Knight

## Jonathan Stacks speaks out on sexual education

Jonathan Stacks, M.S.W., spoke on October 7 about "Sexual Health Education: Creating Forward Movement," and also lectured on sexual health education and reproductive justice to students in the Women, Gender, and Society course.

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