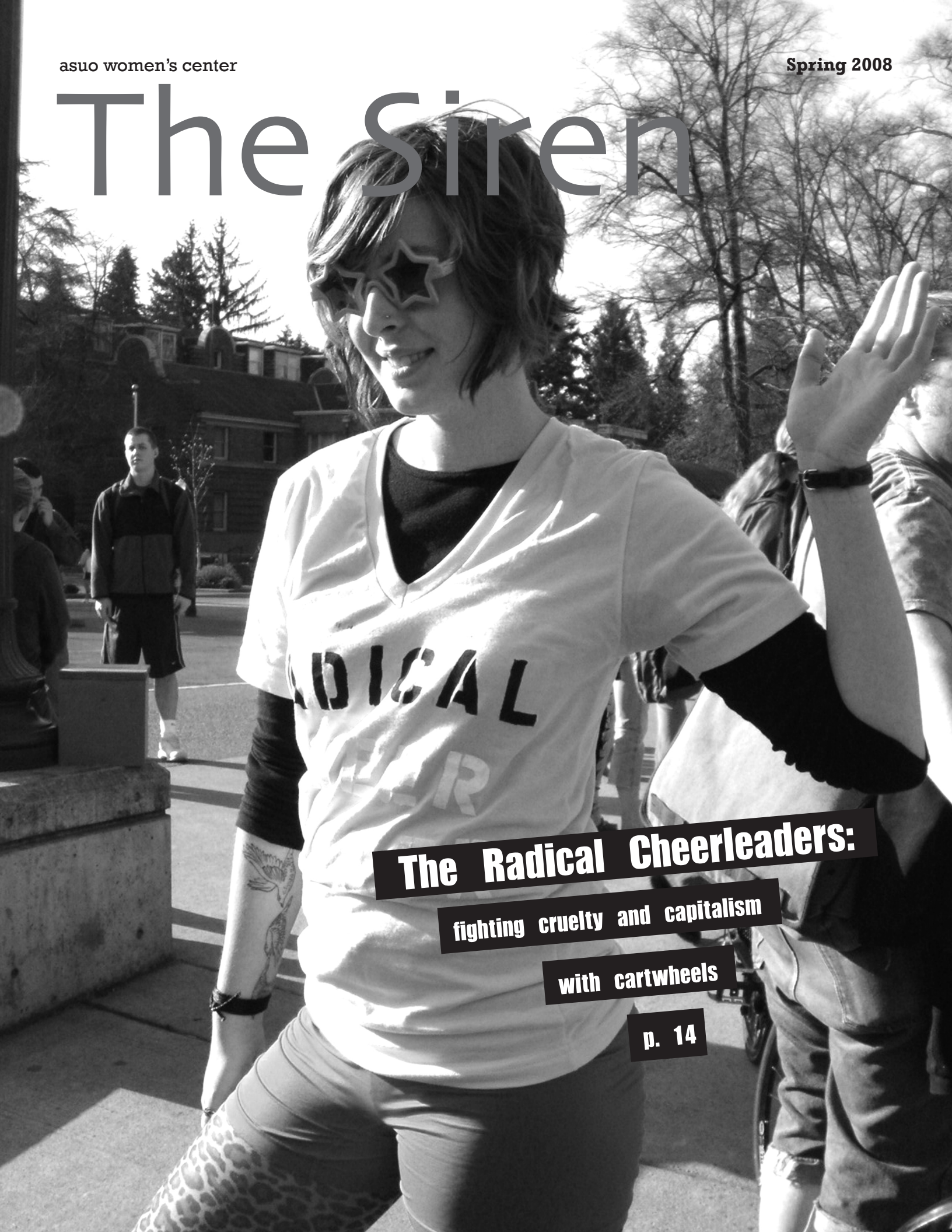


# The Siren



**The Radical Cheerleaders:**

**fighting cruelty and capitalism**

**with cartwheels**

**p. 14**



Above and left: Take Back the Night marchers crafted signs, some bright, some artful, some loudly in-your-face; all with the purpose of "telling" to a public of onlookers that sexual assault will not be tolerated



## listening is resisting

At first glance, this issue's content appears to be an mélange of feminist-inspired articles, essays and poetry. Well, at least that's what I thought during the long months it took to get this issue off the ground. As I read Lauren Zavrel's "Telling it All"-a personal reflection on the power of personal theater and the act of telling-I recognized the organic, unintentional theme carried by this issue's content. Many, if not all the articles, poems, essays, and short stories contained in these pages invoke an act of telling, of engaging the reader in a personal dialogue. As we near our publication date, I am struck by the honesty and clarity with which these stories have been told. Besides Lauren's piece, I am struck by several others, which range in topic from mental illness to radical cheerleading to the women of the Zapatista movement.

While I'd like to honor the stories told in these pages, it seems just as important to implore our readers who impart their own histories, experience and perspective upon these pages by listening to the stories as they're told. As a reader, however, I believe there is a balance to be struck. When hearing or reading stories whose vantage point is one of difference, as listeners, it is our duty to recognize the intersecting oppressions and histories as well as our own privileges that color our vantage points. It must be recognized, therefore, that while reading or listening to a powerful story as it is told might evoke an emotionally-charged reaction, such a response does not fulfill one's duty as Listener.

If one truly listens, by recognizing the humanity, pain, and bravery that one has lived and relived in their Telling, one can become an ally of those who Tell. Today, as feminism is being marketed in a way that attempts to erase difference by creating a mainstream-friendly product, these acts of telling and listening become increasingly important. As we watch feminism

be repackaged in books, blogs, apparel, and films featuring straight, white, able-bodied, middle-to-upper class privilege in its fullest. While part of me wants to celebrate the marketing of feminist ideas and issues to a broader audience, I remain critical of reduced, toned-down feminism that addresses the issues deemed "popular" and "mobilizing" at the expense of silencing the voices of those issues are considered "less marketable" or "divisive." In the same vein, I encourage everyone to check out this year's Beyond Patriarchy conference, happening May 9-10 at the Erb Memorial Union. The Beyond Patriarchy conference is a radical feminist conference for individuals committed to fighting forms of oppression including classism, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, environmental destruction, animal abuse, and hierarchy with the purpose of educating, inspiring, and organizing against all patriarchal oppressions. A partial list of confirmed and potential workshop topics include polyamory, sex worker feminism, male feminism, intersex activism, green anarchy, crisis pregnancy centers, women's health, radical gender theory, radical queer organizing, transmisogyny, energy healing, sex-positivity politics, alternative birthing options, eco-feminism, sexual assault, domestic violence, female sexual dysfunction, and much more.

I hope that The Siren can be a space where stories can be told that challenge readers to recognize their own privilege and tackle the issues that mainstream feminisms leave unrecognized. I also invite readers who have stories to be told to consider contributing their voices to The Siren in whatever genre/format feels right. We are continually looking for genre-bending-and-mixing contributions that expand and challenge the traditional magazine format. This issue, we are happy to print our first-ever short story, "Calantha," a fictional, off-color story about surviving incest and sexual trauma. "For Your Information" is a bitter, unapologizing free-verse rant that tackles, at once, drug use and women's health.

Here's to a happy and healthy Eugene springtime. Support local music and some kick-ass women by attending the Divisi Spring and CD Release Show on Saturday, June 7 at the First United Methodist Church on 13th and Olive.

**KELSEY ROOK**  
EDITOR-IN-CHEIF

# contents SPRING 08



## 4 telling it all VAGINA MONOLOGUES PRODUCER LAUREN ZAVREL REFLECTS ON THE POWER OF "TELLING" STORIES IN PERSONAL THEATER

- 1 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR**
- 3 "UNACCEPTABLE"** In her letter to the editor, Students for Choice Co-Director Katie Hulse criticizes the sexist and misogynist sentiments expressed in the *Oregon Commentator*
- 4 TELLING IT ALL** Personal theater and the power of telling
- 7 ONE HEART, ONE WAY** One woman shares her sorority story of sisterhood, acceptance and identity
- 8 CORAZÓN DEL MOVIMIENTO** Inside El Tercer Encuentro de las Mujeres de las Zapatistas, a gathering dedicated to women's issues in the Zapatista movement
- 12 ON BEING ALLIES** How to be better allies for people of color
- 13 FIGHTING CRUELTY AND CAPITALISM WITH CARTWHEELS** This April saw the return of Eugene's Radical Cheerleader squad and their trash bag pom-poms
- 16 CALANTHA** An off-color short story examines issues of sexual violence and surviving incest
- 20 FOR YOUR INFORMATION** What does it mean to be a "drug-user"?
- 21 LIMP WRIST** An open letter between sisters
- 22 RADICAL CHEER OF THE ISH** This rowdy cheer sends its message loud and clear: women's bodies are not for display only

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.

All comments may be directed to the ASUO Women's Center:

Suire 3, EMU, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403  
541.346.4095 (phone) 541.346.0620 (fax)  
sirenwc@gmail.com

Check out The Siren online at  
[www.uoregon.edu/~women/siren.html](http://www.uoregon.edu/~women/siren.html) and on Facebook



# “unacceptable”

IN HER LETTER TO THE EDITOR, UNIVERSITY SOPHOMORE AND STUDENTS FOR CHOICE CO-DIRECTOR KATIE HULSE CRITICIZES AN OREGON COMMENTATOR FEATURE CONDONING NONCONSENSUAL SEX

{ WORDS BY KATIE HULSE }

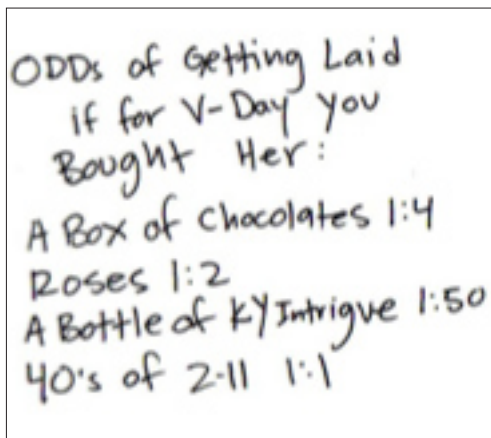
In an article titled “Odds By Drew” by Drew Cattermole in the Oregon Commentator dated February 22nd 2008 Mr. Cattermole gave what he believes the odds “of getting laid” to be on Valentine’s Day if “you bought her” several different items. Among the items listed are chocolates, roses, a bottle of personal lubricant, and malt liquor. The idea that someone is trying to “get laid” on Valentine’s Day by buying his or her partner something to bribe him or her to have sex is troublesome. It casts the person in the role of a prostitute, assuming that commodities such as alcohol and roses are going to buy them for the purchaser’s use.

Most startling in this article is that the best “odds of getting laid” are found in buying “40s of 2-11”, an inexpensive malt liquor. Cattermole says the odds are 1:1, meaning that if the man buys the woman a bottle of “2-11,” his chances of gaining sexual access to her are the highest of any of the commodities listed. This assertion suggests to readers that using alcohol as a means to “getting laid” on “V-Day” is okay, and in fact just as legitimate and more promising from his perspective than giving her chocolates, or roses, or lubricant (an item that is the only one on the list with the potential to make sex more pleasurable for the woman).

Using alcohol to sway anyone into an unwanted sexual encounter is simply wrong. It is rape to have sex with someone who cannot give consent due to impairment. I find it unnerving to see an article published in an ASUO-sponsored newspaper assuming women are so

unintelligent that they are going to be swayed by a \$3 bottle of malt liquor. It is a threat to women on this campus and a commentary on Mr. Cattermole.

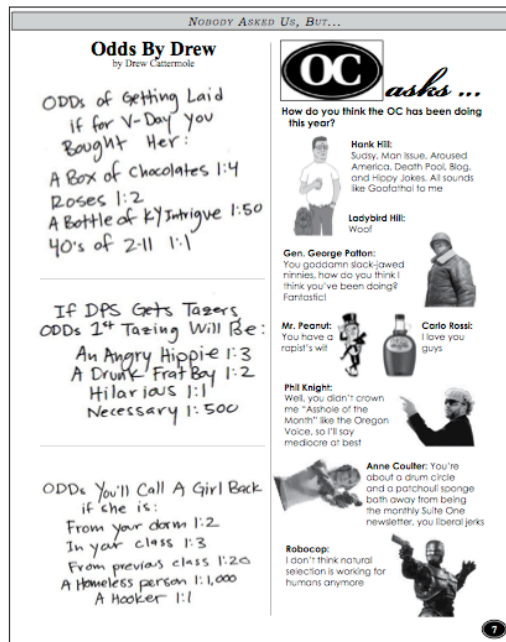
Alcohol and drug related rapes are far too common. I know several women who have suffered date rape drugs and direct pressure to consume alcohol at parties at the University of Oregon. Let



the record be set straight on this issue. The U of O student conduct code allows for the prosecution of sexual assault and harassment in any instance when the victim (or survivor) was raped in a situation in which alcohol was a factor. Buying alcohol to obtain sex from a date, lover or acquaintance is not okay for anyone. The code states:

*Nonconsensual personal contact occurs when a student subjects another person to contact of a sexual nature when a reasonable person would know that such contact would cause emotional distress: without having first obtained Explicit Consent; or when he or she knows or should have known the person was incapable of consent by reason of Mental Disorder, Mental Incapacitation, or Physical Helplessness... Voluntarily making oneself incapacitated does not mean one is giving consent to any form of sexual activity.*

The last sentence is the most important in analyzing Cattermole’s advice. A woman may accept Cattermole’s drinks but that does NOT mean she has consented to sex. In fact, the influence of alcohol impairs people’s judgment, as even Cattermole’s



odds suggest. His words imply that sex would be out of the question otherwise; only alcohol guarantees it. I encourage everyone to play it safe sexually. Communicate openly with your partner(s) about what you want your sex life to be like, and LISTEN to your partner(s) responses. Sex can be fun, beautiful and exciting. Let’s keep it a thing of enjoyment and not allow gendered violence and threats to make sex fearful for women. Be a real man Cattermole, have sex with women who want to have sex with you, not because you get them drunk.

I’m furious that the ASUO Senate funded the Commentator this 2007-2008 budget year, allotting them roughly \$18,000, and decided on Jan. 18 to continue to fund the publication. I’m embarrassed that my student fees are being used to fund this obscene, hurtful, and fearful language. Cattermole’s “Odds by Drew” perpetuates a rape culture and climate, and actively furthers the stereotype that the smart and powerful women at the University of Oregon and everywhere else are at the disposal of men.

This piece makes me afraid to be at parties around men, for fear that any contact I make with the opposite sex is one that is laden with sex. Let’s not paint women or men this way. I urge the ASUO senate to re-examine their funding of this periodical, and seriously consider their mission statement in allowing such material to be produced under the ASUO and general University of Oregon name. ♀

# TELLING IT ALL



WOMEN'S CENTER EVENTS COORDINATOR AND  
VAGINA MONOLOGUES PRODUCER LAUREN ZAVREL  
REFLECTS ON THE POWER OF PERSONAL THEATER

{WORDS BY LAUREN ZAVREL} {PHOTOS BY SREANG HOK}



## TELLING? TELLING WHAT?

(to my non-student friends). Telling what? Well it is a theatrical performance pertaining to war experiences, coming home, etc...but I didn't not know exactly what to expect.

After Telling, I can tell you that I was moved. No actually, moved is not the right word, really. Moved implies that it did something to my emotions, maybe; that it did something to make me think about the condition of my heart in that moment, that it made me feel for the people I saw on stage. I can only say that Telling moved me if the following applies:

Moved means that I could relate on some level, to an experience I had survived, you could say, in my own past. Moved is the implication that, even if only in small ways, we are all connected through the history of humankind, and that we together have the potential to change it. Moved can be the inspiration that those on stage can pass to those in an audience by helping them find a spark of courage in themselves to "tell," if you will. To tell of something that feels like a unique experience, although by Telling it, comes to unite others, even if perhaps silently, as those others may not yet have found their voices in the way that the cast has.

You could say I was moved enough to write about it. You could say I was moved to tears and it would not be a lie. And while I struggled not to let a tear fall,

I heard this question a lot. I might have said "I am going to this event called "Telling"... it was in the Weekly, you know, by the Veterans and Family's Student Association on campus

thankful I was in the back row and not surrounded by my acquaintances, I asked myself two things: Why am I moved to tears by this? And: Why am I ashamed to be moved to tears by this?

I don't have any military experience or combat experience. I have never had a partner or family member that has served overseas. I felt that by becoming upset while the poem on the back cover of the program was read would be disrespectful to the veterans in the room, and their families, with whose experiences I could not directly relate. But then it hit me: the reason I was so moved was an underlying theme that spoke itself between the lines, a theme that implies: I have been through an experience that deserves respect, and often does not receive it. I have lived a segment in my life that others claim to know something about, and have an opinion about, but have never seen or lived themselves. I am a survivor, but I do not have to be alone. And, as Shane Addis put it, we are talking about experiences that alter entire lives, permanently.

Even if we are not veterans, we all have something to Tell. The connection between my moved state and the veterans' play became clearer as I moved forward with the Vagina Monologues. What did the Vagina Monologues really mean to me, other than a fundraiser? As a Nonprofit Management major, I did not even think to ask myself this at first. After seeing Telling, I realized that I was attracted to the production because it amplified voices and stories, created out of interviews with women all over the world. How powerful the cast is, I thought, to bring these voices to a sold-out crowd and help them be Told.

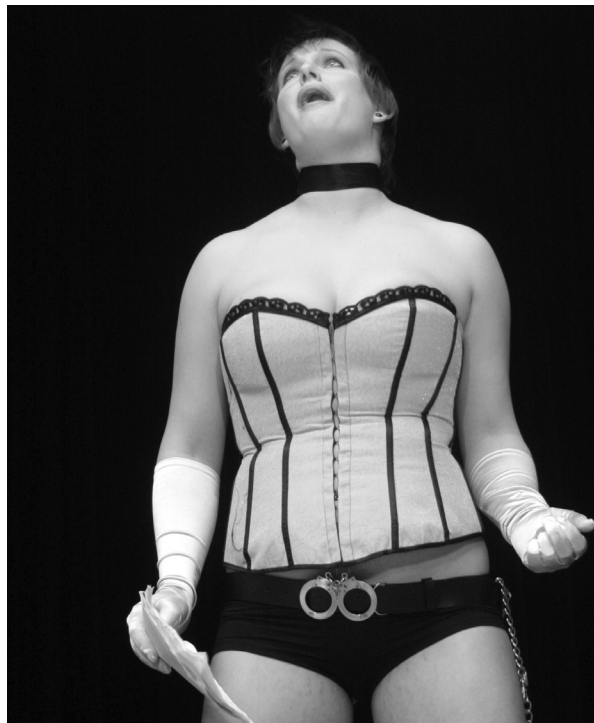
## DURING WHAT I

referred to as the “lull before the storm,” I tried to get grounded and centered before launching head first into the day-of work for productions. Dress rehearsal

was on my birthday, and I sat backstage in Agate Hall alone, in the dark, before the cast was to arrive. I reflected on birthdays past and thought about where I was last year, five years ago, fifteen years ago...I thought of my personal journals and how I had neglected them since I started college in 2001. I held the script in one hand, and an odd thought process started up in my mind: this packet of words is not a script. It has fought with me, challenged me, and won't be changed; I have wrinkled it, spilled coffee on it, written all over it, and torn some of the corners off in nervous fits waiting for the bus to come get me from my house, and it is not a script. It is a journal. All of its stains and tears are stories I have had with it and it with me--but more than that, it won't change for me because it is a testament to the women whose stories it Tells. It is a culmination of pain, joy, healing and dying that I have been entrusted with, I thought then. How alive do I feel? How better to celebrate my 25th birthday then here with these stories, and with the women that will echo them on this very stage tomorrow? How did I get so lucky? And I cried.

The performances were exceedingly well-received by the audiences and the cast carried themselves fabulously from curtain to curtain. They brought their lines to life under the lights, under all the pairs of eyes, in the charm of Agate Hall. The audience stood for them at the end, took pictures and laughed and cried. You could say they were moved.

I understood clearly then why theater like this is so moving. One needs not have a connection parallel to the content of a story told on stage, but rather recognize the beauty in both the culmination of stories and the strength in the voices that tell them. The thing to behold in both Telling and the Vagina Monologues is the gathering of voices--perhaps shaking, perhaps whispering, perhaps screaming, perhaps laughing--and creating a theatrical scrapbook to paint a picture of an issue you may know nothing about, while invoking the humanness to which we are all bound. To connect the shaking, whispering, screaming and laughing to the script, and to amplify these things on stage, we remind each other that we are all human. When, through the performance, we are reminded of times when we have forgotten that about each other, we leave with a greater desire to remember our human connections, and simply to respect, love, and Tell a little more. We relate to the anger we see on stage, the humor, the despair and the love. We leave moved, perhaps, a little closer to each other. ♀





## “one heart, one way”

AS PART OF OUR CONTINUING SERIES EXAMINING THE STORIES OF WOMEN IN THE GREEK SYSTEM, UNIVERSITY GREEK LEADERSHIP ADVISOR AMY LONG SHARES HER UNCONVENTIONAL SORORITY EXPERIENCES AS AN UNDERGRADUATE AT WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY.

### {WORDS BY AMY LONG}

I pledged my membership to Sigma Kappa Sorority in the Fall of 1996. At the time I was a freshman in college at Western Illinois University. I was also unable to comprehend how this one decision would impact my life in so many ways.

Sorority Fall Formal Recruitment was the first weekend of school. At that time, women in my residence hall dressed up in “cute” skirts and dresses, formed lines, got on buses and went to all of the Sorority houses. Four days later, there were screams of excitement up and down the hall as the women received bids to the chapters they wanted to pledge membership to. I didn’t take part in this process. I had very little interest in all of the pomp and circumstance, and the idea of dressing up

and talking about myself in front of all of those sorority women seemed very scary.

I joined my sorority because of a sophomore with a larger than life personality named Karen. She lived on my residence hall floor right across from me. I’ll admit that I was a bit intimidated by her but also very intrigued. Somewhere in the middle of that whole process I learned that Karen was a sorority woman. She was a close friend of my roommate, who was a sophomore and going through recruitment. I was a bit shocked, because Karen didn’t fit the mold of what I thought sorority women looked like. She was a total tomboy who didn’t wear makeup, jewelry, or curl her hair. I was curious, so I started asking her questions about this organization that she was a part of. In retrospect, I recognize that she had to have the patience

of a saint, because I will admit that I most likely asked her some fairly naïve and ridiculous questions. I wanted to understand how she became a member, and what it was about the sorority that she loved. She answered all of my questions with such depth, expressing true love and respect for her sisters. I remember her distinctly talking about how they stood by her in good and in bad times and that she felt as if she had found a place to belong. For her it was more than the letters, balloons, and crafts, it was a place that she felt truly accepted for who she was.

Later, Karen invited me to attend an informal recruitment party at the Sorority house to meet some of the women a week or so later. I went, and I saw what she was talking about. These women came from all walks of life: different types of backgrounds, different majors, different looks, different personalities, and yet they all came together through a common bond. Because of that bond, they came together like a family, helping to provide a place to belong to, and a sense of purpose throughout the college experience. When it was my turn to take my oath of membership, I realized that I was committing myself to be the best woman that I could be, and to provide that example to my sisters.

To this day, that is something I try to live up to. Sigma Kappa has an open motto that states “One Heart One Way,” which means we are connected to one another and moving in the same direction. At times I got lost, but my sisters always pulled me back, and I did the best I could to do the same for them. Shortly after I accepted my bid to the chapter, I learned that my sister Karen was gay. I saw the support and acceptance she gained from our sisters, while she struggled with the process of coming out. It made me realize that sisterhood runs much deeper than I had imagined. My sorority experience has changed my life in many ways. Some of which are measurable, most of which are hard to describe. I think back all of the time to that one day when that one person encouraged me to consider an opportunity, that continues to help shape my identity and purpose to this day. ♀

**Editor’s Note**—Amy serves as the Greek Leadership Advisor in the Holden Leadership Center. She advises the Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Council, and National Pan-Hellenic fraternities and sororities. She earned her B.A. in Broadcast Journalism and her M.S. in College Student Personnel Services from Western Illinois University.





# CORAZÓN DEL MOVIMIENTO

According to the Zapatistas, an army is the heart of its movement, not the movement itself. To follow one's heart is to find the path towards dignity. On December 29 - 31 women from all five Zapatista Caracoles gathered in the community of La Garrucha, Chiapas to meet with women who had come from all around the world to hear their stories of struggling, organizing, and participating in the Zapatista movement, and to share their own experiences. It was at the Tercer Encuentro de los Pueblos Zapatistas con los Pueblos del Mundo that for the first time, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) organized a space and gathering dedicated solely to women's rights and participation.

PHOTOS AND ESSAY BY  
JASMINE ZIMMER-STUCKY



From December 28-January 1, the autonomous Zapatista community of La Garrucha, one of five which has been established since the Zapatista revolution began in mil novecientos noventa y cuatro, 1994, hosted El Tercer Encuentro de las Mujeres “Comandanta Ramona y las Mujeres de las Zapatistas,” The Third Gathering of the Women “Comandanta Ramona and the Women Zapatistas.” This Encuentro created a forum for the female voices of the liberating and powerful movement of the Zapatistas. Women Zapatistas spoke of their inclusion in the rebellion, continued participation in civil duties of the autonomous community and the transformation of women from second-class

citizens to equals.

The Zapatista movement began with the strength of the indigenous, guerrilla army, the Ejército de Zapatista Liberación Nacional, EZLN. At one time, the EZLN used armed force to fight their battle against the Mexican military and paramilitary officers. They fight for agrarian reform, autonomy and against neoliberal globalization policies (NAFTA). The community of La Garrucha is located in a portion of the millions



Photo courtesy of libweb.org

of hectares of reclaimed land.

In the Zapatista community, most noticeable the military fighting has ceased although the political battles over indigenous land rights may never be fully won. There are no paramilitary trucks overflowing with soldiers and weapons, no raids on local market places, no occupation of governmental buildings and spaces, there is no more running, hiding, training and fighting in the jungle highlands of Chiapas. However, the Zapatista movement is far from over and the government and other big industries continue to hinder their progress.

I went to La Gaurcha to learn about the current struggles in the Zapatista community, especially pertaining to the women in the movement. At the root of this movement is egalitarianism, an almost 180 degree change from before. Creating an autonomous community on contentious land might be one of the most difficult things I can think of doing and my personal dreams of creating an autonomous, off-the-grid community fueled my desire to travel south to witness this Encuentro first-hand.

My travels down to La Garrucha began in the Bay Area with my partner Trip. Our journey began with the glory of Craigslist.com getting us from the Bay Area to

**“Creating an autonomous community on contentious land might be one of the most difficult things I can think of doing and my personal dreams of creating an autonomous, off-the-grid community fueled my desire to travel south to witness this Encuentro first-hand.”**

Phoenix, AZ. After an overnight stay and a successful game of Scatagories with my good friend from the Women’s Center, Autumn, Trip and I navigated the city bus system to the outside of the city sprawl and found a nice comfortable place on the side of the concrete jungle of Interstate 10 and put out our thumbs. This act of personal fossil fuel independence proved to be more difficult in the American Southwest compared to the where we come from. It took us all day, three rides, and a near run-in with state police to get to Tuscan, approximately 100 miles south.

The sun was setting as we pulled into a parking lot in Tuscan. At that point, both of us were so anxious cross the border that we went to the nearest Greyhound station and paid the \$9 required for a ticket to the border town of Nogales.

Border towns are overflowing with

clearance stores, probably full of “shoes, clothing and other distracting goods fresh from the maquidoras located on the Mexican side of the boarder,” Trip reminded me. That squashed my desire to enter in search of amazing Burning Man costumes and my focus turned to crossing the border.

Green light! At the boarder crossing red means stop and search, green means “Bienvenidos a Mexico!” Both Trip and I made it through without any problems. It was nearly midnight when we arrived at the station, the next bus left at around 2am. At five a.m., we exited the bus and located the beach—time to catch up on sleep. Waking up to waves, sunshine, and seashells was very satisfying but we had to move on and keep a bit of a strict schedule due to the rapidly approaching date of the Encuentro and the long journey ahead.

We had about 12 hours of bussing ahead of us before we got to the last leg of our journey. The bus had dropped us off in the town of Ocosingo. Ocosingo was a place that I had traveled solo to a few years ago and had my first experience of not being able to communicate with anyone else in my mini-bus not because my Spanish was poor but because everyone else spoke a native language. It was evening time and we were beginning another conversation about migrant rights and respect of all cultures with a local man when we heard two young men yell “Gringos! La Garrucha!” Two Mexican men trying to find more folks to split the cost for a long, slow, bumpy ride to the Zapatista community had spotted us.

Our ride took us off the paved city roads and onto the main arterial for the entire countryside: a 20 mph maximum dirt road. We spent three hours on the road, looking at the stars above and talking about the Zapatista revolution, global communities, and independent media.

We arrived at the Encuentro around 11pm and the place was alive with people, music, and spirit. The common space of the village was decorated with large signs containing writings of female empowerment, respect, and admiration for Comadante Ramona the recently passed female leader of the Zapatista movement. There were regulations posted for the participation of men at the Encuentro. Male Zapatistas were assigned support roles such as cleaning and watching the children; male visitors were allowed to listen to the speeches being given by the Zapatista women but were restricted from the front sections of the space.

We were led to a small collection of houses, each no bigger than my room. This room was to soon house 14 other Encuentro participants from around the globe. In the mornings, we ate breakfast with the family. Trip and sat in awe while they ground corn into mush, added water, and pressed the dough into flat circles to be cooked over the open flame. I cannot recall ever seeing such a complete circle of edibles.

At the Encuentro, women Zapatista’s in full indigenous dresses and iconic black ski masks took turns speaking about the movement. The Zapatista was created to be a completely egalitarian movement. In many of these women’s lives it was the first time equal rights and opportunities



had been presented to them. Women carried guns, negotiated, and organized right along the men during the revolution and now they continue their roles as equals as the communities build and grow. Now women and girls are allowed equal access to school, medical attention, playtime, and other responsibilities.

What I took away most from the Zapatista speeches, which I hope to start in my own community, is a constant process of reevaluation. All jobs in the community, schoolteacher, medical provider, and storekeeper alike are under scrutiny for constructive criticism and positive feedback. Each community has many delegates that oversee their village and then meet with delegates from the other autonomous villages. At these meetings, ideas and skills are exchanged in an effort to equalize and improve all resources available to the community.

They addressed many topics, including LGBT issues, birth control, and abortion. While it was obvious that the women had limited experiences with some topics, they

approached them with great caution, care, and respect. They spoke of the *Mal Gobierno*, bad government, taking their land, teaching their children a racist, demeaning history and not providing equal access to health care and other resources.

Soon, it was December 31. We had spent three days in La Garrucha. Listening, talking, learning and eating some of the best food I have ever tasted. Fearing the thought of spending the next two days camped out next to the latrines near a bathroom we hitched a ride out of the village. We spent New Years Eve on a bus back north.

Hitchhiking to nearly the Guatemalan border for a gathering of indigenous revolutionaries might just be the best story I have to offer. It is also a story from which I continue draw strength, inspiration, and knowledge. I am grateful for the exposure I had to so many different people, places and experiences. I am also grateful to know that somewhere, not very far away, a revolution is happening. ♀

ASUO Women's Center, LGBTESSP, and U of O Mujeres presents



MAY 16 / 17

WOW HALL

doors @ 7:30 Show @ 8pm

tickets per night \$5 std \$7 gen

Tickets available @ UO EMU ticket office, WOW Hall ticket office, Women's Center

# OUT / LOUD

Queer Women's Music Festival

BUTCHLAIS DE  
PANOCHTITLAN

CHRIS PUREKA

TEAM GINA

ANDREA GIBSON

AND MANY MORE

# on being allies

{WORDS AND ART BY PATRICIA WONG HALL}

As a lifelong resident of San Francisco and long-time Buddhist peace activist, I am continually stunned by the question, “What country are you from?” A large European American man at an interfaith spiritual gathering asked me this question recently. He thought I was from Tibet, even though I have an American accent and was not wearing anything Tibetan. Last year in June, I was also asked this question three times in one day. My usual response is to say that I am an American-Asian American, or that my family has lived in the US for five generations. But this question puzzles me. I guess I am tired of having to answer it every month or two, my whole life. When I was ten years old, a Euro-American girl asked me if I knew the pledge of allegiance on the first day of school. I can still remember how upset I was. I became politicized on that day and have been a peace activist for decades. Though my family has lived in the US for several generations, like many Asian Americans, we are still treated like ‘perpetual foreigners’ in our birth land. Rick Fields spoke of this strange phenomenon in his “Confessions of a White Buddhist” (Tricycle, Fall, 1994): “[Asian Americans] ... are still vulnerable to the psychic ambush of some chance acquaintance remarking blandly one fine Sunday morning that they sure do speak English well. This racism has been the nightmare squatting at the heart of the American Dream since the very beginning.” Frank Wu (law professor at Howard University) has said that when he is asked where he is really from, he feels like a foreigner or as if he is not a real American.

Many Asian Americans have roots here dating back to the 1800’s or earlier, with the California gold rush and railroad projects, so it surprises me when I still get asked these questions. It makes me feel like I don’t belong in this country. Asian Americans are perpetual foreigners; to be an “American” means to be white. The repetitive nature of this question is so painful to my spirit. These days, the prevailing anti-immigrant sentiment

“Euro-American allies or others can support People of Color by standing with us in our pain and by not leaving when the stories are too tough to bear.”

intensifies the effects of these questions for many people of color. I have experienced racism on the individual and institutional level since I was a child from strangers, friends, relatives, institutions, companies, in stores, on job interviews, and elsewhere. Years ago, my religion and race were both ridiculed simultaneously. It will take years to heal from such a toxic experience. These experiences are an assault on the life essence or the core of a human being, not just on the identity of someone. When Euro-Americans tell people of color that they do not want to hear sad stories about racism anymore, this is ‘white privilege’ (google: Peggy McIntosh). This is an option that is not available to people of color. Expressing our emotions is healthy, it is not something to be feared or avoided.

When People of Color share their stories about racism with whites, Euro-Americans are only hearing about the harm that has been done, while People of Color have actually had to live through the pain. Euro-American allies or others can support People of Color by standing with us in our pain and by not leaving when the stories are too tough to bear. Stories about racism by People of Color are healing and help build compassion within us all. Euro-Americans can simply listen and not judge or criticize as People of Color speak truth to power. As People of Color, we can teach Euro-Americans how to be allies. And Euro-Americans with extensive experience on diversity training or anti-oppression issues can teach other Euro-Americans how to be effective allies to People of Color. Also, People of Color need to



become stronger allies with each other and remember to drop the dualistic behaviors or minor issues that divide us all. I have been and continue to be an ally to African Americans, Latinos/Latinas, whites and others. There is a feeling of comradeship when this occurs. We can all benefit from learning to share the limited resources and power that exist on this planet. What is required is mutual respect and trust, being accountable for our actions, rejecting racism and understanding how white privilege interfaces with all of these issues, especially at the institutional level.

As a socially-engaged Buddhist and peace activist, when I do political work, part of my spiritual practice involves remembering not to react to the egoic self in myself or others, not to take things personally, and not to make assumptions (per Thich Nhat Hanh, Eckhart Tolle and Don Miguel Ruiz, respectively). My roles as a peace activist, educator, and diversity consultant are challenged continually, as is my compassion. As a human being, I am given countless opportunities to choose how I am going to react in any given situation. I realize that I am experiencing the other’s ignorance. Nonetheless, the pain is still there. I try to take responsibility for my actions, as I hope others will, as well.

Peace and social justice activists everywhere need to be less judgmental and negative about their peers and allies. For the sake of unity, we need to learn to diminish the critical spirit within our communities. ♀

Editor’s Note: Originally published in Turning Wheel, Buddhist Peace Fellowship, Berkeley, CA. Sept. 2006





# The Radical Cheerleaders:

**fighting cruelty and  
capitalism with cartwheels**

{WORDS BY CAMILLE WALSH}



The Radical Cheerleaders returned to Eugene for Take Back the Night recently, after a two-year hiatus without a local group. This year's squad was all new to Radical Cheerleading, which enabled us to really come together as a group and create some

fun cheers and dances (as well as the all-important garbage bag pom-poms). Getting the crowd to spell out "E-V-I-L" for rapists whose "lying won't save you from hell," shaking pom-poms in the air while yelling at sexual harassers that they "better fucking stop!" and dancing with attitude to Twisted Sister's "We're Not Gonna Take It" were some highlights of the performance.

The Eugene squad met only a handful of times, but the energy in the group was palpable at every practice. The cheerleaders were all enthusiastic to choreograph cheers and dances, come up with ways to involve the crowd and, of course, create quirky and outrageous costumes. Cheerleader Claire Sharman said that she was excited to be a Radical Cheerleader because much of the work that she does for women's rights needs to be serious and sobering, while cheerleading provides a fun way to support survivors. Sharman added that "[i]t's important not only to break the silence surrounding sexual violence, but to smash it in the loudest way possible."

Cheerleader Meggan Groh echoed these ideas, saying that cheerleading was a way of "reaching out to people and spreading awareness about sexual assault in a fun and creative way." Priscilla Vasquez summed up her cheerleading experience as "empowering," as did many others. Vasquez especially appreciated being able to support the survivors close to her in a fun and serious manner while having the support of her fellow squad members. Hollie Putnam, another cheerleader, said that the Take Back the Night performance was just the beginning of her life as a Radical Cheerleader. After the positive feedback from the crowd, Putnam was "already ready to do it again." The Cheerleaders plan to perform at other righteous events in the Eugene area, including the upcoming Beyond



Patriarchy conference in May.

Radical Cheerleading is a combination of protest and performance that was first formed in Florida in 1996 when three sisters decided to combine their junior-high cheerleading skills with anarchist politics. They published an independent zine called the "Radical Cheerbook" in 1997, and squads started popping up all over the country and the world. The cheerleading performances brought a new queer and feminist energy (sometimes called "fun") to protests that were often otherwise dull and male-dominated. The first cheerbook described Radical Cheerleading as "activism with pom-poms and middle fingers extended. It's screaming fuck capitalism while doing a split."

Mary Christmas, a Radical Cheerleader for many years in New York, has said that cheerleading is not a methodology, but a community, "a place in the world you can fit into and feel like you're mirrored on all sides. It's a safe space to feel feminine and badass." The power in this safe space comes from being in a group where your movements are mirrored by people who may not share your gender performance, but who share your radical feminist politics. Rather than cheering for male sports from the sidelines as in traditional

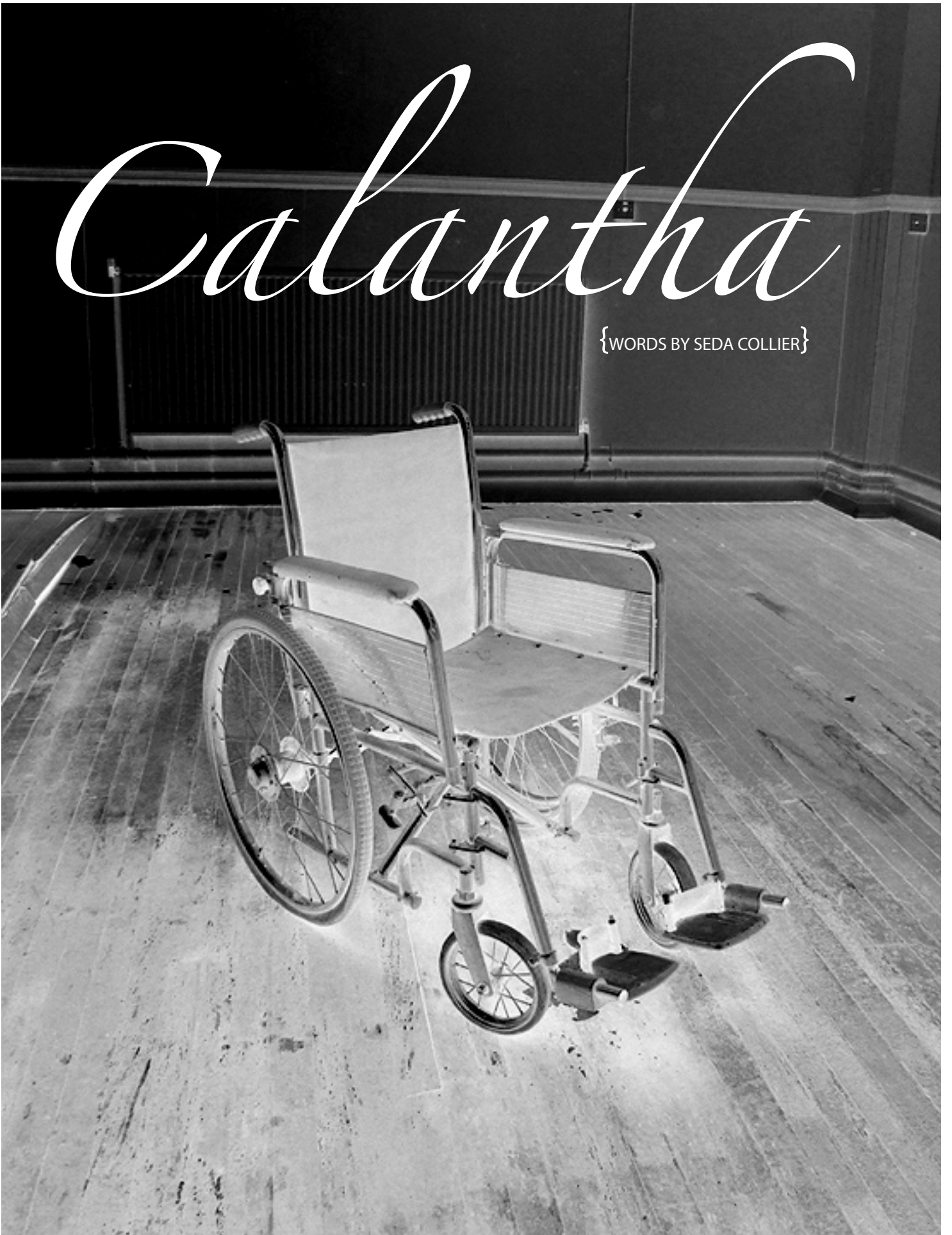
cheerleading, Radical Cheerleaders are front and center, and the only team they root for is radical political change. The cheerleaders wear tongue-in-cheek pigtails and tutus while shouting serious threats at harassers and rapists, subverting traditional ideas of femininity by using them to promote radical feminism and resistance. Fighting bombs with pom-poms, Radical Cheerleading is here to stay! If you would like to be involved in the group, or if you are planning an event that you think could benefit from a little in-your-face cheering, contact [cwalsh@gmail.com](mailto:cwalsh@gmail.com). ♀





# Calantha

{WORDS BY SEDA COLLIER}



Calantha's bloated body hid the strength of her arms and legs behind layers of fat. With no hope of ever being pretty, she gave up trying shortly after she reached puberty. The other kids mostly called her Calamity back then, and that's what she felt like. Big, lumbering Calamity, not like Jane a woman to be feared, but more like a clumsy, harmless dancing bear.

"How is she today?"

Calantha recognized Daddy's voice. She flexed her biceps, keeping her body still, letting the spurt of adrenaline leak into her muscles and then out of her fingertips, but she carefully didn't move, not even the blink of an eye. She pushed her emotions back into hibernation and stared out the window. Morning sun slanted through the old maples that dotted the flat lawn of the nursing home. Buds were breaking out, blurring the sharp outlines of naked limbs.

"The same, sir. The doctors say there's nothing physically wrong, you know, since her bones healed. We just can't seem to get through to her."

"That's okay. I know you're trying."

His voice sounded sad but resigned.

Calantha allowed a smile to twitch across her face, knowing from the location of their voices they couldn't see her reflection in the window. Then she smoothed her face into blankness as footsteps clicked across the linoleum floor.

A bearded face swam into her peripheral vision. "Hi, baby."

Carefully keeping her eyes straight ahead, Calantha noted that gray had crept into his beard, washing out most of the black, the creases deepening at the corners of his eyes and mouth. She hadn't noticed at his last visit, just a month ago. She waited a slow moment longer, then blinked her eyes.

Daddy sighed. "Thanks, nurse. What's your name? Oh, yes, Sandy. I'll take her now, thanks."

Calantha's vision panned around the room as he wheeled her toward the door. Outside, the spring sun caressed the side of her face, and she breathed in the smell of wet earth with a tang of bark-o-mulch. Traffic murmured in the distance. Calantha could hear geese high above, honking their way north. She didn't lift her head to search for them, but

she felt a flutter in her chest, as if something warm and alive were waking up. Her father wheeled her past one of the big maples, and something flashed in the corner of her eye, then she heard a squirrel scrambling up the bark of the tree. She didn't even let her eyes shift to follow the movement. She never knew when Daddy would duck his head past her shoulder, try to catch her in a reaction.

"We'll go to the zoo today, Cal. How's that?"

**"She pushed her emotions back into hibernation and stared out the window"**



When she didn't answer, her father forced enthusiasm into his voice. "You'll like that. Remember how you used to laugh at the gorillas? And the bears. Remember the bears?"

Calantha laughed inside herself. She remembered. She remembered the lazy Saturdays, kneading the bread dough while her mother bustled around the kitchen ("Work it harder, Cal!"), and afterwards Daddy would take her to the zoo and she'd throw what was left of last week's bread to the ducks and geese at the pond, then they'd go look at all the animals and they always ended by the bear pit, because that was the best so she wanted to save it for last. She'd laugh at the cubs, tussling by their lethargic mothers, strong like she was strong but they had friends.

They reached the Taurus station wagon, and her father pulled the wheelchair to a halt. He came around to help her into the front seat, and she saw his face close up. She cringed from his lips, afraid for a moment that they wouldn't stop, that they would come down and crush hers. But that was silly. Of course he wouldn't, not in broad daylight, not on a public street. She forced herself to stay still, stare straight ahead, not even blink. He sighed and opened the door.

He could barely lift her enough to move her from chair to car. Calantha

**“She cringed from his lips, afraid for a moment that they wouldn't stop, that they would come down and crush hers”**

almost stiffened for an instant, torn by repulsion at his touch and an impulse to laugh at his weakness. She could lift *him*. She was the stronger one now, she knew it deep inside, not like something that had to be tested but just a fact.

The ride took almost an hour. At first, as they drove into the rapid traffic on the freeway, Calantha felt a jolt of panic. Scenes flashed in front of her eyes like a kaleidoscope – Daddy tipping a paper bag to his lips, her grabbing at the wheel while their car wandered into oncoming traffic,

headlights rushing at her . . .

Daddy's head swiveled toward her, a smile brightening his face. Calantha forced the panic down, forced herself to stay still.

"You moved! Dear, dear Cal, I hope you're getting better. Did you recognize something? Anything?"

Calantha let her head roll limply with the car as it rocked over a break in the pavement. For a while her father split his attention between the traffic and her, then he sighed and gave up.

"Guess I was mistaken," he muttered to himself. He switched on the radio.

After the accident, Calantha had

found refuge in silence. The doctors and nurses had consulted around her while she suffered from the concussion, but they pretty much left her alone, except for shining lights in her eyes and asking "how many fingers." She just didn't respond. When she got better, she just stared at the wall or out the window and didn't move, and after a while everyone left her alone. She was surprised at how well it worked, though it did take a lot of concentration to suppress her reactions while the doctors poked and prodded.

They turned off the freeway and,

after a short drive on a four-lane street, pulled into the zoo. This early in the day the parking lot held only a few other cars. Calantha could hear her father panting as he wheeled her up the handicapped ramp, felt a drop of his sweat fall in her hair. Suddenly she could smell it, as if his sweat were slippery on her chest, her face crushed beneath him. She swallowed, blinked her eyes, careful not to let her head nod, not to shudder, not to jump out of the wheelchair and run . . .

They went to the primate house first. The warmth of the sun faded from her back as they passed into the dimness of

the building. Calantha breathed in the pungent smell of caged animals.

In the first cage a chimpanzee played on his swing, just the way it would have played to make her laugh in what seemed like a thousand

years ago. Daddy stopped her next to it. He shifted his feet several times, glancing from a nearby couple to Calantha to the chimps and back. Calantha stared past the couple when they glanced at her and whispered to each other. Who cared? Better if they thought she couldn't move, couldn't think.

After a few moments her father wheeled her out into the sunlight, across the pavement to the bear pit. Calantha could hear some bears scuffling inside, and she stifled the sudden urge to rise up and look over the rail to watch the big,



lumbering beasts. Her father ignored them and glanced around, back at the rest of the zoo. A patch of trees screened the pit from most of the zoo, and Calantha knew from earlier visits that this part of the bear pit was visible only from the primate and reptile houses.

Daddy hesitated, looking behind her toward the rest of the zoo, but finally he seemed to come to a decision and spoke. "Cal, baby, I've... been meaning to tell you . . ." He paused. "Well, I know you can't hear me, or understand – at least, I don't think you can."

The tears suddenly lining her father's cheeks surprised Calantha so much she nearly looked him full in the face. She kept her eyes straight ahead.

"About those times . . . long ago . . . when I . . . when you were so young . . . And the accident . . ." He sighed and stared down at the bears.

Calantha caught a movement in her peripheral vision, and she let her eyes slip quickly to glance at the couple, who were wandering arm in arm out of the ape house, and back to the front. The people were far away, oblivious to anything but each other. Calantha repressed a shudder when her father looked back to her face, searching for some reaction, some sign of consciousness, but then his eyes fell and she breathed a silent sigh of relief. He hadn't seen her lapse.

"I'm... sorry, Cal, baby. I know I hurt you. I'm so sorry, for the accident, for everything. For . . . you know. What I did to you . . . when I . . . when I touched . . . No. When I . . . *raped* you." His shoulders fell, and he whispered, "That's what it was, even though you wanted it, too. More than once. How many times? God, I don't want to know." His hands reached out, clenching and unclenching, as if reaching for words that wouldn't come. His voice broke. "You know, I love you." He covered his face with his hands, and sobbed, once.

Calantha didn't respond, and he looked up and gripped and on the rail atop the wall. "I started going to AA. Stopped drinking, it'll be four months on Monday."

The last time they had been here it was fall, the leaves behind her red, and she'd been silent, the old rapport between them broken, and her father had sipped surreptitiously from his pint bottle while she looked down at the bears and wished she could join them and crawl into her cave and sleep 'til spring. They'd had the

accident on the drive home.

A bear snuffled in the pit. Daddy seemed to be looking at it, straight down from where he stood at the railing.

"Too late. Too late for you... For your mother... She left me." He paused a long moment before continuing. "But that doesn't matter now. What matters is that I wronged you, and I desperately want to make up for that. I want to ask for your forgiveness, even though I can't ever do anything to deserve it. And you can't even tell I'm saying this. God!"

His hand clenched on his face, and his shoulders shook. Calantha's heart began to pound with a slow, heavy beat. She forced herself to hold still.

"I wish I could take it all back. Do it all over. Or not do it at all. I wish I could get you back, talk to you, anything . . . I love you. I love you."

He wiped a tear from his cheek.

For the second time, Calantha let her eyes part from their blank stare. She glanced at him, then away. He was serious! Not that it mattered. A smile that was almost happy played across her face and disappeared.

The bears growled and scratched in the pit below. The couple wandered into the reptile house. A young woman, probably a nanny, led a little boy

carrying a bundle of balloons into the ape house. Daddy stood with his face in his hands. He looked small, shrunken, somehow diminished in his grief, and Calantha felt a stirring excitement, an awakening, surge through her. She stood up.

Her father jerked around at her movement, eyes wide. He stretched out his arms, his face lighting in a brilliant smile. Calantha looked into his eyes and saw relief through his tears, and joy, and knew that it was for her sake, far more than his own. She saw love, pure like the love of a bear for her cub, like hers had been for him so long ago.

"Cal! Baby . . ."

Calantha grabbed him under the armpits. She lifted him and tipped him over the wall, batting his arms away as he clutched at her. He fell into the bear pit, and his scream mingled with the squall of a bear. Calantha looked over the rail, watched as the bear tore at him. "That's okay, Daddy," she whispered. "I forgive you."

She settled back into the wheelchair, schooling herself to stillness, ignoring the screams, crushing back the awakening. Soon, but not yet. Her eyes became blank, staring straight ahead, and her lips moved one last time. "I love you, too." ♀





# for your information

{WORDS BY JESSICA HONSINGER}

Just so you know:

I take drugs.  
Three different kinds.  
Every night.  
And sometimes in the morning, too.

They make me feel... alive.  
And I'd give anything to not take them.  
I'm not addicted.  
I'm bipolar.

Down, I can't move.  
Up, I can't stop moving.  
Down, sitting very still hurts to my deepest bones.  
Up, sitting very still is impossible.

Down, I am trapped in an ever-increasing spiral  
of self-doubt, chastising myself for weakness,  
begging forgiveness for perceived inadequacies,  
falling further and further. The darkness is over-  
whelming, even when standing in the brightest,  
warmest sunlight.

Up, I am unable to stop, my face stretching into  
an insincere smile, cheeks aching from the grin.

Down, I am locked in the solitude of my mind,  
opening my mouth to scream with only silence  
escaping.

Up, I can't stop my mind long enough to sleep,  
running mad three days straight on no sleep or  
coffee.

When I'm up, I'm the person you eye with sus-  
picion, the one who laughs a little too loud for a  
little too long.

When I'm down, you'll tell me to cheer up!  
Don't look so sad!  
Can't you just get over it?

I always want to laugh at that one.  
Get over it?  
You think I like being this way?  
Really?

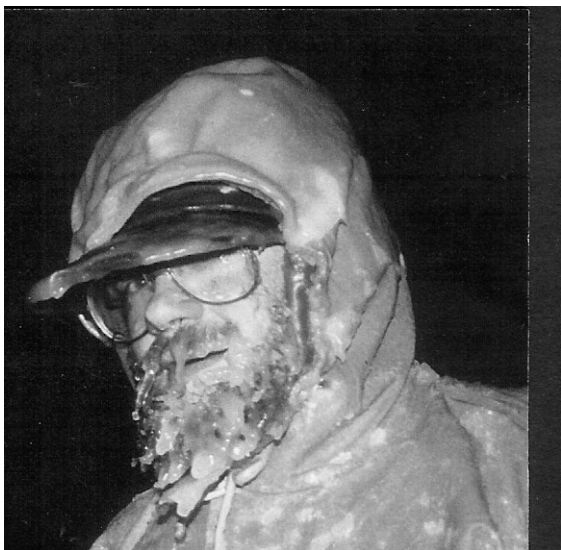
Of course.

It's simply wonderful losing your job because you  
can't get out of bed without crying for six hours  
straight. Having to drop classes, which means  
permanently losing financial aid two terms from  
graduating.

Losing any respect you had for yourself.

Never knowing if tomorrow waking up will bring  
some relief from the aching up or the tumbling  
down.

So yes.  
I take drugs.  
Wouldn't you?



# limp wrist

{WORDS BY SEDA COLLIER}

“Limp wrist,”  
she calls me.

I,  
who stacked fishing pots on a storm-mad deck,  
who felled trees and was almost felled by one,  
who walked through Marinae Corps boot camp  
as through a field of grass.

“Limp wrist,”  
she calls me.

She,  
who felled trees with men stronger but not smarter,  
who fought fires, sweating in the blazing heat,  
who birthed four children from her womb to the wide world,  
and what man has done that?

“Limp wrist,”  
because I aspire to womanhood  
in this culture that despises  
the strength of women.

What is a woman?

I, who will choose the cold stares of society  
for the sake of honesty.

I, who will bear the laughter of the ignorant  
for the price of integrity.

I, who have learned the courage to face myself  
and embrace myself.

Limp wrist?  
I think not.



# **The ASUO Women's Center is Hiring!!!**

**All positions are 9 months, beginning in  
September 2008:**

**Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Coordinator  
Education and Outreach Coordinator  
Nontraditional Advocate Coordinator  
Global Feminist Issues Coordinator  
LGBTQQI Coordinator  
Diversity Coordinator  
Events Coordinator**

**We also have 4-6 Office Assistants positions available  
(work study only please)**

**Please feel free to stop by the ASUO Women's Center in EMU Suite 3 (next to the  
craft center) and pick up an application. For more information, please contact the  
ASUO Women's Center at 346.0640 or email [bota@uoregon.edu](mailto:bota@uoregon.edu)**

**My mama is short and fine**

**shes got a butt like mine**

**when we walk down the street**

**the cars go beep beep beep**

**she tells me to be bold**

**those cars need to be told**

**that were not on display**

**and we dont play**

**NO WE DONT PLAY**

