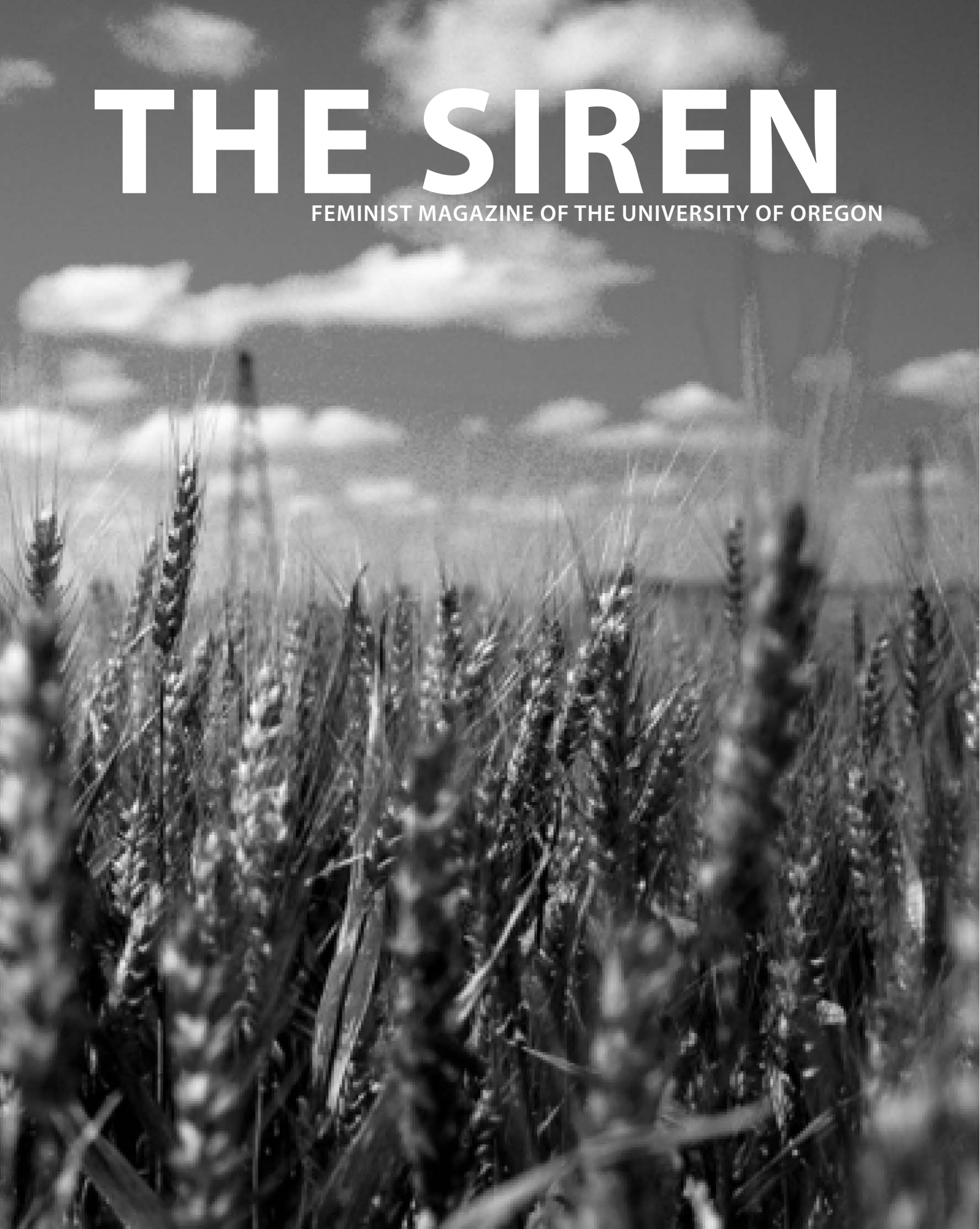


THE SIREN

FEMINIST MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON





THE SIREN

SUMMER 2012

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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.

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THE STUDENT INSURGENT

THE SIREN SUMMER TWENTY 12 INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Students of the Indian Subcontinent held Holi at the UO on May 31 in order to celebrate spring in Hindu fashion. The 1,000 brightly-colored packets of authentic Holi powder that were thrown at friends made for a messy clean up, but a great time.

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CHRISTA LINZ

Christa Linz hails from Cincinnati, OH, where she developed a love for thunder storms, lightning bugs, and late-night walks in the snow. Since coming to Eugene, OR, for an education in Environmental Studies, she has expanded her understanding of what it means to be truly connected to a place. She hopes to build upon this connection to Eugene and to her hometown in a way that allows her to listen and learn from those who find passion in place in their own unique ways.



GRETCHEN PETERS

Twice Grammy-nominated and CMA Song Of The Year winner for the groundbreaking "Independence Day" (Martina McBride), Gretchen Peters has cut her own artistic path, touring continually in both North America and the UK and Europe, releasing nine critically acclaimed albums on the way. Born in New York and raised in Colorado, Nashville resident Peters has accumulated accolades as a songwriter for artists as diverse as Etta James, Trisha Yearwood, Bonnie Raitt, The Neville Brothers, Patty Loveless, George Strait, Bryan Adams and Faith Hill. Her latest album, Hello Cruel World, was described by NPR's All Things Considered as "the album of her career."



HANNAH HOLLEMAN

Hannah Holleman is from Okmulgee, Oklahoma. She completed her PhD in sociology at the University of Oregon this spring and recently joined the faculty of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts. Her scholarship in general is focused on the intersection of economic, political, social, and ecological issues. All of Hannah's scholarly and community efforts are motivated by a strong desire to see greater justice in our society and less suffering, a decline in the growing gap between rich and poor, and movements toward lower rates of imprisonment, an end to imperialist wars and all forms of colonialism, and greater democratic participation in all spheres of life.

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CREATING AN EARTHY, ECOFEMINIST ISSUE

PHOTO BY ANNA BIRD

Siren staff members, (clockwise from left to right) Chelsea Pfeifer, Julia Riley, Kim Kurin, and Kylie Wray dub the Women's Center Lounge "Fort Tampon" as their Siren Headquarters for a weekly Siren Meeting.



According to Google, ecofeminism is a philosophical and political movement that combines ecological concerns with feminist ones.

I'd like to give props to Google, for recognizing the word and providing a definition—a step in the right direction that my Microsoft Word has not yet made, something I realize as I stare at a page filled with red squiggly underlines—but I feel that the definition is so much deeper than that.

A class on environmental philosophy teaches that it is an outlook seeing environmental issues as being caused by the same system that feminism is trying to change: patriarchy.

As a feminist that really doesn't know that much about ecofeminism (there's so much to learn and too few WGS classes...), I think that this particular definition is getting closer, but still doesn't quite encompass the soul of this movement. But then, too few definitions really get to the heart of the issue, and accurately portray the purpose to an outsider. Google claims that feminism is "the advocacy of women's rights on the grounds of political, social, and economic equality to men." Is it just me or does this fall a little short of describing a way of life that we devote ourselves to entirely?

In the middle of winter term, the Women Center's wonderful and amazing Non-traditional Student Advocate, Jessica Rojas, came to me and said that she wanted us to do an Ecofeminism Issue. She was so enthusiastic that she claimed she could write the entire thing, I, whose knowledge of ecofeminism—as mentioned before—pretty much encompasses zilch, was ready to jump on board with that idea. But since I figured that it wasn't in our job descriptions to swap responsibilities, *The Siren* team, my lovely supervisors and I started

pulling together an issue.

This issue, because of everyone's culminating and constant stress during the last term of the year, we decided to devote much of our page space to outside sources, women who know ecofeminism inside and out.

Our resident ecofeminist, Jessica Rojas, provides an interview with Allison Guzman from Beyond Toxics.

We got permission to reprint, "For All Those Who Were Indian In A Former Life," by Andrea Smith, as well as an article on being "Transparent" by Gretchen Peters.

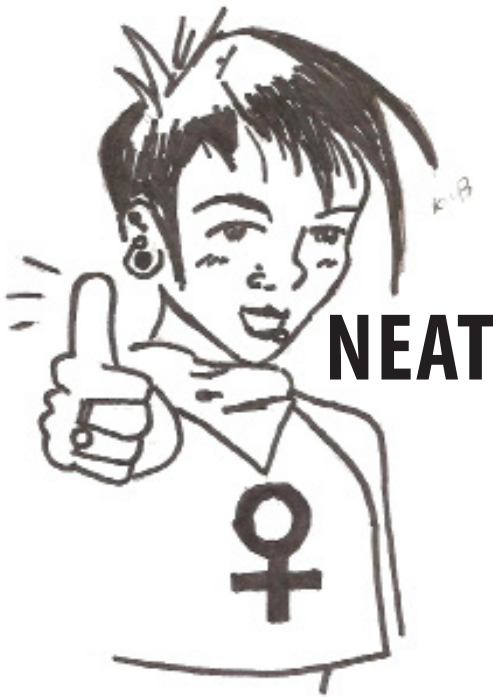
While our small volunteer staff looks at some ecological goods and bads of the campus and lane county area, we also cover some amazing ecofeminists in the review section, who do their work in very different ways.

And, to spruce the issue up a little, we've got a fun campus nature walk, and an article following a Hunger Games lunch talk.

It is my hope that our Mother Earth Issue, will pull pieces of ecofeminism and other connections to the environment into our daily critical thinking, always-on-the-lookout-for-patriarchy, young feminist minds.

- Kylie Wray

KYLIE WRAY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



NEAT: Disproven Plan-B Abortion Myth
WORDS BY RACHEL HATCH

Despite claims by medical authorities such as the Mayo Clinic and National Institutes of Health that emergency contraceptives prevent fertilized eggs from implanting themselves in a woman's uterus, a recent analysis by the New York Times shows that this is not always the case. The study found that in reality emergency contraceptives, better known as "Plan-B" or "The Morning-After Pill," prevent pregnancy by delaying ovulation and thickening cervical mucus.

The findings are especially significant in light of countless efforts by policy-makers to block women's access to health and reproductive choices. Several politicians, including presidential candidate Mitt Romney, are vocal opponents of Plan-B. On the campaign trail in Colorado this February, Romney referred to emergency contraceptives as "abortive pills," ignorantly comparing them to RU-486.

The New York Times claims arguments against Plan-B are "rooted in outdated or incorrect scientific guesses." The findings completely debunk the anti-choice argument that Plan-B "destroys life" as the pill presumably prevents fertilization before it occurs. In Italy, a country with a large, vocal Catholic population, the emergency contraceptive Ella was approved because it is regarded to have no abortive effects. With these new developments emerging, hopefully the hearts and minds of conservative politicians will see a change.

HURL: Kotex Packaging

WORDS BY KYLIE WRAY

At the ASUO Women's Center, our feminist agenda has a way of discouraging certain visitors around campus, but our practice of giving away free pads and tampons has a way of bringing women together. This term however, we're becoming popular for the same reason, but in a different way.

You know, the Women's Center. That little office which you can't see anymore because of the multitude of boxes stacked in front of the lounge window? Yeah! The home of "Fort Tampon."

At the beginning of Spring term, the Women's Center started receiving shipments of free samples from Kotex's Get Real (seriously... that's the name they picked) campaign. As a office that loves being able to provide free tampons to students who are in need we are so thankful for this company's willingness to help us out.

However, the packaging of these multitudes of free product left us wanting. For less.

Let's look at this by the numbers. We were sent about 100 boxes. Each box contains two rows, two boxes deep of nicely lined up cardboard 'magazines' (that's 76 cardboard magazine per box). Inside each magazine are two plastic packages of tampons and pads. Inside each are two-three individually wrapped products. That's a lot of waste.

[Don't even get me started on the typical "women's" magazine design, complete with a quiz on your favorite lipstick and shoes to tell you which period products are right for you.]

For a week we tried opening and discarding the cardboard magazines and sorting the packages of tampons and pads into boxes to save more space. After this failed to make more room and the fresh boxes just kept coming, we tried calling to give them away, but we still have full boxes by the dozens.

Yeah, we've had some good times; the boxes became the newly decorated cardboard walls of our feminist fortress of solitude (and sometimes Siren Headquarters) 'Fort Tampon.' But now they are blocking our office from being seen. We're holed up, cut off from the world by the wall of boxes that can no longer be held in storage.

So thank you, Kotex. But maybe you should have sent some to another University's women center as well? Or simply found a more space-efficient and eco-friendly way to package them?

NEAT/HURL: Campus Tree Climbing

WORDS BY KIM KURIN

TREE CLIMBING FORBIDDEN ON CAMPUS. Does it suck? Does it rule? Can it be a little bit shitty and a little bit awesome at the same time? Our campus is technically an arboretum, and with over 2,000 species of trees in our 290-acre campus backyard how in the hell are we going to keep track of drunkards stumbling through our foliage without a second thought? Although DPS is about as scary as William Defoe (obviously you wouldn't want to mess with it, but rarely will you ever actually have to), they are fairly strict on keeping the natural peace. This includes taking down names for compliant folks, and citations and potential charges of trespassing for all vehement DPS dissenters. And unless you want most of the students in Landscape and Architecture classes to hate you for ruining the only thing left that is good and holy on this campus, you best not climb the trees--LSD driven or not. I'm all about tree climbing, but I'd rather you indulge in your tree-bonding somewhere else, or even in a more constructive manner. Learn about the trees in those LA classes (196-Trees across Oregon; 410-The Nature of Eugene, 326-Plants), or get involved with the Environmental Studies Programs that work with the Pacific Tree Climbing Institute. Canopy Connections is an undergrad-lead project in the Environmental Leadership Program that helps middle school kiddos learn experientially about our local eco-system. So tree climbing rules, but not on my fucking Purple Threadleaf Japanese Maples.



TAKE BACK THE TAP TACKLES BOTTLED WATER ON CAMPUS

WORDS BY ANNA BIRD

PHOTO COURTESY OF TAKE BACK THE TAP

EUGENE TAP WATER IS PURE, SUSTAINABLE AND FREE. WHEREAS BOTTLED WATER IS AN UNSAFE, OVERPRICED, WASTE OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

This simple statement describes the motivation behind the University of Oregon student group, the Climate Justice League, to tackle a complicated issue that is not only prevalent here in Eugene but around the world. The mass production and consumption of bottled water is an issue that environmental advocacy groups are fighting across the globe. Bottled water companies make billions of dollars every year by selling water in plastic containers that has been tested as the equivalent to filtered tap water. However, not all tap water is created equal. Many cities in the US have dangerous chemicals floating in their tap water, and bottled water could be considered a safer solution for them (buying a filter would also be a great solution—for your health, your wallet, and the planet), that being said, Eugene is not one of those cities. We are fortunate enough to have some of the cleanest water in the nation, but that has not halted the production and sale of bottled water in our communities. The Climate Justice League saw the avenue to change that and started with the University of Oregon campus.

In order to combat this issue, the Climate Justice League started the Take Back the Tap campaign on our campus to eliminate the production, sale, and consumption of bottled water. Take Back the Tap is a campaign that began with the Food and Water Watch organization, and has been initiated on several college campuses throughout the US. Here in Eugene, bottled water costs more than 3,000 times the price of tap water. That is a significant number for most people, but especially startling for students already struggling with the financial burden of a college education. Many students may have already come to this sobering realization and have taken the steps

to reduce their bottled water consumption. Buying a reusable water bottle is an easy step in the right direction for sustainability.

This is not only an issue of cost-efficiency. It is no secret that bottled water is a prominent stress on the environment. Worldwide bottling of water uses about 2.7 million tons of plastic each year, requiring 17.6 million barrels of oil each year in the United States alone, and on average uses three-times as much water in the production process than is actually sold to consumers. The campus groups involved in initiating the bottled water policy have done their research and the facts at hand demonstrate an urgency to halt bottled water consumption.

Campus Recycling made a proposal in 2007 to ban bottled water on campus. As a result of this proposal, refill spouts for re-usable water bottles were installed on water fountains across campus, and the issue was passed onto the Climate Justice League. The environmental and social justice group started Take Back the Tap two years ago. Since beginning this campaign, the League has taken many steps to create a healthy, sustainable, and bottled water-

free campus. In the fall of 2011, the EMU began their bottled water-free pilot program and will go completely bottled water-free in Fall 2012. Now, as the Take Back the Tap proposal has moved through the University's policymaking process, all it needs is the final approval from the University President's Executive Leadership team.

In the recent ASUO elections, students were able to voice their opinion on the matter. An overwhelming 72% of students who voted voiced their support of the UO going bottled water-free. A survey given to students living in University Housing showed that 86% of those residents also support this policy. It is clear from these percentages that the Ducks are in favor of reclaiming their water. And, with the approval from the Executive Leadership team, bottled water will be nixed from our beautiful campus for good, taking a slice of stress off the environment and benefitting UO students and their bank accounts. The bottled water initiative will bring us closer to a healthier and more sustainable campus.



HIGHLIGHTING LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVOCATE, ALLISON GUZMAN, FROM BEYOND TOXICS

INTERVIEW BY JESSICA ROJAS

THE SIREN: Tell me about your work with Oregon Toxics Alliance.

GUZMAN: My work with OTA, now called Beyond Toxics, in collaboration with Centro Latino Americano, involves environmental justice work in the industrial corridor area in west Eugene. I started a couple years ago with a community initially through canvassing activities, where we would knock on doors and determine how they felt about their air in general because a lot of those communities are being disproportionately exposed to chemicals such as formaldehyde. They are facing daily exposure to chemicals and we found this out by asking them whether they had respiratory and cardiovascular problems, whether they detected air pollution and when. For the most part a lot of them detected a lot of odor in that area. That's how I kind of got involved in environmental justice issues in Eugene actually.

S: Can you tell me more about how you got involved in this environmental work?

G: I began my research in International Studies and Multi-Ethnic Studies. In that process I learned about Latino issues and ended up getting my M.A. with a focus on human rights and social justice. Through that I learned about Indigenous rights and that was kind of my first in depth look at the environment and environmental justice through Indigenous communities in Central and South America where I was mostly involved with. I did my research on extractive industries and how they affect the communities overseas and particularly I was in Guatemala with my main case study. So before I came to Eugene and worked on environmental justice at a local level, I was involved in environmental and social work at an international level but also at an institutional level. It's affected the way in which people perceive the environment from staff to the extent that when we were working with extractive industries in Peru and South Africa, trying to develop some kind of corporate social responsibility process (which we all know is law, right?),

they shouldn't even be there in the first place. My involvement with all that kind of got me thinking. I gained some knowledge on the corporate side of the atrocities in regards to Indigenous peoples and when my contract had ended, I guess I wanted to do something that was more in line with my values and focus more on local issues, so that's kind of how my involvement here began as an environmental justice advocate.


S: As a woman of color, are there any challenges you face while doing this kind of work?

G: It depends where. I guess overseas is different, it's definitely an advantage as you are working primarily with communities of color. Here it's an advantage when working with communities of color; however. I have felt for the first time in my work where people who don't consider themselves as people of color would assign a certain criteria of me. At a first impression I am a Latina woman, and that is a first for me that I have dealt with at my job. Before I am either a young professional, an American, a woman, but me being a Latina has never really been on the forefront of how other people perceive me and I think that here in Eugene, just to be honest, it's just a predominately white community, to be upfront with that...so who I am to them first is Latina.

I have been out with Latina moms in the community where we would do home visits and sometimes racist remarks would be shouted out from cars as we are walking by, so I'm exposed here in Eugene to racial slanders so that kind of effects my work...yet in a way I am experiencing what the community regularly faces. For example, we were walking one time and doing these home visits and out of a car this man shouted at us, "Faggots" and I asked someone who was walking with us if she gets this all the time and she said, "yes we get this all the time but we just figure that everybody is hurting, so they need to blame." She took the higher road in understanding the situation but they have been called "spicks" a lot by teenagers during their normal grocery shopping, taking their kids to school or

Beyond Toxics, formally known as Oregon Toxics Alliance, is a Eugene group that empowers the community to respond to pollution in their area by providing resources and information. We suggest reading about their Green Cleaning Campaign. For more info about Allison Guzman's work or how to get involved (they love volunteers) please visit:

WWW.BEYONDTOXICS.ORG
or
FACEBOOK.COM/BEYONDTOXICS



**HOW WE TREAT
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TREAT EACH OTHER
AND SO IF WE WERE
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FOOD FOR LANE COUNTY: GARDENS OF GIVING

WORDS BY ANNA BIRD

The air was damp and the clouds hung low over the city of Eugene. There were roughly eight of us who turned out for our morning in the garden, and none of us knew what exactly we would be doing for the next two hours. We dressed for the unknown in old sweatshirts, worn out jeans, and sensible footwear: rain boots or old sneakers. As I started thinking about the great possibility of trudging through mud and/or manure, I was thankful I chose rain boots. It was an early Saturday morning, so conversation ran low on our bus ride out to Bailey Hill Road. We were on our way to volunteer in the FOOD for Lane County Churchill Community Garden for an environmental studies class, knowing very little about gardening or growing fresh food.

For 25 years, FOOD for Lane County (FFLC) has had one simple, but undeniably important goal: to end hunger in Lane County. According to research conducted by the Oregon Food Bank, the number of Oregonians on food stamps has almost doubled since 2003, and the number of residents receiving emergency food boxes nearly tripled since 1997. There are thousands of Lane County residents and families who suffer from food insecurity, and they turn to non-profit agencies such as FOOD for Lane County for assistance. FFLC partners with other local non-profits to distribute the food that is donated to them by individuals and businesses, as well as the food they grow in their three community gardens.

Eugene is home to two gardens, the Churchill Community Garden and the GrassRoots Garden; the third, the Youth Farm, is located in Springfield. Each garden runs almost entirely on volunteer efforts while providing learning opportunities for community members and children.

As we arrived at the Churchill Garden on that Saturday morning, our first sight was a large mound of compost, and the smell that accompanied the pile overwhelmed us just as quickly. We staggered down the hill between Churchill High School and Kennedy Middle School and past the compost pile to come upon a three-acre garden.

The two women who helped coordinate our visit and volunteer hours at the Churchill Garden filled our inexperienced brains full of gardening knowledge by the end of the day. We cleaned the paths that lead you through the different sections of the garden; we pulled weeds, dead vegetables, and other unwanted matter. We shoveled, raked, hoed, planted, and composted. The composting was certainly the most interesting, both for its smell and the process.

With these community gardens, FFLC provides a sustainable way to assure that families have ready access to nutritious, locally grown food. They also sell some of their fresh vegetables at farm stands. This is an important environmental factor in the framework of FOOD for Lane County. As an organization, they are dedicated to not only ending hunger, but ending hunger by providing wholesome and nutritious foods, not just whatever they can forage to feed mouths. This is why the gardens are such an essential aspect in FFLC. They grow thousands of pounds of fresh food every year in their gardens that is then used in Emergency Food Boxes, school and summer lunch programs, and through their Community Supported Agriculture program.

We turned in our gloves, our tools, and our wheelbarrows around lunchtime to bring an end to our day in the garden. We were tired, and the mud sat thick on our shoes, but we were served a fresh lunch compiled of foods straight from the garden. With the dirt under our fingernails we enjoyed a hearty lunch, and appreciated the work that FFLC does for the people in our community who often don't get to have a lunch, or don't know where their next meal is coming from. FOOD for Lane County helps thousands of diverse, low-income families and community members feel better about the meals they are given. In those couple of hours in the garden that Saturday morning, we were able to contribute a small effort in the large fight against ending hunger with sustainable growing techniques and an organization driven to gather and produce as much nutritious food for those who need it most.

THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF LANE COUNTY RESIDENTS AND FAMILIES WHO SUFFER FROM FOOD INSECURITY, AND THEY TURN TO NON-PROFIT AGENCIES SUCH AS FOOD FOR LANE COUNTY FOR ASSISTANCE. FFLC PARTNERS WITH OTHER LOCAL NON-PROFITS TO DISTRIBUTE THE FOOD THAT IS DONATED TO THEM BY INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES, AS WELL AS THE FOOD THEY GROW IN THEIR THREE COMMUNITY GARDENS.

ENERGY JUSTICE: CALLING ALL FEMINISTS

WORDS BY HANNAH HOLLEMAN

ENERGY AND EXPLOITATION IN THE CURRENT SYSTEM

In human societies energy resources are used to extend the power of our labors, which in the capitalist system, along with nature, are exploited for the sake of accumulation by a tiny proportion of wealthy individuals, or what is now called the “1%” (within which white men play a predominant role). Theoretically, environmentally appropriate energy resources can be used to meet social justice goals to make life easier and more fulfilling for everyone, or they can be used in processes that increase inequality—making life easier for some and not others, with energy monopolized to maintain power economically and militarily.

Today the extraction and distribution of energy resources creates globally toxic environments causing environmental and human degradation that is unequally distributed. This is why energy is significant for social justice struggles. The inequalities inherent in capitalism explain the difficulty of socially addressing pressing problems like climate change. As long as the benefits of ecological degradation and human exploitation accrue to one social class, while the costs are borne by others or accumulated in the environment, it is clear that these injustices will persist. Looked at in this way, the struggle for energy justice is part of a larger, revolutionary struggle for a more ecologically sane and socially just society. Feminist ecologists, who study the interface between social inequality and ecological degradation (or environmental injustice), are pushing the radical feminist and ecological agendas forward by locating the roots of current crises in the structures of dominance inherent in capitalism, though not limited to this economic system, and calling for us all to throw in our lot with those fighting for a new society (see, for example, Shiva 2005, Salleh, ed. 2009).

GLOBALIZED ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION AND HUMAN EXPLOITATION: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

While the origins of patriarchy are not entirely clear, the origins of capitalism as a patriarchal, racist, and ecologically exploitative system, with its own particular gender and eco-social order, are well-documented. Lorde (1984) put it thus, “institutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs outsiders as surplus people” (115). “Within this society, that group is made up of Black and Third World people, working-class people, older people, and women” (114). This institutionalized devaluation of women and other groups under capitalism means that the worst effects of the system, including its generation of ecological crises, wars, and everyday dislocation and disorder, disproportionately are visited upon them.

This is clearly the case with the modern energy regime, where energy injustice is gendered, at the same time that it is class and race-based. Now there is plenty of research proving that “women, specifically women of color, are disproportionately impacted by disasters and environmental degradation caused by global warming... low-income women, women of color, and immigrants will be most impacted by the severe weather events, heat waves, and increases in disease rates that will characterize the Earth’s changing climate” (quoted in Park 2009).

The expansionary nature of capitalism has meant the simultaneous globalization of environmental destruction, human exploitation,

and Eurocentric notions of nature, race, gender, and sexuality that serve as justifications for global pillaging. With the modern energy regime, we see constantly the persistent neo-colonial justifications for wars for oil, for biofuel plantations in southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and more locally, for the siting of dirty energy plants and waste repositories. In the United States we can’t even muster a significant movement against the longest running war in U.S. history in Iraq, which is related to U.S. energy policy. This illustrates the paltry level of global solidarity, even amongst women, in the United States. We will have to change this if we are to make any headway on ecological or social problems facing our generation.

MOVEMENTS FOR ENERGY JUSTICE AND WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP: BROADENING OUR VISION, INCREASING PARTICIPATION

As a result of our ideological training—the mantras repeated by our politicians, reinforced by culture, and formally ingrained through our educations—as well as the violent enforcement through the brutality of the police and military when there is real resistance, we often believe that “there is no alternative” to capitalism, or that “all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds.” We are also subject to “divide and conquer” strategies that prevent us from seeing “an injury to one as an injury to all.” Therefore, in rich countries especially, solutions proposed to global environmental problems associated with our social energy practices, like climate change, tend to be solutions that fit into the system and don’t significantly challenge the status quo. “Green consumption,” carbon markets, and “public/private partnerships,” are all indicative of these trends. However, none of these address real issues of domination, imperialism, or the roots of environmental degradation and lack of democratic decision-making in all spheres of life, from the formal political, to the economic. They don’t alter the structure of inequality or challenge the system of endless growth/economic expansion, the costs of which must be borne somewhere, by someone.

There is hope to be found in global movements that do not separate social and ecological struggles, and we should look to these revolutionary movements to expand our ideas and practice of democracy beyond the formal political sphere, to the economic sphere and the rest of society.

We need to challenge the mainstream environmental movement in the United States that is dominated by white and middle class leadership, to act in a supportive role to the more radical movements and organizations headed by women, people of color, and leaders from the global South. In the end, it is necessary that we see the movements against inequality and ecological degradation as one and the same. We will not achieve anything in one area without the other. The World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, which published the “People’s Agreement,” sometimes called the “Cochabamba Protocol,” contains lesson after lesson for activists in the United States concerned with social and ecological justice regarding movement goals and ways we might act in solidarity to realize an alternative future to the dystopia characterizing too many lives today. My hope in writing this is that feminists take up issues of energy justice as part of a broader struggle for another world, a struggle for systemic, revolutionary change, a struggle that reflects in practice what it preaches in principle.

BEING TRANSPARENT

WORDS BY GRETCHEN PETERS

My least favorite word when people ask me about my son is “become,” as in, “When did he decide he wanted to become a man?” When do we decide to become the gender we are? Does it happen at toddlerhood, at school age, at puberty? My son has always been male. The only difference between him and me and probably you is that his body betrayed him, once at birth and again, traumatically, at puberty. Being the parent of a transgender child has led me to some interesting analogies. Being trans is a state which most of us cisgender folks can’t quite wrap our heads around, at least initially. But this question of *becoming* versus *being* reminded me a lot of something that’s bothered me about the music business (I’m a singer-songwriter) for years: people used to ask me the same question after I’d had success as a songwriter and was making my first album as a recording artist. “When did you decide to become an artist?” I felt a similar sense of indignation. I’ve always been an artist. You just didn’t know it.

Learning that my child was transgender was like turning a key and feeling all the tumblers fall into place. Everything made sense: his firm conviction at three that he was a boy, his refusal to wear dresses, his persistent dis-ease throughout childhood, his reaction to puberty (horror), and, most alarmingly, his bouts during his teens with suicidal feelings. He knew who and what he was -- he always had. When he finally told me, I knew in my bones that it was true. I’d even had inklings before he summoned the remarkable courage to come out. None of that makes the emotions any less raw upon learning that the child you raised as a girl for 26 years is, in fact, a boy. This is the child to whom I gave a girl’s name, imbued with my own girlish hopes,

nurtured the mother-daughter bond that I had with my own mother -- a bond based, it seemed to me, on our common gender. What was my relationship with this person if he is my son? How do I learn how to have a son? I’d thought of myself as the mother of a daughter for a quarter of a century.

As a songwriter, singer and musician, I explore the emotional terrain of everyday life on a regular basis. I am interested in shining a light into some dark corners, even compelled to do it, to take the secrets that we all keep and bring them into the light, give them a name, treat them with compassion and humility, but, above all, to tell the truth. Art has the power to transport us into other people’s lives, and thus, ultimately, into our own hearts. The act of empathizing with another, no matter how different, breaks down the walls built by secret-keeping and fear, and forever binds us together in our humanity. So naturally, I turned to music to help me process this sea-change in my life and my son’s.

I wrote, and wrote, and wrote. I thought about my struggle to own my identity as an artist in the world. I thought about my son’s struggle to stand up and be seen for who he is. So many people prefer you to assume a role that makes them comfortable. But life is not about making other people comfortable. This idea seeped into the songs that were coming out of me -- the old adage, “Comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.” I wanted to say what seemed unsayable. That life is tough, heartbreaking, unfair -- and short. And that there is unspeakable beauty to be found. My son unknowingly gave me a tremendous gift last year when he bravely shared his truth with me. He gave me the courage to share mine.

“LEARNING THAT MY CHILD WAS TRANSGENDER WAS LIKE TURNING A KEY AND FEELING ALL THE TUMBLERS FALL INTO PLACE. EVERYTHING MADE SENSE: HIS FIRM CONVICTION AT 3 THAT HE WAS A BOY, HIS REFUSAL TO WEAR DRESSES, HIS PERSISTENT DIS-EASE THROUGHOUT CHILDHOOD, HIS REACTION TO PUBERTY (HORROR), AND, MOST ALARMINGLY, HIS BOUTS DURING HIS TEENS WITH SUICIDAL FEELINGS. HE KNEW WHO AND WHAT HE WAS -- HE ALWAYS HAD.”



ART COMPILED BY KYLIE WRAY

TO THE MOON AND BACK

WORDS BY CHRISTA LINZ

I've come a long way since I began learning about 'the environment' as something to care about and think of as a truly integral part of our being. It began as something scientific – the earth has finite resources, humans use too many of them, carbon emissions are changing the atmosphere, etc., etc. So naturally when I thought of other celestial bodies, such as the moon, my understanding of them was scientific – I knew the moon affects tidal patterns, the behavior of marine and nocturnal animals, and its general cycles in the Milky Way – but I never thought of its connection to humans on a personal level. This is my story of an enlightenment with the Moon.

About a year ago I was inspired by feminist writer Inga Muscio to begin studying the moon's patterns, in turn comparing them to my own female body's patterns. Always having been curious about the Universe, asking existential questions to the physics teachers of my high school astronomy club, I thought I would give it a shot. Maybe my questions could be answered by earth's gentle neighbor in the sky. I began by looking through my south-facing window each night, watching between clouds as the moon gently grew and slimmed as it passed around the earth. As with starting many new 'habits,' I often forgot about it and got tangled in my own thoughts as opposed to listening to my body and its desire to be in dialogue with the moon.

After a summer experience under a dusty-bright sky (my first time truly seeing the Milky Way), I became more intentional about watching the moon. As time passed and

my spiritual life grew into a more pronounced existence, I noticed my energy change on clear nights when I could see the moon. I would become giddy and energetic, often startling my roommates as I clamored into the house exclaiming about the moon and its gentle rocking motion as it moved in the sky. As with most relationships that grow with proximity, I was becoming closer and closer with the Moon, noticing my own changes over a month and my desire to understand its relationship to the earth and to myself.

A friend recently wondered in amazement that although the moon is reflecting the sun's light, it is the unique elements, minerals, particles and energy of the moon that we see, feel, and experience each night. The Moon speaks to us, but are we listening? I finally heard the Moon affirm its bond with me one year after I began pursuing our relationship. On the evening of a spiritual breakthrough, I connected with the full moon on a deeply physical level and I can now proudly say that I am in love with the Moon. Just thinking about its gravitational attraction to the earth and all its beings – the moon has been with us in its cycles within cycles for billions of years – makes me feel connected to the moon. Science classes have taught me that the world is cyclical – from energy webs to feedback loops to celestial rotations – and so the very nature of the moon has become one of spirituality – for I am humbled to know that like the moon I cannot create light, but the light that does pass through me is uniquely my own.

AFTER A SUMMER EXPERIENCE UNDER A DUSTY-BRIGHT SKY (MY FIRST TIME TRULY SEEING THE MILKY WAY), I BECAME MORE INTENTIONAL ABOUT WATCHING THE MOON. AS TIME PASSED AND MY SPIRITUAL LIFE GREW INTO A MORE PRONOUNCED EXISTENCE, I NOTICED MY ENERGY CHANGE ON CLEAR NIGHTS WHEN I COULD SEE THE MOON.

FOR ALL THOSE WHO WERE INDIAN IN A FORMER LIFE

WORDS BY ANDY SMITH

The New Age Movement has sparked new interest in Native American Traditional spirituality among white women who claim to be feminists. Indian spirituality, with its respect for nature and the interconnectedness of all things, is often presented as the panacea for all individual and global problems. Not surprisingly, many white “feminists” see the opportunity to make a great profit from this craze. They sell sweat lodges or sacred pipe ceremonies, which promise to bring individual and global healing. Or they sell books and records that supposedly describe Indian traditional practices so that you, too, can be Indian. On the surface, it may appear that this new craze is based on a respect for Indian spirituality. In fact, the New Age movement is part of a very old story of white racism and genocide against the Indian people. The “Indian” ways that these white, New Age feminists are practicing have little grounding in Native American reality.

True spiritual leaders do not make a profit from their teachings, whether it’s through selling books, workshops, sweat lodges, or otherwise. Spiritual leaders teach the people because it is their responsibility to pass what they have learned from their elders to the younger generation. They do not charge for their services.

Indian religions are community-based, not proselytizing, religions. There is not one Indian religion, as many New Ager’s would have you believe. Indian spiritual practices reflect the needs of a particular community. Indians do not generally believe that their way is “the” way, and consequently, they have no desire to tell outsiders about their practices. A medicine woman would be more likely to advise a white woman to look into her own culture and find what is liberating in it.

However, white women seem determined NOT to look into their own cultures for sources of strength. This is puzzling, since pre-Christian European cultures are also

earth-based and contain many of the same elements that white are ostensibly looking for in Native American cultures. This phenomenon leads me to suspect that there is a more insidious motive for white “feminists” latching onto Indian spirituality.

When white “feminists” see how white people have historically oppressed others and how they are coming to very close to destroying the earth, they often want to dissociate themselves from their whiteness. They do this by opting to “become Indian.” In this way, they can escape responsibility and accountability for white racism.

Of course, white “feminists” want to become only partly Indian. They do not want to be part of our struggles for survival against genocide; they do not want to fight for treaty rights or an end to substance abuse or sterilization abuse. They do not want to do anything that would tarnish their romanticized notions of what it means to become an Indian.

Moreover, white women want to become Indian without holding themselves accountable to Indian communities. If they did, they would have to listen to Indians telling them to stop carrying around sacred pipes, stop doing their own sweat lodges, and stop appropriating our spiritual practices. Rather, these New Agers see Indians as romanticized gurus who exist only to meet their consumerist needs. Consequently, they do not understand Indian people or our struggles for survival, and thus they can have no genuine understanding of Indian spiritual practices.

While New Agers may think that they are escaping white racism by becoming “Indian,” they are, in fact, continuing the same genocidal practices of their forefathers/foremothers. The one thing that has maintained the survival of Indian people through 500 hundred years colonialism has been the spiritual bonds that keep us together. When the colonizers saw the strength of our spirituality, they tried to destroy Indian religions by making illegal. They forced Indian children into white

missionary schools and cut their tongues if they spoke their native languages. Sundances were made illegal and Indian participation in the Ghost Dance precipitated the Wounded Knee massacre. Our colonizers recognized that it was our spirituality that maintained our spirit of resistance and sense of community. Even today, Indians are the only people in the United States who do not have religious freedom. This was made clear when the Supreme Court recently ruled that the First Amendment does not guarantee our right to use peyote in sacred ceremonies.

Many white, New Age “feminists” are continuing this practice of destroying spirituality. They trivialize Native American practices so that these practices lose their spiritual power. They have the white privileges and power to make themselves heard at the expense of Native Americans. Consumers like what many of these white writers have to tell them and do not want to become concerned with the facts presented by Native Americans. Our voices are silenced, and consequently, the younger generation of Indians who are trying to find their way back to the Old Ways become hopelessly lost in this morass of consumerist spirituality.

These practices also promote the subordination of Indian women to white women. Many white “feminists” tell us how greedy we are when we don’t share our spirituality, and that we have to tell them everything they want to know because prophecies say we must. Apparently, it is our burden to service white women’s needs rather than to spend time organizing within our own communities.

The New Age movement completely trivializes the oppression that we, as Indian women face: that Indian women are forcibly sterilized and are tested with unsafe drugs such as Depo-Provera; that we have a life expectancy of forty seven years; that we generally live below poverty level and face a seventy-five percent unemployment rate.

Andrea Lee Smith is an intellectual, feminist, and anti-violence activist. Smith's work focuses on issues of violence against women of color and their communities, specifically Native American women. A co-founder of INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, the Boarding School Healing Project, and the Chicago chapter of Women of All Red Nations, Smith centers the experiences of women of color in both her activism and her scholarship. Formerly an assistant professor of American Culture and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Smith is currently an associate professor in the Department of Media and Cultural Studies at the University of California, Riverside.

No, ignoring our realities, the New Age movement sees Indian women as cool and spiritual and therefore, available to teach white women to be cool and spiritual.

This trivialization of our oppression is compounded by the fact that, nowadays, anyone can be Indian if she wants to be. All that is required is that a white woman be Indian in a former life or that she take part in a sweat lodge or be mentored by a "medicine woman" or read a "how to" book.

Since, according to this theory, anyone can now be "Indian," the term "Indian" no longer refers only to those groups of people who have survived five hundred years of colonization and genocide. This phenomenon furthers the goal of white supremacists to abrogate treaty rights and to take away what little we have left by promoting the idea that some Indians need to have their land base protected, but even more Indians [those that are really white] have plenty of land. According to this logic, "Indians" as a whole do not need treaty rights. When everyone becomes "Indian" it is easy to lose sight of the specificity of oppression faced by those who are Indian in this life. It is no wonder we have such a difficult time getting non-Indians to support our struggles when the New Age movement has completely disguised our oppression.

The most disturbing aspect of these racist practices is that they are promoted in the name of feminism. Sometimes it seems that I can't open a feminist periodical without seeing ads with little medicine wheel designs promoting white "feminist" businesses. I can't seem to go to a feminist conference without the only Indian presenter being the woman who begins the conference with a ceremony. Participants feel so "spiritual" after this opening that they fail to notice the absence of Indian women in the rest of the conference or that nobody is discussing any pressing issues in Native American communities. And I certainly can't go to a feminist bookstore without seeing books by

white women promoting Native spirituality.

It seems that, while feminism is supposed to signify the empowerment of all women, it obviously does not include Indian women. If white feminists are going to act in solidarity with their Indian sisters, they are going to have to take a stand against Indian spiritual abuse.

Feminist book and record stores selling these products, and feminist periodicals should stop advertising these products. Women who call themselves feminists should denounce exploitative practices where ever they see them.

Many white feminists have claimed that Indians are not respecting "freedom of speech" by demanding that whites stop promoting and selling books that exploit Indian spirituality. However, promotion of this material is destroying freedom of speech for Native Americans by ensuring that our voices will never be heard. Furthermore, feminists already make choices about what they will promote. I haven't seen many books by right-wing fundamentalist women sold in feminist bookstores, since feminists recognized that these books are oppressive to women. It is not a radical move to ask that white women extend their feminist concerns to include Indian women. The issue is not censorship; the issue is racism. Feminists must have a choice, will they respect Indian political and spiritual autonomy or will they promote materials that are fundamentally racist under the guise of "freedom of speech."

White feminists should know that as long as they take part in Indian spiritual abuse, either by being consumers of it or by refusing to take a stand on it, Indian women will consider white "feminists" to be nothing more than agents in the genocide of our people.

Our spirituality is not for sale!

**OF COURSE, WHITE
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THIS ARTICLE ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN THE WINTER 1991 ISSUE OF *WOMEN OF POWER*.

WHEN WE TALK ABOUT KATNISS, WE TALK ABOUT BELLA

A Quest for the Feminist Anti-Heros in Young Adult Fiction

WORDS BY ERIN MCGLADREY

It is difficult to get too far into a discussion of whether or not *The Hunger Games* is a feminist novel without beginning to invoke the previous generation of young adult bestsellers—*Twilight* and *Harry Potter*.

For Katniss' two predecessors, Bella Cullen (nee Swan) and Hermione Granger, their power has been framed and limited by their closest male friends and romantic interests. Bella is singly consumed and motivated by her love of Edward and characterized by her clumsiness leading to endless rescues by Edward and Jacob. Though Hermione is credited and relied upon for her superior knowledge by her closest male companions, caretaking-hero Harry and awkward-but somehow-more-practically-capable-love-interest Ron, her very relationship with them limits what she is able to do for herself as a young woman.

Romantic themes limit Bella and Hermione in their ability to be fully capable and self-reliant heroes, continually needing rescue by the men in their lives and fumbling unsuccessfully when left to draw on their own abilities. In return for male protection, these young women forgo autonomy and the ability to make critical decisions about their own lives and the lives of those they love. Masculine protectors can only function in relation to those being protected and thus subordinated, in these cases young women who must give up autonomy for dependence.

Performing these gender roles shape the way readers make meaning of what is unfolding in the plotlines of the *Twilight* and *Harry Potter* series and limit the possibilities for action by the young women, Bella and Hermione, within them. In this narrative, the masculine protector limits the decision making power of the subordinate young women in order to better protect them and utilize his own superior problem solving skills. This is most commonly not a violent or aggressive subordination. The masculine protector often seeks support from the subordinated young woman who in turn is

grateful and happy to trade her autonomy for her security.

"Critics who rightly desire to place Katniss in a feminist framework miss the point if they look only at her choices in men that was so evidently sited of Bella Swans' primary conflict," comments *The Hunger Games* enthusiast Johanna Luttrell. "The primary struggle of Katniss is of survival. And, at least in the first book, readers see that privately she cannot know her feelings on the matter. She doesn't have the peace and space to figure it out because publicly her society has pushed her into a fight to the death. She leverages the conventions of romance for the purposes of her own survival."

Katniss is pragmatic and able to conceptualize relationships as tools, not just sites of personal romantic fulfillment. She is able to analyze power accurately; a skill honed from navigating oppressive systems all her life. She is not afforded the luxury of indulging or losing herself in the whimsy of romantic relationships. While Bella is nearly cationic when Edward breaks up with her, Katniss is called upon to continually fight even in the face of the deaths of those closest to her.

What makes *The Hunger Games* different than the other popular young adult novels is that Katniss doesn't need protection. She makes it clear that she doesn't want a man to protect her, falling in sharp contrast to Bella and Hermione. She does not surrender her decision making capabilities to gain protection from a "good" man willing to protect her from all the other "bad" men who may seek to harm her. Claudia Card further explores the construct of what she calls "protection rackets" and what it means when women aren't allowed to protect themselves in her article *Rape as a Weapon of War*.

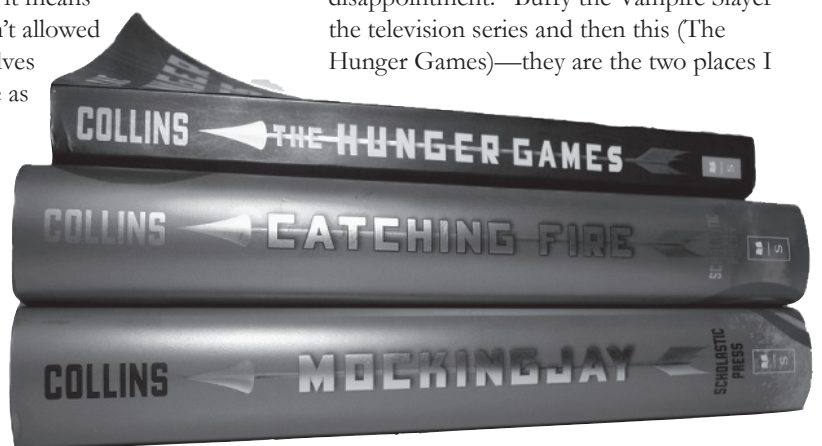
"As someone

who has always been interested in fantasy and speculative fiction I find it really interesting that even in fantasy, even in superheroes, we can imagine all these things, like we can imagine people who climb up walls. We can imagine the child who lived. But we can't imagine women or girls who can protect themselves," states Carol Stabile director of the Center for the Study of Women and Society. "And for me, that is Katniss' signal contribution to popular culture. There is no ambiguity about that. And in fact, she protects the men in the story."

Stabile goes on to deconstruct gender roles and performance in *Harry Potter*. "(Harry) is the center of the narrative. What does Hermione do? She does research. Right? Whatever else you can say about Hermione, she isn't really afforded the opportunity to protect herself. And if you look at the central conflicts in the novels across that vast expanse of texts she doesn't ever fulfill that role. Hermione has to be protected . . . by Ron. . . by Harry. . . by this procession of male figures."

According to Stabile, *The Hunger Games* offers such a contrast that she is surprised by its popularity. "And again Katniss is adamant about this (her ability to protect herself). She hunts for her family. She provides for her family. She masters all these technologies and tools that are typically the province of men and masculinity. I think that that is amazing."

Stabile admits that her standards for what constitutes feminism in popular culture have been eroded by years of disappointment. "Buffy the Vampire Slayer the television series and then this (*The Hunger Games*)—they are the two places I



My Scorpio Encounter in Tunisia

My eyes gazing at the exotic blue,
 my first encounter with you.
 My bare feet on your sand, next to
 your dark red-brown claws lingering--
 Your silver gold self, dark and obscure
 with your moist insides hungry, light shimmering on your shell,
 Solid, alone. A fairytale reminds me of your poison
 I imagine a battleground,
 not knowing what to do with my 12 year-old weapon hands, I--

With my own eyes
 With my own hands
 I turn you in, to a strange man
 exotic distant you, will be sold to the tourists
 after he takes your venom and your haven

My toes in sand, my eyes up at the exotic blue
 I miss you--
 I hear the order!
 Our exotic blue will destroy the rest of you
 Forgive me.

—*Tanja Jenson*

I visited Tunisia when I was 10,
 but thought 12 is a better coming-of-age to use

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

can point to in popular culture where girls have models of what it might be like to be powerful. To not constantly be represented as a victim whether it is sexual assault or war, to imagine a future where you can protect yourself and people you love. Not be some kind of simpering, Bella-esque character who is clumsy and who is not autonomous, whose only goal is to abstain from having premarital sex (Edward has to police that to a certain extent). Her only goal and her only superpower is to make Edward happy. That isn't a kind of world I want to live in."

The Hunger Games offers a rare glimpse into the possibility of interrupting dominant narratives of protection rackets, relegating young women to supporting roles in their own lives. Katniss offers a fantasy that is perhaps more unimaginable for many young women than eternal life or magic—a world in which young women can successfully fight their own battles.

Q&A CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

something like that. The embedded issue around environmental justice is racism, which makes my work super interesting because environmental justice is about bringing equity to decision making processes when it comes to your environmental health, your health as a human being, as a mother, as a child. These qualities are embedded in the system, like the elephant in the room is racism and I think that addressing these issues has both been challenging, but also I am seeing some kind of dismantling through the process of an emerging empowerment that is happening and its not to the point where its super political or threatening to the general Eugene community where its going to cause instability. It's just a general awareness and empowerment, especially through the new generation as they become acculturated to American society and they speak English better than Spanish. That's also another issue to another extent that is if that is something that we want to support or not. Although that is not apart my work; on the bigger scheme it's a topic of the new generation. So all of these challenges are not only based on what I face in the community as a Latina, as a woman and being a part of the decision making process but also these ideas and concepts that are normally not discussed at a normal everyday practical work on the ground. I mean these issues are there, and that's a challenge as well, bringing that to the table, whether if who we speak with is a community leader, a decision maker or nonprofit organization, these are issues that are a challenge by highlighting society dynamics we normally do

not bring about on an everyday level.

S: What would you suggest to our readers is the best way to get involved in environmental issues?

G: That's a good question, I think foremost knowledge is power and I feel that due to this green-washing that is happening, immediately people are affected by what they easily perceive from the media and in most cases they (media) are green-washing. One can go that route but I think that is the lazy route, the more you research into the environment and environmental justice, the more each person will find a different role. So I cannot assign everyone the same thing, and say this is what you must do and the world will change. I think what I would encourage is individuals to really research into what environmental justice is. To a certain extent, environmental justice is no longer a separate issue that can be categorized as a concept that only a few individuals are doing. How we treat the environment reflects how we treat each other and so if we were able to take responsibility for how we treat each other, it naturally encompasses the environment. So I encourage people to get knowledge on these issues and find out how their skills and interests can expand as an environmental justice artist and to find out how best they would be inspired because to make change you need to be inspired. The lazy way, which is being pressured or not thinking twice as to why you are making changes can lead people to fall into a trap.

DO-IT-YOURSELF

BACK YARD GARDENING: CALL TO ACTION

WORDS BY JAMIE GAYLOR

On the face of it, gardening shouldn't be political. It's about the most peaceful, soothing pastime you can imagine. What could be less "extreme" than tending a plot of green, growing things, calling to your sweet and funny chickens to come get breakfast, and bringing in a sun-ripened harvest to rinse and serve for dinner? Seriously, who WOULDN'T want to do that?

Having said that, I realize there are a lot of people who don't want to do that. "Why keep chickens when you can just buy the eggs?" they ask incredulously. I'm not sure how to answer...why would you buy bland watered down store eggs when you can raise your own flavorful vitamin-rich ones?

So, realizing that having a vegetable plot and two hens is an accidental political statement, I've tried very hard not to antagonize my subdivision neighbors. I've laughed good-naturedly with the people who find me ridiculous, and trained myself to stop talking when I see my friends' eyes glaze over as I extoll the virtues of vermicompost (a composting technique involving worms). I try to keep my gardening my business, and all us urban chicken keepers know the first rule: You don't talk about urban chicken keeping (like Fight Club!).

But...as I walk the neighborhood in the evenings, I see vegetable plots peeking out here and there. The neighbors across the street have a stand of corn growing – when I admired it, they lowered their eyes and said, "oh yes, it's just something we're trying." I saw a neighbor down the way with what looked like a chicken coop in the backyard, and when I mentioned it, she became wary and defensive. Woman, I'm not the chicken police; I want to be your friend!

There is one family down the way - they moved in not too long ago, and plowed up their entire front and backyard. They now have an enormous garden, a big three-bin compost, keep six chickens, and I think they are freaking awesome. They are serious gardeners, out and proud!

That's who I want to be – someone who is deeply excited by what I am doing, and proud to share it without apology. If you want to live in a more self-sustainable way, then you need to have this attitude too. You will have to explain yourself to people who think you are wasting your time, and you will have to endure the inevitable "I told you so" when something goes wrong. No matter what, you should hold your head high and be proud that you are doing something really good for yourself and your planet.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

1. No matter how many books you read, and how much prep work you do, some things will work and some things won't. There is a learning curve, and that doesn't mean you failed. Keep trying, and take notes. You will get better at this.
2. Make sure the garden area is easy to get to, and easy to water.
3. Start with herbs. They are relatively pest resistant, expensive in the store, and so much better fresh from the garden. I have had great success with basil, parsley and oregano.
4. Plant some beans. They are stout and fast growing and will encourage you that you are doing it right. Pole beans need something to climb on, but bush beans do not. Make sure to pick the one that fits your space.
5. Compost. Every gardening book talks about the importance of compost, and it's all true. All compost really is? Nature's own system of decomposition aided and abetted by you. Why throw your leaves, grass, and kitchen waste away when you could turn in into black gold?
6. Vermicompost. OMG. Falling-off-a-log easy, and so rewarding. Get a shallow Rubbermaid plastic tub and drill some holes in the top for air. Then add your vegetable peels, egg shells and coffee grounds, some red wiggler worms, and top with damp shredded newspaper. These magic creatures will convert half their body weight in waste to finished compost IN A DAY. And I swear before God and man, it doesn't smell like anything but dirt. I keep our box in the sunroom – some people keep theirs under the sink or in the garage. I harvest a bucketful of compost every two months. One tip: if it does get moldy, it's too wet. Add more newspaper. Also, worms make for fun and unusual pets!
7. If you have any land at all, check your local laws and if possible get some chickens. They are such funny creatures, and they will eat the bugs in your yard and fertilize it with their poop. Also, they give you eggs every day. You don't even have to feel weird about the eggs – without a rooster, they are unfertilized and can never become baby chicks. They don't stink, and they are not dirty.

I hope you try one of these things out. You might be surprised at how much you enjoy it, and I warn you that it can be very addictive! And then you can stand tall with the rest of us crazy farm nuts, and say, "I'm here, I'm a gardener – deal with it!"

SUMMERY SALAD

RECIPE SUBMITTED BY KRISTIN TAYLOR

Wheat Berry Salad:

1 ½ cup uncooked wheat berries, rinsed and soaked
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ med. red onion, chopped
2 handfuls of kale or spinach
½ large cucumber
2 small tomatoes, diced
Feta cheese
¼ cup almonds, chopped (optional)

Dressing:

1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
2 tbs. lemon juice
1 tsp. soy sauce
1 1/2 tbs. balsamic vinegar
1 ½ tbs. apple cider vinegar
1 tsp. stone ground mustard
A few chopped mint leaves
Pinch of salt
Pinch of pepper
Dash of cayenne pepper
Dash of ginger

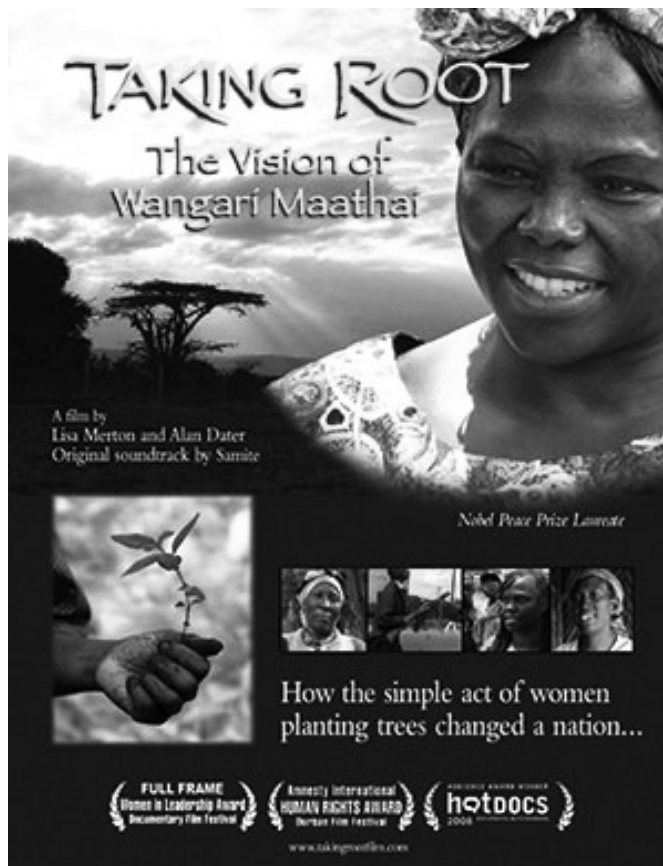
Bring wheat berries to a boil in 3 cups of water, simmer until tender (some berries will split open). As the wheat berries are cooking, prepare dressing. Add all dressing ingredients in either a small bowl or cup of some sort and combine well. Taste and adjust accordingly. Let sit.

After making the dressing, begin to prepare the vegetables. Once the wheat berries are done cooking, add vegetables and mix well. Next, add the dressing until everything is well-coated. Top with feta and pepper and mint leaves for garnish.

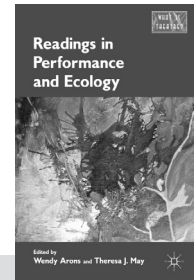
Serve either cold or warm. Feeds 4.

P.S. this dish is fairly adaptable and the veggies you add can change by season as well as mood!

**FOLLOWING
THE LIFE OF
AN INSPIRING
WOMAN,
ILLUSTRATING
A REVOLUTION**



Excerpt from the introduction to May's new book: *Readings in performance and Ecology*.



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BIO COURTESY OF THERESA MAY

WORDS BY CHELSEA PFIEFER

In rural Kenya, one woman's courage and passion for environmental justice led a political revolution. Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai recognized that by deforesting the land, the Kenyan government was essentially digging their graves. Rural families depended on the existence of trees and, by extension, the sustainable biodiversity that the trees enabled. The healthier range of roots and vegetables that included more vitamins could decrease the rampant malnutrition that plagued many children and families. The richer ecosystem could provide a haven where a dry wasteland exists. So, Maathai put the power of growth and life in the hands of the women who lived there. Though discouraged, mocked and in many cases legally persecuted, Maathai taught women and mothers how to plant trees on their land and on public property.

Soon enough, this phenomenon spread throughout southwestern Kenya. Forests were re-growing after government leaders, and prior to that British Parliament, had ordered them all to be cut down to build skyscrapers or attempt to profit from non-native crops. Colonial wounds were healing, and people gathered to plant trees together

PHOTO FROM TAKINGROOTFILM.COM

in their community. As Wangari Maathai predicted, governmental interference persisted and threatened the project. Many members of The Green Belt Movement (founded by Maathai in 1977) were arrested as political prisoners, and the wives and mothers of the prisoners protested for several months. They were finally released, but conflict continued for several years as Maathai, The Green Belt Movement, and tree-planting women pursued their goals to attain ecological peace and prosperity.

Taking Root follows the extensive life story of Wangari Maathai up to her 2004 Nobel Peace Prize award. Filmed by Lisa Merton and Alan Dater, audiences from around the world have a chance to witness the growth and development of an environmental movement initiated and pursued by women. The largely symbolic act of women planting new roots and reclaiming their land is an image that propels this incredible true story. The themes of empowerment and resilience build the foundation for an inspiring, effortless film. We are left with the message of taking change into our own hands, and that all hope for the growth of humanity lies in its roots.

WENDY ARONS AND THERESA J. MAY

The popular conceptual binary that distinguishes between “nature” and “culture” has taken a beating in recent years. Recent large-scale ecological disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina (2005) and Irene (2011), the Gulf oil spill (2010), catastrophic flooding in Pakistan (2010), severe drought in the US Southwest (2011), and famine in Somalia (2011), among others, have vividly dramatized the fierce, inexorable interconnectivity between nature and human culture, and made visible the extent to which that very binary thinking, which has been so instrumental to technological and cultural development, is also carrying us to the brink of ecological collapse. A fundamental transformation of values with regard to the more-than-human world, one that includes a full acceptance of our enmeshment in the larger ecological community, is long overdue. But here we come to a fundamental paradox: one of the key means of shaping and transforming human attitudes and values is the arts, but the arts (in the West, at least, where this book has its origins) have traditionally been conceived as the activity that most divides humans from “nature.” Moreover, theater in its present form—with its emphasis on human conflict in the context of human institutions—occupies a space at the far end of that spectrum. Consequently, the terms we join together in the title of this volume—“performance” and “ecology”—do not easily or readily share space together, either materially or ontologically...

How can we provoke an increasingly diverse and complex discourse, one that has the purpose of inspiring artists as well as scholars? Critics and scholars play an important role in relationship to the arts—not only do they comment on existing work, but they also propose new ways of thinking that can, in turn, call forth new work. In the last half-century, productive reciprocal conversations between scholars, critics, and artists have produced rich and varied performances that have transformed previously ingrained cultural attitudes about gender, race, and sexuality. Despite the fact that ecological degradation will likely precipitate enormous social and political upheaval in the next century, and, with it, unpredictable and unimaginable effects on human communities and cultures—the kinds of concerns that have traditionally been prime subjects for the performing arts—theater scholars and practitioners have been slow to engage environmental issues. Biologist Neal Evernden reminds us that “an involvement by the arts is vitally needed to emphasize . . . the intimate and vital involvement of self with place . . . environmentalism involves the perception of values, and values are the coin of the arts” (102–103). As a scholarly and artistic community we have largely failed to rise to Una Chaudhuri’s challenge, published in *Theater* in 1994, to play our role in addressing the crisis of values that the current ecological crisis represents. Theorists and scholars now have an opportunity—we would argue a responsibility—to critically apply an ecological perspective to theatrical representation, and, in this way, take the lead in forging a space, and sensibility, into which artists may increasingly move to create...

The authors collected here are practicing just such a mode of ecological thinking, defining ecology in its scientific, material sense, keeping focus on the insights theater and performance can provide into our material embeddedness and enmeshment in and with the more-than-human environment that contains and sustains us.

As a result, this volume is the first to address intersections of performance and ecology in which both terms are understood in their material (rather than metaphorical) sense. Some previous contributions to this discourse have tended to deploy ecology as a kind of aesthetic systems-theory in order to describe the multifarious, dynamic, and interdependent relationships between, for example, production and reception, actors and space, or theater and its social context. No doubt, theoretical invention, playfulness, and polyphony are fundamental to discourse about performance. But the use of “ecological” for rhetorical purposes tends merely to sanitize the term while eschewing its political as well as its material-ecological implications. Divorced from the material-ecological issues confounding contemporary society, “ecology” is reduced in this discourse to yet another metaphor. Una Chaudhuri notes that to “use ecology as metaphor is to block the theater’s approach to the deeply vexed problem of classification that lies at the heart of ecological philosophy: are we human beings—and our activities, such as theater—an integral part of nature, or are we somehow radically separate from it?” (*Theater* 27). By embracing the challenge of understanding ecology from a material standpoint, the essays in this volume open up new fields of inquiry, making distinctions, connections, and deviations that plunge us into the ethical, intellectual, and theatrical storm of our present, potentially heartbreaking, moment in history.

Q&A

SIREN: How did the book come about? How did you get involved?

MAY: The book came out of the Earth Matters Onstage Festival, which I produced here in 2009. Actually, in 2004, I started it at my old school, and then brought it here when I came here. It is an ecodrama playwrights festival and a symposium, about performance and ecology... we had that festival in May 2009. Out of that festival and conference, there are a lot of conference papers, so we decided to produce an anthology. Some of the papers are from the conference, we also solicited some papers... It was my idea that we should publish an anthology. I’m one of about 5 people in the country who work at the intersection of performance and ecology. Wendy Arons is another person.

S: Would you mind talking a little bit about the connection between Ecology and Performance? Because it might be something not a lot of people would connect.

M: Like all of the other liberation movements (civil rights, women’s rights), theatre has been an important voice in social change, so one would think that it could be also in the environmental movement... But I think there’s something more for theatre to do, because it is a living art form, it’s an art form that takes place when bodies come together in space and interestinly so are ecological issues. They are about being bodies, living in space with other bodies, how do we deal, how do we communicate and make community, how do we not destroy the other bodies, and so on.

CONNECTING SPIRITUALITY, FEMINISM, AND THE EARTH

WORDS BY JULIA RILEY

I, like many, didn't come into my feminism until entering college. It gave me a wider understanding of the workings of society. However, upon coming to realize that the world through my new feminist eyes was not what it once seemed, I struggled to find communities with which my new found ideologies meshed. I attended LGBTQA meetings which were great for learning more about campus happenings and educational opportunities while also meeting new and friendly people. I ventured into the Women's Center where I found even more of my fellow feminists and became involved in The Siren. But still I felt that I was lacking another kind of community.

I remembered taking a which-religion-is-right-for-you? quiz online once as a high schooler but had long forgotten the results. I grew up rather religion-less with a mother who had left her strict Christianity and four oldest kids with my father who has since also renounced his faith. I wasn't told much about the goings on of the universe that I can remember except for the occasional assurance of the existence of angels and the soothing conviction that thunder was just them bowling. I was mostly left to deduce whatever I found plausible on my own, and for the most part, dismissed organized religion altogether by adolescence.

This last fall term I decided that it was time I give the idea of spiritual community a chance.

It is an understatement to say that I was skeptical of finding a religion I could get into with my newly developed sense of criticism for institutions, but I waded right into questions of belief and morality nonetheless. The following Sunday I took the bus to a part of town I'd never seen in search of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Eugene. I was rather nervous, and with good reason as some of the only services I'd ever attended were generally terrifying. I won't go into detail, but one instance involved an angry Catholic priest admonishing me for trying to take the eucharist, while another landed me in a special two hour young women's service which strongly encouraged us not to preach to men but only to each other. Yes, I had been burned before, but I was willing to give it another go. The website really emphasized the welcoming and friendly nature of the UUCE. I walked into the softly lit building and was immediately welcomed at the door and subsequently approached by several people both before and after the service.

I have been attending the UUCE somewhat regularly since that first time I ventured in alone. I had done a little research on the religion myself before actually going, but I found that the most informative way to get a feel for it is really just to jump in. By doing so I feel that I have a fairly clear idea of it's basis. The title Unitarian Universalism was taken from the European Christian tradition; Unitarian meaning the oneness of God, and Universalism meaning none are condemned to hell. But this breakdown of the title is somewhat misleading. One of the first things I was assured upon attending service was that no one is required to believe in the existence of God. In fact, the longer I stayed on, the more it seemed that there is actually very little that the congregation collectively believe at all. This is because Unitarian Universalism is based in the idea that everyone has the right to explore and discover their own truth. It's not about a group of

people coming together to affirm each others identical theological or spiritual beliefs as in opposition to others, but rather the building of a community based on respect and the understanding that difference is something to be learned from.

What amazes me is not just the Sunday services, though they are nice, but all of the other groups and activities that stem from the church itself. For instance there is an LGBT movie and potluck night the second Friday of every month, several choirs, an in depth womyn's group called Small Group Ministry, a Breakfast Club for the younger adults of UUCE, the Green Sanctuary Committee, and many more that I haven't looked into.

Though the social groups run through UUCE are wonderful opportunities to find people and make connections, the UUCE's Green Sanctuary Committee does some very important work to ensure the sustainability and environmental responsibility of the church. Green Sanctuary is a program through the Unitarian Universalists of America that requires the UUCE to take measures toward energy conservation, recycling and reducing resource use, both religious and environmental education of the congregation, and working on environmental justice issues. The UUCE meets these requirements and so can be officially called a Green Sanctuary. Some of the UUCE's current projects include: bottled water, marine reserves, gardens, transportation, local food production, showing films on environmental issues and continuing to encourage UUs to become more environmentally conscious. The church's commitment to environmental awareness as well as activism is another reason that I feel it to be a truly dedicated network of people that I would feel proud to be associated with. The goal of the Green Sanctuary project, though based in action, is also one of moral and religious responsibility. By taking action in environmental justice issues, the UUCE and wider community is strengthened as is its connection to the earth and its networks and systems.

I've come to realize that much of being a feminist for me is recognizing injustice and working to rectify it. This is a feeling of social and environmental responsibility recognized and shared by the UUCE. Coming into feminism, though endlessly enlightening, can be difficult. Often the burden of knowledge is no longer being able to blindly take part in things you once thought harmless. And although I know this to be a good thing, it can involve some self sacrifice. I am by no means saying that other religions cannot coexist with feminism. But if you are searching for a new kind of community to go with your beliefs, Unitarian Universalism is a very open and stimulating community of active and respectful individuals who are committed to doing good. And that's exactly the kind of group my personal feminism can get on board with!

For more information on the UUCE or Unitarian Universalism you can visit their website at <http://www.uueugene.org> or come to their Sunday Service at 9:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. at their new building on the corner of 13th and Chambers.



SCIENCE COMPLEX: EAST WALL OF VOLCANOLOGY AND CASCADE

Dawn Redwood, Water Fir (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*)

Fossilized leaves of this deciduous conifer (its needles drop seasonally) can be found throughout the northern hemisphere, including central Oregon. This species was previously thought to be extinct until it was discovered in Szechuan China in 1943. In 1947 the Arnold Arboretum at Harvard financed the collection and distribution of the seed throughout the world. This tree is now a Eugene Legacy Tree. Though called a ‘redwood’ it is more closely related to the bald cypress of the southeast U.S.

CAMPUS TREE WALK

As one of our writers touched on in her Neat/Hurl about campus tree-climbing, our campus is not just beautiful, it’s an arboretum. Looking for an outside activity on a beautiful summer day? (Which will start soon right?) Take our short campus tree walk.



OLD CAMPUS QUAD NORTH: EAST OF VILLARD

Ginkgo, or Maidenhair Tree (*Ginkgo biloba*)

Native to southeast China, this tree is another example (beside the dawn redwood) of an ancient species. It can be recognized by its distinctive fan-shaped leaves. The ginkgo is either a male tree or a fruit-bearing female tree. This female tree bears very strong-smelling plum-shaped fruit in the autumn. It is believed that the ginkgo species has existed for 128 million years. There is fossil evidence of it having existed in Oregon, but it survived only in China until being reintroduced to the U.S. in 1790.

JOHNSON HALL: ON 13TH, IN FRONT BETWEEN JOHNSON AND COLLIER



Purple Threadleaf Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum ‘Dissectum Atropurpureum’*)

This is a beautiful example of a Japanese maple, a slow growing species. It is a small variety with purple leaves and twisting trunk and branches. Native to China, Japan, and Korea, this tree has been given special attention due to its size and unique character.

MEMORIAL QUAD: EIGHT OF THESE GIANTS LINE THE QUAD IN FRONT OF KNIGHT LIBRARY



Pyramidal English Oak (*Quercus robur ‘Pyramidalis’*)

The English oak, native to Europe, North Africa, and West Asia, is an iconic species whose strong wood has been prized for centuries. These eight English oaks are a cultivar of English oak having a pyramidal form. They were purchased in Illinois and sent by train to Eugene and were planted in 1939 in memorial of Robert Chase Bailey, senior class president of 1929, who had drowned in the Millrace.

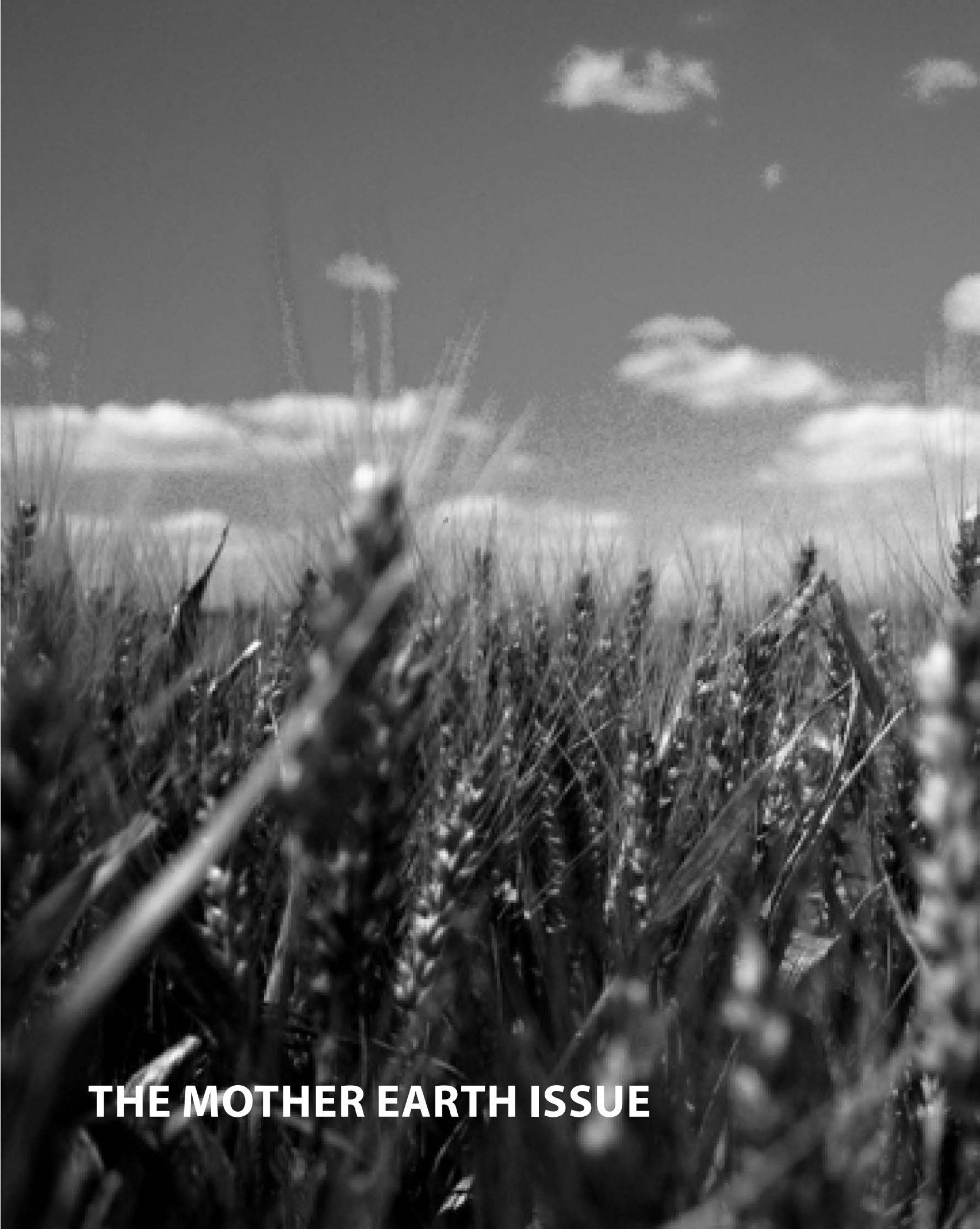
WOMEN’S MEMORIAL QUAD: ON JOHNSON LANE, NW OF HENDRICKS



Western Catalpa (*Catalpa speciosa*)

These interesting trees are native from the Midwest south to Texas. They are large, fast-growing trees, growing to 70 feet. They are known for their large, showy white flowers in the spring, large, bright green, coarse leaves in summer, and large fruit resembling bean pods in late summer and autumn.

COMPILED BY KYLIE WRAY



THE MOTHER EARTH ISSUE