



SDS

director's report

I knew that acting as if I were Brenda Cossman for six months was going to be a challenge, for the first half of her well-deserved research leave. But one measure of how much we've grown since I occupied this position, and how much energy Brenda has applied to building the profile of SDS, is that there is so much happening.

I want to start by saying "thanks" to Wendy Koslow, who served as the Bonham Centre's administrator since mid-2008. She decided that her long term future depends on moving from part-time graduate studies to full time (in the Higher Education program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education). We had an opportunity to wish her well just before she stepped down in July.

I am pleased to introduce Rebecca Thorpe, who began as Bonham Centre administrator in mid-September. She comes to us from the Faculty of Pharmacy and before that a degree in our own program, so she has a terrific background in the issues that engage SDS students. She is already putting her stamp on the Centre, and we are delighted at that.

What else is new? University College has radically revamped its web site, and so a lot of energy has gone into augmenting and updating our section of it. We're at the same address - www.utoronto.ca/sexualdiversity - so look us up.

We start the academic year with the largest roster of undergraduate courses ever. David Brennan, from Social Work, is launching his new course on "Sex and the Epidemic." We have a new SDS special topics course on "Queer Musics" taught by Liz Gould (Faculty of Music), this in addition to a repeat of Andrew Lesk's "Queer Pop/Culture." We are also working on another new option, offered by Patrick Keilty, who has just come to the Faculty of Information with an interest in queer digital culture.

We now have 18 courses offered either by us directly or other units who give our students special access. When I think even a few years back, this represents spectacular growth.

Our graduate program also continues to prosper. We have a strong set of new entrants this year, with a terrifically broad set of interests and disciplinary backgrounds. We are exploring the possibility of adding two new partner academic

units — the Geography department and the Toronto School of Theology — which would mean over 35 graduate programs across the U of T linked to us.

As usual we are going to have lots of special events this year. We will have already started off by cosponsoring talks by distinguished visitors from Britain (Robert Wintemute) and the US (Martin Malanson), talking about international LGBT rights regimes and diasporic queerness in the twenty-first century respectively, and a panel discussion featuring LGBT advocates from Kenya and Uganda. We will be hosting other events later this fall and during the winter, and members of the broader Bonham Centre family will be sent notices of them as soon as we nail down dates.

And then looking further into the future we see very exciting developments. World Pride is coming to Toronto in 2014, and in the same year so will the large and important Berkshire Conference on Women's History. One year after that is the Pan Am Games, which will call for the creation of a "Pride House" and associated programming. The Bonham Centre is planning key roles in all of those international events.

On other fronts, our Sexual Representation Collection continues to grow, with SDS instructor Nick Matte playing an absolutely vital role in creating systematic cataloguing procedures and making it into an even more distinctive collection for researchers.

This fall will also see a revitalized SDS Student Union, the appearance of a new issue of the Undergraduate Journal in Sexual Diversity Studies, the formation of an SDS alumni association, and the launch of the Boundless Sexuality campaign, a part of the U of T's ambitious fundraising drive.

In this newsletter, you'll see stories focused on Rebecca Sheffield, one of our star students, and Michael Cobb, a faculty colleague making waves with his book on being single. You'll also see that Brenda Cossman has been elected to the Royal Society of Canada, a terrifically important recognition of her academic accomplishments.

Happy reading, and happy new-academic-year.

David Rayside
Acting Director



Please join us in welcoming Rebecca Thorpe, who started as administrative assistant at the Mark S. Bonhman Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies this September.

Contributors:

Yvonne Palkowski

David Rayside

Scott Rayter

CENTRE NEWS



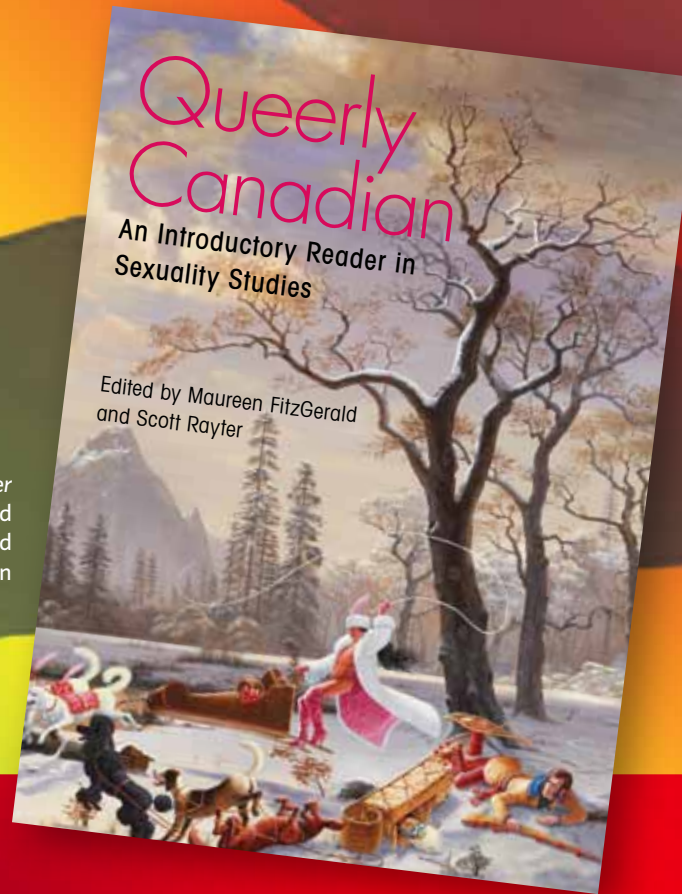
GETTING **FRANK:** SEX & POLITICS WITH BARNEY FRANK

The Bonham Centre hosted Barney Frank, openly-gay member of the US Congress, and his partner Jim Ready, at University College on April 4, 2012. Frank has been an advocate of LGBT inclusiveness in federal law, and has coauthored important legislation in many other fields, including the Dodd-Frank Act on financial regulation. He spoke with his characteristic insightfulness and good humour to SDS supporters about the current and future state of sexual diversity issues in American politics.



Brenda Cossman, Bonham Centre Director, has just been appointed as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. This is an immensely prestigious honour, and a reflection of the path-breaking importance of her scholarly work. Brenda has achieved international recognition for her writing on such crucial issues freedom of expression, sexuality, and the legal regulation of intimate relationships. Her published work includes five books, a wealth of articles, newspaper columns, media interviews, and a number of law reform reports for governments, all of which have made us think critically.

Queerly Canadian: An Introductory Reader in Sexual Studies is a new book edited by SDS faculty Maureen FitzGerald and Scott Rayter. Congratulations Maureen and Scott!



(L-R) Lisa Kadey, winner of the Maureen FitzGerald Award for the highest grade in the Lesbian Studies course, with Steering Committee member Maureen FitzGerald and Lesbian Studies instructor Tori Smith at the SDS Over and Out reception in April 2012.

OUTREACH



WOMEN'S SALON:
BUTCHE
/ FEMME



group of influential Toronto women gathered at Bissell House, University College on May 9, 2012 for an evening of candid conversation and fine cuisine. The salon event explored notions of Butche vs. Femme and the relevance of the distinction to queer women

today. It was organized by Bonham Centre Director Brenda Cossman and Advisory Board member (and evening host) Connie Bonello, and sponsored by IBM.

The meal began with a toast to Barack Obama's endorsement of gay marriage which occurred earlier that same day, marking the first time that a sitting US President publicly voiced such support. Talk soon turned to the provocative topic at hand and the women, representing a range of ages and professional occupations, laid bare their thoughts and experiences regarding butche and femme roles.

It soon became clear that the meaning of butche/femme varies with the individual. For some it means how one dresses and carries herself in the world; for others it has to do with desire or even the power dynamics within a couple.

While a definition of butche/femme was evasive, the women agreed that they, unlike their predecessors, are largely free to play with the roles. Modern queer women have the flexibility to be who they are, be it butche or femme, on any given day. In this sense butch/femme, like so many aspects of sexuality, represents not a dichotomy, but a continuum.

This has been one of a series of provocative, and popular, salons sponsored by the Centre.

STUDENT SUCCESS



Rebecka Sheffield

Rebecka Sheffield is a doctoral student in the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto, and part of the SDS collaborative program. She holds an undergraduate degree in Sociology and Women's and Gender Studies from the University of Saskatchewan, a post-graduate certificate in Book and Magazine Publishing from the Centre for Creative Communication at Centennial College, and a Master of Information Studies degree from the University of Toronto, where she specialized in archives and records management. Rebecka's research draws from social movement theory and archival studies to explore the development of queer archives as social movement organizations, and particularly at the time when the socio-political environment has opened up opportunities for these organizations to engage with the mainstream in ways previously unavailable. Rebecka is particularly interested in the partnerships that have developed between academic institutions and queer archives in the United States and Canada. Rebecka served as guest editor of *Archivaria's* special section on queer archives and has authored articles in *Museum Management & Curatorship* and *American Archivist*. She publishes a blog, www.archivalobjects.com, and is a volunteer archivist at the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives.



Single

A Conversation with Michael Cobb

Michael Cobb is a Professor in the Department of English and the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies, where he teaches courses queer theory and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer literature. His provocative and new book, *Single: Arguments for the Uncoupled* has enjoyed both critical and popular success in suggesting that singles are the most reviled sexual minority today.

How did you get the idea for this book?

I've been thinking about singleness for quite some time. But it was over a dinner in Berlin with my beloved dissertation advisor (years after I had finished graduate school), Hortense Spillers. At that point, she and I had both been happily single for many years, with rewarding careers, great friendships, excellent travels, and everyone thought we must be miserable. It was when we shared our irritation over that discrepancy that I realized I should write a book.

You describe singles as "one of the most despised sexual minorities one can be." Why?

Because everything in culture, politics, and society rewards, endlessly, the sexuality of those who get coupled off, who become involved in relationships that last over time. Even, with an alarming intensity, LGBTQ folks have, through the fight for same-sex marriage, put romantic coupledness at the centre of the struggle for equality (for all sorts of legitimate reasons) over the past decade. So the supremacy of the couple form, even amongst those who understand the pain and politics of sexual minoritization, continues to be a zone of intimacy regulation that renders those who are single as less legitimate, less valuable.

Singles now outnumber married people, and more people are choosing to live alone than ever before. What will it take for cultural narratives to catch up with this reality?

Sustained conversations, intellectual inquiries, and policy interventions about why couples are the most valued intimacy

arrangement (and why that doesn't have to be the case) might help us catch up with people's lived realities. By cultivating a larger sense of singles' culture, politics, language, and society, perhaps we can start to value rather than despise the single selves that are appearing with greater and greater frequency. Singles need a history. They need a language. They need advocates.

Who would you say is the best role model for singles in pop culture today?

None, sadly, that I like or say. But I'd love for people to let me know whom they appreciate. People often say, "Dumbledore," whom I love. But I'm not sure if an aged headmaster of a fictional wizard school is the best role model in pop culture.

How does the cultural narrative for gay and lesbian singles compare to that of heterosexual singles?

I find the narratives, with minor variations (and lived experiences), to be very similar. Couples, whatever their sexuality, tend to be thought superior to those who are not coupled. Certainly differences in the sexuality, race, gender, class of singles are important to consider. But for now, I'm trying to focus our comparisons between those who are coupled (the socially legitimate) and those who are single (those whom are less legitimate; those whom culture finds suspicious). I feel that there's an enormous amount of analysis of that comparison that needs to happen first.

THANK
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