

Higher Ground

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diversity center newsletter

at the center

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with **Virgil Jones**



Building Bridges Conference **Find Your Voice: Putting Awareness into Action**

This year marks the 12th annual Building Bridges Conference. The theme, "Find Your Voice: Putting Awareness into Action," focuses on the power we have within our society, culture, and world to provoke and promote change. This year we emphasize the voice that we have as individuals. By altering past perceptions and involving ourselves in the conversation of activism, we hope to demonstrate the importance of making change a reality.

Our keynote speaker will be Lisa Ling. Ling is the host of the award-winning documentary series "Explorer" from the National Geographic Channel. As the first woman host since the series' premiere two decades ago, Ling immerses herself in the stories she investigates, sometimes going undercover and into danger zones. Ling also serves as a special contributor for "The Oprah Winfrey Show,"



which builds on her sense of adventure, taking her from India to the Congo.

You can find the schedule of events at the Building Bridges website: www.gustavus.edu/diversity/buildingbridges/ ■

Diversity Center

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Keppler Associates

Working for Change

coming events

written by Lindsay Peak, CVR Intern



In 1999, Tene Wells accepted the position of president of WomenVenture, a non-profit agency designed to empower women and assist them in achieving financial independence. Wells' experiences as a former WomenVenture client along with her innovative ideas and unfaltering determination have enabled the agency to assist nearly 5,000 clients annually. According to *Woman's Day* magazine, Wells says she works not to simply assist women, but to "help women soar!"

Carla Smith

I am currently a senior psychology major and very proud of myself for making it this far. Throughout my time at Gustavus, I stayed dedicated to my academic pursuits while participating in a number of organizations such as PASO, I Am We Are, mentors program, Crossroads, CAB-Development Executive, Wednesday Friends, track team, as well as Legacy—a hip hop dance group that I started my freshman year. I also attended the National Black Graduate Student Conference last year and was awarded third place in the paper competition. These extra-curricular activities kept me motivated and gave me social support.

I have always had a passion to learn about different cultures, so I took advantage of the study abroad programs. I studied in Thailand for a January Interim Term and in Ghana for a semester. Studying and researching in Ghana has been the most memorable experience of my time in undergraduate school. It was an amazing learning experience. It allowed me to learn about a different culture, about history and how it affects the present, and allowed me to focus a great deal on gaining knowledge about my own heritage and ancestors. My personality was strengthened and my perspective about other countries in the world was broadened. I was already an advocate for respecting and accepting people of other cultures and now with the knowledge obtained from my journey, my words and actions are more valid to my peers and others for whom I am an educator.

Graduation is approaching and I am moving forward to accomplish more of my life goals. I plan to attend graduate school for a dual master's degree in social work and child development. My ultimate goal is to open a center for youth to



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— Carla Smith

Wells will be visiting Gustavus as the closing keynote speaker of the Working for Change Conference held Saturday, March 17. The conference is for students interested in "Creating Career Paths to Make a Difference" and is designed to inspire students to create social change through fields such as public policy, environmental awareness, empowering youth, working or volunteering abroad, faith-based opportunities, and non-profit work.

To register for this free conference, contact Amy Pehrson at apehrson@gustavus.edu. ■

student profile

provide a positive support system and a place where youth can feel comfortable and encouraged to gain knowledge and participate in activities that are not necessarily available in a classroom setting due to economic circumstances.

I am glad that I came to Gustavus because it allowed me to focus on what mattered and allowed me to express myself and fight for what I want and need in life. It hasn't always been an easy journey to get where I am today due to the many struggles and obstacles that I had to overcome at Gustavus. The most significant obstacle for me was being faced with many acts of racism. I encountered everything from individuals writing on my door, "go back to where you came from" and individuals yelling racial slurs at me, to being shunned from classmates during lectures, group sessions, and activities. I didn't let these incidents ruin my experience here at Gustavus, and hope that no other person will either.

I give thanks to those in the Gustavus community who fought and are still fighting for equality and acceptance on our campus. Gustavus has a long way to go to ensure that equality for all, but I am proud to say that much progress has been made. To my professors and my work supervisors who helped me out and encouraged me throughout my college career, I thank you. I also thank the Diversity Center staff, old and new, and the many organizations that I was a part of—you really provided a social system that helped me survive and overcome. I will take all the education that I received here at Gustavus, whether it is academically and/or socially, along with me in life. Thanks. ■

community service center

Spring Break Work Trips

The destruction of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast Region was enormous. Although the hurricane was over more than a year and a half ago, many areas of the Gulf Coast are uninhabitable. Many homes are still in shambles, and many people still have not returned. There are news articles almost daily that describe the hardships that continue for the Gulf Coast. The situation has not improved much.

- As of July 2006, 100,000 people still lived in 37,745 FEMA trailers
- Less than 300,000 residents (40% pre-Katrina population) currently live in New Orleans.



The Gulf Coast is an area in need, and this is a need that will continue for years to come. This year, Gustavus' Community Service Center will be sending 94 students to the region to help rebuild homes through Habitat for Humanity. Specifically, the students will be rebuilding homes in Slidell, La., approximately 25 minutes outside of New Orleans. The goal of the East St. Tammany Habitat for Humanity is to build 100 homes in 12 months. As this is an ambitious goal, the students will be doing anything from putting up frames to sheet rocking and roofing, and they will play a significant part in reaching that goal.

In previous years, spring break work trips have been 10 different groups going to 10 different locations. This year has a different plan in place. With the severity of damage from the hurricane, the thought is to "adopt the region." Through adopting this region, we plan on returning to the Gulf Coast in future years to continue repairing the damage and making it livable for its residents and displaced population.

Students will be taking a 24-hour bus ride to Slidell, leaving March 31st and returning April 7th. ■

"Justice cannot be for one side alone, but must be for both."

– Eleanor Roosevelt

organization focus

Queers and Allies

(Q&A) is a group of students who are committed to GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Transgender/Transsexual) issues. Q&A performs a dual role on campus; first and foremost supporting and affirming members of the GLBT community, and also educating the greater Gustavus community on GLBT issues. Q&A is composed of students who identify as GLBT and



also those "allies" who support them. The group meets every Wednesday night at 9:15 p.m. in the Womyn's Awareness Center (WAC).

Q&A will be hosting Safe Zone training sessions on Thursday, March 8th from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. and Tuesday, March 13th from 7 to 9 p.m. All are welcome and encouraged to attend! ■

goings on

spotlight on

Diversity Events

March 1
Study Abroad Application Deadline

March 1
Zeta Chi Phi Information Meeting

March 2
Application deadline for Walker House and 10-0-9 House housing

March 8
SafeZone Training

March 9
Gustavus Idol

March 10
Building Bridges Conference

March 13
SafeZone Training

College Calendar

March 5
Cheerleading Clinic

March 6
Resume/Cover Letter Workshop

March 17
"Working for Change" Conference and Concert

March 22
Internship Fair

March 23
Mid Terms

March 24
President's Ball

March 24
Spring Break begins

Student Organization Meeting Schedules

Diversity Leadership Council
MONDAY : 9:30 p.m. : Leadholm

Pan Afrikan Student Organization
TUESDAY : 6 p.m. : Board Room

Meditation with Buddhist Monk
TUESDAY : 7 p.m. : St. Peter Room

Crossroads Executive Board
TUESDAY : 8:30 p.m. : Carlson International Center Lounge

Asian Cultures Club
WEDNESDAY : 6 p.m. : Walker House

Queers & Allies
WEDNESDAY : 9:15 p.m. : Womyn's Awareness Center

Orgulla Lationo Association
THURSDAY : 7 p.m. : Office by the Dive

Womyn's Awareness
THURSDAY : 8 p.m. : Womyn's Awareness Center

Indigenous Student Association
THURSDAY : 8:30 p.m. : Gustie Den

Students of Fostercare and Adoption
THURSDAY : 9:15 p.m. : Diversity Center

I Am We Are
THURSDAY : 10 p.m. : Black Box

Actions Supporting All People (ASAP)
SUNDAY : 8 p.m. : Diversity Center

World Watch and Cultural Connections

World Watch and Cultural Connections are brought to you by Crossroads. The members of Crossroads share an interest in world cultures, languages, and contemporary global issues. Through their interest, members work to develop a broader understanding of the world in which they live and contribute to the education of the College community as a whole.

World Watch

West Indies: The Cricket World Cup—

Cricketers from 16 participating nations and fans from more than 100 countries prepare to descend on the Caribbean to get ready for the Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007. There are 98 member-countries of the ICC and some of the teams competing for the title hail from Kenya, India, The Netherlands, Australia, and Bermuda. The tournament begins March 5th with warm-up matches and concludes with the final match on April 28 in Barbados.

Cultural Connections

March 4—Purim (Jewish): Purim is known as the Feast of Lots, which celebrates the deliverance of Jews in Perisa from the machinations of Haman. Jews dress in costume and give gifts of food to each other.

March 8—International Women's Day (UN): International Women's Day is the foundation of National Women's History Month because its multicultural and international perspective honors all women.

March 17—St. Patrick's Day (N. Ireland, Christian): The death anniversary of Northern Ireland's patron saint. He used the three-leaved shamrock to explain the Christian idea of the Holy Trinity, thus the idea of wearing a shamrock.

March 31 – Eid-Moulud un Nabi (Islam): Marks the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam.