

2009 Student of Achievement Award Recipients: Student Heroes

The Women's Center is proud to highlight these twelve students who have enriched our campus through their hard work, team spirit, and community activism. We are honored to have an opportunity to recognize them. Each of these students has contributed much to Montana State, and the following is an incomplete list of their activities and accomplishments. Thanks to each and every one of you and the best of luck after graduation!

Katie Baldwin will graduate in December with degrees in History with a Science, Environment, Technology and Society concentration; Modern Languages –German; and Honors, Highest Distinction. She is currently a volunteer at the Montana Center for International Visitors, as an intern for Senator Jon Tester, and as an intern at the Burton K. Wheeler Center for Public Policy. She volunteers for Engineers Without Borders as a travel team member and fundraiser event coordinator, the Global Culture Club as an executive board member, College Democrats, MSU's Leadership Institute, and the Montana State Presidential Mentor Program. Katie was involved in the Girls International Forum as an International Summit Leader. Katie is also a published author and researcher. Considering her passion for policy, science and the pursuit of global solutions to our many social and environmental problems, Katie plans to pursue a master's degree in Law and Diplomacy at Tufts.

Kelsi Canavan will graduate in May with a major in Mechanical Engineering and a minor in Aerospace. She has volunteered for the LEGO Robotics Tournament, an Engineer-A-Thon for local 6th graders, Badge Day for the Girl Scouts, and Shadow an Engineer. She is the Student Coordinator for Engineering Ambassadors, serves on the Women in Engineering Student Advisory Board, and is the secretary for Pi Tau Sigma—the Mechanical Engineering Honor Society. Kelsi was the 2007 Homecoming Ambassador and received a 2009 Award for Excellence. She has been a Resident Advisor, an Orientation Leader, and also completed the Lewis and Clark Marathon. Kelsi has a desire to do many things post graduation, and feels that opportunities abound for young, motivated people. Her choices include returning to Boeing as a full time engineer, moving to Ireland to work on a wind farm, attend graduate school at MSU or pursue medical school. One thing Kelsi knows for sure is that she is not done learning!

Ivie English will graduate in December of 2009 with majors in Psychological Science and Spanish Language, and minors in Political Science and Latin American Studies. She is active in the campus community volunteering for MSU's VOICE Center, the College Democrats (currently as president,) the MSU Leadership Institute, and the Spanish Club. Ivie is also busy in the community working as a Montana legislative session Intern and was a campaign volunteer during the presidential elections this fall. Her past involvements include Expanding Your Horizons, as a group leader for the Math and Science Workshop for Girls, Friends without Borders, and RELAY for Life. Ivie studied abroad for two summers

in Spanish speaking countries and continues her involvement by tutoring ESL students in English. Although she has no immediate plans upon graduation, Ivie knows that graduate school will be in her future and wants to combine her volunteer work, her experiences in Latin cultures, and her need to address and affect collaboration and tolerance worldwide.

Patrick Fradette will graduate in May with a degree in Biology with an Organismal Option. He is currently a co-president of Students Against Sexual Assault (SASA) and is involved with Men Stopping Rape (a program of MSU's VOICE-Victim Options in the Campus Environment -Center) as a peer educator. Patrick has lived on campus for his entire college career, has served as both RHA President for his residence hall and Interhall RHA President. For the past two years, he has served as a Resident Advisor for Hannon/Quads. Patrick's work with SASA and Men Stopping Rape over the past 2 ½ years have taught him much about the issues of sexual violence which he'd not previously considered. Realizing that violence against women affects us all has made him enthusiastic about helping other people recognize this fact. Patrick plans to take a year off from school after graduating and is considering pursuing a Masters in Mental Health.

Allyn Harris will graduate in May with a major in Mechanical Engineering. She participates in Badge Day for the Girl Scouts, Shadow an Engineer, the Engineer-A-Thon, the FIRST Robotics Competition and Tournament, the Science Olympiad, and Expanding Your Horizons in Math and Science. She is currently the President of the Society of Women Engineers, a member of MSU Engineering Ambassadors and MSU's FastCat Team, serves on the Women in Engineering Advisory Board as well as Mortar Board. She has received numerous scholarships including the Mechanical Engineering Scholarship. Allyn hopes to work and reside in Montana upon graduation, and continue her volunteer efforts to increase interest in science and engineering

careers, and looks forward to a career that is both dynamic and interesting.

Joshua Jane will graduate in May with a major in History with an SETS option, and a minor in Philosophy. He is the Board of Directors' president for BORN (Bioregional Outreach Network,) and has been NECO's (Network of Environmentally Conscious) Earth Week coordinator for the past three years. Josh initiated the successful institutionalization of a recycling and sustainability committee under ASMSU which resulted in his being hired as their first Sustainability Chair. He plans to continue to empower and engage communities through conservation efforts, and is committed to raising awareness of the notion that we are not isolated individuals and that everything we do has an effect on both the natural environment and our fellow humans.

Chelsea McKenna will graduate in May with a degree in Graphic Design and a minor in Honors. She is involved with MSU's Spanish Club, the Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society, MSU Fridays, ASMSU, the Student Savings Club, and conservation work for Natural Resources Conservation Service. Chelsea used her graphic design skills to create and manage the website for the Element Film Festival, has done graphic design work for Engineers without Borders, and designed posters for the Bridger Clinic. She has worked for the *Exponent* as a designer, is currently serving as the ASMSU Public Relations Committee Chairperson. She is launching her senior thesis on a National Women's Health Campaign, and will seek employment with an organization that allows her to use her graphic design skills for general education and preventative measures for women's health.

Jessica A. Potter will graduate in May with a double degree in Civil Engineering with a Bio Resource Option and Spanish. She currently is a member of the Engineering Ambassadors and Engineers Without Borders. Jessica is also the Co-President for MSU's Bio-Resources Student club (BREN.) She has received many scholarships during

her college career, including the Theodore Williams Scholarship, the American Society of Agricultural Engineers Scholarship, and the ER Dodge Scholarship. Jessica studied abroad in Spain and would like to help bring clean water and sanitation to the people of South and Central America. She is currently pursuing a job with a consulting firm where she can practice under the supervision of a Professional Engineer in order to earn her own PE which will give her the opportunity to return to Latin American to work for an international company or independently.

Tashina Emorie Tibbits will graduate in May with a degree in Mechanical Engineering Technology and a minor in Native American Studies. Tashina began her degree at Salish Kootenai College where she also minored in mathematics and Science and Pre-engineering. In addition to being a mother of two young girls, Tashina also raised her two younger siblings when they were orphaned. Somehow, she also found time to volunteer as the President for the MSU chapter of American Indian Science and Engineering Society (for who she coordinated a basketball tournament,) be a member of the Society for Women Engineers, help with AIC fundraisers, and work with the Designing Our Community project. Upon graduation, Tashina plans to work as a mechanical engineer with Indian Health Services doing design work on reservation projects throughout the country.

Heidi Tynes will graduate in May with a degree in Computer Science. She currently serves on the Women in Engineering Advisory board, volunteers with Women in Computing, the Association for Computing Machinery, Fellowship of Catholic University Students as well as participating in Intramural basketball, volleyball, and softball. Heidi has received a RightNow Technologies Scholarship and Internship, an Engineering School at the Foundation scholarship, and a 2009 Award for Excellence. Upon entering college, Heidi realized that she was free to make decisions on her own, and

nobody was there to regulate whether or not she went to class. She chose early in her college career to focus on learning the skills and knowledge to benefit her in the future, and now has a job lined up for after graduation as a software developer for a respected company in the community.

Kirsten Valentine will graduate in May with a degree in Civil Engineering with a Bio-Resources option. She currently volunteers with the bio-Resources Engineering Club, and Chi Epsilon, the Civil Engineering Honor Society. During her college career, she has volunteered with Engineers without Borders; for the Summer Special Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia; Barack Obama's Presidential Campaign; and has done GIS work for the Forest Service. Kirsten has received a Western Undergraduate Exchange scholarship and has been on the Dean's List. Learning many life lessons from the adversity she's faced, Kirsten places a high value on maintaining a healthy balance between school and life. Her goal for meaningful work will be accomplished by judging the quality of her own work not just by her job description, but instead, by its impact on the world.

Jessica Whitman will be graduating in May with a major in Chemistry and a minor in Music. She's involved with Science Saturdays, a program that invites kids of all ages to MSU once a month for a two-hour session of science experiments and demonstrations. Jessica is the president of the Undergraduate Chemistry Society of MSU, a member of Alpha Lambda Delta, and the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. She is also the principal bassoonist of the Montana State Symphony Orchestra, and a member of the Montana State Woodwind Quintet. After graduation Jessica plans to support and participate in outreach programs that encourage students (especially underrepresented groups such as home-schooled students and young girls) to understand and use the processes of science.

Nidia Castellanos: Activist Hero

by Betsy Danforth

Two weeks ago, the Women's Center co-sponsored our annual Women in Latin America speaker series. This program, now in its fifth year, has been an informative forum for learning about the lives and activism of women in Colombia. This event featured Nidia Castellanos, the secretary general of the Arauca Peasant Association, which is currently enduring severe repression at the hands of the Colombian government.

Community Action for Justice in the Americas (CAJA,) and the Montana Human Rights Network were other sponsors of this program. Scott Nicholson, who served as both tour guide for Nidia, and translator for this lecture series, is one of the founders of CAJA, and has been working in Colombia to provide on-the-ground accompaniment to social leaders whose lives have been threatened because of their work to bring peace and basic human rights to their country. Through education, advocacy, and grassroots organizing, CAJA strives for social, economic, and environmental justice in solidarity with marginalized people throughout the Americas, and seeks to fundamentally alter the unfair distribution of wealth, power, and resources.

Castellanos is a single mother of three children who is risking her life to defend human rights in Colombia. The Arauca Peasant Association promotes organic agriculture and defends the rights of its members and their families. Nidia, her family, and neighbors, are in fact, like all of Arauca, constantly under fire from several different angles. The complex politics of this war-torn country are confusing and extremely disturbing. The Colombian military, often protecting the interests of big business and investing nations (like the U.S.,) has waged war on the peasants in places like Arauca for decades simply to gain access to valuable resources like oil, gold, and emeralds. A paramilitary group was formed in 1962, and consisted of trained and armed civilians. A large part of their purpose was (and still is) to carry out much of the dirty work with which the military does not want to be associated. Human Rights Watch estimates that 70-75% of identifiable political murders have been carried out by the paramilitary, and that they are the group most commonly responsible for the human rights violations in Colombia.

Also in the 1960's, in order to fight governmental repression, a military branch of the Colombian Communist party was created as a guerilla movement known as FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.) However, when cocaine became massively popular in the 1980's, this group became involved with the drug trade in order to finance itself. At the same time that FARC was founded, a smaller guerilla group called the National Liberation Army, or ELN, was formed. Though the two guerilla groups differ somewhat in ideology, and often struggle amongst themselves, they have occasionally operated together on terrorist missions. According to Wikipedia, in mid-2006, mutual rivalries between the two groups escalated into hostilities in Arauca. According to all sources, the incidence of kidnappings, attacks on civilians, torture, and massacres are commonplace in Arauca and the citizens of this beautiful land on the border of Venezuela are terrorized daily by very realistic threats to their lives and well-being

Nidia and her colleagues are simply fighting for the most basic of human rights in

Colombia. The four military groups constantly use citizen's lives in their battles for power, land, and recognition, leading to senseless deaths and displacements every day. The government seems suspicious of all peasants, and considers health workers, unionists, social activists, and even teachers to be rebels and therefore enemies of the government. Each group typically denies responsibility for acts of violence leaving the civilians terrified and helpless.

Even Nidia's work to maintain the villages' organic gardens and keep them safe from the random aerial fumigations is considered rebellious: "Defending the rights of small farmers and their families in our state of Arauca means facing a lot of risk," said Nidia. "I'm willing to suffer those consequences because I want a better future for my children – Melisa, Camila and Brandon." Nidia's commitment to this movement of and for the people of Arauca is honorable, and, quite astonishing under the circumstances. Others who preceded her in this position have been imprisoned, tortured, kidnapped, or have left the country in exile. Hearing this makes us think about our own lives. What do we stand for? What would we fight for? Would you risk your life to help your neighbors in the face of the all-too-common threats that Nidia faces daily? Would I?

The level of dedication and passion that stem from her work and the very real threats she constantly faces make Nidia a true hero. We do not hear much about the ongoing war and terrorism in Colombia. Our government continues to send monetary aid to the Colombian Government (at the rate of almost \$1,000,000 per day according to CAJA) for supposed "war on drugs" efforts and to fight FARC. In Nidia's eyes, the money we have sent to Colombia, in fact, does nothing but fuel the war waged on innocent citizens by destroying their subsistence crops and causing more fighting between the military, paramilitary, FARC and ELN. Nidia plainly stated that she'd prefer that the U.S. government sent no financial aid to Colombia as it does nothing but harm the peasants.

I recognize that our nation is going through very tough times, there can be no doubt that most U.S. citizens have experienced fallout from the current recession: from loss of jobs and property to families being displaced. But, after listening to Nidia, I realized that we still have much to be thankful for. We are (for the most part) safe in our homes and we will not likely suffer random kidnappings, torture, or executions. We are not living in a military state or surrounded by intimidation, fear, and daily threats to our lives. We are able to speak out against the government without threat of retaliation by multiple military groups.

It is rare that we hear about this crisis in Columbia; we read about the "war on drugs" and assume that the money being sent there is for support. Keep yourself informed on the issues (www.hrw.org; www.witnessforpeace.org; www.amnestyusa.org) and contact your representatives about ending the aerial fumigations (with the herbicide glyphosate made by U.S. company Monsanto) and voting against "free trade" agreements with Colombia. The Colombian peasants need our help...and they are, after all, our neighbors.

Women's and Gender Studies Minor:

Women's and Gender Studies at Montana State University offers courses as well as an undergraduate minor.

The program encourages students to engage actively in the innovative and challenging work of interdisciplinary research by applying the critical and theoretical approaches of Women's and Gender Studies to their major. The program takes gender and sexuality as categories foundational to an understanding of culture and society, examining, for instance, the ways in which gender is culturally and socially constructed rather than biologically determined.

Drawing on history, literature, cultural studies, social science, and science, the program fosters analysis of gender and sexuality as they intersect with race, ethnicity, class, nationality, and other categories of difference. Through engagement with feminism, gender and sexuality studies, queer theory, and LGBT studies, the program promotes interdisciplinary inquiry into femininity, masculinity, queerness, and normativity. Our areas of faculty strength include the study of nationhood, science, empire, transnational movements, globalization, family, health, and psycho-social well-being.

Students minoring in Women's and Gender Studies must complete the following components, totaling 21 credits or seven three-credit courses.

Humanities 201H: Introduction to Feminist Theories & Methodologies (3 credits)

Humanities 301: Integrative Seminar in Women's & Gender Studies (3 credits)

Foundation Courses/Senior Capstone Project (15 credits)

Here are some of the other courses offered:

Anth 347	Sex, Gender and Sexuality in Japan
English 330	Women and Literature
HDCF 464	Gender, Social Class and Family Diversity
HDHL 240	Human Sexuality
History 403	Gender in US/Canadian West
History 419	Family, Gender and Law in Ancient Greece and Rome
History 425	Gender, Sexuality and Social Change in Latin America
History 448	Gender and Technology
Hum 204	Gender and Sexuality
MTA 377	Movies and Politics: Whiteness and Masculinity in the Cinema
NAS 405	Gender Issues in Native American Studies
Psych 392	Psychology of Women
Rel Stud 321	Gender and Religion
Sociology 335	Law and Inequality

Still interested? Find more information about the Women's and Gender Studies Minor at http://www.montana.edu/lettersandscience/WOST/wost_main.html

Thank You to Donors!

Thank you all so much for your donations to our "Twenty-six Dollars for 26 Years" campaign. I am truly overwhelmed by the generous and immediate support shown by all our friends. It warms my heart to know that you are out there rooting for the Women's Center!

*** Christy Balder Castonovo * Dorothy and Larry Baker * Wendy Binchini * Phyllis Bock * Kattie Cady * Joseph & Wendy Fedock * Karen Grigry * Julie Hitchcock * Sheila and Mike Jordan * Linda Kerell * Carmen McSpadden * Walter Metz * Mary Murphy * Pat Orist * Martha Rotella * JoAnne Troxel ***

Angela Shelton: Filmmaker Hero

by Betsy Danforth

After watching the film *Searching for Angela Shelton* (2004) which we screened with the VOICE Center for a Sack Lunch Seminar for Sexual Assault Awareness Month, I went online to search for the filmmaker. What I found was a bit surprising: Angela Shelton is an accomplished model, actress, screenwriter, comedian, and filmmaker. For someone who is already so much in the public eye to make this kind of film is indeed remarkable. It is only through this type of exposure that the stigma often carried by victim/survivors of sexual, domestic, and incest abuse will be placed squarely on the shoulders of those who perpetrate these crimes, and on our patriarchal society for allowing them to go unpunished.

I should first explain that *Searching for Angela Shelton* is a shocking and affecting documentary of one woman's search for other women of the same name. After leaving messages for 55 women, she spoke with 32 and met with 17 other Angela Sheltons. She found that almost 70% had suffered incest, rape, sexual abuse, or domestic violence in their lives at some point. The numbers deeply saddened, but did not surprise Angela, who had always suspected that rape, incest, and abuse statistics were low. She had guessed that in researching this rather "random sample" of women, she would find that the numbers were higher than generally reported (although, let me also make it clear that she in no way presents this search as a statistically significant study of victimization.) Angela applauds the bravery of the women who told their stories on film, noting that many would not talk with her at all once they realized the film's angle. One of the Angelas who lived in Detroit had only told her story to one or two other people before repeating it on film for the documentary. The experience of this revelation has the potential to be extremely liberating and empowering for victim/survivors as they realize they need not be ashamed of their victimization.

About her own abuse, Angela says that she constantly lied for her abusive father... "I've been making excuses for him since I was eight years old...I'm on a mission." The mission was to both reveal her own story (even in the face of protests of colleagues and friends who told her it would ruin her Hollywood career,) and find out if other women had experienced abuse in their own lives--she had a hunch that many of the women she would interview and talk with would share much more than a name. What she ultimately got from the experience of making *Searching for Angela Shelton* was a very gratifying sense of camaraderie and a renewed sense of hope. She very candidly observes, "I reveal a lot of myself and my life in this movie and I was not expecting to." The stories of the other Angelas give Shelton the strength she needs to confront her father about his abuse, and help her come to grips with her past and move on.

Angela has since written a book about the experience of making the film. She writes: "I tell how I faced my past of abuse as well as my abuser, how I covered my pain with self-abuse and addictions, and how I healed. I share the dreams I had, my childhood, and how *Searching for Angela Shelton* was a spiritual journey for me." Be sure to check out this very moving film. You can purchase *Searching for Angela Shelton* online at amazon.

Women's Center Staff:

Director: Betsy Danforth

Student Assistants: Kelsey Joronen

& Jessica DeSarno

Volunteers: Cassandra Sargent & Lauren Cervetti

Support Services for Victim/Survivors of Abuse:

The VOICE Center (24 hr. crisis line): 994-7069

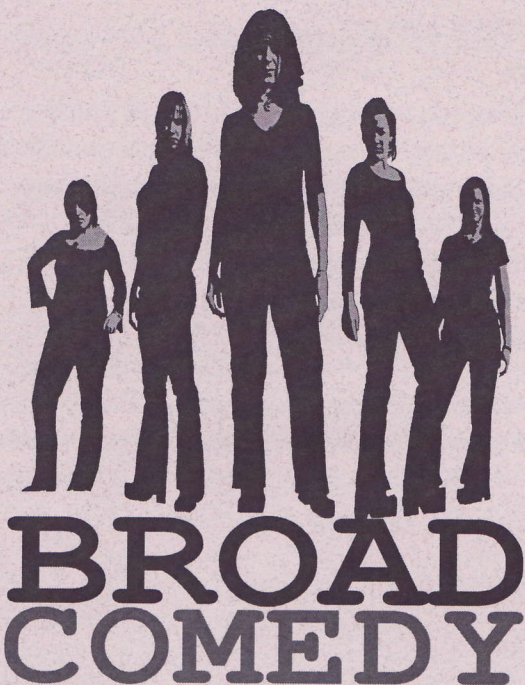
The Help Center (24 hr. crisis line): 586-3333

The Network Against Sexual & Domestic Abuse
(24 hr. shelter and crisis line): 586-4111

MSU Campus Police (24 hr. emergency line):
994-2121

Gallatin County Victim Assistance Program:
582-2075 or 582-2076

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-
SAFE



Montana fans--
We have two shows coming up in May!

Check 'em out!

Broad Comedy Upcoming Shows:

Emerson Cultural Center Theater
Bozeman, MT May 1st & 2nd, 2009
Friday and Saturday at 8:00.

(Doors open at 7pm)



To buy tickets go to Cactus or Ticketweb.com



MONTANA
STATE UNIVERSITY

Women's Center

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