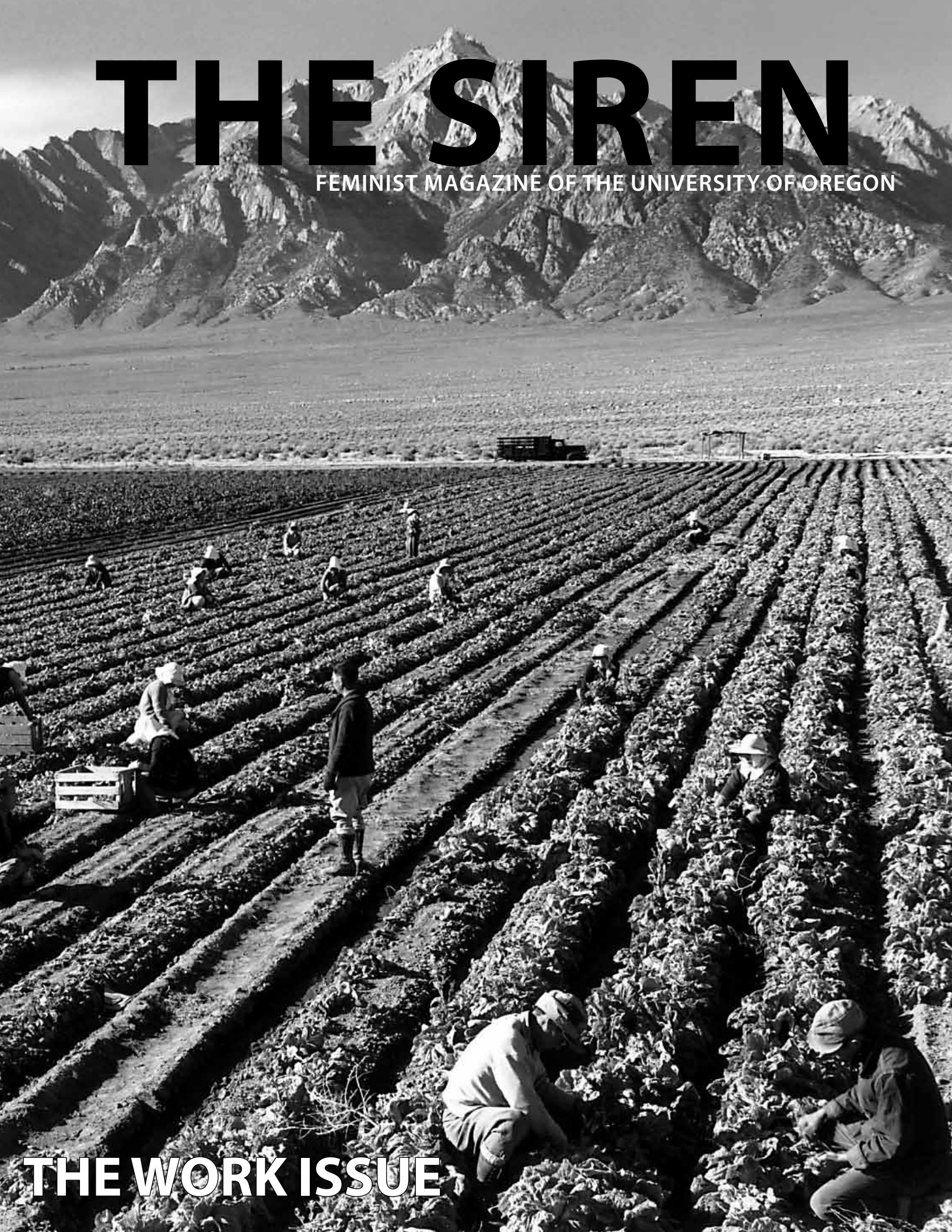


# THE SIREN

FEMINIST MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON



THE WORK ISSUE



# THE SIREN

SPRING 2011

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## OFFICIAL BUSINESS

The Siren is published and produced by the ASUO Women's Center. We are the only student-led feminist publication on campus. It is our mission to cover contemporary feminist issues and act as an outlet for the creative and intellectual development of women. Our staff consists of an editorial board of Women's Center staff who solicit contributions from volunteer writers and artists.

## COVER CREDITS

FRONT: *Workers at Manzanar internment camp in California. Ansel Adams, 1943. Public Domain*

INSIDE: *Alfred Palmer, 1942. Public Domain*

BACK: *William Henry Jackson, 1902. Public Domain*  
*Palmer and Jackson images courtesy of Shorpy.*

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# CONTRIBUTORS



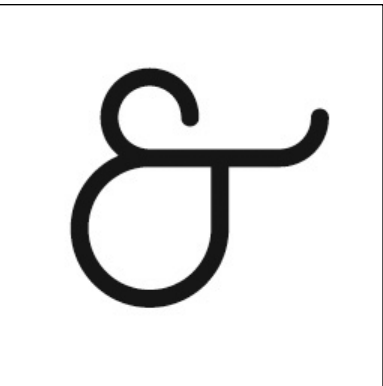
## JULIA WHISENANT

Julia Whisenant is a third-year English major who enjoys fine caffeine, the works of Inga Muscio, talking about sex, and puppies. She spends most of her time reading and chain-smoking. She is currently employed by the UO's Mathematics Department, which is actually a pretty sweet job. Julia is also a member of S.W.A.T (the Sexual Wellness Advocacy Team), where she does her best to end sexual violence and replace it with healthy sexuality. Her new hero is Tristan Taormino, who opened her eyes to the joys of feminist pornography. Her passions include analyzing representations of femininity in postmodern American literature, smashing the patriarchy with the Radical Cheerleaders, and spending quality time with the Willamette River.



## KYLIE WRAY

Kylie is a sophomore Journalism major at the University of Oregon, hoping to minor in French and Women and Gender Studies. Kylie is currently a volunteer at the ASUO Women's Center as well as a Siren staff member. She aspires to spread feminism throughout the media and possibly work for Bitch Magazine in the future. Her hobbies include dancing (ballet, jazz, modern, and the like) reading, photography, and watching Netflix while munching on vegetarian snacks. She loves animals, tea, crazy colorful makeup, and badass chicks in the media.



## SOON MI PARK

Soon Mi is an angry Korean feminist who is passionate about social justice, cooking, argyle, & ampersands. Zee loves to peruse books in the aisles of Smith Family Bookstore and hang out with friends over a home-cooked meal. Zee is not a fan of peas and hopes to one day get over this...but not anytime soon. Zee enjoys watching Molly Ringwald movies when under the weather and strives to make high marks like a good Asian child. Currently, zee is working on graduating in the spring, and aspires to one day get this rad tattoo.

# WRITE IT DOWN

YOU REPORT, WE DECIDE IF YOU'RE GOOD ENOUGH

# EMAIL SIRENWC AT GMAIL DOT COM

# System Malfunction

Problems with my computer were minimal until the end of January, when the screen began to malfunction. It wouldn't turn on completely until midway through startup. One day, the lower portion of the screen blacked out, and the part that was still visible was washed out and barely legible.

My information was safe, but I couldn't see well enough to access it. Until it was fixed, I found myself adrift, without the technological resources I've grown up relying on. Classwork became an obstacle complicated by my inability to use the computer I had come to depend on.

I'm privileged to have a support system. My mother paid for the repairs. The amount—385 dollars—is a fraction of a new laptop, but it is far beyond what I can afford on my tight budget. That's almost a month's worth of rent, not to mention utilities and food expenses.

As it was being repaired, I had to find alternate ways of accessing information. Directory assistance told me there was no Mac store in Eugene, and finally gave me a defunct address. Bitch Media, they told me on another occasion, didn't exist.

In the weeks that my computer was out of commission, I thought about what it must be like to be without a computer at all. I felt disconnected from my peers and my classes. I had to think about when I was going to do my reading for class. I had to find time to do it at the library or figure out a way to print out the readings. Before, I would simply sit down with my computer and log onto Blackboard.

As traditional media negotiates how to survive in an age where the Internet has become the dominant source of information and entertainment, many publications are shifting online. That change doesn't affect me as starkly as someone without access to technology. I can, after all, still use the University's computing resources. In Portland, those without access to a computer and the Internet must make do with the hour of time available for free at the county's libraries. Some have resources that expand that time to two hours, but it is a pittance compared to the amount of time many students are able to plug in.

In light of these things, it is alarming that Congress is proposing to cut all federal funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The CPB provides funding for both public television and public radio, two sources of news and entertainment that provide quality, low-cost information to all Americans. Local stations rely on federal funding, but this money is heavily supplemented through underwriting and donations from the general public. To defund the CPB sends a clear message to working-class America, that if they can't pay for quality broadcast media, they cannot access it.

Kelsey Wallace, the web editor for Bitch, sees this problem. Despite her role managing online content for the non-profit, she is adamant about the importance of printed media. Her job is in line with the way she wants to live her life, but that's not the case for all of us. Read more on page 20.

This issue, we're focusing on work, and all the way that what we do shapes how we live. From advocacy to food, we're taking a



moment to acknowledge how women have impacted diverse fields.

Contributor Julia Whisenant shares how she's struggled through workplace harassment. Her story (*page 16*) feels familiar—I know that I've been in situations at work where I've felt uncomfortable and helpless to change how I was being treated. Alongside her story is information and resources to help you speak up on the job when you feel it's safer to do so. The strongest changes in favor of worker's rights have resulted from employees banding together into unions to fight for fair treatment, and it's important to know which victories they've won for us.

We also remember an icon: Rosie the Riveter. The woman behind the muscles, Geraldine Doyle, passed away recently. The story of her transformation from a wartime factory worker into a symbol of feminism is a tangled one. Staff writer Kylie Wray sorts out the threads in her profile on page 8.

In the follow-up to her story in the Action issue, Mary Sherman is back. She's done her time on the Sheriff's work crew, and she's back to tell us about it on page 24.

Work is more than just the nine to five. Our relationships require maintenance, too. To bring levity to the emotional work of making and maintaining friendships, page 28 features a game you can play with anyone you'd like to get to know better.

Enjoy and keep up with us online at [sirenmag.tumblr.com](http://sirenmag.tumblr.com)

JENNIFER BUSBY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

# STICKING IT TO THE MAN

CHALLENGE OPPRESSIVE IMAGES AND ADVERTISEMENTS  
WHEREVER YOU GO WITH THESE EASY TO MAKE STICKERS

WORDS BY JULIA WHISENANT

BUY PRINTER-  
COMPATIBLE  
MAILING LABELS

OPEN A MICROSOFT  
WORD DOCUMENT &  
FIND THE TEMPLATE  
FOR YOUR LABELS

TYPE SOME  
FEMINIST PHRASES  
ON EACH LABEL

PUT THE SHEET OF  
LABELS IN YOUR  
PRINTER

PRINT 'EM OUT  
(DUH.)

KEEP THEM IN YOUR  
PURSE, BACKPACK,  
WALLET, ET CETERA

(REMEMBER TO  
GIVE SOME TO YOUR  
FRIENDS...THEY  
MAKE GREAT  
GIFTS!)

STICK 'EM TO  
SEXIST/RACIST/  
HOMOPHOBIC/  
SHITTY  
ADVERTISEMENTS



size 12 jeans are not  
a crime... riot, don't  
diet!

STEP BACK  
&  
ENJOY YOUR  
SUBVERSIVE WORK  
OF ART

# Neat / Hurl

WE NEEDED A PLACE TO VENT. THIS IS THAT SECTION IN THE SIREN. BELOW, YOU'LL FIND THE THINGS THAT MAKE US ROLL OUR EYES AND THE THINGS THAT MAKE US JUMP FOR JOY.

## THE RIGHT WAY TO INTERRUPT OPPRESSION

In my Comp Lit class last week, a classmate used the word “ho” to describe a character in a film who had abused and neglected her children. The following day, my Comp Lit instructor spent a solid five minutes explaining why it was inappropriate to conflate malevolent characteristics with promiscuity. He explained how those phrases have been used to degrade and oppress women and why those terms should not be thrown around when there are students in the class (yo!) who may have

reclaimed and identify with those labels. (And just for good measure, in response to other comments that were made in discussion, he added in an addendum about the ways in which scientific studies historically led to institutional misogyny.) The classmate in question then raised her hand and took full responsibility—sans defensiveness. If there was a utopian model for confronting and reacting to oppressive language, that was it.

--JULIA WHISENANT

## THANKS, BUT I CAN GET THE DOOR MYSELF.

I was walking into the Knight library last week and I held the door open for a man walking directly behind me. Normally, when you open a door for someone, you lean against the door to let them through, as I did. Instead of walking through the door, however, the man screeches to a stop and stares at me while I'm awkwardly holding a door open. Somehow confused, he artlessly maneuvers himself in order to help me. Instead, he reached above me in an attempt

to trying to hold open the door that I was already leaning against. Not only did this invade my personal space, but it also made me look like a fool and undermined my supremely selfless act of charitable door-opening. He made me (and himself!) look silly for being courteous. I have no problem with anyone (of any gender) holding a door open for me, but at least allow me to return the favor instead of playing into outdated acts of chivalry.

--JULIA WHISENANT

## STREET NAMES ARE A CONCRETE DEMONSTRATION OF HISTORIC EXCLUSION

Place names define our world. Streets, in particular, provide reference points for houses, stores, and restaurants. They're named after Presidents, trees, Native American tribes, rivers, letters, and numbers. Women are notably absent—less crucial than pines. The only street named after a woman that comes to mind is Portland, Ore.'s Rosa Parks Way. Are women so far down

the list of importance that we don't have a bell hooks Blvd. or a Sojourner Truth Way? Despite consternation when city councils rally to change numbered streets (as they did when 39th Ave was renamed Cesar Chavez Blvd.), it's worth the effort to define our world by those who've brightened in it, not by distant white men who controlled the past. Should President Martin

Van Buren, an adamant opponent of abolition, be immortalized with his own residential street? No. Place names are mutable, and they should change when they no longer reflect the demographics and history of our nation. It's time to demolish the historic exclusion of both people of color and women from the physical spaces we inhabit.

--JENNIFER BUSBY



ILLUSTRATION BY MEREDITH BLUME

# AN UNDYING IMAGE OF FEMINISM CREATED FROM THE MALE GAZE

*Geraldine Doyle, the well-known face of Rosie the Riveter, died on Dec. 26, 2010, leaving feminists to ponder her life and the continuing disrespect shown towards working women.*

WORDS BY KYLIE WRAY

We knew her as the face of “Rosie the Riveter,” flexing her muscles under the exclamation “We can do it!” and inspiring many women throughout the 20th and 21st centuries to break out from the stereotypical mold and do more. Geraldine Doyle, who was unknowingly cast as the model for J. Howard Miller’s Westinghouse, died on December 26, 2010 leaving behind a legacy of female empowerment.

Born in Inkster, Michigan in 1924 as Geraldine Hoff, the female icon grew up in Ann Arbor. After graduating from high school, Doyle took a job as a metal presser. Doyle grew up an avid cellist, so when she heard that one of the other metal press workers had damaged her hands on the job she quit the factory for the sake of her passion and went looking for other work.

During her short time working at the factory, a United Press photographer, shooting images of working women, snapped a photo of Doyle leaning over a press machine. Later, J. Howard Miller, commissioned by Westinghouse Electric Company to design posters for a campaign sponsored by their War Production Coordinating Committee, saw the image of Doyle and decided to use her glamorous face and scarf covered hair as the inspiration for the poster, without first consulting Doyle herself.

The poster, an image of 17 year old Doyle shown flexing her muscles under the testimonial “We can do it!” was displayed for a short time in the Westinghouse Company buildings in 1942. The poster has been called everything from “morale-boosting” (Washington Post) to a “campaign to deter strikes and absenteeism” (New York Times). If the latter, the image was used to impose a male-dominated corporation’s thoughts about women in the workplace: that women are lazy and don’t work as hard as men.

Doyle was not aware of the poster until after it became a popular image of the feminist movement in the 1970s and 1980s. She was alerted to the poster’s existence in 1982 when she found a photo of it in a magazine and recognized herself.

Doyle’s daughter, Stephanie Gregg, explained that the face was that of her mother’s but the muscles were not, that her mother was a slender woman who constantly busied herself playing the cello, leaving no time for body-building.

When the image was created, J. Howard Miller did not respect the working life of his muse enough to alert Doyle that he was using her as the model for his posters. Not only that, he used her face to make the poster more aesthetically pleasing, then spliced on Rosie’s muscles. Although the image has become known for its display of a

working woman, it still imposes certain qualities these women must have. The image portrays that you *can* be beautiful and slender to work in a man’s job, but you must also be well built. (It also sticks to the racial stereotypes of some media in that she is white.) This poster is one of the early forms of Photoshop touch up, with the men in charge changing how real women look and molding them into a hard to reach vision that they have of women.

In a quote published by the Washington Post after her death (December 29, 2010), Doyle spoke of her pride in being depicted in that poster, but despite her optimistic attitude it seems logical to question that the thoughts and work behind the poster were not as empowering to women as they have been portrayed to be. Although the fact that the poster has become a symbol of success and power among women is worthy of note, the lack of respect shown toward the woman who inspired such an inspiring image is representative of how women were viewed in earlier times (and in many areas are still viewed today). Doyle, as a working woman, deserved to be consulted and credited with the work that Miller did, instead of simply being used as a pleasing face incorporated in an image in the way one man sees working women.

Despite the fact that the poster was eventually known as

an image of “Rosie the Riveter,” an embodiment of women who took over what were formerly known as ‘men’s jobs’ during World War II, the original production of the poster happened without regard to the female worker who inspired it.

After the war was over, men returned to the working world and women were expected to return to their previous, everyday, at-home jobs: cooking, cleaning, and raising children. These jobs are expected to be fulfilled with no monetary incentive, paid with the potential approval of husbands. During this time, the poster fell behind the press machine, not to be found again until the ‘70s. This seems to symbolize that women had done well filling an empty spot but it was time to go back to their *work* as homemakers, and that the poster was never meant to change the ways of the industry.

Doyle’s decision to work in a metal press factory has come to represent women who work hard every day to earn the respect that they deserve in professions that used to belong to men alone. In the wake of her death at the age of 86, it’s important to remember her life and the lives of those women, rather than one man who didn’t care enough to learn about the life of one female factory worker, showing once again that women have consistently not received credit where credit is due.





# SOUTH AFRICAN LESBIANS TARGETED

*MEN IN THE COUNTRY ARE USING RAPE AS A WAY TO PUNISH WOMEN FOR STRAYING FROM SOCIETAL GENDER ROLES. DESPITE THE PROBLEM'S PERSISTENCE, THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT IS DOING LITTLE TO STOP THEM. (THIS CONTENT MAY BE TRIGGERING)*

WORDS BY NADUAH WHEELER

**H**ate crimes against both women and queer individuals are still an unfortunately ever-present threat within our society. The threat is taken a step further in South Africa where on top of an estimated 150 women being raped daily, over 500 lesbian women are forced to undergo a horrific practice known as “corrective rape” every year.

Corrective rape is the rape, beating, and verbal abuse of lesbian women in an effort to punish their sexual orientation and make them heterosexual.

Despite the severity and brutality of these crimes, they go largely unnoticed and unpunished by the South African government. For instance after Millicent Gaika, who was raped and choked for five hours, reported her assailant, he was arrested—only to have his bail set at the equivalent of 300 US dollars. He was then released back into the community where Gaika was forced to live in fear until she was transferred to a safe house run by a local Cape Town charity, Luleki Sizwe.

Ndumie Funda founded this charity after her fiancée was a victim of corrective rape in 2007. As part of its mission, Luleki Sizwe provides clothing, support, and advocacy for

survivors of corrective rape in small, under-funded safe houses.

After Gaika was transferred to the Luleki Sizwe safe house, Funda wrote a letter to the Minister of Justice, Jeffrey Thamsanqa Radebe, urging the South African government to acknowledge corrective rape as a hate crime, which would force both government and police officials to take harsher action in reported cases. After her letter was ignored by Minister Radebe, Funda began a petition through Change.org.

This petition has now become the most popular petition in Change.org history. Its 140,000 signatures has finally garnered a reaction from Minister Radebe who promised to meet with Luleki Sizwe activists and to begin to enforce stricter punishments for these crimes.

Despite this promise, many people are still skeptical about any actual progress toward change. In an interview with Change.org, Luleki Sizwe volunteer Billi Du Preez said, “The promise of a meeting is great, but quite frankly, after being ignored for so long, I will not believe it until Ndumie [Funda] is sitting in the meeting.”

Other concerns are based less on issues within the government than they are on larger social

issues. Jill Henderson, the Research, Advocacy, and Policy Program Coordinator at Triangle, a queer-focused organization, said, “My understanding of rape is that it is gender violence and that is linked to patriarchal systems of control and power... if you think of rape in this way then you can see why lesbians particularly are vulnerable.”

In South Africa, there are stark differences in the sexual expectations of men and women. Men are entitled to multiple partners, while women are pressured to remain monogamous. Sex is seen as a tool of procreation, and safe-sex education is nonexistent.

Henderson explained that lesbians, who don't fit into this paradigm, are punished. “It is because they are seen to violate the rules of gender, which describe what a woman is, how she should behave and which states that women's bodies belong to men,” she said.

Corrective rape works as a part of the larger power of patriarchal control. It enforces gender roles. Though stricter government intervention may prosecute and imprison offenders, the problem will not stop until South African society itself undergoes a dramatic transformation. South Africa

has anti-discrimination laws, which prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. Still, since 1998, only one of the 31 recorded murders of lesbians in that country has resulted in a conviction.

The interrelation between criminalization and prevention is shaky in the United States as well. Despite criminal laws on the books in this country, few reported rapes end in conviction. Convictions that do occur often hinge on a story that plays into myths about what rape is, including who its survivors and perpetrators are.

Though South Africa was the first nation in the world to take steps toward LGBTQA equality, their government has been seriously flawed in the investigation and prosecution of corrective rape. With a (supposedly) upcoming meeting between the head of Luleki Sizwe and the Minister of Justice, hopefully assailants will be prosecuted more accordingly and the rate of corrective rape itself will lower. Criminalization is not the magic bullet, though. Until the patriarchal structure of South African government and society is eliminated and the notion that women's bodies belongs to men is eradicated, rape, corrective and otherwise, will persist.

**“EVERY DAY I AM TOLD THAT THEY ARE GOING TO KILL ME, THAT THEY ARE GOING TO RAPE ME AND AFTER THEY RAPE ME I’LL BECOME A GIRL.”**

**--Zakhe Sowell, of Soweto**

# AN EXERCISE IN INTERNALIZED SEXISM

WHEN WORKING OUT MEANS STRUGGLING TO CONFORM TO SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS OF GENDER PRESENTATION, AN HOUR ON THE ELLIPTICAL BECOMES MORE COMPLICATED THAN A TARGET HEART RATE.

WORDS BY ANNA BIRD

For some, exercising is an enjoyable activity that also keeps them healthy. However, doing crunches, running miles, or pumping iron are usually just tedious tasks in an overall goal for a “thinner” or “bigger” appearance, depending on your gender presentation. Our society has a set mold of the “perfect body,” and what that should look like if you are male or female. The bodies of various actors, models, porn stars, and professional athletes have set the bar high for ordinary people. Those of us who hit the gym day in and day out, have images of Gisele Bündchen (or any pro-athlete if you’re a dude) as our end goal. Most self-identified men don’t want to look like tall, skinny super models, with big boobs and a flat stomach, but why don’t more women want to look like Marion Jones (world champion track and field athlete) or Maya Moore (forward for the University of Connecticut’s women’s basketball team)? The answer: because they look too muscular; they don’t have the “feminine” body that society deems so ordinary and appealing.

There is a stigma attached to muscular women—they are considered less attractive, too manly. That could explain why you see women predominately using the elliptical machines in the UO Rec Center and the men filling up the weight room. Most women strive for moderately toned, skinny bodies while men want to be “big or ripped.” Both men and women want to look sexually appealing, but with that desire our societal views

on appearance come shining through. According to these views, women aren’t supposed to be strong—men are. Men aren’t supposed to be small and skinny—women are. This is a concrete, physical instance when women are supposed to be weaker than men, giving them less power and making them more vulnerable to physical domination.

All of these expectations and stereotypes appear in Reebok EasyTone ads. One of the commercials, in which the camera never sways from the woman’s chest, states, “Make your boobs jealous.” It implies that if a woman has a nice butt, nobody will notice her breasts anymore. This is a direct display of how women’s bodies are viewed as a series of sexualized parts instead of a whole, respected entity. When men look at women, they tend to see their perky breasts, rounded booties, or nice legs, but women’s bodies are rarely considered as more than these fragmented parts. Health is something that involves the entire body, but so much of society’s focus is on things such as a “flatter stomach,” or “toned calves.” The detachment of a woman’s limbs from the rest of her gives them less importance or value, justifying the lack of respect she is afforded.

It is important for all of us to love our bodies and to be comfortable with our appearance. On the other hand, health should be the most important. So why is our society pressuring women and young girls to work out for the sake of a man’s gaze instead of being healthy? Why isn’t there

more focus on strong women?

Societal notions of health are strongly tied to appearance—you have to look healthy to be considered healthy. Nobody talks about the biological benefits of working out or eating well. Instead, media talk about the benefits working out and eating healthfully will have on your appearance, and thus the benefits you will receive from your more socially acceptable.

That said, achieving society’s “perfect” body is not be attainable for everyone. Biology and genetics play a huge part in the formation of your body and there isn’t a lot you can do to manipulate those things no matter how many squats you do.

Studies have also found correlation between obesity and low income. Access to fresh produce is a health issue for those who live in so-called food deserts, where processed food is the norm. The people who are most pressured to slim down and work out may not have the money or time for it.

The next time you find yourself at the gym, think about your goals. Are you working toward a lower resting heart rate or healthier blood pressure, or are you working toward a smaller jean size? When you talk about yourself, are you fragmenting your body into parts? Try countering negative statements with positive ones: Instead of distressing over the diameter of your thighs, think about how strong your legs are. Our bodies are part of us and should not be separated from our minds and emotions—no matter how many advertisements fragment images of women into parts.

## WHY DO YOU WORK OUT?

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON STUDENTS TALK ABOUT WHAT BRINGS THEM OUT TO THE GYM

*So I am happy with the way I look and so girls think I'm sexy.*

--Alex Cephus, 18

*To stay healthy and to just keep active because I think it is really important, because in today's society everyone is obese it seems. And it's really fun and I really enjoy it.*

--Kassie Willis, 19

*I like getting my ass kicked in the gym 'cause when you're done it feels hella good... and if you get big or ripped or whatever then apparently girls like it.*

--Shaun Finn, 20

*To get rid of my love handles and because I want to try out for the cheer team and it's not socially acceptable to be a fat Oregon Cheerleader.*

--Jessica Will, 19

# upcoming women's center events

Want to get involved or find  
out more information?

EMU basement, Suite 3  
[womenctr@uoregon.edu](mailto:womenctr@uoregon.edu)  
 541-346-4095  
[@womenscenter](http://@womenscenter)

## Nontrad Appreciation/ Awareness Day

May 20, 2011  
 11 A.M.-3 P.M.  
 EMU Ampitheatre

music  
 food  
 activities  
 resources



## Take Back the Night

WE DON'T NEED PERMISSION  
 TO WALK THE CITY WE LIVE.

**you . me . us .**

No Victims, No **CLOSETS**,  
 No Oppressing Silence.

We are  
**SURVIVORS** speakers learners

We are  
 students teachers **people**

**STAND UP.**

**scream** it,

•••••, whisper it.

**demand the day**

COMMAND YOUR VOICE

## Take Back the Night

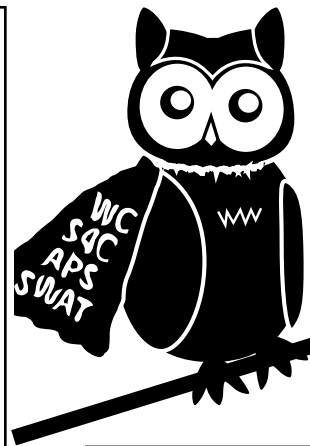
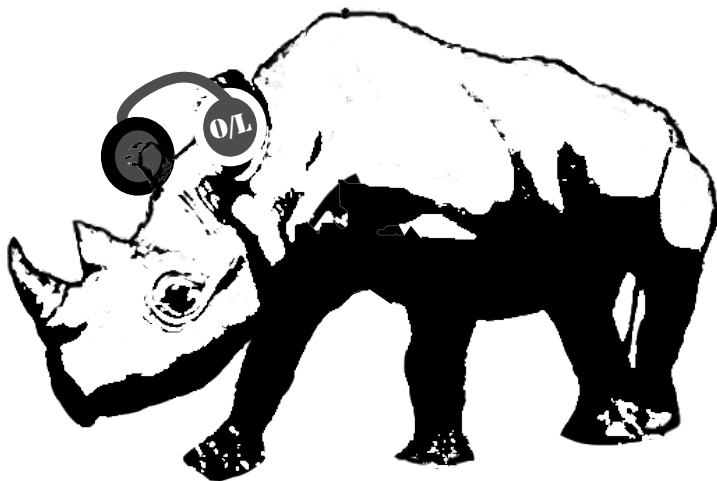
April 28, 2011, 6:30 P.M.

EMU Ampitheatre.

Rally. March. Speak.

## 10th anniversary **OUT/LOUD**

The largest queer women's music festival in the Northwest!  
 May 13-14, 2011  
 Details TBA



## International Women's Day

Thursday, March 3, 2011, 7:00 p.m.

doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Agate Hall, 1787 Agate St.

Featuring Keynote Speaker  
 Dr. Vandana Shiva and  
 Performers, Speakers,  
 Exhibits, and Expression

Buy Tickets at the  
 UO Ticket Office  
 \$5 UO students  
 \$8 general



## FOOD MANGER BY DAY, PUNK ROCKER BY NIGHT

*WHEN SHE'S NOT COORDINATING MEALS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, DIANA SUBCZYNSKI, DORM FOOD MANAGER, BELTS OUT POST-PUNK TUNES IN HER BAND ROCKSTAR ASTRONAUT.*



WORDS AND PHOTO BY KYLIE WRAY

Campus dorms are widely known for tight living quarters, shared bathrooms, and abundant food. As the University's General Manager of Retail Operations, Diana Sobczynski, a newly converted Oregonian with a love for music and her band "Rockstar Astronaut," is responsible for providing the meals that so many students rave about.

Sobczynski works daily to provide food for students, but when shift is done, she caters to her love of music instead, either by playing classical music on the piano, or by belting out post punk tunes along with drummer Tenaya Moore. Moore also happens to be Associate Director for the Marketing and Communications Office of Research and Strategic Initiatives at the UO.

**SIREN:** Can you tell us a little bit about what it is you do at the UO?

**DIANA:** Sure, well I manage retail operations for housing food services, that consists of 5 different units. We've got Grab'n'go, which is a convenience store... and then there's Common Grounds Café; Fire and Spice, which is a Mongolian Grill... Big Mouth Burrito, which is burritos, tacos,

and specials...and then there's Dux Bistro, which is over at LLC. We do salads made to order; sandwiches made to order; we have a yogurt bar in the morning; we have an espresso station.

**S:** How long have you been doing this?

**D:** I've been in my current position, as general manager for three years. And prior to that I was a manager working late night here for retail ops... I first started there for four years and I've been in this position for three.

**S:** How did you decide to get involved in this?

**D:** I've always been interested in food and it's always come very naturally to me... I was managing a restaurant in town and was thinking that I was ready to move forward with my career and try something new, and...my previous position, had been open in the paper...and I was like.. hmm.. University of Oregon, this might be interesting, so I applied and I've been here ever since. It's been an interesting journey so far.

**S:** Are you originally from Eugene?

**D:** I'm not, actually, I'm from Cleveland, Ohio.

**S:** How'd you end up in

Oregon?

**D:** I was graduated from college, and I had moved to Toledo, Ohio... I went to Bowling Green State University, which is just outside of Toledo. I was living in Toledo and I knew some people out here and I was thinking 'you know what.. I think I want to move' because I had visited here and I really liked it... I thought 'I want to see how the other side of the country lives' so I moved... back in '97.

**S:** What did you study in college?

**D:** I studied Public Relations and Music in college. Like a lot of folks studying music or playing music they try food service because the hours are very flexible. Public Relations was just you know, I really enjoyed the journalism side of things and I enjoyed interacting with people, it covered a lot of bases for me and gave me a broad spectrum. I have a BA... so I got to study a lot of different courses.

**S:** Do you do anything with your music now?

**D:** Now that I'm in a professional position... my hours are in the daytime, which they haven't been for a really long time. Usually in

food services, you work nights a lot and weekends and that was my career for a very long time... So this is the first time in a while that I've actually seen some weekends and seen some evening hours which is very exciting. So that has definitely brought back my love for music. I've always had my love for music I've never dropped it, but I do play piano and write songs and play classical music... I'm working on a band project actually, because I play guitar and I sing and it's important to have a balance... I definitely find that balance by being able to address my creative side... because it's a big part of my life.

**S:** Do you want to tell a little bit about your band project?

**D:** So I love rock'n'roll, I know that's a title of a song, but I don't play that one [laughs]. I do love pop rock and rock'n'roll. A lot of the songs that we are working on are 80's rock and 90's rock, so bands like Pat Benatar... we have a couple of Foreigner songs. Lots of women influence though, we have Pat Benatar, Linda Ronstadt and P.J. Harvey.

**S:** How many people are in your band?

**D:** Just... a female drummer. We're a power girl duo.

# PUPUSAS SPICE UP LUNCHTIME

*Take a break from your workday and the same old sandwich with a taste of El Salvador that is homemade, affordable, and delicious.*

WORDS BY JENNIFER BUSBY

In the months since I've transitioned into veganism, I've found myself exploring the food of other cultures. The flavors I've found are far from the California-style meals I grew up eating. If your lunch means a sandwich or a trip to a restaurant or food cart, trying something new means saving money on a meal that will be just as delicious as one you'd pay for.

Instead of relying on restaurants for a filling lunch, I've made an effort to plan my weekly menu. I'm attracted to dishes that will pack well and reheat easily. On Sunday night, I'll make enough food to get me halfway through the week. If my lunches are both appetizing and well-balanced, I can eat well and spend less.

Before I cracked Jennifer McCann's book *Vegan Lunchbox Around the World*, I had no idea what pupusas were. I was familiar with Latin fare like tamales, burritos, and quesadillas, but these filled, flat circles were new to me. McCann blogged about the lunches she packed for her son and has published two books. Compared to her first, *Vegan Lunchbox*, this book samples more international flavors.

Pupusas are made of masa like tamales and tortillas. They hail from El Salvador and it is said, in the hills, that you must know how to make them to be considered an authentic Salvadoran woman. While it's true that culture and cuisine are intertwined, I hardly believe that culinary knowledge is essential to citizenship—or

womanhood.

Pupusas came to the US in the 1980s, when civil war in El Salvador caused refugees to flee. Seventy-five thousand people were killed in the conflict. Those who escaped brought their food with them to their new homes.

Making pupusas is deceptively easy. Some say that the first pupusas you make will look like the jagged shapes of countries. Flattening the filled balls of masa between my palms was easier than I thought it would be. When filling tried to escape, I would simply pat a little heap of dough over the tear.

This recipe calls for a cup of refried beans, but I doubled it so I wouldn't have leftovers from the can I opened. Feel free to make your own beans. I used a 15 ounce can of fat-free refried beans smuggled from my mother's garage. Any kind of vegan refried beans work well in this recipe. You can also mix it up by sauteeing greens and onions for added texture and flavor.

For those unfamiliar with masa harina, it is made by soaking corn in lime before it is dried and ground into cornmeal. It's hiding in plain sight at your local grocery store, and easily found at Hispanic grocers.

Hot off the stove, pupusas are delicious, but they also reheat well, making them perfect for lunchtime. Eat yours with curtido, a traditional spicy cabbage coleslaw, or with hot sauce. Pack them in foil and get ready for a lunch that will keep you satiated long after you hit the grind again.

## Pupusas

Makes 6

2 cups masa harina  
1 cup refried beans, any flavor  
1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped  
1/4 cup shredded vegan cheddar (optional)  
Canola oil, for frying

In a large bowl, mix together the masa harina and 2 cups warm water. Stir and knead together to form a moist, cohesive dough. Allow the dough to rest for 5 minutes; it will become easier to work with. It should be soft without being sticky; add more water a spoonful at a time if needed (the dough should not crack around the edges when you press it between your palms).

In another bowl, stir together the beans, cilantro, and cheese, if using.

Place 1/2 cup of the masa dough in your hand. Form the dough into a ball. Using your thumb, poke into the center of the ball, working the dough up to form a lip around the hole. Fill the hole with a large spoonful of bean filling. Work the dough up and over the filling, encasing it in a layer of masa. Flatten the pupusa by clapping your hands together carefully to form a thick circle about 4 inches wide.

Repeat with the remaining masa and filling mixture.

Heat a griddle or cast-iron skillet over medium heat and brush lightly with oil. Cook the pupusas on the hot griddle for about 4 minutes per side, until the surface is lightly browned and no longer sticky and the pupusas feel solid to the touch.

Serve topped with tomato sauce and curtido.

## Curtido

Makes 4 to 6 servings

1/2 head green cabbage, chopped into coarse shreds (about 6 cups)  
1 large carrot, peeled and grated  
1 jalapeño, seeded and minced  
3 scallions, sliced  
1/4 cup white vinegar  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano  
1 teaspoon sugar  
1/8 teaspoon cayenne (optional, or to taste)  
Salt, to taste

Bring a large saucepan full of water to a boil. Place the cabbage and carrot in a heat-proof mixing bowl and pour in the boiling water, covering the cabbage. Let stand for 2 minutes. Drain in a colander. When cool enough to handle, press out as much liquid as possible.

Place the cabbage back into the mixing bowl and add the jalapeño and scallions. Whisk together the vinegar, olive oil, oregano, sugar, cayenne (if using), and salt. Pour the dressing over the cabbage and toss to combine. Chill.

# YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT IT

## THE INFORMATION THE ADS LEAVE UNMENTIONED

HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP HAS BEEN TRYING TO SALVAGE ITS REPUTATION. BUT THE SMILING FACES IN THE SWEET SURPRISE COMMERCIALS AREN'T FOOLING ANYONE.

WORDS BY CHARLOTTE BOESEL

High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS) also known as glucose/fructose in Canada, and glucose-fructose syrup in the United Kingdom has gained celebrity status now that it has been the topic of discussion in movies such as *Food Inc.* and *King Corn*. The Corn Refiners Association (CRA) is attempting to rename, re-label and reimagine HFCS. This makeover is a desperate attempt to keep outraged “health freaks” aloof and the average American delusional. This attempt is a result of people being concerned by the long, wordy, chemical sounding term High Fructose Corn Syrup. The CRA wants a gentler, fresher, and sweeter name “Corn Sugar” that will not scare the masses. This attempt might actually work, as it has in many historical examples. Have you heard of “low erucic acid rapeseed oil”? This is now called Canola Oil. Recently, the FDA approved the name change of “prunes” to “dried plums.” This technique to re-brand and escape the tarnished label could work for High Fructose Corn Syrup too.

The Corn Refiners Association (CRA) is quickly working to give HFCS a face lift and they have begun with two television advertisements. The first is of two mothers talking over brightly colored “fruit” juice (corn-sugar water) and the second is of a heterosexual couple talking about a Popsicle. These advertisements give “corn sugar” a shining review. A quick visit to the website [www.sweetsurprise.com](http://www.sweetsurprise.com)

features vague, difficult to argue, one-sided “myths versus facts.” Their logic is frightening: one of their myths is that high fructose corn syrup is not natural. The CRA’s says that, “High fructose corn syrup is made from corn — a natural grain product. High fructose corn syrup contains no artificial or synthetic ingredients or color additives and meets the Food and Drug Administration’s requirements for use of the term ‘natural.’” Unlike other standards, there is no regulation concerning who can use “natural” in their marketing. It’s a marketing ploy that doesn’t mean anything.

The CRA is making a last-ditch effort to re-brand HFCS and improve its reputation with consumers. The first claim they make is that high-fructose corn syrup is the same as cane sugar and that your body cannot tell the difference. HFCS is sweeter than sugar, but it does not prompt the same feelings of fullness that table sugar does. It’s harder to stop eating when the food you’re eating doesn’t make you feel full.

It’s true that all sweeteners should be consumed in moderation but that is simply not possible with HFCS. It has been subsidized so heavily that it is the least expensive option for food manufacturers. It’s in everything because it’s the cheapest option. The list contains bread, crackers, cookies, yogurt, pill capsules, juice, soda, alcohol, lunch meat, sauces, dressings, ice-cream, and

more. The overrepresentation of this chemical sweetener makes it difficult to avoid or consume in moderation.

Food from the grocery store is not the same as the homemade, freshly baked dishes our grandparents grew up on. As we’ve turned cuisine into commodity, food has changed dramatically. The processes and ways in which food is made, enjoyed, and consumed are not like they once were. Factories pump out snack cakes that are mechanically filled with HFCS-loaded fluff. Processed food is developed by food chemists, who study the processes and interactions of both the biological and non-biological components of food.

High fructose corn syrup is but one example of the rapidly changing and growing knowledge of food science and nutrition. Most average Americans now focus on getting enough antioxidants, vitamin B12, and probiotics instead of concentrating on eating whole foods like vegetables, fruits, grains, and legumes.

Instead of a focusing on eating a variety of healthful foods, the American diet focuses on quick fixes, fad diets, and trends (remember Atkins?). This has created a new career market. Nutritionists, food scientists, eating disorder specialists, activists, and scholars are working to educate and spread awareness about healthy food, nutrition, and the perils of space-age “food” like high fructose corn syrup.

## HEALTHY FOOD TIPS MAKE LUNCH A SNAP

WORDS BY LAURA CASTLEMAN

*We all know that eating regular meals throughout the day is a healthy and good idea. But bringing lunch in to work or school can be a real pain! In that last-minute rush when you realize you have five minutes to throw a few items in your bag, what can you bring to get you through the day?*

**STEP ONE:** Protein. Having a solid source of protein is very important for ensuring your energy levels and feeling good. Try scooping a big spoonful of peanut butter into a small plastic container, tossing a few string cheese into a cooler bag, or pouring a generous serving of hummus into a container. Seeds (like sunflower seeds) and nuts are another quick way to access protein.

**STEP TWO:** Find a buddy for your protein. Peanut butter is great on crackers, whole-wheat bread, or celery sticks. String cheese goes well with cheese crackers or pretzels. Hummus is great with any vegetable (especially long, skinny ones like carrot sticks), as well as pita or other breads.

**STEP THREE:** Get your fruits & veggies. Carrot sticks are easy to eat on the go, as is celery or slices of zucchini and cucumber. Bananas and apples are great one-handed foods while you’re taking notes in class, and an orange can add flavor to your meal.

**STEP FOUR:** Include snacks! Granola bars, raisins, trail mix, and fruit leathers can get you through your day and come in all kinds of tasty flavors and combinations.

*With some of these items ready-to-go in your kitchen, you have a great backup plan for rushed days. Don't forget to eat breakfast and dinner, too!*

# PART-TIME JOB, FULL-TIME FRUSTRATION

## THE CHALLENGE OF EARNING BOTH MONEY AND RESPECT

*A PART-TIME JOB CAN PROVIDE POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR YOUR FUTURE CAREER.  
BUT DOES IT MEAN ENDURING NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES LIKE OPPRESSION,  
DISCRIMINATION, AND SILENCING?*

WORDS BY JULIA WHISENANT

My heart was racing as I stood outside the retirement community three blocks from my house. I was there for an interview—my *first* job interview. I stepped inside. To the right of the lobby was a large banquet room where I imagined dozens of old people met to play bingo (which turned out to be true). The kitchen manager, Janice, met me in the lobby for the interview and gave me a tour, which ended with my getting a job as a food server.

So began my journey into the wonderful world of employment. It meant a lot for me when I was sixteen: money, independence, being a “real adult,” maybe a car when I could save up the money. My first job was not just an introduction to culturally-sanctioned adulthood. It was where I learned firsthand about oppression, discrimination, powerlessness, and silencing.

I enjoyed my job. I tried to stay to myself and work quickly and efficiently. There were stresses I learned for the first time, and the joy of the bi-weekly paycheck. My first job was turning out to be everything I had expected.

Then there was Matt.

Matt was a prep cook who started working at the

retirement home about eight months after I started. He got along with just about everyone there. We didn’t talk much, but one day, we were sitting outside for our 10-minute break with a few other employees and he made a generic, offensive joke about Ellen DeGeneres being a lesbian. I usually chose to stay out of controversy at work, but on that day, I just wasn’t having it. My response was to ask what was wrong with being a lesbian. He jokingly replied, “Why? Are you a dyke?”

“No, but I’m bisexual, so if you have a problem with the gay community, you have a problem with me.”

And so it began. Though there was an awkward silence directly following my coming-out, the silence was not maintained. Every work-day

following, his greeting to me when I clocked-in for my shift was, “Hey Julia, how’s the bisexual-thing going?” I found this mildly annoying, but after a few weeks, nobody thought it was funny anymore, so he had to add to his repertoire. Soon, he was asking me which of my female coworkers “I would rather do,” and if I refused to elicit a response, he’d assume I would “do” both of them. He would then tell the female coworkers in question that I wanted to “do” them, and even though everyone knew he was joking, those coworkers would confront me and threaten to report me to the manager if I tried to flirt with them. I had one coworker threaten to beat me up. After Matt got tired of that, he decided he would try to embarrass me by asking

me just how, exactly, a woman has sex with another woman. He would go through every sex act he could think of that a woman could perform on another woman, asking me if I had ever done any such thing. Everything he said to me was humiliating. Looking back on it (after a few years of college and awesome friends), there were so many things I could have said to him. I responded, however, with silence.

Matt wasn’t the only problem. One server threatened to out me to my father if I didn’t cover her shift.

Other co-workers also tended to comment on subjects that made work a nightmare. One of my managers said to me, “I’m not a Nazi or anything, but I just don’t like black people. I’d never let one of them work here.” Another coworker told everyone that because I was liberal and pro-choice, I killed babies; three coworkers refused to acknowledge me for a week after that.

What was the use of going to the manager? I had no proof of harassment. I had no evidence of discrimination. Nobody would have acted as a witness on my behalf. I was alone.

I quit in April of 2008, never relinquishing my silence.

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I've had jobs since then, and only one was comparably bad.

I worked at a fast-food place where my manager told me that he'd never hire a black person, because "all black people steal shit." The same manager told me that he "hates men who dress like women. It makes me fucking sick and I hate them." He also frequently told me how hot he thought I was and made daily comments about the size of my tits.

Though I learned to stand up to oppression at work as much as possible, there is only so much an employee in a subordinate position can say to a manager (or an employee who has befriended the manager). First of all, there is the burden of proof. Without evidence, I couldn't prove any allegations I made about my coworkers in court. In most cases, my manager was a friend of my harasser, so there was little chance anything would happen. At the fast-food job, my manager was the son of the store manager, so any complaints would have been discarded.

My livelihood never depended on my job, but unfortunately, this is not the case for many others. Some people have themselves, children and families to support. This puts the employee in a position of vulnerability;

when you depend on your job for food and rent, your life is at the mercy of your superiors. If I needed my job to support a family, standing up to my racist manager would be the last thing I'd do, because my sustenance would depend on a positive relationship with my manager.

The workforce reminds me that oppression really is as widespread as we say it is, no matter how progressive our friendship circles may be. When I'm amongst my friends, it is easy for me to forget just how rampant oppression is, because I'm in a very controlled environment. At work, thrown together with dozens of random people, being a queer, sex-positive feminist that doesn't support oppressive statements and behaviors makes me an outcast. It's hard to be taken seriously.

When you're trying to make a living and fight sexism, homophobia, racism, or whatever else, your job becomes more difficult. For those whose lives depend on their income, fighting oppression is an added challenge. There is no easy answer, but stand up when you can, empower fellow workers to follow suit, and remember that even after the hardest shift of your life, you will eventually be able to clock out, go home, and fight for a better world.

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

*Workers' rights can be complicated. Here are four basic laws to help you know what you shouldn't have to put up with in the workplace.*

## *Discrimination:*

**Under federal law, employers cannot discriminate against you on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, age, or disability. Only some states—Oregon being one of them—prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Discrimination can refer to any aspect of your employment: hiring, firing, termination, job training, promotions, compensation, and discipline.**

## *Harassment::*

**Harassment on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, age, or disability is also illegal. Harassment refers to actions which create a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment, as well as actions which hinder job performance. This could include racial slurs, derogatory jokes about your race/gender/sexual orientation, etc., or comments about your physical appearance. In order for action to be taken against harassers, it must be clear that the actions are unwanted; in other words, you have to tell the harasser to stop, either verbally or in writing (though it is easier to prove to your employer or a jury if it is in writing).**

## *Family and Medical Leave Act:*

**Your employer is only guaranteed to give you time off if they are subject to the Family and Medical Leave Act. To qualify, your employer must have 50+ employees, and you must have worked there for 12+ months and worked at least 1250 hours. If you qualify for the FMLA, you are only entitled to take leave for: 1) birth or adoption, 2) a "serious health condition" that renders you incapable of performing work duties for 3+ days, 3) an immediate family member's "serious health condition," or 4) the need to attend to a family member on active duty.**

## *Occupational Safety and Health Act:*

**Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), you are protected from detriments to your health and safety. Under OSHA, you are allowed to receive training and safety information about hazardous chemicals and occupational hazards in your workplace. It protects employees from exposure to toxic chemicals, excessive noise, mechanical dangers, and unsanitary conditions.**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### LGBT Employment Rights:

<http://bit.ly/eHvKfq>  
[transgenderlaw.org](http://transgenderlaw.org)  
[bias.uoregon.edu](http://bias.uoregon.edu)

# CHALLENGING AN INDUSTRY MARKED BY DOMINATION

*Self-identified sex educator and feminist pornographer Tristan Taormino speaks about her work, the industry, and a changing culture.*



WORDS BY JULIA WHISENANT

**SIREN:** So, can you tell me about your work?

**TRISTAN TAORMINO:** Well, I wear a lot of different hats. I would say I'm a sex educator first and foremost. Whether it's a book, film, website, or any other medium, for me, it's all part of a larger system: it's all about educating and empowering people about their sexuality.

**S:** What made you decide to go into pornography?

**TT:** I first came to it after writing *The Ultimate Guide to anal Sex for Women*. I wanted to create a video adaptation of the book that was education, yet sexy and hot. I wanted it to be explicit, not softcore porn. So I decided to approach large pornography companies and ask them to fund and distribute it. When I first did the film, I found that this is what I wanted to do, but not necessarily full-time, because I was working on a lot of other projects. In 2005-2006, I came back to porn deliberately. I felt like there wasn't enough porn that showed genuine female orgasms and real female pleasure. What I wanted was to add my voice into the mix. Ever since then, porn has been central to my work.

**S:** In your eyes, is the feminist community generally supportive of the work you do? There seems to be a group of feminists

who aren't very supportive of pornography at all.

**TT:** Pornography, specifically, is a hot-button issue. It is unfortunately a divisive issue amongst feminists. Some feminists are completely supportive. Another group of feminists is not crazy about porn, but willing to hear me out and create a dialogue.

Other feminists, however, are like Gail Dines: they are rabidly and radically anti-porn; I don't get any support from them. All porn is bad to them.

**S:** Is there any reasoning with these feminists at all, in your experience?

**TT:** Definitely not. Anti-porn feminists are so fiercely driven by their own agenda that they aren't willing to listen. They throw out so much misinformation and fire people up about it. I don't even like to debate with them about it anymore—it's not useful, because they aren't even willing to listen. They don't give me any respect at all. I want to talk with those who may or may not agree with my work, but are willing to hear me out. Those conversations are so much more useful and encourage learning.

**S:** What challenges do you face as a female pornographer and sex educator in a historically male-dominated field?

**TT:** Oh, lots. Many feminist

pornographers are with independent companies, but I'm one who works for and with large companies: I'm in a shark tank. On one hand, I'm aware of it. There's a section of the company building where all the editing takes place. I call it the "man cave," and all of the editing is done by men: they watch hours of porn footage with naked women in it, sometimes including me. Men mostly run the companies and have a lot of power and control, but that's changing. There is now a community within the mainstream pornography industry that is supportive. With my company, I have a unique position; I have a lot of freedom and support there, which is really important to me. It is also challenging to stand out in an industry with so much product. There is just so much pornography being created and distributed that it's hard to distinguish yourself. But on a personal level, I get tremendous respect from the men in the field. Obviously, some are sexists and treat me with disrespect, but that happens in any field. However, I've never really felt like I've not been listened to because I'm a woman.

**S:** Since you've been doing feminist porn, do you think the industry as a whole has become

more or less sex-positive? Has it changed at all?

**TT:** I have seen some changes. Part of it relies on the fact that there are more women and feminists making pornography. It has had an impact. We are still a minority, but we need to keep pressing forward. We do have fans, so we don't need to make the typical cookie-cutter porn.

**S:** Can you tell me about your 2008 book, *Opening Up*?

**TT:** The book is a guide to creating and maintaining open relationships. The book is based on my original research, which consists of 126 interviews of people from North America practicing some form of non-monogamy. Their voices power the book. It details different styles of open relationships and includes real stories.

**S:** Have you noticed an increase in the popularity of open relationships? Is it that more people are talking about their open relationship or that more people are considering it?

**TT:** There seems to be a trend of more dialogue about it and more people willing to consider it. A lot of people are questioning monogamy, which involves unpacking cultural, political, and religious baggage, and focusing on what works for them.

# TAORMINO DISCUSSION ON FEMINIST PORN ILLUMINATES SOME BUT OFFENDS OTHERS

WORDS BY SOON MI PARK

**O**n February 16, author, columnist, editor, and pornographic film director Tristan Taormino visited campus to speak about her life as a feminist pornographer. Taormino began her lecture by speaking to her recent disinvite from the Oregon State University's "Modern Sex Conference". After explaining that OSU's Interim Vice President for University Relations and Marketing, Todd Simmons, did not feel that it was appropriate for taxpayer money to pay for her visit, she decided to accept the invite from the University of Oregon and tell us about her personal experiences as a writer and sex educator.

As a self-identified feminist pornographer, Taormino delved into the nuances of her work and shared with us her ideas of what feminist pornography is, that it exists, and how she makes it. Following her speech, Taormino opened the floor to a brief question and answer session.

While it was illuminating to hear Taormino speak, a few comments in her lecture garnered my attention. As a Women's and Gender Studies major and a feminist, I found the lecture to be classist, heterosexist, and at times appalling. In an attempt to dispel the myth that sex workers

and pornographers are from broken homes, uneducated, substance abusers, and have a history of sexual abuse, Taormino spoke about her college career at an Ivy League school. The dichotomy created by casting her experience against the stereotypical view of sex workers oversimplified the issue. While I am all for dispelling myths, I am not very fond of the manner in which this dichotomy was presented. While I believe that Taormino was trying to highlight the current societal attitudes towards sex workers and that which is deemed socially unfavorable, I think that she missed an opportunity to speak about the ways in which sex work means different things to different people. For Taormino and the people she works with, sex work is a professional career that allows her to challenge a male-dominated industry. These sex workers are unionized, but for others, sex work may not be as empowering. For others still, sex work is not self-chosen. Some do this work because of economic need. Others are manipulated or forced. While sex work exists on a continuum and consists of both positive and negative experiences, Taormino denied that there is a "seedy underbelly" of pornography, as well as sex work in general. Her focus on the positive aspects of

sex work is understandable, but the conditions for those in the most dangerous situations must improve, too.

As a queer-identified individual, I was also disappointed in the lecture's lack of discussion regarding both her experiences as a pornographer who identifies as bisexual and as a feminist who strives to subvert the current paradigm of adult films. Although she alluded to the queering of films in terms of asking her performers their preferences in activities and in partners, I was hoping for a more explicit discussion of how queerness plays a role in the production of pornography, as it is commonly thought of as an only-for-male-pleasure business.

As someone who has experienced sexual violence, I was taken aback with Taormino's use of the word "gang bang" – a word that, for me, suggests forced, and often violent, intercourse. It was alarming to hear this after she emphasized consensual sex, and more so because it was juxtaposed with her discussion of *feminist* pornography. Coercion and feminism are incompatible. The two should not be used in the same context as when speaking about healthy sex. As a sex educator, I would hope that Taormino would consider this in the future, as well as consider that although she

has not had a history of sexual abuse, that many have and will experience sexual assault in their lifetimes. Taormino's emphasis on performer choice implies that she would support the stand against sexual violence; however, I implore her to start by examining her own use of language. There are alternatives to using the phrase "gang bang." They include group sex, an orgy, etc. Adopting the oppressive language of pornography does her work a disservice.

Having said all of this, it is without a doubt that Tristan Taormino's lecture was very illuminating and captivating. We live in exciting times! I'm not certain that even twenty years ago, a lecturer like Taormino would have been invited, much less paid for her visit to a college campus to speak about her life experiences so openly and honestly. I especially applaud her on her noteworthy comment on her forbidding of fake nails on set, her emphasis on her performers' rights to choose their partners and their activities, her esteem for sexual protection, and for her ability to talk about sex in an open forum in a manner that did not make me feel ashamed, embarrassed, or guilty for liking the way that I enjoy my body.

**I THINK THAT SHE MISSED AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK ABOUT THE WAYS IN WHICH SEX WORK MEANS DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE.**

# BEHIND THE SCENES AT BITCH MEDIA

WORDS BY JENNIFER BUSBY

KELSEY WALLACE WAS NERVOUS. Her first job, at a suburban Mr. Formal, meant measuring older guys from her high school. At 16, the experience made her uncomfortable. She hadn't heard of *Bitch*, and the University of Oregon graduate hadn't yet dreamed of working there.

Wallace graduated from the Master's program in journalism at the University of Oregon. Her post-grad resume reads like a feminist fantasy come true. She's gone from admiring the work of *Bitch* as an undergraduate to working as their web editor from their Northeast Portland office.

When she applied for the position, she was looking for experience between her Master's and Ph.D. Her intended focus for her Ph.D was ethnography. She wanted to go behind the scenes to see how feminist media is made. In retrospect, Wallace is glad she didn't get into her Ph.D program, because it allowed her to continue to work for the non-profit. She says she feels lucky to participate.

"Not many people can use their love of TV, feminism, and journalism in combination and get paid," Wallace said.

Employment at *Bitch* means she gets to work closely with one of her feminist role models: cofounder and editorial/creative director Andi Zeisler. "I'm inspired by her," she said, "she knows so much." There's definitely a resemblance: both women have dark hair and expressive eyes. In a world shaped by the male gaze, they turn their eyes outward to do what *Bitch* does best: critiquing the culture that surrounds us.

Coming out of her feminist workspace can be a jolt to her system. "Sometimes I'm in a

cognitive dissonance bubble where I think everyone wants to hear the feminist perspective," she said.

*Bitch* Media is the umbrella term for what was once only a print magazine. As other magazines have capsized under the weight of the recession and dramatic technological changes in how many access media, *Bitch* has expanded its presence online.

She's been surprised at the response to some critical blog posts. She thought that touchy issues would center around public policy, not reality television shows. Fans get sensitive when pop culture is under the microscope, she said.

Regardless, she holds firm. "We're not going to back down from critiquing something because a lot of people like it," she said. Most of the comments on the blog expand topics and contribute to discussion. A blog post about Bravo's *The Real Housewives* franchise resulted in comments noting that the Atlanta version of the show is the only one that even alludes to racial issues.

Coming from academia, she's happy to have a more responsive audience. "What you said made a difference to someone besides yourself and your professor," she said. The comments section on the blog allows readers to respond to the text and converse with the author of the post.

"Other people are reading and interacting with your text," she said. "In academia, you feel like you're banging your head against the wall."

Wallace also finds the shorter format of her writing at *Bitch* refreshing. "I've written academic papers that probably could have been summed up in a blog post," she said.

Wallace began at *Bitch* as an intern, where she worked for three months before a stretch where she was paid to fill in gaps in staffing. In March 2009, she was hired as the web editor, where she's worked since.

Subscription and donation drives occur throughout the year; the organization just finished a February subscription drive where they met their goal of 801 new subscriptions.

Wallace is among the half of *Bitch's* eight paid staffers who also hold other jobs. She spends about 17 hours in the Alberta St. office each week. She also teaches communication studies as an adjunct professor at the University of Portland and is a web editor for a major cable network.

There are times when she's frustrated, though. Wallace knows that she could make more money elsewhere, but she wants her life to be about what *Bitch* is about—seeing the world through a feminist lens and working against oppression. She said that many people don't have the financial ability to work somewhere they love. It's expensive, she said, to work for a nonprofit and hold two other jobs.

"I would love to stay here forever," she said, "but you can only work at a part time job for so long." Wallace isn't aiming to leave anytime soon. She'd like to stay for a couple more years if she can.

Although the editors strive to create inclusive content, Wallace knows there are weak spots. "You can always do more," she said. Party because their office is in Portland, she said, the staff is predominantly white.

For this reason, she's sought out guest bloggers with other backgrounds and perspectives

to balance the racial makeup of the office. "We've always had the mission to be about more than one group or perspective," she said.

Wallace also acknowledges that men are not equally represented. It's become an office joke to bemoan the inability to find a male mate at work. "There are men who contribute," she said, "but it's not equal. Part of [*Bitch's*] feminism is about promoting women." That's why, she explained, the magazine focuses on female bands and female films.

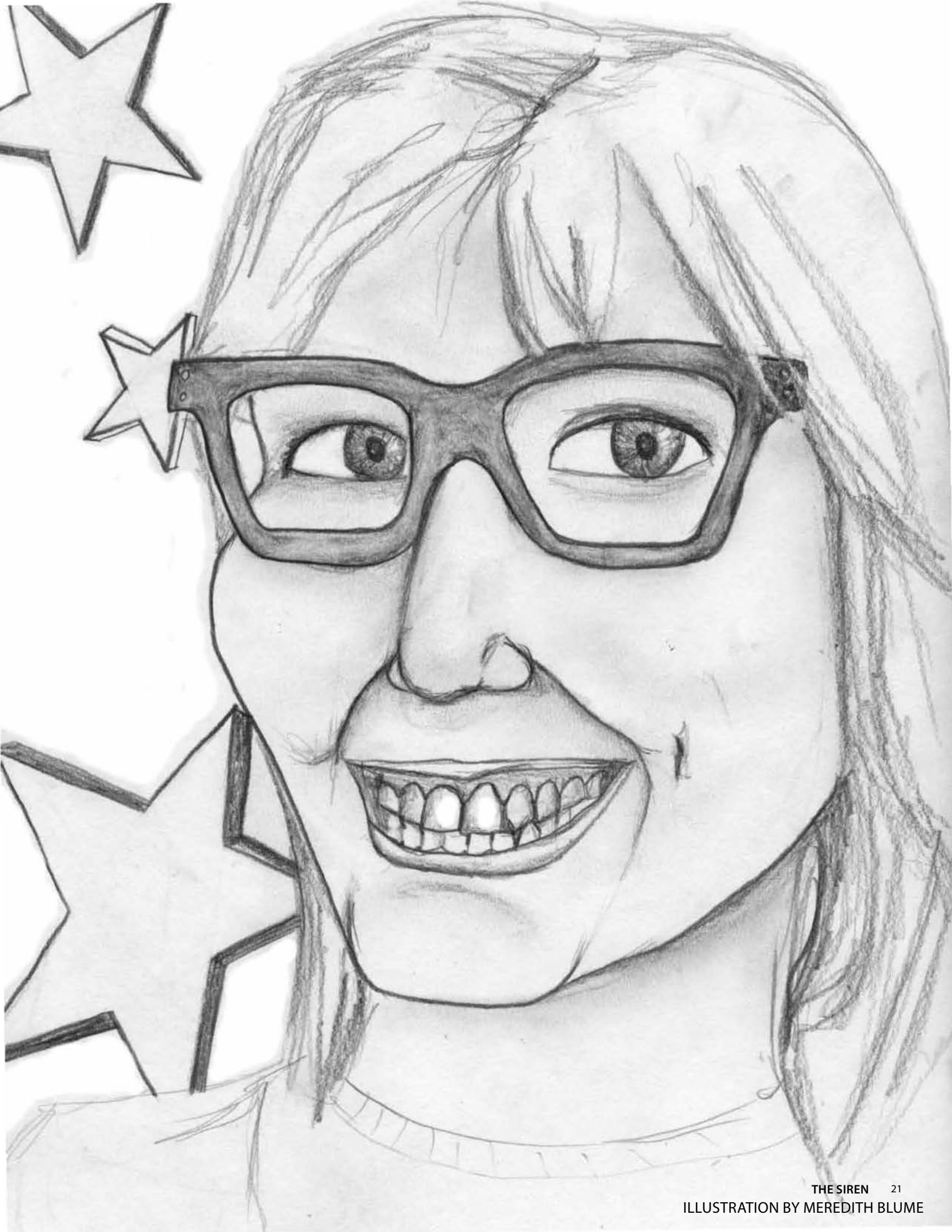
There are male feminists in the world, she said, but their involvement is more surface-level. They aren't going to make jokes about the organization's name, "but they aren't going to subscribe, either," she said.

Passers-by do spot the sign outside the office and make crude jokes. She brushes aside their behavior, "A lot of it comes from guys who don't spend a lot of time thinking about feminism—their loss."

When time and money allows, Wallace says she'd like to reach a younger audience. She's frustrated that *Bitch's* feminist message reaches women so late in their lives—often after they've graduated high school.

The name of the organization has made it difficult to reach younger audiences as well. "I love the name, but every one in a while it's a little bit of a hurdle," she said. "Overall, it's for the best because it speaks to what we do."

This year marks *Bitch* Media's 15th anniversary. Wallace says she wants to be around for its 25th. It's like the feminist mafia, she said. "Once you've been in, you can't get out."



# INAPPROPRIATE MEDIA RESPONSE OVERSHADOWS EVENT'S PURPOSE

Angela Y. Davis spoke at the Lyllye B. Parker Conference in January. Following the keynote performance, responses resonated from the local media which seemed to be driven by misinformation and a failure to provide credit to the event and sponsors that brought Davis to campus.

WORDS AND PHOTO BY JENNIFER BUSBY

In late January, the ASUO Women's Center partnered with campus and community members to hold a two-day conference addressing the experiences of women of color. In addition to a variety of interactive workshops, the conference featured renowned spoken-word group Yellow Rage, radical muralist Favianna Rodriguez, and scholar and activist Dr. Angela Y. Davis.

Overall, local media coverage of the conference was meager. Lauren Fox's Register Guard article was so focused on how much money Davis would receive that the rest of her piece suffered. What was printed was a bland overview of Davis's work that lacked context.

Representation of the event was limited to Fox's article and two inflammatory opinion pieces: a guest commentary in the Oregon Daily Emerald and a letter to the editor published in the Register-Guard. Both misinformed pieces were written by UO alumnus and Eugene lawyer Robert Lowry.

Lowry calls the keynote event an abomination and substantiates his argument with misinformation. Neither the Register-Guard nor the ODE corrected his factual errors.

Student Lidiana Soto took exception to the guest commentary. "I'm not asking you to be neutral, as it's a joke that any journalist thinks this can even happen, but I'm asking for equal coverage of issues from all angles," she wrote in an email to Harris. Her response was not

published.

Harris intended to publish Lowry's guest commentary as a way to call attention to its racism and falseness. He wanted to air the oft-unspoken feelings that some in our community have. But if Lowry's inflammatory opinion was based on faulty logic, why did ODE Opinion Editor Tyree Harris publish it?

"I ran that guy's article not because he had good, valid points...but because he was so wrong and so heinous, that I wanted the University of Oregon community to see this man's thought process so that we could potentially unify and express our frustration with this ignorance," he wrote in his email response to Soto, which was released to the Siren.

Editing the opinion section of a paper is a tricky task. Who finds their voice in print and who does not? An editor should consider multiple opinions and strive to reflect the community's concerns in the pages of the paper while pushing readership to consider diverse perspectives. It's questionable that Harris published Lowry's commentary with the intention of causing an uproar.

Harris continued that those outraged by the coverage of the conference and the keynote speech should come forward. He said he wanted to avoid people of color being pigeonholed as angry minorities. "I think that you definitely deserve an opportunity to run in the paper, and I will do whatever I can to

get you in print," he said.

However, Harris failed to publish any of the responses he received that addressed Lowry's rant. In this case, racist myths went unchallenged.

Among those who responded to Lowry's commentary are Michael Haimes-Garcia, Jon Phan, Jessica Rojas, and Soto. Haimes-Garcia is the head of the Ethnic Studies Department and the Director of the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality Studies. He was succinct in his critique, dismantling Lowry's argument by presenting the facts. His response was not published.

Jon Phan, Men's Center Director, responded as an ally. "By focusing on one speaker, the Emerald reinforces and perpetuates the oppression that women of color experience on campus. More important, the Emerald is silencing the voices of women, women of color, and those who support them," he wrote. His response was not published.

Rojas, who works at the Women's Center, responded with a lengthy piece intent on setting the record straight. She detailed the conference, its supporters, and its workshops. Her response was not published.

It is true that we can only address ignorance if we know it exists. Once we hear the myths, we can debunk them with the facts.

Harris is unintentionally reproducing oppression by publishing Lowry's ignorant opinion (putting him in a

position of privilege) and refusing to publish a response from those on campus who support Davis. These include feminists and people of color, groups that share membership and a history of being silenced.

Harris baited the university community with Lowry's ill-informed article. He put the onus on women, communities of color, and allies to respond. But when they did he did not amplify their voices in the pages of the paper; he silenced them.

Ultimately, the frustration and conflict that has developed out of Lowry's commentary and media coverage of the conference is tangential. Instead of allowing one misinformed perspective to overshadow the Women of Color Conference, let's refocus.

ASUO Women's Center Diversity Coordinator Andrea Valderrama created an intentional space to focus on women of color. She curated workshops to address the oppression that is a daily part of many lives, with a focus on healing the wounds that are inflicted by ideologies that tend to put women and people of color last.

This space brought more than 800 people together: students, faculty, staff, community members, and people from as far away as New York. We shared meals and stories.

And yes, the university community rallied to bring Davis as the closing keynote speaker. Fox, who pursued the financial issue, and Lowry



Angela Davis spoke as the keynote speaker on the last night of the Women of Color Conference.

Brandy Ota and Lyllye B. Parker embrace after the announcement of the conferences transformation from the Women of Color Conference, to the Lyllye B. Parker Conference and Speaker Series.



As Angela Davis walks to the front of the Columbia 150, many of the more than 500 audience members rise to their feet to welcome the speaker.

(who insists that Davis is a terrorist) should take note of who partnered to bring Davis to campus.

On the night of her speech, Columbia 150 was packed with more than 500 people who see the importance of the anti-oppression work she's done since the 1960s.

The closing event presented an opportunity to hear a feminist legend speak about the work she does, but we chose to take this high-profile moment to acknowledge another living

legend: Lyllye B. Parker. Valderrama announced that the Women's Center's Women of Color Speaker Series was to be renamed in honor of Parker's contributions to the community and university.

In the 1940s, Parker's maternal family moved from New Orleans to Eugene. They experienced racism in both places, including housing segregation that prompted Parker's mother Mattie Reynolds to campaign for housing equity.

After Reynolds passed away

in Aug. 2010, Parker was approached by many in the community who wanted to memorialize her mother. My belief is we give flowers to the living, not the dead, she responded.

In naming the Lyllye B. Parker Speaker Series after her, we honor the work that Parker has done for students at this university. That story is one that was neglected by local media coverage.

Valderrama underlined the importance of recognizing

Parker "in a community where racism, sexism, and classism still directly affect communities of color on a daily basis," she said.

The activist community in Eugene will continue to hold events and rally for change, whether or not local media provide adequate coverage. However, it is our hope that journalists recognize the long history of media outlets in this country as institutions that examine those in positions of power and challenge their authority.

# SMUGGLED SANDWICHES AND SAFETY GOGGLES

OUR FAVORITE FEMINIST VIGILANTE IS BACK. SHE'S PAID FOR HER CRIME (READ ABOUT IT IN THE ACTION ISSUE) AND NOW SHE'S READY TO REGALE US WITH HER EXPERIENCE DOING TIME ON THE SHERIFF'S WORK CREW. THE SECOND OF TWO PARTS.

WORDS BY MARY SHERMAN

Hey there gang, Perhaps you remember the last time you heard from me, I was embracing the newly-acquired convict in me, and heading to the Sheriff's Road Crew for a full-blown, nauseating, skin-itching, muscle-aching, and rip-roaring 24 hours of service. That's right, I survived. Now I want to fill you in on all the glorious details of those magical weekends in an attempt to dissuade all interested parties in the wrongdoings I undertook many moons ago.

In review, my last article warned you of the dangers of drinking, biking, racing, mud-slinging, sassing DPS, being photogenic, ticket-taking, court-going, and right on up to the now of road-crewing. In other words, we fought the law, and the law won.

Day one on the Sheriff's Road Crew had a rough start. They are very particular, you see, about what a person can bring (nothing), what time to be at the jail (early), your style of dress and, I was told with a disdainful look that assumed I was bent on rule breaking, *absolutely no cell phones*. Check-in is at 7:30 a.m. sharp. I feared the punishment for tardiness would be harsh indeed.

Luckily, I live quite close to the jail (my mother wondered aloud later if this foreshadowed

“*MY LAST ARTICLE WARNED YOU OF THE DANGERS OF DRINKING, BIKING, RACING, MUD-SLINGING, SASSING DPS, BEING PHOTOGENIC, TICKET-TAKING, COURT-GOING, AND RIGHT ON UP TO THE NOW OF ROAD-CREWING. IN OTHER WORDS, WE FOUGHT THE LAW, AND THE LAW WON.*”

my upcoming year) and I made it just in time with only my Driver's License, jacket, and pink paper in hand for roll-call. In March, I will be able to take the pink paper out of my wallet forever. Until then, I was strictly instructed to have it with me at all times—“more important than your driver's license.”

There were 25 other miscreants loitering about the outdoor cage where the morning routine occurs. Some of our number knew the routine inside and out.

For all you first-timers out there, once your name is called you are asked to stick around after the call and chat with the presiding officers to get the low-down. The low-down, as it turns out, means trooping into the jail for your mug-shot. I can only imagine what my weary-eyed, hung-over, greasy-haired *mug* looked like that morning. I should have brushed my teeth.

After the photo shoot, everyone reports to the yard

behind the jail and waits until further notice. The yard contains at least two Sheriff trucks, their boxy campers looming large behind them. They are blatantly and unmistakably labeled: Sheriff's Road Crew; complete with bars on the windows and a full view from the outside in. On average, about an hour lapses before the badges saunter out from their morning loiter. When the Sheriffs finally showed up, one lanky man with a scrubby beard asked one of them with a startling air of confidence: “Are we going to be using any power tools today?”

“Yeah...” replied the Sheriff, not entirely sure what direction the conversation is headed.

“Can I go get my own safety goggles? I have them in my truck.”

“I have some, but, yeah, I mean, if you need to,” he replied.

Suspect A, of course, returns wearing a pair of shiny gold

aviators. He is grinning at the joke.

Roll is called again, and the group is split into three crews for the day's tasks. After being herded into one of the trucks, I stared forlornly out the window to the few stragglers with no camper to be shuttled into. The Sheriffs spoke with these unlucky few. Whoops of joy startled me out of my reverie, and I realized that they were being sent home. No punishment, no rescheduling, just underfunding and a way to make the rest of us unlucky souls jealous. And off we went.

Ironically enough, my crew was situated right across the street from the scene of the crime. (For those of you not with us previously, The John E. Jaqua Academic Center was Undesirable: No. 1, Target Manifested) Working with my fellow furloughed inmates on the landscape and shrubbery along Riverfront Parkway, I was able to gawk at the wonders of the Jock-Box all day long. I worked my buns off raking, clipping, sweeping, squatting, sitting, staring, and flirting.

I had heard of road crews out East where the Sheriffs carried loaded rifles and though I hadn't seen that kind of artillery yet, I didn't want to test the uniformity of crews across the



country on my very first day. Of course, before beginning the day's labor I had to don my bright yellow vest labeled INMATE.

Thousands of seconds into the grueling shift, it was finally time for some grub. Starving, I rushed to the bright orange cooler, and recoiled in dread. I selected the least soggy (which isn't saying much), saran-wrapped sandwich pack, an orange, and a cookie. Do you remember the 60 cent loaves of white bread that, when wadded up, also function as pencil erasers? A necessary lunch component, apparently. As I peeled the bread apart to reveal the bologna and green mayo combination, I looked over to see Suspect A, still wearing his aviators, pull a meatball sub out of his pocket and begin munching away happily. A sharp ringing sound pulled his attention away from his large and delicious lunch from the local sub shop, and he whipped his cell phone out of his pocket and began jabbing away for the rest of our 30 minute lunch break. The Sheriff does nothing.

At around 2 p.m., we finished cleaning up the area and headed back into the camper for the return trip to the jail. Unfortunately, my inexperience meant I had broken no rules (brought nothing with me), and had not brought my cell-phone or house keys.

After we returned to the jail, I walked home and, after such a rough day, promptly passed out on the front steps of my house. Because I couldn't get in, I laid there thinking, "Eight hours down, 16 to go."

Day two on the Sheriff's Road Crew. I had smartened up enough by this time that I kept my cell phone on silent, house keys in my pocket, bike locked up outside, and made

sure to make a big enough deal about my "life threatening food allergies" that no one bothered me about the lunch I had packed for myself. Seven-thirty on the dot, I rolled into the cage for roll call. It was fun to watch the new inmates squirm. Me? I was hardened regular by this point. I knew the ropes, and knew this was a cut-throat crowd. Some advice: Keep your head down and appear fierce at all times.

This time I met up with an old buddy who also happened to be on the crew and shot the shit about our various deeds that landed us furloughed (slammer-bound). We stood around for another hour before the badges headed out for the second round of roll-call and assigned us to the various rigs ahead. Yep, I was serving today, headed out west to an old homeless camp for some brush clearing.

Lunch was the same as before, with the upgraded veggie option of egg-salad. I smiled happily at my cleverness and, more content with my lunch, felt ready to gossip the lunch break away with my fellow mischief makers. I had been inducted into the society of furloughed inmates, and was ready to hear the tales of past crimes and whatever the most recent escapades were that landed these fine folk shoveling dirt.

"What did you get?" One inmate began the inevitable roundtable conversation.

"I was camping with my two daughters and we were robbed. My daughters chased the assholes down, and I took a shot at one of them while they were running. I didn't see the cops right behind. The judge said if I didn't try to run, I probably could have gotten away with it."

"I was only given four days, and I just didn't want to go the last one. Well, they took

me back to court and I got an additional 30 days on Road Crew. Now I spend every Saturday and Sunday out here for four months."

"Felony possession of pot in a school zone--it was only an ounce!" one convict said.

"Unlicensed gun ownership."  
"Felony DUI."

And the circle finally ended with me. Vaguely embarrassed, I admitted my heinous crime:

"I threw mud at a building."

A short silence. The other convicts look around at each other for a minute until everyone in the circle busted out laughing. Throughout the course of the afternoon, I was the butt of many jokes about the very serious nature of my crime

As I lugged a branch over to the woodchip pile, I received many shaking heads, serious looks, barely disguised grins, and a few mutterings of: "paying for your heinous crimes" complete with winks and outbursts of laughter. The inmates found me, and my crimes, cute indeed.

After the half-hour lunch, I spent the rest of the afternoon appearing busy. When the presiding officer stayed just downstream from me, I could traipse around the ditch and look busy picking up a branch here and there, or maybe a piece of garbage which needed to go to the furthest trash bin from where I was working.

At some point during the day I thought some of the little bushes looked familiar. Poison oak? Nah, they wouldn't bring us out to a place with no protection and no warning of said poison; that sounds like a lawsuit, right? Unfortunately, this was also the day I chose to wear my pants that were cut short below the knee, and short sleeves. And indeed, I came

away from this one with poison oak all up and down my arms and legs.

The final day of Road Crew was bittersweet. The plethora of rumors and speculation that fly around the road-crew crowd are reminiscent of the most loquacious of stich-and-bitch circles. Rumor has it, that your final day of road crew you are allowed to leave.

Remember the envy of those folks who got released on day one? Well, this could be my day. I woke up in time, biked to the jail with my lunch and other unmentionables, and patiently awaited the two sets of roll calls. Roll call one: "Sherman?"

"Here." *Damn. OK, no mention of home yet.*

Wait, wait, wait, one hour in the yard. Roll call two...roll call three (must have missed some)...YES! I am victorious. I am headed home. My heart is fluttering, the birds are singing, it begins to rain glitter, and an impromptu parade erupts from my heart, there will be no final shift for me. Pop the champagne, crack the eggs, it's breakfast time!

Now, even though the Sheriff's Road Crew is a fond memory in my past, I am still a furloughed inmate until March when I can lose the pink paper for good. The sentencing was a Diversion Plan, and I have almost completed it. I had to attend an in-custody arraignment at the jail, complete my hours on the Crew, and keep my nose clean until my impending court date: one more month, and counting. So far so good, but there are still thousands of moments until that day. Cheers to clean noses, and no actual cell-time. Hope this continuation has demonstrated to all y'all how dangerous and lurk-y the 50 can be.



MATA HARI, THE ORIGINAL FEMME FATALE

PUBLIC DOMAIN

# REVIEWS

## FEMINIST PRESS REPRINTS VINTAGE PULP FICTION

WORDS BY NINA NOLEN

Eight years ago, the Feminist Press at the City University of New York made an amazing decision. They began to print a series of books titled *Femme Fatales: Women Write Pulp*. This series is a collection of short novels spanning a wide variety of topics including mystery, science fiction, romance, and other dramatic genres.

The idea was sparked by a used book vender in Florida who sent a copy of a 1930's pulp fiction novel to the Feminist Press. The editors "felt it was touching on issues that were kind of explosive for its time," (*Bookselling this Week*, 2003). Three books were published originally in 2003, and were met with warm reviews. The editors have published six more.

These novels are reprints of works written by women in the first half of the twentieth century, and capture female voices during a male-dominated era.

Valerie Taylor's novel, *The Girls in 3-B*, follows three young girls as they move to the big city and take on reality. Each girl

is confronts different areas of growing up female: body issues, sexuality, orientation, marriage, love, and pregnancy. By the end of the novel each woman values her life as independent woman and learns how to navigate the world around her.

*The G-string Murders*, Gypsy Rose Lee's mystery novel, tells the story of a burlesque club and the murders that take place there. The whole story is glamorous, and Lee has written herself in as a main character. It puts a world of bumbling cops and fierce dancers on display, allowing the women to shine. The book went on to inspire the 1943 film *Lady of Burlesque* while Lee wrote one other mystery novel.

Thanks to these enjoyable stories, I think it is safe to assume that the other books would be an entertaining read. The Feminist Press of the City University of New York has created a great space for women to write, publish, and read excellent books. Next time you crave pulp, reach for *Femme Fatales*.

## CAPTIVATING MEMOIR IS OBSESSED WITH MINUTIAE

WORDS BY LAURA CASTLEMAN

Elisabeth Tova Bailey's unique memoir, *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating*, is an intimate look into the minutiae of life that occur unnoticed all around us. When Bailey falls ill with a mysterious disease that makes her nearly unable to walk even to the bathroom, she becomes bedridden. Alone in her room, she cannot muster the concentration and strength to even read a book, and must turn to alternative forms of entertainment.

One day, a visiting friend finds a snail in the woods near Bailey's home and, along with a pot of violets, gives the tiny friend to Bailey. Although at first the author is alarmed at the prospect of caring for this creature, she eventually grows to adore it. Its home expands from the pot of violets to a terrarium, and page after page of the book describe delightful details about the creature: how it eats square holes into postcards that Bailey then mails to friends, gracefully extends itself into a small shell of water for a drink, and grooms itself like a cat.

*The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating* is an elegant, quiet, and captivating book. Although there is no major adventure, or movement greater than about two feet at any one time, one finds oneself fascinated and invested in the snail's life.

When I was reading it, I found myself frequently pausing to read passages aloud to friends, or to ponder further what Bailey had written. Each chapter opens with a quotation or a poem about snails, by famous writers ranging from the famous Japanese poet Kobayashi Issa to the English writer John Donne.

Along with speaking of the more spiritual, poetic side of snails, Bailey also reads about and shares scientific knowledge of snails. The entire book is like a miniature course on snail mythology, biology, and poetry.

Bailey's book is a relaxing and truly different read. It is a delicate book that one can easily fall in love with – and it teaches us to value and respect the small, often overlooked animals in our world.

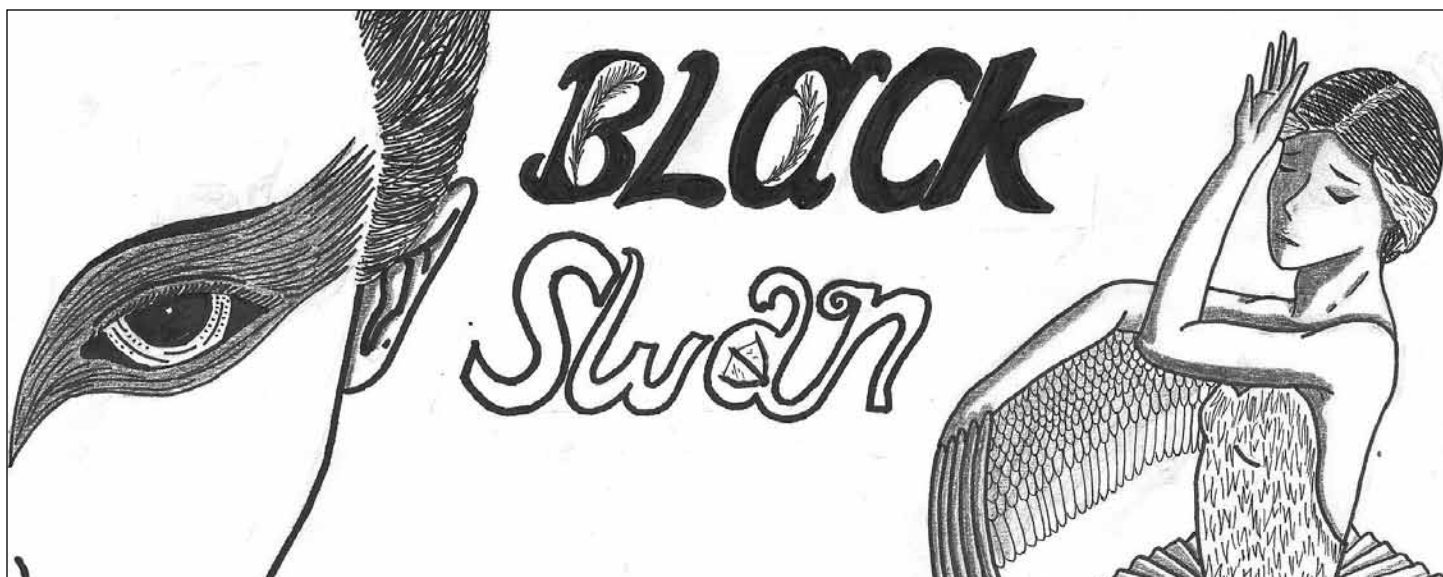


ILLUSTRATION BY VIKA LEQUE

## THRILLER BLURS FANTASY AND REALITY, BOTH ON SCREEN AND BEHIND THE SCENES

WORDS BY ELIZABETH EAGAN

Psycho-sexual ballet thriller. This is the most succinct description possible of Darren Aronofsky's latest film, the widely acclaimed *Black Swan*.

Starring Natalie Portman as Nina, a restrained, driven, perfectionist ballerina, *Black Swan* shows in gruesome detail the realities of a childhood dream gone wrong.

Ballet is pressed firmly into the social consciousness as the quintessential "little girl" activity. It creates a world full of pink tights and tutus, grace, daintiness, and innocence. Even in my otherwise nonconformist childhood, I took ballet lessons while my brother played soccer.

Watching *Black Swan*, I was reminded again and again of that frilly ballet studio where *The Swan Princess* was always playing on the television in the lobby. Nina is exactly the image of what ballet was to me as a child. I looked up to the elegant, thin older girls with their perfect buns, sheer skirts and pointe shoes.

Although I grew away from ballet as I matured, Nina seems never to have entered the real world. She never moved away from that childlike imagining of

what it is to be a ballerina. Her bedroom looks like it belongs to a child: stuffed animals line one pastel wall and a music box chimes her to sleep with the theme from *Swan Lake*.

But the movie isn't about the dream. It's about the reality hidden behind it. In pursuit of the dual role of the Swan Queen and the Black Swan in a production of *Swan Lake*, Nina lies, pushes herself through injuries and exhaustion, and casually pops out to the bathroom to make herself vomit with no awareness that any of this is unusual. In the real ballet world, it isn't.

In an interview on NPR, Natalie Portman discussed her preparation for the role of Nina. In pursuit of the "Balanchine ideal," an image of a dancer that requires slimness and long limbs, she worked with a trainer who literally pulled on her limbs to lengthen them and she was instructed to "lose as much weight as [she] could without getting sick."

Portman remarked that during the first part of her preparation, the dancers she worked with repeatedly said that she looked nothing like

a ballerina, but once she had "really started dieting and lost a serious amount of weight" these same people began complimenting her.

Mila Kunis, who plays Portman's understudy and competition in the film, Lily, also underwent dramatic weight loss. On *Jimmy Kimmel Live* in late 2010, she said that she lost 20 pounds during training. Her normal weight, she says, is 117 lbs. She went on to say that Portman lost more weight than she did.

This is a concrete example of social pressure to conform to a particular body image. Just as the film's characters persevere through draconian training, so do its actors.

It's ludicrous to expect an adult woman to weigh less than 100 pounds, but as Portman said, her weight loss was praised.

Portman mentioned having dislocated several ribs during filming, but said that it was nothing compared to some of the injuries ballerinas will dance with in order to avoid being replaced. This is the world *Black Swan* shows, where narrowly defined physical perfection is the goal, and jeopardizing one's

health in pursuit of a moment's spotlight is the norm.

Take another look at Nina's room. Every time she reenters it, it looks a little more ominous. Her stuffed animals stare at her. Her mother appears inside the room with no warning. The tune on the music box sounds more ominous as the darker context of her life is shown.

Every time the film revisited that little-girl room I thought, "This is what that childhood dream comes to if you let it consume you."

*Black Swan* shows in stark color and harsh violence what hides behind the pink tulle: objectification, the enforcement of a single ideal of physical perfection, and the cost of maintaining that image of beauty — no matter the cost to mind and body.

*Black Swan* successfully inserts the audience into Nina's world. The blending of fantasy and reality within the film tells a cautionary tale about perfectionism. The bleed through into the work the actors must do demands we broaden our consciousness to other fields than ballet where bodily sacrifice has become the norm.

# TELL ME MORE:

A CONNECTION-BUILDING GAME FOR TWO OR MORE PLAYERS

CONCEPT BY CARLI BARNUM

OPEN THE GAME BOARD, READ THE INSTRUCTIONS, AND GET READY TO LEARN ABOUT YOUR FELLOW PLAYERS.

## THE GAME

Tell Me More is designed to make relationship work more fun. It is important to connect with those around us, but starting conversations can be a hurdle for some.

This game aims for good times while allowing people to learn about each other. It's not as sexually loaded as a game of Truth or Dare and not as bizarre as Would You Rather. Instead, we've chosen to include a broad range of questions that include a variety of life experiences. Never had a pet? Talk about the companion animal you would choose if you could.

Don't limit yourself to one word answers. There's no time limit, so feel free to elaborate and follow tangents. Discussing the last good book you read can open the door to discovering that the person you're playing with would be a perfect part of that book club you've been meaning to start.

If a question is uncomfortable for you, speak up. Flip again to move to a new space and continue playing. Recognizing and expressing boundaries is an important part of any relationship; this game is no exception.

## THE RULES

To begin, find a coin and as many game pieces as you have players. Use anything you can find--coins, dice, and tiny plastic animals are good choices.

Begin on the grey space in the upper left hand corner. All players state their full names and favorite colors.

Flip a coin to see who should go first. First player to move gets to pick which direction they move in, whether clockwise or counter clockwise. The next player should go the opposite direction.

When it's your turn, flip a coin to see how many spaces you move. Heads: move one; tails, move two. Feel free to move in either direction.

When you land on a space, you must answer the question. After your answer, play proceeds to the player to your right.

Continue in this fashion until all of the spaces have been landed on at least once.

To conclude play, take turn flipping until you land on the "You win!" space. Enjoy a consensual group hug.

Feel free to deviate from the questions on the game board and make up your own getting-to-know-you questions.

STATE YOUR FULL NAME AND FAVORITE COLOR.	IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT SOCIETAL NORMS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
IF YOU WERE A TREE WHAT TYPE WOULD YOU BE?	
SING A FEW LYRICS FROM A SONG YOU ENJOY.	
	DESCRIBE YOUR FAVORITE MEAL.
IF YOU COULD BE ANY FICTIONAL CHARACTER, WHO WOULD IT BE?	
	WHO ARE YOUR ROLE MODELS?
WHAT IS THE LAST GOOD BOOK YOU READ?	
WHAT WEATHER CONDITIONS DO YOU LOVE THE MOST?	
IF YOU COULD INVENT ANYTHING WHAT WOULD IT BE?	LIST FIVE THINGS YOU LIKE ABOUT YOUR GAME PARTNER.

LIST FIVE THINGS THAT YOU LIKE ABOUT YOURSELF.	WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE ANIMAL?	DESCRIBE A FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.	DO YOU HAVE ANY HABITS?	SHARE A SEXUAL FANTASY.	GIVE THE OTHER PERSON A COMPLIMENT.
				DESCRIBE A SUPERNATURAL ENCOUNTER YOU'VE HAD.	

# TELL ME MORE

A GAME FOR TWO OR MORE PLAYERS

IF YOU HAD A SUPER-POWER WHAT WOULD IT BE?	DO YOU COLLECT ANYTHING?	NAME A GUILTY PLEASURE OF YOURS.	WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST PET PEEVE?	WHAT'S THE LATEST ADVENTURE YOU'VE BEEN ON?
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DESCRIBE A TIME WHEN YOU FELT SPECIAL.	WHERE WOULD YOU LIVE FOR A YEAR IF IT WAS EXPENSE FREE?	DESCRIBE YOUR FAVORITE UNDERWEAR.	THINK OF A QUESTION TO ASK YOUR PARTNER.	WHAT'S YOUR IDEA OF A DREAM PARTNER?	YOU WIN! HUGS ALL AROUND!
TELL THE STORY OF YOUR FIRST KISS.				WHAT WOULD BE YOUR DREAM CAR?	

# CO-WORKERS BECOME FRIENDS, FAMILY

*Intense volunteer experience teaches advocacy that results in deep bonds.*

WORDS BY VIKA LEQUE

**H**ave you ever felt an emotionally intimate connection with someone that you can't express in words? Have you ever felt that same connection with every one around you? In my sophomore year of high school, I wanted to start volunteering with younger teenagers because I noticed most of my struggles with friends, school, crushes, sexuality, my parents' divorce, and my identity began just before I turned thirteen. The first volunteer organization I went to was called TRAIN—Teens Resisting Abuse and Initiating Non-violence. The local battered women's shelter called AWARE—Aiding Women in Abuse and Rape Emergencies—sponsored TRAIN. Afterward, I found that TRAIN impacted me the most because every teenager there was just like me: struggling to triumph over their pasts whether it was rape, violence, suicide, drug addictions, or broken families. It's difficult to admit things like these, which is why we all shared a deep bond at the end of the program.

From the knowledge of advocacy learned at the volunteer training, we were able to advocate for other students for students that did not trust talking to adults based on the experience with their families. The other volunteers and I were in no way therapists, but we could listen, and relate to the

situation, which is what most of the students wanted.

About six months later I heard about a volunteer training at the women's shelter, and I joined. The training was about 50 hours in two weeks—intense is an underestimation for this organization. The two weeks were just before high school midterms, so not only did I study continuously for my classes, but I read an extra twenty pages a night for the training. The weekend sessions were the hardest as they lasted 10 hours on Saturday and 9 hours on Sunday.

Emotions ran high and long debates broke out every other hour. I know I seem crazy for finishing just one, but I continued with two more volunteer trainings for another year because all I could think about was working at the shelter that taught me so much. Finally, I applied for a job in the summer of 2009 and the volunteer coordinator hired me.

When I got the job, I was eighteen and still in high school. My supervisor never trained me to work with adult clients since they were the women were under the most stress. Usually, I spent time watching the children so the mothers could focus on finding housing, lawsuits, long-term protection orders, and therapy.

Because I was the youngest to work there, many kids gravitated towards me because I

was closer in age; sometimes the difference was only five years. It was relaxing for the kids and I to draw pictures with crayons. Some afternoons, another advocate and I took them on field trips to the nearby parks or climbing wall. My most favorite times with the kids was when they opened their lives to someone for the first time, and the person they told was me: talking about their school, friends, siblings, mothers, and fathers.

If I wasn't with the children, I did plenty of administrative tasks. At first, I hated this work because it was lonesome and boring, but as time progressed I found a sense of release. It was an emotional break from the clients and it did not take long to develop some organizational skills. I formatted informational binders, and paperwork for upcoming events. After fund raising events, like the Women of Distinction Banquet, I inputted the donations—in-kind and money—with the money that was brought in. Other times I helped to coordinate other programs (Girls on the Run, and Race for the Cure) because most of these organizations depended on support from each other. A couple times a week, I cleaned the shelter. There were six toilets and carpeting on the second floor that needed to be steam cleaned. I always left the shelter feeling a little weary, but happier

that I—an eighteen-year-old high school student living with just a dad—was making a difference in my clients' lives.

When I finally left, I realized how connected I became with my co-workers. My co-workers were my friends, always encouraging me, and listening to my problems. I tried to do the same for them, and if I was out of my league I offered administrative support by taking some of their workloads with re-arranging meetings, sending out letters, or taking phone calls. And for someone like me whose mother disowned her, my co-workers became my older sisters, my aunts, and my stand-in mothers (yes, at that time all of my co-workers were female).

A part of me felt lost when I left, and I sometimes cry because I miss all of them, but I know they are only a phone call away.

I took the skills I gained into peer counseling at the high school, and the amount of knowledge I gained about myself has been priceless while transitioning to college. When I stress about all the class work, I use my organizational skills. On the days when I got into arguments with my roommate or friends, I called the shelter for emotional support and to calm down. When my friends got into fights with their roommates, I could listen to them vent, and after a break the two could talk the issue out.

*I WANTED TO START VOLUNTEERING WITH YOUNGER TEENAGERS BECAUSE I NOTICED MOST OF MY STRUGGLES WITH FRIENDS, SCHOOL, CRUSHES, SEXUALITY, MY PARENTS' DIVORCE, AND MY IDENTITY BEGAN JUST BEFORE I TURNED THIRTEEN.*

# WOMEN OF COLOR CONFERENCE 2011

PHOTOS BY JENNIFER BUSBY

*For more photos from the conference, head to <http://sirenmag.tumblr.com/tagged/wocc2011>*

Spoken word duo Yellow Rage performed for students and community members at the Friday Keynote performance of the Women of Color Conference.



Favianna Rodriguez, a celebrated artist based in Oakland California, led a workshop on muraling during the conference. Those who participated in the workshop put together a mural that is now displayed in Petersen Barn.



After Yellow Rage performed, ASUO Women's Center staff gather to reflect on the first day of the Women of Color Conference. Registration for the Conference exceeded organizer Andrea Valderrama's expectations. People of all ages and backgrounds flocked to the university for two days of workshops and performances.



