

asuo women's center

winter 2008

The Siren



**EUGENE
DRAMA KINGS**

The Siren

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06 Chinese New Year 2008

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09 Winter Formal

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Black Women of Achievement

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Land Air Water

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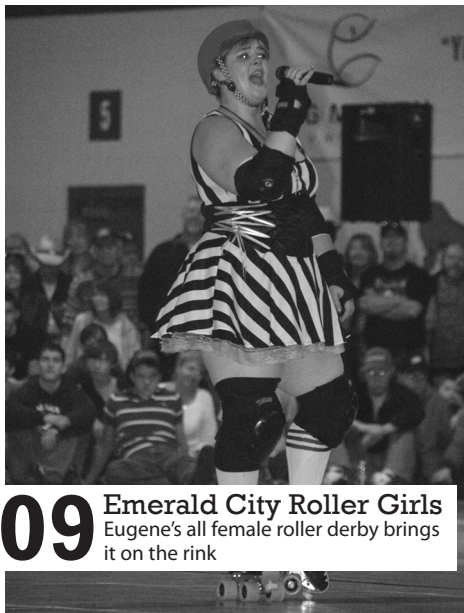
Mills International Center

Women's Center

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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 search for volunteers, contributors, and artists.

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Dr. Timothy Leary; (inset) Kurt Cobain



conversations about gender, the environment, mass media, queer issues, parenting, d.i.y. and a myriad of other topics. As in past years, we will continue to provide a space and forum for the inclusion of creative submissions from women and feminists, whether they are poetry, nonfiction, short story, or visual art.

This issue, we feature the Men’s Center’s weekly discussion series, “Myths of Masculinity.” We’re exploring what feminism means to men, mothers, athletes—just about everyone. We are not the counterforce to the *Oregon Commentator’s* recent “Man Issue.” Unlike that publication, we’re including everyone in the dialogue in bringing issues of relevance and importance to the University community. We invite students, non-students, faculty, staff, teens, women, men, transpeople, feminists, womanists, and any other interested contributors to add their voices to our publication. Because, as June Jordan wrote

in her *Report from the Bahamas*:

“The ultimate connection must be the need that we find between us. It is not only who you are, in other words, but what we can do for each other that will determine this connection.”

KELSEY ROOK
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A LETTER FROM THE 07-08 SIREN EDITOR

this is what a feminist publication looks like

Hello, dear reader. Welcome to this year’s first issue of the *Siren*, brought to you by a (mostly) new staff of energized and informed Women’s Center employees and volunteers. You may notice a few changes we’ve implemented with this issue. First, we like the magazine format and we’re sticking to it. With inspiration from other cool, smart women’s publications like *Bust*, *Bitch*, *Ms*, *VenusZine*, *Latina*, *Nylon* and others, we’re creating a tighter, more reader-friendly publication. We’ve also expanded our reader and contributor base to include the greater Eugene community; articles featuring the Emerald City Roller Girls and Eugene Drama Kings shine the spotlight on deserving individuals in our community.

Perhaps the greatest change we’ve made, however, is a less obvious one. In past years, the *Siren* was a Women’s Center publication created by and for women, the only such publication on campus. Today, we are redefining the publication as the University of Oregon’s first and only feminist publication. Why, some will ask, would we label ourselves with that loaded F-word? We say: “Why the fuck not?!” If Timothy Leary and Kurt Cobain could publicly call themselves feminists, why shouldn’t we? What is it about that world that makes us recoil and escape the stigmas that it carries? As Cybil Shepherd said, “We are all benefiting from the great feminists who struggled and suffered and worked to give us everything women now enjoy... I refer to myself as a feminist, and I do it with pride.” And from Richard Epstein, “Feminism is the single most powerful social movement of our time, one that addresses every aspect of human and social life.”

The feminist community of today needs a voice, a sense of community and a forum. We aim to bring together a community of contributors and readers who are self-identified feminists, women’s liberationists, womanists, pro-feminist men and free-thinkers with the goals of raising awareness, bringing together feminist voices, and promoting understanding and discussion within the University and Eugene community. Does this mean that we will only write about “women’s” issues? Probably not. We will write about topics that interest our readers and staff, and that engage our community in



With my daughter Juniper, Sept 2007



escaping seductive love: confessions of a vulnerable prom queen

{WORDS BY LISA ANDERSON 2005}

I don't know how much longer I can handle this. I'm running myself ragged. I am secretive. I am distanced from those closest to me.

No longer do I enjoy or have time for my passions. No longer do my friends call me with much frequency, or do I call them. My family watches my every move, worrying endlessly that I am not in a healthy place. Everyone close to me says that I've changed. They are concerned and offer me sympathetic glances. But not everyone knows the extent. I wear masks

to hide the pain. I smile, nod, and meticulously closet the darkness that surrounds me.

I am living in my own hell, fighting to keep my sanity and strength. He challenges my soul. I don't want to continue in this path. I want to fly freely. I want to feel the nurturing breeze and sun upon me, to be happy and carefree.

When he and I began dating, I never imagined it would come to this. I never foresaw myself barely sleeping while balancing sports, homework, piano lessons, a job, editing the school newspaper, his homework, his needs, and his late night phone conversations. I never thought this could happen to me. He has consumed me. My overflowing cup has poured into his dry cup. My family and friends don't like the effect he's had on me; they call it emotional abuse, dating abuse. They want the old me back—the girl who was once excited about her life.

I've always tried to stand up for other's rights and the injustices of the world, but right now, I need to take care of myself and be my own advocate. I know I must break away from the toxicity he injects into my spirit. It is going to be a long journey to come back into myself. I need to fall into my parents' arms. I need to cry. My friends are waiting for me to cross over the bridge and meet them. Their hands are held out when I am ready.

Tonight, this journey has begun. Tonight, I was crowned my senior class "Prom Queen." I have been empowered and embraced by my peers. I have felt happiness, once again. I have been given the gift of strength and have the determination to begin stepping across the bridge. People believe in me.

I lay vulnerable after my prom night. I came home, stripped of my crown, dress, jewels, and mask. Candid with myself, I wept beneath my crimson sheets, naked, lonely, confused and relieved.

Tomorrow I'll begin to tell my story. Tomorrow I will say goodbye to him. Tomorrow I will begin the healing process; summer's sweet solace will comfort me.



every 15 seconds

CAMPUS AND EUGENE ORGANIZATIONS JOIN FORCES IN ERADICATION OF DOMESTIC AND RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE

{ WORDS LAURA MARIE PIZZO }

{ PHOTOS BRANDY OTA }

A man beats a woman every 15 seconds in the United States, according to Womenspace, an organization in Eugene, Or. that provides services to battered women and their children. There are many efforts to end domestic violence, including intervention (counseling and shelter care) prevention (education). October, being Domestic Violence Awareness Month, is particularly focused on the latter method: prevention through education and expanding awareness. Domestic Violence Awareness Month began in 1981 with the Day of Unity, a day when women across the nation worked together to end violence against women and children. Six years later, the Day of Unity expanded into a month of education and advocacy with the first Monday of October dedicated to celebrating the original holiday.

This October the University of Oregon and Eugene community joined the national effort to end domestic violence. Purple ribbons distributed outside the EMU on Wednesdays in October compelled students and faculty to support the battle against domestic violence, while the ASUO Women's Center also encouraged students to donate items to a



toiletry drive. Donations were given to Womenspace and First Place Family Center, a resource for homeless families and those at risk of becoming homelessness. Purple bins located outside the Women's Center, the UO bookstore, the UO Health Center, and several other campus locations brought generous donations of personal care items ranging from shampoo to shaving gel to women, children and families in need.

Many students on UO's campus who are involved in awareness efforts choose to take an active role in ending relationship abuse. Tiffany Strauss, an undergraduate and intern at Womenspace, describes her hope that increased awareness will expand the support network for battered women beyond existing organizations.

"[Domestic Violence] is such a pervasive thing in our society- crossing all races, classes and orientations- that people really need to be educated about how common and terrible a thing [it] really is. If more people were aware of the far reaching effects and the human costs, there would probably be less violence in our society and women in abusive relationships would have a lot more support and resources," she said.

S.W.A.T, the Sexual Wellness Advocacy Team, is a student organization that uses role-playing and interactive education to help students recognize sexual, physical and emotional abuse and develop skills for maintaining healthy relationships. Rebecca Sprinson, a junior in SWAT, emphasizes the connection between sexual abuse and physical abuse, "Sexual assault prevention and domestic violence prevention go hand-in-hand; there is a great deal of overlap between them. Sexual assault occurs frequently as a part of domestic violence, as partners can use coercive or violent methods to get sex or withhold sex as punishment as a part of their exercising power and control over their partners."

One of the most important goals of Domestic Violence Awareness Month was to increase awareness among abused women about support networks in their community. Womenspace offers a 24-hour support hotline, safety planning, crisis counseling, support groups and a 15-bed shelter. Womenspace also hosts a Lesbian Alliance to help support battered lesbians in a culture that frequently marginalizes lesbian violence. The University Counseling Center also offers a drop-in clinic and individual, couples, and group therapy. Their facilities are located on the second floor of the Student Health Center building.

“Alright. Let’s start with a short check in,” said Marcus Farley, leader of the Men’s Center discussion series, Myths of Masculinity.

“From the past week, share an experience involving gender roles.” Marcus Farley, an involved father; Pat Werhane, a dedicated University of Oregon runner; Ted Hatton, an inspired non-traditional student; and Rachel Hom, an interested writer/observer all take a moment to consider this challenging request.

Before the discussion begins, Farley lays down some ground rules for the group to keep in mind. For the sake of the reader- I know you’re dying of curiosity- those ground rules will be relayed. First, each of the participants is free to share, but at his or her own risk. Second, even though a meaningful discussion can have therapeutic results, the discussion is not a therapy session. The Myths of Masculinity discussion series, which began in 2001, was the first of its kind to be held at the University. The series is sponsored by the Men’s Center and aims to scale down a large forum topic-masculinity- into weekly meetings where participants can explore deeply and with intention, which was exactly my experience on Wednesday, November 7.

After warming up our brains and tuning our perceptions to the topic at hand, we caught up on the myth discussed in a previous meeting, “The Lizard in the Fire.” This legend originates from Africa, and focuses on the journey from boyhood to manhood. In the legend, a boy inadvertently chooses to sacrifice his boyhood by sleeping with a maiden. In order to bring him back to life, the maiden consults an old hunter. Someone must snatch a lizard out of a fire, and the boy will be alive. When the maiden succeeds, and he is brought back to life, the boy receives a chance to consciously decide his path. He can either kill the lizard, which will kill his mother, or let the lizard live, which will kill the maiden. The father,

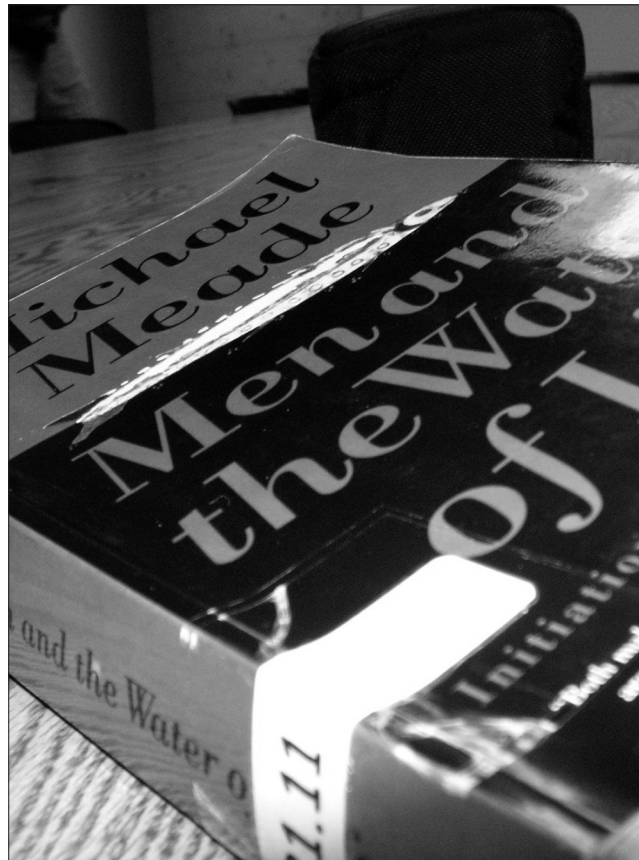
who taught his son nothing of manhood before he dumped him in the bushes to be stumbled upon by maidens, gets off scott-free. This is where the legend ends, and the meat of the discussion begins.

Drawing parallels that were mindful

masculinity myth gives feminist food for thought

SIREN STAFFER RACHEL HOM SHARES HER EXPERIENCE AS PARTICIPANT, WRITER AND OBSERVER AT THE MEN’S CENTER’S WEEKLY DISCUSSION SERIES, MYTHS OF MASCULINITY

{WORDS AND PHOTO BY RACHEL HOM}



of the everlasting relativity of mythology, the discussion group likened the legend to a “failure to launch” conflict experienced in contemporary society.

“Men are afraid to grow up,” said Marcus Farley. “[Too many fathers are] better at getting a high score on a Playstation than raising their children.”

The group agreed with Michael’s point, and conversation progressed from the reasons for various mediums of entertainment to domestic responsibilities and gender roles. The discussion was less about what makes a man, and more about how gender is defined. We compared how ancient cultures approached gender to our own, and which acts and customs define a person’s gender. Our broad discussion wrapped up conveniently in an hour, as the men and myself prepared to confront our schedules for the rest of the evening.

The Myths of Masculinity discussion has since left me with food for thought, from an angle that I can’t experience firsthand. The discussion was open, honest, insightful, jovial, thoughtful, and expressive, to match its creators, a diverse group of engaged men. To the University of Oregon’s Men’s Center we owe thanks, for creating and fostering an environment wherein individuals are able to share experiences and insights as they navigate the realms of masculinity.

The Men’s Center’s Myths of Masculinity Discussion Series meets Wednesdays at 5 pm during the regular term. Contact Men’s Center Director Marcus Farley at mfarley@uoregon.edu for more information.

MORE MASCULINITY MYTHS

The Trouble With Men: Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema

Phil Powrie, Ann Davies, Bruce Babington. Wallflower Press, 2004.

A collection of original essays focusing on masculinity and film, particularly the representation of European masculinity.

The Cultural Myth of Masculinity

Joseph H. Peck. MIT Press, 1983.

A devastating critique of the “male sex role paradigm.”

how to:

FIX A FLAT

by Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky

SO— You've got a flat tire...

1:

STOP RIDING! (or you'll damage the rim) AND FLIP THE BIKE UPSIDE-DOWN OR PLACE ON BIKE STAND.

2:

UNLOCK THE BRAKES!

road/mtn. bike: LEVER ON CHAIN SIDE OF BRAKES PUSH THE ARCH OVER THE WHEEL TOGETHER AND REMOVE CABLE



3:

RELEASE THE WHEEL!

road/mtn/quick release:

non-quick release:

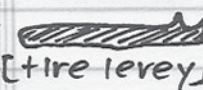
TRACK DOWN A 15MM OR CRESCENT WRENCH "lefty loosey, righty tighty!"

OR!

PULL THE LEVER OUT ON THE HUB AND UNSCREW NUT ON THE OTHER SIDE.

4:

REMOVE TIRE AND TUBE! find a TIRE LEVER!



INSERT THE LEVER UNDER THE TIRE. PULL DOWN ALL THE WAY AROUND. REMOVE TIRE + TUBE

5:

LOCATE HOLE! • CHECK TIRE FOR EMBEDDED GLASS/ THORN/ETC. • FIND HOLE IN TUBE: VISUAL INSPECT OR PUMP IT UP + LISTEN FOR AIR

6:

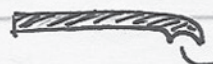
PATCH OR REPLACE? ITS UP TO YOU! BRING YOUR TIRE INTO A BIKE SHOP (OR COPY THE SIZE EMBEDDED ON THE TIRE) FOR A NEW TUBE. OR, PATCH W/ BIKE TIRE PATCH KIT (INSTRUCTIONS ON KIT)

7:

PARTIALLY FILL NEW/PATCHED TUBE AND PUT BACK ON THE TIRE.

8:

PLACE TIRE BACK ON THE RIM USING THE TIRE LEVER OR YOUR HANDS.



USE LEVER THIS WAY— PUTTING THE INDENT ON THE RIM & PULLING UP.

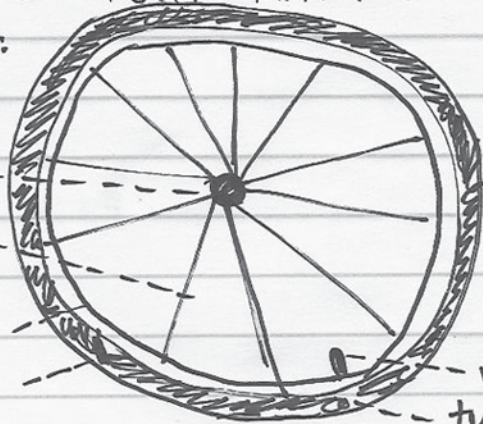
9:

FILL BACK UP TO APPROPRIATE AIR PRESSURE (LISTED ON THE TIRE)

10:

KEEP ON RIDING!

tire anatomy: hub, spoke, rim, tire



valve tube (inside)



these roller girls play dirty!

THE EMERALD CITY ROLLER GIRLS, EUGENE'S PREMIERE WOMEN'S ROLLER DERBY LEAGUE, BRINGS BLOOD, SEX APPEAL, AND MAJOR COMPETITION TO THE ROLLER RINK

{WORDS AND PHOTOS BY CHELSEA FRYHOFF}

Leather, lace, fishnets and helmets. This is not a racy sex shop; this is women's roller derby.

Hundreds of fans came to see the Emerald City Roller Girls (EMCRG) participate in their first bout on Saturday, Oct. 13 at the Regional Sports Center in Springfield, Oregon.

Let's go over some roller derby basics. There are two positions: blockers and jammers. Four blockers from each team make up the pack, and there are two jammers that start 20 feet behind the pack. There are a total of 12 people on the track at

a time.

When the referee blows the whistle once, the pack starts to move. When she or he blows the whistle a second time, the jammers move towards the pack.

The jammer's objective is to try and get through the pack as many times as they can. The blocker's task is to try to block the opposing team's jammers from getting through the pack, while simultaneously trying to help their own jammers through the opponent's pack. Each of these "jams" lasts approximately two minutes.

Although fighting, hitting, and other foul play is a cause for penalty, that doesn't stop the girls from getting rowdy on the track.

The Emerald City Roller Girls League formed in Feb 2007 after Adrienne von der Valk, and some other women checked out the Rose City Rollers in Portland.

These ladies "were inspired by what they saw," said von der Valk, so they set out to create their own roller derby league. Unable to secure a private practice location, the first members held practices at Skateworld.

Even though the ladies were lucky to have some members who knew a little bit about roller derby, most of the other ladies didn't even know how to roller skate. All the girls started from scratch together.

An ideal roller derby team requires 15-20 girls, and the Emerald City Roller Girls has as many as 60 women in the league.

Within the league there are three separate teams with 12-14 girls each. There is also a "Fresh Meat" team, which includes new members and beginners.

Each team within the league has a chance to create its team name. Every team has its own process of picking a name, but most

brainstorm and then vote. Teams also decide on their own themes, colors and outfits.

In addition to the team names, each woman gets to create her own alter ego. While on the track, these women have the chance to be someone they would never be in their daily lives. Most of the made-up names are funny, sexy, or violent, and all have some kind of an edge.

However, roller derby is not all sex appeal and blood. There is a lot of work that goes into planning an event. In August, Von der Valk, with help, began planning the Oct. 13 event in August. Many things were needed to make this event a success. First and foremost the group needed a venue where they could hold the bout. They also required entertainment, lights, sound systems, beer, costumes, and places for the opposing team to stay. Most of the money that went for this event came from fund raising.

Even though this was the Emerald City Roller Girls' first event, they had a large fan-base as a result of radio shows, local publications, and word-of-mouth from friends and family. People have also seen roller derby in other cities, such as Portland, Bend, and Coos Bay, and were excited that a local league had emerged.

The Emerald City Roller Girls have held bouts against Coos Bay and Portland. When in Portland, the group competed against Portland's "Fresh Meat" team. They are excited to contend against the league in Bend.

Time commitment is a major issue for the team, which practices four days a week, for two hours a day. Even more time is required of members who hold a committee or board position. This time commitment has caused some girls to leave the team and has even brought forth complaints from partners and families. For many of the girls, it is hard to balance both home life and the roller derby life, but the sacrifice is a worthwhile one.

Check the girls out on their MySpace page (www.myspace.com/) and look for the Emerald City Roller Girls in a bout sometime after the New Year.



"IN ADDITION TO THE TEAM NAMES, EACH WOMAN GETS TO CREATE HER OWN ALTER EGO. WHILE ON THE TRACK, THESE WOMEN HAVE THE CHANCE TO BE SOMEONE THEY WOULD NEVER BE IN THEIR DAILY LIVES. MOST OF THE MADE-UP NAMES ARE FUNNY, SEXY, OR VIOLENT, AND ALL HAVE SOME KIND OF AN EDGE."







KINGS FOR A NIGHT

DRESSED IN A WIDE-COLLARED PAISLEY SHIRT, MATCHING LEATHER VEST, AND GREY POLYESTER WRANGLERS, DAVE IS A MAN STUCK IN THE FASHION OF THE 70'S. HE DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS "A PEACE LOVING GUY," A JIM MORRISON FAN, AND "THE KIND OF GUY WHO WEARS HIS SHIRT OPEN HALFWAY DOWN." AFTER SEEING DAVE PERFORM ONSTAGE, YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO MEET ALYSSE HENNESSEY, WORKING MOTHER AND UNIVERSITY OF OREGON ALUMNAE WHOSE DRAG PERSONA, VIRGIN OF THE WOLVES, BRINGS DAVE, STARLIGHT SAM, AND A HANDFUL MORE CHARACTERS TO LIFE ONSTAGE WITH EUGENE'S OWN DRAG KING TROUPE, THE EUGENE DRAMA KINGS.

WORDS **KELSEY ROOK**

PHOTOS **BENJAMIN BRAYFIELD**

When Alysse's partner, Max Skorodinsky, was asked to pull together a drag performance for the annual HIV Alliance fundraiser at the Hult Center in Fall 2005, the Drama Kings were born. Adrienne Black was also approached by an event coordinator, and was soon in contact with the other two. She and Alysse met previously in several venues online trying to coordinate a local "mommy-dyke playgroup."

"I met Alysse through the internet," said Adrienne. "She said, 'Just get come over to my house! Get your kids together and come over.'"

The group, though well versed on gender-queer issues and gender play, had never performed drag.

"We started our right away on the big stage with only one piece," said Alysse.

After their Hult Center debut, the group received invites to perform at Eugene/Springfield Gay Pride, Comic Pizza's Queer Laugh Off, and at the University. In February 2007, member Ray Kowitz joined when another member was unable to attend a performance.

"Ray jumped in with a total rock star attitude," said Alysse.

Today, said Alysse, the group has more invitations than they can handle.

"We're getting more invites to do performances in clubs," said Alysse. "We've just started performing outside of queer audiences."

In October, the group made their club-scene debut at Diablo's Lounge, to a great success. Following performances at the Grrrlz Rock finale concert and with Sluts and Squares in Portland, Oregon find the group performing to a "new crowd."

The demand for gender fluid performance is increasing.

"We're the only drag king troupe in Oregon, as far as we know," said Alysse.

King for a night

"Dave has gone onstage with nothing on in those tighty-tight pants of his!" Alysse jokes.

"People should definitely look at our crotches when we get onstage," replied Adrienne.

While backstage crotch-checks may seem absurd, the Drama Kings are committed to the accurate portrayal of the masculine attributes of their male counterparts. With each performance, the Kings don facial hair and men's clothing, perfect their manly swagger and craft the perfect bulge before taking the stage.

"Costuming is really of huge importance for

us to get into character," said Alysse.

The group, however, doesn't limit themselves to male-only characters. Many of their pieces include multiple roles, both male and female, performing gender across a spectrum of presentations and experiences.

"There are some pretty high femme characters," said Alysse. "Some of our characters are fags, bi boys, faggy boys..."

"... sexless dorks," Adrienne added.

"... and Sesame Street characters," Max said.

"Don't forget the hetero cowboys!" Ray chimed in.

For each member, their gender performances onstage and in everyday life differ in both presentation and motivation. It's safe to say that the group, as a whole, experiences and presents gender across a spectrum, upholding the very concept of gender fluidity that their performances as kings exemplify. For all, their experiences living within society's homogenous two-gendered binary provide material and motivation for the group's work.

"I'm a little bit of a guy in real life, and it allows me to be a guy without being a certain stereotype," Max said. "I can be any guy that I want to be that night."

For Adrienne, dragging offers the opportunity to deconstruct gender norms and "present a range of gender roles to our community and friends."

"One of the reasons I do drag is because I have a friend who has a very young son who is transgendered," said Adrienne, who wants to encourage others that "the gender spectrum exists and it's ok. Whatever version of them feels best is ok."

Alysse attributes her gender fluidity and love for dragging to her college experiences in the queer community at the University of Oregon.

"I came out at 18 on campus, as the only bi in the youth queer group," Alysse said. "I never seem to follow the rules."

Most important to the Drama Kings is that their performances create dialogue and acceptance of all gender expression.

"It's about positivity, about including gender, about including sexuality, including whatever gets people off," said Alysse.

Alysse is careful to distinguish the Kings from other drag king troupes and performers. While drag performances typically include lipsyncing and impersonation, the Kings spend hours in twice-weekly practices perfecting costuming, props, and dramatic elements creating pieces that not only entertain, but also "feel good" and educate.

"I don't see what we're doing as just entertainment. It's almost performance art





“(Drag) is about positivity, about including gender, about including sexuality, including whatever gets people off. I don’t see what we’re doing as just entertainment. It’s almost more performanc art than dragging.”

Alysse Hennessey

rather than dragging,” Alysse said.

One of the group’s pieces, the “Touch Me Medley,” explores the rules of touch and sexuality. As Alysse explained, the piece explores “what you can touch, what you can’t touch, and why.” Another number, titled “Here I Am” exposes compulsive heterosexual norms as an attractive woman is wooed by a succession of male characters; in a surprise ending, she is picked up by her girlfriend, whom she has been waiting for all along.

One of the group’s wildly popular characters, Alysse’s “Starlight Sam,” has notorious sex-appeal. Sam is a “vintage guy” performing a seductive soft shoe routine, whose dark allure incites an enthusiastic audience response.

“He is a dark character. I have a side of me that likes to perform really dark or slimy that I would never talk to as a woman,” said Alysse.

It goes without saying that the Kings are skilled entertainers, delivering crowd-pleasing performances that excite and educate with ease.

“All of us feel really playful and free on stage,” said Alysse.

“We don’t have to be super sexy,” Ray added, “but we are when we want to be.”

Tools of gender illusion

The Drama Kings strive for authenticity. Their dedication to drag includes saving their hair clippings after each trim, which can be used with spirit gum to fashion incredibly realistic facial hair. In order to present as men onstage, they must also bind their breasts and pack “heat,” whether by the use of athletic socks, prosthetic dildos, or even “falsies.”

“Lately, I’ve been using three socks— athletic, gray heel, no color bands. That’s what been living in my jock strap,” Max said.

Binding, however, can be a less comfortable process, and it’s desired results more difficult to attain.

“I bind with an ace bandage, then I wear under armor that’s about five sizes too small. I go really flat, and it’s really impressive,” said Max. Max also described the pain and difficulty breathing created by binding.

Performing gender goes beyond donning the physical characteristics typically associated with men. Max gave the group workshops on “how to be a dude,” which Max said includes, “making everything look like you have too much muscle.”

Perfecting certain masculine mannerisms is as— if not more— important than crafting more obvious gender traits, according to Alysse.

“Guys and girls wear hats very differently. It’s little things like that. Subtle things are way more important.”

The groups approach to gender illusion is both creative and unconventional.

“I dare you to find yourself a drag king troupe that says, ‘I’ll felt you a chest merkin!’ or, ‘Don’t worry honey, I’ll knit you some pubic hair!’” Alysse said.

At one particular rehearsal, a troupe member presented the group with a pair of fake silicone breasts, or “falsies.” Adrienne, whose packing prosthetic sadly



the course of one night, loved the “look and feel” of the falsies, and was determined to by a pair of her own. What ensued was a memorable packing adventure to Victoria’s Secret, wherein Max learned that “there’s something kind of obscene about buying bra stuffers to put down your pants.”

After requesting the help of a salesperson, Max and Adrienne were presented with a stores falsies (“Two perfect little mounds of silicone,” according to Max) which came extravagantly wrapped in boxes like “truffles from France.” Adrienne recalled the salesperson’s horror when they asked to walk around the store with them “in order to bond with them.” After a few uncomfortable moments of being followed around by the distressed employee, the two decided against the luxurious bra stuffers.

“They weren’t quite the right feel. I like my falsies to feel a little fuller,” Adrienne said.

They found what they were looking for at Castle Superstore, where, Max said, “Nobody told [us] we couldn’t walk around with the merchandise.”

The future of drag

In light of their growing demand and popularity, the Drama Kings are expanding performances to include new characters and increased audience participation. One idea still in the works is King Kioke, a forecasted once-monthly karaoke event where participants come dressed in drag and lip-sync on stage. As Alysse

described it, “We’re gonna make our own party and invite people; put on a mustache, and we’re ready to go!”

The Kings are also looking for guests to compliment their performances, and dream of featuring burlesque and “dyke double-dutch jump ropers, if any exist in Oregon,” Alysse said.

Max plans on developing a specific character, evoking the historic drag queen performances that included “cabaret, with a hint of movie star.” While the group doesn’t typically portray famous individuals, Max sees it as an opportunity for further gender investigation.

“I’d like to explore what that guy was about; what were the expectations of that guy, what did that guy want beneath those expectations?” Max said. “Every era had this expectation of how a guy was supposed to be.”

Most importantly, the Kings will keep sewing, crocheting nylon hairpieces, creating new pieces, and towing their kids along to their performances. Above all, they continue to transform the model of drag kinging, exploring new modes of gender expression while remaining accessible to their audiences.

“Most people, if you said, ‘There’s this really hot drag kind troupe coming to town...’ they wouldn’t expect us” Alysse said.

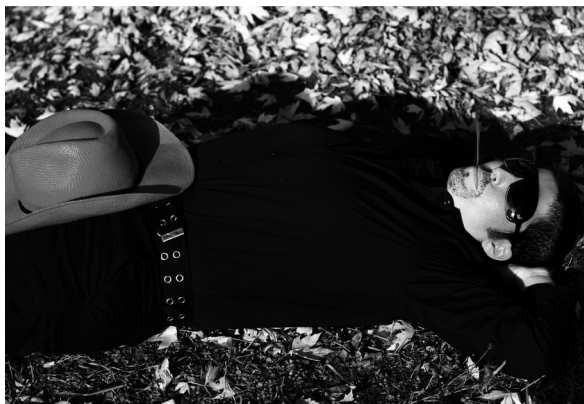
“We’ve got two mothers, include someone who’s been preggy. We’re not single young students having fun on the weekends, sleeping around with each other.”

MEET THE KINGS

THESE MEN ARE SEXY, TALENTED, LITERARY AND THEY WEREN'T AFRAID TO TELL US WHAT THEY'RE PACKING...

NOT ENOUGH TO SATIATE YOUR KING-SIZED HUNGER? CHECK OUT THE GROUP'S MYSPACE PAGE:

www.myspace.com/dragkingsrock



OZZY B. WILDE

AKA: Ray Kowitz

Member since: Feb 2007

Performance greats include:

While Ozzy doesn't have any specific favorites, he's "up for anything", including portraying Gunther, a popular Samantha Fox character featured on YouTube.

Quoted: "People should definitely look at our crotches when we're on stage!"

I'LL BE ALVIN

AKA: Max Skorodinsky

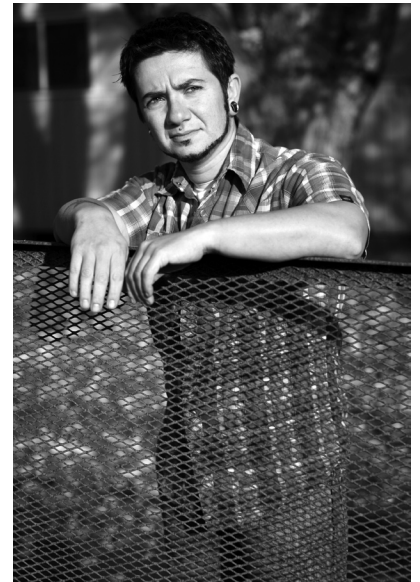
Member since: Fall 2005

Performance greats include:

An ode to a lawnmower performed to Cake's "Perhaps."

In a recent performance, the lawnmower was replaced by a vibrator pat the end of an impossibly long extension cord.

Quoted: "There's something sort of sexy about some hot girl in drag who you know is a girl and who wants you to know she's a girl!"



VIRGIN OF THE WOLVES

(pictured as Dave)

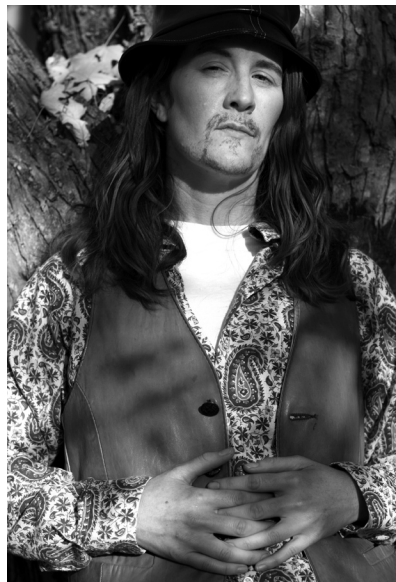
AKA: Alysse Hennessey

Member since: Fall 2005

Performance greats include:

Starlight Sam, a vintage-era softshoe performer known for his slimy, dark brand of sex appeal.

Quoted: "Sometimes you want to look like a dude, and sometimes you just want to have a campy mustache"



SHAKES SPEARE

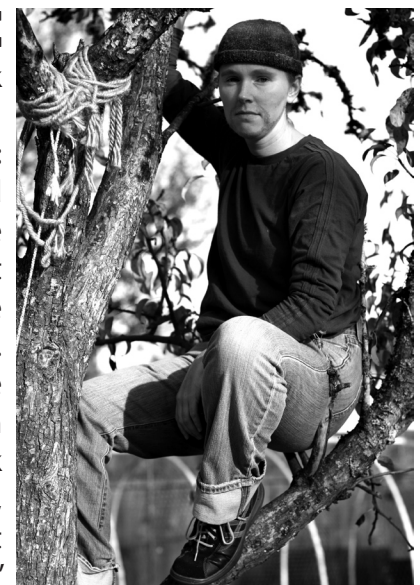
AKA: Adrienne Black

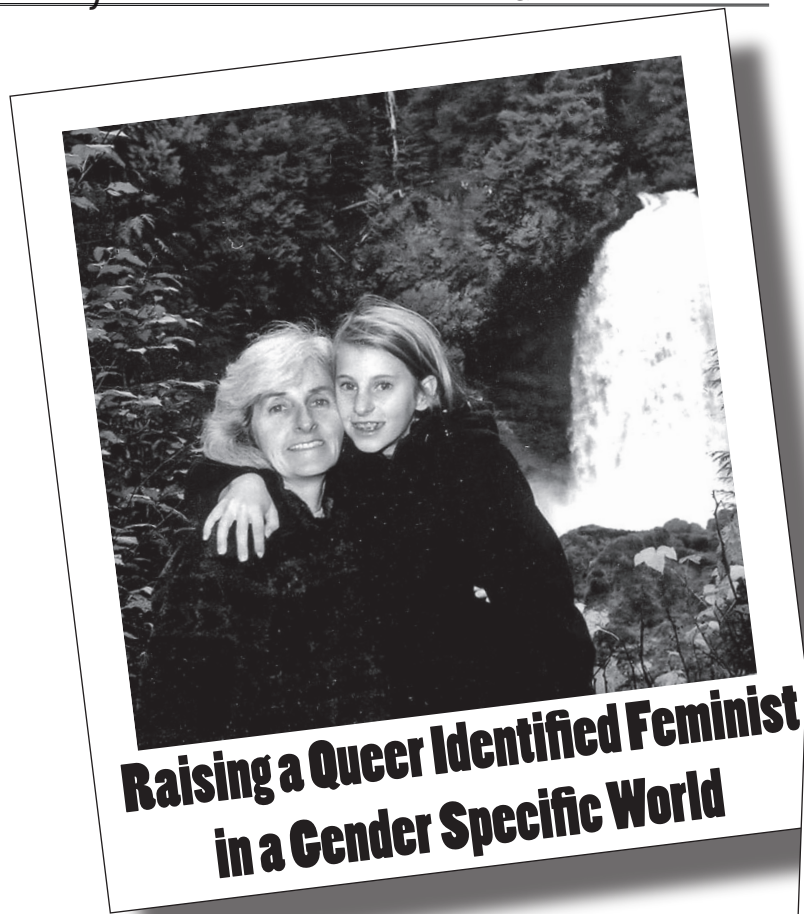
Member since: Fall 2005

Performance greats include:

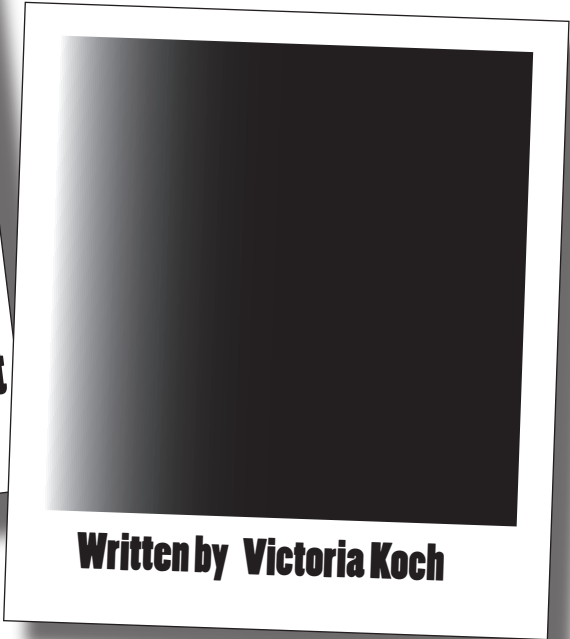
A dork strip tease performed to the song "Gigolo" complete with pens and pocket protectors thrown to the audience.

Quoted: "I really enjoy the gender play, going between girl and boy. I didn't think that I would in the beginning, but now I really enjoy that process."





**Raising a Queer Identified Feminist
in a Gender Specific World**



Written by Victoria Koch

HE STRETCHED HIMSELF. HE ROSE. HE STOOD UPRIGHT IN COMPLETE NAKEDNESS

BEFORE US, AND WHILE THE TRUMPETS PEALD

TRUTH! TRUTH! TRUTH!

**WE HAVE NO CHOICE LEFT BUT TO CONFESS—HE
WAS A WOMAN.**

VIRGINIA WOOLF, ORLANDO, P 137

My highschool snior daughter came home last weekend from her Integrated Outdoor Program desert camping trip bubbling over with excitement. In this class, she has enthusiastically biked, rock-climbed, bouldered, and learned orienteering/survivor skills. She grew up with most of these activities, but shifted them aside during adolescence. As we sat around the kitchen table, she proudly told of her bouldering adventure. "I was the only girl who reached the top," and of her fearless navigation through the narrow passageways to the end of Boyd Cave: "At one point I had to crawl on my stomach to get to the next opening. When we turned off our flashlights, it was totally dark."

I am in awe of my daughter. Though

I came through a typical fifties childhood and stepped into a sixties consciousness-raising, feminist women's group, my daughter has from the get-go been herself. We live in a gender-specific and gender-stereotype world: girls are to wear pink, put on makeup, seek the attention of their boy counterparts, demurely shrink from adventure and risk, and are quiet and polite; boys are encouraged to be adventurous, loud, athletic, ambitious and protective of girls. I thought eighteen years ago when I had my baby these black and white differences would no longer be valid, but as I raised this child, I found, sadly, that they were.

I had my daughter at forty-two and believed her dad and I could bring her up

in an "open" manner. From the moment of conception, my feminist nature dearly wanted a girl. I wanted to pass on my journals, my feminist experiences, the herstory and women's literature I chose to study on my own. When at the moment of her arrival her dad held her up and said, "It's a girl ... I think," little did I know then that this small being would be the one to redefine for her parents the meaning of that word "girl."

Today it's called gender neutral parenting. Logging onto the Internet, I find scores of blogs and articles trying to assist socially aware, determined parents in raising their boys and girls beyond the stereotypes. Clicking on a Mothering Magazine forum, shows a good slice of current thinking. But when we brought our baby home in 1989, all we knew was we wanted her not to be defined by her gender. I refused to dress her in pink or put a bow on her fuzzy head. While dressed in blue, I held her in my arms as we entered a Hult Center elevator. "Oh what an adorable boy," the woman on my left cooed. As I dressed my toddler in

brown overalls, I realize now, I was simply shifting her to the “other gender.”

Dress has been notoriously gender specific. As a preschooler, my daughter only wanted to wear dresses and tights. Our social norms become the third parent. She refused jeans until one day I said, “These will be easier to play on the playground with.” Once in pants, my daughter has rarely turned back.

Dress, toys, television, the media, peers and the home environment are all acknowledged as definers of our children. We had dolls, stuffed animals, cars and trains; we had music, stories and time for jungle gyms and hiking. Our daughter took ballet classes and rock climbing; she was on soccer teams and took art classes. As I write this, I wonder why any of these activities have to traditionally be classified masculine or feminine.

I remember one summer when we had gotten our daughter involved in Ukrainian folk dancing. She came to me one practice and asked, “Why do the boys get to do the fun things like jumping and kicking?” She had noticed the girls were twirling and turning and not moving a whole lot. If her mother were braver then she would have asked for kicking and jumping privileges for the girls. But this would have broken with a cultural norm.

We make concessions. We think we want our child to fit in. But we soon learn that it’s not important what our children are but who they are. Having been raised in an extremely gender specific world, I fell for some of the stereotypes: I made frilly dresses for Christmas and dollhouse dolls for the playroom. I loved when she wanted longer hair and played dress up with jewelry and scarves. But I also loved when the boys visiting our house wore dresses too, played with her dollhouse and had longer hair. It’s taking

away the limitations for either gender that is important.

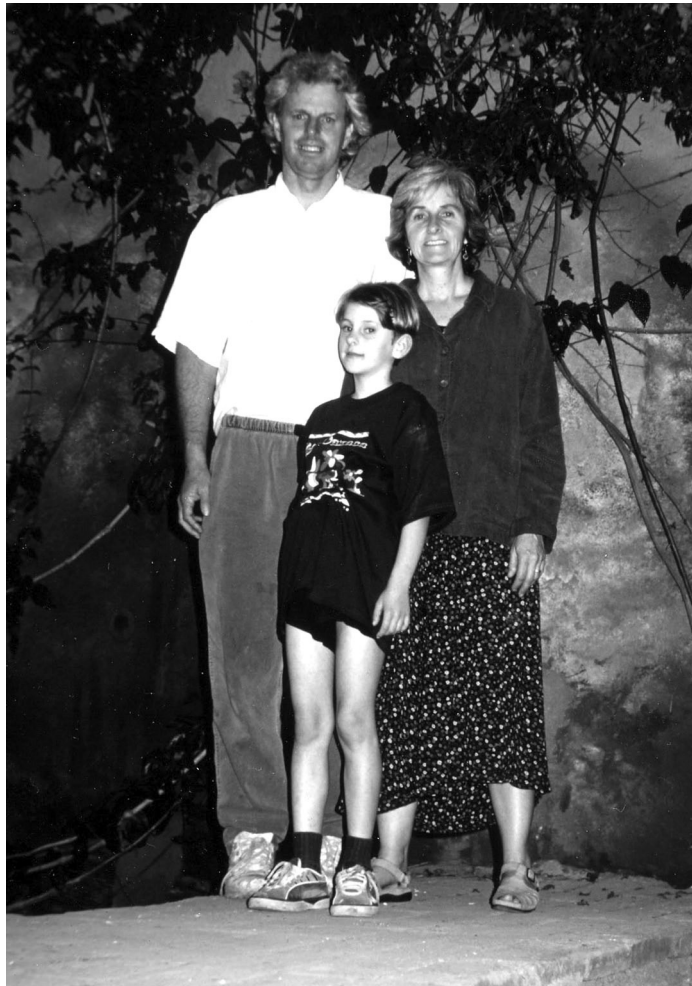
What became a priority for us was taking away the narrow definitions for love and relationships. Around four my daughter asked me about love. “What does it mean to love someone, Mom?” Without hesitation the following words poured out of my mouth: “To love means you really care about someone and you want to be with them. You can grow up and love a man like I have with your dad or you can grow up and love a woman.” At the time this answer seemed so natural. Little did

I realize how appropriate it would turn out to be. Shortly before my daughter’s fourteenth birthday, she sat me down on our couch and told me, “Mom, I think I am a lesbian.” Again without skipping a beat I replied, “You’ve chosen the right parents.”

My daughter’s “queer-identification” has pushed me to the next level of gender understanding. She currently prefers the word queer over lesbian but ideally would like no label. She has pointed out to me on several occasions that she is more than her sexuality. Her so openly and stubbornly being who she is has encouraged her father and me to be who we are.

Parent equity and parent role modeling is, I believe, the best means of displaying gender neutrality. Her father does the cooking and grocery shopping; I do the gardening and schedule organizing. He does maintenance. I do cleaning. It’s a mish-mash,

sometimes fitting the gender stereotype, sometimes not sharing how gender specific her parents’ upbringings were also gives our daughter perspective and can be a positive teaching tool: I had to wear skirts to high school and the vice principal made girls kneel down in the hallway to assure these skirts were the appropriate length; her dad wanted to participate in team sports but he didn’t have the “masculine skills” and body image; I was told I was going



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WOULDN'T IT BE POSITIVE NO MATTER WHAT OUR SEXUAL ORIENTATION TO BE ABLE TO

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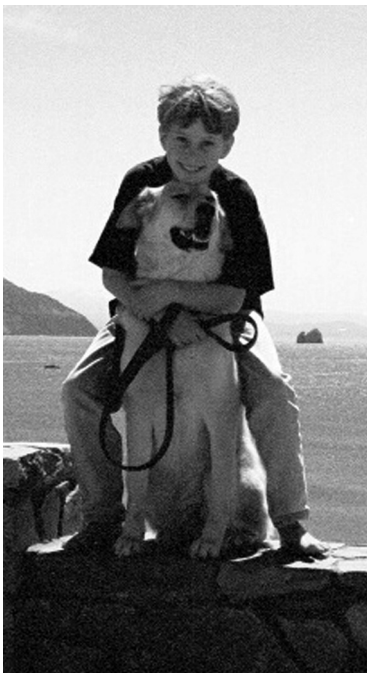
SIMPLY LOVE AS WE PLEASE?

to college to get a husband; her father was sensitive and compassionate, loved words and music and was then type-cast as something other than the cool, masculine ideal.

Joining PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Intersex and Transgenders) assisted me in “growing up” as a feminist. Immediately I met Annie and Anita, who have been partners for over twenty-five years; then I got to know Robert and Scott, who also have been together nearly thirty years. But what exploded my innocent beliefs about gender was becoming friends with Risa. Having been a male for over fifty years, she was at the beginning of her

paradigm. Wouldn't it be positive no matter what our sexual orientation to be able to dress as we please, act as we please, simply love as we please? Two-mommy, two-daddy, and transgender families are in the forefront of breaking down gender specific parenting roles.

I am in awe of my daughter. She has come through being teased, called a boy and turned away from the girls' bathroom by her peers in elementary school because she had her hair cut short. She wanted dearly to be a boy, not only because in our society boys have privileges, but also because her attraction to girls would be deemed “normal.” Her interest in feminism, her non-interest in “dumbing down” or “dressing to impress” have made her feel



TWO-MOMMY, TWO-DADDY, AND TRANSGENDER FAMILIES ARE IN THE FOREFRONT OF BREAKING DOWN GENDER-SPECIFIC PARENTING ROLES

transition. Working together on several PFLAG fundraising projects, I was privileged to share through observation and discussions with Risa her complete transformation from being a man to a woman. In a thirty-year marriage with grown children, Risa's family stuck by her. It was an amazing process

to witness, and it helped me remove my gender limiting blinders.

Working on the No on 36 campaign here in Oregon (The Anti Gay discrimination rewrite of our constitution defining “legal marriage” as only between a man and a woman), I came to the realization that the LGBTQQ fight for civil rights is a fight for all of us to break free from the confining heterosexual, masculine/feminine

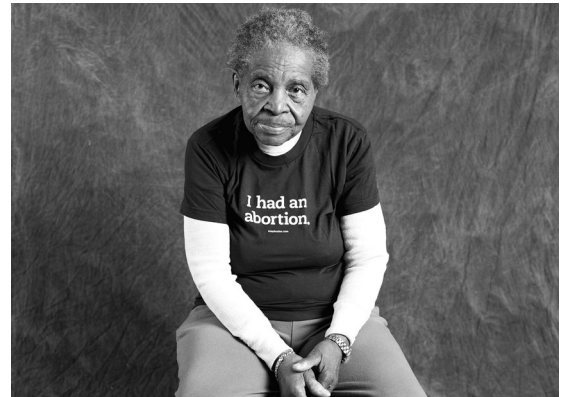
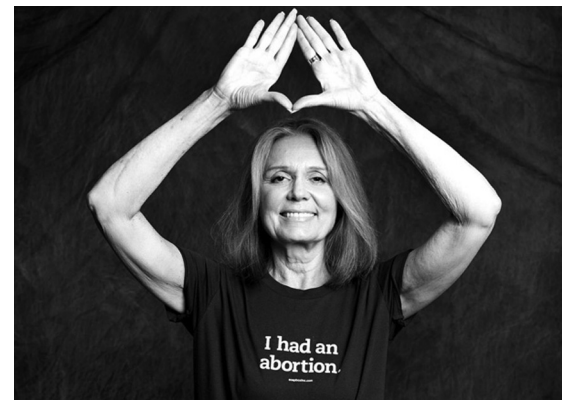
eccentric. In high school she refused to be closeted, allowing herself to appear in a story in the daily newspaper with her then-girlfriend.

We sit around the kitchen table and my daughter's face beams with the bright confidence of knowing and loving who she is, as she entertains her parents with further adventures from her recent high school camping trip. She has taught her parents more than she will ever know about the meaning of gender. “Gender is overrated,” she once quipped to me.

Let us dare to move forward and push the handy girl/boy labels aside. Queer youth are trying to create a new language: rather than he or she, the pronoun, at least for some queer youth, has become zhe. If I could rewind the tape and go back to the moment of this daughter's birth, I would love to hear my husband say, “It's a remarkable human being!”



photos courtesy of Women Make Movies, www.wmm.com



Speak out!

10 WOMEN, AGES 21 TO 85
SHARE THEIR ABORTION
EXPERIENCES IN THE
DOCUMENTARY
"SPEAK OUT: I HAD AN
ABORTION"

{BY CLAIRE SHARMAN}

ON OCTOBER 18, the Network for Reproductive Options and University of Oregon Students for Choice hosted Eugene's first Speak Out for women that have experienced abortion. 1.3 million women in the United States each year have a legal abortion, yet the experience is often marginalized, stigmatized, or simply not discussed. The speak out was organized to provide a forum where women could share their stories.

"I think this is an important event, especially considering it's the first such event in Eugene," said University student Kate Davis, who is a member of Students for Choice. "It's important for women to feel they can share their experiences without feeling judged."

The night began with the documentary film "Speak Out: I Had an Abortion" which chronicles the stories of 11 women of differing ages, politics, race, religion, and class. Each of these women chose to have an abortion – some of them before the Roe versus Wade decision legalized abortion in 1973. Their stories are personal as well as communal, but above all, they are powerful. The women interviewed speak about the power of choice and the power of responsibility. One woman interviewed, feminist Gloria Steinem, said about her abortion in 1957, "far from feeling guilty, that was the first time I took responsibility

for myself – the first time I wasn't passive... I did not see any way that I could give birth to someone else and also give birth to myself."

Women interviewed for the film spoke about their lives before and after the abortion and about the procedure itself. One woman interviewed, who had an abortion pre-Roe v. Wade, compared the clinic offering the service to an assembly line: "It was like everybody east of the Mississippi came to New York for their abortion. It was an abortion mill, basically," she recalled.

After the film was screened, the floor was opened for women in the audience to share their stories. The speak-out was designed to be a safe forum, with all participants agreeing that the stories and experiences shared would not leave the room.

The evening closed with a reading of two stories from innotsorry.net, an online site where women can share their experiences and affirm their choice. One woman's narrative concludes with a list: "I am happy. I'm in my twenties, I'm in a good place in my life. I'm successful... I'm confident that I made the right decision. I had an abortion. And here is what I'm not. I am not a whore. I am not a baby killer. I am not a murderer. I am not selfish. And I am not sorry."

Students for Choice and the Network for Reproductive Options are planning on hosting a second Abortion Speak Out later this year. All are welcome.

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my sorority story: a feminist reflection

UNIVERSITY ALUMNAE SHARES HER VIEW OF THE EVENTS
FOLLOWING LAST YEAR'S TAKE BACK THE NIGHT OBSERVANCE,
WHICH PLACED THE SPOTLIGHT ON THE GREEK COMMUNITY

{WORDS BY EMELIA UDD} {PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY BENJAMIN BRAYFIELD}

Fall is an appropriate season for writing an article about being in a sorority. Whenever I peruse Facebook, I'm bombarded with images of past sisters coming together once more. In some of the photos, I see women who once had me as friends-but deleted me following our letter to the editor in response to the actions of fraternity Delta Sigma Phi at Take Back the Night. In the photos, I see women with whom I've never been close, those who have been in my "Greek Family," and new pledges. When I look at these gifted and often ambitious women, I understand the importance of identity politics, integrity and honesty. Like many people, I've fit into multiple conflicting categories, and stood at varying political angles. Sororities are the epitomic front of solidarity and will remain so until questioned; problems occur when the tension within the presumed space of solidarity cracks.

I disaffiliated in late Spring 2007, following Delta Sig's performance during Take Back the Night. The Delta Sig brothers ran through Take Back the Night in Speedos, wielding a massive flag emblazoned with their fraternity's letters. Many people in the Greek community will hate that I'm writing this article; inevitably, they will think, "She just can't let it go," or "What the **** is her problem!?" I'm sure their responses will range in sophistication.

Following our letter, I received an email from a Delta Sig attempting to "educate" me on the men in his house. I'd met several members, and, frankly, have no personal problem with anyone. I do, however, take issue with a community that condones a lack of engagement in serious societal problems. Unfortunately, this attitude and policy is present in both fraternities and sororities. Until the Greek community takes responsibility for collective and individual actions, they (we?) will never be taken seriously; not just the obligatory "thanks" from random charities and university organizations, but the real respect that true leadership attracts.

I have no idea why I joined a sorority. Really. I had a spectrum of rationalizations, but my main reason was prompt access to a lot of people. To my ex-sorority's credit, they wanted me despite the fact that I had super short hair, non-designer clothes, and generally couldn't survive long periods of fake conversation. Contrary to stereotypes, I found many women with similar interests within the sorority. My friend and co-author, Allison, and I used to joke that the folks in the co-op next to us would be shocked to hear our many conversations about anarchy, feminism, antiracism, multiculturalism and much, much more. Of course, many in our sorority would have been equally shocked. Nonetheless, I found a niche within the structure-even though many of us held different political and social perspectives, we found some kind of connection with each other.

Despite my reasonably positive tone, I will say that many of the women within the sorority owned racist, homophobic, heterosexist, classist, sexist and ableist (among other) ideologies. Obviously, this truism extends beyond the Greek community. However, what is unique about sororities (and many other cohesive groups) is the structure's collusion with these viewpoints; in other words, the specific institutionalized "okay" that allows many women to freely contribute to communal and societal oppression. Recruitment, or rush, is a glaringly obvious example of this, as seen by the enforced makeup, the door-lines, and the point system. Apparently, members were once threatened with monetary fines if we didn't straighten our hair and put on a full face of makeup. The leadership made no attempt to justify these demands. No one was fined, but the sexism, classism, and, perhaps, racism (depending on the context) inherent in

this imposition is clear.

Moreover, we are talking about an institution with enormous political, economic and social capital. I was not entirely cognizant of the power to which I'd become a part. Fraternity men were always saying things such as, "X-number of senators were once fraternity brothers," and the network surrounding Greek life certainly attests to the enormous privilege inherent within these organizations. Ultimately,

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CONVERSATION

the oppressive content of many Greeks' opinions matters because most of the members (though absolutely not all) hold the power. I often found myself in a state of emotional whiplash, unable to effectively stand against the policies but, nevertheless, fracturing the solidarity (of sisterhood).

Of course, I did experience the occasional "mooring" or "b-a-a-a-ing." I cannot say I didn't feel degraded, but I was keenly aware of the reasons behind such nuanced acts. Many view sororities as completely homogenous and lacking real diversity (generally white, middle-to upper-class, able-bodied, heterosexual women), but within these groups, variations in opinion, lifestyle and choices abound. Our disaffiliation had much to do with our developing identities and coming to grips with what we could represent with integrity. We decided we could no longer support an organization in collusion with violence against women, and, although we agonized over how and when to make such a decision, the choice was clear.



one badass mama

{BY KELSEY ROOK}

I found my feminism when I became pregnant at 16. I was sitting on the lid of the only toilet seat in the only coffee shop in my hometown, coerced into taking a Dollar Tree pregnancy test by a concerned friend. The motion sensor light kept switching off in the single occupancy bathroom, suspending me in intermittent darkness. After several episodes of exaggerated arm-waving, I resigned myself to waiting in the dark. I didn't want to see that fateful pink line solidify before my eyes. Better to wait it out and summon the florescent lights in one single, decisive moment. At least then I would encounter my fate with grit and purpose.

The test results were no surprise to me; I tossed the strip of pee-soaked plastic into the garbage with little interest. In this strangest of circumstances I felt totally in control—of my body, my pregnancy, my life. I had no idea how I might handle the pregnancy or which actions I might take, but I knew that any decision was mine to make. I considered instead my friend, who was waiting amongst the beans, bags, and roaster in the café backroom. I steadied myself, knowing fully that confronting me outside the bathroom door was something much scarier than what I was facing within my own body.

For the next four months, my pregnancy was a poorly-kept secret. I carried the burden of secrecy and a certain shame faced by many unexpected mothers, especially single teens. Everyday, as I sat in my junior-health class, feigning teenage indifference, I watched my instructor as she chronicled the development of the fetus, my chest tightened by anxiety and indecision. Everywhere, in class, at home, with friends and alone, my mind continuously replayed the same inner monologue. An outspoken pro-choice feminist, I had no idea how to determine the course of my own pregnancy. My initial reaction to the pregnancy was to seek termination; what else was expected of a teenage girl who smoked too much pot, had unprotected sex, and was completely dependent on her parents? In the same junior health class, at my conservative, abstinence-mostly school, a local adoption-activist visited our classroom.

"Chances are, everyone in this classroom either knows a classmate who has been pregnant, or is dealing with a pregnancy at this very moment," she began.

My involuntary cringe was mirrored by Nathan, seated, like me in the back row and whose girlfriend's pregnancy was another poorly-kept secret. When he asked questions about abortion and miscarriage that made my peers

snigger and my instructor furrow her massive brow, I lowered my eyes, not wanting to attract the same gossip. Abortion was mostly off-topic in the classroom, mentioned only rarely and with a distinct air of moral injustice. Adoption was the option, and when Nathan's girlfriend did miscarry, it was only after she took a heavy dosage of birth control pills and several blows to the abdomen from her confused boyfriend. I dropped out of my health class, furious at the instructor who advised Nathan that spontaneous abortion, or miscarriage, was always favorable over induced abortion, preventing my classmate from ending her pregnancy in a safe and sane way.

Like Nathan's girlfriend, I struggled to find the means to end my pregnancy, if/once I reached that decision. I knew little about abortion—all research was done incognito at the public library. The cost was around \$300; I searched for belongings I could sell to raise the money. I needed someone to drive me to Portland, twice, for the procedure and subsequent check-up. I felt completely disconnected from my body, isolated by my secrecy and shame. The other half to my x-chromosome was 24-years-old, perma-stoned, and completely indifferent to my situation. In his opinion, it was my pregnancy, my body, my mistake. I was the one whose birth control failed.

My 14-week-window of opportunity passed. At the time, I didn't feel like the choice to continue my pregnancy was a conscious one. It was more like I had forgotten to have an abortion; though my decision was later misinterpreted by some as a "pro-life" statement. I was resolved, however, to face my body shame, to endure the daily morning sickness, and to carry my pregnancy to term.

I regained that feeling of control I first felt upon taking my pregnancy test, which I quickly lost upon I stepped out of my safe space. My passivity, embarrassment and indifference were gone. I felt the strength of choice. My choice. I felt like a feminist and, somehow, like a total badass.

After 15 weeks of pregnancy, I revealed my "secret" to my family, my current boyfriend, and my doctor. Over the next months, I watched my belly grow, both with interest and slight irritation as I was confronted with increasingly rude and curious reactions.

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 I had no idea how to
 determine the course
 of my own pregnancy

My grandmother, who suffers from Alzheimer's, consistently asked me whether the father was good-looking and if this might guarantee an attractive offspring, unaware of the various sex abuse charges being levied against him as a result of my pregnancy. She was also unaware that I was considering open adoption. Yet she was the only person who didn't seem to care what I would "do with my life," whether I was keeping the baby, who the father was, or what tragic circumstance had befallen this high-performing, honor-roll, student-class representative; she just hoped that I might give birth to a healthy, beautiful child.

I stopped fearing and predicting the reactions of my peers, my teachers, and my family. There was no escape from the numerous and pervasive stigmas surrounding abortion, adoption, and teen parenthood. Late in the pregnancy, I decided that the single teen parent stigma suited me best. I was already fiercely-defiantly-independent, and the more I thought about it, fancied myself as a mother. So I chose motherhood. I chose to return to school, I chose to control the conditions of my pregnancy and birth, I chose to take as many AP classes as I wanted, I chose to wear spandex shirts that accentuated my ever-expanding uterus, I chose to be present and outspoken.

The father of my child suffered for my choices when he was prosecuted and convicted of sex crimes. My school administration suffered my continual threats, backed by Title IX, which proved nobody could legally dictate the conditions of my education. I suffered enrollment in a mandatory "parenting class" where I made crafts for my non-existent partner and watched Lifetime movies that were supposed to tell the story of the single teen mother, my story.

My problem was that I couldn't get my own story straight. I didn't identify with the Lifetime model; a single teen mother struggles to hide the conditions of her pregnancy until reaching some pro-life epiphany, soon followed by heart-warming reconciliations-with parents, friends, teachers, pastor, ex-boyfriend. I became obsessed with pop culture representations of young mothers-Gilmore Girls, The View's Elisabeth Hasselbeck, Britney Spears, those terrifying birthing shows on Discovery Health, the movie Saved! These women were many things; I was just, a teen mother. A little like Lorelei Gilmore, repulsed by Elisabeth Hasselbeck, sympathetic to that girl from Saved! But what these women really were, including Haseslbeck, were fictions, crafted by adults to fit their idea of who a young mother was. I was looking for my story in the wrong women. If I truly had embraced motherhood, embraced the stigmas "single" and "teen," made myself an advocate for real young parents, why couldn't I make their story mine? What alienated me from my peers in the Mac High parenting class? When we debated over the terms of parenthood, I was the only one to say that a child didn't need a father and a mother, no matter that the class consisted of only mothers— no fathers were required to take the

course. I was also the first and only student in the history of the program to graduate high school to attend a four-year-university.

But what really separated me from the other young parents was the privilege of choice. I had chosen the conditions of my pregnancy. I fought to choose the conditions of my education, the conditions of custody, and of those birth and parenting. I chose to remain single. I chose to be one badass mama. A proud parent at 17- one who sometimes made unlikely and unconventional parenting decisions. Most of my peers were forced to stay ashamed, to say with self-reproach that they became a parent at 14-15-16-17-18-years of age. They were told that to be parents, they must to sacrifice their education, their friends, their dreams, and their sense of self. That they would eagerly await the day when both they and their child were old enough to divert disapproving glances and awkward conversations where they were mistaken for the sibling or babysitter. Then and only they could they call themselves parents with pride. I want young parents to feel empowered now. I want the pro-life community to stop interfering in the lives and decisions of pregnant teens. I want all grrls to have the right to a future, with or without a baby. I want pregnant teens to find the support they need from their friends, families, schools, and partners. I want schools to stop "hiding" pregnant teens by sending them to special schools. I want people to accept that teens have sex, and we need access to comprehensive sex education, birth control, and pregnancy options. I want to see a community of badass mamas and papas who are unafraid to become whatever kind of parent they want to be.



TEEN PREGNANCY RESOURCES

- Planned Parenthood**
1670 High St
(541) 344-9411
www.pphsso.org
Free and low-cost pregnancy testing, and contraceptive and abortion services
- De Bours Health Center**
539 E. 11th St
(541) 484-1223
Prenatal and abortion services
- Girl-Mom**
www.girl-mom.org
Website and forum providing support, education, and community for young mamas
- Lane County Public Health Prenatal Assistance**
(541) 682-4013
- Doulas Supporting Teens**
doulasupportingteens.org
(541) 344-1091
Pairs volunteer doulas with pregnant teens in the Eugene area; they also offer free childbirth education classes and parenting groups
- mamazine.com**
www.mamazine.com
An online feminist publication for mamas and those who love them

creating a visible community

COMING OUT WEEK EVENTS CULTIVATE AWARENESS,
ALLIANCES AND ENTERTAINMENT ON CAMPUS

{PHOTOS BY JENNIFER GROSS} {WORDS BY ANNIE GROSSARTH}



The celebration of Coming Out Day and Week has become an increasingly prolific event at the University of Oregon campus. This year, it took place the week of Oct 7-13 and was sponsored by the University's Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Alliance and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Educational and Support Services Program. Coming Out Day was founded in 1988. It originated in Washington, D.C. during the second annual LGBTQ march in D.C. Over the years, the celebration made its way across the United States, and is on its way to becoming an international celebration. National Coming Out Day was created with the intention to raise awareness about the LGBTQ community throughout the U.S.

At the University of Oregon, the week consisted of a variety of events including an informational meeting and skate party; the week's sponsors planned an assortment of fun and educational activities in support of the LGBTQ population on campus.

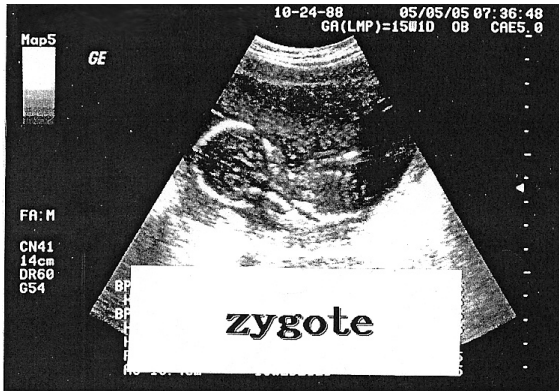
There was an event each day of the week. The highlights of the week included a social on Monday where staff, students and the community were invited to mingle with each other and the LGBTQ alliance. Tuesday brought cartoons into the lounges of the Riley and Living Learning Center dormitories. Thursday marked National Coming Out Day, and the Erb Memorial Union's amphitheater hosted the Coming Out Day rally. Thursday evening, vans shuttled students and community members to Skate World to skate and converse with other supporters. Friday, Keith Boykin, the highest-ranking openly gay aide in the Clinton administration spoke to students in the EMU ballroom.

The "Coming Out Dance" was a finale of the week. Students of all ages and sexualities danced for the evening in the EMU Fir Room. It was brightly decorated and everyone was very friendly. Such events garner support from by the campus community, including appreciative students. Freshman Kylee Jacobsen said that she felt "really strong support" from the campus.

This year's events achieved their goal of reaching many different students in pursuit of support for the LGBTQ alliance.

Sophomore Sam Ford, who attended the Coming Out Dance on Friday, said he appreciates the support that the LGBTQA community receives from the straight campus community. "I'm glad that it happens, it's really cool," he said of the events that took place at the UO.

grrl zine review



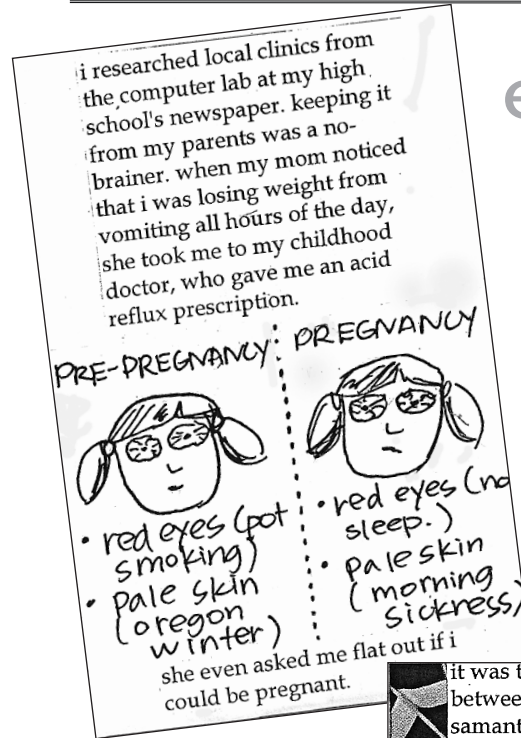
ANONYMOUS GRRL ZINESTER RELATES UNPLANNED PREGNANCY EXPERIENCE WITH STRENGTH AND PRIDE IN ZYGOTE

{REVIEWED BY SEQUOIA ALBA}

Zygote is a pocket-sized accordion style booklet. In classic zine style it features printed text arranged artfully amidst clippings, cutouts, and some campy illustrations. The cover shows an ultrasound image foreshadowing the content within: the story of a junior in high school and her pregnancy. I found the story and the author's courage in keeping a child, the result of a teen pregnancy, touching.

Traditionally, grrl zines provide a voice for grrls who otherwise might not be heard. They provide an alternative perspective and forum for talking about women's issues and feelings, feminism, and politics, and a way for women to openly reject the way that we are depicted in the media. Zygote certainly provides a voice for the author and gives a different view on an old story: a young woman becomes pregnant, and chooses to keep her child instead of giving in to the pressure to get an abortion from her peers and the individual who helped her into the situation. But it is not the story of the righteous defender of the Christian values so often represented in these circumstances, but what appears to be a proud and strong grrl who keeps the child growing inside of her because her pregnancy "was unplanned, not unwanted."

Being the sort of person I am, I would have liked more information about how she made her decision, and perhaps even some commentary on the pressure young women feel from their peers and the sort of old-guard feminism to have an abortion, and the nth-wave feminist reclaiming of some traditional gender roles, like that of mother. I suppose that is what my zine would be, and for this young woman it is enough that she shared her experiences. If you have any questions about Zygote or would like to obtain a copy, please contact Peter Kass, pjkass14@yahoo.com.



it was the topic of passed notes between my best friend, samantha, and i during the first weeks of "jr. health with mrs. shultz."

how long has it been?

i don't know, like 12 days...

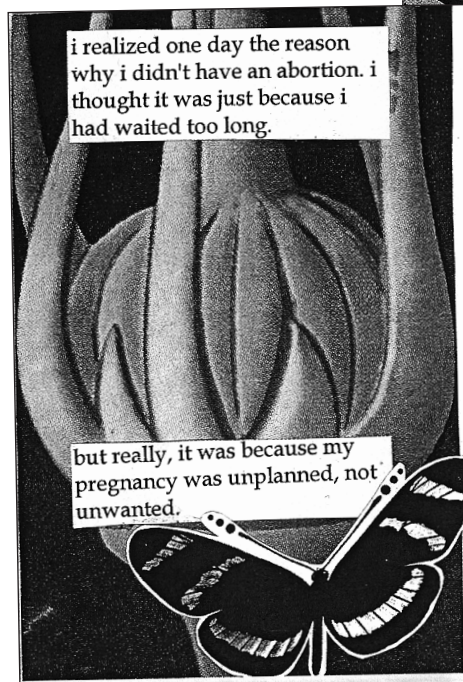
did you take the ec i gave you?

yeah, but, should i take the test?

can daily marijuana use be considered a "male contraceptive?"

(this question

was posed to the inept mrs. shultz, who answered "yes")



DO YOU PRODUCE OR KNOW OF A GRRL ZINE/BAND/BOOK/MAGAZINE./WEBSITE/FILM THAT YOU'D LIKE TO SEE FEATURED IN THE SIREN?

BRING IT TO THE WOMEN'S CENTER, EMU SUITE 3

creative submissions



Acceptance

by Abby Diskin

torn seams
and lint in your pocket
old jacket
even older smile.
eyes capture the light reflecting off of magical hairs
floating in the translucent, sweaty air
fumble with the seam,
find a way to sew it up
keep the smile on your face,
god forbid you appear anything but happy.
wrinkled hands have mended many lives but somehow
have failed to sew up the seams of the old jacket
the old person you were
the old person you once loved.
lint covers lost secrets
now folded in the rolling blue hills of your old jacket's
pocket
teeth keep a once rebellious tongue contained
and lips feel the hairs floating
the strands that connect him to you and her to him
the luminescent hairs that entangle you into a life full of
seams and torn ones too—
a connection that is unchangeable.
don't sew the seam.
let it tear
and let yourself be.
old jacket, lint in your pocket
be the old you
full of wrinkles and words left to be
told,
secrets still there in your palm to
hold.



"Normative" Autumn Johnson

A Fate Not Self-Decided

By Lauren Zavrel

A slow and painful fate a flag endures
as vibrant colors hoisted to the sky
arouse the winds, as wolves to flesh are lured.
The pole-bound victim, not allowed to die,
is forced to watch its own unraveling fate,
like witches feeling flames lick at their feet.

And struggle's violence mounts as more the
sting
of lashes dealt to tear the woven seams.
Strengthened are the grips of hands restraining,
much as coils of the snake squeeze tight
around the rodents not so quick to die,
or as deeper sets the hook in fish that fight.

(The victim, full of pleas it dares not cry
recalls the flag, who limp, has less to endure,
lays still and waits beneath the fate it's dealt,
like whores that feel the dollars on their legs.
For should its hope be not so quick to die,
the serpent's coils on its neck should tighten,
and thrilled he'd be to sport with such a creature
that fights, as fish that pull his hook yet deeper.
Not so unlike the tortured prey of cats
whose limbs are torn away before they're eaten.)

As cats are known to taunt and torture prey,
men pride not the flags that limply hang,
but are pleased to witness rationings of pain
the wind inflicts upon its tethered slave
and thrilled to see the victim writhe in vain,
as killer whales, who mangle baby seals.

A fate not self-decided bears the flag,
to represent wherever it is placed,
belonging to whatever land may bear it.
Not unlike some women's fate to bear
seized and bound by hands of hungry men
from which (she) may attempt to writhe away...



"Cyclical" Autumn Johnson

anthem.

by Sabrina McNamara

we who are not as others
rise up usurp slay & smother
generations
live in squalor
not gone far
cycle, consequence,
hope is marred
we who are not as others
we gain strength
we gain in numbers

cattle, product, minion, pawn
they think we're broken
tho' we shrug on
show no hope, look defeated
let 'em think they have us beat
one eye alert, the other down

watch our masters
wear their crowns
deal young lives
flex their arms
profit, profit, guzzle, conquer
they take & horde
oppress & breed us
toss a buck to keep us eager

we who are not as others
see past the screams
conserve our anger
to break our bonds
we have the will
we don't need guns
we're fueled by fire



"Constitutional Equality" Autumn Johnson

POEM

by Barbara McFarland

The Game of Life
Can be Played

Zero-Sum Game:
If you win, I lose,
And vice-versa

Win-Win
It is a Cosmic Dance:
Left, Right
Up, Down
In, Out
Black, White.

It's All About
The Music

And Lord Krishna is
in charge of
the DANCE

so swing your
partners – daisy-doe

left & right and
To and FRO

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR GAME!

Reverence

by Esther Bain

May the fear of God within you
Encounter and befriend the universal shout for
mercy

May your anguished wails and cracked tears
Be coventented in a friend's prayers
And sewn into sweet melodies by everyday
angels

As you bear witness to your discontentedness
And turn towards the storm braving its
misdirection
Know you are your worst enemy
And yet the only human
You can ever wholly count on

So my love, when you can't weather your own
Promise to take me along
If only to provide a lover's warmth
Or a temporary refugee in the storm's chilled
center

Your need for God
Outshines your need for me
But, perhaps He led us to the same beaten path
To direct us home to each other
Through reflections of the infinite
In wounded eyes and believing souls

Remember it's where the grandmothers believe
God is hidden
Walking this lonely earth
Buried in each wretched soul



"Commodification" Autumn Johnson

how to be content-another memo to myself

by Tanja Jenson

To be rooted down in soil, letting my roots nurture water, soak up sun, and breathe air simply in and out. To walk and sit alone in the knowing that this is so. To say what is needed to know when to stop. Roots take me to who and where I am. To be a rock that gives a guiding hand. To be a paper that shows my soul, even if others might wrinkle the edge, I can only try to know.

The wisdom to know that I can not be replaced by an ad, a sign that offers to sell my land. To branch out to others, connecting in the soil of why I am here. To accept the things that others do, for I know that it is their way in which to see. To try, to take risks, to take on new tasks, explore the fall, get back up if the fall is too hard. To lick the spoon when I think it is all gone, savor the last taste of vanilla ice cream. Hold my daughter's hand; to know when to let her go--she can try it on her own.

To be one with nature. To be. Trust. Breathe. Accept. Let go. To sing and dance in the snow. To lift my own spirits, no one else knows really. I know. I am in my roots and I know that I want to grow.

to wrap myself in nature
throw myself onto the Spring bed of daisies
deeply inhale the damp air
let the wet Rain drench me
reveal myself
covered
with the River water up
to my hips
listen to the whispers of the trees
let the waterfall persuade me
to wash onto my face
down my hair
dripping off my body
splashing onto the slippery
solid surface
on which
I stand, barefoot.

Drum to the rhythm beat, take five. Know that I am alive. Read and listen to the ones who see it so; try to understand and learn every day from them, that, me, and you.



"Beauty Absolutes" Autumn Johnson



"Monologues" Autumn Johnson

"why sign up for love lessons and then run away"

by Michelle Seeds

I was thinking,
Wondering,
What you all have in common,
You know, besides me,
Because that can't be it

Right?

When you asked if I'd be your girl,
I told you to wait,
To know your mind.

What I meant was:
Wait, please, to know your mind,
Because I will fall in love with you.
And if you change your mind,
I will be crushed and devastated,
In all sorts of girlie pink and red woe, black glitter
and tear-filled lashes.
And I have too many responsibilities to be crushed.
I have to be able to get up every day and move
mountains by my faith
And make wine from these grapes by my working
hands.

I guess my silence made the subtext too subtle.

Nazi Alien Living on Planet Coos Bay

By Tanja Jenson

I felt like an alien when I moved from Germany to the U.S. I was twelve-years-old. And I didn't know a lick of English. I had three months to pick up a foreign language before I entered the 6th grade at Charleston Middle School on Planet Coos Bay in Oregon, a place that was barely a dot on the map. I was the tallest kid in my 5th grade at the Goeppingen Waldorf School in Germany. So, I was relieved I wouldn't be held back and could move into a grade with kids who would be closer to my height.

I didn't want to be a twelve-year-old alien who spoke no English. I wanted to be just like the American teens: normal, ordinary, cool. I wanted to eat Wonder Bread with jelly and Skippy peanut butter. I wanted to wear make-up and have my hair curled with my bangs standing on top of my head. I wanted to be Madonna: dance like her, be sexy like her, sing like her. I wanted to be popular. I wanted to see myself as them, not be viewed as different. I was a girl who wanted to fall in love, who wanted to play in the woods with my friends, swing on swings, talk on my purple phone all evening, and drink alcohol during recess behind the bleachers or in the bathrooms. I wanted to be lost and drunk like them.

The first day at my new school on Planet Coos Bay, my hand shook as it opened my classroom door. In an instant, thirty-five familiar yet foreign eyes dissected my skinny, tall body and my fine, white-blonde, long hair all the way over to my seat by the door.

Mr. Tolefson smiled at me softly, "Welcome Tanja. Class, this is our new student. She just moved here from Germany."

His words untied the knots in my stomach. I liked him.

At recess, I was not alone. Almost the entire class surrounded me with curious eyes; I was their new science project. I noticed Johnny, because he led a crew of kids behind him. Johnny and his crew stayed back, glancing at me now and then from a safe distance. Their eyes star-

ing made me feel like an alien once again, although we all looked like humans.

The playground was small. I do not remember if it had a slide or play structure. I remember the swings. I remember the tether ball. I remember the trees being too far away. I missed the familiar whispers of the trees. I missed my friends. I missed my Oma the most. But I was determined to make friends.

On the second day at recess, Dawn, a short, awkward red head, was playing tether ball. I watched as kid after kid lined up to play. She won almost every game! She noticed me staring and winked me over to play.

"You want to play?"

I knew that ja was yes in English, but I nodded eagerly instead. My English phrases consisted of: "Vhere iz dhe bathroom?" "My name iz Tanja, what iz yourz?" "Do you want to reide bike sometyme wit me?"

Dawn smiled, "You take the ball like this in your left hand, with your left, hit the ball like this," as the ball wrapped around the pole with enough speed to land on the moon.

She handed me the ball, "You try it."

My concentration was on the ball when I sensed Johnny and his crew walking slowly towards me. I missed the ball. I stood there frozen like a popsicle. Maybe Johnny wanted to play.

"Do you vant bahl play?"

I asked as he got closer. I was proud that I could say this in English. Johnny laughed louder than a creepy monster and his crew joined in. He could not look me in the eye. He only said one word to me that day.

"NAZI!" he shouted.

On that day, I went from learning how to play tether ball to losing my accent.

People used to ask me where I was from. They do not ask me that anymore.