

After the **F** Word...

The **G** Words

The **G** Words is for **Gender Justice**, gaining purposeful knowledge to effect social change towards an inclusive and equitable campus community.

Margaret Sloss Women's Center Newsletter • Volume 2 • Issue 1 • February/March 2008



Letter from the Director

“The Sloss House has stood proudly on central campus since 1883, and although she is in need of extreme attention and repair, she remains a reminder to all about equity and social justice.”

The Winter Solstice has passed and believe it or not, our days are growing longer. Winter is my favorite season. I grew up in Minnesota and you have to get to love it or it will make you mad! I enjoy the crispness of a fresh snow and cold air that surrounds us. Changing seasons help us mark the passing time. We have the opportunity to see things begin, enjoy them, and then watch them fade away four times a year! Seasons, like semesters are filled with excitement, anxiety, and hesitation.

As we all return to the Iowa State community I hope you bring restful moments that rejuvenate you for the upcoming semester.

The Margaret Sloss Women's Center has been on the Iowa State campus for 26

years helping students, staff, and faculty through each semester's "seasons" of change and challenge. The Sloss House has stood proudly on central campus since 1883, and although she is in need of extreme attention and repair, she remains a reminder to all about equity and social justice. The Sloss House is a comfortable place to relax, study, and meet new people. Stop by and use the computers (1 desktop, and 8 laptops), store and eat your lunch/dinner, find resources for a paper on women or women's issues in the library, or volunteer.

The staff at the center are here to assist, refer, encourage, and put a smile of hope on your face. We have three new (this year) graduate assistants: Val Erwin, Marissa Klousie,

and Laura Bestler-Wilcox. They are all graduate students in Higher Education. Marcia Purdy our Secretary, has been in the center for over 10 years and on campus much longer.

I'm happy to continue as the director of the center after seven years in the position.

We celebrate good news among us this semester. Marcia Purdy graduated with her masters degree in Higher Education in December and I completed my course work for my doctoral degree in Educational Leadership & Policy Studies. Sometimes the endings of seasons are just as exciting and frightening as the beginnings—but we are celebrating!

Welcome back! Stop by and say hello!

Peace, *Penny Rice*

About the Margaret Sloss House

The Sloss House is preparing to embark on another exciting year of activism, learning, and community building. Whether you've never set foot in our doors or you're a "house resident" there is a whole array of exciting new programs happening in the Sloss House this year. You will find a calendar and a list of events to make sure you never miss an exciting minute of what is most certainly going to be our best year yet!



The G Words is a monthly electronic newsletter produced by the Margaret Sloss Women's Center to provide the Iowa State campus with the latest information on Women's Resources and activities. If you would like to contribute to The G Words, please contact womenctr@iastate.edu

Women Moving Forward: Elizabeth Blackwell by Val Erwin



Elizabeth Blackwell was the first woman doctor in America. She was born in 1821 in England and moved to the U.S. when she was 8. She soon found a desire for medicine and started to apply for medical schools. She was rejected by over twenty schools until she was eventually accepted into Geneva Medical College in New York. She graduated first in her class in 1849 becoming the first woman to graduate from medical school

in the modern era. Elizabeth planned to go on to become a surgeon but during a medical procedure she gained an infection in her eye causing her to go blind. However, because of Elizabeth's example her younger sister Emily became the first woman surgeon.

In 1853, Elizabeth started a clinic for the poor in New York with three other women doctors, including her sister. During the Civil War she created the Women's Central Association of Relief, which selected and trained nurses to work in the Civil War. She helped to create the Women's Medical College in New York and the London School of Medicine for Women. Elizabeth Blackwell didn't just become the first woman doctor but also actively encouraged other women to go into the field of medicine. Books by Elizabeth Blackwell: 1871: *The Religion of Health*, 1878: *Counsel to Parents on the Moral Education of Their Children*, 1884: *The Human Element in Sex*, 1895, her autobiography: *Pioneer Work in Opening the Medical Profession to Women*, 1902: *Essays in Medical Sociology*

To learn more about Elizabeth Blackwell:

womenshistory.about.com/od/blackwellelizabeth/a/eliz_blackwell.htm,
Elizabeth Blackwell: First Woman Physician by Tristan Boyer Bunn.

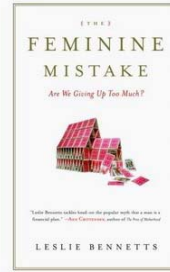
Gender Justice

Gender Justice (GJ) was created and is coordinated by the Women's Center. The course fulfills one credit of students' U.S. diversity three credit requirement. GJ focuses on contemporary gender issues present in the United States and will examine how the socialization process impacts our perspectives, experiences, and personal and professional relationships.

Students are exposed to theories and topics necessary to create understandings of issues occurring in society as well as develop skills to enhance communication and understanding among men and women. The purpose of GJ is for students to receive practical and purposeful knowledge, grounded in research and theory that can be used to develop their own interpersonal and intrapersonal communication abilities and effect social change.

GJ is a seminar-style course which relies upon active participation and thoughtful commentary. Check out the syllabus: <http://www.dso.iastate.edu/wc>

Book Review & Reflection by Marcia Purdy



Review: The Feminine Mistake: Are We Giving Up Too Much? by Leslie Bennetts is a book about women's roles and the messages given to girls that it is too difficult to balance work and family. "If they don't really 'have to' then it is better for the families if they stay home. Not only is this untrue, but the arguments in favor of stay-at-home motherhood fail to consider the surprising benefits of work and the unexpected toll of giving it up."

Bennetts raised two children while earning a living and understands the challenges and rewards firsthand.

Earning money and being successful not only make women feel great, but when women sacrifice their financial autonomy by quitting their jobs, they become vulnerable to divorce as well as the potential illness, death, or unemployment of their breadwinner husbands. Unfortunately, when women gamble on dependency, most eventually end up on the wrong side of the odds.

Bennetts' interviews with women from a wide variety of backgrounds documents the steep toll when women forfeit the intellectual, emotional, psychological, and even medical benefits of self-efficiency. Susan Faludi, author of *Backlash* and *Stiffed* says, "In a time of trumped-up 'opting-out' and 'nesting-fever' trends, *The Feminine Mistake* comes as an essential corrective. With good sense, hard facts, ample wit, and compelling urgency, Leslie Bennetts delivers an incontrovertible argument for economic self-efficiency as the foundation of women's well-being. *The Feminine Mistake* should be required reading for all young women, and a lot of older ones, too."

Personal Reflection: This book seems like some sort of biography about my life. I had no one encouraging me to pursue a college degree that would lead to a career. I did what many other women did in the 1960's and 1970's and married my high school sweetheart when I was barely 19. At the time I thought all I ever wanted was to raise my children. My self-esteem plunged, I grew angry and bitter without really understanding my discontent. I was always waiting...waiting for the next baby, the next move, the next house. I was middle-aged before I realized that I was the only one that could make me happy.

As basic as that sounds, it is the truth. Close friends' and family's relationships were disintegrating around us. Of those women still married, many are in unhappy relationships and stuck because they cannot afford to divorce and are not able to support themselves. For many years I lived in fear that my partner would find a younger, more attractive woman and ask for a divorce. But then I began working at ISU, and have been able to earn my B.S. In December, I graduated with a Master's in Higher Education, all while working and raising my family. It is still extremely important to me to know I am able to support and care for myself and for the first time in my life, I feel like it is a reality. My daughter got this book as a Christmas gift this year.



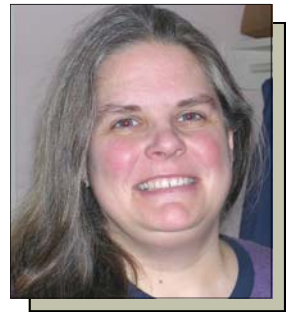
New Staff at the Women's Center

The Sloss House Women's Center has three new graduate assistants for the 2007-2008 academic year.



Val Erwin is a first year student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program. She received her B.A. in History with a minor in Disability Studies from Michigan State University. She is originally from Detroit Michigan and enjoys watching sports, reading a good book, and walking around campus.

Laura Bestler-Wilcox joined the staff in January 2008 as the graduate assistant for assessment and marketing. She will be finishing her coursework towards a Ph.D. in Higher Education with a Concentration in Social Justice over the next two years. Laura received her B.S. in Broad Area Art at University of Wisconsin-River Falls, and a M.Ed. in Educational Leadership from Grand Valley State University, MI. She worked as the Assistant Director of Student Activities from 1997-2006 at Iowa State University. She has spent the last year working with online gaming communities, developing her art portfolio, and as a nanny for Harvey Kenemer. She and her partner, Lonnie, have 5 amazingly humorous cats.



Marissa Klousie is in her second semester as a graduate student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Program. Marissa graduated in 2005 with a B.A. in Psychology and a minor in Women's Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Marissa calls Wisconsin home, but has been living in Ames for a year with her partner, Robyn. Marissa invites you to stop by and visit at the MSWC.



Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much.

Helen Keller

Nominations Sought for Margaret Sloss Gender Equity Scholarship & Awards

Margaret Sloss was the first woman to graduate from the College of Veterinary medicine at Iowa State University. She earned her bachelor's degree in zoology from Iowa State in 1923 and her master's degree in veterinary anatomy in 1932. Despite an unwritten policy against admitting women as veterinary students, Dean Stange let her accumulate credits in the veterinary medical curriculum, and in August 1938, Margaret Sloss was awarded a D.V.M. degree. She grew up on the Iowa State University campus where her father was Superintendent of Grounds. Her childhood home is now the location



of the Margaret Sloss Women's Center, which was established there in 1981.

The Women's Center Advisory Board is requesting your assistance in nominating candidates for the Second Annual Margaret Sloss Gender Equity Award. Nominees of the Margaret Sloss Gender Equity Award should have demonstrated a commitment to helping women gain equity within the university and/or the Ames community. Significant contributions come in many forms, from public acts such as organizational leadership to personal acts such as academic and professional mentoring. Examples include:

- Promoting awareness and understanding of the effects of sexism or prejudicial attitudes upon women;
- Raising campus awareness of feminist issues;

- Promoting attitudes and the use of skills and techniques which work toward the elimination of a sexist ideology;
- Demonstrating an unusual and unique effort to promote gender equity in the classroom, university or community
- Promoting the development of policies and procedures designed to achieve gender equity;
- Developing or strengthening programs aimed at a scholarly understanding of women and gender roles;
- Promoting the respect of human diversity and the rights of women.

Those eligible for the Margaret Sloss Gender Equity Award include Iowa State faculty and staff, Iowa State undergraduate and graduate students, and Ames community members. The awards will be presented at the Margaret Sloss Gender Equity Awards Luncheon on March 5, 2008 at 11:30 a.m. in the Campanile Room of the Memorial Union. Tickets are available at the Margaret Sloss Women's Center for \$15.00 per person, and RSVPs are to be made by February 28.

Please show your support for those who work for equity on campus and within the community by nominating them for the Margaret Sloss Gender Equity Award. Nominations may be made by ISU faculty, staff, and students or by members of the Ames community. Nomination forms are available online:

<http://www.dso.iastate.edu/wc/msgea/>. **The deadline for submitting nominations is Wednesday, February 20, 2008 at 4:00pm.** For more information, contact Marissa Klousie, Equity and Social Justice Educator-Graduate Assistant of the Margaret Sloss Women's Center, at 294-4154 or mklousie@iastate.edu.

EVENTS

Margaret Sloss Women's Center

FEBRUARY



A Benefit Production of Eve Ensler's

The Vagina Monologues

As Part of the 2008 V-Day Campaign
Raising funds for Assault Care Center Extending Shelter Support

Join us as we celebrate V-Day's Ten Year Anniversary,
to raise awareness

and end violence against women

TWO PERFORMANCES ONLY!

Thursday, February 14, 2008 at 7:00pm

Friday, 15, 2008 at 7:00pm

Durham Great Hall, Iowa State Memorial Union

Admission: \$10, available at the Memorial Union Ticket Office
(11:00am-5:00pm M-F) or at the door the day of the performance.

Contact: Val Erwin, MSWC Graduate Assistant,
verwin@iastate.edu, 515/294-0886

Sponsored by: Margaret Sloss Women's Center, Vagina Warriors,
and Student Union Board

The Vagina Warriors Celebrate Their 10th Year at Iowa State

Since V-Day launched its very first event in 1998, the movement has encountered incredible women working to end violence against women and girls in their communities. These women have often experienced violence personally or witnessed it within their communities and dedicated themselves toward ending such violence through effective, grassroots means.

They have been the very heart of V-Day since it was conceived as a worldwide movement to empower and enable local activists to raise awareness and funds locally through V-Day benefit productions of "*The Vagina Monologues*."

In every community there are humble activists working every day, beat by beat, to undo suffering. They sit by hospital beds, pass new laws, chant taboo words, write proposals, beg for money, demonstrate and hold vigils in the streets. *Every woman has a warrior inside waiting to be born.* In order to guarantee a world without violence, in a time of danger and escalating madness, we urge them to come out.

The Vagina Warriors is hosting the February production of *The Vagina Monologues*, February 14 and 15, 2008 at Durham Great Hall, Memorial Union. General Admission tickets available for \$10.00.

Friday, February 1
2:00pm-4:00pm Margaret Sloss Women's Center Advisory Board
3:00pm-5:00pm Graduate Women's Network, Margaret Sloss House

Tuesday, February 12
11:30am-1:00pm Faculty Women's Network, Campanile Room, MU

Thursday, February 14
7:00pm *The Vagina Monologues*, Great Hall, MU (\$10)

Friday, February 15
7:00pm *The Vagina Monologues*, Great Hall, MU (\$10)

Wednesday, February 20
Gender Equity Scholarships & Award Nominations Due

Friday, February 22
6:00pm-? Social: Graduate Women's Network, MU Underground

Thursday, February 28
RSVP (\$15) on or before this date for Margaret Sloss
Gender Equity Scholarship & Awards Luncheon

MARCH

Wednesday, March 5
11:30am-1:00pm Margaret Sloss Gender Equity
Scholarship & Awards Luncheon
Gallery Room, MU (\$15 RSVP by 2/28/08)

Friday, March 7
8:00am-5:00pm **ISCORE:** 9th Annual Iowa State Conference on
Race & Ethnicity (<http://www.iscore.iastate.edu/>)
Graduate Women's Network, Sloss House

Thursday, March 13
11:30am-1:00pm Faculty Women's Network, Gallery Room, MU

Monday, March 17-21 SPRING BREAK

APRIL

Friday, April 4
3:00pm-5:00pm Graduate Women's Network, Margaret Sloss House

Monday, April 7-Sunday, April 13 VEISHEA

Monday, April 7
11:00am-1:00pm SART Flag Display, Campus Lawn (TBD)

Wednesday, April 9
11:30am-1:00pm Faculty Women's Network, Cardinal Room, MU

Friday, April 11
11:00am-1:00pm SART Flag Display, Campus Lawn (TBD)
2:00pm-4:00pm Margaret Sloss Women's Center Advisory Board

Saturday, April 12
9:00am-4:00pm VEISHEA: Rest & Relaxation, Margaret Sloss House
Tuesday, April 15
Clothesline Project, Margaret Sloss House Lawn

Tuesday, April 22
6:00pm-8:00pm Take Back the Night Rally & March
MU West Terrace
8:00pm-10:00pm Take Back the Night -- Reflection & Entertainment
The Maintenance Shop, MU

Monday, April 28-Friday, May 2 DEAD WEEK

MAY

Friday, May 2
4:00pm-5:00pm Graduate Women's Network, Margaret Sloss House

Monday, May 5-Friday, May 9 FINALS WEEK

Friday, May 9 Graduate Commencement
Friday, May 10 Undergraduate Commencement

Revolution begins with
the self, in the self.

~ Toni Cade Bambara, writer



Nominations Sought for the Margaret Sloss Women's Center Equity Scholarship & Awards

Significant contributions come in many forms, from public acts such as organizational leadership to personal acts such as academic and professional mentoring. Please show your support for those who work for equity on campus and within the community by nominating them for the Margaret Sloss Gender Equity Award.

Nomination forms are available at: <http://www.dso.iastate.edu/wc/msgea/>.

The deadline for submitting nominations is Monday, February 25, 2008.

Nominees will be recognized at the Second Annual Equity Scholarship & Awards Luncheon on March 5, 2008 in the Gallery Room, MU. Tickets are available for \$15.00 at the Margaret Sloss Women's Center; RSVP by February 28.

For more information, contact:

Marissa Klousie

Equity and Social Justice Educator

Margaret Sloss Women's Center

515/294-4154 or mklousie@iastate.edu.