

CSRF NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2009

MESSAGE FROM THE (NEW) PRESIDENT

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The CSRF Executive:

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Laurie Betitio

President-Elect

Robin Milhausen

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Larry Brockman

Secretary

BJ Rye

Student Representative

Jocelyn Wentland

Newsletter Editor

Kristen Mark

This year marked a change of our Executive Council, so I want to introduce myself as the new president of the Canadian Sex Research Forum. I am Terry Humphreys, assistant professor in the Psychology Department at Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario. My current research interests in sexuality range from first sexual experiences, to sexual consent negotiations, to sexuality and the Internet. Outside of academic life, I love golf, reading, watching movies, and good wine. I'll leave the history of how I became a sex researcher for another newsletter.

We have an excellent new team that make up the rest of the Executive Council. Laurie Betitio (DrLaurie.com, Montreal), moves to the past president position; Robin Milhausen (University of Guelph), is our new president-elect; Larry Brockman (Alberta) and BJ Rye (St. Jerome's College, University of Waterloo), take on newly created positions of treasurer and secretary respectively; and Jos Wentland (Guelph) becomes our newest student representative. Kristen Mark is our new newsletter editor. I encourage you to write to Kristen (kmark@uoguelph.ca) with your newsletter ideas and suggestions.

I am very appreciative of the nominating committee for giving me the nod to lead our great organization for the next

2 years. There are a few new and ongoing directions for the CSRF that I would like to make you aware of.

As a member-at-large last year, I renewed our bylaws that were in need of a significant update. The new bylaws were accepted at our Montreal meeting in October, but it ain't over. The bylaws of an organization should be a living document and as such, should be continuously examined. There have already been a number of suggestions raised so look for more edits as we move forward.

The CSRF website is currently being given a significant, and long overdue, facelift. A new logo for the organization has been developed that will be used on all CSRF correspondence including the website and the newsletter. Although we are not in a position to provide any high-tech glitz to the site, it will be a professional face to the organization with some much needed functionality.

A couple years back I suggested that I was hard at work on a database of sex researchers in Canada as well as a second database on sexuality programs in Canada. That project was halted for a while as I focused on my university tenure process, but I am happy to say that it has returned and with the assistance of my Master's student might become an addition to the CSRF website. Watch for developments.

Recruitment.

Our student membership is incredibly healthy and it is wonderful to see this next generation of sexuality researchers, clinicians, and educators not only attending our meetings but also having an active role in our organization! The high level of presentations at our Montreal meeting is a case in point. Where our organization is lacking is with full members. We have an excellent, but small, group of committed members, the majority of whom are in the field of psychology. Given our commitment to be interdisciplinary, we seem to be getting a little lopsided. As an executive council, we will need to give some thought to recruiting more full members from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. We encourage you to talk up our organization with your colleagues who may not be members now, but would certainly mesh with our interests. We are also very open to any advice on how to achieve some progress on this endeavour.

Highlights of the Montreal conference

Our 2008 conference in Montreal (the 35th annual) was another successful event for the books. The food was absolutely marvellous (p.s. don't expect that again in the near future!) and our plenaries were wonderfully controversial, getting many of us fired up during the discussion periods! In Dr. Irv Binik's plenary,

LETTER FROM THE (NEW) PRESIDENT CONTINUED

provocatively titled "Does Sex Therapy have a future?", he asked us to take a step back and think conceptually about the field of Sex Therapy. Why does therapy have a subspecialty in sexuality? Are any of the techniques used by sex therapists unique? If not, could sexuality issues be subsumed into couple and family therapy as a whole? From our discussion, it certainly seemed like many were convinced that our comfort level with the topic was a significant element of uniqueness that would keep sex therapy going for the foreseeable future. Dr. Binik did a wonderful job of getting us to "take stock" of our assumptions. Dr. Peggy Kleinplatz presented an equally compelling plenary session that had us all talking about "great sex". It

was refreshing to hear about positive sexuality and couples that have come to a place where they believe their sexuality is "optimal" for them. Although there seemed to be some concern over the use of the term "optimal" sexuality (sex researchers have a great history of consternation over terminology!), the overall point of examining how some couples arrive at very satisfying sexual relationships was not lost on anyone. We applaud the difficult work of examining the upside of sex.

Overall, our attendance was higher than it has ever been and the abundant student presentations were engaging and very educational. I would also like to extend my congratulations, once again, to our four student presentation award

winners. Two awards were given in the 30 minute presentation category to: Tina Laundry (Dyspareunia in adolescent girls) and Krystelle Shaughnessy (Predicting cybersex: The role of gender and attitudes). Two additional awards were given in the 15 minute presentation category to: Evelyne Gentilcore-Saulnier (Pelvic floor physiotherapy) and Melissa Farmer (A mouse model of provoked vestibulodynia). Very well done, everyone!

The 2009 CSRF has recently been confirmed for the Citadel hotel in Halifax, Nova Scotia for September 24 to 26. Please block off these dates on your calendar and start thinking about the research that you can share with us. I am already looking forward to another great conference.

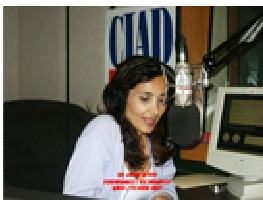


Terry Humphreys, PhD

Current CSRF President

"Our attendance was higher than it has ever been and the abundant student presentations were engaging and very educational"

Featuring Laurie Betito, PhD



Dr. Laurie Betito
doing her nightly
radio show
"Passion"

Laurie Betito has been a member of CSRF since 1986. She started as a student member (when very few students were involved) and became President of the organization from 2006-2008. Laurie is a clinician, a psychologist, who trained with Pierre Assalian. She has spent the last 20 years working with Pierre, as a member of the Montreal General Hospital's Human Sexuality Clinic. In 1998, both Pierre and Laurie started a weekly "sex show" on the Montreal airwaves. It had an almost cult following and remained on the air for 9 years. This was the start of a career in the media for Laurie. Numerous television appearances ensued until she got a regular spot on the show "Eros" as their "sexpert". She then got the opportunity to host her own national television show, *Let's Talk Sex* (aired on MenTV, PrideTV, and Slice). Since 1999, Laurie has hosted a live radio program in Montreal (and for 2 years in Toronto as well) called *Passion* which airs nightly where she talks about sex and relationships and takes

questions from listeners. Laurie has written columns for magazines and continues to write advice columns for several local newspapers.

Laurie is on the board of directors of several organizations involved in advocacy and sexuality education. She is the President of the Sexual Health Network of Quebec (formerly Planned Parenthood of Montreal), and is on the board of the Cherith Ravine Foundation, an NGO involved in work with sexual assault survivors. Although she has published several academic papers (on treating incest survivors, and also transgender issues), her main interests lie in reaching the population at large. To this end, she is working on a couple of books (one for men, and one on therapy with incest survivors). Most recently, her work with incest survivors has even attracted the attention of Oprah. More news on that front in future editions of the newsletter. Laurie can be reached at www.drLaurie.com

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Email your ideas to Kristen at
kmark@uoguelph.ca

Kristen Mark



I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you as the new editor of the CSRF Newsletter. I'm a Masters student at the University of Guelph and some of the research I have conducted thus far has included sexual and relationship satisfaction, infidelity in committed relationships, women's sexuality, solutions to sexual problems, and condom use and misuse.

The conference in Montreal was my first CSRF conference of many more to come. I thought the program was excellent, the quality of presentations was high, and the plenary by Irv Binik was very thought provoking. I left Montreal feeling energized to get back to the drawing board on my own research; one of the aspects I love most about attending conferences.

For my role as Newsletter Editor, I would happily take on any suggestions you would like to see implemented in upcoming newsletters. If you are conducting interesting research (isn't it all interesting?) or have a story to share and would be willing to write about it for the next newsletter, it would be great to hear from you.

CSRF AFTERDARK

By: Jocelyn Wentland & Amy Muise

At the CSRF annual meeting in Banff 2007, we discussed how to deal with the growing number of presentations that are submitted each year. One idea that was raised was to come back for evening presentations. Dr. Jonathan Huber suggested that if we are going to have to come back for another round of evening presentations and extend an already very full day of conference presentations that we create a *CSRF After Dark* session. This session would highlight themes and research that were not as academically-focused as the daytime presentations. *CSRF After Dark* would be an opportunity for members to showcase their research during a more relaxed evening session without as much emphasis on research methods and statistics and more emphasis on highlighting new

and upcoming research.

The name was inspired by the original hit series, *Beverly Hills 90210*, when the owner of the classic daytime restaurant *The Peach Pit* expanded his enterprise to include a new and upcoming nightclub that was opened in the evenings and had a more social atmosphere. He called this *The Peach Pit After Dark*. Our goal was similar, to add a fun evening event to a successful daytime programme, and therefore the name *CSRF After Dark* was fitting.

We presented the 1st Annual *CSRF After Dark* at this year's annual meeting Montreal, which was an evening presentation where members were invited to bring a drink from the hotel bar and sit back and relax for a night of fun sex research. The title of our presentation was "Stepping out from behind that camera: A qualitative analysis of erotic photographers" which highlighted the pre-

liminary findings from an ongoing exploratory study of photographers who take erotic photographs.

We started out the presentation with an expose on one of our featured photographers which highlighted over 100 erotic photographs. Another one of our photographers was present, Melanie Gillis, and presented on her photography and also took a number of curious questions from the audience! Wrapping up the 1st Annual *CSRF After Dark* was the screening of the video "Passion and Power: The Technology of Orgasm." We think that the 1st Annual *CSRF After Dark* was a great success.

We hope to make *CSRF After Dark* a continuing tradition and are already looking forward to the 2nd Annual *CSRF After Dark* presentations in Halifax next year.

Next year we hope to combine a wine and cheese reception with the *CSRF After Dark* presentations, which could be up to two or three separate presentations.

We invite you to contact the *CSRF After Dark* Committee (Jonathan Huber, Amy Muise, Jocelyn Wentland) if you think you have a presentation that would work well for this type of session. We will then submit a formal *CSRF After Dark* submission including all of the proposed presentations to the program committee for final approval.



Jocelyn Wentland, Jonathan Huber, and Amy Muise sporting their coveted CSRF t-shirts

Research Feature: URGiS from a student perspective

It's hard to tie down the general student experience of URGiS; student roles are frequently changing, and time demands fluctuate for everyone depending how far along the research project is. However, despite this plasticity, URGiS is the type of opportunity that always seems to boil down to students getting what they put into the project. With this in mind, I see there being three parts that compose the benefits of URGiS: rewards, skills training, and mentoring.

While being, in my mind, the smallest component of the URGiS experience, the rewards URGiS offers always seems to be the most startling as an undergrad. Upper level authorship is available, on both manuscripts and presentations, to those students who work the hardest throughout the project, while other less-involved students may enjoy a lower level of authorship on a presentation. These references are gold for developing a student CV, and with attaining research experience on campus being such a competitive process, it's hard to believe at times that achieving authorship on anything is possible for students. However, the impact of URGiS is not defined by a presentation or article reference, but by the learning process that extends well above and beyond classroom curriculum.

As a student, URGiS is easily the most intense learning experience I have ever encountered. Since the entire research process is student driven, it demands that the students in our group are constantly learning to be able to meaningfully contribute. In my second year of school, I learned how to effectively conduct extensive literature reviews, design legitimate focus group guides, moderate focus groups, and finally transcribe and analyze qualitative data. While much of this subject matter is covered in some classes, I have learned that it is one thing to learn this material to do well on a multiple choice test, and quite another to learn how to do these things to the standard demanded of a bona fide research project. Now in my third year, I am develop-

ing my skills as a presenter, with presentations at CSRF and SSSS under my belt. Again, these are opportunities and learning experiences that just aren't available to undergraduates on campus, and it is this learning process that has established URGiS as the protégé student academic group of The University of Guelph.

While URGiS is a student-driven group, it is impossible to mention URGiS without talking about Robin Milhausen. One of the qualities that make Robin such an amazing mentor is her dedication to her undergraduate students. It is very common for faculty members to focus on their own research, and the students involved in their graduate and doctoral programs, but Robin makes an extra effort to be available to her undergraduates and to be involved in URGiS. While Robin is an incredible resource for sex research information, I think her largest contribution to her students is creating and enhancing a love of learning, and being so knowledgeable and enthusiastic about her field establishes her as a truly one of a kind mentor.

As a student, I would encourage any researcher to consider starting an URGiS "chapter" at their institution, as it can be a very mutually rewarding experience. Students benefit from the intense exposure to the research process, and develop researching skills well above standard for their level of education, and both student and faculty benefit from the publishing of manuscripts. Most importantly though, as Robin does so well, a faculty-undergraduate arrangement like URGiS excels at getting students excited to learn again, and in a much more active way than classroom learning can provide.

Founded in 1974, The Canadian Sex Research Forum has as its focus, the encouragement and dissemination of information related to teaching, research and clinical activities of Canadian researchers and professionals involved in areas relevant to human sexuality.

The primary objective of the CSRF is to foster an interdisciplinary exchange in the area of human sexuality, and to encourage scientific research in this domain, specifically in the area of sexual behaviour.



Some members of the Undergraduate Research Group in Sexuality (URGiS) at the University of Guelph

Written by John Sakaluk, a third year undergraduate student in psychology at the University of Guelph

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

AASECT 41st Annual Conference

Some Like it Hot: The Cutting-Edge in Sex Education, Counseling, Therapy, and Medicine

May 13–17, 2009

Glendale/Phoenix, Arizona

See <http://www.aasect.org/annualcon.asp> for more information

Guelph Sexuality Conference

Positive Approaches to Sexuality and Sexual Health

June 15–17, 2009

See <http://www.open.uoguelph.ca/sexconf/> for more information

SSSS Annual Conference

Sexual Literacy: Health and Rights in a Cultural Context

November 5–8, 2009

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

See http://www.sexscience.org/events/index.php?category_id=497 for more information

CSRF Annual Meeting

September 24–26, 2009

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Citadel Hotel, more information to come in the next newsletter

To contribute to the CSRF Newsletter:

Send us your latest accomplishments, news, or anything else you would like us to include in our next newsletter.

Email Kristen Mark at kmark@uoguelph.ca

We look forward to hearing from you!